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M.A. [English]

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FICTION

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SYLLABI-BOOK MAPPING TABLE

Fiction

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Unit - II	Charlotte Bronte	: Jane Eyre	**Unit 2:** *Jane Eyre:* Charlotte Bronte **(Pages 21-30);**
Unit - III	D.H. Lawrence	: Sons and Lovers	**Unit 3:** *Sons and Lovers:* D. H. Lawrence **(Pages 31-62);**
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INTRODUCTION

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Literature as a term is used for describing whatever is written or spoken. It basically comprises creative writing, innovative style and imagination. Literature has various forms; some popular ones are fiction, drama, prose and poetry.

Fiction is the most popular form of literature present in today's world. It is any narrative that deals with events that are not factual, but rather imaginary. It is often applied to theatrical and musical work. Harry Potter, the *Twilight* series and *Da Vinci Code* are some of the perfect examples of fiction.

This book, *Fiction* has been divided into fourteen units. The book has been written in keeping with the self-instructional mode or the SIM format wherein each Unit begins with an Introduction to the topic, followed by an outline of the Objectives. The detailed content is then presented in a simple and organized manner, interspersed with Check Your Progress questions to test the student's understanding of the topics covered. A Summary along with a list of Key Words, set of Self-Assessment Questions and Exercises and Further Readings is provided at the end of each Unit for effective recapitulation.

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BLOCK - I
FICTION I - V

UNIT 1 *A TALE OF TWO CITIES:* CHARLES DICKENS

Structure

1.0 INTRODUCTION

A Tale of Two Cities was published in Dickens' magazine *All The Year Round* in 1859. It is Dickens' second attempt at writing a historical fiction, the first one being *Barnaby Rudge* in 1841. Dickens performed in Wilkie Collin's play *The Frozen Deep* and liked its theme of redemption, love and violence and decided to provide a historical treatment to these issues. Thus, *A Tale of Two Cities* is not just concerned with the love triangle and the complex relationships, but true to its title, it describes the events in Paris and London before and during the French Revolution.

1.1 OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- Assess Charles Dickens as a novelist
- Discuss various characters of *A Tale of Two Cities*
- Describe the theme and setting of *A Tale of Two Cities*

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1.2 *A TALE OF TWO CITIES:* SUMMARY

A Tale of Two Cities is set in the cities of Paris and London between 1775 and 1790. The French settings in the novel include the storming of Bastille by the peasants in Paris, the Defarge's wine shop, and the French chateau. The English settings include the London courtroom, the Tellson's bank and the Manette's house. Both France as well as England is weakened by the political and social unrest under the leadership of King Louis XVI of France and King George III of England.

Book the First: Recalled to Life

Chapters 1 to 4

In the year 1775, when France seems to be on the threshold of witnessing a revolution, indulged in extreme violence, England appears to be 'scarcely better'; as Dickens puts it, 'It was the best of times, it was the worst of times'. In the month of November, on a Friday night a mail coach is heading from London to Dover. Among the three passengers mounted in it, one is Jarvis Lorry, a clerk at Tellson's bank. The passengers hear a horse approaching and fear it to be a robber. However, a messenger appears from amongst the mist and asks for Jarvis Lorry. Recognizing the familiar sound of Jerry Cruncher, the messenger and runner at the Teller's bank, Mr Lorry receives a note from him. It reads, 'Wait at Dover for Mam's elle'. Lorry asks Jerry to return with the message- 'Recalled to Life'. Jerry is perplexed with the message, but he rides back to deliver it. The narrator ponders that 'every human creature is constituted to be that profound secret and mystery to every other.' Jarvis Lorry snoozes and dreams of repetitive conversations with a ghost who informs Lorry that his body has been buried for almost eighteen years. Lorry tells him that he has been 'recalled to life' and inquires whether he wants to live. He asks him in a mysterious manner if he should show 'her' to him. The ghost gives different reactions to him. He weeps and implores him to let him see her soon, and also says that he would die if he were to see her soon.

The coach arrives at Dover only with Jarvis Lorry as the other passengers have gotten down earlier. Lorry goes to the Royal George hotel and refreshes himself with some breakfast and a nap. He is expecting Lucie Mannette from London, who has been informed that some discovery has been made regarding the property of her dead father. Lorry informs her that the reason behind Tellson having called her to Paris is that her father whom she assumes to be dead, has been found alive. He further tells her that her father was once a doctor but now he has lost his memory and stays in the house of an old servant. He says that he must be secretly taken out of France and she can 'restore him to life, love, duty, rest, comfort.' Lucie is stunned by the information about her assumingly dead father and her servant Miss Pross enters to attend her.

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Chapters 5 to 6

The scene shifts to Saint Antoine, a Paris suburb. The place appears to be cold and gloomy. A cask of red wine falls on the street and breaks. Everyone including the idlers and businessmen rush to it and drink the spilled wine. The women soak it up their handkerchiefs and drip it into the mouths of their babies. A man dips his finger into it and writes 'BLOOD' on a wall. Ernest Defarge, a 'bull- necked, martial looking man of thirty' is the owner of the wine shop. His wife Therese Defarge, apparently knitting inside the wine shop, keenly watches everything that takes place around her. As Monsieur Defarge enters the shop, she signals her husband of the arrival of a gentleman and a lady (Lorry and Lucie). Ignoring their presence, Defarge directs the three 'Jacques' (a secret name identifying them to be the revolutionaries) to a chamber. Mr Lorry has a word with him and then he leads them upstairs where the three men are standing. He says that he shows Doctor Manette to people occasionally and opens the door. The room is dark and Lucy clings to Lorry out of fear. They see a white - haired man stooped over a bench busy making shoes.

Dr Manette is a frail old man indifferent to the outside world. He reveals in his faint voice that he is making shoes of the latest fashion for a lady. He says his name is 'One Hundred and Five, North Tower'. As Lucie goes near him, he notices her golden hair and shows the similar strands of hair tied in a rag that he wears around his neck. He remembers having begged to be allowed to keep these golden strands of his wife upon his imprisonment. Lucie urges him to weep if he recalls his loved ones and assures him that his 'agony is over'. He is overcome by emotion on hearing his daughter's words and she hugs him. They decide to leave for England immediately. Defarge assists their departure and Lorry tells Dr Manette that he hopes that he cares to be recalled to life.

Book the Second: The Golden Thread

Chapters 1 to 5

The scene shifts to Tellson's bank in London in 1780. The old and reputed bank takes pride in its ugliness, darkness and smallness. The bank is located near the Temple Bar, a place where the criminals' executed heads were displayed till recent, since the death penalty was greatly used for even for the crimes like forgery and petty theft. Jerry Cruncher works as a messenger of the Tellson's bank. He lives in a small apartment and wakes up yelling at his wife who is praying. He complains that she is praying against him and flings a dirty boot at her. He takes his 12 years old son with him and leave for the Tellson's bank. Soon, Cruncher sets off for his job as a porter is called off by the inside messenger. His son wonders why his father's fingers are always rusty. As instructed, Cruncher goes to the Old Bailey court and waits for further instructions from Jarvis Lorry. In the court, Cruncher finds that Charles Darnay, a 'well- grown and well - looking' young man is on trial for treason. Cruncher gathers that the crowd in the courtroom desires to see Darnay

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publically executed as he has been charged with providing secret information to the French king Louis XVI. Dr Manette and his daughter Lucie are sitting in the court room as witnesses against Darnay, although Lucie is full of compassion for him.

The jury is informed by the Attorney General that Darnay has been passing English secrets to France for five years. John Barsad's testimony supports the Attorney General's case but cross examination reveals that Barsad has himself been in debtor's prison and involved in brawls over gambling. The defense attorney Mr Stryver proves that the second witness Roger Cly is also untrustworthy. The similar questions are asked to Lorry and Lucie. While Lorry denies any familiarity with the accused, Lucie admits to have met Darnay on a ship going from France to England. Just as a witness insists that he can identify Darnay, Stryver draws the court's attention to his colleague Sidney Carton having striking resemblance with the accused. Darnay is acquitted by the court due to the uncanny resemblance leading to mistaken identity. Every one exits the court room and Darnay is congratulated by Dr. Manette, Lucie, Lorry and Stryver. Darnay kisses Lucie's hand and thanks Stryver. Stryver, Lucie and her father leave and a drunk Sidney Carter appears. Lorry chides him for not being serious with business. Carton joins Darnay to a tavern and they drink a toast to Lucie. Carton gets drunk and says to himself that he hates Darnay because he reminds him of what he has not achieved. The next morning, Carton meets Stryver in his apartment. They drink and discuss the court proceedings. Stryver-'the lion' praises Carton- 'the jackal's point of bringing forth his resemblance with Darnay. Stryver says that ever since they were in school together, Carton's life has always lacked a unified direction. As Carton complains about his life, Stryver changes the subject to Lucie. He praises her beauty but Carton calls her a 'golden-haired doll'.

Chapters 6 to 9

A period of four months has passed and the court proceedings have been forgotten. Dr Manette lives in a quaint house with his daughter Lucie. Lorry is now their family friend and is on his way to have dinner with the Manettes. Waiting for the Manettes to return, he engages in a conversation with Miss Pross. He is surprised to see Dr Manette's shoe making bench among his possessions. Miss Pross tells Lorry that hundreds of suitors approach Lucie but all of them are unworthy of 'Ladybird'. She continues that only her own brother Solomon Pross is a worthy suitor, but he has stolen all her possessions and forced her into poverty. Lucie and Manette are joined by Darnay upon their return. He narrates a strange story that puts a strange look on Manette's face. Meanwhile, Carton also joins them and suddenly the loud foot steps are heard making an alarming echo. Lucie believes that the people whose footsteps can be heard will gradually be a part of their lives.

The scene shifts to the royal court in Paris where Monseigneur is holding a reception. Indulged in sumptuosity, he is having four servants help him with his drinking chocolate. It is said that his money corrupts anyone who touches it. Among

all the pomp and decadence, the party breaks up with a storm. Marquis Evremonde condemns Monesigneur's arrogance and leaves crazily racing his carriage through the city streets. The carriage suddenly hits something and stops. Marquis sees a tall man holding his dead baby that died under the wheels of the carriage. He blames the accident on the peasants and inquires whether his horses have been injured. Defarge comes out of his wine shop and comforts the baby's father, while Marquis throws a few coins over them and rides away. He reaches the small village of which he is the lord. He looks at the peasants living a wretched and exploited life in his chateau. He asks a road mender whom he had noticed during his journey what he was staring at. He replies that someone was holding the bottom of his carriage. He drives past indifferent to the woes of the peasants. Upon entering his chateau, he inquires whether Monsieur Charles has arrived from England, to which the servant replies that he hasn't.

Charles Darnay arrives later at night to meet his uncle Marquis and it becomes obvious by their conversation that they share a strained relationship. He detests the thinking of his uncle that being superior is their 'natural destiny'. He argues that his family's name is linked with fear and slavery all over France, but Marquis maintains that the class distinction is essential. Darnay announces that he wants to settle in England and renounce his uncle's property. However, the following morning Marquis is found dead, a knife having pierced his heart. A note attached to the knife reads 'Drive him fast to his tomb. This, from Jacques.'

Chapters 10 to 13

A year later, Darney has shifted to England and works in London as a dedicated French teacher and translator. He visits Dr Manette and reveals his love for his daughter. He says that he wishes to marry Lucie and his marriage will only help strengthen the bond between a daughter and a father. Manette admires his manner of seeking his daughter's hand but informs him that there are two more suitors—Stryver and Carton. Darnay confesses to Manette that he wants to share a secret regarding his real identity, but Manette asks him to wait till the wedding day. He takes his leave and Lucie returns. She is shocked to find her father working at his shoe maker's bench. Holding his hand she walks with him through the hall way for a long time. Later that night, working in his chamber with Carton, Stryver announces that he wants to marry Lucie. Carton is upset with his words but assures Stryver that he is not at all disturbed, yet he drinks heavily. Stryver suggests him to find a wife who can take care of him.

Stryver plans to propose marriage to Lucie, and on his way he decides to stop at Tellson's bank and reveal his intentions to Lorry. Lorry advises him to wait till he finds out his position in Manettes' house. Stryver gets upset and calls Lucie a fool if she rejects his offer. However, he dismisses the plan and asks Lorry to forget what he had said. Sidney Carton visits Lucie's house and speaks to her. She notices his ill looks and asks him if it is not a pity to be wasting away the gift of life. He laments that it is too late and he shall never be able to lead a better life.

Lucie gives him hope and he is moved by her compassion. He admits that he loves her but she is too good for him. He tells her that he can do anything for her; he can even give his life for her.

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Chapters 14 to 16

Sitting outside the Teller's bank, Jerry Cruncher sees a funeral procession and learns from the crowd following it that it is the funeral of Roger Cly who was one of the witnesses in Charles Darnay's case. Jerry joins the procession in burying Cly. The mob gets violent after the burial and engages in looting and breaking windows. Jerry reaches home and again rants about his wife's prayers. He goes out late at night with a sack, a crowbar and a rope. His son secretly follows him to the graveyard where he digs up Cly's body to be sold to the scientists. Terrified, his son runs back home and the following morning asks his father what a 'resurrection man' is. Jerry replies that a resurrection man is an honest tradesman whose deals in 'person's bodies'. His son reveals his intention of being a resurrection man when he grows up. Meanwhile, in the wine shop at Paris, Defarge enters accompanying the road mender whom he calls 'Jacques'. He reveals that he had seen a man hanging beneath Marquis' carriage a year ago, and a few months later that man was imprisoned for Marquis's murder. One of the Jacques informs him that Defarge had presented a petition to the king to save that man's life as his baby had been killed by Marquis's carriage, but the petition was ignored and the man was hanged. He is asked to wait outside and Defarge and the other Jacques decide to register the names of the entire aristocracy to be executed. Madame Defarge is knitting a pattern that contains the names in codes, of those who are to be executed. Defarge and his wife take the road mender to see King Louis XVI and Queen Marie Antoinette as they pass by in their coach. The road mender is excited to see them and screams, 'Long live the king!'. Defarge is pleased at his excitement and says, 'You make these fools believe that it will last forever.'

In the evening Defarge is informed by 'Jacques of the police' that John Barsad, a spy has been sent to their quarters. Madame Defarge decides to register his name. They return to the wine shop and Defarge laments that he fears that he will not witness the revolution in his lifetime. Madame Defarge gives him hope by saying that the revolution is like lightning and earthquake that take time to form, but strike with a sudden force. Barsad comes to the wine shop pretending to be sharing their concerns, commenting upon the terrible plight of the peasants. However, Madame Defarge knits his name while speaking to him. Barsad informs them that Charles Darnay, Marquis's nephew is soon going to marry Lucie in England. Madame Defarge tells her husband that Darnay and his entire family are registered already.

Chapters 17 to 20

It is the eve of Lucie's wedding and she is sitting with her father assuring him that her wedding will not change their close bonding. For the first time Dr Manette

talks to Lucie about his imprisonment in the Bastille. He tells her that he always thought of her and wondered what she would grow up to be. He says that he has known all happiness due to her. The next morning, before going to the church for the wedding, Darnay reveals his secret to Dr Manette who turns 'deadly pale' at this information. The wedding takes place and Manette says, 'Take her, Charles! She is yours!' they depart for their honeymoon and a sudden change comes over Manette. Lorry visits him and is informed by Miss Pross that Dr Manette is making shoes. He doesn't recognize Lorry, and they decide to keep a watch on him for nine days.

On the tenth day, Dr Manette looks better as he has put away his shoe maker's bench and is busy reading. Mr Lorry decides to discuss his problem indirectly as Dr Manette does not remember the last nine days of his strange behavior. He talks to him of a certain Mr Smith and asks if his relapse is likely to recur. Dr Manette says that the worst is over as the trigger is very unlikely to resurface. Lorry suggests that they should destroy the shoemaker's bench, but Manette says that the tools probably comforted his trauma and so should not be taken away. However, he agrees to destroy it for Lucie's sake. Mr. Lorry and Miss Pross break and bury the tools when Dr Manette leaves to join his daughter and her husband. They return from their honeymoon and Sidney Carton visits them. He apologizes to Darnay for his rudeness in the past and seeks his friendship. Darnay thanks him for helping to have him acquitted. He leaves and Lucie implores her husband to be soft with Carton as he is a good-hearted man and she has witnessed his wounded heart. Darnay is moved with Lucie's compassion and promises her to be sympathetic towards Carton.

Chapters 21 to 24

Several years pass and Lucie seems to be enjoying her married life. She has a daughter named Lucie; she also has a son who dies young. Lucie sits in the corner hearing the echoes of distant footsteps. Lorry visits them and informs that Paris is experiencing a restless phase. He says that a large number of French citizens are sending their money to England. But he is relieved to find that everything is fine in the Manette household. The scene shifts to Paris where the peasants are led by the Defarges storming the Bastille. Inside the Bastille, they release the prisoners and Defarge threatens a guard and demands him to be taken to 'One Hundred and Five North Tower', a cell where Dr Manette had been captivated. Defarge searches the cell and finds the initials A.M on the wall. He rejoins the mob in murdering the governor and Madame Defarge cuts off his head.

After a week, as Madame Defarge, now named 'The Vengeance' is knitting as usual, Defarge enters with the news that Foulon has been captured. He is the one who had asked the peasants to eat grass if they were starving. He had also faked his death in order to escape the peasants' fury. However he is caught in the country and the peasants are led by 'The Vengeance' to serve him justice. Foulon is hanged and grass is stuffed in his mouth. The mob also captures Foulon's son-

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in- law and treats him in a similar manner. The countryside is left desolate and ruined. One of the Jacques meets the road mender and they greet each other as revolutionaries. The road mender directs him to the Marquis' chateau. He burns down the chateau at night, but Monsieur Gabelle, the local tax collector escapes on his horse and watches the chateau burn. Such incidents have become very common all over France.

Three years elapse as the political agitation continues in France. The subjugated aristocrats seek refuge in England and as a result the Tellson's bank in London turns into a 'gathering place of Monseigneur'. Mr Lorry is sent off to France by the Tellsons so as to assist their Paris branch during the period of turmoil. Although Darnay suggests him not to go but he decides to take Jerry Cruncher along as his bodyguard. Lorry receives a letter addressed to the Marquis St. Evremonde, but Darnay being the surviving Marquis takes the letter from Lorry not letting him suspect his true identity. The letter is from Gabelle who has been imprisoned. He pleads the only surviving Marquis to return to France and help him. Darnay decides to leave for France as he has never been an oppressor; he thinks that France is safe for him. Leaving all 'that was dear on earth behind him', Darnay begins his journey to France with a 'glorious vision of doing good.'

Book the Third: The Track of a Storm

Chapters 1 to 5

On his way to France, Darnay comes across many difficulties as he is interrogated by the revolutionaries in every small town that he passes by. He learns that a new decree will soon be passed declaring all the emigrants to be sentenced to death. Later, he is sentenced to be imprisoned in La Force by the revolutionaries. When he protests, he is told that he has no rights as he is an emigrant. It is decided that he should be taken to Paris 'In Secret' by an armed escort who is none other than Defarge. Darnay seeks his help but he refuses and says that his allegiance lies with his country. He is confined to isolation in a very small cell where he thinks 'he made shoes, he made shoes, he made shoes.' Meanwhile Lucie and Dr Manette reach the Tellson's bank in France and inform Mr Lorry of Darnay's confinement in La Force. A mob gathers in the courtyard and as the blood stained 'savages' sharpen their weapons on a grindstone, Lorry reveals that they are preparing to kill the prisoners. However, Dr Manette says that he can influence the mob as he has been a former prisoner in the Bastille. Soon, he is led to Paris by the mob crying 'Help for the Bastille prisoner's kindred in La Force.'

Mr. Lorry fears that harbouring the wife and daughter of a prisoner may compromise bank's business, so he finds another lodging for Lucie, her daughter and Miss Pross and directs Jerry Cruncher to guard them. Defarge brings Dr. Manette's message to Lorry that Charles is safe but he is unable to leave the place. Lorry takes Defarge to Lucie as per Manette's instructions. Defarge feels that Madam Defarge should accompany them so as to familiarize herself with their

faces for their safety in future. They reach Lucie's lodging and give her the note from Darnay. Lucie begs Madam Defarge to be merciful to Darnay but she coldly replies that the course of revolution cannot be altered for one family. Dr. Manette returns from La Force after four days and informs Lucy that Charles has not been executed. He tells Lorry that he has used his influence with the tribunal in keeping Charles alive. Moreover, the court having rejected his plea to free Charles, has appointed him the inspecting physician of La Force and two more prisons. Lucie is happy with this arrangement as her father can see Darnay regularly and ensure his safety. Guillotine is introduced and is made a fixture in the streets of Paris as the king and queen are beheaded by the revolutionaries. 'Liberty, Equality, Fraternity, or Death' becomes the banner of the new republic; as a result beheadings increase rampantly and the time goes by. A year and three months have passed since Darnay's confinement.

Dr. Manette takes his daughter to a place from where the window of the prison is visible, so that she can see her husband sometimes. As he is famous as the 'Bastille Captive', no one doubts him. It becomes a daily feature for Lucie to stand near the window every day and Darnay also looks through it. The former road mender is now a wood sawyer and he talks to Lucie while she awaits her husband's glimpse. His saw is inscribed with 'Little Sainte Guillotine' and he too pretends that his saw is a guillotine that beheads the prisoners which are actually the small wooden pieces. Madam Defarge happens to pass by following the violent dance known as Carmagnole. Manette informs his daughter that the trial for her husband has been scheduled for the next day.

Chapters 6 to 10

The trial of Charles Darnay is held in the court of the new republic where a blood thirsty mob awaits the judgment. However, Charles announces that he is the son-in- law of Dr Manette and he has returned to France only to save someone's life. His status as much loved Manette's son-in-law strengthens his case and the testimonies from Manette and Gabelle convince the jury to acquit him. The mob, once furious, now carries him home on their shoulders. Darnay admits that Dr Manette has done what no one else could have done for him. Lucie is overjoyed to have him back home but she remains frightened for Charles. She hears strange footsteps on the stairs and suddenly the soldiers appear at her door. They demand Darnay's arrest. Dr Manette protests but the soldiers inform him that he must make a sacrifice that the new republic demands of him. Manette inquires who has demanded Charles's re-arrest and the soldiers name Defarge and Madam Defarge. They do not reveal the third name and say that they will know it by the next day.

Miss Pross has gone shopping with Jerry Cruncher and she suddenly finds herself standing in front of her lost brother Solomon. Solomon tells her that he is working as a spy so she should not make his discovery public. However, Cruncher also recognizes Solomon and suddenly Sidney Carton appears and informs that Solomon's name was Barsad when he was in England. Carton threatens Solomon

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that he will reveal his true identity if he refuses to accompany him to the Tellson's bank. At the bank, Carton informs Lorry that Charles has been re-arrested. Carton says that he has a plan to save Charles but he needs Barsad's cooperation. He says that he has seen Barsad secretly conversing with an English spy named Roger Cly. Barsad says that Cly is dead but Jerry Cruncher says that his death was faked as his coffin only contained stones. Barsad admits that Cruncher's statement is true. He says that although he can easily access the prison in which Darnay is kept, but it is impossible to arrange his escape. Carton convinces him to help him execute his secret plan.

Barsad leaves and Carton reveals to Lorry and Cruncher that he has arranged a visit to Darnay in prison before his execution. At night, Carton goes to a chemist and purchases two 'packets', and the chemist warns him to be careful. As he wanders through the streets, he is reminded of the words of a priest 'I am the resurrection and the life…'. Carton keeps repeating these words and then helps a little girl cross the street. The priest's words still echo in his mind and he keeps wandering through the night. Darnay's trial begins in the morning and the names of Darnay's accusers are announced by the judge. He names Ernest Defarge, Therese Defarge and Dr. Manette as the ones who have denounced Darnay. Manette is shocked to hear his name but Defarge shows him a paper that he had found in Manette's cell in Bastille.

Manette's letter is read out aloud which carries the story of Manette's imprisonment. It was in 1757 that the two brothers Marquis St.Evremonde and Marquis, took Dr. Manette to treat a dying young peasant woman and her dying brother who revealed that Marquis had abused his sister and killed her husband. Both of them died, and the next day Marquis's wife came to Manette's house and told him that she wished to make atonement for the sins of her family for the sake of her son Charles. She said that she wanted to help the dead woman's sister, but Manette told her that he was ignorant of her whereabouts. However, later at night, he was arrested by Marquis's man in the presence of Ernest Defarge, his faithful servant. The letter ended with Manette's condemnation of the Evremonde family and "their descendants to the last of their race." The jury sentences Darnay to "Death within four and twenty hours".

Chapters 11 to 15

Lucie implores the mob to let her embrace her husband one last time. Barsad, who has to escort Darnay to prison, allows Lucie and her husband to say their goodbye. Darnay urges that Dr Manette should not blame himself for his arrest. Lucie faints and Sydney Carton carries her to her apartment. On seeing Carton, little Lucie exclaims that he can save her father. Dr Manette leaves to again try his influence in an attempt to save Darnay. However, Lorry and Carton agree that there is no hope. Carton arrives at Defarge's wine shop and the Defarges wonder at his stark resemblance with Darnay. Carton overhears the conversation between

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Defarge and his wife that she wants to denounce Dr Manette, Lucie as well as the little Lucie. Defarge thinks it unnecessary but Madam Defarge reminds him of the atrocities of the evremondes on her own family. Carton leaves to return to Lorry. Later, Manette returns home madly searching for his shoe making tools. Carton tries to calm him and takes out some papers from his pocket. He hands the documents that ensure Lucie's, her daughter's and the doctor's escape from the city. He also gives him his own document and tells him of Madam Defarge's plan to exterminate the entire Manette family. He warns Lorry that Madam Defarge may recall those documents soon, so he directs him to secure a coach for the next day, and wait for him before leaving. He says a final goodbye and blesses Lucie.

'From the farmer of seventy… to the seamstress of twenty', there are fifty two prisoners who have been denounced to meet their fate at the guillotine. Darnay has surrendered himself to his fate and is ready to meet the death bravely. Waiting for his impending execution the following day, he falls asleep. Sometime later, Sidney Carton reaches his cell and drugs him with the contents of the 'packets' he had bought from the chemist. As Darnay faints, he switches clothes with him and with Barsad's assistance, succeeds in carrying Darnay to the carriage at the Tellson's. At the scheduled time, the guards take Sydney Carton believing him to be Charles Darnay, to a dark room where he stands in the queue of the denounced prisoners, soon to be beheaded. The young Seamstress realizes that he is not Charles and asks him if he is dying for Charles's sake, and he replies that he is also dying for Charles's wife and daughter. On the other end, Lorry and Dr Manette along with Lucie, her daughter and Charles disguised as Sydney Carton, having produced the documents at the city gates, flee to England.

As Carton awaits his death, Madam Defarge leaves for Lucie's apartment so as to condemn her along with her father and daughter. She realizes that the entire family has already escaped and inquires Lucie's whereabouts from Miss Pross. In the fight that ensues between Madam Defarge and Miss Pross, Madam defarge gets shot by her own gun. Meanwhile, at the guillotine, Carton repeats his words 'I am the resurrection' as the seamstress calmly embraces her death. Carton imagines a peaceful future and sees that he will be fondly remembered by Lucie and her family. He has a calm and prophetic look at his face as he is aware that his sacrifice is 'a far, far better thing that I do, than I have ever done; it is a far, far better rest that I go to than I have ever known'.

Check Your Progress

1. What is the significance of the broken cask of red wine?
2. What is the significance of the golden strands to Dr Manette?
3. Comment upon the constant knitting of Madam Defarge.

1.3 CHARACTER SKETCHES AND THEMES

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Some of the important character sketches and themes of the novel are mentioned in this section.

Lucie Manette

Lucie Manette is the beautiful daughter of Dr Manette who had been imprisoned in Bastille for many years. Lucie is the embodiment of love, compassion and virtue. She restores her long lost father to life with her care and devotion. She marries Charles whose past leads to his condemnation, but throughout his trials Lucie remains by her husband's side and makes all possible efforts for his release. Her compassion for Sydney Carton is evident from her request to her husband to treat him with utmost generosity as she has seen his wounded heart. It is the outcome of Lucie's compassion that Carton blesses her and declares that he will do anything for her and her dear ones. She presents a stark contrast to the ruthless character of Madam Defarge.

Charles Darnay

Charles St. Evremonde is the son of Marquis St. Evremonde who is against the oppressive ways of his aristocratic family. He renounces his inheritance and property in France and leads a simple life in England as a French teacher. His first encounter with Lucie establishes him as a kind hearted young man who helps her in taking her father on board. Before he marries Lucie, he wishes to reveal his true identity but Dr Manette stops him until his wedding. He gets into trouble as he wishes to help his fellow citizen and is imprisoned in La Force. He is sentenced to death and he surrenders himself to his destiny. However, Sydney Carton saves his life by exchanging place with him**.**

Sydney Carton

Sydney Carton is introduced as an aimless drunkard who assists Mr Stryver in his court proceedings. He admits to be leading a wasteful life. He confesses his love to Lucie and is touched by her compassion. He declares that he will do anything for her if she ever needs him. True to his word, he emerges as a selfless martyr in sacrificing his life to save Lucie's husband. His act provides a real meaning to his life in his own eyes and he envisions a beautiful Paris, a peaceful life foe Lucie and her loved ones and above all his own special place in the hearts of his loved ones.

Theme

A Tale of Two Cities not only asserts Dickens belief in resurrection, but also the redemption through sacrifice. In the first book, Dr Manette is 'recalled to life' by his daughter and Mr Lorry who actually dreams of digging up Dr Manette's body. He is restored to life by the love and compassion of his daughter, and his own act of forgiving Charles Darnay for his father's sins leads to his redemption. Later, he

is transformed into a hero who leads the mob shouting the slogans for the release of his son- in- law. In the second book, Jerry Cruncher appears as 'the resurrection man' who steals the dead bodies from their graves and sells them to the medical schools.

Charles Darnay is released the first time due to his resemblance to Sydney Carton and the second time due to Sydney Carton himself who keeps repeating 'I am the resurrection'. In the third book, Sydney Carton sacrifices his life in order to secure a peaceful life for Lucie and her dear ones, as he had once promised. Not only does his own life find a new meaning that he has sought throughout his life, but he also envisions himself as a loved one in the hearts of his own loved ones.

Check Your Progress

4. What does Jerry Cruncher tell his son about the resurrection man?
5. What does Manette's letter reveal?
6. How does Monsieur Marquis react to the death of a child?

1.4 IMPORTANT PASSAGES FOR EXPLANATION

1. "It was the best of times …… direct the other way".

   Reference to Context

   These are the opening lines of *A tale of Two Cities* pointing out the inherent motifs of the novel.

   Explanation

   Dickens begins the novel with a slight indication of the tensed state that prevails throughout the novel. There is a constant conflict between the love of the family and class oppression, between the good intent and the evil doings, between the wisdom and light and folly and darkness.

2. "But he has been …… duty, rest, comfort".

   Reference to Context

   The above lines are spoken by Mr Lorry to Miss Lucie in the first book of the novel. Lorry meets Lucie to inform her about the whereabouts of her long lost father whom she thinks to be dead.

   Explanation

   Mr Lorry tells Lucie that her father has been found. As he has not seen him himself, he says that probably her father would have undergone a great change over all these years and may be in a deplorable condition because of all the hardships that he had to endure. However, he hopes for the best as he is still alive contrary to her belief. He says that he will accompany her

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to Paris where her father has been taken to the house of an old servant. He will try to identify him and he urges her to restore him to life with her love and compassion.

3. "None. My mind is a blank …….. no remembrance of the process".

   Reference to Context

   The above lines are spoken by Dr Manette to the judge in the second book of the novel. As Charles Darnay is convicted of the treason, Dr Manette is produced in the court as a witness against him. The judge inquires him about his remembrance to the occasion which he denies.

   Explanation

   Dr Manette says that he has no memory of the time when he was in captivity at the Bastille. He says that his mind is blank for the time period that he was in prison making shoes till he was restored to life by his dear daughter. He does not even remember what made her recognize her daughter.

4. "It is extraordinary to me ……. See! Give him that".

   Reference to Context

   The above lines are spoken by Monsieur the Marquis to the father of the dead child whom he crushed under the wheels of his carriage.

   Explanation

   Monsieur the Marquis says that he is surprised at the carelessness of the peasants who cannot take care of themselves and their children who are always on the road leading to their death by accident. Indifferent to the child's death, he is concerned whether his horses are injured. He throws a gold coin at the father of the dead child and asks him to pick it up.

5. "Better to be a rational …… I renounce them".

   Reference to Context

   The above lines are a part of the conversation between Monsieur the Marquis and his nephew Charles Darnay in the second book of the novel.

   Explanation

   Monsieur the Marquis tells his nephew that he should take pride in his 'natural destiny' which is to be that of an oppressor. But he can sense the differences in their opinions and thus considers him lost. However, Charles says that he is not lost but he wishes to lose his inheritance as well as France. He declares that he renounces all his property.

6. " For you and for any dear …….. for those dear to you".

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Reference to Context

The above lines are spoken by Sidney Carton to Miss Lucie Manette as he confesses his love for her in the second book of the novel.

Explanation

Sidney Carton tells Lucie that if there will ever be the need, he will not hesitate to do anything for Lucie or her loved ones. He assures her that he will happily make any sacrifice for her and her loved ones in the hour of need. His intentions are true as he is the one who emerges as a true martyr in sacrificing his life for Lucie's husband.

7. "Lucie I recall these old …….. we have before us".

Reference to Context

The above lines are spoken by Dr. Manette to his daughter Lucie on her wedding eve in the second book of the novel.

Explanation

Dr. Manette says that he remembers the old days that he spent in prison only thinking about his daughter and that is his reason for loving her more than he can ever express. He is grateful to God for uniting him to his daughter who is the only source of his happiness. He admits that he has never known the happiness that he has known in the short span of time in the company of his sweet child.

8. "I would ask you dearest ……. Have seen it bleeding".

Reference to Context

The above lines are spoken by Lucie to her husband Charles Darnay in the second book of the novel. As Sydney Carton visits them, she realizes that her husband is not as considerate to him as she expects him to be.

Explanation

Lucie implores her husband to be very generous and compassionate with Sydney Carton and try to ignore his faults if he finds any. She says that he has a heart that is badly wounded although he rarely reveals his wounded heart to anyone. She admits to have been exposed to his wounded heart.

9. "I entreat you to observe ……. Not that my right?"

Reference to Context

The above lines are spoken by Charles Darnay in his defense as he is presented in the court of the new republic in the third book of the novel.

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Explanation

Charles Darnay says in his defense that he has voluntarily come to France in order to provide protection to the person who had sought his help in a letter. He has produced the letter in the court as evidence to his statement. He seeks the opportunity to help his fellow citizen as his right.

10. "Are you dying for him …….. brave hand, stranger".

Reference to Context

The above lines are a part of the conversation between the seamstress and Sydney Carton disguised as Charles Darnay in the third book of the novel.

Explanation

The seamstress realizes that Sidney Carton is disguised as Charles Darnay, so she asks in surprise whether he is embracing death for Charle's sake. Sidney Carton replies that he is not dying only for Charles but also for Charles's wife and daughter. Impressed by his boldness and bravery, she urges to hold his hand as she also awaits death.

Check Your Progress

7. Who was disguised as Charles Darney?
8 What does Charles Darnay say in his defense?

1.5 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS QUESTIONS

1. The broken cask of red wine symbolizes the desperate hunger of the oppressed peasants. The peasants' hunger is literal as they starve in their poverty, as well as metaphorical as they desperately await their political freedom.
2. The golden strands of Dr Manette's daughter Lucie help him revive his memory. He notices her golden hair and shows the similar strands of hair tied in a rag that he wears around his neck. He remembers having begged to be allowed to keep these golden strands of his wife upon his imprisonment.
3. Literally, Madam Defarge's knitting comprises of an entire network of symbols as she registers the list of names of the ones condemned to die in the name of the new republic. Her constant knitting represents her cold bloodedness and vengefulness in sentencing the victims to death.
4. As Jerry Cruncher's son inquires from his father about a resurrection man, he replies that a resurrection man is an honest tradesman who deals in 'person's bodies'.

5. Manette's letter reveals the story of Manette's imprisonment. It was in 1757 that the two brothers Marquis St.Evremonde and Marquis, took Dr. Manette to treat a dying young peasant woman and her dying brother who revealed that Marquis had abused his sister and killed her husband. Both of them died, and the next day Marquis's wife came to Manette's house to tell him that she wished to make atonement for the sins of her family for the sake of her son Charles.
6. Monsieur Marquis is indifferent and cold to the death of a child and says that he is surprised at the carelessness of the peasants who cannot take care of themselves and their children who are always on the road leading to their death by accident. He is rather concerned whether his horses are injured. He throws a gold coin at the father of the dead child and asks him to pick it up.
7. The seamstress realizes that Sidney Carton is disguised as Charles Darnay, so she asks in surprise whether he is embracing death for Charle's sake.
8. Charles Darnay says in his defense that he has voluntarily come to France in order to provide protection to the person who had sought his help in a letter. He has produced the letter in the court as evidence to his statement. He seeks the opportunity to help his fellow citizen as his right.

1.6 SUMMARY

- In the year 1775, when France seems to be on the threshold of witnessing a revolution, indulged in extreme violence, England appears to be 'scarcely better'; as Dickens puts it, 'It was the best of times, it was the worst of times'. In the month of November, on a Friday night a mail coach is heading from London to Dover.
- Lorry tells him that he has been 'recalled to life' and inquires whether he wants to live. He asks him in a mysterious manner if he should show 'her' to him. The ghost gives different reactions to him. He weeps and implores him to let him see her soon, and also says that he would die if he were to see her soon.
- The scene shifts to Saint Antoine, a Paris suburb. The place appears to be cold and gloomy. A cask of red wine falls on the street and breaks. Everyone including the idlers and businessmen rush to it and drink the spilled wine.
- Dr Manette is a frail old man indifferent to the outside world. He reveals in his faint voice that he is making shoes of the latest fashion for a lady. He says his name is 'One Hundred and Five, North Tower'. As Lucie goes near him, he notices her golden hair and shows the similar strands of hair tied in a rag that he wears around his neck.

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- The scene shifts to Tellson's bank in London in 1780. The old and reputed bank takes pride in its ugliness, darkness and smallness. The bank is located near the Temple Bar, a place where the criminals' executed heads were displayed till recent, since the death penalty was greatly used for even for the crimes like forgery and petty theft.
- The jury is informed by the Attorney General that Darnay has been passing English secrets to France for five years. John Barsad's testimony supports the Attorney General's case but cross examination reveals that Barsad has himself been in debtor's prison and involved in brawls over gambling. The defense attorney Mr Stryver proves that the second witness Roger Cly is also untrustworthy. The similar questions are asked to Lorry and Lucie.
- A period of four months has passed and the court proceedings have been forgotten. Dr Manette lives in a quaint house with his daughter Lucie. Lorry is now their family friend and is on his way to have dinner with the Manettes. Waiting for the Manettes to return, he engages in a conversation with Miss Pross.
- The carriage suddenly hits something and stops. Marquis sees a tall man holding his dead baby that died under the wheels of the carriage. He blames the accident on the peasants and inquires whether his horses have been injured.
- He takes his leave and Lucie returns. She is shocked to find her father working at his shoe maker's bench. Holding his hand she walks with him through the hall way for a long time. Later that night, working in his chamber with Carton, Stryver announces that he wants to marry Lucie.
- Madame Defarge is knitting a pattern that contains the names in codes, of those who are to be executed. Defarge and his wife take the road mender to see King Louis XVI and Queen Marie Antoinette as they pass by in their coach. The road mender is excited to see them and screams, 'Long live the king!'. Defarge is pleased at his excitement and says, 'You make these fools believe that it will last forever.'
- On the tenth day, Dr Manette looks better as he has put away his shoe maker's bench and is busy reading. Mr Lorry decides to discuss his problem indirectly as Dr Manette does not remember the last nine days of his strange behavior. He talks to him of a certain Mr Smith and asks if his relapse is likely to recur.
- After a week, as Madame Defarge, now named 'The Vengeance' is knitting as usual, Defarge enters with the news that Foulon has been captured. He is the one who had asked the peasants to eat grass if they were starving. He had also faked his death in order to escape the peasants' fury. However he is caught in the country and the peasants are led by 'The Vengeance' to serve him justice. Foulon is hanged and grass is stuffed in his mouth.

- On his way to France, Darnay comes across many difficulties as he is interrogated by the revolutionaries in every small town that he passes by. He learns that a new decree will soon be passed declaring all the emigrants to be sentenced to death. Later, he is sentenced to be imprisoned in La Force by the revolutionaries. When he protests, he is told that he has no rights as he is an emigrant. It is decided that he should be taken to Paris 'In Secret' by an armed escort who is none other than Defarge.

1.7 KEY WORDS

- **French Revolution:** The period between 1789 and 1799 marked by the social as well as political unrest in France is termed as the French Revolution. As the French Government experienced a fiscal crisis in the 1780s, the weak leadership of King Louis XVI mishandled the affairs.
- **Guillotine:** Guillotine is an apparatus designed for efficiently carrying out executions by beheading. The device is best known for its use in France, in particular during the French Revolution.'

1.8 SELFASSESSMENT QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

Short Answer Questions

1. Write a short note on the setting of the novel *A Tale of Two Cities*.
2. Briefly mention the character of Lucie Manette.

Long Answer Questions

1. Discuss the major themes in the novel.
2. Assess the plot construction of the novel.

3. '*A Tale of Two Cities* not only asserts Dickens belief in resurrection, but also the redemption through sacrifice.' Explain the statement.

1.9 FURTHER READINGS

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UNIT 2 *JANE EYRE:* CHARLOTTE BRONTE

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Structure

2.0 INTRODUCTION

Jane Eyre is a novel written by Charlotte Bronte and published in the year 1847 under the pen name Currer Bell. It is autobiographical as Jane narrates the development of her life from childhood till she reaches her middle age.

It is interesting to note that the novel breaks many new grounds as the heroine of the novel is neither a beautiful damsel nor a heroic figure. The novel instead of dealing with extraordinary creatures deals with men and women as we see them in our daily lives – it deals with the romantic aspirations of the hero and heroine – Mr Rochester and Jane – but deals with it from a very realistic perspective.

It can be said that the novel is a social novel as the novel deals with the social mores and codes that governed the Victorian life and times. In this unit, you will get to critically analyse the novel *Jane Eyre.*

2.1 OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- Analyse the plot of the novel *Jane Eyre*
- Prepare an overview of the Victorian novel from the perspective of the novel *Jane Eyre*
- Critically understand the themes and characters of the novel *Jane Eyre*

2.2 VICTORIAN NOVEL

Although the eighteenth century saw the birth of novel yet it is only in the nineteenth century that the novel as a genre reached a certain height which was not earlier

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trespassed. All of us are aware of this fact that the growth of the novel depended on the growth of the middle class, as today, we see the novel to be the most popular genre as the major part of the world's middle class is interested in this genre of literature. The Victorian novel is the revelation of the most typical product of English genius. In fact, the novel occupies the same place in Victorian Age, which drama established its unique reputation in the age of Queen Elizabeth I. The comment of David Daiches, Scottish literary historian, scholar and writer, seems to be apt here, as he says, 'The Nineteenth Century was the great age of the English novel.' The nineteenth century, especially the Victorian Age is known for its novels – especially social novels. Social novels are the novels which portray the reality of the then society in such terms to the readers that the readers are able to grasp a complete and clear picture of the same. Charles Dickens, Elizabeth Gaskell, Charlotte Bronte and other novelists of the age wrote social novels dealing with themes which concerned the society at large.

The Bronte Sisters and their Works

According to Edward Albert, the Bronte Sisters - Charlotte (1816-55), Emily (1818-48) and Anne (1820-49) 'were the pioneers in fiction of that aspect of the romantic movement which concerned itself with the baring of human soul.' In place of the detached observation of a society or group of people, such as we find in Jane Austen and the earlier novelists, the Bronte Sisters painted the sufferings of an individual's personality and presented the new conception of the heroine as a woman of vital strength and passionate feelings. Their works are as much the products of imagination and emotions as of the intellect and in their powerful passages they border on poetry. Charlotte Bronte's first novel *The Professor* (1857) is autobiographical in tone and the characters have been sketched based on her personal acquaintances. *Jane Eyre* (1847), her greatest work, is also autobiographical and reveals the love story of Charlotte. It combines realism and romanticism. It is rich in Wordsworthian attitude to nature. *Shirley* (1849) is extremely realistic and factual in terms of character delineation. The main incidents in this novel are historical and the places are real. Her last novel *Villette* (1852) is a direct autobiographical novel. As a novelist, Charlotte Bronte is concerned with the unfolding of the human soul to the audience.

Major Works of Bronte Sisters		
Charlotte Bronte	**Emily Bronte**	**Anne Bronte**
• *Poems* by Currer, Eliss and Acton Bell (1846) • *Jane Eyre* (1847) • *Shirley* (1849) • *Villette* (1853) • *The Professor* (her first novel, published posthumously in 1857)	• *Wuthering Heights* (1847)	• *Agnes Grey* (1847) • *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall* (1848)

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Check Your Progress

1. Name the famous novelists of the Victorian Age.
2. In which year was *Jane Eyre* published?
3. Name the first novel written by Charlotte Bronte.

2.3 *JANE EYRE:* SUMMARY AND CRITICAL APPRECIATION

The novel *Jane Eyre* has five main movements. They are:

(i) Jane's early life at Gatestead Hall to the point of her eviction

(ii) Jane's schooling at Lowood School and her subsequent life as a teacher there

(iii) Jane's life at Thornfield as a governess – Mr Rochester's proposal of marriage to her and her leaving of Thornfield on learning the truth about his living mad wife

(iv) Jane's stay at Moor House

(v) Jane's final union with Mr Rochester

These five movements complete the novel which traces the life of Jane from her difficult childhood to that of her marriage and union with Mr Rochester. Therefore, the novel can be termed as a romantic novel as it portrays the emotional feelings that Mr Rochester and Jane have for each other; but at the same time, it is also a novel which realistically presents the difficult life of a woman in the Victorian Era. In that sense, the novel is both realistic and romantic.

Jane Eyre is the orphan daughter of the sister of Mr Reed of Gatestead Hall. After her parents death, Jane is adopted by her uncle Mr Reed and she comes to Gatestead Hall where her uncle treats her very well; although she is not treated in the same manner by Mrs Reed. Mr Reed on his death bed takes a promise from Mrs Reed which makes Mrs Reed tolerate Jane in Gatestead Hall. However, simultaneously, it is also true that Mrs Reed hates her for her intelligence. Jane is not as beautiful as Mrs Reed's daughters – Eliza and Georgiana, but she is extremely intelligent and outspoken which makes her the subject of hatred of both Eliza and Georgiana and Mrs Reed. Jane is treated as a 'pariah' in Mrs Reed's household and Mrs Reed is particularly very cruel to her. Jane, thus, has to lead a miserable as well as sad life in Gatestead Hall which makes her more and more defiant and aggressive. Next, it is decided that Jane should be sent to Lowood School (a boarding school) as supposedly, a wicked and deceitful girl like her needs to be treated in a strict manner in order to discipline her.

In the next part of the novel, Jane is sent to Lowood School which is a charity institution for the orphan girls. Here too, we see that orphan girls are treated

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in a cruel manner and are made to live on a 'starvation diet.' Mr Brocklehurst, supervisor of Lowood, makes the lives of the orphan girls very miserable by following a strict and harsh routine. Jane makes all her efforts to adjust to this new life where everything seemed very difficult. She is at least happy that she is far away from Gatestead Hall. Here she makes friendship with Helen Burns – a girl of very sensible character and intellect. Miss Temple, the superintendent of the school is also a very kind lady and Jane finds some solace in their company.

As Spring arrives, there is an epidemic in Lowood School. The starvation diet as well as the neglect during the winters makes the girls subject to the infection very fast and, therefore, the normal routine of the school gets suspended. In such a situation, Jane prefers to walk around in the beautiful woodlands nearby the school. After such a sojourn when she comes back to school one day she finds Helen to be in a bad state and goes to meet her. Helen puts her arm affectionately on her and when Jane wakes up the next day she finds Helen to be dead.

Many girls continue to die in the Lowood School which makes the public aware of the situation there and consequently efforts are made to make the situation proper. Jane stays in Lowood School for eight years. After completing her studies there, she becomes a teacher in the same school. When Miss Temple gets married and leaves the school, Jane also decides that there is no point in carrying on any further in the school and, therefore, she resigns from her job. This marks the end of the second phase of Jane's life.

Then Jane applies for employment as a governess at Thornfield Hall. As soon as she receives a note from Mrs Fairfax (the housekeeper) that her application has been accepted, she leaves her job as a teacher in Lowood School and goes to Thornfield Hall where she is supposed to take care of the daughter of Mr Rochester, the master of Thornfield Hall.

Jane meets Mr Rochester in an unusual circumstance after her three months stay in Thornfield Hall when one day she goes out to post a letter to Mrs Fairfax and on coming back sees a man falling down from a horse. She helps the man mount back on his horse. On returning to Thornfield Hall, she figures out that the injured man on the horse was no one else but her master Mr Rochester.

This strange chance meeting between Jane and Mr Rochester then goes on to signal the beginning of a love relationship. We come to know from the novel that Mr Rochester was a man of few words and that he always remains away from the household members and has been travelling across the continent. The next day, Mr Rochester calls Jane to meet her and there is an interesting conversation that follows and simultaneously Mr Rochester gets very impressed by the paintings of Jane. At the same time, we come to know that Jane has been gathering information about Mr Rochester from Mrs Fairfax.

The relationship between Jane and Mr Rochester begins to deepen as they continue with their exchanges on a regular basis and Mr Rochester likes speaking to her a lot. Mr Rochester even confides in Jane that the little girl (Adele) is a daughter that he had with his French mistress.

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One day Jane is unable to sleep and she hears some movements in Mr Rochester's room and as she goes close to his room she figures out that air is thick with smoke. As she treads nearer, she figures out that Mr Rochester's bed is in flames. She calls Mr Rochester and saves his life. At this moment, she hears the mad laughter once again. Mr. Rochester makes Jane believe that the laughter is of Grace Poole, (works as a servant at Thornfield Hall) and also takes a promise from Jane that she will not talk about the incident to anyone.

Jane does not talk about this to anyone and Mrs Fairfax also is not able to give her any further information on the subject. But Mrs Fairfax informs Jane that there is a young pretty girl named Blanche Ingram who is supposed to get married to Mr Rochester. A few days later, a big party arrives at Thornfield Hall including Miss Ingram and feasting, singing and dancing continues there. Jane is asked by Mr Rochester to be there in those parties. Jane feels very comfortable and happy in the presence of Mr Rochester, but at the same time, she does not think very highly about Blanche Ingram as a woman. It can be said that as she was already falling in love with her master and, therefore, in Miss Ingram she could not find much worth.

One evening a gypsy woman comes to Thornfield Hall and insists that she would tell the fortunes of the members of the mansion. To her surprise, Jane figures out that this gypsy woman knows a lot about her past. In reality, this gypsy woman was no one but Mr Rochester himself and he had decided to declare his love for Jane in such a fashion. Few days later, one night, there was a terrifying scream and when Jane goes out to Mr Rochester's chamber, they figure out that Mr Mason is bleeding profusely and lying unconscious on the ground. Even for this incident, Mr Rochester asks Jane not to talk to anyone.

In a few days, Jane leaves for Gatestead to meet her dying aunt. Mr Rochester is very unwilling to let her go and takes a promise from Jane that she will return back. On her death bed, Mrs Reed tells Jane that she had wronged her by telling her uncle John Eyre of Madeira, who wanted to leave his property for Jane. Jane forgives her aunt and stays in Gatestead till her aunt's funeral and then she bids adieu to her cousins whom she never again meets in her life.

At this point she is reminded of Mr Rochester who had told her that he is going to marry Miss Ingram. Actually this was a trick played by Mr Rochester to make Jane jealous and to inflame her passion for him. When Jane returns back to Thornfield Hall, Mr Rochester declares his love for Jane. Jane is overwhelmed and gives her consent to marry Mr Rochester.

Soon the marriage preparations begin and Adele is sent away to a boarding school. On the night before marriage something very strange happens. A mad-looking woman enters Jane's room and tears her bridal-veil. On seeing this sight, Jane falls unconscious on the ground. In the morning, when Mr Rochester comes to know about it, he expresses his relief that nothing greater had happened. Later, as they leave for the church for the marriage ceremony, Mr Mason and a solicitor arrive there to inform the priest that he should stop the marriage as Mr Rochester

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is already married to Mr Mason's sister who is alive, though mad. The marriage is immediately stopped and Jane returns to the house as a broken lady who does not know what to do next as she is deceived by Mr Rochester.

We come to know that Mr Rochester's earlier wife is the mad woman in the house and she is the one responsible for all the earlier uncanny incidents and that she was living under the same roof under the care of Grace Poole. Mr Rochester begs for pardon from Jane and insists that he will not be able to live without her. Jane listens to his statements in a dazed state and later goes out of Thornfield Hall.

She has no money, no clothes and most importantly no place to go. She spends the night in the open and wanders about without food and rest. One evening, out of sheer exhaustion she falls unconscious at the door step of a lonely house in the moor-land. This house turns out to be the residence of St. John Rivers, a parson. Jane is rescued by the parson and she soon develops a cordial relationship with the two sisters of Rivers. There Jane takes up the job of a teacher in the parish.

Meanwhile, Mr Rivers receives a letter informing that their uncle at Madeira had died leaving his property to his niece Jane Eyre. The solicitor had written to him (St. John Rivers) to find out Jane. They find out that they are none other than cousins to one another; she comes to know that she has inherited twenty thousand pounds. She insists that the money be equally divided among them and she only keeps five thousand pounds as her share.

In the meantime, we come to know that Jane had written to Mrs Fairfax a number of times to find out some out some news of Mr Rochester. On the other hand, we witness that St. John Rivers begins to learn Hindi as he is supposed to go to India to promote his missionary activities. One day, St. John Rivers suggests to Jane that she should also go with him and the only way to go there is by becoming his wife. Jane says that she can go but not as a wife rather as a sister. Then suddenly one day she hears the call of Mr Rochester crying for help.

In the next part of the novel, we see Jane again going to Thornfield Hall and as she arrives there after a journey of thirty six hours she figures out that Thornfield Hall is in a state of ruin as it has been burnt down by the mad wife of Mr Rochester. Moreover, Bertha Mason (the mad wife of Mr Rochester) has killed herself by jumping down from the top of the building. Even Mr Rochester has lost one of his arms and one of his eyes in his efforts to save her and now he was living in the old Manor house.

Jane immediately goes to the Manor house to meet Mr Rochester. As soon as they meet, they recognize their affection for each other and express their love as well. After a few days, they get married and Adele is brought back from the boarding school. After two years of marriage, a son is born to Jane and Mr Rochester. Mr Rochester also recovers in the time being St. John Rivers goes to India and remains unmarried and dedicates himself entirely to the missionary activities in India. Jane ends the narrative telling the readers about her praise for St. John Rivers.

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Critical Appreciation

The novel *Jane Eyre* can be considered as one of the typical Victorian novels as it deals with the theme of growing up of a girl in adverse circumstances to fall in love with her master and then suffers for it. The novel ends with the protagonist uniting with her lost love. The novel is an autobiography. This suggests that the novel is narrated in the first person by Jane about her life beginning with her childhood and then till her marriage with Mr Rochester. The novel, therefore, traces the difficult life of Jane as she narrates her story.

It is interesting to note that the novel traces the life of a female who is neither beautiful nor connected to any elite family. She is an orphan and through her own efforts makes adjustments in her life to achieve whatever happiness she gets in her life. In that way, she is a lonely woman fighting her lone battle. If one looks at the history of novel as a genre from Richardson's *Pamela* (the first novel in English) then you will find out that the novel as a genre was associated with women. But in Charlotte Bronte's *Jane Eyre*, we come across something very new and unusual. Jane Eyre, the protagonist, is a female with no connections in life which would place her in higher society. She begins her life as a hated orphan whose life has been difficult because of the harsh treatment meted out to her by her aunt Mrs Reed. Even in the boarding school – Lowood School – that she goes to, life was not easy for her. She goes through several adversities in life and it is through these adversities that she learns and progresses further in life.

This progress of Jane Eyre makes the novel a universal favourite amongst readers of all generations. Since its publication in 1847, it has been read by a host of readers and the popularity of the novelist has soared great heights. It is to be remembered that the novel gained popularity not only for portraying the life of a girl in adversity but also because it presents the English ways of life and English manners in a just manner to make the readers aware of the ways of the Victorian world. When one reads the novel today, one realizes that the English ways of the Victorian world were very different and that makes the novel a must read apart from its strong heroine.

The unconventional treatment of characters is also another reason why it can be said that the novel has become so popular. None of the characters of the novel are in white or black – they are present in grey shade signifying that life is not always in black and white. The story of the novel may appear to be melodramatic to some extent because events happen in Jane's life in such predictable manner; but in spite of it, the way the novelist Charlotte Bronte has represented the characters in the novel is something that needs to be applauded.

As referred earlier, the character of Jane is both realistic and romantic. She is portrayed as a rebelliously independent lady who fights her own battle. She is thoroughly an unconventional character. She is a governess and lives her life in an extremely ordinary way yet, at the same time, there is something extraordinary about her which makes her master Mr Rochester fall in love with her. It is a tale of suffering and endurance, it is also a tale of her passion and it is by juxtaposing these two elements that Charlotte Bronte creates an unusual tale of sorrow and love.

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Similarly, when we look at Mr Rochester, we see that he is not a hero in the traditional sense of the term, as he is not a good looking dashing hero. He somewhat seems to be a weak imitation of the Byronic hero as he has an unpredictable enigmatic quality about him which makes Jane fall in love with him. If, he is a person of few words on the one hand, on the other, he is romantic even when he tries to propose to Jane by being a gypsy woman. He is frank with Jane and at the same time withholds the essential truth about his life which hampers his marriage to Jane. He is in love with Jane and at the same time tries his best to save his mad wife and in the process loses his hand and eye. He seems to be a bundle of contradictions and it is this contradictory quality about him which makes him more appealing that just a hero who possesses all the heroic characteristics.

Check Your Progress

4. Who is Jane Eyre?
5. Name the boarding school to which Jane is sent by her aunt, Mrs Reed.
6. What is Jane Eyre's job at Thornfield Hall?
7. Why is Jane's marriage to Mr Rochester suddenly stopped and by whom?

2.4 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS QUESTIONS

1. Charles Dickens, Elizabeth Gaskell and Charlotte Bronte are some of the famous novelists of the Victorian Age.
2. *Jane Eyre* was published in 1847.
3. The first novel written by Charlotte Bronte is *The Professor* (1857).
4. Jane Eyre is the orphan daughter of the sister of Mr Reed of Gatestead Hall. After her parents death, Jane is adopted by her uncle Mr Reed and she comes to Gatestead Hall.
5. Mrs Reed sends Jane to Lowood School (a boarding school).
6. Jane Eyre's job at Thornfield Hall is that of a governess. Her duty is to take care of the daughter of Mr Rochester, the master of Thornfield Hall.
7. Mr Mason and a solicitor arrive at the church suddenly to stop Jane's marriage to Mr Rochester because he is already married to Mr Mason's sister who was alive, though mad.

2.5 SUMMARY

- *Jane Eyre* is a novel written by Charlotte Bronte and published in the year 1847 under the pen name Currer Bell. It is autobiographical as Jane narrates the development of her life from childhood till she reaches her middle age.

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- The nineteenth century, especially the Victorian Age is known for its novels – especially social novels.
- Charlotte Bronte's first novel *The Professor* (1857) is autobiographical in tone and the characters have been sketched based on her personal acquaintances.
- Jane Eyre is the orphan daughter of the sister of Mr Reed of Gatestead Hall. After her parents death, Jane is adopted by her uncle Mr Reed and she comes to Gatestead Hall where her uncle treats her very well.
- Jane is treated as a 'pariah' in Mrs Reed's household and Mrs Reed is particularly very cruel to her.
- In the next part of the novel, Jane is sent to Lowood School which is a charity institution for the orphan girls.
- Many girls continue to die in the Lowood School which makes the public aware of the situation there and consequently efforts are made to make the situation proper. Jane stays in Lowood School for eight years.
- As soon as Jane receives a note from Mrs Fairfax (the housekeeper) that her application has been accepted, she leaves her job as a teacher in Lowood School and goes to Thornfield Hall where she is supposed to take care of the daughter of Mr Rochester, the master of Thornfield Hall.
- We come to know from the novel that Mr Rochester was a man of few words and that he always remains away from the household members and has been travelling across the continent.
- The relationship between Jane and Mr Rochester begins to deepen as they continue with their exchanges on a regular basis and Mr Rochester likes speaking to her a lot. Mr Rochester even confides in Jane that the little girl (Adele) is a daughter that he had with his French mistress.
- One evening a gypsy woman comes to Thornfield Hall and insists that she would tell the fortunes of the members of the mansion. To her surprise, Jane figures out that this gypsy woman knows a lot about her past.
- In a few days, Jane leaves for Gatestead to meet her dying aunt. Mr Rochester is very unwilling to let her go and takes a promise from Jane that she will return back.
- When Jane returns back to Thornfield Hall, Mr Rochester declares his love for Jane. Jane is overwhelmed and gives her consent to marry Mr Rochester.
- Mr Mason and a solicitor inform the priest in the church that the marriage should be stopped as Mr Rochester is already married to Mr Mason's sister who is alive, though mad.
- Jane leaves Thornfield Hall. She receives assistance at the residence of St. John Rivers, a parson.
- It is discovered in the course of the novel that Jane and St. John Rivers are cousins. Then suddenly one day she hears the call of Mr Rochester crying for help.

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- Jane immediately goes to the Manor house to meet Mr Rochester. As soon as they meet, they recognize their affection for each other and express their love as well. After a few days, they get married and Adele is brought back from the boarding school.
- Jane ends the narrative telling the readers about her praise for St. John Rivers.

2.6 KEY WORDS

- **Social more:** These refer to the accepted traditional customs and usages of a particular social group.
- **Romanticism:** It was an artistic and intellectual movement which took place in Europe between the late eighteenth and mid-nineteenth centuries.
- **Governess:** The term refers to a woman who is employed to take charge of a child's upbringing and education.

2.7 SELF ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

Short Answer Questions

1. Prepare a brief character sketch of Mr Rochester.
2. What are the autobiographical elements present in Jane Eyre?
3. Comment on the portrayal of the character of Bertha Mason in the novel.

Long Answer Questions

1. Discuss *Jane Eyre* as a Victorian novel.
2. Critically comment on Jane-Rochester relationship.
3. Analyse the plot of the novel *Jane Eyre.*

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UNIT 3 *SONS AND LOVERS:* D. H. LAWRENCE

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Structure

3.0 INTRODUCTION

D. H. Lawrence is considered one of the twentieth century's greatest and most visionary English novelists. His novel *Sons and Lovers* is an autobiographical novel which adheres to the notion of bildungsroman. The novel also highlights issues such as sex and psychology to the readers. However, the novel is largely known for its incorporation of the Freudian theory of Oedipus complex.

In this unit, you will study about the Oedipus complex, the concept of bildungsroman, the significance of women characters and the significance of the ending of the novel *Sons and Lovers*.

3.1 OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- Discuss D. H. Lawrence as a modern novelist
- Analyse Oedipus complex in the novel
- Explain the concept of bildungsroman in the novel
- Assess the significance of women characters in the novel
- Interpret the ending of the novel

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3.2 D. H. LAWRENCE: LIFE AND WORKS

David Herbert Lawrence was the son of an illiterate coal miner and a refined school teacher. He was the fourth child of his parents and was quite close to his mother. From his early years, he was plagued with tuberculosis, which growing acute in his forties eventually killed him.

During his life time, Lawrence wrote many books. He wrote many novels as well as short stories. Some of his famous works are *Sons and Lovers*, *The Rainbow* and *Lady Chatterley's* Lover including others.

The novel *Sons and Lovers* tells the story of Paul Morel, a young man and budding artist. This was a semi-autobiographical novel. Lawrence revised the book four times before he was satisfied with the final version. The book has been marked as one of the best novels of the twentieth century.

The works of D. H. Lawrence reflect the dehumanizing effects of modernity and industrialization.

3.2.1 Novels and Short Stories

Lawrence is perhaps best known for his novels *Sons and Lovers*,

The Rainbow, *Women in Love* and *Lady Chatterley's Lover*. Within these, Lawrence explores the possibilities for life and living within an industrial setting. In particular, Lawrence is concerned with the nature of relationships that can exist within such settings. Though often classed as a realist, Lawrence's use of his characters can be better understood with reference to his philosophy. His depiction of sexual activity, though shocking at that time, has its roots in this highly personal way of thinking and being. It is worth noting that Lawrence was very interested in human touch behaviour. His interest in physical intimacy has its roots in a desire to restore our emphasis on the body and rebalance it with what he perceived to be Western civilization's slow process of over-emphasis on the mind. In his later years, Lawrence developed the potentialities of the short novel form in *St Mawr*, *The Virgin and the Gypsy* and *The Escaped Cock*.

Short Stories

Lawrence's best-known short stories include *The Captain's Doll*,

The Fox, *The Ladybird*, *Odour of Chrysanthemums*, *The Princess*,

The Rocking-Horse Winner, *St Mawr*, *The Virgin and the Gypsy* and

The Woman Who Rode Away. Amongst his most prized collections is

The Prussian Officer and Other Stories, published in 1914. His collection *The Woman Who Rode Away and Other Stories*, published in 1928, develops his themes of leadership that he also explored in novels such as *Kangaroo*, *The Plumed Serpent* and *Fanny and Annie*.

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3.2.2 Poetry

Although best-known for his novels, D. H. Lawrence wrote almost 800 poems, most of them relatively short. His first poems were written in 1904 and two of his poems, *Dreams Old* and *Dreams Nascent*, were among his earliest published works in *The English Review*. His early works clearly place him in the school of Georgian poets, a group not only named after the reigning monarch, but also to the romantic poets of the previous Georgian period whose work they were trying to emulate.

Just as World War I dramatically changed the works of many poets who saw service in the trenches, Lawrence's own work saw a dramatic change during his years in Cornwall. During this time, he wrote free verse influenced by American poet and essayist Walt Whitman. He set forth his manifesto for much of his later verse in the introduction to *New Poems*.

Lawrence rewrote many of his novels several times to perfect them and similarly he returned to some of his early poems when they were collected in 1928. This was in part to fictionalize them, but also to remove some of the artifice of his first works. His best-known poems are probably those dealing with nature such as those in *Birds, Beasts and Flowers* and *Tortoises*. *Snake*, one of his most frequently anthologized poems, displays some of his most frequent concerns.

Although Lawrence could be regarded as a writer of love poems,

he usually dealt in the less romantic aspects of love, such as sexual frustration or the sex act itself. Lawrence's works after his Georgian period were clear in the modernist tradition. They were often very different from many other modernist writers, such as Ezra Pound. Modernist works were often severe in which every word was carefully worked on and hard-fought for. Lawrence felt all poems had to be personal sentiments and that spontaneity was vital for any work. He called one collection of poems *Pansies* partly for the simple transient nature of the verse but also a pun on the French word *panser*, to dress or bandage a wound. *The Noble Englishman* and *Don't Look at Me* were removed from the official edition of *Pansies* on the grounds of obscenity. Published in 1930, just eleven days after his death, his last work *Nettles* was a series of bitter nettling but often wry attacks on the moral climate of England.

Two notebooks of Lawrence's unprinted verse were posthumously published as *Last Poems* and *More Pansies*. These contain two of Lawrence's most famous poems about death, *Bavarian Gentians* and *The Ship of Death*.

Check Your Progress

1. Name the famous novels written by D. H. Lawrence.
2. Mention the works of D. H. Lawrence published posthumously.

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3.3 D. H. LAWRENCE AND HISTORICITY

> The front door swings open and the sixty year old woman rushes into the hallway to greet her visitors—a young couple with their six-month old baby.
>
> 'Hi mother, I'm back, hi dad' says the young man. 'Welcome back' the older woman smiles, 'look how big you have grown while you were away' she coos at the baby. A normal family reunion, except for one thing; these people have never met before.
>
> These visitors are professional actors hired by the elderly couple's son ... a thirty-five year old computer salesman, who says he can't find the time to visit even though his parents live only a ten minute car ride away in this Tokyo suburb.

This extract is from an article entitled 'Filial Feelings on Hire in Tokyo'. It reports the disintegrating ties between ageing parents and their children in particular, and between human beings in general, in a society which is getting rapidly industrialized.

> Without a felt relationship to the present, a portrayal or history is impossible. But this relationship in the case of really great historical art, does not consist in alluding to contemporary events ... but in giving poetic life to those historical, social and human forces which ... have made our present day life what it is—writes George Lukacs (literary critic).

Let us now try to connect the above profound statement with the works of Lawrence and the historicity of his works. Lawrence was shocked at the extent to which the incorporation of industrialization had degraded human life, especially in the realm of relationships. Through an imaginative rendering, the historian in Lawrence is trying to analyse how and why the simple life of his countrymen is taking this negative turn. His analysis enables us to understand the above mentioned extract, which shows how we have developed a few steps ahead in the direction which he dreaded and criticized.

One could start by defining 'history'. The concern of the historian is with the past, more specifically with the human past. However, not all human past qualifies as history. It must have what Maurice Mandelbaum (an American philosopher) calls 'societal significance'. It means that history does not have space for personal and individual issues unless they reflect something significant about the society in which they are happening.

Further, the task of the historian is not only to state facts, but also to reconstruct the past 'as it was' in order to understand it. The question arises: Is such a reconstruction possible? Charles Beard (an American historian) points out: 'Whatever acts of purification the historian may perform, he yet remains human, a creature of time, place, circumstance, interests, predilections, culture'. Hence, his reconstruction of the past will always be tainted with the present, which is what makes him important. History is to be studied in an effort to understand the present as Lukacs argues in the quotation (above), and Lawrence can be seen in his novels analysing the process out of which his present has evolved.

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We must remember that the historian in Lawrence stands behind the artist; the subtext instead of the text opens up historically. It happens because Lawrence as a literary historian reconstructs the past imaginatively, liberally interspersing it with factual details. It is in this context that F. R. Leavis' (literary critic) description of Lawrence as an imaginative historian seems apt. However, for his fiction to qualify as history, it needs to have what we have called 'societal significance'. As a result, much of his material has this significance because it is rooted in biography. Lawrence is great as an artist because the biographical material he transmutes into fiction reflects faithfully the general existence in the mining colonies while serving his artistic purpose effectively.

The biographical material forms a kind of spinal cord in the *Sons and Lovers*. The coal-mining town of Eastwood, referred to as Bestwood in *Sons and Lovers* is the birthplace of Lawrence (also the centre of the sketch map provided). 'I was born ... about eight miles from Nottingham and one mile from the small stream, the Erewash, which divides Nottinghamshire from Derbyshire.'

The exact place is 8A, Victoria Street. It is interesting to note how often he returns to the borderline between the two districts to locate the primary houses of his characters. The Marsh Farm in *The Rainbow* is located in the meadows where 'the Erewash twisted sluggishly through older trees, separating Derbyshire from Nottinghamshire'.

Also, biographical are the factual details which Lawrence infuses into the lives of his characters. Lawrence in his article, 'Nottingham and the Mining Countryside' wrote, 'Somewhere about 1820 the company must have sunk the first big shaft ... and installed the first machinery of the real industrial colliery.' The fictional counterpart to this factual statement reads: 'Some sixty years ago, a sudden change took place. The gin pits were elbowed aside by the large mines of the financiers.' We are supposed to count these sixty years from the time when Paul is gesticulating in his mother's womb. So Paul's birth can be dated around 1880 which is similar to Lawrence's own.

Born and brought up in a collier family, Lawrence also gives little details which help to reconstruct the colliery life quite realistically. Acutely realistic are the description of the position and the architectural details of the miners home at Eastwood. However, little facts like the neatly laid parlour being the uninhabited part of the house, while the kitchen and the dwelling room with its fire place being the active part are mentioned. Also evident is Mrs Morel's herbal beer preparations that places the reader in the lives of the colliers.

The colliers were paid just enough to maintain a somewhat strained day-to-day living. 'The wages of piece work colliers in the Eastwood district ... between the 1850s and 1914 ... averaged 9s 10½ d a shift', according to Griffins (literary critic). It adds up to a maximum of 60 shillings assuming that the work is available all the six working days of the week. As Lawrence recalls: 'I don't remember him giving mother more than 35 shillings a week. So much was rare. The usual amount

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was 25. The rent was 5 shillings and the rakes were extra'. In the novel, Walter Morel's contributions to his family are similar and like Mrs Lawrence and her children, Mrs Morel is sick of 'the struggle with poverty and ugliness and meanness.'

Apart from a faithful representation of the places, industrial developments, and wages and customs, Lawrence was more concerned with the rapidly changing face of the countryside because of industrialization. A look at the sketch map reveals that in an area of roughly 30 sq. km., Eastwood houses six major collieries and the Felley Mill. As a result of the digging and spreading of coal and slag on the lush countryside, the rectangular structures of the machines and the ugly dwellings around them, the collieries struck a jarring note on the countryside. Paul and Clara walking on the road into Nuttall come near a colliery: 'It stood quite still and black among the coal fields, its immense heap of slag seen rising almost from the oats.'

'What a pity there is a coal pit here where it is so pretty!' says Clara.

And Clara is not alone. Ursula is revolted by the sight she sees at Wiggiston. 'The place had a strange desolation of a ruin .... the homogenous amorphous sterility of the whole suggested death rather than life.'

Canals and railways were the other major manifestations of industrialization on the English Countryside. To Lawrence, all this development seemed a submission of the countryside to the brutal forces of industrialization. He faithfully transmutes this sense to the opening pages of *The Rainbow*:

> About 1840 a canal was constructed across the meadows of the Marsh Farm, connecting the newly opened collieries of the Erewash Valley .... Then a short time afterwards a colliery was sunk on the other side of the canal and in a while the Midland Railway came down the valley at the foot of the Ilkeston Hill, and the invasion was complete.

The invasion mentioned in the lines above emphasizes the severance of the Brangwen household from the world of nature, which was one of the major defects of the process of industrialization. The railways encroached upon the ambience and beauty of nature, upsetting its ecological balance and effecting mass transfer of population. Statistics from the Ilkeston growth chart show that the population of the region was about 4,500 in 1831 and went upto nearly 20,000 in 1891. Hence, those houses spreading across the skyline at the end of *The Rainbow* were quite as spectacular and ugly a development as the novel suggests.

In *Sons and Lovers*, the collieries play an important part in defining the interrelationship of the individuals in the Morel family. The novel is a brilliant study of the systematic degradation in familial ties which occurs in a miner's life because of the nature of his job. The incident in the early part of the novel about Walter walking out of the house because of an altercation with Gertrude about the theft of six pence shows clearly the ties which remain inspite of the tensions prevalent. 'At the bottom she knew very well he could not go.' 'She (Annie) and William retired to the sofa and wept, while Walter does not have the courage to carry his "big blue bundle" out of the yard.'

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However, the situation degrades as the novel advances. The nature of Walter's job leads to a situation in which, 'the only times when he entered again into the life of his own people was when he worked, and was happy at work.' This allied with his own brutal behaviour results in his being 'shut out from all family affairs .... He was like the scotch in the smooth, happy machinery of the home. And he was always aware of this fall of silence on his entry, the shutting off of life, the unwelcome.'

Even the earlier generations of the Brangwens in *The Rainbow* are in harmony and happy with their work in the fields and farms, but it is never at the cost of relationships with one's own family members. Since the women are left alone in the house unfulfiled in attending to the domestic chores, a certain degree of strain is evident in their relationships too. Nevertheless, the polarization of the family against the father/husband never occurs in them. Leaving scope for personal idiosyncrasies, one might argue that Walter's estrangement from his family is a logical result of the effort of industrialization in his life, and not many miner's homes would be different from it.

Walter Morel is working in a system whose objective is not the fulfillment of the life of the people working in it, but the production of a certain amount of coal irrespective of the material and human cost. That according to Lawrence is the problem. 'The industrial problem arises from the base forcing of all human energy into a competition of mere acquisition,' writes Lawrence.

As a result of this estrangement in relationships between Morel and his family, he is reduced to a breadwinner. The family is comfortable when Mr Morel is in the hospital because of the leg injury he sustains in the mine. 'There were fourteen shillings a week from the pit, ten shillings from the sick club, and five shillings from the Disability Fund ... she was quite well to do. (It adds upto 35 shillings a week including some contribution from the butties, which is more than what Mr Morel used to give her!) And Whilst Morel was progressing favourably in the hospital, the family was extraordinarily happy and peaceful'. The members show a neat independence from any emotional associations with their husband/ father.

That these effects are consequent to industrial life becomes evident when we compare Walter's life to Will's who is working in a non-industrial set-up, may be a decade or two earlier. The ideal which Lawrence advocated in the *Study of Thomas Hardy* about working only for a few hours and spending the rest in a fruitful fulfillment of the self is something realized in the case of Will and even other workers in non-industrial set-ups. 'English workers according to commentators from Defoe to Arther Young preferred to work long enough to obtain their customary standard of living', writes Harold Perking (British social historian). Will, apart from working as a lace factory worker, is also an artisan and finds adequate time to pursue his vocation in carpentry and music.

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Sons and Lovers is an earlier novel; hence, there is only a degree of contempt and not cynicism when analysing human relationships. Walter develops a kind of hatred and disgust for his family: 'There's not a man tries harder for his family', he would shout. 'He does his best for them and then gets treated like a dog.' However, at the bottom of all this, subtle link with his family is still preserved, as evident in his reaction to William's death:

> Then he got up suddenly and hurried out to the Three Spots, returning in his normal state. But never in his life would he go for a walk up Shepstone, past the office where his son had worked, and he always avoided the cemetery.

It is the dissolution of this subtle link which the later novels chronicle. In *The Rainbow*, the theme is manifested in the life of Tom Brangwen, the colliery manager and his maidservant Mrs John Smith. Commenting on the death of her husband, she says: 'But you see, you get used to it. I've had my father and two brothers go of just the same. (The men die of consumption very often Tom has informed us a little earlier.) You get used to it.' Two lines later, we are told: 'But that's how they are. She'll be getting married again directly. One man or another—it does not matter very much. They're all colliers.'

The speaker of these lines is Tom and what follows in the conversation suggests that it is not only the house maid, but also the master for whom individual human beings have ceased to exist. The significance lies in the fact that their identity exists as part of a mechanical system. Winnifred is troubled by the way Mrs Smith annihilates all individual identity until explained by Tom:

'It is with the women as with us .... Her husband was John Smith, loader. We reckoned him as a loader, he reckoned himself as a loader, and so she knew he represented his job. Marriage and home is a little side-show.'

This happens not because the miners have consciously chosen to surrender their human identities but because 'the pits own every man, the women have what is left'.

Winnifred finds this a universal experience: 'It's the office, or the shop or the business that gets the man, the woman gets the bit the shop can't digest. What is he at home, ... a machine out of work.' Together they offer a very comprehensive and untroubled account of the man-machine equation. However, what troubles Ursula, the Lawrentian spokeswoman here, is their unwillingness or even a lack of conscious effort to come out of this degradation, and only a 'ghoulish satisfaction' in 'deploring' it.

When individuals cease to exist, familial as well as personal relationships are bound to get effected. Ronald Gaskell (literary critic), from whom Engels derived most of his ideas, writes about such families:

'A household ... in which the decencies and moral observances of domestic life are constantly violated reduces its inmates to a condition little elevated to that of a savage.' Perhaps savage is too decent a word to describe a set-up in which 'it all amounts to the same thing, moral or immoral—just a question of pit-wages'.

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Lawrence was himself born and brought up in a working class family. However, this extent of degradation in human life had not set in them. In this family, as Raymond Williams has pointed out, 'the material processes of satisfying the human needs ... were not separated from personal relationships.' Tom's relationship to Winnifred is reduced to fulfil his need of an offspring. 'Neither marriage nor the domestic establishment meant anything to him ... He would let the machinery carry him; husband, father, pit manager.'

In *Women in Love*, this equation between man and machine is established in the mind of Gerald Crich: 'the God of the machine, Deus ex Machine'. On inheriting the firm C.B. & Co., Gerald realizes that 'he had a fight to fight with matter' to reduce the matter to his 'will'. In addition, he knows that in order to win this fight, he has to have a perfect mechanism with perfect men. Hence, he conceives the 'instrumentality of mankind'.

In his system, what matters is the pure instrumentality of the individual.

'As a man as of knife: does it cut well? Nothing else mattered'. The workers share an equal burden in this dehumanization. Lawrence feels that Gerald is only overreaching them: 'Their hearts died within them, but their souls were satisfied. It was what they wanted. Otherwise Gerald could never have done what he did.'

Apart from this dehumanization, Lawrence was also troubled with a vision of the horror which confronted him as its end. Commenting on the system Gerald has built, he writes: 'It was pure organic disintegration and pure mechanical organization. This is the first and finest state of chaos.'

He knew it perfectly well where all this organization was leading to. Quite early in the novel, Ursula comments on Gerald's life: 'He'll have to die soon, when he's made every possible improvement, and there will be nothing more to improve. He's got go anyhow.' Ursula's prophetic words come true by the end of the novel, but by the middle, the process leading to it is very much in sight. 'The whole system was now so perfect that Gerald was hardly necessary any more.' This leads to a distinct loss of identity and purpose in Gerald's life for sometimes he 'suddenly stood up in terror not knowing what he was ... . He was afraid that one day he would break down and be a purely meaningless babble lapping round a darkness.' Lawrence feared that the picture of fulfillment according to Gerald might also be the picture of hell.

It is interesting to note how the story of the characters in these three novels also tells us about the advance of education and women in the English countryside. In *The Rainbow*, Lawrence established the Brangwen family in a kind of synecdochic relationship with the nineteenth century rural England. Alfred Brangwen's sons and daughters provide us with a fairly comprehensive view of the occupations available to average English country men and women in the first generation of the nineteenth century. As the extent of development is limited, the nature of the jobs does not demand specialization or any formal education. Farm houses, collieries and small industrial set-ups are the only options available.

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Education as a compulsory factor has not yet entered the English family. Hence, out of the six children, it is only Tom who is sent to a grammar school in Derby and that too because 'Mrs Brangwen had set her heart on it.'

However, by the time the second and third generations grow up, considerable change has taken place. A glance at the illustration below makes it clear that education has now become a fact in children of both the sexes. Also, education was important not for the sake of it, but leading to occupation in life. Thus, Tom, Fred, Will, Winnifred and Lara put their education to occupational use, while Anna who refuses to follow the stream dwindles into a housewife. William, Paul and Arthur in *Sons and Lovers* belong roughly to the same generation and a similar pattern is available there.

Lawrence incorporates into the life of his characters actual historical incidents relating to development in education. Well into their married life Will and Anna become independent of each other and Will finds participation in outside life possible. So he turns to the 'idea of handwork in school'.

'At this time, Education was in the forefront as a subject of interest. There was the talk of new Swedish methods, of handwork instruction, and so on.'

This interest in education and its relation with occupation takes the women in its sweep. The progress of industrialization also marks the progress of feminism in England. One basic way of understanding the history of feminism is to see it evolving from 'relational', which sees man and woman as the basic unit of society to 'individual', which sees the individual irrespective of gender as the basic unit.

In the early Brangwen families, we see relational feminism in action. The dual role of wifehood and motherhood is something which goes as natural and unquestioned in the first and the second generation as indicated in the illustration. Due to industrialization in the Victorian society and its allied problems, women got increasingly relegated to the household. Hence, evolved the 'ideology of domesticity'. One of the pretext on which it rested was that the woman was morally superior so her task was to provide moral guidance. To the earlier Brangmen, women, therefore, become 'the symbol of that further life which comprised religion and love and morality'. There was an implicit acceptance of a natural complimentarily between the two sexes as evident from Tom's married couple.

A similar family structure exists in the Morel household in *Sons and Lovers*, but here the woman is not entirely subservient to domestic chores. Mrs Morel joins the Women's Guild where the women 'discuss the benefits to be desired from cooperation and other social questions'. Clara's mother in the same novel becomes a victim of the rigidified division of labour which industrialization brought with systematization in the mode of production. Increasingly, women were relegated to tedious and unskilled tasks.

Mrs Morel starts a process of looking out of the assigned domestic chores which blossoms fully in Ursula. Her high school mistress advises her economic

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freedom: 'I shall be glass indeed to know that one of my girls has provided for herself the means of freedom to choose for herself.' By this generation, marriage and domestic life are not the necessary features of a woman's life. They are now asking about what they have done in terms of fulfillment.

It is not only material fulfillment which seems to be in question.

A woman must have individual fulfillment, and it is perhaps because of this that the rich lady to whom Will goes in an effort to make a lady out of Anna cannot be criticized. At the same time, Hermione Roddice, a generation later, has to be criticized for pre-occupying herself with culture.

Lawrence is giving to his readers an imaginative account of the process by which industrialization progressed in the midlands, incorporating events of social and economic importance en-route. Chief among the issues he tackles the effect of industrialization on the individual and his relationships, while also reflecting the changes taking place in the fields of education and the development of women.

The descriptions are poignant and great as works of art because so much of it is rooted in biography while also reflecting the society and serving his primary artistic purpose effectively.

Check Your Progress

3. What is the task of a historian?
4. Give any one biographical detail of D. H. Lawrence depicted in Sons and Lovers.

3.4 OEDIPUS COMPLEX

Sons and Lovers is universally accepted to be linked thematically to the Freudian idea of the Oedipus complex. Let us now try to explore how this complex theory is linked to the plot and some characters of *Sons and Lovers*.

Perhaps the first thing to be noted in this context is the title itself.

The title links two people around a woman—a son and a lover (in the sexual sense). The simplest way to read the title is to see it as referring to Mrs Morel's sons and their roles as lovers to other women. However, as is usual in classical literary works, a word never means only what it means in the dictionary. A similar fate awaits the word *and* in this analytic mode. If we study the need for love and lovers in Gertrude's life, it becomes obvious that this woman turns to her sons to fill this vacancy, giving them the emotional space and expectations a woman usually reserves for her lover. As the sons grow up, they displace their elder sibling in this role until it is time for them to find other women with whom they can have a complete love relationship including the sexual aspect. In this respect, the sons function as asexual lovers for their mothers.

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Before proceeding further, let us be clear about what is meant by the Oedipus complex. Oedipus complex, in psychoanalytic theory, is a desire for sexual involvement with the parent of the opposite sex and a corresponding sense of rivalry with the parent of the same sex. For Sigmund Freud, it is a crucial stage in the normal developmental process of a growing child.

The term is derived from the Greek hero Oedipus who unknowingly slew his father and married his mother.

Freud attributed the Oedipus complex to children of about three to five years of age. He said the stage usually ended when the child identified with the parent of the same sex and repressed its sexual instincts. This for him was the point when the child accepted and entered the world as a social and political subject with a well-formed superego or conscience. If previous relationships with the parents were relatively loving and non-traumatic, and if parental attitudes were neither excessively prohibitive nor excessively stimulating, the stage is passed through harmoniously. In the presence of trauma, however, there occurs an 'infantile neurosis' that is an important forerunner of similar reactions during the child's adult life.

It is clear that Lawrence had read Freud's ideas and was influenced by them. Let us now try to understand how these ideas weave through the themes and composition of this novel. In a letter to Edward Garnett written in 1912, D. H. Lawrence states the theme of the novel, as follows:

> It follows this idea: a woman of character and refinement goes into the lower class, and has no satisfaction in her own life. She has had a passion for her husband, so the children are born of passion, and have heaps of vitality. But as her sons grow up she selects them as lovers—first the eldest, then the second. These sons are urged into life by their reciprocal love for their mother, urged on and on. But when they come to manhood, they cannot love, because their mother is the strongest power in their lives, and holds them. It is rather like Goethe and his mother and Frau von Stein and Christiana. As soon as the young men come into contact with women, there is a split. William gives his sex to a fribble, and his mother holds his soul. But the split kills him, because he does not know where he is. The next son gets a woman who fights for his soul—fights his mother. The son loves the mother—all the sons hate and are jealous of the father. The battle goes on between the mother and the girl, with the son as object. The mother gradually proves stronger, because of the tie of blood. The son decides to leave his soul in his mother's hands, and, like his elder brother, goes for passion. He gets passion. Then the split begins to tell again. But, almost unconsciously, the mother realizes what is the matter, and begins to die. The son casts off his mistress, attends to his dying mother. He is left in the end naked of everything, with the drift towards death.'
>
> It is a great tragedy, and I tell you I have written a great book. It's the tragedy of thousands of young men in England.....

Perhaps no one can summarize the story better. This is Lawrence's own story, told eight years later: a heroic effort of a sex-crucified man to free himself from a strangling past. William's story, which has significant 'Oedipus complex'

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content in it, has been kept out of it. So have been the trials and tribulations of the women around the sons of Morel.

Morel was a British collier having a reckless nature. Mrs Morel's puritan family had lost social status because of economic pressure, but she retained a fierce unyielding pride and determination to regain superiority in life. She fell in love with Morel at a dance. Her colder world-of-ideas was charmed by his sensuousness and romanticism, limitless vitality and strength. Morel was equally attracted by her polish and intellectual superiority.

They failed to sense the essential individuality each preserved in their

marriage and that their marriage was the perfect example for incompatibility and failure.

Mrs Morel's disgust at his drunken escapes from reality turned to bitterness when her first son was born. She lost her faith in life and turned to the infant, William, for love and comfort. Her reaction angered Morel and his attitude hardened. Their sex drives became dissociated: she was attracted to William while Morel returned to what he had always been, a miner among miners.

He was destroyed by her efforts to make him better than he could be; a moral and religious rather than a sensuous personality. She longed for the old love for a while, but soon realized Morel was fast becoming an outsider to the family life. She determined that her children should be her salvation and live for her the life she had hoped might be her own. When Paul was born, 'A wave of hot love went over her to the infant....she would make up to it for having brought it into the world unloved.'

Paul was delicate and quiet and clung to his mother; sometimes he had fits of depression. 'These fits were not often, but they caused a shadow in Mrs Morel's heart, and her treatment of Paul was different from that of the other children.'

Morel was disappointed when William refused to work in the mines. Mrs Morel was determined on a more ambitious career for her first-born. So William went to work, first at Nottingham and then London. He wrote and visited occasionally, but began to neglect to send the money he had been proud to send his mother but spent it on trifles for a girl neither well-suited to him nor for whom he had any real love. Mrs Morel naturally turned more than ever to Paul as a love-object of her sex drive now progressively thwarted by her husband and first-born.

Paul's first opportunity to be a more vital substitute for his father came when careless Morel was brought home badly hurt. All the indecision and conflict over going to work disappeared in the fourteen-year-old boy and he crowed, 'I'm the man of the house now'. Night after night, he painted by the fireside while his mother enriched him with ideas from her fertile mind. 'Mrs Morel clung now to Paul. He was quiet and not brilliant .....Everything he did was for her.' The occasional upsets which followed every letter from William were the only interruptions in their close relationship.

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For a time, things went on casually—until William died. The strain of readjustment was terrible for both Paul and his mother. When Paul contracted pneumonia, 'His mother lay in bed at nights with him; they could not afford a nurse. He grew worse, and the crisis approached. One night he tossed into consciousness.....I'll die, mother.....He put his head on her breast, and took ease of her love.' 'For some things,' said his aunt, 'it was a good thing Paul was ill that Christmas. I believe it saved his mother.' Mrs Morel had made a complete identification of her sex drive in Paul.

The death of William is the turning point in *Sons and Lovers*.

The demise culminates in the formation of the Oedipus complex, as now the reader finds Paul and Mrs Morel spiritually one. The mother completely absorbed her son. She had lived through painful retreats from successive thwarting by her husband and by her first-born son, and Paul remains her only comfort and hope. However, now the sixteen-year-old psychologically-chained Paul sought other friends at the Willey Farm. Here he met Miriam.

Miriam intruded herself into Paul's visits to her brothers and found a common bond with him in their love for nature. 'So it was in this atmosphere of subtle intimacy, this meeting in their common feeling for something in nature that their love started.' For about three years, this adolescent idyll progressed: now with joy, now Paul was upset by her intensity of emotion in contrast to his mother's reserve, and again an undercurrent of mother—jealousy he could not understand.

> The intimacy between them had been kept so abstract, such a matter of soul.....We aren't lovers, we are friends, he said to her.....Then if she put her arm in his, it caused him almost torture. His consciousness seemed to split. The place where she touched him ran hot with friction.

Here the tragedy-within-a-tragedy comes to sharp focus again.

Two neurotic children are unable to adjust normally with each other because each is tied to a thwarted mother. Paul saw Miriam in terms of his mother. He disliked her intensity, resented her humbleness, sought her criticisms of his art, and fought with the growing awareness that she aroused him sexually. Miriam saw herself as a sacrifice to one whom she loved very much despite sensed weaknesses of personality in a man who seemed to think her unworthy. Paul feared her eagerness for his soul would suck him dry.

'Mrs Morel hated her for making her son like this. She watched Paul grow irritable, priggish, and melancholic.' The 'strife in love' is detailed endlessly.

Instinctively, Paul realized he was life to her. After all, she was the chief thing to him, the only supreme thing. Mrs Morel reproached him:

'I can't bear it. I could let another woman—but not her. She'd leave me no room, not a bit of room.....And I've never—you know, Paul—I've never had a husband—not really.' Miriam was defeated. She had given everything Paul had asked and was ready to give more. But he denied her: 'I can only give friendship—it is all I am capable of—it is a flaw in my make-up.' He had come back to his

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mother. Hers was the strongest tie in his life.....It was as if the pivot and pole of his life, from which he could not escape, was his mother.' He told her he should never marry anyone, and so he turned to an older woman for friendship.

> This was the end of the first phase of Paul's love affair. He was now about twenty-three years old, and, although still a virgin, the sex instinct that Miriam had over refined for so long now grew particularly strong. Often, as he talked to Clara Dawes, came that thickening and quickening of his blood....warning him that sooner or later he would ask one woman or another. But he belonged to Miriam.

Clara Dawes was five years older than Paul, unhappily married, physically very attractive, and with none of the spirituality of Miriam. Despite continued conflict—he sensed his mother's disapproval. He felt himself still tied to Miriam, and knew Clara did not measure up to his mother-ideal. Yet, Paul became sexually intimate with Clara. 'He was like so many young men of his own age. Sex had become so complicated in him that he would have denied that he could ever want Clara or Miriam or any woman whom he knew.....He loved Miriam with his soul. He grew warm at the thought of Clara.... and yet he did not positively desire her. He would have denied it forever. He believed himself really bound to Miriam.' Hence, he came back to make the test of his heterosexuality on Miriam.

> He told himself it was only a sort of over strong virginity in her and him which neither could break through.....It lay in the physical bondage. He shrank from the physical contact.' Also, '....she dreaded the issue with him.' But the test came and brought happiness to neither of them.
>
> [Miriam] realized that she was doing something for him and lay to be sacrificed for him because she loved him so much.' And he had to sacrifice her. 'For a second, he wished he were sexless or dead.....And afterwards he loved her—loved her to the last fibre of his being. He loved her. But he wanted, somehow, to cry. There was something he could not bear for her sake.' But Miriam was again defeated. 'For one day he had loved her utterly, but it never came again. The sense of failure grew stronger and he sought out Clara once again. Now he hated Miriam and told her they ought to break off their friendship. In her hurt, she became angry and told him that instead of being twenty-four years old he acted as if he were only four. He sat still, feeling as if he had had a blow, instead of giving one. Their eight years of friendship and love, the eight years of his life, were nullified.

Paul was twenty-four when he confidently said, 'Mother....I will make a painter that they'll attend to.' Here was compensation for a tormented soul. His return to Clara and passion was futile, and so he returned to Miriam again to talk about Clara and about ideal marriage. 'Miriam pondered over this. She saw what he was seeking—a sort of baptism of fire in passion, it seemed to her. She realized that he would never be satisfied till he had it.....Well, then, if he must go, let him go and have his fill. At any rate, when he had got it....he would want the other thing that she could give him.'

Paul brought Clara home to his mother, but Mrs Morel measured herself against her rival and found herself the stronger—and so accepted her where she

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had rejected Miriam. And she was right, for some time later when discussing marriage, Paul admitted loving Miriam and even of loving Clara; 'but to give myself to them in marriage I couldn't.....They seem to want me, and I can't ever give it to them.....And I never shall meet the right woman while you live.' He continued to satisfy his lust with Clara. 'But then Clara was not there for him, only a woman....'

Mrs Morel still held Paul, and she was dying of cancer. He was torn in several directions. 'A furious storm, he knew not what, seemed to ravage him.' Sometimes he returned to Clara for passion, but without happiness for either. 'She began to have a kind of horror of him....He wanted her—had her—and it made her feel as if death itself had her in its grip.....There was no man there loving her. She almost hated him.' Another visit to the sea-side was spoiled by his anxiety for his sick mother. And when at last she died—hurried by an overdose of a drug given by Annie and Paul—the release brought another storm. He kneeled down, and put his face to hers and his arms around her: 'My love-my love-oh- my love' he whispered again and again.' The neurotic conflict and indecision was forgotten in overwhelming grief; the sense of release came only later. For a time he wanted to die.

'He would not admit that he wanted to die, to have done....So the weeks went on. Always alone, his soul oscillated, first on the side of death, then on the side of life, doggedly. The real agony was that he had nowhere to go, nothing to do, nothing to say, and was nothing himself.' He ends up a derelict but Lawrence appears unsure about the nature of this dereliction. The Paul who turns toward the city in the end may be heading to start a new future or to live the whole thing over again. Lawrence wants us to imagine Paul's future in terms of our experience and understanding.

Check Your Progress

5. Define Oedipus complex.
6. What is the significance of the death of William in *Sons and Lovers*?

3.5 THE BILDUNGSROMAN NOVEL

There are two traditional approaches to *Sons and Lovers*, one of which treats the novel as a psychological study and the second focuses on the autobiographical aspect. The first approach emphasizes particularly Paul's Oedipus complex, and the second explores the many passages where Lawrence seems to be retelling his own experience fictionally (the scenes of family life, the mining background, and Paul and Miriam's relationship).

Sons and Lovers can also be seen as a traditional bildungsroman. The hero is viewed as an individual in whom the personal-psychological aspect cannot be distinguished from the historical and cultural forces in which he is entangled. The

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bildungsroman offers a way of synthesizing the two approaches. Let us understand Richard Beard's (critic and novelist) analysis and exploration of the theme of bildungsroman to show how the genre weaves through the two readings.

Let us begin by discussing the term bildungsroman. It is commonly referred to as the 'novel of self-development' or 'apprenticeship novel' in English. It features a protagonist, an apprentice to life, whose goal is to master it so that he can achieve an ideal or ambition, fulfillment of which will heighten his sense of self. The bildungsroman protagonist is usually passive, reflective, intellectual and artistic probably because the author has drawn the character of the hero based on his own experiences.

Beard first tries to understand the reason behind the emergence of the term 'bildungsroman' in the nineteenth century. He feels that it is during this epoch that the traditional class society and its heavily class-weighted institutions and values, in effect since the Renaissance, underwent pressure and erosion of values. Also, it is in this century that for the first time, a young man who was not born a gentleman could choose to ignore the social status and even the particular work of his father without necessarily facing near-suicidal odds (for example, Robinson Crusoe's regrets and guilt over ignoring his father's advice).

While large number of the more intelligent and energetic members of the lower and middle classes sought to rise above their inherited stations in life, the educational system continued to reflect an outmoded society where class determined the content and quality of one's education. Therefore, it is important that Paul in *Sons and Lovers* does not receive formal education. He is tutored in French and German by the local minister, Mr Heaton; coached in composition by his brother William; and encouraged in art by his mother. In the case of literature, he is self-taught, Miriam serving in both the last two instances to inspire Paul to his best. The kind of class mobility that Paul aspires for is something that the formal education system could not prepare for and, thus, had to be worked at by the individual.

The same independence which characterizes Paul's education helps prevent his capitulation to the economic and social outlook of his elders and peers. Like many of his nineteenth-century predecessors, Paul shows considerable courage, resilience and idealism in pushing his way towards an artist's future. Persistent belief in his future as an artist accounts for Paul's refusal to accept provincial goals and expectations.

Earning does not bother Paul as a source of livelihood. In fact, *Sons and Lovers* sets earning against creativity as if the two were mutually hostile entities. When Paul seems to believe that he can have art and money at the same time, imagining himself as popular and, therefore, a well-to-do artist, the alliance between art and income seems to be romantically founded and an improbable one. In the first paragraph of Chapter XII, 'Passion,' we are informed that Paul is beginning to earn a living through his textile and ceramic designs, while 'at the same time, he laboured slowly at his pictures'. Furthermore, Paul's integrity as an artist (he has

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to accept less money for a commissioned painting because he will not paint what is demanded of him) and the peculiar subject of his painting, luminous figures 'fitted into a landscape,' do not promise the kind of success Paul imagines for himself. Regardless, however, of his probable future, Paul here faces a problem which confronts all protagonists in self-development novels—how to make a living. If we fail to consider the vocational and economic issue in Paul Morel's development, we mitigate and over-simplify his struggle toward self-realization. Knowledge of the typical bildungsroman protagonist makes us aware of this aspect of Lawrence's novel.

A second characteristic of all bildungsroman is that their protagonists must always decide on a suitable mate or at least define the ideal that waits in the near-distant future. This aspect of *Sons and Lovers* has received close attention from critics. The way in which the novel appears to blame Gertrude for dominating and almost destroying Paul and indicting Clara and Miriam for their sensuality or near-frigidity, has given rise to a great deal of discussion among literary critics.

The most provocative attack on this aspect of *Sons and Lovers* is made by Kate Millett (a classic feminist) in *Sexual Politics.* Writing from a Marxist-feminist perspective, Millett accuses Paul (and by implication, Lawrence) of using the three women in his life, then discarding them when they no longer serve his self-centred interests. Millett describes Paul as the 'perfection of self-sustaining ego' and states, 'the women in the book exist in Paul's orbit and cater to his needs: Clara to awaken him sexually, Miriam to worship his talent in the role of disciple and Mrs Morel to provide always that enormous and expansive support….' Despite the bluntness and even crudeness of her critique, and the fact that in regard to Gertrude, Millett seems to contradict herself—one must admit some truth to the charge.

The tradition of the bildungsroman itself provides an explanation for this apparent male bias. Fiction with a developmental focus always slights characters not of the protagonist's sex, and for that matter, all the other characters. One of the distinguishing traits of the apprenticeship novel is the strong central figure for whose experience and development the lesser figures exist, and from whose process of self-realization the novel receives one of its principal unifying elements. Furthermore, the novel of self-development generally is written from a narrowly omniscient point of view, the author standing beside his character, as it were, and most often interpreting experience through his character's mind, senses and emotions. Thus, the bildungsroman's customary point of view adds to a sense of the protagonist's egoism and lends emphasis to his seeming exploitation of the novel's other figures.

An opposite view to Millett's, one which reveres Lawrence's mystical vision where Millett only scorns it, has been recently expressed by Joyce Carol Oates, an American author. Acknowledging the challenge of Lawrence's love ethic, Oates declares Lawrence to be, not as Millett would have it, a sexual reactionary, but 'too radical for us even today'. Lawrence, Oates continues, 'goes back beyond

even the tradition women are rebelling against, today, to a mystical union based upon the primitive instincts of our species, but carrying us forward into pure spirit'. He may well be abrasive, 'yet one comes to believe that Lawrence is absolutely right.'

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The concluding pages of *Sons and Lovers* present several difficult but ultimately answerable questions as to Paul's probable future which the apprenticeship novel can help clarify. In an interesting article entitled 'Autobiography in the English Bildungsroman,' Jerome Buckley (Professor of English Literature, Harvard University) argues that because the novel of self-development is highly subjective, commonly fictionalizing the author's own experience, 'the novel has frequently an inconclusive or contrived ending'; its creator being too close to the experience being retold 'to achieve an adequate perspective on (it).' *Sons and Lovers,* he adds, 'scarcely persuades us that Paul Morel at last finds the release from his fixation that Lawrence apparently won, perhaps in the very act of writing the novel.'

Commenting on the final paragraph of *Sons and Lovers,* Buckley asserts that 'nothing has prepared us for so positive a resolution. If Paul is at last free and whole, his victory is not inherent in his story; it is imposed upon it from without.' Even with the added weight of Lawrence's own judgment on the ending ('Paul is left in the end naked of everything, with the drift toward death'), Beard maintains that Paul's triumph is 'inherent in his story' and that a knowledge of the bildungsroman helps us to see the rightness of the final affirmation.

However, the chief obstacle here is Freudian authority. It somehow displaces the perception of a rich variety of evidence that suggest a host of other things that may be happening to Paul, and the Oedipus complex may itself be a product of some of these basic forces.

To begin with, let us consider the fact that Paul's trajectory all through *Sons and Lovers,* like that of many other bildungsroman protagonists, has been away from pressure to conform—whether social, familial or economic—and towards the accomplishment of his own ideal. Paul's brothers, first William, then Arthur, serve as foils to this aspiration.

Paul's values are nothing like his older brother's, and Paul consciously rejects a business career and the social approval and circumstances William is so desperate to gain. Lawrence reflects this difference symbolically when Paul goes to Nottingham to receive the first prize for his painting. Dressed in William's altered evening suit, Paul 'did not look particularly a gentleman'. Moreover, Paul argues vigorously against his mother's advice that he ought 'in the end to marry a lady'. Having refused to follow William's ambitions, condemned by Lawrence's tone and treatment as well as by the obvious pattern of self-destruction and folly implicit in the older brother's choices, Paul is freed from William's fate.

Apart from the desire not to conform, we have already noted his vitality, the quickness of his soul and spirit and the unusual closeness between him and his

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mother through the entire childhood and adolescent phases apart from his father's distancing from and rejection of his mother. There is a passion and sensitivity with which he turns towards his projects that is reminiscent of a neurotic artist. We can read these as powerful forces that can turn the trajectory of his growth in the direction that it actually takes. In this reading, Paul's mother fixation appears as a headstrong and sensitive child's turning away from the current social norm into an inordinate concern for his mother, as she needs him and fulfiling one's mother's need is a fairly satisfying individual response.

Given the fact that we do not dispute the strong attachment between Gertrude and Paul and the fact that this attachment interferes in relationship with other women, how is it different from the Oedipus complex? Notice how we have kept one of the central ideas of Oedipus complex—the hatred for the father out of this analysis. Paul may be angry at his father for the way he treats his mother and others in the family but to say that he hates him and secretly desires to kill him because he is an active competitor for the mother's affection is to misread the novel. It is also relevant to note here that Gertrude is not interested in Paul sexually. She does not object to her son sleeping with other women but objects to the marriage with Miriam because she fears that the latter would have complete control over Paul. A mother who demands a fair share of her son's attention after marriage because that is one of the main things that she has to live by, is a perfectly understandable claim emanating from a complex personal and familial history rather than in one's physiology. One should also notice the active role that Gertrude plays in retaining Paul, something that the Oedipus mother is never attributed with.

When evaluated from the perspective of a bildungsroman, Paul engages with and solves challenges relating to his vocation, mating, religion and identity. To an optimist—Paul's future, through Lawrence's tone is typically equivocal, seems assured. He knows what he wants to do in life; has realized the dimensions of sexual relationship even if he has not found his ideal mate; has forged a new religious sense; and knows, largely because he has defined the other questions, who he is. Paul, who has gone through the travails of growing up with his mother, will never be able to forget her. However, this does not mean that he will not be able to mould his future in the face of the new reality that his mother is no more there to demand his attention and energy. The fact that her memory will continue to affect him in the same way as her real presence did is a more pessimist view of the text than Lawrence perhaps intended. The concluding statement is an affirmation in this regard.

Check Your Progress

7. Define the term bildungsroman.
8. State the two traditional approaches to *Sons and Lovers*.

3.6 WOMEN CHARACTERS

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Women in *Sons and Lovers* have been drawn on Lawrence's own experiences of women in his real life. In addition, women characters in the novel depict Lawrence's own powerful experiences with women. Lawrence's projection of women in the novel involved an in-depth analysis of his own relations with women and the delineation of women in particular ways. Using some basic ideas from the writings of Austrian psychologist C. G. Jung, Lawrence has drawn women characters based on his day-to-day experiences of life.

Literary critic H. M. Daleski refers to Lawrence's later misgivings about the portrayal of his parents in *Sons and Lovers*, especially that of his father, to whom Lawrence thought he had not done justice. Daleski states that Lawrence as an artist, 'penetrated to the truth which the son subsequently thought he had not seen, for the impression which Mr and Mrs Morel in fact make, is not notably different from that which Lawrence had of his father and mother in later life.'

The reader's first impression is that Mr Morel is a coarse, rather violent man who bullies his wife and has more time for drinking than for his children. On the other hand, the sensitive, high-minded and long-suffering mother keeps the family together, resorts to her children for emotional sustenance and raises her sons to be the kind of husbands she would like them to be. Yet, at the end, after Paul's deep-seated problems become evident, some of the reader's sympathy shifts towards the father and away from the mother. The author, looking back, reveals the mother to be ruthlessly domineering and subtly manipulative. Lawrence's sympathy with his father is never explicit, but reaches the reader as a silent, almost subconscious communication, a tacit communication that pervades the novel like a magnetic field invisibly influencing perceptions and reactions. This element is an important and typically Lawrentian trait which allows the reader to glimpse a deeper stratum of emotions, all the more intense for not being explicitly articulated.

Analyses like these suggest that the characterization of Mrs Morel is much more than of a victimized mother. She is not only the tyrannical Medusa figure, but also one who holds aspects to her personality that Paul both identifies with and finds repulsive.

Let us now understand two significant concepts of C. G. Jung.

The first is the well-known concept of the artist as a person 'driven to develop all sorts of defects [in himself]—ruthlessness, selfishness ('autoeroticism'), vanity, and other infantile traits [...] inferiorities [that] are the only means by which it [the artist's creative impulse] can maintain its vitality.' The important thing to notice here is that according to Jung, these defects are not inherent in the character of the individual who is the artist, but developed by the artist in the interest of maintaining his creative vitality. If he overcomes these defects, his creativity would vanish.

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The second is that of the unconscious mind and its Jungian division into two parts: the personal unconscious and the collective unconscious.

The first one, that is, the personal unconscious, is a reservoir of material that was once conscious in the individual but has been forgotten or suppressed. On the other hand, the collective unconscious is the deepest level of the psyche containing the accumulation of inherited psychic structures and archetypal experiences. According to Jung, the collective unconscious in the male finds expression as a feminine inner personality: the anima. It is the total of all unconscious feminine psychological qualities a male possesses, and which is one of the sources of creative ability.

As a character, Paul Morel has his own flaws, and tends to see many of these personal defects (vanity and selfishness) in others, especially the women, and these are often things he 'detests' about them. This is the psychological phenomenon C.G. Jung has called a 'projection': 'a process where an unconscious characteristic [...] is seen as belonging to another person or object'. For Jung, this projection also constitutes 'a process of dissimilation, by which a subjective content becomes alienated from the subject and is, so to speak, embodied in the object. The subject gets rid of painful, incompatible contents by projecting them.'

The projection of a male personality (albeit through his feminine anima) on the female characters endows them with special characteristics representative of, if not unique to, their sex: acute intuition, strong, infallible instincts, and close affinity to nature. These women, however flawed, are by their nature the guardians of real life: life in the body; life in emotion and feeling; the preservers of the deep mysterious human resources that can lead to regeneration.

The stark realism of the novel is complemented with poetic messages that communicate these mysterious elements and portray the female in mystical connection with the other. Mrs Morel's first direct association with this mystery is in a significant encounter with nature, when after a bad quarrel, her husband locks her out of the house and she finds herself alone in the peaceful darkness of the garden. There she loses all sense of consciousness and experiences something akin to a dissolution of the self: '[...] her self melted out like scent into the shiny, pale air. After a time, the child too melted with her in the mixing-pot of moonlight, and she rested with the hills and lilies and houses, all swum together in a kind of swoon.'

The process of mythicization of the mother follows a dual route.

On the one hand, Lawrence depicts her as a paragon of maternal love, devotion and self-sacrifice, along with incidents in which she is shown endowed with mysterious, otherworldly qualities. These qualities suggest that she is something greater and nobler than a mere human being. This Jungian analysis suggests that Mrs Morel available to us in the novel is a projection of Paul/Lawrence's anima rather than a real reflection of what Mrs Morel may have been and felt as a part of

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her day-to-day life in the garden that day or at numerous other occasions in the novel, when her mystical association with nature is suggested.

This relegation of women to the mystic and natural sphere, harbouring a deep mystical energy that can enter into a mystical communion with nature, can also be observed in other women characters in the novel, namely, Mrs Leviers, Miriam's mother, Miriam and Clara. It is interesting to note that none of the men experience this specific form of energy and communion, though they may possess a different capacity like Mr Morel's communion with the earth and the mines.

Miriam, Paul's first love and muse, though abandoned, is to some extent both a spiritual kin and mysterious benevolent force in his life. Miriam's real kingdom is nature, where she reigns, with a genuine intimacy with all natural things, away from, and largely indifferent to, the brutal realities of the human world: 'To her flowers appealed with such strength, she felt she must make them part of herself. When she bent and breathed a flower, it was as if she and the flower were loving each other. Paul hated her for this.'

The question here is : Why does Paul hate her for this communion? At the beginning, his need to be romantic, as well as admired and adored, is reflected by the attraction he feels for the 'Botticelli angel' he sees in Miriam. This does not sustain for long as there is so much that Miriam lacks. No wonder, Paul finds her a girl 'cut off from ordinary life by her religious intensity which made the world for her either a nunnery garden, or a Paradise, where sin and knowledge were not, or else an ugly, cruel thing.' This might be extraordinary from a perspective and would make her suitable for a religious calling but Paul is clearly looking for more. He does not want an almost asexual beloved who does not feel or respond to the pangs of the flesh. Therefore, he finds himself repelled by her love of flowers and wants to escape when he smells the 'white, virgin scent' of the ivory roses. Miriam belongs to the 'enormous orange moon' which makes his blood 'burst into flames,' but she remains a mysterious figure 'deeply moved and religious,' a figure to which Paul is attracted but which he somehow fears. He cannot stand her chastity; he is irritated by the very archetypes he himself assigns to her; he is 'disgusted' by her 'purity,' a purity he finds forbidding.

Still, he acknowledges that 'in contact with Miriam he gained insight'; she 'urged' the 'warmth' he derived from his mother 'into intensity like a white light'. Miriam's spirituality is not without a positive dimension; indeed, it is life-giving. She can intuitively direct Paul and offer him crucial insights into his artistic work, pointing out with words that are both warm and true what he had inarticulately, unconsciously produced. Miriam provides support that is important for his development as an artist, in his quest to acquire the knowledge and the discipline to turn everyday experiences and emotions into works of art. She successfully responds to one of Paul's needs, that for a spiritual woman and Paul values her for this response.

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Still, Paul grows tired of Miriam. Her spirituality and benign influence on his progress as an artist are not enough. Miriam is too 'sane' and controlled, too 'hypersensitive' to find joy in the harsher realities of the blood, to offer Paul what he desperately believes he needs at this point in his life. Thus, she is finally left behind, as Paul heeds the call of the blood and seeks physical passion in Clara.

The question, thus, arises: Is this a real Miriam we are talking about or is this a projection of Paul's own mystic self onto a girl who does not gratify his craving for the sensuous? Is this projection being done for the management of a part of the self that is in obvious conflict with the sensuous self? It is difficult to say because given the fusion of the Paul/Lawrence persona, there is no other perspective from which Miriam is available to us in the novel. There is very little of Miriam available in the novel except what is seen and felt through Paul/Lawrence's eyes.

Clara appears now to fill the need for bodily passion. Lawrence's description of her as the very opposite of Miriam is immediately suggestive of her significance: 'a rather striking woman, blonde, with a sullen expression, and a defiant carriage.' Full of sensuous female energy, Clara, with her large breasts, heavy, dun-coloured hair and imposing stature, has the magnificence of an ancient pagan goddess:

> Wherever she was seemed to make things look paltry and insignificant. When she was in the room, the kitchen seemed too small and mean altogether […]. All the Leivers were eclipsed like candles. Yet she was perfectly amiable, but indifferent, and rather hard.

Clara combines a number of significant characteristics: she is intensely attractive, though not always aware of her power; she is fiercely independent, considering herself as a woman apart from her class, and a woman of passion. Yet, she is also 'a sleeping beauty,' a 'dormant woman,' the '*femme incomprise*,' who never had the real thing which would fertilize her soul and help her accomplish the sacred mission to serve the instinct. She has become another victim of mechanization and has forgotten her intuitive power.

Paul sees her through mystified eyes, as another lost goddess who needs to awaken to her sacred female self and experience 'the real, real flame of feeling through another person'.

Clara is a portrait of the early modern twentieth century woman, who, though possessing female intuition and wisdom, has her womanhood destroyed by the rage of mechanization. Thus, she needs to be awakened to her 'dark' but real self. She feels horror for this darkness, this unknown and unfamiliar feminine part of her. She is reluctant to accept her real nature, which Paul thinks he sees so clearly.

In order for Paul to find complete satisfaction in this relationship,

it is important that two things happen. One is that Clara respond not only to the sensuous, but also the mystic Paul, and secondly, Paul dissolve his self into that of Clara in a way that real communion happens.

Clara can neither respond to the mystic Paul, nor can allow Paul this dissolution of his self into the other. He cannot let go off his identity, not the least because he is still searching for it. He feels attracted by her femaleness— but he is not yet ready to surrender himself to the woman. He is not ready to cross the boundary which separates them in order to reach and unite with the other.

We can, thus, see how in his relationships with his mother, Miriam and Clara, Paul explores his self-identity. This is intimately related to the realization of his manhood, a goal that makes him oscillate between the demands of the intellect and the challenge of the liberating surrender to the life of the body and the emotions.

Check Your Progress

9. What are the two parts of the unconscious mind according to C. G. Jung?
10. Who is Paul's first love and muse in the novel?

3.7 THE ENDING

Critical opinion is sharply divided on Paul Morel's future at the end of the novel. Are we to suppose that Paul will continue in his 'drift toward death,' or is there evidence to indicate that he will resist the pull and eventually come to some kind of an affirmation of life? On the one hand, the substance of most of the chapter, itself entitled 'Derelict', seems to indicate that Paul is indeed a derelict irretrievably bound for extinction. However, on the other hand, the concluding paragraph seems, at least on the surface, to indicate that Paul is breaking away from the deathward drift and moving towards a new life:

> But no, he would not give in. Turning sharply, he walked towards the city's gold phosphorescence. His fists were shut, his mouth set fast. He would not take that direction, to the darkness, to follow her. He walked towards the faintly humming, glowing town, quickly.

There is no contradiction if one accepts, as the final word on the novel, Lawrence's celebrated letter quoted in the section that discusses the Oedipus complex. Paul 'is left in the end naked of everything, with the drift towards death.' However, it is not necessary to accept Lawrence's word as final. Authors often produce works, the final effect of which is quite different from what they intended.

Here is a summary of twentieth century critical positions in this debate provided by Mortland.

[An instance of the 'derelict' approach is an]… early Freudian critic, Alfred Booth Kuttner. Kuttner feels that Paul's attachment to his mother has been so strong that he will never find fulfilment in another woman; the most that can be implied from the conclusion is that Paul 'will hope again and when he has compared one woman to his mother and found her wanting, he will go on to another, in endless repetition. A later critic, Elliot B. Gose, Jr., indicates that the narrative of

Sons and Lovers demands that Paul continue in his drift towards death and that the only thing, the ending reveals is stoic determination in the face of complete loss.

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Both Mark Schorer (an Amercian writer, critic and scholar) and Louis Fraiberg (Professor Emeritus of English at the University of Toledo), while agreeing that Paul is lost, go one step further and consider the conclusion an artistic failure on Lawrence's part. Schorer sees the conclusion as a reflection of the author's unwillingness to accept the implications of the theme which he has consistently developed throughout the novel: the crippling effects of a mother's love. The conclusion and the weaknesses of Miriam and Clara represent, according to Schorer, rationalizations that are merely superimposed on the main theme without artistic integration into the novel as a whole. Fraiberg is basically in agreement with Schorer; he too sees the conclusion as incongruous and superimposed on the main theme by Lawrence as a means of coming to terms with his own experience later. In his opinion, Paul's character, as established in the first half of the novel, is so defective that it is not reasonable to assume that he is capable of resisting the pull towards death.

Those who see Paul overcoming his difficulties and moving towards life read the ending differently. Most of these critics, including Daniel A. Weiss, Mary Freeman, Ronald P. Draper and Graham Hough, feel that the supposedly affirmative conclusion has been prepared by Paul's rejection of Miriam and Clara, and his initiative in the mercy-killing of his mother. These acts, according to this group of critics, indicate that Paul has within him a spark of vitality that enables him to rise above associations that would ultimately work to his disadvantage. Mark Spilka (literary critic) even goes so far as to maintain that Paul's association with each of these women adds a different dimension to his character—his mother, life-warmth; Miriam, creative vision; and Clara, incipient manhood—the sum total of which adds up to a belief in life itself.

A little more comprehensive than these treatments is Julian Moynahan's analysis of the ending. Moynahan (Professor of English Emeritus, Rutgers University) sees three levels at which *Sons and Lovers* operates: at the level of an autobiographical narrative; as per a psychoanalytic scheme; and as per a 'vital' or 'passional' matrix. Moynahan himself never clearly defines this third matrix, but he implies that it has reference to a quality that unites Paul with some of the deeper rhythms of nature. The vital matrix might be considered as a kind of biological life force that lies beneath the level of consciousness and enables one to exist in harmony with the natural universe. It refers to the natural aspects of one's being that are innate rather than the cultural or intellectual abilities that one develops. Its effects and operations are more likely to manifest at the emotional rather than at the intellectual level.

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Paul is operating in both the vital matrix and the psychoanalytic matrix, and therein, according to Moynahan, lies the problem:

> Confusion arises owing to a final inescapable conflict between the psychoanalytic and the vital contexts. Each approaches experience from a somewhat different angle, interprets it differently, and posits a different sort of hero. Paul is finally caught in a dual focus.
>
> As a case study of neurosis he is trapped in a pattern of 'repetition compulsion' from which there is no escape this side of the analyst's couch. He therefore seems to be left at the end in the 'drift toward death'.... As a 'vital' hero Paul, although threatened with death, owing to the sheer difficulty of the human relationship he has thrust upon him in childhood and develops on his own in early manhood, has a better than even chance of maintaining himself whole and alive in the midst of the novel as it ends.

This is perhaps the essence of the problem. Paul is caught in a 'dual focus'. On the one hand, he is caught in the Oedipus trap and on the other, he is a 'vital' character whose vitality can handle any of the ordinary human entanglements.

The question that arises at this point is why Paul, if he does exist in the vital matrix, cannot overcome this drift towards death that emerges from the psychological context. There are at least two reasons for his failure to do so. In the first place, Paul is up against a strong force that has framed him into a being that needs Mrs Morel for a satisfying and meaningful life. Paul has had his basic attitudes shaped by his mother; she has had the opportunity to activate the Oedipus complex in the very foundation of his psychological being. The second reason relates to the relatively limited and somewhat episodic influence that the vital matrix exercises on Paul. He can often commune with nature, but cannot operate exclusively at the level of the senses. He tends to conceptualize experience, to raise the unconscious to the conscious level and, thereby, to negate the possibility of escape through the brute sensuality of the experiences like at the tavern. In short, his intellect raises a barrier between him and the vital currents of nature that are communicated on a purely sensual and unconscious level.

This is not to say that only the psychoanalytical force wins. Actually, both the forces ultimately win. Donald E. Mortland (literary critic) describes it as follows:

> The psychoanalytical wins because Paul is no longer capable of maintaining normal human relationships in this world; everything in the concluding chapter clearly indicates that he is indeed a derelict adrift in the society in which he lives. But the vital element in Paul is not defeated—the drift toward death and his identification of himself with the darkness represent a triumph of Paul's vitalism, a triumph that is independent of his psychological inability to deal with society and which unites him to the larger and more mysterious forces of the universe. Unlike his father, Paul cannot rely exclusively on his senses to put him in tune with the vital rhythms of nature; his intellect keeps getting in the way. His solution is to extinguish his consciousness altogether, to give up his individual will and become one with these forces of the universe.

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The above analysis presents three possible ways of interpreting the conclusion of the novel:

1. The Freudian mode that sees the death drive, emerging in the mother fixation of Paul, dominating the end and driving Paul into repeating the same pattern of events (always) into eventual oblivion.
2. The vital mode that sees the vital forces in Paul triumphing over the psychoanalytical bind with the death of the mother and the possibility of Paul finding some sustaining significance in the hereafter or previous relations with women.
3. The balance mode that invests faith in Paul's ability to give both these legitimate sets of forces their due significance without locking them in a relation of conflict, one existing only by destroying the other or the self which both inhabit.

Although one may appear in a more profound way to interpret the text than the other, that is not really true. The meaning of the novel's conclusion does not have to be a fixed one. It is perfectly possible to see the three readings resonate through a reader's mind when it comes to analysing the end without letting them contradict each other.

Check Your Progress

11. Why is Paul unable to overcome the drift towards death in the novel?
12. How has the ending of the novel *Sons and Lovers* been interpreted by Mark Schorer and Louis Fraiberg?

3.8 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS QUESTIONS

1. The famous novels written by D. H. Lawrence are *Sons and Lovers*, *The Rainbow*, *Women in Love* and *Lady Chatterley's Lover*.
2. Two notebooks of Lawrence's unprinted verse were posthumously published as *Last Poems* and *More Pansies*. These contain two of Lawrence's most famous poems about death, *Bavarian Gentians* and *The Ship of Death*.
3. The task of the historian is not only to state facts, but also to reconstruct the past 'as it was' in order to understand it.
4. . Biographical material forms an integral aspect of Sons and Lovers. One biographical detail of Lawrence depicted in Sons and Lovers is that the coal-mining town of Eastwood referred to as Bestwood in Sons and Lovers is the birthplace of Lawrence.

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5. Oedipus complex, in psychoanalytic theory, is a desire for sexual involvement with the parent of the opposite sex and a corresponding sense of rivalry with the parent of the same sex. For Sigmund Freud, it is a crucial stage in the normal developmental process of a growing child.
6. The death of William is the turning point in *Sons and Lovers*. The demise culminates in the formation of the Oedipus complex, as now the reader finds Paul and Mrs Morel spiritually one. The mother completely absorbed her son.
7. Bildungsroman is commonly referred to as the 'novel of self-development' or 'apprenticeship novel' in English. It features a protagonist, an apprentice to life, whose goal is to master it so that he can achieve an ideal or ambition, fulfillment of which will heighten his sense of self.
8. There are two traditional approaches to *Sons and Lovers*, one of which treats the novel as a psychological study and the second focuses on the autobiographical aspect.
9. According to C. G. Jung, the unconscious mind is divided into two parts: the personal unconscious and the collective unconscious.
10. Miriam is Paul's first love and muse in the novel.
11. Paul is unable to overcome the drift towards death in the novel. There are at least two reasons for his failure to do so. In the first place, Paul is up against a strong force that has framed him into a being that needs Mrs Morel for a satisfying and meaningful life. Paul has had his basic attitudes shaped by his mother; she has had the opportunity to activate the Oedipus complex in the very foundation of his psychological being. The second reason relates to the relatively limited and somewhat episodic influence that the vital matrix exercises on Paul. He can often commune with nature, but cannot operate exclusively at the level of the senses.
12. Both Mark Schorer (an Amercian writer, critic and scholar) and Louis Fraiberg (Professor Emeritus of English at the University of Toledo), while agreeing that Paul is lost, go one step further and consider the conclusion an artistic failure on Lawrence's part.

3.9 SUMMARY

- D. H. Lawrence is considered one of the twentieth century's greatest and most visionary English novelists.
- David Herbert Lawrence was the son of an illiterate coal miner and a refined school teacher. The works of D. H. Lawrence reflect the dehumanizing effects of modernity and industrialization.

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- Lawrence is perhaps best known for his novels *Sons and Lovers*, *The Rainbow*, *Women in Love* and *Lady Chatterley's Lover*.
- Although best-known for his novels, D. H. Lawrence wrote almost 800 poems, most of them relatively short.
- Apart from a faithful representation of the places, industrial developments, and wages and customs, Lawrence was more concerned with the rapidly changing face of the countryside because of industrialization.
- Lawrence incorporates into the life of his characters actual historical incidents relating to development in education.
- *Son and Lovers* is universally accepted to be linked thematically to the Freudian idea of the Oedipus complex.
- Oedipus complex, in psychoanalytic theory, is a desire for sexual involvement with the parent of the opposite sex and a corresponding sense of rivalry with the parent of the same sex.
- There are two traditional approaches to *Sons and Lovers*, one of which treats the novel as a psychological study and the second focuses on the autobiographical aspect.
- The concluding pages of *Sons and Lovers* present several difficult but ultimately answerable questions as to Paul's probable future which the apprenticeship novel can help clarify.
- Women in *Sons and Lovers* have been drawn on Lawrence's own experiences of women in his real life. In addition, women characters in the novel depict Lawrence's own powerful experiences with women.
- Critical opinion is sharply divided on Paul Morel's future at the end of the novel.
- The meaning of the novel's conclusion does not have to be a fixed one. It is perfectly possible to see the three readings resonate through a reader's mind when it comes to analysing the end without letting them contradict each other.

3.10 KEY WORDS

- **Manifestation:** It is an event, action or object that clearly shows or embodies something, especially a theory or an abstract idea.
- **Industrialization:** It is the period of social and economic change that transforms a human group from an agrarian society into an industrial one.
- **Colliery:** It is a coal mine and the buildings and equipment associated with it.
- **Neurosis:** It is an emotional illness in which a person experiences strong feelings of fear or worry.

3.11 SELF ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

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Short Answer Questions

1. Write a short note on the life and works of D. H. Lawrence.
2. What are the major differences between autobiography and bildungsroman as genres of writing?
3. Compare Miriam and Clara as individuals and suggest why Paul is attracted to both of them at different points in his life.
4. What do you think are the reasons because of which Mrs Morel finds Miriam unacceptable as Paul's wife?
5. Write a note on the future of Paul Morel keeping in mind his profession and past relations.

Long Answer Questions

1. '*Sons and Lovers* is an excellent record of industrialization as it was experienced on the surface and the depths of human life and relationships.' Do you agree? Substantiate your answer with a thorough reading of the text.
2. Reconstruct the daily and annual life of a miner and his family from the life of Morels and their family as presented in *Sons and Lovers*.
3. Discuss Walter Morel's life outside his house along with the miners and in connection with the earth. Do you think he was happy there?
4. How did Freud define the Oedipus complex? Do you see *Sons and Lovers* as an adequate rendering of this complex? Give a reasoned answer.
5. Discuss *Sons and Lovers* as a bildungsroman.
6. 'The story of Paul is actually the story of Lawrence rendered into fiction for therapeutic ends.' Do you agree? Give a reasoned answer.
7. Examine the nature of Paul-Miriam relationship.
8. What do you think is Paul's attitude towards his mother? Do you think it is one of uncritical obeisance, love and dependence? Give arguments in favour of your answer.
9. 'Lawrence's ambiguity at the end of the novel is fundamentally a lack of resolution about whether Paul will be able to outgrow the relationship with his mother which in turn reflects his own unresolved mother–fixation.' Do you agree?
10. Analyse the perspective of feminist critics regarding Lawrence's depiction of women in *Sons and Lovers.*

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UNIT 4 *ULYSSES:* JAMES JOYCE

NOTES

Structure

4.0 INTRODUCTION

The understanding of modernist literature is incomplete without knowledge of James Joyce as his writing not only typifies the Irish sensibility but also the modernist sensibility of Europe. Dublin may be the concern of Joyce like most of the modernists who are concerned with the 'city' following the French symbolists like Baudelaire and Mallarme, but through Dublin the sensitivity of Europe. Joyce's cosmopolitanism and his concern for Irish Nationalism along with Irish Catholic hierarchy deeply affected his writings. In this unit, you will critically analyse *Ulysses* written by James Joyce.

4.1 OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- Prepare an overview of the life and works of James Joyce
- Analyse the plot of *Ulysses*
- Explain the Stream of Consciousness technique

4.2 JAMES JOYCE: LIFE AND WORKS

James Joyce **(**1882 – 1941**)** was an Irish novelist, who was born in Dublin, Ireland on 2 February 1882. He finished his graduation from University College, Dublin and emigrated from Ireland to Paris where he worked as a journalist and a teacher. His first major work was *Chamber Music* – a collection of thirty-six love poems which was later included in Imagist Anthology by Ezra Pound (expatriate American poet and critic). Next comes his collection of twelve short stories dealing with the city of Dublin, named *Dubliners.* It primarily deals with the moral stagnation of the Dublin society.

Joyce then ventured into novel writing and became one of the most venerated novelists of the twentieth century with his three novels – *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* (1916), *Ulysses* (1922) and *Finnegan's Wake* (1939). The novel *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* deals with the formative years of Joyce's own life and is, therefore, semi-autobiographical. It deals with the life of Stephen Dedalus as he grows up in Dublin. *Ulysses* deals with the protagonist Leopard Bloom and one day of his life – 16 June 1904. In this novel, James Joyce deals with the stream of consciousness technique. *Finnegan's Wake* is considered to be Joyce's most significant work though it is thought to be incomprehensible as it has a difficult style which is most difficult to read.

Joyce died in Zurich on 13 January 1941.

Major Works of James Joyce

- *Chamber Music* (poems , 1907)
- *Dubliners* (Short Stories, 1914)
- *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* (Novel, 1916)
- *Exiles* (play, 1918)
- *Ulysses* (Novel, 1922)
- *Poems Penyeach* (poems, 1927)
- *Finnegan's Wake* (novel, 1939)

Check Your Progress

1. When and where was James Joyce born?
2. Name the famous novels of James Joyce.

4.3 *ULYSSES*: SUMMARY AND CRITICAL APPRECIATION

Ulysses is set in Dublin, and the events unfold over 24 hours, beginning on the morning of Thursday 16th June 1904. Some of the events chronicled in the narrative correspond to actual episodes and occurrences in Joyce's life; but most of them don't. Joyce is reported to have desired to 'give a picture of Dublin so complete that if the city one day suddenly disappeared from the earth it could be reconstructed out of … (his) book'. The work has 18 chapters which correspond, often approximately and strangely, to episodes in *The Odyssey* of Homer. Although the chapters of *Ulysses* which were published serially in *The Little Review* between 1918 and 1920 carried 'Homeric' titles, the final novel omitted them.

The first three episodes of *Ulysses* are sometimes referred to as the Telemachiad (Telemachus was the son of Odysseus/Ulysses) and concern themselves with Stephen Dedalus, a problematically autobiographical character

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that Joyce had first introduced into his published work through *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*. The next twelve chapters are considered to comprise the Odyssey or wanderings of Ulysses, and the final three are sometimes characterized as the Nostos, or Ulysses' homecoming to Ithaca, and treat the hero's return, his slaying of the treacherous suitors of his faithful wife Penelope and his joyful reunion with her.

1. TELEMACHUS

TIME: 8.00 am.

Summary: Stephen Dedalus, his friend Buck Mulligan (a medical student), and his English friend from Oxford, Haines, prepare for the day. Due to Haines' nightmares, Stephen has had a troubled night and Mulligan continues to upbraid him for refusing to pray at his own mother's deathbed. They breakfast, receiving milk from an old woman with whom Haines, with his interest in the native tongue and Irish nationalism, starts a conversation by speaking to her in Gaelic. As they leave the tower so that Mulligan can enjoy his morning swim Stephen is asked to explain his theory of *Hamlet*. He declines, and Haines and Stephen discuss literature and politics. They meet a friend who gossips about a drowning, and about a certain Bannon and a young girl, who will later turn out to be Milly, Leopold Bloom's daughter. Mulligan borrows the key to the tower and two pence from Stephen, who, like the usurped Telemachus, wanders off.

2. NESTOR

TIME: 10.00 am.

Stephen is teaching in a boy's school, and while the class recites Milton's *Lycidas* he broods upon his life, his lot and his doubts. He has a meeting with the Anglophile headmaster Mr Deasy, who pays him for his work and lectures him on thrift. He solicits Stephen, whom he knows has 'editorial connections', to place a letter for him. A xenophobic characterization of the Jews by Deasy, punctuated by Stephen's voiced and inner disagreements, ends the episode.

3. PROTEUS

TIME: 11.00 am.

Stephen walks along the sea front and reflects upon the things he sees — midwives, cockle-pickers, boulders, a dog, the body of a dog, 'seaspawn and seawrack'. He wonders if he should visit his aunt and remember his father's scorn for his mother's relatives. He changes direction, thinks about his time in Paris and his Fenian friend Kevin Egan. His imaginings drift towards his own writing and sex, which he projects into exotic settings. He picks his nose, worries about his teeth, then sees 'a silent ship' in the bay.

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4. CALYPSO

TIME: 8.00 am.

Leopold Bloom is preparing breakfast for himself and his wife (and his cat) before departing for Paddy Dignam's funeral. The jingling springs of the bed upstairs show that his wife Molly is awake. He muses upon the source of the bed—it came, like Molly, from Gibraltar. He goes out (like Odysseus in *The Odyssey*, it is Bloom's wanderings which will take up the major part of *Ulysses*), and after greeting a friend enters a butcher's shop and buys a pork kidney. He daydreams on a range of themes, and fantasises about the women he sees. He walks back from the butcher musing about the exotic Mediterranean; this has been prompted by reading about orange groves on the newspaper wrapping he has picked up. It refers to a Zionist colony of planters: Bloom himself is a Jewish advertising salesman, hence, the interest in the ad and the place. The sky clouds over and, thinking about his wife Bloom hurries home, picking up mail on the doorstep. There is a letter from his daughter Milly, and a letter for his wife from Blazes Boylan, who is both the organizer of a concert tour which features Molly (phrases and refrains from popular songs and operas pepper Bloom's internal monologue throughout) and, at present, her lover. Bloom scorches his kidney then repairs to the outside loo with *Titbits*.

5. LOTUS EATERS

TIME: 10.00 am.

Bloom walks through the streets of Dublin and performs several errands. Again he and his mind wander (through advertising themes, exotic settings and scientific explanations of phenomena). As ever, he is voyeuristically concerned with the women in Dublin, preoccupied with the 'signs' of the modern city ('Plumtrees Potted Meat', for example, which recurs again and again; what does it refer to? Dignam's burial? Sexual intercourse?) and also mysteriously excited about a letter he has just collected under an alias (Henry Flower). After meeting a friend called M'Coy, avoiding lending him money and musing about the weak voice of the man's wife, Bloom surreptitiously opens the letter. It is from a girl called Martha, whom he has never met, and as he reads it he recalls sado-masochistic passages from other letters she has sent him. He goes into a church and then into a chemist's shop, buying a cake of soap for his bath later (chemicals, perfumes and drugs are the motifs of this episode. Drugs also invoke the themes of pain, loss and their relief... a dimension of Bloom's day which will emerge more clearly later). His meditations on chemists, chemicals, poisonings and physics are interrupted by Bantam Lyons who wants to borrow Bloom's newspaper to check the details of a horse race. Bloom tells him to keep it as he was going to throw it away anyway. Lyons thinks this is a tip on a horse called 'Throwaway'. The day is hot and sticky, and Bloom dreams of himself in the bath with his penis floating languidly.

6. HADES

TIME: 11.00 am.

Bloom and his fellow mourners travel to the cemetery for the burial of Dignam. The occasion evokes a wealth of Bloomian meditations on birth, death and human frailty, including his reminiscences on Rudy, his own dead son, and his father, a suicide (a theme that, like anti-semitism, tactlessly arises in various conversations here). Bloom's own propensities towards practicality and technology are also consolidated here, as he thinks about death and hygiene and the benefits of running a tram line to the cemetery. Sentimental talk on death articulates the emotional past of these people, just as talk of the dead Parnell invokes their public and historical plight (Charles Stewart Parnell, leader of the Irish Nationalist Party, almost forced the passage of the Home Rule Bill through Parliament in 1886. His career ended in shame when in 1890 his adulterous relationship with Katherine O'Shea came to light).

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7. AEOLUS

TIME: 12.00 noon.

Here we have the first 'meeting' of Stephen and Bloom/Father and son/Odysseus and Telemachus. Bloom attempts (unsuccessfully) to complete an advertising contract, and Stephen (successfully) hands over Deasy's pompous letter. Movement, bustle and noise set the atmosphere (and a wind which blows every time the door opens). When Stephen arrives the denizens of the office swap stories, including the legendary account of Ignatius Gallagher who telegraphed an account of the Phoenix Park assassinations to America through an ingenious code (Gallagher cropped up earlier in Joyce's writing as a character in *Dubliners*). Famous speeches and literary efforts are nostalgically recounted, but the episode, like Stephen's 'Parable of the Plums', seems to revolve around themes of failure, isolation and 'missing the point'. As ever, latent historical and political motifs are drawn out (Britain is compared to Rome, and Israel to Ireland, as a general theme of 'exile' arises. A statue of Admiral Nelson, the English hero and 'one-handled adulterer', features in and overlooks the episode — his column would be blown up by Irish Nationalists in 1966). The group leaves for the pub, and Bloom wanders off to the National Library to check their files for the design he wants.

8. LESTRYGONIANS

TIME: 1.00 pm.

In LOTUS EATERS the predominant motifs were perfumes, chemicals and drugs; here, as Bloom gets hungry, the dominant motifs are related to food and eating — in many ways, *Ulysses* is an epic of the body and its processes. He continues to wander, thinking about birth and family life, Molly, her previous lovers and his own past. He is handed a religious pamphlet, sees Stephen's sister Dilly in the

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street, feeds some seagulls and then starts noticing and thinking about advertising (men whose placards taken together spell HELY'S will keep cropping up). Bloom meets Mrs Breen, sort of an old flame, and sympathizes with her because of her 'cracked' husband (he had earlier sympathized with women's lot in general when thinking about families—'Life with hard labour'). He learns that a mutual acquaintance, Mrs Purefoy, is in the maternity hospital (Bloom will visit the hospital in OXEN OF THE SUN). Erotic musings, observations about policemen, A.E. (George Russell, a dominant figure in the Irish literary renaissance) and the nature of food follow Bloom into actual eating places, which make him nauseous. He ends up in Davy Byrne's for a light meat-free snack (Bloom chooses cheese, something which falls between meat and vegetables). This is just one of a complex series of 'choices' between paths which anticipate Stephen's upcoming voyage between SCYLLA AND CHARYBDIS. Boylan's name crops up distressing Bloom momentarily. After leaving, he helps a blind young man across the road, thinking compassionately about blindness (as opposed to Stephen's philosophical experiment with it in PROTEUS; the 'blind stripling' will crop up again too) — indeed, along with all his other traits, this episode establishes Bloom as a deeply sympathetic and compassionate character (his acquaintances in Davy Byrne's agree).

9. SCYLLA & CHARYBDIS

TIME: 2.00 pm.

In the office of the director of the National Library, Stephen, A.E., John Eglinton and Lyster the librarian discuss Shakespeare. The others mock Stephen for his youthful enthusiasm for complex theories of literary creation. A.E. is a Platonist (idealist), and mocks all readings of Shakespeare which suppose that Hamlet is a real person. There is a chat about the Dublin litterati, A.E. leaves and Stephen begins to expound his theory (it is a theory which must chart a course between idealism of A.E. and the reductive materialism of Mulligan in order to define the ways in which art [ideal] and life [material] interact. Essentially, the theory as a theory owes much to psychoanalytic readings, popular at the time, of the way in which art — or dreams, fantasies and neuroses — creatively 'rework' the stuff of life). Stephen's theory is dense with learning and allusions, he weaves elements from the putative 'biographies' of Shakespeare, and from literature, philosophy and theology, into an argument which suggests that in *Hamlet* Shakespeare tries to compensate for a sexual 'wounding' and cuckolding perpetrated by his older and more experienced wife, Ann Hathaway. He suggests that Shakespeare's son, Hamlet, who died young, was perhaps conceived adulterously by his wife and one of his brothers (Richard or Edmund, who are always villains in Shakespeare's plays). This would be the rationale behind the bard's self-exile in London, and while he was there he would write *Hamlet*, casting himself in the murdered father's role (the ghost): in a sense, *Hamlet* would be the 'true' offspring of the relationship between Shakespeare and his wife. Stephen aligns physical sexuality with the woman, while suggesting that the father's identity is essentially unknowable — it is

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'a legal fiction'. This 'fiction' becomes a metaphor of artistic creation itself, a 'mystical estate' in which the tragic frustrations of the artist, rather than the brute facts of the artist's material 'life', are what are transmuted into the stuff of art. Thus, *Hamlet* becomes a ghost-story: the ghost/father is Shakespeare, Hamlet is the product of his artistic soul, and the treacherous Gertrude is Ann Hathaway. Echoes with Stephen's own life here are apparent (he has been 'wounded' by his mother and presents himself as a tragic character without a father; Bloom too is invoked here — he has lost a son and is soon to be cuckolded by his wife), but his theory is presented to impress the Dublin litterati, it is wild, clever and interesting, but they are not very impressed (when asked if he believes his own theory, Stephen replies that he does not). Mulligan appears and parodies Stephen's theory, and other Shakespearean 'theories' are discussed, including Oscar Wilde's. Bloom appears then disappears, and Mulligan reports that he had seen him earlier inspecting the genitalia of the Library's statues (Bloom had been wondering if goddesses and Greek statues had ate food, defecated and had anuses earlier in LESTRYGONIANS) and an anti-Semitic and homophobic interlude occurs (Mulligan mocks Bloom's Jewishness and implies that he desires Stephen sexually). The group returnS to Stephen's theory, and, while expounding it, Stephen reflects upon the way the father-son nexus in *Hamlet* illumines his own situation. They leave the library to the accompaniment of a quote from Shakespeare's *Cymbeline*.

10. WANDERING ROCKS

TIME: 3.00 pm.

This episode, comprised of 18 mini-episodes, is a sort of doubling of the book itself. We meet Father Conmee, the Dedalus sisters and Stephen (who, at the sight of his sister is wracked with guilt), a one-legged sailor and an arm which throws a coin and belongs to Molly Bloom, Blazes Boylan, and a host of other characters. It develops — if 'develops' is the right word, by tracking the links which the Earl of Dudley's procession makes between different characters and places in Dublin. However, there is no logical sequence to these events (follow the journey of the one-legged sailor in the first three sections and you find that the third section occurs before the first). If there is no temporal 'unfolding' of these events (there is also a lot of repetition, as if the narrative has lost its memory and starts each section as a 'new' story), then there is little logical connection between them and less indication of their significance. Are these alternative scraps of narrative potential 'paths' which the book — like Odysseus in *The Odyssey* and like Stephen's view of history in NESTOR — didn't take, and so exist only as a jumble of 'possibilities ousted'?

11. SIRENS

TIME: 4.00 pm.

The barmaids at the Ormond Hotel see Bloom pass by. Simon Dedalus is there, and he turns his attention to the piano, which has just been tuned by the blind

stripling. Bloom is elsewhere, buying paper. Boylan enters; Bloom spots his car outside and also enters with a friend, Ritchie Goulding. They sit near the door as Boylan and Lenehan flirt with the barmaids. Boylan leaves, Ben Dollard and father Cowley come in (the 'jingling' of Boylan's departing car echoes the jingle of the Blooms' bed-springs). Simon sings, Bloom thinks of Molly, and begins to write a reply to Martha's letter (he resists the modality of the audible through reading and writing). Ben Dollard sings 'The Croppy Boy', a ballad about the Irish rebellion. Irish nationalism and nostalgia fill the text and the audience are captivated, but Bloom, the Odyssean wanderer, breaks wind and leaves, encountering a prostitute that he knows on the way.

12. CYCLOPS

TIME: 5.00 pm.

Bloom is going to Barney Kiernan's to meet Martin Cunningham and discuss the affairs of the Dignam family. The unnamed narrator (a debt collector) chats with Joe Hynes, and they meet the Citizen, a fierce nationalist with a dog called Garryowen (who we will meet again in NAUSICAA). Several characters enter the pub, including Bloom, behind whose back the Citizen starts throwing insults. The talk turns to capital punishment, a topic which Bloom, still in and out looking for Cunningham, discusses rationally. Bloom discusses Dignam and the plight of the Breens, among other things, sympathetically, but the citizen rejects Bloom's attitudes. The Citizen starts to speak about the unwanted presence of 'strangers' in Ireland, a remark clearly aimed at Bloom. After the Citizen's speech about Irish history, Bloom tries to define a nation, implying that he is Irish because he was born in Ireland. As an Irish Jew, however, his position in this debate is unstable, and his advocacy of 'love' in the face of 'Force, hatred, history, all that' makes things worse. After Bloom leaves, Lenehan believes that he's gone to pick up his winnings from 'Throwaway', the horse that he (supposedly) tipped to Bantam Lyons in LOTUS EATERS (it won at 20-1). Bloom's closeness about this alleged stroke of fortune inflames the Citizen more. Cunningham and John Power enter and defend Bloom, but when Bloom returns the Citizen gets violent and chases him from the pub, Garryowen hot on his heels.

13. NAUSICAA

TIME: 8.00 pm.

Cissy Caffrey, her twin brothers, and her friends Edy Boardman and Gerty MacDowell (who sits a little apart), are on the Sandymount Strand. Gerty is impatient with the boys and their noise and mess, and her friends, who are a little common, and she daydreams at length about herself and both her romantic aspirations (her suitor, Reggy Wylie, has neglected her), and her spiritual strivings (her thoughts often turn to religious themes) . The twins kick their ball to Bloom, who is also on the beach, and Gerty weaves him into her thoughts (she notices that

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he is in mourning and constructs a tragic but romantic tale around him). Cissy cockily goes to ask Bloom the time, but his watch has stopped. A fireworks display begins. Her friends run along the beach, but Gerty stays near Bloom and leans back to watch the fireworks (she knows that men can be excited by immodest women, and she is allowing Bloom to see up her skirt). When she leaves, Bloom notices that she has a limp, and we learn that he has masturbated while she 'was on display'. Bloom's thoughts run along the lines of women, marriage and smells (which join sight, taste and sound in the novel's sensory compendium). He thinks of writing a story about himself—The Mystery Man on the Beach. He thinks of his children and of Gerty.

14. OXEN OF THE SUN

TIME: 10.00 pm.

Mrs Purefoy is in labour, and Bloom is visiting her at the hospital. A party is in progress, and Dr Dixon is there (who once treated Bloom for a bee-sting) along with Stephen, Lynch, Lenehan and others and Mulligan who comes later. A nurse begs for quiet. The group is discussing problems in the philosophy of medicine: whether, in a dire childbirth, the mother or baby should be saved and the ethics of contraception. Bawdy comments and noise ensues (like Odysseus' men, they lack respect for the sacred inhabitants of the place). Bloom can think only of his dead son Rudy. The talk turns to Stephen's choice of literature over the church. There is a storm and Bloom provides a scientific explanation of thunder. Papal Bulls is the next topic, then Mulligan gets bawdy. The nurse again asks them to keep the noise down, and Bloom too disapproves of the way things are going as the party gets drunker. Mulligan tells a gothic horror story, the Purefoy baby is born, and then the group pours into the street — Stephen and Lynch head for the red light district.

15. CIRCE

TIME: 12.00 midnight.

A 'realistic' synopsis of this episode is difficult, but, broadly... Mabbot Street opens onto Nighttown, a strange and sordid place. Stephen and Lynch stagger in a drunken state and are mocked by the denizens of the place. Bloom follows, events and characters (Gerty, Molly, his father and mother) stimulating his mind and sense of guilt in a hallucinatory fashion. Bloom is arrested for committing a nuisance and undergoes a protracted Kafkaesque trial. His identity constantly changes as characters from his past and 'personifications' of perverse desires enter the court. Bloom speaks with one of the whores, Zoe Higgins, who knows where Stephen is. This stimulates scenes of an imaginary triumph for Bloom, who becomes an example of the 'new womanly man', gives birth, and is then farcically pilloried after the temper of the court changes. He returns to 'reality' and finds Stephen in the music room, while also becoming his own grandfather and thinking about his past loves. In a discussion on theology, Stephen metamorphoses into

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Cardinal Dedalus. Meanwhile, Bella Cohen the Madame of the place appears. She and Bloom change sex and ritual sado-masochistic humiliations of Bloom ensue. Stephen, in his drunkenness, is attempting to settle his bill. Bloom ensures that he isn't cheated. The ghost of Stephen's mother appears, he breaks the chandelier, and they end up on the street. A fight with some English privates (he has allegedly insulted the King) leaves Stephen prostrate on the pavement. The police appear, but Corny Kelleher and Bloom smooth things over. Bloom gazes at the unconscious Stephen, and experiences a vision of his dead son Rudy.

16. EUMAEUS

TIME: 1.00 am.

Summary: Bloom and Stephen walk from Nighttown to the Cabman's shelter. Bloom talks about the events in Nighttown, and Stephen is hailed by Corley, a friend who has hit bad times. Stephen suggests that he applies to Deasy for the teaching post he has decided to quit. In the shelter they drink coffee, and chat with W. B. Murphy, a sailor. Bloom dreams of travel, a prostitute pops her head into the shelter and Bloom holds forth on the perils of vice. 'Skin-the-Goat' and others talk about the tyranny of England. Bloom tries to talk to Stephen about his own experiences in CYCLOPS but finds him inattentive and cynical in the extreme. Bloom shows Stephen a photograph of Molly, the implication being that Stephen's talents might be used to further Molly's career (and thus oust Boylan from her affections). They leave and discuss music as they walk.

17. ITHACA

TIME: 2.00 am.

Bloom (like Stephen in TELEMACHUS) has lost his key, so when the pair arrives at 7 Eccles Street he has to climb the railing and enter through the back door. He lets Stephen in and puts the kettle on (Stephen refuses to wash, and Bloom interprets this as a sign of intellectual disdain for worldly things; when Stephen is quiet Bloom assumes that he is composing poetry). Bloom makes some cocoa and they think about times they have met in the past. The pair has separate temperaments: Stephen is artistic; Bloom is scientific. Bloom tries to persuade Stephen to lodge with him (as instructor and company for Molly and himself). Stephen sings a ditty about the murder of a child by a Jew's daughter and Bloom changes the subject. Bloom asks Stephen to stay. He declines. They go into the garden, urinate together, a shooting star crosses the sky, Stephen leaves and Bloom comes back in. Bloom dreams about projects that he might realize should one of his schemes make him wealthy. He unlocks a drawer to deposit the letter from Martha and is confronted by objects which remind him of his past. He thinks of the day he has had and goes to the bedroom. He notices the impression that Boylan has made in the bed, but he accepts his position as cuckold. He tells Molly about his day, he curls up in a prenatal posture, and with his head against Molly's feet, goes to sleep.

18. PENELOPE

TIME: None

Molly Bloom lies in bed, thinking about her husband, her meeting with Boylan, her past, her hopes... Among myriad other things, she suspects Bloom of having an affair, she thinks of woman's lot in the games of courting and mating, she remembers a clap of thunder (perhaps the one that disturbed Stephen and Bloom explained away in OXEN OF THE SUN), she thinks of her lovers and longs for a glamorous life. She thinks of beauty and ugliness, and her thoughts are interrupted by a train whistle. She thinks of her past life in Gibraltar and laments the drabness of her present. She thinks about her health and her daughter and she is interrupted again this time by the onset of menstruation. She thinks about her visits to the doctor and muses about Stephen. Her thoughts turn to Rudy and Bloom. She thinks of humiliating her husband, a clock strikes and she recalls the time on Ben Howth when she and Bloom first made love.

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Check Your Progress

3. What is the place of setting of *Ulysses*?
4. Who is the protagonist of the novel *Ulysses*?

4.4 THE STREAM OF CONSCIOUSNESS NOVEL

'The modern practice of art is somehow an improvement upon the old, … For the modern, the point of interest lies very likely in the dark places of psychology, at once, therefore, the accent falls a little differently; the emphasis is upon something hitherto ignored ….' According to William James, American philosopher and psychologist, 'Psychology is the science of mental life, both of the phenomena and of their conditions. The phenomena are such things as we fall feelings, desires, cognitions, reasonings, decisions and the like'. In other words, psychology as the scientific and objective, examination of the nature and form of human reactions is a comparatively recent development. The term 'stream of consciousness' comes from psychology. It was coined by William James in 1886 and popularized in his *Principles of Psychology* in 1890. According to him, 'Every definite image in the mind is stooped and dyed in the free water that flows round it. The significance, the value of the image is all in this halo or penumbra that surrounds and escorts it. (Here is the 'luminous halo' of Virginia Woolf)…. Let us call it the stream of thing, of consciousness, or of subjective life.'

The concept of the stream of consciousness has added a new and significant dimension to the art of prose fiction. In the words of Leon Edel, North American literary critic and biographer, it has enlarged the scope of fiction and enriched it beyond measure. The supporters of this concept have explored a new realm of subjective experience; they have endeavoured to portray the depth and complexity of human consciousness as faithfully as possible. The presentation of the new

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material, according to Robert Humphrey, 'necessitated the invention of new fictional techniques or a refocusing of the old ones'…. Virginia Woolf realized that in the stream-of-consciousness novel 'the story might wobble the plot might crumble; ruin might seize upon the characters.' New wine could not be held in old skins, and the new novel dispensed with the accepted principles and conventions of prose fiction. I.A. Richards (English educator, literary critic, and rhetorician) insisted on the need for a new form different from the solid mechanism or framework of the traditional novel.

This new genre took birth between 1913 and 1915. On the eve of the First World War three novelists, unknown to each other, were writing works which had a remarkable influence on the English fiction. In France, Marcel Proust published in 1913 the first two volumes of the eight-part work we know today as *Remembrance of Things Past*. While these volumes were in the press, an Englishwoman, Dorothy Miller Richardson had begun to write what was later on entitled *Pilgrimage.* Between the launching of these two ambitious works on both sides of Channel, James Joyce, an Irishman, began publishing in serial form a novel entitled *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*. In this manner, a new type of novel came into existence what we have come to call the stream-of-consciousness novel or the novel of the silent, the internal monologue, and in French letters, the modern analystic novel, which, is not written as following thought, caught the very atmosphere of the mind. This was indeed a great coincidence. These three writers wrote separately and were unknown to each other. They were writers of altogether different talent and temperament. And yet between them they turned fiction away from external to internal reality. The great journey inward had definitely begun – a journey of exploration into the realm of feelings and sensations. Of course, the first thing to be discarded was the traditional story. A story involved a certain amount of conscious or unconscious falsification of man's experience of life. It tortured reality out of shape. It was artificial and a made-up thing. It should therefore go. And they annihilated it. According to a critic, 'The new psychology has shifted the goal of the novelist.' Now, he is not out to point a moral or to adorn a tale. He wants to get at all that there is in any individual; in short his purpose is psychological research. His business is to depict human life as experienced by those engaged in the business of living it. His aim is to get nearer to life. In this, he is helped by the psychologist whose goal is the same. Instead of a rounded whole, the novelist is out to catch the psychological moment. This led to many interesting experiments.

According to the psychological researches, consciousness is an amalgam of all that we have experienced and continue to experience. Every thought is a part of personal consciousness; every thought is also unique and ever-changing. We seem to be selective in our thoughts, selectively attentive or inattentive, focusing attention on certain objects and areas of experience, rejecting others, totally blocking others out. When a thought recurs in the mind, it can never be exactly the same as it was before, renewed; it carries with it the freshness of renewal, and the new context in which it has re-emerged. 'Experience is remoulding us every moment, and our mental reaction on every given thing is really a resultant of our experience

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of the whole world up to that date.' This is true not only for ideas, but for our sensory perceptions as the consciousness registers them. In the modern novel, here is the artistic record of a mind, at the very moment that it is thinking. It is the author who says to the reader: 'Try to penetrate within it. You will know only as much as this mind may reveal. It is you not I who will piece together any "story" there may be. Of course I have arranged this illusion for you. But it is you who musts experience it.'

The new technique of novel has relegated the importance of the story to the background. James Joyce's expression of experience took a different turn as also a different form. The early years of his life were passed in Dublin. Almost blind from his childhood, he lived in the world of sound, in that clamorous town of Dublin, Joyce wanted to catch the immediate and the present – he called it 'an epiphany'. Unlike Proust, he wanted to express the immediate consciousness as reality.

Dorothy Richardson, Virginia Woolf and James Joyce, ever dissatisfied with superficial objective realities, were opposed realists. They were interested in the flux and complexities of human consciousness and tried to render this internal reality in terms of art. They agreed with Henry James that 'experience is never limited and it is never complete' and desired to explore the hidden recesses of consciousness. They annihilated the illusory objective pattern or framework of the traditional novel.

It is obviously necessary to understand the real nature or quality of human consciousness with the focus of interest in the stream-of-consciousness fiction. The subjective note was not absent from the traditional novel and was often expressed through internal conflicts, memories and day-dreams. The expression 'stream-of-consciousness' was coined by William James and used in his *Principles of Psychology* published in 1890. In 1918, May Sinclair used it for Richardson in *Pointed Roofs*. Henry Levin felt that the term was vague and misleading and Dorothy Richardson herself stated: 'Amongst the company of useful labels devised to meet the exigencies of literary criticism, it stands alone, isolated by its perfect imbecility'. However, William James thought that 'stream' was an apt metaphor for describing the flux and continuity of human consciousness. He was impressed by the 'teeming multiplicity' of the human minds and the vague fringes and penumbras that surrounded the process of the consciousness thought or perception. Conscious thought, according to William James, is a 'clearly lighted centre of experience' bounded by a dim twilight region. He dwelt at length on the difficulties of introspective analysis, of arresting and examining the fluidity of the human mind. He believed, 'Experience is remoulding us every moment, and our mental reaction on every given thing is really a resultant of our experience of the world up to that date, every definite image in the mind is steeped and dyed in the free water that flows round it. The significance, the values of the image, is all in the hallo or penumbra that surrounds it or escorts it'.

The accent also insisted on the individual flux or consciousness which we call 'laduree' (duration). Consciousness was the continuation of an indefinite past

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into the living present. He disapproved of the logical pattern imposed arbitrarily on life and character, and insisted on the need to portray fluidity of human consciousness that defies the barriers of time and logic.

The stream of consciousness novel admits the reader to the hidden recesses of consciousness, and concentrates attention on what J.W. Beach calls 'passive states of mind', which are undirected by rational thought or a sense of practical need or conduct. The traditional novel ignores or under stresses ninety-nine per cent of what goes on within the human consciousness in order to elucidate a definite course of external action. 'The novel,' according to Professor Beach, 'has generally confined itself with that which interests men on action; and the subjective moments are such as bear upon a definite line of conduct.' Middleton Murray believed that the new novel presented human consciousness 'as it was before it had been reshaped in obedience to the demands of practical life' and explored ' the strange limbo where experiences once conscious fade into unconsciousness.'

The stream of consciousness fiction did not impose a coherent and logical pattern on life and dispensed with formal storytelling and characterization in order to reveal the depths and fluidity of human consciousness. Life at pre-speech level of consciousness is chaotic and incoherent; it lacks pattern or logical sequence and does not shape itself into a story. A well-made plot or story is something invented – a made-up affair. It tortures reality out of shape. The stream-of-consciousness novel presents character 'as a process, not a state,' according to David Daiches (Scottish literary historian, scholar and writer). There is no arbitrary formalization and no emphasis on superficial traits of personality or external idiosyncrasies and humours. The old fictional character, according to Aldous Huxley, English novelist and critic, was like the victim of one of Ben Jonson's 'humours,' neatly circumscribed; the new character is as uncircumscribed as Hamlet. The new novelists aimed at capturing the flux of consciousness. They revealed the richness and subtlety of psychic life.

The stream-of-consciousness writers sometimes use figurative language, rhetorical devices and expressive symbols and images to portray the flux and privacy of human consciousness. 'This use of rhetorical figures', according to American author, Robert Humphrey, 'is a feature of stream-of-consciousness writing which stems naturally from the attempt to reproduce the broken, seemingly incoherent, disjointed texture of the process of consciousness when they are not deliberately screened for direct communication.' Sometimes, the novelist is compelled to use private symbols or images expressive of the individual's private sense of values or predilection. 'Both image and symbol tends to express something of the quality or privacy in consciousness; the image by suggesting the private emotional values of what is perceived (either directly or through memory or imagination); the symbol of suggesting the truncated manner of perceiving the expanded meting.' (Humphrey)

The process of psychological association is very well illustrated by Molly Bloom's stream of consciousness in *Ulysses*. Molly lies in bed at night. The striking of the clock, the sight of the wallpaper and lowering of the lamp are the only external stimuli. The flux of her consciousness at the pre-speech level is

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rendered with great art and skill by James Joyce. An extract from her long monologue is reproduced below with comments within brackets.

"….. quarter after (a clock nearby has reminded her of the time) what an unearthly hour I suppose they are just getting up in China now combing their pigtails (her imagination carries her off to China) …. Let me see if I can doze off 1 23 4 5 (she tries to count herself to sleep) what kind of flowers are these they invented like the stars (she notices the flowers on the wallpaper), the wallpaper in Limbard Street was much nicer (at her former dwelling), the apron he gave me was like that (her husband's gift) …. I only wrote it twice, better lower the lamp and try again so as I can get up early remembers it is already late) ….' Thus, Molly Bloom's fancy continues to stray.

Another important characteristic of stream-of-consciousness fiction is its *freedom from rigid notions of Time and Space*. Modern novelists are preoccupied with the problem of time and space. David Daiches says that they are experimenting with the baffling problem. Psychic processes, before they are rationally controlled for communication, do not follow the chronological sequence. Human consciousness at the pre-speech level swings away freely in time and space. The past, present and future intermingle inside it. 'The stream-of-consciousness technique is a means of escape from the tyranny of the time dimension,' according to David Daiches. He believes that 'retrospect and anticipation constitute the very essence of consciousness at any specified time.' The past impinges upon the present and conditions it. The present holds visions of the future. Consciousness becomes a jumble of vague memories, immediate preoccupation and dim aspirations. Memory flashbacks, mingle the past with the present. Bergson insisted on fluidity or 'duration' which is independent of external time and spoke of 'the continuation of an indefinite past into a living present.' External time is indicated by the ticking or chiming of clocks or the ringing of church bells. Marcel Proust said that 'memory by introducing the past into the present without modification, as though it were the present, eliminates precisely that great Time dimension in accordance with which life is lived.'

Memory recalls the past and disrupts the time sequence. The mind also swings away in space to distant scenes and, thus, the movement acquires a wide sweep. The concurrence of the past and present, or of scenes widely apart in space, within the consciousness, is known as time or space montage. Montage is a cinematic device based on the simultaneous representation of associated images or the scenes. In the works of Robert Humphry montage shows 'a rapid succession of images or the super-imposition of image on image or the surrounding of a focal image by related ones.'

The aggressive novelty of the stream-of-consciousness fiction has often baffled critical opinion. Wells detested its 'copious emptiness.' Herbert Read, English art historian, poet, literary critic and philosopher, was distressed by the 'terrible fluidity' and the disintegration of form and structure in the work of Joyce and Proust. Yeats looked at the genre with alarm and Wyndham Lewis felt that Joyce and the disciples of Bergson were menacing Western culture by abandoning themselves to flux and disintegration. I.W. Beach states that the stream-of-

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consciousness technique is applicable only to neurotics whose consciousness is given order to 'the chaotic May sensations and associations undirected by the normal will to rational conduct.' The new genre disregarded rational thought and the commonly accepted syntax and diction. It flouted the rules of grammatical construction and evolved a strange cryptic medium of expression. Hence, the stream-of-consciousness fiction is sometimes dismissed as essentially morbid or unwholesome, altogether destitute of artistic beauty and merit.

However, it cannot be disputed that the psychological novel has added a new province to fiction. It has explored a new realm of experience and revealed the amazing depths and fluidity of human consciousness. It has thrown light on the deepest recesses of the mind and depicted psychic processes with remarkable art and skill.

Check Your Progress

5. Who coined the term streams of consciousness?
6. State one feature of the stream of consciousness novel.

4.5 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS QUESTIONS

1. James Joyce **(**1882 – 1941**)** was an Irish novelist, who was born in Dublin, Ireland on 2 February 1882.
2. James Joyce is one of the most venerated novelists of the twentieth century with his three novels – *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* (1916), *Ulysses* (1922) and *Finnegan's Wake* (1939).
3. The place of setting of *Ulysses* is Dublin.
4. Leopold Bloom is the protagonist of the novel *Ulysses*.
5. The term streams of consciousness was coined by William James in 1886 and popularized in his *Principles of Psychology* in 1890.
6. The stream of consciousness novel admits the reader to the hidden recesses of consciousness, and concentrates attention on what J.W. Beach calls 'passive states of mind', which are undirected by rational thought or a sense of practical need or conduct.

4.6 SUMMARY

- James Joyce **(**1882 – 1941**)** was an Irish novelist, who was born in Dublin, Ireland on 2 February 1882.
- Joyce ventured into novel writing and became one of the most venerated novelists of the twentieth century with his three novels – *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* (1916), *Ulysses* (1922) and *Finnegan's Wake* (1939).

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- *Ulysses* deals with the protagonist Leopard Bloom and one day of his life – 16 June 1904.
- *Ulysses* is set in Dublin, and the events unfold over 24 hours, beginning on the morning of Thursday 16th June 1904.
- Although the chapters of *Ulysses* which were published serially in *The Little Review* between 1918 and 1920 carried 'Homeric' titles, the final novel omitted them.
- According to William James, American philosopher and psychologist, 'Psychology is the science of mental life, both of the phenomena and of their conditions. The phenomena are such things as we fall feelings, desires, cognitions, reasonings, decisions and the like'.
- The term 'stream of consciousness' comes from psychology. It was coined by William James in 1886 and popularized in his *Principles of Psychology* in 1890.
- The concept of the stream of consciousness has added a new and significant dimension to the art of prose fiction.
- In France, Marcel Proust published in 1913 the first two volumes of the eight-part work we know today as *Remembrance of Things Past*.
- According to the psychological researches, consciousness is an amalgam of all that we have experienced and continue to experience.
- The new technique of novel has relegated the importance of the story to the background. James Joyce's expression of experience took a different turn as also a different form. The early years of his life were passed in Dublin.
- Dorothy Richardson, Virginia Woolf and James Joyce, ever dissatisfied with superficial objective realities, were opposed realists.
- The traditional novel ignores or under stresses ninety-nine per cent of what goes on within the human consciousness in order to elucidate a definite course of external action.
- The stream of consciousness fiction did not impose a coherent and logical pattern on life and dispensed with formal storytelling and characterization in order to reveal the depths and fluidity of human consciousness.
- The stream-of-consciousness writers sometimes use figurative language, rhetorical devices and expressive symbols and images to portray the flux and privacy of human consciousness.
- Another important characteristic of stream-of-consciousness fiction is its *freedom from rigid notions of Time and Space*.

4.7 KEY WORDS

- **Bawdy:** It refers to humour that is vulgar or off-colour.
- **Cuckold:** The term refers to the husband of an adulterous wife.

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- **Epiphany:** It refers to a moment when you suddenly feel that you understand, or suddenly become conscious of, something that is very important to you.
- **Monologue:** It is a speech delivered by one person, or a long one-sided conversation.
- **Montage:** It is a cinematic device based on the simultaneous representation of associated images or the scenes.
- **Neurotic:** It implies behaving strangely or in an anxious way, often associated with mental illness.

4.8 SELF ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

Short Answer Questions

1. Mention the major works of James Joyce.
2. Prepare a short summary of *Ulysses*.
3. Identify the significant features of the stream of conscious technique.

Long Answer Questions

1. Discuss the plot of James Joyce's *Ulysses*.
2. How does *Ulysses* re-work the *Odyssey*? Thematically, how is it similar to the earlier epic?
3. Why is *Ulysses* so drenched in the particular details of Dublin life? What does it tell you about Joyce and the novel?
4. Why is *Ulysses* considered to be one of the most influential novels of the twentieth century? What is so revolutionary about it?

4.9 FURTHER READINGS

Farner, Geir 2014. *Literary Fiction: The Ways We Read Narrative Literature*. USA: Bloomsbury Publishing.

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UNIT 5 *THE SCARLET LETTER:* NATHANIEL HAWTHORNE

NOTES

Structure

5.0 INTRODUCTION

Nathaniel Hawthorne originally belonged to Salem, Massachusetts. Hawthorne started his career as a short story writer in America at an early age, and later developed as a romance novelist. Some of his best known works today remain the renowned novels *The Scarlet Letter* (1850) and *The House of Seven Gables* (1851).

Much like the works of Herman Melville and Edgar Allan Poe, Hawthorne is categorized in the genre of Dark Romanticism. This genre is distinguished by a unique emphasis on the fallibility in human life and nature and the common and regular lapses in judgment that lead even the best of people on the path of self-destruction. This genre also attract the attention of the readers to the subsequent consequences of the efforts made towards a social reform. This unit discusses Hawthorne's novel *The Scarlet Letter* and explores the various theme of morality and societal corruption present in the novel.

5.1 OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- Assess Nathaniel Hawthorne as an American writer
- Discuss the various themes in Hawthorne's *The Scarlet Letter*
- Analyse Hawthorne's novel *The Scarlet Letter*

5.2 NATHANIEL HAWTHRONE: LIFE AND WORKS

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An eminent critic once wrote the following lines about Hawthorne:

> His genius was greater than that of the idealist, Emerson. In all his mysticism his style was always dear and exceedingly graceful, while in those delicate, varied and permanent effects which are gained by a happy arrangement of words in their sentences, together with that unerring directness and unswerving force which characterize his writings, no author in modern times has equaled him. To the rhetorician, his style is a study; to the lay reader, a delight that eludes analysis. He is the most eminent representative of the American spirit in literature.

Hawthrone was born on 4 July 1804. Hawthorne came from a family which followed sea trade—his father, the most melancholy man, was a sea captain. However, he died when the author was just four years of age. After the passing away of her husband, Hawthorne's mother led a sad, secluded life, which resulted in the young Hawthorne spending most of his time playing with the creations of his own mind. He eventually thus grew fond of a feeling of seclusion. He received most of his education at Joseph E. Worcester School and took admission in Bowdoin College in 1821.

Hawthorne graduated in 1825 and, having made his acquaintance with poets Longfellow and John S. C. Abbott, returned to Salem, resuming his dreamy existence. He spent the next twelve years of his life in the same place, reading and writing, working from his room and wandering the darkened streets of the town. Though this kind of certain lifestyle detached him from the social life around him, Hawthorne made use of his solitude and worked to develop his thoughts and his imagination for the fame that was to come his way many years later.

Hawthorne's first book was called *Fanshawe* and it was published in the year 1826. The novel, however, did not achieve much success and it was owing to this minor failure that Hawthorne chose to withdraw and destroy most of his manuscripts that he had earlier placed with some known publishers. It was only after the encouragement he received from Samuel G. Goodrich in 1831 that Hawthorne took up editing in *American Magazine of Useful and Entertaining Knowledge*.

It was during his two years of work at this magazine when Hawthorne decided to write and submit some of his short stories again to *New England Magazine*, *The Knickerbocker*, and the *Democratic Review*. Later, in 1937, he published his volume of *Twice Told Tales* and this contained parts of some of the short stories he had published in these magazines. This *Tale* was the first work of Hawthorne that spoke of the labour he had endured for the past twelve years of his life.

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Hawthorne's work was richer than most of the writings that were developing during that time. He had a firm grasp of the art of fiction and a strong imagination that was accompanied by a deep insight into the human nature. Poets like Longfellow and Edgar Allan Poe saw promise within the author and his writings, though they were of the opinion that Hawthorne would achieve great success if he was to leave allegory behind in his writings.

Hawthorne's friend Bancroft helped the author get a job at Custom House at Salem. Hawthorne took up the position in 1839 and remained at the post for a total of two years. After losing the job because of political jobbery, he joined the Brook Farm settlement, where he remained a Democrat present among Abolitionists. The works he composed during this period were full of the discontentment he felt during his time at Brook Farm. His engagements with his surroundings during this time are best expressed in his novel *Blythedale Romance*, which contains story of Margaret Fuller (Zenobia) and speaks of her drowning in a passage that is considered the most tragic words ever written by Hawthorne.

It was in 1842 when Hawthorne got married to Miss Sophia Peabody. This marriage proved fortunate and happy for the author, and the couple soon moved to Concord where they lived in the Old Manse—a house intended for Emerson's grandfather, where Emerson has also stayed for about ten years. It is known that Hawthorne chose to study and compose in the same room where the philosopher had composed most of his works, and written his famous book *Nature*. Hawthorne has himself declared the four years he had stayed at this house as the happiest in his life. It was in this particular place where he composed his second volume of *Twice-Told Tales* and added *Mosses from an Old Manse* to his list of published writings.

In 1846, owing to a growing family and financial needs, Hawthorne had to once again seek employment. He moved back to Salem after having secured a job at Surveyor of Customs, and, during his presence there from 1846 to 1849, Hawthorne finally composed and published his most famous work *The Scarlet Letter* in 1850.

Critically essential to a fully developed novel is a broader experience of life, and this becomes evident when one takes a closer look at the history of American literature—Scott wrote *Waverly* when he was fifty; Cooper wrote *Spy* at the age of thirty-three, *Vanity Fair* was finished by Thackery at the age of forty, as was *Adam Beede* by George Eliot. It then comes as no surprise that Hawthorne would also compose his best work *The Scarlet Letter* at the age of forty-seven. The work is considered a masterpiece in American literature and the only novel that stands worthy of a comparison with Mrs. Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. In fact, when it comes to the study of Puritan life in New England of the time, the novel can also be considered superior to Mrs. Stowe's novel.

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Hawthorne died on 18 May 1864, while traveling to the White Mountains with his friend and ex-President Pierce. All throughout his life, Hawthorne was critical of the American transcendentalist movement. He was, nevertheless, influenced by it, as becomes evident in the themes he explores in most of his works.

Transcendentalism of the time was centered upon a highly individualized relationship with God and focused majorly on its development. A complete acceptance of the powers of nature along with a rejection of the social constraints. Civilization is considered by the transcendentalist as restricting the development of an individual and ceasing her/his spiritual, mental and emotional growth and widening the gap between the individual and God. Such are themes explored by the author in his novel.

Given below is a short list of publications by Hawthorne in a chronological order:

- *Fanshawe* (1826)
- *Twice-Told Tales* (1837)
- *Twice-Told Tales* (second volume, 1845)
- *Mosses from an Old Manse* (1846)
- *The Scarlet Letter* (1850)
- *The House of Seven Gables* (1851)
- *The Wonder Book* (1851)
- *The Blythedale Romance* (1852)
- *Life of Franklin Pierce* (1852)
- *Tanglewood Tales* (1853)

Check Your Progress

1. When was Nathaniel Hawthorne born?
2. What was the focus of transcendentalism?

5.3 THEMES IN *THE SCARLET LETTER*

Hawthorne published his novel *The Scarlet Letter* in 1850. Written in a quintessentially American style, the novel is set in the Puritan Massachusetts of the nineteenth century. The story centers around the character of Hester Prynne and her extra-marital affair. Faced with dangers of punishment that might come from this Puritan society (which was a society that was dedicated to purifying society through a strict interpretation of Christian scriptures), Hester eventually becomes

an outcast and the novel races the spiritual and emotional growth of this single individual.

Transcendentalism in *The Scarlet Letter*

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Hester is condemned for her sin of adultery and she lives literally outside the Puritan community with her illegitimate daughter Pearl. The two, exiled by Church despite Hester's numerous charitable acts, are scorned by the community around them and are discarded from every place of residence.

This is exactly what the transcendentalists loathed about society as a whole—they believed that social institutions, from schools to hospitals to churches, warped the human soul and spirit. Society's teachings were so damaging that they made hypocrites and lemmings of its citizens. Such hypocrisy can be seen in the poor and sick whom Hester helps—they cannot see how ridiculous they are to accept her help in one instant and condemn her in the next.

Society, for the transcendentalists, is a blinding, deforming and devouring force. What matters to them is the individual, who has the potential to be beautiful, divine and free. Hester and Pearl live as social outcasts who cannot attend Church services, and Pearl is not accepted into the Puritan school. Children are taught to shun and mock them both. They are literally alone, even when in the midst of the community, yet seem closer to the divine and are freer than others in the community.

Transcendentalists do not believe in organized religion, and certainly not in the highly restrictive Christianity practiced by the Puritans. For the transcendentalists, God cannot be confined to a single name or religion. The deity, for them, is far bigger, and can be understood through reading the sacred texts of all faiths, and taking from their teachings that which resonates in the soul. Above all, one develops a sense of the sacred and the moral by turning inward.

This is the inner sense of morality that Hester learns to cultivate across her decades as a social outcast. At first, she accepts nearly every bit of scorn heaped upon her; she internalizes and believes almost everything the Puritan doctrine teaches about sin. Initially, she believes that she is an abject sinner, far more corrupt than the rest of her upstanding community. Yet, she harbours a seed of doubt, because she loves Reverend Dimmesdale, and there is something in her feelings for him and for their affair that she cannot condemn entirely. For Hester, Dimmesdale is her true husband, the one given to her by God. She does not feel love for Roger Chillingworth, the man the church recognizes as her husband.

Indeed, as the years pass, Hester begins to have what in the Puritan community are considered 'dangerous thoughts'. She develops an acute sense for the moral hypocrisies and the moral suffering of others; she can feel the secret weight of sin in the townspeople as they pass by her. She alone recognizes how diabolical the widely respected Chillingworth has become.

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Hester's sense of an independent morality only grows. Barred from the Church, she develops a private relationship with God. Ultimately, she comes to embrace the scarlet 'A' she was made to wear as a symbol of her adultery. Through it, she comes to recognize her desire and love for Dimmesdale not as a sin, but as a blessing.

Societal Issues in *The Scarlet Letter*

More than the act of the affair, Hawthorne's novel focuses on the effects that are borne out of this affair. There were numerous reasons for the success of the novel. One of the primary reasons was the emerging society of the time. The culture that prospered in Britain helped Hawthorne form his unique style and language. Hawthorne's focus was more than just the entertainment of the masses and boldly explored the issues that the society had labelled as taboos.

Puritan values and rules had become less strict during the time Hawthorne was writing his novel. The scenarios portrayed by the author, however, were still received well when it got published. Though it was considered dangerous to write about a theme centered on adultery, but Hawthorne maintained a detached attitude towards the affairs of the characters.

The details of the affair between Hester and Dimmesdale are not provided to the readers within the text of the novel. Instead, the focus is on the aftermath, the public shaming, bearing of the illegitimate child and the rigidity of the values that force the 'sin' to exist long after the act has been finished.

For Hawthorne, the biggest asset was the interiority of his compositions, which allows him to plunge in deep and use thoughts and emotions to humanize the characters involved and demonize the wrong-doers. Chillingworth, for instance, who represents lust, greed and envy, is the perfect embodiment of all Puritan values.

Another reason for the popularity of the novel was that this was amongst the first novels in America to be mass-published. Before this novel, the books that circulated within the country were handmade and, thus, were sold in limited amounts. Hawthorne's was one of the initial novels to enjoy the advantage of the printed press—the 2500 copies of the first-print run were sold almost immediately.

The controversial matter combined with this large readership became thus the main reasons for the success of the novel. Many people read the text, and passed their positive and negative remarks on to the people around them. This trajectory resulted in the novel becoming a seminal political tract and advocated, though subtly and in subtext, a social change. The author's favourable reputation among literary peers (for instance, Herman Melville) furthered contributed in tagging the book as 'appropriate' despite its themes of adulterous love.

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Summary of the Novel

The novel opens with a lengthy preamble which talks about how the book came to be written in the first place. The narrator, whom Hawthorne depicts as nameless, is shown a surveyor in Salem, Massachusetts. This narrator is shown visiting customhouses. In the attic of one of the customhouse he visits, he comes upon several documents. He discovers that one of these documents is a manuscript, which is shown with 'a scarlet, gold-embroidered patch of cloth in the shape of an 'A' '.

The narrator then discovers that this is a manuscript that was composed about two hundred years ago before his time and must have been the work of a past surveyor. Upon losing his custom post, Hawthorne's narrator takes upon himself the task of writing down a fictional account of the incidents that were recorded within this manuscript. The result becomes the novel *The Scarlet Letter.*

As the story begins, a young woman Hester Prynne is shown being led from the town prison carrying her infant daughter Pearl in her arms and bearing the scarlet letter 'A' on her breast. Someone in the crowd mentions it to an elderly onlooker that the woman (Hester) is being punished for her act of adultery.

Hester is married to a scholar who is much older to her in age and, having sent her to America, himself stayed in Boston. Hawthorne indicates through several rumours that maybe he is lost at sea. Hester, while waiting for her husband, gets involved in an affair. The identity of Hester's lover is not revealed to the readers initially, however, the scarlet letter she bears is a symbol of the public shaming she is subjected to and the burden of sin along with a sense of secrecy that she has to live with. On the day the story opens, Hester is harangued by the fathers of the town but she remains adamant not to reveal the identity of the father of her child.

It is later revealed to the readers that the elderly onlooker is in fact Hester's lost husband. However, he now goes by the name of Roger Chillingworth and practices medicine. His true identity is not revealed to anyone except Hester, who has been sworn to secrecy. His main desire is to take revenge upon Hester.

Over the course of several years, Hester lives as an outcast. She takes up a job of a seamstress to support herself while her daughter Pearl develops into an impish child. The two live on the outskirts of the city in a small cottage. After a few years, the community officials attempt to separate Hester from Pearl, but Arthur Dimmesdale intervenes and the mother and daughter finally get to stay together.

Dimmesdale, however, is shown suffering from heart trouble and other illnesses caused by psychological stress. Chillingworth, acting as a healing minister, moves in with him and offers to take care of him. Chillingworth suspects a connection between Dimmesdale's illness and Hester's secret, and over time, begins to test Dimmesdale. One afternoon, while Dimmesdale is sleeping, Chillingworth discovers a mark on his chest and this convinces him of his suspicions. The details of this mark on Dimmesdale are, however, not explained to the reader.

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As his condition worsens, Dimmesdale psychological anguish further develops. Meanwhile, Hester continues to work towards charitable causes and manages to earn a respectable status within society. One night, Hester and Pearl, upon returning home, encounter Dimmesdale standing on a scaffold, trying to punish himself. The two join Dimmesdale and a seven-year-old Pearl requests Dimmesdale to publically acknowledge her as his daughter. When this request is denied, Hawthorne again shows a dull red 'A' marked across the sky.

When Hester notices the deteriorating health of Dimmesdale, she decides to step in and help. She visits Chillingworth and asks him to stop adding further misery in Dimmesdale's life, a request that Chillingworth denies.

Hester plans to meet Dimmesdale in a forest and tell him the truth about Chillingworth. The two lovers, upon meeting, decide to flee to Europe and live together as a family. Feeling a longed-for sense of relief, Dimmesdale arranges for the three to sail from Boston in the next four days. It is as a result of these events that Hester decides to remove the scarlet letter and finally accept happiness. The irony of this is, however, brought forth the readers when Pearl, who is shown playing nearby, fails to recognize her mother without her scarlet letter.

The day before the three are to depart on their ship, Dimmesdale decides to deliver his most eloquent sermon to the gathered townspeople. Hester, on the other hand, discovers that Chillingworth has found out about their plan and has booked a place for himself on the same ship. As he leaves from the church, Dimmesdale, on seeing Hester and Pearl on the scaffold, impulsively joins them and declares the truth to everyone, revealing, finally, the scarlet letter that is seared into his skin on his chest. He then dies and Pearl is shown kissing him.

Obsessed about taking his revenge, Chillingworth dies after a year. The last that the townspeople get to know about Hester and Pearl is that they had left Boston. Years later, Hester returns, alone, still bearing the scarlet letter, resumes her charity work and lives in her cottage house. It is told to the readers that she occasionally receives a letter from Pearl, who is now married to an aristocrat and lives in Europe with her family. When Hester dies, she is buried with Dimmesdale, and their tombstone is shown bearing a scarlet 'A'.

Adultery and Punishment

Hester's punishment, as cruel and absurd it might seem when placed in the modern-day context, was in keeping with legal Biblical laws of punishment. The Puritan Bible states, 'Thou shalt not commit adultery' (Exodus 20:14), and Leviticus 20:10 mentions 'If a man commits adultery with the wife of his neighbor, both the adulterer and the adulteress shall be put to death.' Similarly, it is mentioned in Matthew 5:27-28, as Jesus speaks, 'You have heard that it was said, 'Do not commit adultery.' But I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart.'

Therefore, according to the laws of the community, the vengeance seeked by Chillingworth attains an appropriate end only with the death of Hester and Dimmesdale. In Puritan culture, adultery is not concerned with two individuals, but is concerned with a defiance of the contract between the individual and the whole of community. In fact, according to the legal and moral obligations by the community, a husband wanting to forgive his wife for adultery would also not be taken into consideration and the female would be punished regardless. In Hawthorne's time, the sexual affairs of individuals were considered a public matter.

Check Your Progress

3. When was *The Scarlet Letter published*?
4. What is the central focus in the novel?
5. How does the novel begin?

5.4 *THE SCARLET LETTER*: ANALYSIS

Throughout the novel, Hawthorne explores the concepts of love, sin and morality, through his portrayal of varied characters and their viewpoints. He describes the main three characters of the novel with such a brilliance and a detached view that the readers end up making their own decisions about what is right and what is not, instead of simply accepting the values preached by the institutions—Is Hester a victim or seductress? Is Dimmesdale innocent in his ignorance? Is Chillingworth a victim who, scorned, ends up a villain?—the morality issues are explored openly by the author and by the reader.

The one character who is most vividly described in the novel is Hester. She is burdened with an 'A' that she must bear as a sign of her transgression. However, as Hester suffers, so do the citizens, though unconsciously, through their punishments and hypocrisy. Though Hester's actions were morally wrong, she could still not be accused of dishonesty. Paradoxically, her acceptance of the letter 'A' helps her attain a definite position in society, as people can still accept her in her place. As Dimmesdale mentions:

> But still, me thinks, it must needs be better for the sufferer to be free to show his pain, as this poor woman Hester is, than to cover it all up in his heart.

This statement is indicative of the resurrection that Hester must go through. She becomes for the community a sister of Mercy, with her 'A' standing for 'Able'.

Dimmesdale initially comes forth the readers as a man who contributes to Hester's bad reputation. Even though he is a holy man, he commits a sin far greater than anyone else's, for he goes against exactly what he preaches. His secret, locked up inside him, results in deterioration of his health. Each time he delivers his sermon, he grows weaker and his sense of shame increases. Dimmesdale, thus, suffers far more than any other character in the novel.

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The town of Salem, however, is better off living in the secret of Dimmesdale's wrong actions. Keeping Dimmesdale's secret, in that sense, is the best thing for the community. Chillingworth, on the other hand, is the most mysterious character in the novel, and the only one who keeps changing throughout the novel—from a kind man, he turned into a man who practiced 'Black Magic'. Chillingworth's biggest sin was to inflict torture on Arthur Dimmesdale. Dimmesdale says, 'That old man's revenge has been blacker than my sin. He has violated, in cold blood, the sanctity of a human heart.'

Chillingworth grows more evil as time progresses, through his acts of evil. His sin is a result of his actions. Even if he might seem to be devoid of evil at first, eventually, he becomes the cruelest character in Hawthorne's story.

In Hawthorne's book, the criminal becomes innocent and the one who was initially innocent becomes evil by the end. Dimmesdale and Hester are forgiven by the readers for committing their sin and for their secrecy, but Chillingworth gets associated with the Devil. Through his sin, he ends up killing Dimmesdale and, thus, becomes the unforgivable criminal.

Check Your Progress

6. What are the main societal concepts that Hawthorne explores in his novel?
7. What does the 'A' on Hester stand for?

5.5 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS QUESTIONS

1. Nathaniel Hawthorne was born on 4 July 1804.
2. Transcendentalism of the time was centered upon a highly individualized relationship with God and focused majorly on its development.
3. Hawthorne published his novel *The Scarlet Letter* in 1850.
4. The novel centers around the character of Hester Prynne and her extra-marital affair.
5. As the novel begins, a young woman Hester Prynne is shown being led from the town prison carrying her infant daughter Pearl in her arms and bearing the scarlet letter 'A' on her breast.
6. Throughout the novel, Hawthorne explores the concepts of love, sin and morality, through his portrayal of varied characters and their viewpoints.
7. Hester becomes for the community a sister of Mercy, and her 'A' standing for 'Able'.

5.6 SUMMARY

NOTES

- Nathaniel Hawthorne originally belonged to Salem, Massachusetts.
- Much like the works of Herman Melville and Edgar Allan Poe, Hawthorne is categorized in the genre of Dark Romanticism.
- The genre of Dark Romanticism also attract the attention of the readers to the subsequent consequences of the efforts made towards a social reform.
- Hawthorne came from a family which followed sea trade—his father, the most melancholy man, was a sea captain.
- After the passing away of her husband, Hawthorne's mother led a sad, secluded life, which resulted in the young Hawthorne spending most of his time playing with the creations of his own mind.
- Hawthorne graduated in 1825 and, having made his acquaintance with poets Longfellow and John S. C. Abbott, returned to Salem, resuming his dreamy existence.
- Hawthorne made use of his soltitude and worked to develop his thoughts and his imagination for the fame that was to come his way many years later.
- Hawthorne's first book was called *Fanshawe* and it was published in the year 1826.
- Hawthorne's work was richer than most of the writings that were developing during that time.
- Poets like Longfellow and Edgar Allan Poe saw promise within the author and his writings, though they were of the opinion that Hawthorne would achieve great success if he was to leave allegory behind in his writings.
- It was in 1842 when Hawthorne got married to Miss Sophia Peabody. This marriage proved fortunate and happy for the author, and the couple soon moved to Concord where they lived in the Old Manse—a house intended for Emerson's grandfather, where Emerson has also stayed for about ten years.
- *The Scarlet Letter* in 1850 is written in a quintessentially American style, the novel is set in the Puritan Massachusetts of the nineteenth century.
- Hester is condemned for her sin of adultery and she lives literally outside the Puritan community with her illegitimate daughter Pearl.
- Society, for the transcendentalists, is a blinding, deforming, and devouring force. What matters to them is the individual, who has the potential to be beautiful, divine, and free.
- More than the act of the affair, Hawthorne's novel focuses on the effects that are borne out of this affair.

NOTES

- The culture that prospered in Britain helped Hawthorne form his unique style and language. Hawthorne's focus was more than just the entertainment of the masses, and boldly explored the issues that the society had labeled as taboos.
- The details of the affair between Hester and Dimmesdale are not provided to the readers within the text of the novel. Instead, the focus is on the aftermath, the public shaming, bearing of the illegitimate child, and the rigidity of the values that force the 'sin' to exist long after the act has been finished.
- Another reason for the popularity of the novel was that this was amongst the first novels in America to be mass-published.
- The author's favourable reputation among literary peers (for instance, Herman Melville) furthered contributed in tagging the book as 'appropriate' despite its themes of adulterous love.
- The one character who is most vividly described in the novel is Hester. She is burdened with an 'A' that she must bear as a sign of her transgression.
- Dimmesdale initially comes forth the readers as a man who contributes to Hester's bad reputation.
- Chillingworth grows more evil as time progresses, through his acts of evil. His sin is a result of his actions.
- In Hawthorne's book, the criminal becomes innocent and the one who was initially innocent becomes evil by the end.

5.7 KEY WORDS

- **Fallibility**: It means the tendency to make mistakes or be wrong.
- **Solitude**: It means the state or situation of being alone.
- **Allegory**: It refers to a story, poem, or picture that can be interpreted to reveal a hidden meaning, typically a moral or political one.
- **Transcendentalism**: It is a philosophy started in the early 19th century that promotes intuitive, spiritual thinking instead of scientific thinking based on material things.
- **Quintessentially**: It refers to something that is used to emphasize the most perfect or typical example of a quality or class.
- **Harangued**: It means to lecture (someone) at length in an aggressive and critical manner.

5.8 SELF-ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

NOTES

Short Answer Questions

1. How did Hawthorne's marriage to Miss Sophia Peabody influence the author?
2. Write a short note on the character of Dimmesdale in Nathaniel Hawthorne's novel *The Scarlet Letter.*
3. Identify the traces of transcendentalism present in Nathaniel Hawthorne's novel *The Scarlet Letter.*

Long Answer Questions

1. Evaluate Nathaniel Hawthorne as an American writer. How did the solitude he experienced in his childhood influence the writer?
2. Why is Hawthorne placed in the category of Dark Romanticism? Explain with reference to his novel *The Scarlet Letter*.
3. Explain the issues of morality and independence as explored by Nathaniel Hawthorne through the character of Hester in his novel *The Scarlet Letter.*
4. Why did Hawthorne consider interiority as the biggest asset in his compositions? Explain with reference to Nathaniel Hawthorne's novel *The Scarlet Letter.*
5. Critically assess the themes of punishment and adultery as portrayed by Nathaniel Hawthorne in his novel *The Scarlet Letter.*
6. Explain the significance of the letter 'A' in Nathaniel Hawthorne's novel *The Scarlet Letter.*
7. How does Nathaniel Hawthorne reverse the traits of positivity and evil in the characters he portrays in his novel *The Scarlet Letter*?

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NOTES

BLOCK - II
FICTION VI - IX

UNIT 6 *A FAREWELL TO ARMS, BOOK I AND II:* ERNEST HEMINGWAY

Structure

6.0 INTRODUCTION

In this unit, you will be studying the semi-autobiographical novel, *A Farewell to Arms*, by Ernest Hemingway. This novel covers numerous events of the Italian campaigns during the First World War. In Hemingway's early works, war used to be a major theme. Ernest Hemingway's own wartime experiences led to the construction of the main plot in *A Farewell to Arms*. The novel outlines the themes of love and war that runs side by side. It portrays how despite serving as a miserably disconsolate situation, the war actually acts as a powerful catalyst in creating, as well as reinforcing, relationships between human beings. This novel goes a long way in establishing Ernest Hemingway as one of the greatest futuristic authors of the twentieth century.

6.1 OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- Prepare a brief biographical sketch of Ernest Hemingway
- Explain the significant happenings of Ernest Hemingway's novel *A Farewell to Arms*, specifically Book I and II
- Analyse the main characters of the novel *A Farewell to Arms*
- Evaluate Hemingway's *A Farewell to Arms* as a twentieth century novel

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6.2 ERNEST HEMINGWAY: LIFE AND WORKS

Born at Oak Park, Illinois, in the summer of 1899, Ernest Hemingway is known to have condemned his middle-class parents for their conventional morality and values. Hemingway left home at a young age and became a newspaper reporter in Kansas City. He joined the Italian Red Cross in early 1918 where he served as an ambulance driver in Italy during the First World War. During this stay abroad, a couple of incidences in Hemingway's life became the source of inspiration, as portrayed by the characters of his work *A Farewell to Arms*. The first incidence was a mishap that took place on 8 July 1918, when a trench mortar shell struck Hemingway while he squat beyond the front lines with three Italian soldiers. Though the story was exaggerated over the years, it was a fact that when Hemingway was transferred to a hospital in Milan, he fell in love with Agnes von Kurowsky, a Red Cross nurse. Though there are divided opinions on the role played by Agnes in Hemingway's life and writing, there is modest doubt that his relationship with her inspired the relationship between Lieutenant Henry and Catherine Barkley in his novel *A Farewell to Arms*.

Fig 6.1 *Ernest Hemingway*

After recovery, Hemingway worked as a reporter for many years. This helped him in honing his writing skills, where his style had clarity, precision and an emotional expression. In September 1921, Hemingway got married to *Hadley Richardson*, first of his four wives and settled in Paris. Here, he made valuable connections with American expatriate writers that included names like Ezra Pound and Gertrude Stein. Hemingway's first collection of short stories, *In Our Time*, introduced Nick Adams, one of the Hemingway's favourite protagonists, whose difficult road from youth to maturity he chronicled. By then, Hemingway's reputation as a writer was firmly established by the publication of *The Sun Also Rises* (1926) and *A Farewell to Arms* (1929).

A Farewell to Arms is considered to be Hemingway's most accomplished novel that gives a powerful description of life, during and just after the First World War. The novel also maps the psychological complexities of its characters with the aid of revolutionary and pared-down prose style.

In 1952, regardless of bouts of depression, Hemingway wrote the novel *The Old Man and the Sea.* Hemingway's novel received the *Pulitzer Prize* in May 1952, and he was awarded the *Nobel Prize in Literature* in 1954. On 2 July 1961, Hemingway committed suicide at his home in *Ketchum, Idaho*.

Check Your Progress

1. When did Ernest Hemingway join the Italian Red Cross?
2. Name the prominent works of Ernest Hemingway.

6.3: *A FAREWELL TO ARMS,* BOOK I AND II: SUMMARY AND ANALYSIS

Let us now study Chapters I and II of the novel briefly here.

Chapters I– II

Chapter I

The novel opens with a description of the small Italian village where Lieutenant Henry, the narrator, lives. It is the summer during the First World War; troops often march down the road, officers pass in 'small gray motor cars'. Henry speculates that one of the fast-moving cars may carry the king, who travels out of the palace almost every day to assess the battle. As winter approaches, an outbreak of cholera sweeps out about seven thousand soldiers.

Chapter II

The second chapter opens with Henry's unit moving to the city of Gorizia, away from the actual scenes of the fight. The life in Gorizia is relaxed and pleasant. The buildings are still undamaged and there are cafés and two brothels in the city; one for the officers and the other for enlisted soldiers. Henry sits in the mess hall one day, with a group of fellow officers who declare that the war is over as there is snowfall. They are contemptuous of religion and taunt the priest with their crude remarks about sex. A captain jokingly tells him not to horse around in the presence of ladies. This makes the priest blush. The officers then discuss Henry's travel routes, and the priest urges him to visit the Abruzzi region, where his family stays. However, others tell him to visit Palermo, Capri, Rome, Naples or Sicily. The conversation then moves towards opera singers and the group proceeds toward the brothels to spend their night.

Analysis of Primary Characters

- **Lieutenant Frederic Henry:** The novel's narrator and protagonist, Henry is a young American ambulance driver in the Italian army during the First World War. Henry's quiet stoicism is evident in the manner he conducts his military duties. Though he has no faith on abstract terms like 'glory' and 'heroism', he displays courage in battle. These terms have no value to him and he is portrayed as a realist rather than an idealist. His life is mundane until he meets the love of his life, Catherine Barkley.
- **Catherine Barkley:** Catherine Berkley is the beautiful nurse and the female protagonist of the novel. The opening of the novel portrays her sorrow for her dead fiancé. In order to forget the tragic event, she gets into a playful and reckless game of love with Henry. Her feelings for him, however, soon change and she becomes his lifelong companion.
- **Rinaldi:** Henry's closest friend and a surgeon in the Italian army, Rinaldi is wry, naughty and oversexed. His primary interest lies in seducing beautiful women though he was an efficient and skilled doctor.
- **The Priest:** Often at the wrong end of the soldier's jokes, the kind young priest is employed by the Italian army to provide spiritual guidance to young officers. He responds to the soldier's jokes in his usual good-natured manner. The author challenges abstract but popular notions of honour, glory and loyalty through Henry's conversations with the priest.
- **Helen Ferguson:** Catherine's beloved friend and a nurse's aide in the American hospital. Her outburst at Catherine and Henry's 'immoral' affair portrays her as an unhappy and lonely woman.
- **Miss Gage:** An American nurse who helps Henry to recover at Milan. She soon becomes Henry's friend as she is easy-going and unorthodox. They are shown to share a drink and a few gossips.
- **Miss Van Campen:** The superintendent at the American hospital, Miss Van Campen is cold, strict and unpleasant. She dislikes Henry and maintains a distance from him.
- **Dr Valentini:** A stoic and aggressive doctor who operates upon Henry immediately, thereby rubbishing the claims of other surgeons that Henry would have to wait for his operation for six months. The novel celebrates the self-confidence and assurance that the character portrays.
- **Count Greffi:** The ninety-four year old count represents a mature version of the protagonist, Henry. Though he dismisses the label 'wise', he lives his life according to his own terms. In the novel, Henry values him as a father-figure.

- **Ettore Moretti:** Moretti is a soldier in the Italian army just like Henry. He is an obnoxious braggart who instigates people to fight. He pursues the glory and honour that war veterans believe in and Henry despises.
- **Gino:** Henry meets this young Italian in a devastated village. His patriotism is sharply contrasted with Henry's antagonism towards war.
- **Ralph Simmons:** Simmons is an opera student and the first person Henry meets after fleeing the battle. He provides Henry with civilian clothes so that the latter could venture to Switzerland without drawing any suspicion.
- **Emilio:** A bartender in Stresa, Emilio helps Henry and Catherine unite after the war.
- **Bonello:** Henry's subordinate ambulance driver, who shows his ruthlessness by unloading a pistol on an uncooperative engineer who was already been shot by Henry.

We now analyse in detail, in the subsequent section, the primary characters in the novel.

Frederic Henry

Henry portrays himself as a man of duty whenever he explains his experience in war. He is someone who just keeps to his duties as a soldier and does not bathe in the vainglory that war-mongering fetches. He despises the aftermath of war and even after being mortally wounded, does not pursue a medal of distinction. Through his conversations with the priest, Ettore Moretti, and Gino, he proclaims his apathy for nonfigurative notions of war, honour, glory, patriotism and so forth. These to him are no more significant than the names of cities he has fought in and the streets he has seen decimated. While we notice the nonchalance and unexcited behaviour of Henry in the perspective of war, he surprises us with his passion for Catherine. It seems as if she is the remedy to him for war; an antidote, maybe to the hatred he has for war. Initially, he only looks forward to a night's simple pleasures with her, just like his friend, Rinaldi. However, he returns to her, not for the physical attraction, but for a passion he has never known before. We get to see a sudden vulnerability, earlier hidden by his stoicism and masculinity, in his love for Catherine; he swears his love for her even when she asks him to stop playing around. The words he uses to describe her hair and her presence in bed is enough to vouch for his genuine intentions for her. The power of the pathos of an elegy that is evident in his narration after Catherine's death suffuses the whole novel; probably this was the author's intention of using Henry as a narrator of the novel.

Catherine Barkley

Hemingway's portrayal of female characters has always come under scanner; more so after the genre of feminism rose to prominence. Women readers have openly criticized him as a novelist who likes to keep his women in traditional garbs. Critic Leslie A. Fiedler has mentioned that his portrayal of women may be divided into

two vivid categories. First being a dominant shrew, such as the character of Lady Brett in *The Sun Also Rises*, and secondly, the overtly submissive, such as Catherine in the novel in discussion. Fiedler also maintains that Hemingway is clearly uncomfortable portraying his women characters. He is smarter while handling the men. He stays in comfortable domain with his women and retreats into uncomplicated stereotypes. Catherine surrenders to blissful domesticity, particularly at the novel's end, which is evident with lines like, "I'm having a child and that makes me contented not to do anything". This hardly goes down well with feminists and progressive women readers who get rankled at reading such a stereotypical suggestion to a bygone era where women were happy in the traditional roles of a homemaker.

Though Catherine's desire to lead the proverbial happy life often makes her look archetypal, she cannot be denied her moments of grandeur as well. She alludes herself as slightly 'crazy' in her initial days with Henry though she is aware that they have no serious relationship. She is aware that her feelings for him are primarily physical and that she is using him to keep the memories of his dead fiancé at bay. She capably draws a line and does not wield when Henry claims that he loves her. She tells him that she had had enough for the night and that this love of his is nothing but a lie. She doubts his love and tells him that she imagines that dreadful things are awaiting them and that she would never be able to love her baby as she had never loved anyone truly. This scepticism that she professes about love and their future together may be reflections of a mind of the war-torn social conditions. Though her inner conflicts and their intensities are always open to debate, her loyalty to Henry is absolute. She is a loving, dedicated woman whose desire and ability for a redemptive, otherworldly love makes her the inevitable victim of tragedy.

Rinaldi

An unbelievable womanizer, Rinaldi serves an important function in the novel. Hemingway often celebrates his kind of masculinity, where a man lives life on his own terms, living boldly and truly. Rinaldi professes his love for Catherine when the novel opens, but soon claims that he is relieved that he is not tied down with the emotional baggage that a women's love brings along. He regularly visits brothels and at one point of time Henry maintains that he will succumb to syphilis. Though there is no sermonizing in this statement, Hemingway presents this with an air of detached morality. Rinaldi dominates the other minor male characters.

Check Your Progress

3. Who is the narrator of the novel *A Farewell to Arm*s?
4. What is the primary interest of Rinaldi in the novel *A Farewell to Arms*?

6.4 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

1. Ernest Hemingway joined the Italian Red Cross in early 1918 where he served as an ambulance driver in Italy during the First World War.
2. *The Sun Also Rises* (1926) and *A Farewell to Arms* (1929) are prominent works of Ernest Hemingway.
3. Lieutenant Henry is the narrator of the novel *A Farewell to Arms*.
4. Rinaldi's primary interest lies in seducing beautiful women though he was an efficient and skilled doctor.

6.5 SUMMARY

- Ernest Hemingway was a twentieth century author and journalist.
- His style of writing was economical and understated, influencing contemporary literature in a big way. His adventurous lifestyle and public image in turn, influenced the younger generations.
- *A Farewell to Arms* by Hemingway covers numerous events of the Italian campaigns during the First World War. In Hemingway's early works, war used to be a major theme.
- Hemingway's own wartime experiences led to the construction of the main plot in *A Farewell to Arms*. The novel outlines the themes of love and war that run side by side.
- It portrays how despite serving as a miserably disconsolate situation, the war actually acts as a powerful catalyst in creating, as well as reinforcing, relationships between human beings.
- This novel goes a long way in establishing Hemingway as one of the most futuristic authors of the 20th century.

6.6 KEY WORDS

- **Stoicism:** It refers to repression of emotion and indifference to pleasure and pain.
- **Realist:** This term refers to a person who represents things as they really are.
- **Idealist:** This terms refers to a person who cherishes and pursues noble principles.
- **Masculinity:** It refers to qualities such as strength and boldness ascribed to men.

- **Illusions:** It is a false sense of reality.
- **Fantasy:** It refers to extravagant and unrestrained imagination.
- **Antiwar novel**: It is a genre of novel that condemns war and its glorification.

NOTES

6.7 SELF ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

Short Answer Questions

1. Write a short note on the life of Ernest Hemingway.
2. List the prominent works of Ernest Hemingway.

Long Answer Questions

1. Summarize the contents of Book I and Book II of *A Farewell to Arms*.
2. Critically analyse the character of Lieutenant Frederic Henry in the novel.
3. Why has Heminway being criticized for the portrayal of female characters in his literary works?

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UNIT 7 *A FAREWELL TO ARMS, BOOK III AND V:* ERNEST HEMINGWAY

Structure

7.0 INTRODUCTION

Ernest Hemingway is recognized as one of the greatest novelists of the world. He gave novel writing in America a new turn which marked a break in formal treatment of the subject and the rapid shift in perception of realities. His work baffled the readers and critics for the dazzling novelty with which they made their appearance. Nobel Prize winner Ernest Hemingway is one of the great American twentieth century novelists, who was known for his economic and understated style of writing. He is best known for works like *A Farewell to Arms, The Old Man and the Sea, The Sun Also Rises* and *For Whom the Bell Tolls*.

In this unit, you will study about the Book III and Book V of the novel *A Farewell to Arms*.

7.1 OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- Discuss the significant happenings of Ernest Hemingway's novel *A Farewell to Arms*, specifically Book III and V
- Analyse the themes, motifs and symbols in the novel *A Farewell to Arms*

7.2 *A FAREWELL TO ARMS, BOOK III AND V:* SUMMARY AND ANALYSIS

Let us now study Chapters III and V of the novel briefly here.

Chapters III and V

Chapter III

The chapter opens with Henry describing his trip to his roommate and fellow lieutenant Rinaldi. He tells Rinaldi that he has travelled all over Italy, and Renaldi comments that travel is no longer necessary to seek beautiful women. Here we get the first glimpse of the larger-than life, womanizing character of Rinaldi. Rinaldi further informs Henry that he has fallen in love with a beautiful young nurse, Catherine Berkley. Henry lends Rinaldi some money so that he could impress the woman as having come from a wealthy background. During dinner, Henry tries to mollify the priest who feels hurt that Henry did not visit Abruzzi. A drunken Henry tries to explain the situation as best as he can; the chapter ends with the soldiers picking on the priest again.

Chapter V

The chapter opens with Henry calling on Catherine the next day. At the British hospital, he is told by the head nurse that Catherine's duty would not be over before the evening, so she would be unable to meet him in the morning. She also expresses surprise at the fact that an American has joined the Italian army. While driving back home along the trenches, Henry surveys the road, which when completed, can be used for launching an offensive at a later date. After dinner he returns to talk to Catherine, whom he finds with Helen. Helen leaves them alone and the duo talk about Catherine's job. They decide to 'drop the war' as a subject of conversation. When he puts his hand around her, she initially resists but later agrees. However, when he attempts to kiss her, she slaps him. Henry notes, with laughter, that their little drama has taken them away from the talk of war. Catherine lets Henry kiss her and starts crying, saying that 'We're going to have a strange life'. Rinaldi comments on his romantic glow when Henry returns home.

Check Your Progress

1. How does chapter III begin?
2. What is the topic of discussion between Henry and Catherine in chapter V?

7.3 THEMES, MOTIFS AND SYMBOLS IN THE NOVEL

Themes

Themes can be defined as the primary and often universal ideas explored in a literary work. In Hemingway's novel, *A Farewell to Arms,* the following themes are explored in details.

(i) Grim reality of war

The title of the novel makes it obvious that the novel primarily deals with war and its aftermath. This is evident by the way Henry's life is affected by war and the manner in which he abhors war. Gino and Moretti support the author to bring out the vagaries of war. Though Gino is naïve and Moretti a braggart, they are the only ones who have their own glorious notions of war; most of the other characters remain inconclusive about the war. Through evocative scenes such as the Italian army's retreat, Hemingway paints masterful pictures of the mindless brutality and violent chaos caused by war. The soldiers' nerves, minds and capacity of rational judgment crumble along with the columns of men. The engineer who is shot by Henry due to the uncooperative behaviour of the former mostly upsets readers as, through this violent act, he deviates from his usual calm and detached self; and second, the setting of the scene robs it of its moral import as the conniving fellow soldiers legitimize the murder. The legitimizing of the act is seen to justify the spiralling disorder and hatred that war has brought in. Through these brutal incidents, Hemingway suggests that the war is nothing but an extension of the dark, murderous addendum to the world that refuses to acknowledge and protect humanity and love.

Hemingway suggests that war is nothing more than the dark, murderous extension of a world that refuses to acknowledge, protect, or preserve exact love.

(ii) Relationship of love and pain

In this novel, the author offers a deep, sombre meditation on the relationship between love and war. The game of seduction that Catherine plays with Henry soon turns into a serious affair of the heart for both. She initiated this game because she was mourning for her dead fiancé and desperately wished to forget him. Henry and Catherine start finding solace in each other from the things that plague them in this world. Henry's passion for Catherine is so strong that he flees the war and looks for her. Once they are reunited, they start planning an idyllic life that could salvage them from the horrors of war. They become each other's social, psychological and emotional healing amidst the Swiss mountainside. The tragedy of the novel lies in the fact that their genuine love can only be temporary in this cruel world.

Motifs

Motifs are persistent structures, contrasts, or literary devices that can help to develop and inform the text's major themes.

(i) Masculinity

Hemingway's novels almost always celebrate a swaggering, virile, domineering and supremely confident masculine power. In *A Farewell to Arms* some of the minor characters portray a fine example of manhood. While Dr Valentini exudes virility as an expert surgeon that poses as competition to Rinaldi's womanizing,

Rinaldi proves to be a faithful friend. Bonello, who shoots the fleeing engineering sergeants, has a touch of cruelty that sort of pervades the entire novel. Hemingway has almost always used humour, if not contempt to portray their opposite characters. The success of these men depends on the failure of the other. Rinaldi attacks the guileless priest, thereby establishing his manhood; the overly cautious, almost mousy three surgeons challenge Dr Valentini's reputation by refuting Henry's claims to an early operation.

(ii) Games and divertissement

The novel abounds in games, intrigues and divertissement which we notice right from the opening of the novel. Catherine and Henry start flirting with each other in order to forget their personal troubles. Flirting helps Henry to 'drop the war' and also diverts Catherine's thoughts from her fiancé. Henry blocks out the worrying thoughts of his return to the front by attending horse races with Catherine. Ironically, his involvement with Catherine becomes the reason for his suffering. Though the war turns out to be a primary divertissement for him, he tries to forget the pain of being separated from his lover while playing pool with Count Greffi. When Catherine tells him not to think about her when he was in the front, he tells her, Henry replies, 'That's how I worked it at the front. But there was somewhat to do then.' Hemingway portrays the temporariness of happiness by using the war and pain as divertissements in the novel. Though happiness is temporary, it is imperative human nature to pursue it. The count claims that though love is a pleasurable pastime, he is well-aware of its vagaries to fall in love with a lady. He hedges against the transitory character of love by finding pleasure and amusement in games, birthday parties, and the taking of 'a little stimulant'. That one can depend on their simple pleasures lends games and divertissement a definite dignity; while they may not match up to the nobility of pursuits such as love, they prove quietly constant.

(iii) Loyalty versus abandonment

The ideas of loyalty and abandonment apply equally well to love and war. Hemingway suggests that one should be loyal to one's love than to war and political causes. While Henry is portrayed as a serious soldier, he does not attach false importance to unreal notions of glory and honour. Though he shoots an uncooperative sergeant who fails to comply with his orders, his reaction needs to be treated as a violent outcome of the all-pervasive nature of war, rather than a personal failure. He eventually follows in the fleeing engineer's footsteps and deserts his regimen. At times he feels guilty that he has abandoned his regimen when it needed him, his supreme loyalty lay in being true to Catherine. Hemingway wished to impart upon his readers his take on loyalty and abandonment—for him, these are not the opposite ends of an ethical spectrum, but the practical priorities of an individual life.

(iv) Illusions and fantasies

The novel begins with a sense of illusion and fantasy. When the protagonists meet for the first time, they create the illusion of falling in love with each other. While Catherine seeks solace in Henry from the death of her fiancé, Henry fantasizes about her when he is away, thereby urging himself to fall in love with Catherine. Their relationship, at the initial stage, was absolutely artificial and based on illusions and fantasies. Henry is reminded by Catherine that the love they have is nothing but flirting, being sent away many times by her once she has her fill for the night. When he gets injured at war, the care and tenderness that he experiences from her transforms his feelings for her to love. His love begins to sustain him through his journey through recuperation. It blossoms into an almost surreal passion.

> The couple is genuinely passionate about each other; however, they never escape the temptation of dreaming of a better world. The boundary between actuality and illusion blurs often. After Henry and Catherine have spent months in the desolate Switzerland, Hemingway depicts their relationship as a mixture of reality and illusion. Boredom had started to set in, and the couple effects small daily changes to reinvigorate their lives and their passion: Catherine gets a new haircut, Henry sports a beard. Still the relative dullness of real, mundane life makes them turn to fantasies of a more perfect existence. They dream of life on a Swiss mountain, where they will make their own clothes and require nothing but each other, suggesting that fantasizing is part of coping with the banal, sometimes damaging effects of reality.

Symbols

Symbols are objects, typescript, figures, or colours used to represent abstract ideas or concepts.

(i) Rain

Throughout the novel, this symbol of rain has been used as a potent symbol of disintegration of the happiness of life. When she and Henry lie on the bed, listening to the storm growing larger every minute, Catherine admits her fear of the rain. She says that rain has a potential of ruining everything in life. Her fears prove prophetic as they are eventually doomed. Catherine dies on a rainy day and Henry walks in the rain as he banishes the thoughts of missing her from her heart. The rain may also be understood as a symbol of the bleak future that he faces without his lover to support him anymore. Catherine's anxiety over rain finds its destiny in the tragic separation of the lovers forever, confirming the fact that like everything else, great love too, cannot last forever.

(ii) Catherine's hair

Catherine's hair is a symbol that, though not recurrent, is an important one. In the initial days of their relationship, when the lovers were in bed, Catherine had untied her hair and let it cascade around Henry's face. Henry remembers the inside of a tent or the seclusion of the waterfall. The lovely description that Henry provides of

Catherine's hair stands as a symbol of their isolation from the world. The hair acts as a protective covering that secures Henry from the rest of the world. It also stands for temporariness and fragility of life. When they are cut off from the rest of the world and live peacefully in Switzerland, they learn the harsh lesson that love is as ephemeral as life.

Check Your Progress

3. What does the rain symbolize in the novel *A Farewell to Arms*?
4. What are motifs?

7.4 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS QUESTIONS

1. Chapter III begins with Henry describing his trip to his roommate and fellow lieutenant Rinaldi.
2. The topic of discussion between Henry and Catherine in chapter V is Catherine's job. They decide to 'drop the war' as a subject of conversation.
3. Throughout the novel, the symbol of rain has been used as a potent symbol of disintegration of the happiness of life.
4. Motifs are persistent structures, contrasts, or literary devices that can help to develop and inform the text's major themes.

7.5 SUMMARY

- Ernest Hemingway is recognized as one of the greatest novelists of the world. He gave novel writing in America a new turn which marked a break in formal treatment of the subject and the rapid shift in perception of realities.
- Chapter III opens with Henry describing his trip to his roommate and fellow lieutenant Rinaldi.
- At the British hospital, Henry is told by the head nurse that Catherine's duty would not be over before the evening, so she would be unable to meet him in the morning.
- The title of the novel makes it obvious that the novel primarily deals with war and its aftermath.
- Through evocative scenes such as the Italian army's retreat, Hemingway paints masterful pictures of the mindless brutality and violent chaos caused by war.

- Hemingway suggests that war is nothing more than the dark, murderous extension of a world that refuses to acknowledge, protect, or preserve exact love.
- Motifs are persistent structures, contrasts, or literary devices that can help to develop and inform the text's major themes.
- The novel abounds in games, intrigues and divertissement which we notice right from the opening of the novel.
- The ideas of loyalty and abandonment apply equally well to love and war. Hemingway suggests that one should be loyal to one's love than to war and political causes.
- The novel begins with a sense of illusion and fantasy. When the protagonists meet for the first time, they create the illusion of falling in love with each other.
- Throughout the novel, this symbol of rain has been used as a potent symbol of disintegration of the happiness of life.
- Catherine's hair is a symbol that, though not recurrent, is an important one. In the initial days of their relationship, when the lovers were in bed, Catherine had untied her hair and let it cascade around Henry's face.

7.6 KEY WORDS

- **Divertissement:** It refers to a minor entertainment or diversion.
- **Typescript:** It implies typed copy of a text.
- **Ephemeral:** It means lasting for a very short time.

7.7 SELF ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

Short Answer Questions

1. Why is Henry not able to meet Catherine initially in chapter V?
2. Write a short note on the character of Dr Valentini.

Long Answer Questions

1. Discuss the primary themes of the novel as discussed in the first five chapters of the novel *A Farewell to Arms.*
2. How far do you think the novel *A Farewell to Arms* deals with the grim reality about war? Discuss in detail.
3. Comment on the title of the novel *A Farewell to Arms.*

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7.8 FURTHER READINGS

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UNIT 8 *CRIME AND PUNISHMENT CHAPTER 1 – 3:* DOSTOEVSKY

Structure

8.0 INTRODUCTION

Fyodor Dostoevsky is reckoned as one of the most leading writers of the nineteenth century, irrespective of national origin. He incorporated psychological, philosophical, political, and religious elements in his works, which largely changed the manner of perceiving fiction. The impact of Dostoevsky's works has been felt far and wide, from native Russia to the far corners of the world, as his works have been translated into more than 50 languages. His novel *Crime and Punishment* is recognized as an archetypal of world literature that directly impacted diverse group of remarkable writers like Franz Kafka, Albert Camus and J. M. Coetzee. In this long, feverish trip through the psyche of an anguished murderer, Dostoevsky's narrative skill reached an unsurpassed height. Apart from literary fame, the novel also achieved significant commercial success.

8.1 OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- Prepare a brief biographical sketch of Fyodor Dostoevsky
- Discuss the plot of the novel *Crime and Punishment*

8.2 FYODOR DOSTOEVSKY: LIFE AND WORKS

Dostoevsky was born in Moscow in 1821. His father was a doctor. Though his education started at home, he was eventually sent to an elite boarding school.

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Finally, he graduated from the St. Petersburg Academy of Military Engineering in 1843. However, he soon realized that his real calling lay in literature and resigned from the rank of a sub-lieutenant to pursue the career of a fiction writer.

Unlike many others, Dostoevsky was lucky as *Poor Folk* (1846), his first novel, received immediate commendation from the critics after its publication. Due to his active opposition to the institution of Serfdom, Dostoevsky became increasingly prominent in the socialist circles. His involvement in this and many other socialist causes gradually increased during the period 1847–1849. Due to his involvement in printing and distributing socialist doctrines which were considered illegal and insidious, Dostoevsky was arrested and sentenced to a long imprisonment. After spending eight months in the prison along with many others convicted of similar crimes, Dostoevsky was sentenced to be executed. However, it became apparent that the execution was a show meant to psychologically crush the activists. Their 'death sentence' was commuted to a sentence of four-year penal servitude in a labour camp in Siberia. Four years of compulsory service to the military followed a term of penal servitude. Raskolnikov's experience in a Siberian prison, as depicted in the 'Epilogue' of *Crime and Punishment* (1866), is produced out of Dostoevsky's own familiarity regarding a similar situation.

More directly, Dostoevsky's *The House of the Dead* (1862) records his prison experiences as well as the psychological condition and trauma created by a life of penal servitude. During his term in Siberia, Dostoevsky had a significant impact on his life. During this time he suffered the first of many epileptic seizures. This personal experience shaped and impacted many of his literary presentations of the alleged 'abnormal' mind that offers unique insight into human greatness achieved in mental spheres. The wisdom that is attained by such 'insane' people is immortalized in Dostoevsky's *The Idiot* (1869). However, apart from that, in general, many of Dostoevsky's protagonists exhibit moments of wisdom and insight when they are seized by irrational impulses, as experienced by the people who suffer from such epileptic seizures. Second, perhaps in a more pervasive way, Dostoevsky's faith in social radicalism and socialist revolutions underwent a paradigmatic shift. He not only lost faith in such interventionist-constructivist social activism, but also became a staunch opponent to all such rational enterprises to change human behaviour in society through the use of specific pragmatic techniques. The first outburst of his systematic fictional treatment of the critique regarding this pragmatic approach to human life and civilization was presented in his *Notes from Underground* (1864). In this text, he directly takes on *What is to be Done.* It is a political pamphlet written by the Russian revolutionary Vladimir Lenin in 1901 and published in 1902. However, *What is to be Done?* remains one of the most seminal texts, even for a generation after that. Lenin was immensely influenced by the text and offered his own paraphrase, making it a suitable textbook for revolution. Dostoevsky's ideological opposition to such rational, pragmatic approach to human

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welfare and betterment, as found in his *Notes*, becomes more trenchant in *Crime and Punishment*. Here, the presentation of the dialectic behind the murder motive and other ways of supporting a crime works as a travesty of the whole idea of discourse of rationalization for human actions.

In fact, in part Raskolnikov's crime is motivated by his justification of any action based on such a pragmatic, utilitarian view of the society. Further, Lebeziatnikov, whose name is a derivative of the Russian word for 'sycophant', is fixated on the new philosophy that was fashionable in St. Petersburg. Luzhin, a middle-ranking public servant, is constantly anxious of being 'uncovered by the nihilists'. Dostoevsky's marriage to Mariya Dmitriyevna Isayeva in 1857 ended when she died of consumption after seven years. During the 1860s, Dostoevsky spent much of his time in close proximity with Western European culture. This experience gave him direct access to the invading cultural mores that were transforming Russian customs in an irrevocable way. Further, during the early part of the decade, he was beleaguered by a number of personal problems, his wife's illness and death being one of the most profound, and crises like acute poverty, epileptic illness and apparently an incorrigible addiction to gambling. His personal problems were further aggravated by his brother's protracted illness, which he heroically tended to, and his brother's eventual untimely death, that burdened his already impoverished condition with further burden of a huge debt caused by his brother's reckless lifestyle. If his personal and material conditions reached its lowest point in the middle of the decade, these experiences also contributed to the reversal of his fortunes. *Notes from Underground* presented the anti-rationalistic tormented diatribe in the form of a troubled mind's long monologue. The novella not only consolidated Dostoevsky's stand as an anti-socialist, but also established him as the pioneering writer with a unique psychological insight into the complex human minds.

His achievement as a pioneering author in the psychological-realist vein was only consolidated by the publication of *Crime and Punishment* in 1866. In this long, feverish trip through the psyche of an anguished murderer, Dostoevsky's narrative skill reached an unsurpassed height. Apart from literary fame, the novel also achieved significant commercial success that barely allowed him to keep afloat in terms of finance. However, his earnings were soon eroded by the mounting impact of his doubly daunting financial burden, inherited credits and the responsibility of raising a number of children orphaned by premature and sudden deaths both of his brother and sister. In 1867, he remarried Anna Grigoryevna Snitkina. She helped him deal with his clinical problems of epilepsy, psychological difficulties of depression and gambling, and offered the services of a stenographer for his novel, *The Gambler* (1866).

Dostoevsky continued to write many more novels which also attained the status of classics with lasting reputation. Among these, *The Idiot* (1868) and *The*

Brothers Karamazov (1880), completed a year before his death, are considered to be the most important ones. The legacy and influence of Dostoevsky's novels and writings can be traced in many writings of twentieth century literature and philosophy, cutting across the geographical and cultural boundaries of Europe. Some saw his treatment of the external issues as prescient depictions of life under future totalitarian regimes that created pragmatic monstrosities professing to ostensibly improve the very condition it ended up stifling manifold. Dostoevsky's accounts of the frustratingly futile nature of human encounter with mortality, despair, meaninglessness and futility of anxious choices were lapped by the existentialist thinkers who flourished during the mid-twentieth century.

His literary successors like Jean-Paul Sartre and Albert Camus treasured Dostoevsky's works for his perceptive insight into human quandary. The befitting style to such content was created by his treatment of literary techniques. The unforgettable characters in his novels contribute to the continuation and consolidation of a lasting legacy, long after his death.

Check Your Progress

1. When and where was Fyodor Dostoevsky born?
2. Why did Dostoevsky resign from the post of sub-lieutenant in army?
3. In which year was *Crime and Punishment published*?

8.3 *CRIME AND PUNISHMENT*: PLOT OVERVIEW

In the beginning of the novel *Crime and Punishment*, written by Fyodor Dostoevsky, we find the protagonist, Rodion Romanovich Raskolnikov, recently a student, but now unoccupied, living alone in the little attic of a ramshackle St. Petersburg apartment. Though handsome and intelligent, Raskolnikov looks wan and is scruffily dressed. While his financial condition verges on poverty, he is often found to be abstractedly engaged in a monologue with himself. He is often shown deeply pondering over a dreadful crime of uncertain character. He goes to the house of an old pawnbroker, Alyona Ivanovna, with the intention of pawning a watch for some money. However, it is hinted that the ulterior motive for the visit is to plan the crime more thoroughly.

On his way back, he meets an extraordinary person called Marmeladov at the tavern. Marmeladov reveals that in a fit of drunkenness, he has indulged in a five-day spell of drinking after abandoning his job. Now he is afraid to return to his family and to tell them what he has done. He tells Raskolnikov about his ailing wife and his daughter, Sonya. Marmeladov tells him that Sonya has been forced into prostitution to support the family. Without any logical explanation, Raskolnikov accompanies Marmeladov to his apartment and finds his family living in extreme

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poverty and squalor. Pulcheria Alexandrovna, Raskolnikov's mother, sends him a letter informing him of his sister, Dunya's, imminent marriage to a government servant, Luzhin, and their plan to move to St. Petersburg for solemnizing the marriage. After receiving the letter, Raskolnikov goes to another tavern only to overhear another fellow student declaring how the world would be a better place if the old pawnbroker, Alyona Ivanovna, died.

As if to conjure the entire circumstance to some specific goal, Raskolnikov, on the streets, overhears another bit of information that the old pawnbroker will be alone at her apartment the next evening. By the time, we find him sleeping fitfully at night and arranging for an axe in the morning, we are half-aware that the awful crime he had contemplated for long is the murder of the old pawnbroker. Raskolnikov takes out the same watch that he had taken with him during his previous visit to the pawnbroker to create an alibi for his visit. In the evening, Raskolnikov finds the old pawnbroker alone at her apartment. He kills her in an instant, but while rummaging through her belongings for money, her sister, Lizaveta, suddenly walks in. Fearing that she could be a potential witness to the crime, Raskolnikov kills her as well. He manages to narrowly escape from the crime scene without being seen by more witnesses. Returning to his apartment, Raskolnikov collapses on his sofa. Next morning, he wakes up with an unexplained restlessness and frantically hunts down every possible bloodstain on his clothing. A police summon requires him to visit the police station, where he finds out that the summon is not related to the murder, but his landlady, trying to evict him for non-payment of house rent for a long period of time. However, at the police station, he overhears a conversation regarding the murder of the pawnbroker. He collapses immediately, thereby setting off the police to include him in the list of suspects. Anxiously, Raskolnikov returns to his house to gather all the wares he had amassed at the pawnbrokers and hides it under a stone slab in an isolated courtyard. Restless, he craves for a change of scene and goes to his friend Razumikhin, where he receives an immediate offer of work. He refuses the offer of work due to his inner restlessness and rather inexplicably leaves his friend's place and abruptly returns to his own apartment.

After coming back to his apartment, he falls into a disturbed and restless sleep. When he wakes up after four days of disorientation and fever, he finds that Razumikhin and Nastasya had been taking care of him. He also finds out that a doctor, Zossimov, and a young police detective, Zamyotov, had also been visiting him. They notice that Raskolnikov becomes quite uncomfortable when the murders of the pawnbroker and her sister are mentioned.

Dunya's fiancé, Luzhin, also pays a visit and Raskolnikov, after a confrontation with him, goes to a café, almost confessing his crime to Zamyotov. Furthermore, acting on impulse, he also goes to the pawnbroker's apartment. While going back home, he discerns that Marmeladov had been run over by a carriage. He carries

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Marmeladov to his apartment, where he dies, succumbing to his injuries. He meets Sonya at the apartment. He gives Marmeladov's family the twenty roubles he had been given by his mother. When Raskolnikov returns with Razumikhin to his apartment, he faints upon discovering that his mother and sister were waiting for him. He becomes angry with Dunya and Pulcheria Alexandrovna, and orders them to leave the room. He orders Dunya to break-off her engagement with Luzhin. In the meantime, Razumikhin falls in love with Dunya. Razumikhin tries to explain about Raskolnikov to his mother and sister the next morning. The trio return to Raskolnikov's apartment, where they are greeted by Zossimov, who informs them that Raskolnikov was feeling much better. Raskolnikov apologizes to his mother and sister about his behaviour last night and confesses about giving all his money to the Marmeladovs.

However, he again becomes angry and irritable, ordering Dunya not to marry Luzhin. Dunya, knowing that Luzhin had particularly requested her not to bring Raskolnikov, asks him whether he wanted to go and meet Luzhin with her that evening. Raskolnikov agrees to it and at that moment, Sonya, who is quite embarrassed to be amongst Raskolnikov's family, enters the room. Sonya invites Raskolnikov to her father's funeral. Sonya is followed by Svidrigailov, Dunya's former lecherous employer, on her way back to the apartment. Raskolnikov pays a visit to Porfiry Petrovich, Razumikhin's relative and the magistrate in charge of the murder investigation under the pretence of recovering a watch pawned by him.

When Raskolnikov arrives at Porfiry Petrovich's house, he finds Zamyotov already present there. They have an apprehensive conversation regarding the murders. Raskolnikov believes that Porfiry suspected him of the murders and was leading him into a trap. Raskolnikov and Razumikhin later discuss Raskolnikov's conversation with Porfiry, trying to find out whether he suspected Raskolnikov for the murder. Raskolnikov, upon returning to his apartment, is informed that a man had come looking for him in his absence. The man called Raskolnikov a murderer when he caught up with the man in the street. Raskolnikov dreamt about the pawnbroker's murder that night. When he woke up, he saw a stranger in his room, who eventually turned out to be Svidrigailov. Svidrigailov explains to Raskolnikov that he wanted Dunya to call-off her engagement with Luzhin as he was not worthy of her love and affection. He even offered Dunya a sum of ten thousand roubles to terminate his engagement with Luzhin. Svidrigailov also informs Raskolnikov that Marfa Petrovna, his late wife, had bequeathed three thousand roubles to Dunya in her will. Raskolnikov refuses the offer made by Svidrigailov and suspected that he was insane, as Svidrigailov kept talking about seeing the ghost of Marfa. Raskolnikov and Razumikhin go to a restaurant to meet Pulcheria Alexandrovna, Dunya and Luzhin after Svidrigailov leaves.

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Razumikhin informs Raskolnikov that he is convinced about the police suspecting Raskolnikov for the murders. Luzhin feels insulted when he discovers Raskolnikov at the meal, after he had specifically requested him not being there. They talk about Svidrigailov arriving in the city and the money offered by him to Dunya. Raskolnikov and Luzhin start arguing with each other, and Luzhin offended everyone in the room, including his soon-to-be mother-in-law and fiancée. As a result, Dunya breaks-off her engagement to Luzhin and asks him to leave, leaving everyone overjoyed. Razumikhin talks about his plans of entering into the publishing business as a family. However, Raskolnikov spoils everyone's cheerful mood by saying that he did not want to see them anymore. Razumikhin chases Raskolnikov when he leaves the room, and after catching up with him, Razumikhin realizes that Raskolnikov was guilty of the murders. Razumikhin then goes back to Dunya and her mother, reassuring them that he would look after them and help them overcome any difficulties they might encounter.

Raskolnikov goes to Sonya Marmeladov's apartment and during their conversation finds out that Sonya was a friend of Lizaveta, one of his victims. He forces Sonya to read aloud the biblical story of Lazarus, who was resurrected by Jesus Christ. In the meantime, Svidrigailov was eavesdropping on their conversation from the apartment next door. Raskolnikov visits Porfiry Petrovich at the police department the next morning, under the pretext of lodging a formal complaint regarding his pawned watch. Raskolnikov again starts feeling that Porfiry Petrovich was leading him into a trap. He eventually succumbs to the pressure and blames Porfiry Petrovich of playing psychological games. Nikolai, a workman held under suspicion for the murders, felt the tension between the two and burst into the room, confessing to the murders. Raskolnikov, on the way to Katerina Ivanovna's memorial dinner in the honour of Marmeladov, comes across the mystery-man who had called him a murderer on the street. After confronting the man, Raskolnikov discovers that he does not know quite a lot about the case.

The scene now shifts to Luzhin and Lebeziatnikov's apartment. Luzhin is seething over his humiliation by Dunya and Raskolnikov, whom he holds responsible for breaking-off his engagement to Dunya. Luzhin refused to attend the memorial dinner for Marmeladov, even though he was graciously invited. Luzhin invites Sonya to his room, giving her ten roubles. Katerina's dinner does not go as she had planned, and since she was extremely arrogant and fussy, few guests had shown up, in a drunk and crude state, with the exception of Raskolnikov. Luzhin comes to the dinner and accuses Sonya of stealing hundred roubles from him. The bill is discovered in her pocket, even though she denied stealing it. However, Lebeziatnikov enters the room and informs everyone that he had seen Luzhin slip the bill in Sonya's pocket when she was leaving Luzhin's room.

Upon discovering the truth, Raskolnikov tells everyone that Luzhin was just trying to embarrass him and get back at him for breaking-off his engagement to

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Dunya, by discrediting Sonya. Luzhin then leaves the room, and at that moment, Katerina and her landlady start fighting with each other. Raskolnikov, after the dinner, goes to Sonya and confesses about the murders committed by him. Subsequently, they enter into a long conversation regarding his confusing and bewildering motives. Sonya convinces him to confess his crime to the authorities. Lebeziatnikov comes to the apartment and tells them that Katerina had gone mad as she was parading around the children on the streets, making them beg for money. Sonya hastens to find her and Raskolnikov goes back to his apartment to talk to Dunya. He goes to the streets and sees Katerina singing and dancing wildly. After confrontation with a policeman, she collapses. After being brought back to her room, she eventually dies. Svidrigailov, upon Katerina's death, offers to look after the children and pay for her funeral. He also tells Raskolnikov that he was certain that Raskolnikov had committed those murders.

Raskolnikov wanders around in a trance after the death of Katerina and his confession to Sonya. Razumikhin confronts him; informing him about the pain he had caused his sister and mother, and asks him if he had gone mad. Subsequently, Porfiry comes to his apartment, apologizing for the way he had treated Raskolnikov at the police station. However, Porfiry still does not believe Nikolai's confession. He still accuses Raskolnikov for the murders, but admitted that he did not have enough evidence against him to arrest him. He tries to coax Raskolnikov into confessing to his crime, saying that if he does, he would get a lighter sentence. Raskolnikov leaves his apartment to find Svidrigailov. He finds Svidrigailov in a café, where Svidrigailov informs him that although he was engaged to a sixteen-year-old girl, he was still attracted to Dunya. Svidrigailov leaves the café and manages to lure Dunya in his room, threatening to rape her if she did not marry him. Dunya, feeling trapped, fired several rounds at him with her revolver, but missed him every time. Svidrigailov, seeing her strong dislike for him, lets her leave unharmed. He wanders around St. Petersburg aimlessly with Dunya's revolver. Subsequently, he gives Dunya a sum of three thousand roubles along with fifteen thousand roubles to his fiancée's family. After that, he books a room in a hotel, sleeping peacefully and dreaming of a seductive five-year-old girl and a flood. He kills himself in the morning.

Raskolnikov tells his mother that he loves her and goes back to his apartment, informing Dunya of his plan to confess to his crime. After Dunya leaves, Raskolnikov visits Sonya. Sonya gives him a cross to wear as a parting gift. While going to the police station, he stops and kisses the ground in a marketplace. He almost changes his mind when he reaches the police station and is informed of Svidrigailov's suicide. However, the thought of Sonya helps him through his hesitation, and he confesses his crime to Ilya Petrovich, a police officer.

After a year and a half, we find Raskolnikov in a Siberian prison, where he had been sent nine months ago. Sonya had also moved to a town close to the prison, visiting him regularly. His death sentence had been reduced to a sentence of eight years of hard toil and labour in Siberia due to his confession and past good deeds and his mental confusion surrounding the murders. After his arrest, his mother had died, and Dunya married Razumikhin. Raskolnikov, for a while, remained self-righteous and alienated himself from humanity. However, he eventually realized that he truly loved Sonya and expressed remorse for his crime.

Check Your Progress

4. Who is the protagonist of the novel *Crime and Punishment*?
5. What information is conveyed to Raskolnikov by his mother?
6. Where does Raskolnikov hide all the wealth amassed from the pawnbroker?

8.4 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS QUESTIONS

1. Fyodor Dostoevsky was born in Moscow, Russia in 1821.
2. Dostoevsky resigned from the post of sub-lieutenant in army to pursue the career of a fiction writer.
3. *Crime and Punishment* was published in the year 1866.
4. Rodion Romanovich Raskolnikov is the protagonist of the novel *Crime and Punishment*.
5. Pulcheria Alexandrovna, Raskolnikov's mother, sends him a letter informing him of his sister, Dunya's, imminent marriage to a government servant, Luzhin, and their plan to move to St. Petersburg for solemnizing the marriage.
6. Raskolnikov hides all the wealth amassed from the pawnbroker under a stone slab in an isolated courtyard.

8.5 SUMMARY

- Fyodor Dostoevsky was born in Moscow in 1821. His father was a doctor. Though his education started at home, he was eventually sent to an elite boarding school.
- Unlike many others, Dostoevsky was lucky, as *Poor Folk* (1846), his first novel, received immediate commendation from the critics after its publication. Due to his active opposition to the institution of Serfdom, Dostoevsky became increasingly prominent in the socialist circles.

- Due to his involvement in printing and distributing socialist doctrines which were considered illegal and insidious, Dostoevsky was arrested and sentenced to a long imprisonment.
- Raskolnikov's experience in a Siberian prison, as depicted in the 'Epilogue' of *Crime and Punishment,* is produced out of Dostoevsky's own familiarity regarding a similar situation.
- The first outburst of his systematic fictional treatment of the critique regarding this pragmatic approach to human life and civilization was presented in his *Notes from Underground*.
- Dostoevsky's ideological opposition to such rational, pragmatic approach to human welfare and betterment, as found in his *Notes from Underground*, becomes more trenchant in *Crime and Punishment*.
- During the 1860s, Dostoevsky spent much of his time in close proximity with Western European culture. This experience gave him direct access to the invading cultural mores that were transforming Russian customs in an irrevocable way.
- *Notes from Underground* presented the anti-rationalistic tormented diatribe in the form of a troubled mind's long monologue. The novella not only consolidated Dostoevsky's stand as an anti-socialist, but also established him as the pioneering writer with a unique psychological insight into the complex human minds.
- Dostoevsky continued to write many more novels which also attained the status of classics with lasting reputation. Among these, *The Idiot* (1868) and *The Brothers Karamazov* (1880), completed a year before his death, are considered to be most important ones.
- The legacy and influence of Dostoevsky's novels and writings can be traced in many writings of twentieth century literature and philosophy, cutting across the geographical and cultural boundaries of Europe.
- His literary successors like Jean-Paul Sartre and Albert Camus treasured Dostoevsky's works for his perceptive insight into human quandary. The befitting style to such content was created by his treatment of literary techniques. The unforgettable characters in his novels contribute to the continuation and consolidation of a lasting legacy, long after his death.

8.6 KEY WORDS

- **Enlightenment:** It was a cultural movement of scholarly people in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.
- **Pedagogy:** It is the art or profession of teaching.

- **Seduction:** It is an act of enticement or temptation or to induce to engage in sex.
- **Fate:** It refers to the supposed force, principle, or power that predetermines events.
- **Catastrophe:** It implies a great, often sudden calamity.
- **Pawnbroker:** A pawnbroker is an individual or business (pawnshop or pawn shop) that offers secured loans to people, with items of personal property used as collateral.
- **Rouble:** Rouble is the standard monetary unit of Belarus and Russia, divided into 100 kopecks.
- **Post-lapserian stage:** It is the time or condition after the fall of humankind described in the Bible.
- **Psychological realism:** It is a genre which explores the subconsciousness of the human mind.

8.7 SELF ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

Short Answer Questions

1. Write a short note on the two major changes brought about by Dostoevsky's experience at the Siberian penal colony that affected all his subsequent writing.
2. What is Dostoevsky's contribution to the creation of an anti-rationalistic tradition?
3. List the prominent works of Dostoevsky.

Long Answer Questions

1. Discuss the factors that contributed to the development of a style developed by Dostoevsky that presented an 'abnormal' style.
2. Summarize the plot of *Crime and Punishment.*

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UNIT 9 *CRIME AND PUNISHMENT* CHAPTER 4 – 6: DOSTOEVSKY

Structure

9.0 INTRODUCTION

Dostoevsky is recognized as of the greatest literary figures. His forte lay in revealing the inner thought process of human mind that generally led an individual to crime, insanity, suicide, humiliation and self-destruction. His major works include *Notes from the Underground*, *Crime and Punishment*, *The Idiot*, *The Possessed* (also and more accurately known as *The Demons* and *The Devils*), and *The Brothers Karamazov*. In this unit, you will study about the primary characters and the themes and techniques employed in *Crime and Punishment*.

9.1 OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- Discuss the character of Raskolnikov in *Crime and Punishment*
- Describe the themes and techniques employed in *Crime and Punishment*
- State the significance of epilogue in *Crime and Punishment*

9.2 PRIMARY CHARACTERS OF *CRIME AND PUNISHMENT*

The primary characters of *Crime and Punishment* are discussed as follows:

Raskolnikov

Raskolnikov is not just the protagonist of the novel, as the novel mostly employs a subjective I-narrator, who is the exclusive narrator of the entire story. His name is

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derived from the Russian word 'raskolnik' which means 'divided' or 'cleft'. Such derivation aptly befits a person, whose main attribute is an estrangement from humanity in general. Due to his extreme sense of pride and intellectualism, he considers all fellow human beings fit to perpetuate only their biological functions and is extremely disdainful of humanity for this reason. Detaching himself from the rest, he believes that he belongs to the rank of elites who should be considered as supermen. He also thinks that since he and other select few who constitute this elite class are above the common limitations of other members of the society. Consequently, they can also contravene the prevalent moral principles of the society for achieving certain higher goals.

Raskolnikov's tormenting agony after the murder and recurring fainting at the reference of his secret crime, however, betrays his ordinariness, contrary to his own belief of belonging to the clan of the hardened pragmatic 'supermen'. In spite of his continuous struggle throughout the novel regarding the decision to confess his crime, he remains convinced regarding the justification of the pawnbroker's murder for most part of the narrative. Nevertheless, he gradually acknowledges the certainty of his mediety, but at the same time, he also realizes that the force of love he feels for Sonya is strong enough to overcome his entrenched disdain of human society. Apart from his evolving relationship with Sonya, Raskolnikov's affiliations with other characters shed light on his character as well as clarify his understanding of himself. His concerns about Razumikhin, Pulcheria Alexandrova and Dunya are often overshadowed by his sceptical attitude and indifference to their earnest attempts at helping him. Even if he is primarily attracted to Sonya by considering her a companion in social transgression, he does not realize that Sonya's 'crime' is of completely different kind. Her transgressions are indeed committed for the sake of others, while his crime is solely motivated by self- seeking mentality.

His association with Svidrigailov is also inscrutable. Raskolnikov loathes the man for his wickedness, but also wants to be a little like him. This want may be conjectured as a justification offered by a toughened malcontent of Raskolikov's crime.

The description Razumikhin offers to Sonya and Pulcheria Alexandrovna is that even in more than a year's time, the bundle of contradiction remains more hidden to him than revealed and presents a range of complexities that Raskolnikov embodies. The major attributes of Raskolnikov's character like self-centredness, and kindness are elaborated by his comments. Nevertheless, apparent contradiction, inherent in both the character he is commenting upon as well as the narration he is offering, is brought about by the prolonged, colloquial and grammatically imprecise statements given by Razumikhin. The unresolved tension experienced by Raskolnikov in his contradictory wishes to admit guilt and avoid imprisonment is brought about by the mention of the 'two opposite characters in

him.' Altogether, this indistinct portrayal records Raskolnikov's essentially divided character that his connections with the humanity has been severed and he engages with it only when social engagement brings him tangible benefits. In effect, he has taken utilitarianism to its extreme by taking human beings not at their intrinsic value but by their usage value. Moreover, the contrasting characters of Razumikhin's sociability and affability are presented in relation to glumness and surliness embodied in Raskolinkov's behaviour. The argument regarding Raskolnikov's troubled conditions compelling him to carry on the murderous plot is easily counter-evidenced by such statements, showing his fundamental nature as already predisposed towards such motives. Further, Razumikhin is also a poor student in dire economic hardship but his desperation never prods him to consider such criminal action. Quite contrarily, his happiness in general pursuits of life is genuine and pleasurable.

Sonya

The character traits of Sonya can be summarized as timorous, calm and prone to easy embarrassment. On the other hand, she is whole-heartedly dedicated to her family and is exceptionally pious. Her suffering in giving herself up to prostitution gains further poignancy due to her father's inability to control his own drunkenness. Sonya's limitless capacity to empathize with the troubled soul of Raskolinkov wins over her initial fright at the insane inconsistency of Raskolnikov. She is not repelled by his crime and seriously worries for his spiritual and mental well-being. It is her deep concern for Raskolnikov's welfare that urges her to convince him to confess his crimes. Raskolinkov's initial identification with Sonya as that of a fellow transgressor who has overstepped the lines of conventional social morality is a partial understatement, as he surely fails to acknowledge the crucial difference between their contraventions. However, this is made obvious in the narrative explication that she sins for others' sake and his motives for crimes are completely self-serving by nature. Many contemporary socio-political issues of the time that concerned Dostoevsky deeply were given a covert treatment in the character of Sonya. Many such issues like the effects of poverty on human morality, the treatment meted out to women, an individual's commitment to the well-being of the family, individual faith and its religious significance are given fictional treatment through various events of Sonya's character.

Dunya

Proud, intellectually sharp and determined in nature, Dunya's character resembles many aspects of Raskolnikov's. However, for the most part, she is his perfect foil. His self-centredness, cruelty and intellectualism are totally absent in her compassionate, altruistic and selfless nature. Raskolinkov's slow conversion to the moment of admission of guilt turns his reactions from one extreme to the other, even if her attitude remains steadfastly based on mutual esteem and adoration. In particular, their reactions towards Luzhin bring out their level of maturity.

While Raskolinkov becomes giddy and irritated, she shows an even temperament oozing in self-assuredness and command even at the face of her rising displeasure when tackling his problems. By standing in the middle ground between pecuniary corruption and Sonya's extreme timidity, Dunya is certainly the most powerful woman in the novel. Certainly, along with Razumikhin, she could be counted as one of the heroes of the novel, and that makes their marriage at the end of the novel principally appropriate.

Check Your Progress

1. State one important feature of the character of Raskolnikov.
2. Name the character who can be considered as a perfect foil of Raskolnikov.

9.3 *CRIME AND PUNISHMENT*: THEMES AND TECHNIQUES

There are numerous themes and techniques used by Dostoevsky in his novel *Crime and Punishment*.

1. Religious redemption

The ironic, if not contradictory, presentation of the view of religious redemption coming in an apparent guise of a practical punishment is one of the clinching achievements of the novel. Fictional treatment of human destiny has often delved in the relation between the appearance and contradictory nature of the reality it often bears. Two classic examples regarding loss of sight and gain of vision, and loss of worldly possession to gain an empire of the soul in Sophocles' *Oedipus Rex* and Tolstoy's *Resurrection* (1899) will suffice for the moment. Similar treatment of punishment in the form of a spiritual atonement and grace abounding can be found in the plot of this novel. In order of importance and priority, the redemption far outweighs the crime, but following the causal sequence the punishment must follow the crime. While the treatment of the motive for the crime as a definite gain (that in the end turns out to be a failed crime due to failure in its proper ratiocination) is perfunctory, if not intentionally flawed, the gain in giving up this lucrative motive by admitting the crime is certainly about true spiritual gain. Even at a very practical level, Sonya's insistence on Raskolnikov's admission to the crime only confirms their imminent separation. However, such separation only affirms their perpetual union at the level of deepest tenderness. This contradiction that has constituted the core of universal mystical tradition is essential to the understanding of the novel's main concern.

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2. Anti-rationalism

Intellect not supported by humanity is a source of human corruption as well as a fundamental idea in the novel. This critique on the insistence of the purely rational worldview is a key idea in Dostoevsky's intellectual world that links this to many other building blocks of his attitudes to some of the most important contemporary phenomena. In many of his novels, *The Possessed* and *The Idiot* being two important examples, his protagonists' rationality asserts that reason alone is real while a voice of conscience 'repudiates this preposterous claim of reason' according to George G. Strem in *The Moral World of Dostoevsky*. In Dostoevsky's writing, this struggle between the rational and the spiritual eventually takes on a mystical significance that represents the Christian struggle between God and the devil. The actual debate between these agents that he presented in *Brothers Karamazov* (1880) has a few forerunners. The immensity of the concern implicitly involves the destiny of mankind. Establishment of the idea of a purely rational being will free human beings from the fetters of their own conscience. Consequently, they will abandon all moral justifications and will base their actions purely on the basis of a pragmatic view considering only personal advantages. As the narrator, Dostoevsky himself becomes the Devils' Advocate 'to expose this captivating thesis with great eloquence' as per George G. Strem. When Nietzsche praised Dostoevsky's anti-Christ arguments, he simply failed to see the narrative strategy employed. Dostoevsky meticulously gathers all evidence against a spiritual worldview only to show that such a philosophical expose will tantamount to nothing as it will only bring self-destruction. If Nietzsche championed in favour of the 'superman', he did so by ignoring Dostoevsky's efforts to counteract the temptation of the superman theory that spelt the doom of Western civilization. It may be recalled that Dostoevsky's anti-rational standpoint was first manifested in *Notes from Underground*. Though the polemical nature of the expression in that autobiographical novella succeeded in presenting his main ideas much more concisely, in *Crime and Punishment*, their varied and fictional treatment endows the novel with a more rigorous configuration.

3. Alienation

The failure of human connection, distancing or alienating is conversely speaking one of the primary concerns of *Crime and Punishment*. Initially, Raskolnikov's consideration of himself as superior to the society in general and consequent pride disconnects him from the social order. Further, his extreme utilitarianism encourages him to consider everyone else as a tool for his own purpose. His isolation is only intensified after committing the murder, as a severe feeling of remorse grips him. His failure to connect with others is most vividly presented in his conscious rebutting of all persons, including Dunya, Pulcheria Alexandrovna, Sonya, Razumikhin, and even Porfiry Petrovich, who are genuinely interested in helping him. However, the

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final realization in the Epilogue that he truly loves Sonya and the consequent conclusion of his self-centred isolation must be preceded by a phase of near-complete alienation that impresses on him its insufferable nature.

4. Suffering

Suffering is the inevitable corollary to humility as an indispensible criterion for moral elevation, following one of the fundamental Christian doctrines in Dostoevsky's novels that those who suffer most are greatly rewarded by divine love. His profession of faith in the cleansing effect of suffering is portrayed through various ways in his writing. It constitutes one of the main elements in Prince Myshkin's behaviour in *The Idiot*. In fact, the sole purpose of Myshkin's human existence seems to be the resultant transformation that he brings in the life of Nastasia Filipovna, who is made worthy of divine grace by her inner sufferings and horrible end. Once this purpose is achieved, Prince Myshkin relapses into a state of unconsciousness.

Raskolnikov is a great sufferer as well, though of a completely different order. His suffering before and after committing the murder are of two different kinds. Before the murder is committed, Raskolnikov is tormented by the mediocrity of his life and is anxious to alter it. Rather than beating down the trodden path, he plans to execute a daring act, basing great trust on his intellectual faculty in which he takes great pride. Since such a daring act will violate the norms of legal limits, he convinces himself that such limitations will not be operative on him, as he does not belong to the middle order of the society. Even if he successfully builds the argumentative structure of his argument, at the core of his heart he doubts his own superiority. To prove his self-image as true, Raskolnikov commits the crime. Once this wanton act is committed, he realizes, to his utter horror, that he is not a person of such proportions that may transcend the moral limits and violate its legal injunctions. Consequently, the premise upon which his entire existence was depending proved to be a false one. To reconcile between these potent forces of intellectual and conscientious arrays, Raskolnikov needs to accept suffering. Once this acceptance is integrated into his faith structure, his path to resurrection commences. Therefore, in a mystic sense, the pattern of his suffering before and after the crime may be reconciled into one pattern of 'direction, meaning and ultimate possibilities of human existence' as per George G. Strem. Extending the archetypal possibility, Raskolnikov's sin then becomes a representative partaker in the original sin, a sin that can only be redeemed by suffering. Man's struggle for purification at the post-lapserian stage may be compared to his bewildered striving at the post-crime stage, in which, like the biblical pattern, he is assisted by his woman companion.

Apart from the cleansing effect, suffering also becomes a positive energy in Dostoevsky's writing. Some of his protagonists deliberately seek suffering in an attempt to find the great transformative experience of their lives. Thus, finally, the

suffering in the punishment takes a self-contradictory connotation, as this suffering is the only possible action that may bring Raskolnikov to the path of contrite resurrection.

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5. Psychological realism

The order in which the novel treats the themes of crime and punishment is counter-intuitive. In terms of the text, the difference between the crimes committed in Part-I and the punishment appearing in the Epilogue, later, is certainly not intended to be two end-points of the narrative focus. On the contrary, quite possibly, the real focus of the novel is on the phase of transformation that separates them. This intermediate section attempts at an in-depth exploration of the criminal psychology. Therefore, what constitutes the main body of the narrative is Raskolnikov's internal world, with all its vacillation, dread, uncertainties and despair. The novelist's main narrative focus is not on the definite consequences of the crime but on the modes; the crime that compels Raskolnikov to grapple with an ensuing sense of culpability. The little narrative attention to the actual punishment and imprisonment compared to the great amount of details lavished on worry and trauma involved in attempts to avert the punishment surely indicates a narrative intention to portray their relative burden. This comparative emphasis on the psychological angle of the novel is further emphasized by the canny recognition of Raskolnikov as the murderer by Porfiry Petrovich. He elaborates on the internal mechanism of Raskolnikov's murderous mind and the guilt-ridden thoughts subsequently in many of his speeches. The options available to the troubled mind of a murderer as well as the admission of guilt are succinctly presented by him. This also assures him in a strange way that Raskolnikov will eventually admit to his crime. His expertise at the psychological acuity and its exposition only reinforces the novel's perfection in other areas of psychological expertise.

6. Murder motive

Suffering constitutes a mainstay in Dostoevsky's moral world. To complete the cycle of redemption, suffering is necessary, and in the moral world of his fiction, suffering originates with crime. This makes Dostoevsky immensely interested in the lives of criminals of the worst order, who have killed their fellow human beings. These crimes may be considered as human problems carried to an extreme degree. In all four of his major works, namely, *Crime and Punishment, The Idiot, The Possessed and The Brothers Karamazov*, murders are committed. Therefore, thematically, they all test a climactic human problem of redemption. If a man, who directly bears the stigma of original sin and the crime of Cain by committing the fratricidal sin of homicide, is capable of effecting a resurrection, then all human beings can bring themselves to a similar fate. This resurrection will then establish the basic Christian pattern of action that partakes in the declaration of divine glory.

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Led by his pride and ambition, Raskolnikov commits a criminal act that immediately places him outside the boundaries of human society. Viewed from a social perspective, homicide or fratricide is the most heinous of all crimes as it strikes at the very root of the idea of universal brotherhood that allows a human community to take shape. By committing the archetypal crime, he becomes an outcaste from all human societies. The seemingly inextinguishable flame of remorse and castigation that simmers within him must be channelled into an exercise of redemption. However, before that is implemented, he must pay the price of his action that attacks the social base. In order to do that, Raskolinkov must abandon his mother and sister and must spurn all friendship lest he denigrates those who come close to him. However, by this action of accepting the implications of his moral crime and the process of its retribution to take place in his own person, Raskolinikov asserts his identity of a moral being whose 'conscience punishes him for his crime'.

In this context, the crime of Joseph K, a character in Franz Kafka's *The Trial*, may be rather pertinent. When we read about K's crimes, we find that being a novel that was authored almost sixty years after Dostoevsky's novels, that novella is even more interiorized. His crime is never spelt out in the novella. At first glance, K may even seem to be an innocent who is being executed for no reason at all. However, on closer analysis, it is obvious that K is a person whose idea of a hierarchically organized society has reached such a deplorable proportion that he has almost been disconnected from the life that sustains social organs. Among many of Raskolnikov's reasons for murdering Alyona, pride takes a prominent place, but ironically, this is not the pride of the pawn-broking lady, but clearly is an attempt in establishing his superior rank above the general public. However, his claims regarding the utilitarian purpose of the crime, that on the whole the society's happiness would be enhanced by the killing of such an appalling 'louse', or that his needs are of purely financial nature are totally contradictory to his claims of superiority. Further, in Part I, it is hinted that the squalid surroundings of the place where he lives, his failing health and the continuous state of hunger are possible factors to have weakened any restrictive urge that might have saved him from committing the crime. This statement fuses the external and internal reasons that conspire to degrade a human being to the level of a murderer. In Part III, Chapter VI, immediately after the murder has been committed, Raskolnikov rants to himself, while lying in bed and recapitulating the prior arrangements of his own arguments, saying that:

> The old woman was a mistake perhaps, but she's not the point! The old woman was merely a sickness . . . I was in a hurry to step over . . . it wasn't a human being I killed, it was a principle!

However, his sense of failure to achieve anything out of this action is also immediately apparent to him. He confesses to himself:

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All I managed to do was kill. And I didn't even manage that, as it turns out . . . The abrupt phrases with frequent use of ellipses indicate the halting nature of his fractured thoughts and its attendant language. Such fractured attempt at rationalization of human action still shows Raskolnikov's entrapment in the so-called Napoleonic mindset that goads him to believe that the only important thing is triumph in individual actions. He realizes that his crime of murder has not achieved his desired effect and his anxiety at this stage of thought evolution is produced not by his sense of committing a crime but rather by the sense that he has committed an unsuccessful crime. His failure to structure the arguments supporting his murderous action and intent indicates the ultimate failure of his rational system that might have considered the murder successful, if the crime could be rendered useful to his goal and thereby dispel the blame from his mind. Raskolnikov's repeated attempts to convince himself of the rational basis for the murder of Alyona Ivanovna and his recurring, frenetic justification of his crime in terms of rationally appropriate action manifest his uncertainty about the whole affair. This also shows how far he is from his intellectual declamation of the 'superman' idea. In another instance, Raskolnikov succinctly puts forward his ideas to Dunya saying that while there was nothing unjustified in the murder, his inability to derive tangible benefit from it was wrong.

For Raskolnikov, the internal stimulus for the murder is conceptual, cerebral and strangely reasonable. The argument of Raskolnikov's article 'On Crime' establishes the rational validation for a similar crime. In that article, Raskolnikov hypothesizes a group of 'supermen', whose superiority over the general public allows them to act above the general purview of usual moral codes. Therefore, even in his wavering conclusions from the outcome of his action, Raskolnikov remains fixated on the idea that though his murder is an action punishable by law, in reality, it is not a reprehensibly wicked act that would draw extreme moral condemnation. His conviction that the murder committed by him was for the greater good of humanity, in which merely 'an insect' has been killed, even accompanies him to Siberia, long after he had surrendered to the legal course of action. This conviction is complementary to his belief that he has been victimized by 'some decree of blind fate' and his conviction for the crime has been caused by the crime's slipshod execution. It means that if he could execute the crime to its perfection, it would make a practical difference to many people's lives and he could also escape the legal and investigative procedures.

The contextual root of those ideas can be traced to nihilism, an attitude predominant in Russia, in late nineteenth century. In the words of Lebeziatnikov, one of its principal proponents, the doctrine is known for 'negating more'. Its conceptual hallmark was the rejection of bonds of emotion, society and family as well as giving up aesthetic regard in favour of a severe materialism, or the doctrine that dogmatically denies any existence of mind and soul outside the physical world. Nihilism disdained traditional bonds of society and family as well as the effectiveness

of emotional stimulus. Such tenets of nihilism can easily be traced back to its ideological progenitor, utilitarianism. Utilitarianism professed that morality should be dependent on the rule of maximum happiness for maximum number of people. This reductive tendency of pulling down human beings to mere numbers and resultant calculations based upon such numerical considerations systematically denied human beings their individual worth. As discussed earlier, Raskolnikov's remorse and inner commotion hardly befit the ideal of a 'superman' who is supposed to execute such a 'crime' with pragmatic efficiency. His attempts at justifying the murder with tenacious arguments (even if he ultimately fails to build the argument) are strongly utilitarian and nihilistic in nature.

7. The idea of the superman

Initially, Raskolnikov is convinced that he belongs to a group of extraordinary 'supermen'. He considers himself as a person of extraordinary capability that enables him to transgress the conventional codes of morality, that is, applicability in standard social context. The desired self-appraisal propels him to isolate himself from rest of the society. Consequently, his murder of the pawnbroker may be interpreted as his deluded conviction of superiority above the jurisprudence, and such an action would indirectly prove his original claim to superiority.

Once the crime is committed, Raskolnikov realizes that the pragmatic-rational justification of redistribution of money taken from the pawnbroker, which served as the ostensible rationalization of his murder, is a facile one. The realization of this money-argument to be invalid also convinces him that the sole reason for committing the crime is to put an effort to establish his 'supermanly' superiority over others. However, as it dawns on him that the obstacle he has removed by murdering the pawnbroker is not of the order of an insurmountable impediment, he also realizes that his committing the crime boils down to a completely meaningless action. With this realization, the whole conception of the superman, built at so much torment and emotional cost to him, starts crumbling. Raskolnikov's failure to put down his ensuing sense of remorse, however, makes him realize that he is not a 'superman'. Though he recognizes his failing to live up to what he has presented as an ideal for his life, he is reluctant to acknowledge the complete destruction of this personality. He persists on resisting the thought that he is as adequate as others by sustaining in his effort to convince himself that the crime was reasonable. The release from his own conceptual prison of the superman and attendant isolation is affected by the realization of his love for Sonya and the pleasures in submitting to such an emotional possibility.

8. Poverty

As is commonly experienced in reality, poverty usually pushes the familial bonds towards greater closeness in the novel. Significantly, Raskolnikov often takes the

reverse direction, though there is no apparent connection between his personal action and their economic condition. Nevertheless, he rebukes his sister, Dunya, when he realizes that she is marrying Luzhin to financially help her family. His rejection of Razumikhin's offer of employment may be seen as paralleling his reaction to Dunya's initial consent to marry Luzhin. The intersection between the socio-economic condition of poverty and the individual self-sacrifice as a way of grappling with such situations allows the novelist to create a multi-dimensional treatment of the socially important issues in a nuanced manner. Consequently, characters such as Sonya and Dunya are able to express their strength and compassion through externally manifested actions.

A regular reminder of the lack of money and its attendant unhappiness gloomily hovers over the narrative. Two of the most arresting examples are provided by the circumstances of Marmeladov's and Raskolnikov's families. For Raskolnikov, his financial disability provides him a strong motive for the crime. He thought that by committing the crime, he would be able to amass a considerable amount of money that would allow him to resume and complete his higher education, thereby allowing him to eventually lead a better life in material terms. However, he also identifies financial worries to be one decisive factor in Dunya's consent to marry Luzhin. Apparently, the Marmeladovs are in an even worse financial situation. The vicious circle that entraps the socio-economically downtrodden people is best manifested in their family's trio of misfortunes, Marmeladov's drunkenness, Katerina Ivanova's disease and Sonya's desperate recourse to prostitution to save her family from destitution. As the narrative progresses, the foundations and effects of such conditions are made explicit by a range of choices and sacrifices made by the characters in face of their pecuniary desperation.

The rationale that Raskolnikov planned so elaborately as the moral justification is also based on the foundation of financial considerations. He plans to redistribute the money hoarded by the pawn broker, and by a single stroke of action, that would release a number of people from the clutches of degrading conditions imposed by poverty in their lives. However, as he takes the victim's money the fallacious nature of the pragmatic rationale of putting the money to good use becomes apparent in the same instant. His realization that he never really wanted money is coterminous with the realization of his own desire to establish his extraordinariness and superiority over others. The money at hand does not interest him at all. His previous plans of using the money in various ways crumbled the instant he acquired it. He does not even count it or show the slightest inclination to recall its planned usages.

Svidrigailov's magnanimity at the end of the novel changes its entire tone. By a sheer swerve in the plot manipulation, one character makes a choice that almost simultaneously solves everyone's financial crisis. This sudden change in the plot and tone can either be seen as unlikely authorial contrivance to rescue an

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apparently floundering plot-situation or as an affirmation to the supremacy of faith in human regenerative power that can solve all practical problems, including social inequalities and malpractices like poverty easily.

9. Symbols

Dostoevsky's St. Petersburg is filled with physical squalor, human indignity and moral filth. The grubby streets are crammed with human bodies. The little, raucous streets of the city are filled with begging children howling for alms, worn-out women exhausted by their meagre existence and drunkards stretched out on the ground. The muddle and disorder of the city is a symbol that works in two different directions. On one hand, it represents the state of affairs of a particular society in its disparity, shortcomings and chauvinism. On the contrary, deeper psychological level, this confusion is indicative of Raskolnikov's restless and confused state of mind. For him, both the external condition of the city and the psychological prison of his mind seem like an inescapable condition. The unbearable conditions of the city in its oppressive sultriness as well as malodorous streets and crowds contribute to Raskolnikov's state of mind that is perpetually agitated and edgy. Ironically, the punishment that forces him to leave the city and stay in a small Siberian town allows him the external condition that is congenial to regaining his kindness and mental equilibrium.

Besides, the crucifix that is given by Sonya just before Raskolnikov decides to go to the police station is a symbolic element in the novel. Apart from the conventional religious association of the crucifix with the vicarious sacrifice and atonement of humanity through Christ's self-sacrifice, it emphasizes the redemptive quality of such an action on a personal level in the novel. However, Raskolnikov's denial of any feeling of remorse or resultant piety only drives home the point that he has not yet completely understood the significance of the crucifix, but has rather only initiated the journey on the path of redemption through expiation. Sonya's gift of the Cross further signifies her catalytic agency in recovering his attitude towards humanity through her kindness and compassion for him.

10. Coincidences

The novel has plenty of coincidences, more so as important plot markers. There are two specific coincidences that directly contribute to the hardening of Raskolnikov's resolution to kill the pawnbroker. First, is the general remark regarding the social utility of killing the old lady, and consecutively, the second, regarding her being alone in her flat in the evening. Both these incidents of eavesdropping contribute crucially to Raskolnikov's psyche for the moment. It may be textually corroborated that before overhearing these two important pieces of information regarding the old pawnbroker, Raskolnikov was strongly disinclined to commit the crime. However, his treatment of the chance encounter of these two pieces of vital information can be read as a manifestation of his deep-seated motives

which he himself might not have been explicitly aware, as if the coincidental remarks act as an encouragement towards the execution of the crime even if there were prior indication of his latent ulterior motives. His pride compels him to take those events as merely accidental by nature, even if there are other indications that he turns paranoid in interpreting seemingly trivial things into matters of great significance.

Moreover, Raskolnikov's chance meeting with the hurt Marmeladov on the street is another important coincidence that turns into a vital piece of information for the plot structure. Even though this chance encounter does not provide us with any vital information regarding Raskolnikov's character, it certainly becomes instrumental in advancing the plot development and endowing a rushed sensation in the narrative progress. Every bit of this chance encounter contributes to the fast pace of the plot in a forward direction.

11. Epilogue

Many literary scholars have argued against the inclusion of the epilogue in the novel as redundant and an example of unnecessary authorial intervention. They argue that the simplistic techniques of the dream of the plague troubling the entire European continent and rather trite description of the blossoming of Sonya's love for Raskolnikov are examples of rather clumsy moves blighting the superb artistry and complexity of the main body of the novel. The hasty attempt to somehow connect the annexe and the original into a forced whole does not succeed at all. The specific allegation on this count must be acknowledged as a shortcoming on the novelist's part.

Nevertheless, there are specific literary advantages of the epilogue. Most importantly, the development of two of the most important thematic modules of the novel, individual estrangement and spiritual redemption, are given proper treatment only in the epilogue. The end of Part VI of the novel leaves the resultant development of Raskolnikov's confession ambiguous, and thus, forces the reader into a state of uncertain conclusion. The narrative elaboration of an imprisoned and confessional Raskolnikov also presents the yet-to-be-repentant side of his character. The process, rather than a magical instantaneous transformation, is required as the narrative requirement of the novel. To make that possible, the novel must allow enough space to be devoted through the narrative space. The epilogue is precisely able to perform that formal requirement in the novel. The dream of the spreading plague, in particular, effectively takes away all sense of superiority from Raskolnikov, leaving him within the fold of a larger group of commonplace social stratum. The first portrayal of Raskolnikov's true happiness is delineated at the moment of his epiphanic realization of his true love for Sonya and as a symbolic prostration at her feet.

Indeed, the transformation of Raskolnikov is rather epiphanic, if not abrupt. However, the development in the epilogue for months of mortification and contemplation is the narrative space that prepares the transformation covertly.

Sonya's gift of the crucifix and reading of the Bible are both symbols of the stirring of spiritual conviction. Rather than the inherent nature of faith, the transformative capacity of faith is what is most important in the presentation of the idea in the novel. The transformative capacity is also a way of reconnecting with other individuals. The divine faith rekindles faith in other human beings and the story of Lazarus emblematically brings the idea of resurrection to the core of the novel. Raskolnikov's reaching out to the New Testament symbolically presents the possibilities of such ultimate resurrection. A definite moment of transformation may be recognized in the description of the climax of the epilogue, in which, Sonya at last realizes Raskolnikov's genuine love towards her. The significance is both personal and public. By demonstrating his capacity to love an individual, Raskolnikov shows that once again, he is prepared and capable to take his position as a social element. His cry in this scene is both the sign of his compunction over crime and of great delight in comprehending the true import of Sonya's love for him. At the moment of his realization of true involvement with another person, Raskolnikov's alienation from the society ends and his return to the social structure of collective weal through suffering begins. Thus, human love in a specific personal sense, as well as human love felt by a member of the collective, revives Raskolnikov's joy of living.

Check Your Progress

3. How does alienation manifest itself as a major theme of *Crime and Punishment*?
4. State one important advantage of using the epilogue in the novel.

9.4 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS QUESTIONS

1. Raskolnikov is so full of pride and intellectualism that he considers all fellow human beings fit to perpetuate only their biological functions and is extremely disdainful of humanity for this reason.
2. Dunya's character resembles many aspects of Raskolnikov's. However, for the most part, she is his perfect foil.
3. The failure of human connection, distancing or alienating is conversely speaking one of the primary concerns of *Crime and Punishment*. Initially, Raskolnikov's consideration of himself as superior to the society in general and consequent pride disconnects him from the social order. Further, his extreme utilitarianism encourages him to consider everyone else as a tool for his own purpose. His isolation is only intensified after committing the murder, as a severe feeling of remorse grips him.

4. One important advantage of using the epilogue in the novel in that the development of two of the most important thematic modules of the novel, individual estrangement and spiritual redemption, are given proper treatment only in the epilogue.

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9.5 SUMMARY

- Raskolnikov is not just the protagonist of the novel, as the novel mostly employs a subjective I-narrator, who is the exclusive narrator of the entire story. Due to his extreme sense of pride and intellectualism, he considers all fellow human beings fit to perpetuate only their biological functions and is extremely disdainful of them for this reason.
- The character traits of Sonya can be summarized as timorous, calm and prone to easy embarrassment. On the other hand, she is whole-heartedly dedicated to her family and is exceptionally pious. Her suffering in giving herself up to prostitution gains further poignancy due to her father's inability to control his own drunkenness.
- Proud, intellectually sharp and determined in nature, Dunya's character resembles many aspects of Raskolnikov's. However, for the most part, she is his perfect foil. His self-centredness, cruelty and intellectualism are totally absent in her compassionate, altruistic and selfless nature.
- The ironic, if not contradictory, presentation of the view of religious redemption coming in an apparent guise of a practical punishment is one of the clinching achievements of the novel. Fictional treatment of human destiny has often delved in the relation between the appearance and contradictory nature to the reality it often bears.
- Intellect not supported by humanity is a source of human corruption as well as a fundamental idea in the novel. This critique on the insistence of the purely rational worldview is a key idea in Dostoevsky's intellectual world that links this to many other building blocks of his attitudes to some of the most important contemporary phenomena.
- The failure of human connection, distancing or alienation is conversely speaking on one of the primary concerns of *Crime and Punishment*. Initially, Raskolnikov's consideration of himself as superior to the society in general and consequent pride disconnects him from the social order.
- Suffering is the inevitable corollary to humility as an indispensable criterion for moral elevation, following one of the fundamental Christian doctrines in Dostoevsky's novels that those who suffer most are greatly rewarded by divine love. His profession of faith in the cleansing effect of suffering is portrayed through various ways in his writing.

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- The order in which the novel treats the themes of *Crime and Punishment* is counter-intuitive. The novelist's main narrative focus is not on the definite consequences of the crime but on the modes the crime that compels Raskolnikov to grapple with an ensuing sense of culpability.
- Suffering constitutes a mainstay in Dostoevsky's moral world. To complete the cycle of redemption, suffering is necessary, and in the moral world of his fiction, suffering originates with crime. This makes Dostoevsky immensely interested in the lives of criminals of the worst order, who have killed their fellow human beings.
- For Raskolnikov, the internal stimulus for the murder is conceptual, cerebral, and strangely reasonable. The argument of Raskolnikov's article 'On Crime' establishes the rational validation for a similar crime. In that article, Raskolnikov hypothesizes a group of 'supermen', whose superiority over the general public allows them to act above the general purview of usual moral codes.
- Initially, Raskolnikov is convinced that he belongs to a group of extraordinary 'supermen'. He considers himself as a person of extraordinary capability that enables him to transgress the conventional codes of morality, that is, applicability in standard social context. The desired self-appraisal propels him to isolate himself from rest of the society.
- Dostoevsky's St. Petersburg is filled with physical squalor, human indignity and moral filth. The grubby streets are crammed with human bodies. The little, raucous streets of the city are filled with begging children howling for alms, worn-out women exhausted by their meagre existence and drunkards stretched out on the ground. The muddle and disorder of the city is a symbol that works in two different directions.
- The novel has plenty of coincidences, more so as important plot markers. There are two specific coincidences that directly contribute to the hardening of Raskolnikov's resolution to kill the pawnbroker. First, is the general remark regarding the social utility of killing the old lady, and consecutively, the second, regarding her being alone in her flat in the evening.
- Many literary scholars have argued against the inclusion of the epilogue in the novel as redundant and an example of unnecessary authorial intervention. They argue that the simplistic techniques of the dream of the plague troubling the entire European continent and rather trite description of the blossoming of Sonya's love for Raskolnikov are examples of rather clumsy moves blighting the superb artistry and complexity of the main body of the novel.
- Nevertheless, there are specific literary advantages of the epilogue. Most importantly, the development of two of the most important thematic modules of the novel, individual estrangement and spiritual redemption, are given proper treatment only in the epilogue.

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9.6 KEY WORDS

- **Utilitarianism:** It is the doctrine that actions are right if they are useful or for the benefit of a majority.
- **Criminal psychology:** It is the study of the views, thoughts, intentions, actions and so reactions of criminals and all that partakes in the criminal behaviour.
- **Nihilism:** The rejection of all religious and moral principles, in the belief that life is meaningless.
- **Malodorous:** It implies having an unpleasant or offensive odour.
- **Epilogue:** It is a piece of writing at the end of a work of literature, usually used to bring closure to the work.

9.7 SELF ASSESSEMENT QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

Short-Answer Questions

1. Write a short note on the character of Sonya in the novel.
2. Comment on the use of epilogue in your own words.
3. Briefly mention the use of symbols in the novel.

Long-Answer Questions

1. Examine the nature and relationship between 'crime' and 'punishment' in *Crime and Punishme*nt.
2. Do you think the characterization of Raskolnikov is a presentation of the criminal mind? Substantiate your point of view with close textual references.
3. Analyse the major themes of *Crime and Punishment*.

9.8 FURTHER READINGS

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BLOCK III
FICTION X - XII

UNIT 10 *THE TIN DRUM:* GUNTER GRASS

Structure

10.0 INTRODUCTION

Gunter Grass is widely reckoned as of the prominent German writers in the Post World War scenario. He is best known for his first novel, *The Tin Drum* (1959), a key text in European magic realism. In this unit, you will be studying the novel *The Tin Drum* from the perspective of magic realism as well as how it has documented the history of World War II.

10.1 OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- Prepare an overview of the life and works of Gunter Grass
- Critically analyse the novel *The Tin Drum*
- Examine the use of magic realism and treatment of history in *The Tin Drum*

10.2 GUNTER GRASS: LIFE AND WORKS

Gunter Wilhelm Grass (16 October 1927 – 13 April 2015) was a German novelist, poet, playwright, illustrator, graphic artist, sculptor and recipient of the 1999 Nobel Prize in Literature. He was born in the Free City of Danzig (Poland). As a teenager, he served as a drafted soldier from late 1944 in the *Waffen-SS* and was taken

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prisoner of war by US forces at the end of the war in May 1945. He was released in April 1946. Trained as a stonemason and sculptor, Grass began writing in the 1950s. In his fiction, he frequently returned to the Danzig of his childhood. Gunter Grass is best known for his first novel, *The Tin Drum* (1959), a key text in European magic realism. It was the first book of his Danzig Trilogy, the other two being *Cat and Mouse* and *Dog Years*. His works are frequently considered to have a left-wing political dimension and Grass was an active supporter of the Social Democratic Party of Germany (SPD). *The Tin Drum* was adapted as a film of the same name, which won both the 1979 Palme d'Or and the Academy Award for Best Foreign Language Film. In 1999, the Swedish Academy awarded him the Nobel Prize in Literature, praising him as a writer 'whose frolicsome black fables portray the forgotten face of history'.

Check Your Progress

1. When did Gunter Grass receive the Nobel Prize for Literature?
2. When was *The Tin Drum* published?

10.3 *THE TIN DRUM*: SUMMARY

The plot of *The Tin Drum* revolves around the life of Oskar Matzerath, as narrated by him when confined in a mental hospital during the years 1952–1954. Born in 1924 in the Free City of Danzig (Poland), with an adult's capacity for thought and perception, he decides never to grow up when he hears his father declare that he would become a grocer. Gifted with a piercing shriek that can shatter glass or be used as a weapon, Oskar declares himself to be one of those 'clairaudient infants', whose 'spiritual development is complete at birth and only needs to affirm itself'. He retains the stature of a child while living through the beginning of World War II, several love affairs and the world of postwar Europe. Through all this, a toy tin drum, the first of which he received as a present on his third birthday, followed by many replacement drums each time he wears one out from over-vigorous drumming, remains his treasured possession; he is willing to commit violence to retain it.

Oskar considers himself to have two 'presumptive fathers'—his mother's husband Alfred Matzerath, a member of the Nazi Party, and her cousin and lover Jan Bronski, a Danzig Pole who is executed for defending the Polish Post Office in Danzig during the German invasion of Poland. After the death of his mother, Alfred marries Maria, a woman who is secretly his first mistress. After marrying Alfred, Maria gives birth to Kurt, whom Oskar thereafter refers to as his son. But Oskar is disappointed to find that the baby persists in growing up, and will not join him in ceasing to grow at the age of three.

During the war, Oskar joins a troupe of performing dwarfs who entertain the German troops at the front line. But when his second love, the diminutive Roswitha, is killed by Allied troops in the invasion of Normandy, Oskar returns to

his family in Danzig where he becomes the leader of a criminal youth gang. The Russian army soon captures Danzig, and Alfred is shot by invading troops after he goes into seizures while swallowing his party pin to avoid being revealed as a Nazi. Oskar bears some culpability for the death of both of his presumptive fathers since he led Joseph Bronski to the Polish Post Office in an effort to get his drum repaired and, the fact that he returns Alfred Matzerath's Nazi party pin while the latter is being interrogated by the Soviet soldiers.

After the war, Oskar, his widowed stepmother, and their son have to leave the Polish city of Danzig and move to Düsseldorf, where he models in the nude and works in engraving tombstones. Mounting tensions compel Oskar to live apart from Maria and Kurt; he decides on a flat owned by the Zeidlers. Upon moving in, he falls in love with Sister Dorothea, a neighbour, but he later fails to seduce her. During an encounter with fellow musician Klepp, Klepp asks Oskar how he has an authority over the judgment of music. Oskar, willing to prove himself once and for all, picks up his drum and sticks despite his vow to never play again after Alfred's death, and plays a measure on his drum. The ensuing events lead Klepp, Oskar, and Scholle, a guitarist, to form the Rhine River Three jazz band. They are discovered by Mr. Schmuh, who invites them to play at the Onion Cellar club. After a virtuoso performance, a record company talent seeker discovers Oskar the jazz drummer and offers a contract. Oskar soon achieves fame and riches. One day while walking through a field he finds a severed finger: the ring finger of Sister Dorothea, who has been murdered. He then meets and befriends Vittlar. Oskar allows himself to be falsely convicted of the murder and is confined to an insane asylum, where he writes his memoirs.

Check Your Progress

3. Who are the two 'presumptive fathers' of Oskar?
4. Who are the members of the Rhine River Three jazz band?

10.4 MAGIC REALISM: AN OVERVIEW

Magical realism is like emerging from a dream. Here, we are offered a new style that is thoroughly of this world which celebrates the mundane. This new world of objects is still alien to the current idea of realism. It employs various techniques that endow all things with a deeper meaning and reveal mysteries that always threaten the secure tranquility of simple and ingenuous things. This [art offers a] calm admiration of the magic, of being, of the discovery that things already have their own faces, [this] means that the ground in which the most diverse ideas in the world can take root has been reconquered—albeit in new ways. For the new art, it is a question of representing before our eyes, in an intuitive way, the fact, the interior figure, of the exterior world.

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(*Lo real maravilloso Americano*) The marvellous begins to be unmistakably marvellous when it arises from an unexpected alteration of reality (the miracle), from a privileged revelation of reality an unaccustomed insight that is singularly favoured by the unexpected richness of reality or an amplification of the scale and categories of reality perceived with particular intensity by virtue of an exaltation of the spirit that leads it to a kind of extreme state. To begin with, the phenomenon of the marvellous presupposes faith.

If we stop to take a look, what difference can there possibly be between surrealism and the marvelous real? This is very easily explained. The term magical realism (*el realismo magical*) was coined around 1924 or 1925 by a German art critic named Franz Roh what he called magical realism was simply painting where real forms are combined in a way that does not conform to daily reality. In fact, what Franz Roh calls magical realism is simply expressionist painting. Now, then if surrealism pursued the marvellous, one would have to say that it very rarely looked for it in reality.

In magical realism, we find the transformation of the common and the everyday into the awesome and the unreal. It is predominantly an art of surprises. Time exists in a kind of timeless fluidity and the unreal happens as part of reality. Once the reader accepts the *fait accompli*, the rest follows with logical precision.

Magical realism is, more than anything else; an attitude toward reality that can be expressed in popular or cultured forms, in elaborate or rustic styles in closed or open structures. In magical realism, the writer confronts reality and tries to untangle it, to discover what is mysterious in things, in life, in human acts. The principle thing is not the creation of imaginary beings or worlds but the discovery of the mysterious relationship between man and his circumstances. In magical realism, key events have no logical or psychological explanation. The magical realist does not try to copy the surrounding reality or to wound it but to seize the mystery that breathes behind things.

Magical realism offers a multifaceted fiction that incorporates metropolis thinking, rejects some components of it, and also incorporates and shapes the traditions of indigenous cultures.

Garcia Marquez maintains that realism is a kind of premeditated literature that offers too static and an exclusive vision of reality. However, good or bad they may be, they are books which finish on the last page. Disproportion is part of our reality too. Our reality is in itself all out of proportion. In other words, Garcia Marquez suggests that the magic text is, paradoxically, more realistic than the realist text.

Magical realism is not a realism to be transfigured by the supplement of a magical perspective, but a reality which is already in and itself magical or fantastic.

Magical realism, unlike the fantastic or the surreal, presumes that the individual requires a bond with the traditions and the faith of the community, that she/he is historically constructed and connected.

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Rushdie sees 'El realismo magical', magic realism, at least as practiced by (Garcia) Marquez, as a development out of surrealism that expresses a genuinely Third World consciousness. Magical realism is a way of showing reality more truly with the marvellous aid of metaphor.

Magical realism turned out to be a part of the twentieth century preoccupation with how our ways of being in the world resist capture by the traditional logic of the waking mind's reason. The magical realists aim to reveal the intimate interdependence between reality and fantasy as shared by the modernists, but magical realism and modernism proceed from different means. Magical realism wills a transformation of the object of representation, rather than the means of representation. Magical realism, like the uncanny projects a mesmerizing uncertainty suggesting that ordinary life may also be the scene of the extraordinary.

Magical realism takes the supernatural for granted and spends more of its space exploring the gamut of human reactions.

Magical realism's most basic concern is the nature and limits of the knowable. Magical realist texts ask us to look beyond the limits of the knowable. Magical realism is truly postmodern in its rejection of the binarisms, rationalisms and reductive materialisms of Western modernity.

Magical realist fiction exhibits the following features:

- It is a disruption of modern realist fiction.
- It creates a space for interaction and diversity.
- It is no less 'real' than traditional 'realism'.
- It is about transgressing boundaries and multiple worlds.
- It destabilizes normative oppositions.
- It is subversive.
- It is an international phenomenon.

First, it is the combination of reality and fantasy and second, it is the transformation of the real into the awesome and unreal. Thirdly, it is an art of surprises, one which creates a distorted concept of time and space, fourth, a literature directed to an intellectual minority; characterized by a cold cerebral aloofness it does not cater to popular tastes, but rather to those sophisticated individuals instructed in aesthetic subtleties.

A 'poetics of excess' that typifies magical realist texts, extends within a broadly delineated typology from the fantastic to the hyperbolic and from the improbable to the possible. Magical realism manages to present a view of life that exudes a sense of energy and vitality in a world that promises not only joy, but a fair share of misery as well. In effect, the reader is rewarded with a perspective on the world that still includes much that has elsewhere been lost. Where 'possible' is instantly transformed into probable as we are transported from the domain of the real to the magically real by the similarly uncharted stratagems of the artistic imagination.

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Magical realism refers to the occurrence of supernatural, or anything that is contrary to our conventional view of reality [it is] not divorced from reality either, [and] the presence of the supernatural is often attributed to the primitive or 'magical' Indian mentality, which coexists with European rationality. Floyd Merrel explains that 'magical realism stems from the conflict between two pictures of the world'. Magical realism is thus based on reality, or a world with which the author is familiar, while expressing the myths and superstitions of the American Indians, [and it] allows us to see dimensions of reality of which we are not normally aware.

As per the Oxford Companion to English Literature, magic realist novels and stories typically, have a strong narrative drive, in which the recognizably realistic merges with the unexpected and the inexplicable and in which elements of dreams, fairy story, or mythology combine with the everyday, often in a mosaic or kaleidoscopic pattern of refraction and recurrence.

According to the American Heritage Dictionary, magic realism is chiefly a literary style or genre originating in Latin America that combines fantastic or dreamlike elements with reality.

According to the Encyclopedia of World Literature in the Twentieth Century, magic realism is the result of a unique fusion of the beliefs and superstitions of different cultural groups that included the Hispanic conqueror, his *criollo* (creole) descendants, the native people and the African slaves. Magic realism, like myth, also provides an essentially synthetic or totalizing way of depicting reality. It was firmly grounded in daily reality and expressed man's astonishment before the wonders of the real world,[and] convey[s] a vision of the fantastic features of reality.

According to the Macmillan Guide to Modern Literature, magic realism is a fantastic situation realistically treated (discussed only in terms of German Literature).

As per The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Literary Terms, magic realism is a kind of modern fiction in which fabulous and fantastical events are included in a narrative that otherwise maintains the 'reliable' tone of objective realistic report. Designating a tendency of the modern novel to reach beyond the confines of realism and draw upon the energies of fable, folk tale, and myth while maintaining a strong contemporary social relevance. The fantastic attributes given to characters in such novels—levitation, flight, telepathy, telekinesis—are among the means that magic realism adopts in order to encompass the often phantasmagoric political realities of the twentieth century.

According to the Dictionary of Literary Terms and Literary Theory, magic realism is characterized by the mingling and juxtaposition of the realistic and the fantastic, bizarre and skillful time shifts, convoluted and even labyrinthine narratives and plots, miscellaneous use of dreams, myths and fairy stories, expressionistic and even surrealistic description, arcane erudition, the elements of surprise or abrupt shock, the horrific and the inexplicable.

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As per the Handbook to Literature edited by Harmon, in a magic realist work, the frame or surface of the work may be conventionally realistic, but contrasting elements—such as supernatural myth, dream, fantasy—invade realism and change the whole basis of the art.

The Handbook to Literature, edited by Harper, refers to the Spanish term 'Lo real maravilloso' as the practice of Latin American writers who mix everyday realities with imaginative extravaganzas drawn from the rich interplay of European and native cultures. [Writers] enlarge a reader's ordinary sense of the real to include magic, myth, hallucination and miracles.

As per Benet's Reader's Encyclopedia, magic realism is the capacity to enrich our idea of what is 'real' by incorporating all dimensions of the imagination, particularly as expressed in magic, myth and religion.

Check Your Progress

5. Who coined the term magic realism?
6. State two features of magical realist fiction.

10.5 *THE TIN DRUM*: MAGIC REALISM AND TREATMENT OF HISTORY

The greatest significance of Gunter Grass's first novel, *The Tin Drum* (1959) lies in its presentation of the ways and means of World War II. *The Tin Drum* certainly engages with 'madness'. The novel depicts Oskar Matzerath's personal experience of psychic disturbance and opens with his frank admission, 'I am an inmate of a mental hospital.' Yet, if Oskar is mad, how much more so the world around him. So, even as *The Tin Drum* depicts the events that lead up to and result in Oskar's incarceration, it also provides an examination of the social and political conditions that combined to give rise to one of the most horrific periods in world history. This is the madness at the centre of the novel and might explain why so many critics read *The Tin Drum* in terms of its historical engagement.

The Tin Drum is the personal narrative of the child-like dwarf, and later hunch-backed, Oskar. From his bed in a mental institution, Oskar recounts his life story and that of his family in pre-war, wartime and post-war Poland and Germany. Much of the novel is set in the city of Danzig. As the novel unfolds, these events become increasingly dark and foreboding. The ethnically pluralistic culture of the city begins to fragment and polarize as the novel charts the rise of National Socialism. Fractures appear in Oskar's family. The relationships between Oskar's Kashubian mother, her German husband and her Polish lover reflect tensions that go far beyond Oskar's doubtful parentage. Oskar elects to halt his growth and in doing so seeks to ensure for himself a position of critical distance from the developing horror. From this perspective, Oskar beats his drum as an accompaniment to his narrative.

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Oskar drums to the death of his mother, for whom a demonic compulsion to consume fish ultimately results in her death. Oskar drums to the death of his best friend impaled upon a cursed, yet alluring, ship's figurehead. His insistent rhythm continues through the terror of the 'Crystal Night', a night that claims the life of Sigismund Markus, the Jewish toy merchant who supplied Oskar with his drums. Even with his limited supply of drums, Oskar's drum accompanies the outbreak of a World War, its many battles, the execution of his mother's lover and the death of his father.

The narrative continues into the post-war desolation of Germany, describing its shattered cities and population. The war has had its effect on Oskar. Loneliness and a fear of the world haunt him. After brief but successful careers as an artist's model and a jazz percussionist, Oskar fabricates a rather gruesome criminal case against himself so that he might be consigned to an asylum. The narrative brings us full circle to the point where Oskar is about to be released and is attempting to prepare himself for this ordeal through the writing of his novel *The Tin Drum* — the story of the collapse of a world and the death of all those he knew.

If Oskar is to move forward, it seems he must first exorcise the past. For many critics, *The Tin Drum* serves a similar purpose for Grass. In the 'Introduction' to Grass's collection of essays, 'On Writing and Politics', Salman Rushdie identifies the profound emotional dislocation and intellectual estrangement experienced by Grass at the end of World War. Rushdie has written for Grass: 'What an experience: to discover that one's entire picture of the world is false, and not only false, but based upon a monstrosity. What a task for any individual: the reconstruction of reality from rubble.' *The Tin Drum*, argues Rushdie, represents Grass's attempt to reconstruct German pre-war, wartime and post-war 'reality' by first 'unlearning' it.

Grass explains, *The Tin Drum* represents a much-needed 'confrontation with history, with German history'. By directly confronting the National Socialist movement's evolution in Germany, and the German experience of the war, Grass seeks to free himself from a similarly dangerous ideological colonization of the mind. It is, indeed, precisely Grass's engagement with such a horrific period in world history that leads some magic realist critics to identify *The Tin Drum* as a magic realist novel. Grass's treatment of German history is complex. *The Tin Drum* examines both the lived experience of National Socialism and its post-war consequences. In doing so, Grass confronts a post-war, reconstructed, Germanic knowledge of self and challenges what he considers to be the German people's profound reluctance to confront its own past. So, when Grass suggests that the figure of the writer is best understood as 'someone writing against the passage of time', he is, at the same time, referring to himself as a writer who seeks to ensure that personal memories are not over-written by perhaps more palatable versions of the past. Oskar, moreover, appears to express a similar view when he challenges his readers with the observation that ''even wall-paper has a better memory than ours.'

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The death of Sigismund Markus, the Jewish owner of a toy store and chief provider of Oskar's drums, indicates the pressing need for such memories to be preserved and returned to regularly. Sigismund Markus commits suicide rather than face the violence of the Fascists who attack his store. In doing so, his death mirrors that of Walter Benjamin who in his 'Theses on the Philosophy of History' observes that 'every image of the past that is not recognized by the present as one of its concerns threatens to disappear irretrievably'. *The Tin Drum*, by returning to a German pre-war and wartime experience that many may well prefer to forget and by placing it in relation to post-war Germany, refuses to allow the memory of this historical period to disappear.

Grass's novel directly confronts the unease associated with German art and culture in the years immediately following the war. *The Tin Drum*, as it attempts to stimulate memories of pre-war and wartime Germany, also revives memories of the relationship that developed between art and politics under National Socialism. During this period, there emerged a reformulated understanding of the German artist and German art itself. Under the ideological influence of National Socialism, the figure of the 'true'-artist was credited with an almost divinely inspired creativity through which the soul of the German 'Volk' might find expression. As Mason observes, however, 'far from being so grandiose an affair, it simply meant that art was subordinate to political propaganda. Thus, under Hitler, Nazi writers and theorists went about the propagandistic reinterpretation of their literary heritage.'

The Tin Drum had a polarizing effect on critics and public alike. Supporters of the novel argued that the novel represented an 'explosion of pent-up epic energy', demonstrating that 'obituaries on the novel as an art form were suddenly shown to be premature. The publication of *The Tin Drum*, however, also caused enormous consternation within Germany.

Though Oskar has the stature of a child, his physical weakness is somewhat compensated by his remarkable glass-shattering voice. With this voice, Oskar is able to defend himself when threatened by the adult world. Soon after his third birthday, for example, Oskar's incessant drumming becomes too much for his parents to bear and they attempt to take his now battered drum from him. Oskar defends his instrument by first shattering the glass face of a clock and then several light bulbs. Oskar's voice, however, is used to more dramatic and more political effect when it is directed against the institutionalized violence of the classroom. Oskar's first day at school is a disaster. His teacher, Miss Spollenhauer, feeling her authority undermined by her young pupil's incessant drumming, attempts to separate Oskar from his beloved instrument. At first, Oskar gives her 'a harmless warning scratch on the lens of her right eyeglass.' Unfortunately, Miss Spollenhauer persists in her efforts to enforce discipline. Without hesitation, she resorts to the whip. To defend himself, Oskar is forced to take drastic action and pandemonium ensues. His 'Glass demolishing scream' shatters the classroom windows one at a time. On the way out of the school, Oskar has his photograph taken against a blackboard, inscribed upon which, in Stitterlin script, are the words: 'My First School Day'.

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Oskar's drum is the image that dominates the novel and perhaps most clearly signals the convergence of fantastic symbol and protest. The magical power of his drum endows Oskar with a 'strange influence over crowds and individuals'. In the summer of 1935, Oskar attends a party demonstration and conceals himself beneath the speakers' rostrum. Oskar prefers to approach the rostrum from behind rather than face it as part of the mob. Just as the guests of honour are about to make their entrance, the party band begins to play its military music. The crowd before the rostrum is expectant, all wanting 'to be present while history was being made, even if it took all morning'. Yet, the music is not to Oskar's liking. In keeping with his sometimes-dramatic character, he calls out, 'now, my people. Hearken unto me'. With the magic of his drum, he manipulates the militaristic music until it becomes first a waltz, then the Charleston tune 'Jimmy the Tiger'. The party meeting degenerates to the point that: 'All those who were not dancing hastened to snatch up the last available partners', until eventually the field is cleared of 'everything but daises.'

Much of the controversy associated with *The Tin Drum* also arises from its alleged blasphemy against the Christian Church. In his essay, 'What Shall We Tell Our Children?', Grass reveals his bitterness against the church, arguing that it was not 'beasts in human form, but cultivated representatives of the religion of human brotherhood [who] allowed the crime to happen: they are more responsible than the criminal in the spotlight, be his name Kaduk or Eichman'. Grass was himself both a church-going Catholic and a member of the Hitler Youth and he concludes this essay with a stem warning against forgetting the church's complicity in the horror of National Socialism. Oskar appears to display similar feeling against the church. Early in 1936, he encounters the sculpture of the child Jesus in the Church of the Sacred Heart - the very place of worship Grass attended as a child. Oskar is immediately struck by an uncanny resemblance between himself and the statue, declaring: 'I take a good look at Jesus and recognize my spit and image. He might have been my twin brother. He had my stature and exactly my watering can'. More significantly, Oskar is shocked by the sculpture's posture. Oskar does not leave things as they are. He attempts to encourage his double to drum, appearing to invite Jesus to take up the form of Oskar's protest and through a 'little private miracle' join with Oskar. Yet, Oskar's attempts fail. Jesus refuses to take up the drum and so seems to indicate that Oskar is alone in his role as protester.

Near the end of the war, Oskar repeats this test, seeking to confirm Jesus' previous failure. This time, however, the sculpture responds to Oskar's challenge and begins to drum. Oskar takes a moment to admire the saviour's drumming style before anger overwhelms him. He quickly reclaims his drum lest its power be compromised by what he perceives to be an act of treachery. As lrýne Leonard points out: 'Whereas Jesus' cross has proved a fraud, Oskar's drum still has all the makings of an authentic cross in the secular sphere, and if Jesus frivolously abuses the drum; he invalidates its integrity as a symbol of protest.'

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His use of the fantastic in *The Tin Drum*, however, does not only function to expose and attack the violence of a specific period in German history, but also engages with the very process of recording and writing history and the values associated with such a process. History as a form of knowledge, for example, is presented in *The Tin Drum* as both alluring and dangerous. This is a knowledge that responds to the desires and insecurities of its disciples, but is capable also of enslaving them.

Oskar also appears to manipulate history for his own purposes. Oskar uses his photo album as the starting point for his story and introduces the characters of his narrative as he studies its pages in the mental asylum. The pictures in the album are of his family and friends. Yet, though the photographs appear to follow a chronological sequence, and seem to offer an ordered and accurate account of the past, Oskar alone controls their relationship to one another. Oskar's use of the photo album represents an attempt to impose meaning on the past. More significantly, perhaps, Oskar is also drawing upon his version of the past to explain his present. His position as a writer of history allows him a great deal of potential power, not only to shape our perception of the world he inhabits, but also to explain, even excuse, his cruel and frequently criminal actions. Oskar, however, makes no effort to present his version of events as authoritative. As a matter of fact, Oskar readily admits that his narrative has a tendency to 'exaggerate and mislead, if not to lie.' Oskar as historian, moreover, is guilty of random, even chaotic, connections. The experiences of a world war and the events leading up to it, how they affect Oskar and how they are viewed through the shattered lens of his disintegrating family, are of such a confused nature that no methodology or ideology can make them conform to a single ordering principle.

In *The Tin Drum*, Grass appears to display an approach to history that incorporates the imaginative possibilities of literature. Susan Anderson, for example, argues: 'As for imagination, Grass regards it as the other side of a narrowly defined reality. Literature gives form to fantasy and makes a new reality. In doing so, Grass is both challenging the hegemony of historians over literary writers and asserting 'that fiction is superior in depicting history because it's very mode acknowledges the relativity of its perspective'.

Such an understanding of Grass's approach to history is, moreover, very much in line with critical discussion of the relationship between historical discourse and magic realism in as much that: 'Magic Realism reminds us that our history is a fiction existing only in the books that have been written about it'.

Check Your Progress

7. How is Oskar's first day in school?
8. Give one example of the use of the fantastic element in the novel.

10.6 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS QUESTIONS

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1. Gunter Grass received the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1999.
2. *The Tin Drum* was published in 1959.
3. Oskar considers himself to have two 'presumptive fathers'—his mother's husband Alfred Matzerath, a member of the Nazi Party, and her cousin and lover Jan Bronski, a Danzig Pole.
4. Klepp, Oskar and Scholle, a guitarist, form the Rhine River Three jazz band.
5. The term magical realism ((*el realismo magical*) was coined around 1924 or 1925 by a German art critic named Franz Roh what he called magical realism was simply painting where real forms are combined in a way that does not conform to daily reality.
6. Two features of magical realist fiction are the following:
   i. It is a disruption of modern realist fiction.
   ii. It creates a space for interaction and diversity.
7. Oskar's first day at school is a disaster. His teacher, Miss Spollenhauer, feeling her authority undermined by her young pupil's incessant drumming, attempts to separate Oskar from his beloved instrument.
8. The use of the fantastic by Grass in *The Tin Drum*, however, does not only function to expose and attack the violence of a specific period in German history, but also engages with the very process of recording and writing history and the values associated with such a process.

10.7 SUMMARY

- Gunter Wilhelm Grass (16 October 1927 – 13 April 2015) was a German novelist, poet, playwright, illustrator, graphic artist, sculptor, and recipient of the 1999 Nobel Prize in Literature.
- Gunter Grass is best known for his first novel, *The Tin Drum* (1959), a key text in European magic realism.
- The plot of *The Tin Drum* revolves around the life of Oskar Matzerath, as narrated by him when confined in a mental hospital during the years 1952–1954.
- The greatest significance of Gunter Grass's first novel, *The Tin Drum* (1959) lies in its presentation of the ways and means of World War II. *The Tin Drum* certainly engages with 'madness'. The novel depicts Oskar Matzerath's very personal experience of psychic disturbance and opens with his frank admission, 'I am an inmate of a mental hospital.'

10.8 KEY WORDS

- **National Socialism:** *This largely* alludes to Nazism, the ideology of the Nazi Party, National Socialist German Workers' Party (NSDAP) which existed in Germany between 1920 and 1945 and ruled the country from 1933 to 1945.
- **Consternation:** It is a feeling of anxiety or dismay, typically at something unexpected.
- **Rostrum:** It is a raised platform on which a person stands to make a public speech, receive an award or medal, play music, or conduct an orchestra.
- **Blasphemy:** It is the act of insulting or showing contempt or lack of reverence for God.
- **Surrealism:** It is a movement in visual art and literature which flourished in Europe between World Wars I and II.

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10.9 SELF ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

Short-Answer Questions

1. Prepare a brief biographical sketch of Gunter Grass.
2. Write in brief the summary of the novel *The Tin Drum.*
3. Define the term 'magic realism'.

Long-Answer Questions

1. Analyse the use of magic realism in the novel *The Tin Drum.*
2. Critically analyse the character of Oskar in the novel.
3. Examine the backdrop of history in the novel *The Tin Drum.*

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UNIT 11 *SURFACING:* MARGARET ATWOOD

Structure

11.0 INTRODUCTION

Surfacing published in 1972, was the second novel written by Margaret Atwood. The story of *Surfacing* has been visualized in Quebec by the author and she has incorporated the uniqueness of people of Quebec. The Canadian province is different from other provinces as this was the only province which instead of British population had French population. The novel has been written at a time when there was a splurge of Quebec nationalism as the province was facing tremendous cultural discrimination due to its non- British population. The period witnesses many socio-economic reforms, like in the field of education. The province initiated secularist ideologies in the society. The Quiet Revolution also took place at this time and as a result of that the province established political and economic independence which enabled the people to have more nationalistic feelings and prompted them to form a separate identity from Canada. The political scenario of the period is very visible in Atwood's novel, *Surfacing*.

11.1 OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- Prepare a brief biographical sketch of Margaret Atwood
- Critically analyse the novel *Surfacing*
- Discuss the significant elements and symbols used in *Surfacing*

11.2 MARGARET ATWOOD: LIFE AND WORKS

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Margaret Atwood was a Canadian who was born in 1939 in Ottawa. She completed her education from the Victoria College and the Radcliffe College from University of Toronto. She is known for her work as a poet, novelist, literary critic, essayist and environmental activist. Her work in these areas has managed to get many acclaims. She has won the Arthur C. Clarke Award and Prince of Asturias Award for Literature. Atwood has won the Booker Prize and twice she has won the Governor General Award. In the year 2001 she was included in Canada's Walk of Fame. In order to encourage young talent, Atwood has founded a non-profit organization, the Writer's Trust of Canada. Due to her immense contribution towards literature in Canada she has been nominated as the founding trustee of the Griffin Poetry Prize. Atwood is credited for developing and promoting robotic writing of documents, for this she has initiated the technology of Long-Pen in 2004 which help in such writings. She is the director of Syngrafii Inc, this is the company which manufactures and distributes the Long-Pen technology all over the world.

Although she is prominently known as a novel writer she has made significant contribution in literature because of her poetry work as well. Atwood has fifteen books on poems which are mainly based on fantasy and mythologies. She has written many short stories for numerous magazines and publishers like Tamarack Review, Alphabet, Harper's, CBC Anthology, Ms., Saturday Night. She has written four collections of stories and three collections of unclassifiable short prose works as well. Atwood's first novel was *The Edible English Woman* which was published in 1969. The books by Atwood have been published in more than thirty languages.

Her second novel, *Surfacing* is often categorized as a postcolonial writing. This categorization is based on most work which is done by authors who have witnessed the colonization in their country and have very clear idea of the struggles the people have gone through during that period. The novel is not completely embedded with the features of postcolonial tradition but at the same time it does have the influence of the feeling of Canadian nationalism which was prevalent at that time. The author has mentioned about the Canadian national flag in a passage in the story even though the flag was declared in 1965. The second reason as to why the novel is categorized as a postcolonial novel is due to the way the author has mentioned the American influence in trying to impact the culture of Canada. This forceful penetration into the culture is viewed as a form of colonization.

The author has tried to touch upon many social issues related to women and their sexuality in the society. *Surfacing* has in a way challenged a woman's conservative, social and sexual role. *Surfacing* addresses the health hazards connected with hormonal contraception, the notion of contraception as a male discovery, the impact of pregnancy, the society's outlook towards the use of

makeup, the false concept of a perfect marriage, the impression of an innate woman, and the emotional techniques that men create to have an upper hand over the female population. The author has addressed all these issues by creating a narrator and how the narrator is trying to cope with these issues. The author has tried to convey the general feelings of women in society when they are treated as a sex object in the society by the male population. Due to these aspects *Surfacing* can be termed as a proto-feminist book.

Surfacing tries to promote ideology of secularism and points out how religion is used to control the people in the society which results in bringing discord among people. The novel tries to address the growing gap between the younger generation with the older people of the society and how it is affecting the society. The narrator of the book considers the older age group people to be at the mercy of false sense of integrity. The author projects the generation gap present in the society and the repercussions of such split.

A slight indication is made in the novel through the narrator about the impact the World War II has added in terms of establishing superiority of men in the society. The narrator also mentions that since America is restless after the war that is why it tries to impose on the culture of the country. *Surfacing* explores the vague moral scene left after the World War II. The narrator has her childhood memories of Hitler being the personification of all malevolence during the World War II period. The narrator realizes that after the war the morals of the society have become even vaguer and there is an urgent need to fight the existing evils in the society. *Surfacing* emphasizes the need for an environmentalist movement as the narrator is a person who believes in the upkeep of the natural resources and strongly condemns the American tourist for their crude treatment of the natural resources. The issues mentioned in the novel are a part of every society even in the present day and there is a need to safeguard the natural resources.

Check Your Progress

1. Mention Margaret Atwood's major contribution towards encouraging the young writers.
2. Name Margaret Atwood's first novel.

11.3 *SURFACING*: CRITICAL ANALYSIS

In this section, we will discuss the important nuances of Margaret Atwood's novel, *Surfacing*.

11.3.1 Summary

The nameless speaker comes back to Quebec after many years in order to look for her father who has been missing. She is accompanied by Joe who is the boyfriend

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of the narrator and two others who are a couple named Anna and David. Before reaching the island where her father used to live she stops to meet Paul, who is a friend of her father. She is keen to meet him as she feels he may be able to tell something about her father's whereabouts. She is disappointed as Paul has no information regarding her father. The narrator reaches her father's island and with the help of a guide named Evans and her friends tries to find the reason for her father's disappearance. The narrator is sure that her father is alive and has become mentally unstable.

Due to all this the narrator who works as an illustrator of books is unable to concentrate on the book of fairy tales she is assigned to illustrate. In order to help the narrator to be able to do her work, David agrees to stay at the island. While on the island David is often invective at his wife and justifies it as humour. Anna confides to the narrator that David is a philanderer who is constantly prompting her to wear makeup. The foursome goes on a trip to another island to pick blueberries. During this trip, Joe suddenly proposes to the narrator. The narrator does not accept this proposal and tells Joe the story about her husband and child who she had separated from.

While the friends are on this trip, Paul brings Malmstrom to the island. He is from an American wildlife agency who wishes to buy the island but when narrator comes to know about his intentions she refuses straight away and informs Paul that she feels that her father is still alive. Though Paul does not agree with her and as a result of this the narrator goes through her father's papers and feels that may be Paul is right in feeling that her father is no longer alive. When she goes through her father's papers she comes across that her father had been researching Indian wall paintings and had visited several sites for that purpose. She gets determined to visit one of the sites mentioned in his records.

The narrator persuades her friends to come with her to the site to see the paintings. Enroute they find a decomposed body of blue heron hanging from the tree. The narrator is very upset to see the decaying bird and believes that it is the work of the American campers. She is also upset with David who wants to film the scene so that he can use it in one of his movies. While they are setting up the camp, Anna confides to the narrator that she has not got any makeup to the camping trip and because of this David will get very upset with her and may be rebuke her for this. The narrator finds it strange for David to be annoyed on such a trivial issue and decides to go fishing with Joe and David. When they are on the way to the lake, they spot the campers who the narrator feels have hunted the bird and she is convinced that they are American because she believes only they can behave in such a crude manner.

While they go fishing they reach the site which is mentioned on the records of narrator's father but at the site they do not find any paintings. The narrator is very dejected and confused with all this. When they return to their island the narrator decides to go searching for the paintings on another site which is under

the lake. While she is preparing to go to the new site she finds that David is coaxing Anna to pose nude for his movie, this is very embarrassing for Anna, seeing this the narrator confronts David for his bad behaviour against his wife which he justifies by saying that he is making Anna pay for her deeds of treason.

The narrator reaches the site and dives into the lake in search of the paintings. During these dives under the lake she comes across an object which scares her and then she realizes that when she witnessed the object the image of her unborn child comes to her mind whom she had to abort against her will as her former lover had demanded her to do so. When Joe asks her about her whereabouts at first she ignores him then on his pestering, admits to him and tells him the real story about her past life. The narrator confides to Joe that she had an affair with one of her professors at the art college and got pregnant. The professor forced her to abort the child. Joe tries to get close to the narrator but because of her past she resists him and goes back to the cabin. David also tries to misbehave with the narrator and when she reminds him that he is married to Anna he justifies his actions by saying that he can do what he wants as Anna is having an affair with Joe. The narrator does not believe all this.

The police comes and informs that they have recovered the body of the narrator's father. The narrator is very upset and refuses to believe this news and in this state she goes to Joe for comfort and lets him seduce her. The narrator wishes to be pregnant with Joe's baby so that she can forget the grief of her first child. The narrator realizes later that she had got carried away and starts to repent her actions. She leaves the island in a canoe without her friends and before leaving she damages David's movie. The others try to search for her and finally give up when they are unable to find her. They decide to leave the island without her.

The narrator is left alone on the island and due to this she gets hysterical and destroys all her illustration work— things inside the cabin. She abandons her clothes and starts to roam about the island in complete madness remembering the past about her parents, former lover and her aborted child. When she gets thoroughly exhausted and feels hungry she comes to her senses and gets in control of her senses. She realizes that there is nothing achieved by behaving in this manner and this only makes her weak and pitiable. She decides not to feel defenceless anymore. In the end, Paul and Joe come looking for her and when she sees Joe she realizes that she is in love with Joe and wants to be with him. She eagerly waits for him to reach her.

11.3.2 Main Characters

Let us discuss the major characters of the novel.

- **The Narrator:** The nameless central character of *Surfacing* is the narrator. The author has left her nameless as she wanted to establish her universal feeling of disaffection towards the society. The narrator is respectful toward nature, deeply clandestine, against the Americans and wistful, socially

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neurotic and sceptical of being in love with. The narrator is a victim of emotional paralysis that resolves itself through self-realization. Surfacing of a strong capable character from madness is the crux of the story. The novel is entirely based on the narrator's viewpoints and thinking. The author has not clarified the reason for narrator's madness and the process of overcoming that stage. Though on few occasions the author has pointed out that grief is one of the major causes and the news of her father's death completely breaks her and reminds her of all the sadness in her past life. One cause of madness has been the feeling of complete loneliness towards the end of the story. Atwood tries to discover a woman's position from various angles in the society. She realizes that if she continues to alienate herself she will not be happy but she has also decided that she will not attempt to transform herself for the benefit of others.

- **Joe:** Initially the narrator has presented Joe as an easy-going and straight forward individual. The narrator feels that he is not very ambitious as he is content to be just an ordinary pottery maker who does not make very impressive pottery and earns a living by teaching pottery. Joe is not able to relate with the narrator's insecurities. All this undergo a sudden change when the narrator rejects his marriage proposal. The character of Joe is not very clear as the narrator herself is not clear about his temperament and her own stand about him constantly changes as the story progresses. In fact, in the end she realizes that Joe is her soulmate who will keep her content and happy.
- **David:** He is projected as an emotionally offensive and a womanizing spouse. David is a teacher by profession who is very fond of baseball. He is known to the narrator because he and Joe are making a movie together titled the 'Random Samples'. David constantly tries to cover up his harsh and sexist tendencies under the cover of humour. He treats his wife in a very rude and inconsiderate manner which is extremely disliked by the narrator. According to the narrator, in spite of not approving of Americans David behaves truly like them. The narrator's dislike for Americans leads to her comparing David as one. He has been shown as a very chauvinist male who considers the men to be superior as compared to females. At the first glance, David seems as a jovial and loving person but the author makes it clear as the novel progresses to establish that in reality he is very cruel and harsh. He has no respect for his wife as an individual. On pretext of light conversation he is forever trying to dominate his views over his wife. The author has very well-established that David has no respect for the women in the society. Under the guise of joking, David constantly tries to control Anna's behaviour. The narrator felt that David was a hypocrite as he claims to hate Americans but constantly behaves like them and even loves the sport which is most popular in America.

- **Anna:** She is defenceless yet wily wife who pretends to be sweet to her husband David so that he does not punish her. She does things like applying makeup just to please her husband even though she is not too keen herself. Anna tries to keep her marriage intact by using her body. Through Anna, the narrator has tried to portray the actual scenario in most societies about relationships and role of women. The narrator feels that men are always trying to regulate the actions of women and this aspect is elaborated with the issue of birth control pills which Anna has to consume even though they are causing a lot of discomfort to her. The narrator is able to understand how unhappy Anna is in her present marriage when Anna compares marriage to skiing down a hill without knowing how to ski well. The relationship between Anna and David has been presented by the author in such a way that it actually addresses many existing issues in the society about the status of the women and how men are constantly using them to suit only their personal needs. Through the observations made by the narrator, the author has managed to explore the impact of unhappy marriages and relationships which are not based on mutual respect for each other.

Other Characters in the Novel

Paul is empathetic yet a cautious friend of the narrator's father. He is the one who informs narrator that her father is missing. He is very helpful in narrator's search and provides all the information he has.

The narrator's mother is mentioned by narrator very briefly as she had died while the narrator was very young. She remembers her in order to feel strong in her weak moments.

The narrator's father can be listed as the main reason for the narrator's awakening in the story and coming to terms with all her insecurities.

The narrator's brother is mentioned very briefly and the narrator does not have much recollection of him.

The narrator's former lover can be blamed for most of narrator's insecurities about commitment.

Bill Malmstrom is projected as a rich and suspicious character that is disliked by the narrator in the first meeting itself.

There are few other characters like Evans, who is hired as a guide by the narrator in order to search her father, American campers who are actually Canadians but because of their crude behaviour are not approved by the narrator.

11.3.3 Essential Elements of the Novel

Different themes and their significance in the novel are as follows:

- **Inability to express**: All through *Surfacing*, the narrator's emotion of helplessness is attached by the way of inability to express herself verbally.

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In the last part of the novel when she goes crazy she is unable to react towards David's behaviour. In fact she is unable to understand the spoken words at that time and even decides to teach her future child the language of animals. The narrator uses her inability to understand spoken words towards her way of rejecting the norms of the society. This inability makes her reject everything around her. In the end, she is able to overcome her madness by acceptance of language.

- **Feeling of loneliness is symbolic to women's role in the society**: The author is trying to establish the way women feel left out in most decisions which men take. They try to control every aspect of the relationship without any consideration towards the impact of such actions on the female in the relation. The narrator's loneliness results in her going mad which leads her to withdraw herself completely.
- **American extension**: Atwood tries to imply in *Surfacing* that given the opportunity the Americans will take over Canada. Through the narrator's repeated dislike towards their actions the author has tried to reflect how their behaviour should be checked or they may start to influence the Canadian culture.
- **The quest for power**: The author has projected that women in the society have no power. Through the actions of the narrator the author has reaffirmed that the women will feel lonely and alienated if they are not treated as equals by the men. The novel shows that because of lack of power the narrator goes mad and reacts by completely withdrawing herself from the society. The narrator has mentioned the element of power on several occasions in the novel.

Symbols in the Story

The author has used a few subtle symbols to explore few aspects of the story with the issues in the society, for instance:

- **Paul's barometer** has been used by the author to explore the narrator's views of marriage. She has called the relation between the married couples mentioned in the story to be similar to the wooden couple which is inside Paul's barometer.
- **The Heron** which is spotted by the foursome on the way to the lake has been used to depict the destructive nature of Americans. The author has associated the narrator's views about the heron as destruction to nature and further established the view that men also destroy the women when they try to control them.
- The fact that David forces Anna to wear **makeup** depicts extensive male domination present in the society. Anna wears make up to please David. The narrator feels that by this act Anna is deprived from being a natural women and being natural is very essential according to the narrator.

- The **Ring** is an entrapment for the narrator and feels that it is just a piece of jewellery and has relevance only if there is equality in the relationship. The author feels that with the ring the only false ideals of marriage are formed.

Critical Analysis

Surfacing gained appreciation in Canada and in the United States from many writers and from the readers of the book. The novel was highly praised by the critics for its style, characterizations and elements. Edward Weeks, author and editor, commented in his review which was published in Atlantic that the author has very well depicted the nature and used natural environment to comment about serious issues. The book has very well written and powerful passages in the novel. According to Paul Delany, who presented his views in the New York Times Book Review, felt that the author has explored many expressions in the novel. He pointed out that she has beautifully blended the elements of realistic documentary with a free flowing fantasy. The book has showed that the power to stand for self has to surface from within the individual. Barbara Godard, in her section on Atwood for Feminist Writers, claims that the story explores very serious ironies of real life by simple symbols. Though there is another set of critics who felt that the narrator was not very sure as to what she wants and some parts of the novel resolve the issues on its own leaving the reader very confused as to the reasons for the change of thoughts.

Check Your Progress

3. Why was the narrator keen to meet Paul?
4. What made Anna worried as they were setting the camp in the island?
5. What is the significance of heron in the novel?
6. How is the character of Paul depicted in the novel?

11.4 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS QUESTIONS

1. In order to encourage young talent Atwood has founded a non-profit organization, the Writer's Trust of Canada.
2. Atwood's first novel was *The Edible English Woman* which was published in 1969.
3. Paul is a friend of the narrator's father. She was keen to meet him as she felt he may be able to tell something about her father's whereabouts. But she gets disappointed as Paul has no information regarding her father.

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4. While they were setting up the camp, Anna confides to the narrator that she has not got any makeup to the camping trip and because of this David will get very upset with her and may rebuke her for this.
5. The Heron which is spotted by the foursome on way to the lake has been used to depict the destructive nature of Americans. The author has associated the narrator's views about the heron as destruction to nature and further established the view that men also destroy the women when they try to control them.
6. Paul is shown to be empathetic yet a cautious friend of the narrator's father. He is the one who informs the narrator that her father is missing. He is very helpful in narrator's search and provides all the information he has.

11.5 SUMMARY

- Margaret Atwood was a Canadian who was born in 1939 in Ottawa. She completed her education from the Victoria College and the Radcliffe College from University of Toronto. She is known for her work as a poet, novelist, literary critic, essayist and environmental activist.
- Although she is prominently known as a novel writer she has made significant contribution in literature because of her poetry work as well. Atwood has fifteen books on poems which are mainly based on fantasy and mythologies.
- Her second novel, *Surfacing* is often categorized as a postcolonial writing. This categorization is based on most work which is done by authors who have witnessed the colonization in their country and have very clear idea of the struggles the people have gone through during that period.
- *Surfacing* tries to promote ideology of secularism and points out how religion is used to control the people in the society which results in bringing discord among people.
- A slight indication is made in the novel through the narrator about the impact the World War II has added in terms of establishing superiority of men in the society. The narrator also mentions that since America is restless after the war that is why it tries to impose on the culture of the country.
- The nameless central character of *Surfacing* is the narrator. The author has left her nameless as she wanted to establish her universal feeling of disaffection towards the society.
- Initially the narrator has presented Joe as an easy-going and straight forward individual. The narrator feels that he is not very ambitious as he is content to be just an ordinary pottery maker who does not make very impressive pottery and earns a living by teaching pottery.

- Paul is empathetic yet a cautious friend of the narrator's father. He is the one who informs narrator that her father is missing. He is very helpful in narrator's search and provides all the information he has.
- All through *Surfacing*, the narrator's emotion of helplessness is attached by the way of inability to express herself verbally.
- The Ring is an entrapment for the narrator and feels that it is just a piece of jewellery and has relevance only if there is equality in the relationship. The author feels that with the ring the only false ideals of marriage are formed.
- *Surfacing* gained appreciation in Canada and in the United States from many writers and from the readers of the book. The novel was highly praised by the critics for its style, characterizations and elements.

11.6 KEY WORDS

- **Colonization:** It is the establishment, exploitation, maintenance, acquisition and expansion of colonies in one territory by people from another territory.
- **Barometer:** It is a gadget used to indicate atmospheric pressure.
- **Invective:** This refers to insulting, abusive, or highly critical language.
- **Philanderer:** This term refers to a man who readily or frequently enters into casual sexual relationships with women; a womanizer.

11.7 SELF ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

Short Answer Questions

1. Mention the significant events in the life of Margaret Atwood.
2. Write a short note on the tone of the narrator in the *Surfacing*.
3. Briefly mention the essential elements and symbols used in the novel, *Surfacing*?

Long Answer Questions

1. Analyse the genre in which the author has presented *Surfacing*.
2. How is the position of women in the society depicted in the novel, *Surfacing*?
3. Comment on the title of the novel, *Surfacing*.

11.8 FURTHER READINGS

NOTES

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UNIT 12 *VOSS:* PATRICK WHITE

NOTES

Structure

12.0 INTRODUCTION

Patrick White's novel *Voss* deals with a German named Voss' exploration of the Australian topography. Apparently, it may seem that it is a historical novel as the exploration of Australia was based on the real life exploration that was done in 1845; but more than being a historical novel it is a metaphysical novel, as it deals with the psyche of Voss as well as his relationship with the Australian landscape.

12.1 OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- Prepare a short background to the British presence in Australia
- List the major works of Patrick White
- Discuss the major themes of the novel *Voss*

12.2 A SHORT BACKGROUND TO THE BRITISH PRESENCE IN AUSTRALIA

Australia was discovered by Captain James Cook in 1770 and thereafter colonized by the British eight years later when the First Fleet landed at Botany Bay in 1788, under the commandership of Captain Arthur Phillip. This historic landing occurred on 18 January 1788, but Captain Phillip and his crew did not settle there. The fleet sailed north and landed at Port Jackson (Sydney) eight days later. To celebrate the landing of the First Fleet, January 26 is celebrated as Australian Day. The primary objective behind the colonization of Australia by England was the need to

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relieve its overcrowded prisons. The secondary objective was to provide a base for the Royal Navy in the Eastern Sea. In fact, the first fleet comprised 1373 people of which 732 were convicts. The transportation of convicts continued till 1868. In total, more than 1,60,000 convicts were transported to Australia within a span of 80 years. By the mid-nineteenth century, New South Wales, Queensland, South Australia, Western Australia, Tasmania and Victoria had emerged as independent states paying nominal allegiance to Great Britain. The Commonwealth of Australia was formed as a result of the alliance of the colonies on 1 January 1901.

Check Your Progress

1. When and by whom was Australia discovered?
2. What was the primary objective behind the colonization of Australia by England?

12.3 *PATRICK WHITE:* LIFE AND WORKS

Patrick White was born in 1912 of Australian parents in England. He was just six months old when he was brought to Australia. He was educated in Australia till he was thirteen. The next phase of his education started in England. After the British phase of his education, he came back to Australia. He started working as a jackaroo on sheep stations. Patrick White's intention to be acquainted with continental literature became evident on his return to England to study French and German at King's College. His life is one of journey and travel.

During the early phase of his life, he frequently travelled between Australia and England. Patrick White epitomizes a sustained effort at fictionalizing the Australian experience. His first novel *The Happy Valley* is projected against the background of the snow country of New South Wales. In this novel, he concentrates on the intensity of human suffering in relation to the archetypal problems of love and jealousy. Some of his other prominent novels are *The Living and the Dead (1941), The Aunt's Story (1948), The Tree of Man (1955) Riders in the Chariot (1961) The Solid Mandala (1966), A Fringe of Leaves (1976).*

Check Your Progress

3. When was Patrick White born?
4. Name the first novel written by Patrick White.

12.4 *VOSS*: SUMMARY

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Some scholars are of the opinion that the novel *Voss* by Patrick White is based on an actual expedition which attempted to cross the Australian continent in 1845. This makes it a historical novel in the strict sense of the term; but there are other metaphysical preoccupations of the novel which makes many other scholars read the novel from a different perspective. It can, therefore, be derived that *Voss* is by no means a conventional historical novel in the strict sense of the term. The exploration is as much of the psychological and spiritual nature of the characters as it is of the actual terrain, though Patrick White renders the latter most vividly in his concentrated and poetic style. As the novel opens, Johann Ulrich Voss, a German immigrant, calls on Edmund Bonner, the major financial backer of the expedition, and meets Bonner's niece Laura Trevelyen. The development of their ensuing relationship parallels the fate of the expedition.

In Sydney, Voss recruits four members of the expedition, one of whom, the boy Harry Robarts, attaches himself to Voss, making himself useful and idolizing Voss as a benefactor and hero. Palfreyman is a rather sickly young man, an ornithologist commissioned by a titled Englishman to make a collection of flora and fauna. For Frank Le Mesurier who has held a number of jobs but none for very long, the expedition may provide fulfillment and self-knowledge, though he is prophetically uneasy about the undertaking. Turner, a drunkard, forces himself upon Voss, assuring him that he will do his part. Meanwhile, Edmund Bonner and his wife are preoccupied with their own affairs, to which Voss and the expedition are peripheral. Their daughter Belle is a beautiful but rather empty-headed young woman; her cousin Laura is the quiet, bookish one. The Bonners' secure, middle class household is disrupted by the discovery that Rose Portion, their servant, who was transported for the manslaughter of one illegitimate child, is now pregnant again. Rose, an awkward, ungainly young woman with a harelip, thought that she had done what was best for the child. Like Harry Robarts, she is somewhat simple.

Although they have spoken only a few times, at the farewell dinner the Bonners give for the expedition Voss talks for some time with Laura in the garden and requests permission to write to her. Laura agrees. The expedition sails the next day for Newcastle. Thus, it can be perceived that the novel centres on two characters – Voss, a German, and Laura, a young woman, orphaned and new to the colony of New South Wales. It opens as they meet for the first time in the house of Laura's uncle and the patron of Voss's expedition, Mr Bonner.

Johann Ulrich Voss sets out to cross the Australian continent in 1845. After collecting a party of settlers and two Aborigines, his party heads inland from the coast only to meet endless adversity. The explorers cross drought-plagued desert then waterlogged lands until they retreat to a cave where they lie for weeks waiting for the rain to stop. Voss and Laura retain a connection despite Voss's absence and the story intersperses developments in each of their lives. Laura adopts an

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orphaned child and attends a ball during Voss's absence. The travelling party splits in two and nearly all members eventually perish. The story ends some twenty years later at a garden party hosted by Laura's cousin Belle Radclyffe (née Bonner) on the day of the unveiling of a statue of Voss. The party is also attended by Laura Trevelyan and the one remaining member of Voss's expeditionary party, Mr Judd.

Check Your Progress

5. Name the four members who are recruited by Voss for the expedition.
6. Where do Laura and Voss meet for the first time in the novel?

12.5 *VOSS:* MAJOR THEMES

Patrick White's greatest achievement as an artist probably lies in the fact that he for the first time creates a distinctive Australian consciousness in Australian writing. Patrick White's early novels bear the influence of such renowned writers as D. H. Lawrence, James Joyce, Virginia Woolf, T S Eliot and others. In the novel, *Voss* he has wonderfully recaptured the colonial reality of New South Wales in the context of the house of Mr Bomer. However, at the same time, this is true that Patrick White does not only deal with the real world but also with the metaphysical world. Therefore, in his novels, we see a spiritual level of experience which makes his novels a greater reading experience. In other words, he creates a tension between spiritual and non-spiritual, body and spirit, good and evil, life and death, dream and actuality, time and eternity.

Voss and Australia

It can be said that the central protagonist of Patrick White's *Voss* is Australia as Patrick White seems to be dealing with Australia to a greater extent in his novels, especially, *Voss.* Yet, the title of the novel is Voss and not Australia which go on to suggest that it is not only a novel about Australia but moreover about the experiential phase of Voss's journey as he carries on with his expedition of Australia. In the novel, we discover a linear progressive pattern of Voss's expedition — the preparation of the journey, the journey on the ship Osprey, their progress through Rhine Towers and Jildra, the beginning of their expedition through an arid landscape, varying degrees of predicament, the encounter with the Aborigines and the death of Voss.

Voss is in Australia only for 'two years and four months, but he has already formed a greater understanding of the land than the settlers of New South Wales. When Laura complains of the land being extremely monotonous, he finds himself quite at home: 'I am at home ... it is like the poor parts of Germany' (Chapter 1).

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Though Laura fails to be intimate with her new home in New South Wales, Voss discovers the intense complexity of the country: 'Your country is of great subtlety' (Chapter 1). In Voss's scrutiny, the expedition should not be merely measured at the concrete level of human experience; it is also not just an adventure that has drawn him to this precarious pursuit, but is a metaphysical exploration of a country and also one's own self as Voss is able to locate an element of affinity of his soul with the land that he is exploring.

Moreover, Voss gradually begins to locate an element of infinity. In some sense, it can be said that Patrick White has always reiterated the theme of sublime infinity in most of his novels. The theme of topographical exploration is gradually sublimated to the level of a spiritual experience which makes his novels more of metaphysical in nature than merely physical explorations. This is possible because White is essentially preoccupied with certain notions of religious mysticism. Voss's knowledge about Australia as he explores the country generates an awareness of infinity itself as he himself says to Le Mesurier: 'But in this disturbing country, so far as I have become acquainted with it already, it is possible more easily to discard the inessential and to attempt the infinite'.

Voss and Laura

The theme of exploration seems to be the central theme of *Voss;* but apart from it the relationship between Voss and Laura also seem to occupy the central stage of the novel. The novel runs with twin focus at the same time – at one level it is an adventure tale dealing with the mysterious places of Australia (an adventure starting from New South Wales and ending in the wilderness of Australia); and on the other, the relationship between Voss and Laura. In the beginning, it seems that Voss and Laura belong to two different worlds and there is no compatibility between the two of them. Apart from the initial differences, there exists between them an internal connection which is emphasized by the novelist. After the initial meeting they both go back to their memories where Laura starts thinking about how she came to New South Wales to live in the house of Mr Bonner; and Voss remembers his days in Germany and his final decision to come to Australia as an explorer.

As things progress in the novel, we see that Voss is being misinterpreted and misunderstood by others, but Laura seems to be patient to Voss as she has an understanding of his inner self. The country of Australia seems to be 'foreign and incomprehensible' to them and the settlers find it difficult to assimilate to such a pattern of Australian topography. Things get further complex when Tom Radcliff rudely points out that Voss does not possess the right to claim it as his own country. To this, Laura says: 'It is his by right of vision'. This is substantiated when Mr. Bonner makes an elaborate statement: 'Here we are talking about our colony as if it did not exist until now. *Or* as if it has now begun to exist as something quite different'. Laura's inner perceptions gradually bring her closer to Voss.

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At the picnic scene, they are more mystically aware of each other as they begin to span the silent gulf operating between them. Patrick White writes: 'It was not exactly clear what they should do, only that they were suddenly faced with a great gap to fill, of space, and time . . .Words, silences, and air had worked upon them subtly, until they had undergone a change' (Chapter 3). In the garden scene (Chapter 4), Voss and Laura begin to discover each other. Laura finds the personality of Voss especially enigmatic. For Laura, Voss is as strange as the Australian desert. She therefore exclaims: 'You are my desert'.

The real intensity of Laura's emotion is noticed after the departure of Voss's ship. She visualizes the ship Osprey proceeding through the blue waters and the little white waves. It is only through his separation from Laura that Voss discovers the intensity of his feelings for her. In his letter written to Laura from Rhine Towers, he for the first time acknowledges the need for a relationship with her. He writes: 'I would ask you to join me in thought, and exercise of will, daily, hourly, until I may return to you' (chapter 6). Although she cannot see Voss, she feels the existence of Voss in her very inner being: 'I do truthfully believe that you are always lurking somewhere on the fringes of my dreams, though I seldom see you face, and cannot even distinguish your form' (Chapter 9).

It may seem that this relationship is essentially tragic, because Voss and Laura never meet again. But Patrick White never intended to make it a tragedy. It is true that Voss dies at the end. But Laura continues to cherish the idea of Voss as a symbolic being. For Laura, Voss becomes part of history. She believes: 'He is there still, it is said, in the country, and always will be. His legacy will be written down, eventually by those who have been troubled by it' (Chapter 16).

Check Your Progress

7. Name the renowned writers who had a significant impact on the writings of Patrick white.
8 State the central theme of *Voss*.

12.6 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS QUESTIONS

1. Australia was discovered by Captain James Cook in 1770.
2. The primary objective behind the colonization of Australia by England was the need to relieve its overcrowded prisons.
3. Patrick White was born in 1912 of Australian parents in England.
4. The first novel written by Patrick White is *The Happy Valley*.
5. In Sydney, Voss recruits four members of the expedition namely, boy Harry Robarts, Palfreyman, Frank Le Mesurier and Turner.

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6. Laura and Voss meet for the first time in the novel in the house of Laura's uncle and the patron of Voss's expedition, Mr Bonner.
7. The renowned writers who had a significance influence on the writings of Patrick White are D. H. Lawrence, James Joyce, Virginia Woolf, T S Eliot and others.
8. The theme of exploration is the central theme of *Voss*.

12.7 SUMMARY

- Patrick White's novel *Voss* deals with a German named Voss' exploration of the Australian topography.
- *Voss* is by no means a conventional historical novel in the strict sense of the term. The exploration is as much of the psychological and spiritual nature of the characters as it is of the actual terrain, though Patrick White renders the latter most vividly in his concentrated and poetic style.
- In the novel *Voss* he has wonderfully recaptured the colonial reality of New South Wales in the context of the house of Mr. Bomer. But at the same time this is true that Patrick White does not only deal with the real world as his emphasis is also on the metaphysical world.
- In the novel, we discover a linear progressive pattern of Voss's expedition — the preparation of the journey, the journey on the ship Osprey, their progress through Rhine Towers and Jildra, the beginning of their expedition through an arid landscape, varying degrees of predicament, the encounter with the Aborigines and the death of Voss.
- In the beginning, it seems that Voss and Laura seem to belong to two different worlds and there is no compatibility between the two. Apart from the initial differences, there exists between them an internal connection which is emphasized by the novelist.

12.8 KEY WORDS

- **Topography:** It refers to the physical appearance of the natural features of an area of land.
- **Jackaroo:** This term is used for a man who is learning to work on a sheep or cattle farm.
- **Ornithologist:** This term refers to a person who studies birds.
- **Experiential:** It means pertaining to or derived from experience.

12.9 SELF ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

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Short Answer Questions

1. Prepare a short note on British presence in Australia.
2. List the major works written by Patrick White.
3. Write a summary of the novel *Voss* in your own words.

Long Answer Questions

1. Patrick White's novel *Voss* is more about metaphysical exploration than topographical exploration. Do you agree? Give reasons for your answer.
2. Critically comment on the statement 'Voss deals with Australian consciousness.'
3. Discuss Voss – Laura relationship as one of the central themes of the novel.

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BLOCK - IV
FICTION XIII - XIV

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UNIT 13 *THE VICAR OF WAKEFIELD:* OLIVER GOLDSMITH

Structure

13.0 INTRODUCTION

Goldsmith was an Irish novelist, poet and playwright. His novel *The Vicar of Wakefield* was published in 1766. It was one of the most popular novels of the eighteenth century. The story in the novel follows the misfortunes of the Primrose family. The novel is considered an exemplary example of the sentimental novel, which was basically an eighteenth century genre that celebrated the emotional and intellectual concepts of sentiment, sentimentalism and sensibility.

13.1 OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- Discuss the life and works of Oliver Goldsmith
- Describe the themes in the novel *The Vicar of Wakefield*
- Summarize and critically analyse the novel
- Examine the main characters in the novel

13.2 OLIVER GOLDSMITH: LIFE AND WORKS

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Aid slighted truth with thy persuasive strain,
Teach erring man to spurn the rage of gain;
Teach him, that states of native strength possest,
Tho' very poor, may still be very blest;

[The Deserted Village, Lines 423-426]

The author of utter simplicity in style, good humour and satirical observation with native and rural touch, rendering to whatever rhythm of written art form that he attempted, and in which he promptly excelled, Oliver Goldsmith [1728-1774] was miles adrift from the Augustan Age's neoclassical trend of writing and focus. He was a noted novelist, playwright, poet, essayist and prose writer of the Augustan Age of English letters, who hailed from Ireland. It cannot be affirmed if Goldsmith was born on a particular date or year, however, 1728 or 1730 is assigned as the year of his birth. Born to an Irish Anglican curate who served the parish of Forgney, with background of clergy and master grandfather, Goldsmith received his education in Dublin. He later fixed his attention to music, study of medicine at the University of Edinburgh [1752-55], and foreign tours to Italy, France and Switzerland. He decided to settle in the English capital in 1756. Eighteenth century London was a hub of fashion and intellectuals in which Goldsmith made a place for himself worthy of respect.

London did not prove to be a facilitating platform for Goldsmith initially. He tried his hand in various vocations, but his perpetual gambling and squandering resulted in debts that obliged Goldsmith to slog as a literary hack for Grub Street. Later on, he was associated with Dr. Samuel Johnson, Edmund Burke and others that helped him in his career. He also became a founder-member of The Club: a renowned club of contemporary academicians, scholars, intellectuals, scientists and great artists. His short life was a rare combination of talent and dissolution where at points he produced quality literature, and at others he was often a staunch wastrel. This compelled Horace Walpole to adorn Goldsmith with the epithet 'inspired idiot.' Oliver Goldsmith gave himself a pseudonym James Willington for his translation of the autobiography of *Jean Marteilhe.*

Goldsmith was short and stout, blessed with wit, very simple-natured and devoid of a single streak of cunningness. If he had gambled in his life, he also never saved a penny that caused a sufferer a pretty smile. Hence, his financial stability was always in doubt. In short, his naiveté, love for children and goodness of heart were what God had gifted him. Dr. Johnson's patronage led to Goldsmith's fame as a playwright and literary artist. His contemporaries held him as easily envious, soft-natured man with a lack of personal discipline, who had plans of immigrating to America. Fate prevented his migration. It was during this time Goldsmith was engaged at Thornhill Grammar School, which overtones biographical notes in the novel *The Vicar of Wakefield.* Goldsmith had a large circle of intellectual men of

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letters, eminent scholars, elites, philosophers, painters, scientists who were fond of him like the scientist Reverend John Mitchell. Thomas De Quincey aptly portrayed him as: 'All the motion of Goldsmith's nature moved in the direction of the true, the natural, the sweet, the gentle.'

Oliver Goldsmith met with his demise prematurely at the age of forty-six [or forty-four] in 1774 and was buried in London. The monument at his death is inscribed by Dr. Samuel Johnson. His works include the *Universal Dictionary* which was an encyclopedia comprising articles by Dr. Samuel Johnson, Edmund Burke, Adam Smith, Edward Gibbon, Thomas Percy, Sir Joshua Reynolds, David Garrick, Sir William Jones, James Boswell, Charles James Fox and Dr. Burney which remained unpublished, *The Hermit* (1765), *The Deserted Village* (1770), *An History of the Earth and Animated Nature* (1774), *The History of Little Goody Two-Shoes* (1765), *The Vicar of Wakefield* (1766), *She Stoops to Conquer* (1773), *An Enquiry into the Present State of Polite Learning in Europe* (1759) and *The Citizens of the World, or, Letters from a Chinese Philosopher* (1762).

Leaning on autobiographical roots, his novel *The Vicar of Wakefield* which was completed in 1762, presents the picture of a rural life enthralling in the dews of sentimentalism, idealistic views, moralizing and melodramatic occurrences trimmed with soft humour, pathos, vivacious gaiety and subtle irony. When Laurence Sterne's *novel Life of Tristam Shandy,* (1759) attained fame, Goldsmith still struggling with his stature as a writer, authored *The Vicar of Wakefield* following Sterne as his model and achieved greater success.

He believed in heterodox religious principles, 'as I take my shoes from the shoemaker, and my coat from the taylor, so I take my religion from the priest.' His faith was dauntingly firm which made Thomas Hurst describe Goldsmith as a man who 'recognised with joy the existence and perfections of a Deity'. For the Christian revelation also, he was always understood to have a profound respect knowing that it was the source of our best hopes and noblest expectations. The benevolent literary genius who spent his hard earned savings on the needy or his own excesses, through his characterization and background presented his interest in countryside and deep study of human nature. But his works are never as deep as those of the novelist Thomas Hardy. His literary productions are unlike his age and men of letters because Goldsmith voiced human sentiments and laughed at concurrent trends of the Augustan Age, known for its neoclassical precision and inflexibility of standards.

Check Your Progress

1. When did Goldsmith complete writing *The Vicar of Wakefield*?
2. Mention the prominent works of Oliver Goldsmith.
3. Why did Horace Walpole label Goldsmith an 'inspired idiot'?

13.3 *THE VICAR OF WAKEFIELD:* SETTING AND PLOT CONSTRUCTION

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The Vicar of Wakefield, published in 1766, written about 1761 or 1762, has a native English setting of two village parishes: the first one is named Wakefield, and the other is never mentioned, save hinting at a dominant family name: Thornhill. This reveals that the second village parish where most of the action of the novel takes place might be Thornhill. The novel is also subtitled 'A Tale, Supposed to be written by Himself.' It was published in two volumes. The novel is a first person narrative where the vicar, Dr Charles Primrose is speaking about his family and difficult life conditions. Dr Charles Primrose and his better-half, Mrs Deborah Primrose, live in Wakefield with their six children- George, Olivia, Sophia, Moses, Dick and Bill. In the beginning of the novel, the hero, on the evening of his eldest son George's marriage with Miss Arabella Wilmot, the daughter of his fellow but elite and arrogant clergy Mr Wilmot, loses his fortune and becomes bankrupt. As a result, the engagement is broken off as Mr. Wilmot does not want his daughter to marry a destitute. The vicar sends his son to find a job to London so that they can improve their life on his future success.

He gives priority to peaceful management of all troubles in life and does not lose patience. Dr Primrose settles on the farms of Squire Thornhill, a lewd, lusty man who is known for his promiscuity around the countryside. Dr. Primrose's family, which enjoyed wealth and space in life before their misfortune, has problems adjusting in that new atmosphere, which has no fashionable society like they enjoyed previously; however, they get to know two gentlemen: the Squire who is their landlord, and Mr Burchell who is a poor man; and they happen to provide a new, agreeable circle to them beside their neighbours.

Incidentally, Sophia's life is saved by Mr Burchell and attraction grows between them. Her father does not agree to their secret admiration as Mr Burchell, although agreeable, is an indigent young man. Squire Thornhill has more sway on the vicar's family because he is rich despite being socially disregarded because of his characterlessness. Thornhill's advances to Olivia are entertained by the family for he is a man of well-cultivated manners and charming personality. Dr. Primrose's family, encouraged by their landlord, mixes up with his acquaintances to dignify their reputation, but they are treated in a condescending manner only resulting in their embarrassment.

In course of time, the vicar observes how the Squire has been taking advantage of their family, and has been only fooling them; but it only happens when Olivia elopes with him, like Wickham elopes with Lydia in *Pride and Prejudice*. However, there is a difference between the two comparisons as Wickham was set right by Mr Darcy, and here, the Squire even though he is punished by his uncle at the end of the novel, does not change himself for his wife Olivia. Dr Primrose goes after his daughter but he becomes sick on this job. Many

incidents take place which render severe blows to his family and they only receive miseries, defamation and disrepute. But like a fairy-tale denouement, Mr. Burchell unveils himself as their saviour from entire sequence of vicissitudes that they face. He is discovered to be the hidden Sir William Thornhill, the Baronet.

The English village where the majority of the action is set reiterates Goldsmith's memories of his Irish home of childhood days in Lissoy. The hero of the novel is a virtuous man, who having left behind a lavish life and modern facilities in his previous job, appreciates his hard and close-to-nature life. But Squire Thornhill who helps him post-misfortune in the new settlement, is a man full of London's vices like excessive indulgence in pleasure, luxuries of rich life, elite society, lasciviousness and so forth. The hero is punished unduly by his landlord and imprisoned; his daughters are abducted, and the eldest abused and left by him; and his son is also jailed by him in vengeance. The whole family is subjected to excessive mortification, loss of livelihood, health and fortune by his landlord. Suddenly, Mr Burchell, their former associate who was looked down contemptuously by them and who happens to be the Baronet of the place, emerges as their protector, restoring them to happiness and prosperity.

The story is often held in esteem as Goldsmith's memoir represented in the first person but his experiences are shared by many characters here, not one. The novel encompasses multiple literary genres like fiction, poetry, prose, memoir, sermon, fable, letter and others. The novel is remembered for its complex plot, themes and incidents being one of the prominent literary works promoting sentimental fiction.

Check Your Progress

4. What is the subtitle of the novel *The Vicar of Wakefield*?
5. Why does Thornhill hold more sway on the vicars family?

13.4 *THE VICAR OF WAKEFIELD*: SUMMARY AND CRITICAL ANALYSIS

Let us now summarize and critically analyse the novel *The Vicar of Wakefield*.

Advertisement

The 'Advertisement' in the beginning of *The Vicar of Wakefield* is addressed to its readers. Oliver Goldsmith commences his much acclaimed fiction, *The Vicar of Wakefield* with a clarification which is rather philosophical but true to realism: 'There are an hundred faults in this Thing, and an hundred things might be said to prove them beauties. But it is needless. A book may be amusing with numerous errors, or it may be very dull without a single absurdity.' His literary manifesto as an advertisement of his oft-quoted novel is a strong platform of voicing ironically

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the textures and tapestries employed in this work of art. They counsel and impart the readers, the philosophy and style of Goldsmith himself.

Upon his word, his hero exhibits and embodies three most agreeable qualities of manhood, 'of a priest, a husbandman, and the father of a family.' The behaviour that the hero of this novel exudes is that of a mild man. Goldsmith, with a soft current of humour and irony, puts this epithet 'He is drawn as ready' to explain his inner qualities. The novelist wants to present a figure to the society which is ideal for him. His hero is warm-hearted, genteel, pleasure-loving, investing into business and shares, allowing freedom to his daughters, gambling, drinking, truthful, pious, righteous, honest and so on. In the first half of the novel, he adorns a careless behaviour of a family yes-man; in the second, having tragedy befallen him, he becomes a pure Christian who never deviates into any other thing but uprightness.

He is a type Goldsmith considered as virtuous enough to command life in every given challenge, circumstance and manner. After describing his hero's goodness, Goldsmith turns to focus on his audience, age and state of a literary artist: 'In this age of opulence and refinement whom can such a character please? Such as are fond of high life, will turn with disdain from the simplicity of his country fire-side.' Goldsmith's digressions during his college and university days, his own dissipating lifestyle, his vision and outlook towards life, his principles of simplicity, humanity, dissoluteness embedded in his nature, disagreement with Augustan traits, his love for rural and native life, are apparent in his literary productions which feature and invoke these qualities, or even his shortcomings. They either flourish and serve in his dramatis personae, or engage his background.

Goldsmith's work emits shades of his personal philosophy and attitude towards his age. And that verges on the lightness of life, which he seemed to admire in the countryside, and less complex characters, in contrast to the pomp and polish of his age. But some of his characters are too complex. On the other hand, when Goldsmith created such characters like his hero in the novel, he wants to show the world the small foibles and absurdities which are darker sides of our lives. However, he does it in a humorous vein and an undercurrent of subtle irony dabbles over his pages by which he satirizes English society of the time: 'Such as mistake ribaldry for humour, will find no wit in his harmless conversation; and such as have been taught to deride religion, will laugh at one whose chief stores of comfort are drawn from futurity.'

Chapters 1 to 6

Sperate miseri, cavete faelices is the Latin phrase tagged on the top of the novel. It means 'Let the wretched live in hope and the happy be on their guard'. Oliver Goldsmith begins his story with the nature and description of the protagonist's family: the Vicar of Wakefield. The author presents oneness of views and similarities of characters among them. His hero is of virtuous character whose responsibility as a father sometimes overlaps his curacy and priesthood. His commentary about the Wakefield occupants has an archness giving vent to irony and sarcasm. The

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vicar had chosen a wife who was rather fond of housekeeping than indulging into books with whom he shared great understanding, by never objecting her wisdom or prevalence. They enjoyed an elite friend-circle with wine and visitors, but also spent time helping the needy. The hero's family condescended their poor relatives, 'my wife always insisted that as they were the same flesh and blood, they should sit with us at the same table. So that if we had not, very rich, we generally had very happy friends about us; for this remark will hold good thro' life, that the poorer the guest, the better pleased he ever is with being treated: and as some men gaze with admiration at the colours of a tulip, or the wing of a butterfly, so I was by nature an admirer of happy human faces.'

The last statement reveals the character of the protagonist of this novel, that is, his generosity. The vicar's initial period of marital and filial bliss is described in the exposition of the plot. His sons were hard and active, and his daughters, beautiful and blooming. In praise of his parenthood, the vicar states, 'When I stood in the midst of the little circle, which promised to be the supports of my declining age, I could not avoid repeating the famous story of Count Abensberg, who, in Henry II's progress through Germany, while other courtiers came with their treasures, brought in his thirty-two children, and presented them to his sovereign as the most valuable offering he had to bestow.' And therefore, he had six children whom he reckoned as 'very valuable present made' to his 'country, and consequently looked upon it as my debtor.'

The second chapter opens up a storm of ill fate on the Wakefield family and they suffer loss of fortune. The vicar had rendered ample services to Wakefield to have his share of humanity, 'I made over to the orphans and widows of the clergy of our diocese; for having a sufficient fortune of my own, I was careless of temporalities, and felt a secret pleasure in doing my duty without reward. I also set a resolution of keeping no curate, and of being acquainted with every man in the parish, exhorting the married men to temperance and the bachelors to matrimony; so that in a few years it was a common saying, that there were three strange wants at Wakefield, a parson wanting pride, young men wanting wives, and ale-houses wanting customers…'

The early introduction of the vicar is that of a less serious man until life became severe on him. There are certain parts in the vicar's behaviour like his light-heartedness, tolerance to everything, humaneness and politeness which remind us of the author himself. There are often some manifestations which are related to Augustan priesthood, 'it was unlawful for a priest of the church of England, after the death of his first wife, to take a second, or to express it in one word, I valued myself upon being a strict monogamist. I was early initiated into this important dispute, on which so many laborious volumes have been written. I published some tracts upon the subject myself, which, as they never sold, I have the consolation of thinking are read only by the happy Few. Some of my friends called this my weak side; but alas! they had not like me made it the subject of long contemplation…...as he had engraven upon his wife's tomb that she was the only wife of William Whishton;

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so I wrote a similar epitaph for my wife, though still living, in which I extolled her prudence, oeconomy, and obedience till death…'

Even with his sons and daughters, the protagonist's affection sided with the favourable no matter what. This is reflected in George's love affair with Arabella Wilmot who was inheriting a large fortune by her clergy father. Mr Wilmot does not object to this match as he knew that George's father was a rich cleric and lot of properties would be transferred to his son-in-law in the future. Here, Goldsmith has subtly conveyed that clergies of the Augustan parishes were rather interested in keeping sources by which they could ensure their wealth and live a gay life, 'We were generally awakened by music in the morning by music, and on fine days rode a hunting. The hours between breakfast and dinner the ladies devoted to dress and study: they usually read a page, and then gazed at themselves in the glass, which even philosophers might own often presented the page of greatest beauty.' The lifestyle of the vicar often verges on exposing reality of the holy men of England during Goldsmith's days in a mild manner.

The vicar was fond of inviting people, enjoying music with family and guests, cards, gambling and ale, 'When we had dined, to prevent the ladies leaving us, I generally ordered the table to be removed; and sometimes, with the music master's assistance, the girls would give us a very agreeable concert. Walking out, drinking tea, country dances, and forfeits, shortened the rest of the day, without the assistance of cards, as I hated all manner of gaming, except backgammon, at which my old friend and I sometimes took a two-penny hit.' His utterance further confirms his lavish lifestyle, 'Nor can I here pass over an ominous circumstance that happened the last time we played together: I only wanted to fling a quatre, and yet I threw deuce ace five times running…' On the occasion of marriage of his son George, he composes a sermon because he thinks of matrimony as the most important concern of the parish.

Mr Wilmot's character is contrasted to the vicar by Goldsmith. Although they were going to be relatives, the former disagreed to all that the latter said or proposed. While these two were in dispute arguing about the marriage which was scheduled the following day, the vicar got the news that his wealth which he had invested in the town through a merchant was lost. The London merchant had announced his bankruptcy. The informer requested him to 'dissemble his emotions lest he would lose the prospects of Arabella's nuptials with his son, and further fortune.' But the vicar being honest admitted the truth of his situation to the bride's family. After the vicar's announcement, Mr Wilmot does not show any interest in the match.

The vicar, whose name the novelist has not disclosed till now, invested money in shares which he has lost as his broker declared himself bankrupt. And his son lost the hand of his would be bride as its consequence. By now the novelist has given a fair account of his protagonist's nature: the vicar was a man of modern likes and demeanour; he loved to be a family man; and he was social, forgiving

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and sentimental. This outbreak of misfortune on him did not break his confidence or his devotion to family. Committed, he rather tried to look forward.

In the next chapter, the vicar, not blaming anyone after his ill fortune, moved on to save his family from further abuse. His efforts to rescue his wealth goes in vain and he is forced to employ himself on fifteen pounds a year in a remote parish where he also had prospects of raising his income by managing farms of a certain gentleman Squire. He paid all his debts from his remaining wealth of fourteen thousand pounds after which he was left with only four hundred at the end. The family meets Squire Thornhill, a rich and playboy kind of person: 'scarce a farmer's daughter within ten miles round but what had found him successful and faithless.' They are also introduced to Mr Burchell, a poor but well-mannered gentleman who accompanied them to their new parish. The vicar's daughters become happy to see a future match in the Squire. Mr Burchell was a money-borrower and the vicar seemed to dislike and scorn him.

While his family was riding together to his new home, Mr Burchell explained to them what kind of man Sir William Thornhill is. While Burchell is narrating his story about Sir William Thornhill, Sophia falls in a stream and is about to be carried away by its gushing force. Burchell jumps in the water and saves her life. As a result, Sophia and the entire Primrose family are indebted to the young improvident man for his kindness. In this chapter, all the major characters of the novel are introduced and the author brings the family to the place through incidents where they are going to spend their life from now on. The story is navigating the principle of simplicity of life, but wealth and comforts of life are deemed greater than human qualities by the protagonist by now.

Now the narrator, the vicar himself, describes the village where fate led his family: it is a self-contained kind of parish where all comforts are available and people are related to each other. Goldsmith's philosophy of life is well-reflected in his description of the village here: 'Remote from the polite, they still retained the primaeval simplicity of manners, and frugal by habit, they scarce knew that temperance was a virtue.' It was a kind of paradise where people 'wrought with cheerfulness on days of labour; but observed festivals as intervals of idleness and pleasure.' Their small abode was fixed in the midst of beautiful panorama that mother Nature graced: 'Our little habitation was situated at the foot of a sloping hill, sheltered with a beautiful underwood behind, and a pratling river before; on one side a meadow, on the other a green.' He had to look after twenty acres of 'excellent land' as his farm. The vicar bred good manners in his children and tried to remind them that family discipline was foremost of importance to him expecting them to carry his legacy of manners forward.

The fashionable daughters of Primrose family had not forgotten their former style, arrogance and indulgence to keep themselves in a beautiful way which gave their parents a strong sense of pride still. At this point of story, Mrs. Primrose opens up the name of her husband Charles, and the names of last two boys are

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also introduced to the readers as Dick and Bill. They all mix up well with their neighbourhood families. In short, their life begins again with a smooth flow, except the realization of their changed circumstances and penury.

Chapter 5 introduces us to the character of Thornhill. He comes visiting the vicar's family, after which there grows a familiarity between him and Charles's family members, especially his daughters. Mrs Primrose looks forward to gain the power of happiness from such a high association, and encourages his visits, and so does Olivia, who harbours private affection for him. The vicar is not happy with the interest that Thornhill shows his daughters, but his wife changes his mind. By the end of this chapter, they receive news from the Squire that he would come to dine with them in a few days. The news brings a wave of happiness to the entire household. But the closing lines of this chapter are harbinger for future which the vicar was suspicious of, 'I therefore continued silent, satisfied with just having pointed out danger, and leaving it to their own discretion to avoid it. That virtue which requires to be ever guarded, is scarce worth the centinel.' The next chapter is focussed on Mr Burchell's visit to the household. Charles observes that Burchell seems to be interested in Sophia; however, the vicar is against any relation forming between this improvident man and his daughter. When Burchell leaves them, the family discusses his unfortunate circumstance and spendthrift nature, and laugh at his level of comfort in his wretched poverty. They are of the opinion that Burchell is a complete waste and no fruitful gain can be achieved out of him. As the discussion upon Mr Burchell continues, the vicar comes to acknowledge that his daughter Sophia does not wish to blame Burchell for his former gullibility and simplicity that verged on foolishness. She thought that good people should be respected no matter they had once been fools enough to squander all they had. The chapter ends with the family expecting the Squire to call on them.

Chapters 7 to 12

The chapter begins with the squire arriving with his two servants. Olivia is the centre of interest for Squire Thornhill's proposed visit and familiarity. She also admires the man and his humour. His presence in the family had ushered a kind of stir which Charles is not been able to subside or control, 'Indeed, pappa…she does not: I have read a great deal of controversy. I have read the disputes between Thwackum and Square; the controversy between Robinson Crusoe and Friday the savage, and I am now employed in reading the controversy in Religious courtship…' Their discussion ended in cooling down the storm on part of the vicar because he never crossed any view in his life which created disturbance or upheaval in his happy family atmosphere. This chapter ends with a strong suggestion of the future that awaits Olivia.

The eighth chapter describes the many visitors to the Primrose family. The placid family of the vicar witnesses an emotional tumult with the presence of Thornhill; not so fast had the essence of that guest subsided than they now were waited upon by Mr. Burchell the following morning. This guest was quite a nuisance

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to the master of the house. Goldsmith paints this poor gentlemen as a sharp contrast to the Squire, 'It is true his labour more than requited his entertainment; for he wrought among us with vigour, and either in the meadow or at the hay-rick put himself foremost. Besides, he had always something amusing to say that lessened our toil, and was at once so out of the way, and yet so sensible, that I loved, laughed at, and pitied him. My only dislike arose from an attachment he discovered to my daughter: he would, in a jesting manner, call her his little mistress, and when he bought each of the girls a set of ribbands, hers was the finest.' The father was protective of his daughter because Burchell had squandered his belongings.

Goldsmith's characters in the vicar's family often mention the names of famous literary writers and poets such as Dryden, Gay and so forth. In one such conversation, Mr Burchell says, '…both the poets you mention have equally contributed to introduce a false taste into their respective countries, by loading all their lines with epithet. Men of little genius found them most easily imitated in their defects, and English poetry, like that in the latter empire of Rome, is nothing at present but a combination of luxuriant images, without plot or connexion; a string of epithets that improve the sound, without carrying on the sense.' He then sings a ballad composed in quatrains having thirty-nine stanzas which he claims is free of above-mentioned defects.

At the end of the ballad, which leaves a captivating impression on Sophia, to whom it was intended, they hear a gunshot. Frightened, Sophia jumps into the arms of Mr. Burchell. The gunshot was aimed at a blackbird by the Squire's chaplain who appeared on the scene apologizing for shaking off their habitual peace. The chaplain also brings news that the Squire has given a moonlight ball in honour of her young daughters that night.

The chaplain asks for Sophia's hand as his dance partner but she announces Mr Burchell to be her partner. This astonishes the vicar as he does not expect his daughter to refuse a man of wealth and position for a man in want of all. His characters here are presented close to appreciating Nature, and are people with good hearts. They themselves attain simplicity of manner, and admire simplicity in others too. Occasionally, they indulge into fashion or extravagance, especially his root characters. Goldsmith has wilfully introduced the gentlemen of the Squire group with shooting and killing. Hunting also symbolizes their malevolent intention and character.

In the ninth chapter, the Squire, a lascivious man of ill manners, visits them with his men and two ladies from London. The narrator gives his assessment of the guests and their behaviour putting parallel his family's reactions to the unspoken and unprepared visit of the gallant Squire. Goldsmith's comparisons, contrasts or commentaries remind us of Austen's world where she throws ironical light upon such city-bred ladies and gentlemen who ooze pomp, and have a polluted life full of discontentment. In front of the guests a discussion about refinement of the two young Primrose ladies flourishes when Squire Thornhill, taking their part, speaks

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about his actual character, and by this, Goldsmith informs his readers what the Squire actually plans to use the vicar's family, 'And what pleasures do they not deserve to possess, who have so much in their power to bestow? As for my part, my fortune is pretty large, love, liberty and pleasure, are my maxims…' The tenant Charles Primrose objects to Thornhill's flirting and audacious approach towards Olivia reminding him that they respect honour greater than anything in the world.

The onset of the next day brings a 'gypsy' fortune-teller who portends that Olivia would be married to a Squire within an year, and Sophy would be the wife of a Lord after her elder sister's wedding. Goldsmith's description of the gypsy, with omens, dreams, all act as dramatic agents to apprise the readers about the novel's end when the girls will have final settlement gaining riches and social position. The ladies from the Squire's side sent a note to Olivia and Sophia that they wished to be with them on the forthcoming Sunday congregation at the church. The vicar reaches the church on his usual time; finishes the clergyman's services; and takes the way home on which his family is expected to follow to church. On his return, he meets his family and comes to know what problems they have encountered on their thoroughfare because of an imprudent decision to ride horses merely to ostentate false status and fan their former pride of being rich.

The twelfth chapter opens on the vicar's house where hustle and excitement are peculiarly carrying their hearts away in a dreamland, the premise of which are founded totally on the preferment of the Squire, and his town-bred women friends. The vicar's family is always shown discussing any small incident that even by chance occurred to them. In style, Goldsmith has chosen a bit of melodramatic tinge in his sequencing of incidents which steer the main action in the plot. Against the vicar's wish, as he seldom delighted in unnatural growth of anything, his family decides to send Moses to a village fair to sell their old colt, replacing him with a new horse to gain respect in the eyes of those who were rich.

The dolled and decorated Moses goes to the fair. In between, the family received good news of commendation from the Squire through his butler. Meanwhile, Mr Burchell visits them with gifts for their children. Deborah Primrose and he initiate a discussion meanwhile Moses returned. Since the Primrose family had a principle of keeping no relation with anyone deprived especially young men, Deborah laughs at his imprudence of spending money being so poor. The colt was sold for three pounds, five shillings and two-pence and Moses gets a bargain of a 'groce of green spectacles, with silver rims and shagreen cases' in return. His bargain was a fraud. His family informs Moses that he was fooled by someone.

Chapters 13 to 18

The vicar Mr Charles Primrose tells a moral fable to his family which means, 'how little is to be got by attempts to impose upon the world, in coping with our betters. Such as are poor and will associate with none but the rich, are hated by those they avoid, and despised by these hey follow.' This fable is symbolic of what the vicar's family was aspiring for: rich connections with the Squire and detesting the poor

but good soul Mr Burchell. The fable was about two friends: the giant and the dwarf who sought adventures in life. The story was intended for Dick and at its completion the vicar hears a verbal dispute between his dear wife and Mr Burchell. Mr Burchell seemed to be against the vicar's wife's decision of sending their daughters to visit London with women friends of Thornhill. Burchell perceived that he was openly hated by the Primroses and he mentions that he would make only one more visit to them as he knew that he was unwelcome there. It was a happy proposal to the vicar's family because they also wanted to get rid of Mr Burchell. Sophia was the only one who trusted goodness of this gentleman but the greatest disadvantage with this young man was that he was poor. The girls were bred learning similar values because their chief pursuit was to have a husband who would give them high social rank with all the comforts of life. And Burchell did not fit in their concepts of eligibility for their suitors. Their pursuit of rich suitors such as the characterless Squire blinded them so much so that they could not allow any other young man near their daughters. Burchell did not belong to any special rank that they craved to be with in order to enhance their status, thus he was abominable, and to be kept out of their way. And their entire discourse after his departure was based on their likely future link with Thornhill giving encouragement to their daughters for a lucrative and prosperous morrow.

The fourteenth chapter opens having a flutter of excitement where the young Primrose ladies are seen preparing for their London trip on which they might be invited by those two town-bred fashionable friends of the Squire. To meet the expenses of their styling and fineries, the vicar moved to the village fair to sell his one-eyed horse that was now almost useless to them. There are a number of biblical references made by Goldsmith to connote the vicar's situations in life. In the fair, buyers do not show inclination in purchasing his poor animal and thus, the vicar walks with his clergy friend to an alehouse for refreshment. Here, the vicar becomes the victim of fraud just like Moses. He loses his for without any payment being made to him. After he reaches home, another misfortune befalls his family. He is informed that his daughters cannot go on their London trip. Having had their whole set of expectations being crashed to pieces, the family is in tears. Thornhill goes on to inform them that a suspicious person pressurized the London ladies to at once leave for London without vicar's daughters.

The fifteenth chapter opens on Charles's family who are busy searching for their enemy in the neighbourhood since they believe the neighbours are envious of Squire Thornhill paying too much attention to their daughter Livy [Olivia].While playing outside, one of his younger sons finds a letter-case which divulges that Mr Burchell was the man who made those ladies travel to London without the daughters of the vicar. All of them are shocked at the audacity of their friendly, amicable guest who selfishly marred their future blossoming. They not only planned to retaliate but also give Burchell a good lesson for his impudence and insincerity on his very next visit. Mr Burchell calls upon them very soon, the moment which they anxiously wait for. Immediately the family members take turn making fun of Mr Burchell.

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And then the vicar shows them the letter that they have seen. The vicar accuses him of his baseness upon which Burchell retorts that he could equally hang them for opening his pocket-book. The vicar does not expect a poor wretch like Burchell would reply to him in such discourteous, insolent manner and he proclaims, 'Ungrateful wretch, begone, and no longer pollute my dwelling with thy baseness. Begone, and never let me see thee again: go from my doors, and the only punishment I wish thee is an alarmed conscience, which will be a sufficient tormentor!' They find it astonishing that Burchell smiles as he collects his pocket-book before quitting their house for good. They are amazed to witness his pride even though he was a beggar.

In the sixteenth chapter, the narrator says that Mr Thornhill became a regular presence at vicar's house after Burchell's final exit and none showed any reaction upon Mr Burchell's thorough absence. The Squire visited them only when the men were out to field and the ladies were in. He amused the ladies and taught them piquet. The vicar's wife entreated him in many ways and tried to tempt, persuade him for her eldest daughter to which he never gave clue if he would get married to her. The shrewd Squire did not leave a single way of flirting with Olivia which was all the more motivated by her family. While Squire Thornhill was their uninterrupted guest, the vicar's family was enthralled between mortification and vanity, honour and suspicion, scandal and gratification. Through the actions of the chapter, the author skilfully plaits many themes together, the chief of which is that for a woman the pursuance of rich suitors for the prospect of matrimony is the most important task in life. In fact, matrimony and happiness in marriage are the foundation of the story here.

The seventeenth chapter unfolds the main action or problem which will lead to the resolution of the novel. The vicar and his family is happy with the prospective wedding of the Squire and their daughter Olivia. When the 'intended nuptials' was only four days away, the poor vicar's family discusses around the fire place how that connection would raise their level of support to ease their lives. Bill sings an elegiac song taught to him by Mr Williams: 'An Elegy on the Death of a Mad Dog.' After the song comes to an end, Dick came running in the midst of their joy to inform that Livy, his sister, has left them forever with two gentlemen who came in a post-chaise and one of them persuaded her to elope and kissed her. The vicar's family had been facing various blows of fate, of which this was the strongest. The villain had been calling her his 'angel' and Olivia was crying that she should not, thus, breach her father. The parents and family wailed in anger, suspicion and helplessness of fate being severe on them. The news would sure become a forest's fire the following day, and they were supposed to suffer this infamy's consequences in society.

The eighteenth chapter opens on similar morose, bleak and chill family atmosphere. Dr Primrose knew very well that his young landlord Squire Thornhill had taken his daughter away. He started for Thornhill-Castle, but one of his neighbours communicated to him that his daughter was seen with Mr Burchell in a

post-chaise. He still went to the castle to ask his landlord about his daughter, but he denied connection to the matter and appeared quite ignorant of the truth. After this meeting, the vicar starts suspecting Mr Burchell. He moves from place to place in an attempt to find his daughter. Despite being an old man, he traverses many miles after her. His health is not able to keep up with him and he falls sick. He has to linger at an ale-house for three long weeks as a result.

On his way back, he meets the strolling theatrical company where his daughter was witnessed performing. There is a digression from the theme here where the vicar evaluates the English dramatists like *Dryden, Otway, Row, Fletcher, Ben Johnson, Shakespeare, Congreve* and *Farquhar* while conversing with a player working for that company. The novel contains many styles including the picaresque too as is seen in the flight of the vicar in search of his daughter with a pistol. Thinking Olivia would be there in the company or he might get some news regarding her, he travels with them until in fear of being recognized when he is obliged to find shelter in an ale-house. He met a gentleman who mistakes him for the owner of that company.

Chapters 19 to 24

The gentleman, who was well-educated and sober, takes the two invitees to his house nearby on foot. To their surprise, they 'arrived at one of the most magnificent mansions I had seen in that part of the country.' They are awestruck to be in such an elegant apartment where servants with liveries were attending on them. The strange gentleman introduces some ladies to them with whom he sat to discuss politics and English governance with their guests. He knew all the journals published in England and displayed a unique command with impeccable civility over whatever he touched as subject; and the ladies participated in the talk equally well. They discussed the economy, rule, their shortcomings, condition of an ordinary English citizen, state of being ruled, colonization, capitalism, monarchy, democracy, religion and so forth. But upon the vicar's opinion he burst into wrath. At this moment, a knock appeared to rouse them from their actual level to an understanding that all of them were only servants, and the master and his wife were at the door.

As the door opened, the master and the lady of the house entered followed by Miss Arabella Wilmot. This pleasant surprise took her to cling in Dr Primrose's arms at once, as though she had found her lost father back. The old gentleman and his lady requested him to grace their abode for a few days by his honourable presence. It was Mr Arnold and his lady's property who were uncle and aunt of Arabella. The vicar was well received by them into a beautiful chamber to spend night. In the morning while Arabella chose to walk with him, she asked if he knew where George would have been. He denied having any knowledge about George after they left Wakefield. It is here, we come to know that the name of his previous village parish was Wakefield. The name of the current village is still not disclosed by the author. And he explains that for three years he had had no news from George; and being humbled by time and poverty, he could not even try to enquire

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his whereabouts. She cried hearing his details and her concern was deep about the vicar's family. At dinner, he meets with the manager of that company who gave them tickets of a play named 'Fair Penitent' and highlights praise of a newly joined great actor who represents Horatio. When Dr Primrose goes to watch the play, he discovers his son George playing part of Horatio.

When George sees his father and Miss Wilmot in the audience, he cannot overcome his flood of tears which interrupts his performance and the curtains are drawn. The vicar was taken home by good Arabella and her uncle. After discovering George's fate, he gets cordially invited to the house by Mrs Arnold. George was cordially received by her aunt and uncle. In the twentieth chapter, Mrs Arnold urges George to share his experiences as she already knew some of it from her niece Arabella before he left for London after their engagement broke. George goes on to narrate his story. The story of George's way through his poverty and struggle as a writer is somewhat the author's own tale at the Grub-street of London. The market demands from an author, the popular choice, the genius, the mediocre and die-hard efforts of an original mind in the vocation of writing: these are detailed by Goldsmith as he himself brooked all hardships before fate shined on him.

When he was at the university, he was friends with Ned Thornhill who was vicar's landlord, and Lady Arnold's family friend whose visit was expected there. Ned appointed him as helper and entertainer. But a captain, efficiently talented in flattery which best pleased Ned Thornhill and whose sister was ill used by Ned, took George's place. When Ned Thornhill was leaving London, he recommended his friend to his uncle Sir William Thornhill, who though a gentleman of high rank posted under the government and very decent, sternly queried him what reward should he receive for serving his idle and spoilt nephew. William Thornhill left his mansion seeing a card which ended their communication and George did not receive any of his replies regarding employment or help.

In the next chapter, Thornhill's visit to the Arnolds discloses that he was courting Miss Arabella. Squire Thornhill secretly conveys to the vicar to keep Olivia's elopement hidden from Arabella or his son before proceeding to dance with Arabella; she, on the other hand, had certain reservations of feelings as she still hesitated to be with anyone else; and perhaps, was secretively attentive to George. As Arabella was kind to George during his stay, so was Thornhill. He, having paid a hundred pounds to be returned by Charles Primrose later, sent his son to fight in the royal army. The vicar felt that Miss Arabella loved George more than Thornhill. When George was gone, Dr Primrose, the Reverend, also bids adieu to his hosts commencing passage for his home.

Dr Primrose takes shelter at night at a country inn twenty miles off his abode where he sits drinking with its landlord discussing Squire Thornhill. He is told by this inn owner, Mr Symmonds that Squire Thornhill was hated by all unlike his uncle. It is a habitual conduct of the Squire to allure and possess daughters of people; keep them for some weeks; and return or leave them after having destroyed their modesty. Mr Symmonds's wife interrupted their conversation and joined

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them in drink to inform them about a young woman who is lodging at their inn without payment. While she is shouting at her to leave their inn, her father recognizes the wailings of his daughter Olivia.

Both father and daughter unite to cry together. She reveals that the villain, shameful man gave her private proposals from the first day of their meeting. The father suspected Mr Burchell to be the culprit of this criminal activity against Livy, but she tells him that Mr Burchell always tried to convince her that Squire Thornhill was a fallen man who was ensnaring her and nothing else. Squire Thornhill employed two abandoned women or whores of the town to trap Olivia but this artificer's plan was defeated by Mr Burchell's letter. Olivia did not know by what power could Burchell drive away those women and silence the Squire for a while from seducing her further. Squire Thornhill got married to her in a private way by a popish priest but his own name was kept secret. The squire welcomed his daughter as his legal wife but she disclosed that there were several like her to whom he was married and then abandoned.

She was afraid to let her secret out; but her father, the vicar insists on exposing and punishing the squire. In the morning following her nuptials, she was introduced to two more women whom he married and set into prostitution. Probably, Olivia was taken into a brothel as Squire offered her to a Baron but she run away. She took a stage-coach to reach this inn. Guilt and infamy were pressing hard on her conscience which she could not unburden even though she had accepted her fault to her father. The benevolent vicar alleviated his daughter's pain by consoling her and conveying that she was always loved by her dear family who had been impatiently waiting to welcome her.

The vicar leaves Olivia behind in a secured, comfortable situation at the inn for a better reception at home to come back with Sophia the next morning. He was very happy as he reached home at midnight when all were asleep and the house was 'bursting out in a blaze of fire, and every apperture red with conflagration.' He fainted at this dreadful sight which woke up his son; all the family assembled to bring the master back to senses; his family was in distress due to the prevalent situation. The fire destroys all of their possessions save only a few tokens of wealth. The neighbours including the warm-hearted Mr Solomon Flamborough sympathetically and caringly arranged for their night at one of their outhouses with utensils, clothes and other items. Dr Primrose explained to his family what he had gone through during his absence from home and the discoveries of Olivia, George and Arabella. The following morning, Moses and Sophy were dispatched to bring their elder sister home. Despite losing his home in the fire, the vicar does not lose self-confidence even in adversity.

The twenty-third chapter opens on the vicar fostering courage into his loving family, who he calls his fortune and esteem of life. His neighbours take up the task of rebuilding his abode; the fellow farmers warmed up their friendship with his family; Mr Williams also renewed his affection for his daughter, and family. However, Olivia rejected his advances with disenchantment for her miseries were greater in

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volume than playfulness which society demanded from her. Though the worried vicar gave her sermons about life and repentance, Livy shun the public eye and seemed to be losing her health.

Squire Thornhill's marriage was fixed with Ms Wilmot. The vicar sent his son Moses to deliver a letter to Ms Wilmot stating her future husband's bad conducts towards his family and similar information was sent to Mr Wilmot too. But Arabella could not get that letter as she was travelling. The wedding was nigh and the couple was seen celebrating with their families and surrounding. Sir William Thornhill, his uncle was the most regarded gentleman among all present there.

Dr Primrose reminded his son Moses that he should not be carried away by the happiness of that vile man who abused the life of his sister and acted immorally against her. He looked at his family which even though was being supplied with all necessary nourishments by their kind neighbours, was yet trudging under the 'heavy weight of hours.' Whenever the vicar's family demanded divine aid, circumspection and animation, they looked ahead to a song, a tale, a fable or a poem to vitalize and invigorate them. Squire Thornhill visits them but displays no sense of remorse, rather greets them with the same candour and frivolity. The vicar, despite being incensed, keeps his composure while receiving his landlord. Mr Thornhill shamelessly argues with him that his acts were no impudence. The vicar scolds and shouts at the culprit in anger directing him to leave at once for the dishonour he had brought on them undeservedly. The Squire tells him that he does not bother about who they are and what poor opinion they wish to form against him. His daughter could be married to any other man keeping the squire as her lover simultaneously to which he would always agree.

Mr Thornhill's immoral, base proposal unbolts the indignation of Dr Primrose upon his offender who in return threatens him to destroy more, '…what may be the consequences of my resentment. My attorney, to whom your late bond has been transferred, threatens hard, nor do I know to prevent the course of justice, except by paying the money myself, which, as I have been at some expenses lately, previous to my intended marriage, is not so easy to be done.' The Squire daringly warns him to turn his daughter into his mistress, while making her someone else's wife and both father-daughter should attend his marriage with smiles lest they would be thrown out of house and face serious legal consequences. The vicar retorts that he would not allow him to marry as he already had a marriage with his daughter, and he was free to settle his resentment the way he pleased. Thornhill having given his tenant an ultimatum of severity in revenge leaves his dwelling.

The following morning, the squire's steward demands annual rent from the vicar, failing to receive it, drives his cattle sells them for an inferior price. Additional misfortune befall the vicar as he is arrested on the squire's orders by men of justice. By the end of the twenty-fourth chapter, the hero, a kind family man whose moral leaning was so staunch that he could not be shaken by further tempest designed by the Providence stands firm even in this hour of distress when they had

to partake of all their honour, social capacity, family happiness, wealth, position and health. There was hardly a possession left to despoil.

Chapters 25 to 30

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They are forced to leave the neighbourhood on foot as beggars. Almost fifty of the vicar's poor parishioners come behind their priest and start having verbal spats interceding with the judicial officers. Had the vicar not intervened, it would have been difficult for the men in charge to seize him as prisoner. But he told his parishioners that they should not take law into their hands and believe in God's service and truth. As they reached the jail, the family is set in a comfortable place and the vicar has to shift to the cell where debtors serve. The prison is full of wailers, rioters, 'prophaneness' and disorganised robbers. The next chapter goes on to describe Dr Primrose' time in prison. Through the trial and tribulations of the vicar and his family, Goldsmith suggests that all of their misfortune is linked with both his and his wife's aspirations to join the elite class circle and marry their daughters to ranked men irrespective of prudently judging whether they were sincere and upright or vile and pretentious.

The twenty-seventh chapter begins with the Primrose family while still in jail being intimated of plans of prison reform by its master to which they disagree unanimously. Their objection is on the foundation that the idea of prison reform would further damage his image. Dr Primrose deemed that 'the heart that is buried in a dungeon is as precious as that seated upon a throne.' 'Human soul' is the greatest gem on Earth and he would always protect it. Like politics, governance, education, authorship, unemployment, gentility towards life, and above all humanity, Goldsmith introduces another theme of prison reform in the novel, commenting on the prison reforms that took place during his lifetime by John Howard in England. Oliver Goldsmith has been delineating many themes here in his *The Vicar of Wakefield* which he thinks would be able to govern society better. Throughout his fiction, it has been his general disposition to be carried away in discussion, discourse on topics related to his interests and through his hero, or other characters, convey his thoughts or what he thought was apt for humanity. Dr. Primrose argued on natural laws which tame a man more efficiently than the constitutional laws. England's mismanagement has been discussed in many aspects here. Dr. Primrose states, 'I cannot tell whether it is from the number of our penal laws, or the licentiousness of our people, that this country should shew more convicts in a year, than half the dominions of Europe united.' Dr. Primrose's discourse on prison and law reform concerning human nature, ends the twenty-seventh chapter.

Till now the story has developed having gust of problems one after another and no clue to the resolution has been hinted at: Dr. Charles Primrose loses his wealth, his job, and is sentenced to prison. In addition, due to his pursuit of rich life and false pomp of manners, his eldest daughter loses her virginity to a criminal Squire Thornhill who even tries to sell her into brothel; his Oxford-graduate son wandering like a destitute, is sent on debt of one hundred pounds to serve in the

army; and the rest of his family is yet unsettled and deprive of their all belongings. The author till now has given no sign of an agent or character who will resolve the problems in the plot.

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The vicar Dr Primrose does not see his daughter Olivia since the time he has been in prison. Almost dead with ailment for a fortnight now, Olivia visits her father being supported by her sister. He cheers her with his usual love and care to which she replies that he should comply with Thornhill's wish rather than suffer himself to death. This consolation would allow her easy death. But the vicar stubbornly protests further offence to his family from Thornhill saying he would never make his daughter a whore by surrendering her to the immoral, unfair, dishonourable snares of Thornhill. This comment is heard by a fellow prisoner. The unknown prisoner suggests that the vicar send a detailed letter to Sir William Thornhill, the uncle of Squire Thornhill. He assures him that the uncle is the most respected and just man in the whole country, who would sure make a decision against him in only three days.

The man supplied him with the stationery and the vicar sent his letter. No reply appeared to diminish the vicar's troubles; instead his health begins to fail because of confinement and previous wounds. The tormented family has to silently watch their father and sister wither away but they can shed tears only. Olivia is not able to meet her father directly. So she communicates to him each day via Sophia. On the fifth day after his letter is dispatched to the uncle, Dr Primrose is surprised to know that his daughter was near death. The unknown fellow prisoner who gave him her account every day informed him that ill Olivia was free from earthly bondage. The vicar cannot even see his dead daughter. The number of problems was increasing when Jenkinson advises him to forget about his self-respect or values for the sake of his family and survival as the vicar was also on way to death; he urges him to compromise with his landlord Squire Thornhill.

Mr Jenkinson notes down the submission word by word as the vicar spoke and it meant that he had no objection to the squire's further marriage begging forgiveness for himself. Putting his signature, the letter is sent by Moses who returns in six hours informing him how Thornhill knew about Dr Primrose sending a letter to his uncle, which was thrown away with contempt. He should stop pleading and trouble his attorney for further communication related to the Squire who was getting married in three days; and the vicar should rather depend on his daughters to plead to the Squire now. Dr Primrose shares his emotions with the prisoner who compels him to send another letter to his uncle conveying the schemes that his nephew was undertaking. A fresh storm wrecks the Primrose family as Deborah informs her husband that Sophia has been forcibly abducted by ruffians. Another prisoner's wife tells him that a post-chaise followed them when a handsome, rich stranger kidnapped her and drove off their sight quickly. Both parents wailed as their dignity was utterly ruined. The ray of hope peeped in as Moses delivered his brother George's letter to his father saying that he was going to be promoted to the rank of lieutenant by his colonel soon.

Deborah, in tears for Sophy, is not ready to accept if God is still kind to them and George was safe. The God fearing vicar always thanks his Creator for giving him the strength to fight his life's adversities. He is content that George could be a wise guardian to all in his absence as he was about to die. Suddenly, a frightening noise arrests their attention when the jail-keeper drags inside a heavily-fettered, badly-wounded, thrashed young man. To his family's horror, the thrashed young man was George. Yielding to fate's coldness and cruelty, the vicar implores that God should give him death as all their hopes were lost.

It was George's honesty that he went to punish Squire Thornhill after receiving his mother's letter. Thornhill protested his approach by sending four of his men to stop him. Since George wounded one of those four in a scuffle to save himself, Thornhill influenced the law to give death to his offender. This was the reason for his rigorous imprisonment. Goldsmith exposes a flaw in the English judicial system here, 'I have sent a challenge, and as I am the first transgressor upon the statute, I see no hopes of pardon.' There was hardly any plea accepted against the new law. As the vicar's death is nearing like George, he requests all the prisoners to be called and stand in front of him whom he made an effort to reform. The vicar can scarcely get up but he goes on to address them. The vicar tells the prisoners that religion is the most efficient guide to an erred human soul. The biblical philosophy is then propitiated by the author that those who brook pain as their companion more than pleasure are closest to God. If God is the caresser, what else does a human being need? Therefore, to be acting for human welfare with the passion of no return has been the reward for this humbled vicar who feels most relieved and elevated near death. He gives his final sermon to his fellow prisoners based on his own precepts. Till this part of the fiction, the author does not allow access to a happy resolution which convinces the reader that the novel is a tragic tale of an honest parson. There is no room for any ray of hope as evil has gained sufficient influence upon those deserving good.

In the thirtieth chapter, the vicar, near death is visited by a gentleman. To the vicar's surprise, the gentleman is Mr Burchell, accompanied by Sophia. Sophia tells her parents that Burchell is her saviour and rescuer. The vicar who taught lessons loaded with morality throughout his life committed the silly mistake of loathing a poor man, Mr Burchell who loved his daughter Sophia respectfully. The vicar apologizes to the gentleman accepting Thornhill's machinations made him detest Burchill. Burchell being a benevolent soul with big heart does not raise previous issues. Rather he pities the calamities that vicar has had to endure as he was adamant to advance relations with Squire Thornhill and he understood its aftermath.

Turning to Sophia he asks the name of the person who abducted her but Sophia denies to have known who actually they were. She was pushed in a post-chaise by a few people who threatened her to stop crying out for help as they drove fast through busy roads. She broke the window-canvas and saw Mr Burchell on the road, who ran to her aid. He ran parallel to the chaise and controlled all by

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applying physical strength. Defeated, they were soon chased away. She was then driven in the same chaise to her father. Now the generous father offered his daughter's hand to Mr Burchell if he wanted. The young man demands if her father remembers well how his status was once despised, ridiculed by them all. But the vicar Dr Primrose insists that finding a match of similar sincerity was beyond his capacity, though it was completely the gentleman's choice to be her husband or leave her for someone else.

The young man becomes silent at his proposal, which was another insult to the poor vicar. Mr Burchell rather orders food from a nearby inn which seems to be some sort of celebration for all, but the merriment has to obey restrictions as they stood under a jail-roof. However, the jailor provided them the required help. George, upon entering the room, is greatly bewildered to behold the man whom his family knew as Mr Burchell. Dr Primrose tells his son how Sophia has been saved by Mr Burchell. They must pay their regards to the gentleman together. His son maintains a distance in hushed reverence with the gentleman while Sophy entreats her brother again to thank her deliverer.

George was yet silent until Mr Burchell allowed him to disclose his identity by moving forward. Burchell is in fact Sir William Thornhill in disguise. Mr Burchell assumes a dignified and superior countenance now. The jailor's servant stepped in to pass the news that a person with distinction and wealth waited upon to see him and was asking which time would suit him. Burchill orders the jailor to wait until he was free and turned to George to state why he was in prison. After hearing George, Burchell tells him that George was no higher than a murderer who killed people for selfish ends. The vicar discloses that his wife wanted her son to take revenge upon Thornhill which pushed him go there. His father handed Burchell his wife's letter reading which he pardons George and breaks his spell of stupefaction by admitting he often visits jails for indiscriminate reasons. Mr Burchell shakes hands with George, cordially acknowledging that his father was a very honest and kind man. He explains how his small, impoverished abode could furnish him joy that courts could not afford. He loved the 'amusing simplicity by his fire-side' and regarded their company for long. His nephew had been informed of his meeting them at that hour and was shortly to join his uncle Sir William Thornhill, 'the disguised spectator.'

Sir William Thornhill reminds George not to accuse Squire Thornhill until his blames were proved and he should believe in the justice of Sir William Thornhill who had been revered for his wisdom by all. Thorhill tells them that, 'The poor Mr. Burchell was in reality a man of large fortune and great interest, to whom senates listened with applause, and whom party heard with conviction; who was the friend of his country, but loyal to his king.' The vicar's wife stands in awe of her past familiarity and misconduct against the poor Burchell. Sophia begins to cry as the distinction and change in his circumstances had claimed all her rights over that poor friend whom she loved so dearly. Deborah Primrose apologizes to him for her ill demeanour and overt, intended insults. Sir William Thornhill calmly clears

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those clouds by stating that he had never held any of them as offenders or anyone on the Earth except the man who trapped Sophia, 'his little girl.' He inquires if Sophia recalled his features.

She informed that he had 'a large mark over one of his eye-brows.' Jenkinson wants to know if that man had red coloured hair which she acquiesces in the affirmative. Jenkinson recognizes the man as Timothy Baxter, the greatest runner in England. He assures the Baronet of his current location also when Sir William called the jailor decreeing that the culprit must be arrested immediately. Jenkinson is dispatched to catch the criminal. Meanwhile, Bill climbed upon Mr Burchell to kiss him. His mother tried to hush the child from trespassing but the Baronet stopped her. He showered affection on Bill and Dick in his usual manner, though the handsome children were hungry, ragged and indigent. Sir William happens to have been a doctor as well and writes a prescription for the ailing vicar as his burnt hand was in a miserable condition due to lack of medical care and confinement. Dr Primrose witnesses immediate relief as his wound was dressed.

Chapters 31 And 32

In the second last chapter of *The Vicar of Wakefield*, when the nephew Squire Thornhill bids his greeting and tries to embrace his uncle, his uncle repels it. He strictly conveys that Squire Thornhill should not expect his uncle to endure his vices, but rather only honesty in a person which can find a space in his heart. He opened the allegations against Ned, like seduction of Olivia, ruination with imprisonment of the vicar, his son's punishment without reason and so forth. Mr Thornhill places his arguments very shrewdly. Sir William accuses him of insincerity which was opposite his father's nature who was his honoured elder brother noted for his magnanimity, generosity and dignity. Thornhill convinces his uncle that he was innocent and that the vicar's imprisonment was a natural outcome of his queued debts. The Squire instead blames Dr Primrose for his meanness to have abused him by throwing baseless, motivated allegations upon him which as testimony could be sealed by the witness like some of his servants. He could easily free Dr Primrose of other accusations but his letter to his uncle, and his son's preparation to attack him determined him to pay them back legally.

It looked like Squire Thornhill, being manipulative, malicious and powerful was prevailing on his uncle's will. Mrs Primrose angrily protests his lies against her son George and curses the pretender. Having arrived there, Jenkinson interrupts with the tall man who was fit for Tyburn, a place in London known for capital punishment. Thornhill's altered frightened look was obvious enough of his guilt as he was a regular acquaintance with Jenkinson and Baxter. Jenkinson addresses the Squire audaciously exposing his evil deeds to Sir William: the man, referred to as over-wounded was not so in truth. The Squire framed the entrapping by giving good clothes and post-chaise to Baxter who took Sophia by coercion, feigning himself as an abductor, where Thornhill would appear on the scene to rescue her to gain confidence over the young lady in order to exploit her. The Baronet

recollected the coat belonging to his nephew. For the rest, the man caught accepted how Mr Thornhill swore being in love with both the sisters at the same time with a wish to possess both, had manoeuvred this for obtaining her.

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The Baronet Uncle becomes aware of the wickedness and treachery of his nephew. Mr Thornhill accuses the two criminals plotting against him, which his uncle should not believe and rather take evidences from his butler or other servants. The butler being presented admits the truth in front of his master that Squire was thick with Baxter who brought him new women. Then he declared he never liked young Mr Thornhill by character or deeds. Jenkinson inquired from the butler if he knew him of which he returned that he remembered the night when Olivia was deceived being parcelled to Thornhill's house, he was one of the party who committed that crime. Jenkinson, on being reproached indignantly by Sir William, disclosed that the Squire was blameworthy. Jenkinson was, on his usual duty, ordered to bring the fake priest so that this marriage could not be validated legally. Sir William asks George to be set free and demands Olivia's presence to affix her seducer. Miss Arabella Wilmot accidentally approaches the jail. She and her father, who were going to her aunt to discuss the venue of her marriage, by chance halt to take refreshment at an inn from the window of which she could see either Dick or Bill with the children. Having met him, she becomes aware of their misfortunes. She does not know that her future husband was at the centre of all tragic events befalling her beloved old acquaintance.

Though Mr Wilmot prevented her to visit an unsuitable place like a prison, she still comes to see them. She thought Ned Thornhill to be their rescuer, but in reality he was the criminal contriver of the entire Primrose family's doom which his uncle discloses to her shock. She, in utter distress, divulges that the Squire had told her how George was in America with his newlywed wife enjoying a holiday. Mrs Primrose said that it was falsehood as George had vowed he would never marry anyone as he loved Miss Wilmot. Mrs Primrose narrated the rivalries of Thornhill with her son and explained how he brought the whole family to where they were, in jail. Miss Arabella Wilmot exposed the dishonesty of Mr. Thornhill who fabricated hundred ways to achieve her acquiescence for their wedding only on the grounds that George, to whom she was betrothed and loved dearly, had no care of her and had married someone else. Since that breached their promise for each other, she could be free to be his wife. He did not leave a single effort to fan her hatred against George, a brave and honest man.

George was freed because the man who posed as nearly murdered by him was a fraud caught by the law now. He was prepared by Jenkinson to be presentable in a military uniform. Miss Wilmot begged his pardon for her betrayal in earnest tears which filled him with emotions because there was a mile's distance between their current social ranks. Moses rushed to that inn and narrated all particulars that had taken place to her father. Squire Thornhill's iniquities, sinfulness and misdemeanour were uncovered in public. He retaliated openly and warned Sir William that he did not need to obey him for 'anything' as he repulsed his wealth.

His father-in-law, Mr Willmot would pass on him his wealth which he was sure about. Arabella was already in his custody having signed bonds under his control. He pursued her as his wife only for wealth sake and the rest could not escape him anyway. Sir William himself was party in that agreement, and hence knew of the legal consequences Ned Thornhill could impose.

Miss Wilmot applying common sense seeing herself in the clutches of a rogue asked George if he would accept her hand without fortune. George proclaimed his love to be only Ms Wilmot. Mr Wilmot joined them declining any nuptial promise to be fulfilled to the declared culprit but since his wealth was in his security, it was a great loss to him which he deplored in silent contemplation acknowledging what was going on. The Baronet having known his passion for wealth in disengaging his daughter from the vicar's son, reminded him of his uncompassionate past, simultaneously reminding him of his present when he could amend his former mistake by allowing his daughter to go back to that worthy man who deserved her.

Mr Wilmot displays no objection to his daughter's wedding with George. However, Dr Primrose is supposed to pass on six thousand pounds to Miss Wilmot whenever he would be rich again, if they wished to secure her as match. The vicar readily consents to this agreement as all depends on his acquiescence. The couple unites in happiness throwing away all prospects for love for each other. As for Squire Thornhill's possession of her wealth as her husband prior to their marriage, it would be granted only if he married Arabella Wilmot. This he could not as he was wedded to someone else as claimed by Jenkinson by introducing dead Olivia to them as alive, displaying their marriage certificate. Jenkinson shared that he was a great loyal friend to the Squire who married women with a fake priest and fake certificate; but when he had to bring a priest for Thornhill and Olivia's wedding, he prepared an original licence and an original priest; albeit his real marriage was accomplished by Jenkinson for extracting money from him in future by blackmailing. All were happy to see that gradually justice being finally done. Jenkinson, being inquired upon how he kept the elder Miss Primrose alive secretly, replied that he could not see any other way to get the vicar off prison but to comply with what Squire Thornhill demanded: the submission of both his daughters to him by letting them married to someone else. Since the eldest daughter was still alive the younger could not be sacrificed to the Squire. In this plan of Jenkinon, the vicar's wife was a partaker too.

The Squire fell over the feet of his uncle begging forgiveness. Though his penance was abated by Dr Primrose's interference but his uncle deprived him of his wealth; gave its third part to Olivia; and ordered that he would be given any money only at the request of his wife. The Baronet neither accepted pleading nor pardoned him. He was made to leave the place and for his daily services, only one servant was granted to him. After his ordered departure, Sir William congratulated Olivia for becoming a member of his family. Miss Arabella and her father also did her the same honour. And so did her mother to Olivia because now her marriage

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was legal and respectable. Mr Jenkinson, Moses and Sophy also congratulated her. Sir William happily looked around to observe their faces and remarked that there were one or two faces and they were not content who seemed agitated from within. Mr Jenkinson was next to be thanked by Sir William and Dr Primrose as he acted very kindly in procuring evidences and exposing real villains.

Sir William suggested that Sophia would be a good match for Jenkinson and announced to give five hundred pounds to both of them wishing them a happy married life. He called Sophia forward to give her consent or disagreement on this proposal which she denied, '…not have Mr. Jenkinson, your benefactor, a handsome young fellow, with five hundred pounds and good expectations!' The Baronet is astonished to see Sophia's ungratefulness who prefers death to such a match. But readers come to know that it was a jest. Then he unravels himself to be the one who wants to marry Sophia ardently. A man such as Sir William Thornhill who had been with the most ranked girls and families, praised Sophia for her great beauty, innocence and pragmatism which was all he wished in his future wife in whose search he was roaming like a vagabond in disguise for so many years. He felt sorry for Jenkinson. Jenkinson was promised to have five hundred pounds by him.

They leave 'those gloomy mansions of sorrow' for the inn that was prepared for their reception with Lady Thornhill, Miss Sophia Primrose. The convicts are given forty pounds as charity by the Baronet, and twenty pounds by Mr Wilmot. By then all his villagers assemble outside jail to welcome their honest vicar and partake in their joyous moments at the inn. But they are retuned with some gifts by their generous landlord, Sir William. The hero of this story being ill leaves the jolly crowd and comes back to retire with profound gratitude to God for both good and evil that had been his fate. At last, the resolution has taken place in which the vicar's honesty, integrity and righteousness are rightly paid.

The last chapter of the fiction contains conclusion in which Dr Primrose, the previous vicar of Wakefield, is bestowed unexpected happiness by the Almighty. George apprises his worthy father in the following morning that the merchant who dealt in the town with his wealth was taken into custody at Antwerp, Belgium and his creditors were to secure more amount of money than anticipated. George had done perfect duty of an obedient son to relieve Dr Primrose of his settlement which he had to do for him and his wife. The vicar takes the opinion of the Baronet in this regard if he is permitted to do so without any legal offence. The Baronet confirms that there could be no legal implications as his son was already affluent by his marriage with Arabella Wilmot. He only expected his father to bless the ceremonies. The two couples were impatient to get married and all were sharing in their joy. Amusingly, the serious priest wanted them all to maintain the gravity of life while getting married but they were so full of merriment and light-heartedness that they did not pay heed to his moral preaching.

Sir William Thornhill and Sophia Primrose were the first to tie the knot. George followed next with Arabella, the most charming pupil of the vicar as he

called her. Dr Primrose had invited his kind neighbour Mr Flamborough who reached the inn by the time when they came back from church having fulfilled rituals of marriage. The eldest Ms Flamborough was offered a proposal from Mr Jenkinson and Moses chose the youngest. The parishioners came to congratulate him screaming in joy. They were chiefly those who had rescued the parson previously. They first received censure from the Baronet for being there and later some money for celebration. The entire party was then invited by Mrs Olivia Thornhill to dine at her residence. The former Squire now dwelt with one of his relatives in a modest manner being carefully tended by them. Olivia could not but be hurt whenever she thought of him, yet she might forgive him would he rectify his mistakes. They sat eating, exchanging jokes, laughter, and jocoseness. The vicar relied on his old custom of removing table after food to have all together for a longer period of time for enjoying the fireside. Dr Primrose happily beholds his whole family in front of him in mirth and comfort graced by God which was what he always meant life for. To say, all his ill luck was reversed with abundance of health and delight. And the fiction, full of justice of karma with the moral lesson of retaining morality in life ends in contentment with peace.

Check Your Progress

6. Who is the advertisement in the beginning of the novel addressed to?
7. What is the real identity of Mr Burchell?

13.5 RECURRENT THEMES IN *THE VICAR OF WAKEFIELD*

Oliver Goldsmith in his masterpiece *The Vicar of Wakefield*, has carefully woven some important themes which he has tried to validate by his hero's life and those of others characters. Let us examine some of them here.

Matrimony: The overlapping wings of prospects in matrimony, harmony in matrimony and family balance cover the whole plot of Oliver Goldsmith's novel. Therefore, matrimony on the whole, remains its main theme. His hero, Dr Charles Primrose, a priest, makes sure to publish and preach about the importance of peaceful married life to his parishioners: a doctrine practised diligently by himself. He believes that a happy marriage could keep a man contented in his family which would promote a healthy society. Both he and his wife make sure to teach their daughters and sons to think and act on choosing a proper match for their life-partners and making a comfortable life by adjusting with them. The theme of matrimony which is introduced in the very first chapter by the description of the hero's family and house continues to flow in the same vein till the end of novel, as the story is principally linked with Olivia, Sophia and George's prospects in marriage. Likely so, the novel ends on the espousals and engagements of Olivia, Sophia, George, as well as both Miss Flamboroughs'.

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Family-Man and Husbandship: Linked with the theme of matrimony in his *The Vicar of Wakefield*, the author introduces other significant aspects of life: family-man and husbandship. How and what a man should do to make his family and wife happy, satisfied are major purposes of life to the hero here. Dr Charles Primrose, the parson protagonist, knew one principle of running his life peacefully: never object to his sweet but uneducated wife and restrict his children unnecessarily. From the onset of the novel, he proved himself a true family-man and greatly obliging husband. His family had always enthralled in comfort and gaiety of which he was the soul procurer. This aspect of the priest's demeanour has sundry effects on which the whole plot revolves: excessive liberty in application of any decision that his family members take, pursuit of following only rich people for the prospect of matrimony, maintenance of peace in every possible way to keep family members happy, commitment towards each other in a strong bond of love, keeping the poor at bay so that nothing unranked could blemish their respectability and so forth. They contain both negative and positive effects.

Having given freedom to his wife to handle family the way she thought best, the vicar loses control over the manners of his daughters who make sure to secure a rich suitor for themselves without judging his sincerity or character. It is because of this reason that tempests break on them followed by a series of misfortunes governed by both men and fate. The other side of commitment to family and husbandship pays the vicar well in the latter half of novel when Olivia returns after her undignified elopement with Squire Thornhill before her wedding with Mr Williams. Then all of them unite and live in poverty brooking storms of destiny like the best family.

Humanity, Prison Reform and Natural Law: Dr Charles Primrose, the vicar is shown as man of high moral character who conscientiously works on the correction of human vice by instituting morality and goodness in human hearts. When punished for not paying annual rent to his landlord Squire Thornhill, the parson Dr Primrose is jailed where he is surprised to notice how his fellow inmates were rejoicing their state of wastage blindly being misled. Even though he was very ill, he reads to them as part of his service because he wants to bring in reform in their lives. Being godly in his efforts, the vicar receives productive outcome within six days of his readings to them. Consequently, he begins to inspire them to earn money by 'cutting pegs for tobacconists and shoemakers, the proper wood being bought by the general subscription, and when manufactured, sold' by the vicar's appointment in the market. Though it could not add a huge amount of money to turn them wealthy, but it teaches them their existence and energy's significance.

Dr Primrose believed that human efforts in the right direction could sow the seeds of morality in society which would empower any nation. Even those who commit crime, savagery and kill others could be tamed by kindness and love. If negative energy could be turned into positive ways, those who enacted serious offence, violation, damage could be brought to a better state of life. In this way, by giving lessons of rectification by reading to such prisoners and driving their negative

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energy towards doing something constructive would certainly shape them as better and responsible human beings. The author strictly disagrees with the governance and constitutional laws that announce capital punishment for any sinner. The hero, a philosophical thinker, hold that a humane heart could create wonders: 'Thus in less than a fortnight I had formed them into something social and humane, and had the pleasure of regarding myself as a legislator, who had brought men from their native ferocity into friendship and obedience.' If the law could concentrate on reform rather than severity, follow natural law instead of capital punishment, change rather than cut, better ends could be achieved by any government. Advocating natural law against harshness, inflexibility and brutality, the hero reflects, 'Natural law gives me no right to take away his life…' Often, 'the multitude of laws produce new vices, and new vices call for fresh restraints.'

Mixing Literary Genres in the Fiction Form: Oliver Goldsmith has given a complex design to his novel *The Vicar of Wakefield* by amalgamating many literary genres in one form: fiction. It contains letters, a ballad, elegy, fable, story, discourse and songs. He has attempted to give a typical pastoral setting to his novel. Besides making it rich and interesting, he has also employed dramatic techniques such as use of emotionalism, sentimentalism and fine play of irony throughout the fiction.

Love for Nature and Simplicity of Life: The entire fiction dabbles into beauty of Nature as she is presented as a friendly figure here. Nature is painted uniquely in her serenity, picturesqueness, mildness in the form of a protector in Goldsmith's novel. From the commencement of the novel till its end, the author has shown Nature in her most soothing complexion. The Primrose family has a life close to Nature when it shifts to the other place of work after the vicar's loss of fortune. Away from artificiality of life, they enjoy sitting under honeysuckle: 'Our little habitation was situated at the foot of a sloping hill, sheltered with a beautiful underwood behind, and a pratling river before; on one side a meadow, on the other a green.' They reposed outside and enjoyed songs by their children with music: 'Our family dined in the field….To heighten our satisfaction two blackbirds answered each other from opposite hedges, the familiar redbreast came and pecked the crumbs from our hands, and every sound seemed but the echo of tranquillity.' Even though when their house was set on fire, which is the angriest form of Nature here, whatever they are offered next by Nature as life, they accept it.

Another principle theme that runs throughout fiction is simplicity of life to which Dr Primrose sticks to without compromise. He always seeks ways to pacify things and forgive his family members. Even with his neighbours and parishioners, he shares exceptional rapport and camaraderie. From the commencement of fiction, he controls his family's manners and behaviour by encouraging moral strength in them. Peace and love are the messages he spread in his family and acquaintances. Even though people have been merciless for him like Squire Thornhill, he minimizes his chastisement by urging Sir William Thornhill to be considerate. Except for his grave mistake of giving a little too much liberty to his family, hating impoverished people, allowing freedom to strangers to have free play in his inner family circle

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and restraining himself against his family members decisions till the point of calamity, there have been no foibles in the character of Vicar Dr Primrose. Not only that, he often preaches in his long discourses how simplicity of life and morality could be two major premises of human dignity and existence.

Check Your Progress

8. Give one example of love of nature as exhibited in the novel *The Vicar of Wakefield*.
9. Name the various literary genres which have been combined together in fiction in *The Vicar of Wakefield*.

13.6 CHARACTERIZATION IN *THE VICAR OF WAKEFIELD*

Let us discuss the major characters in the novel.

Dr Charles Primrose: The protagonist of *The Vicar of Wakefield*, Dr Charles Primrose is a righteous and kind gentleman who lives his life on the principles of simplicity. He is a stable character by demeanour who does not lose patience and wisdom even in his misfortunes. When the novel begins we soon witness that life and incidents begin to humble his pride down in a series of tempests but he endures all his difficulties and sorrows with forbearance and fortitude. He has a loving wife and well-bred children who try to maintain their father's principles of simplicity and morality. He is usually against pomp and show except for his wife's provocation of enticing Squire Thornhill and encouraging his daughters' over expectations from their position. He is the strongest character who narrates this story as well. The readers see each and every incident described by him learning his views towards life. He gives comments and opines about many topics which are sometimes not the immediate concern to the thread of the story like English literary figures, politics, governance, economy of Europe and so forth. He is seventy-two and his name is introduced in the middle of the story.

Mrs Deborah Primrose: Mrs Primrose, the wife of Vicar Dr Charles Primrose, is a poorly educated woman who is though simple and sweet by nature, yet runs behind superficial charms of life. She is an active agent in the story who brings in the main action to plot: the scandalous elopement of her eldest daughter Olivia prior to her marriage. It is she who quarrels with her husband when he wants to command his daughters' disgracing pursuit of unprincipled man Squire Thornhill, unnecessary running behind two fashionable ladies from London, insults to poor Mr. Burchell and so forth. She is a simple woman of obstinate mentality but a loving, kind mother and wife too. She obeys her husband most of the times and where she does not obey, her actions propel some serious flaw like her plan to fix a false marriage of Olivia with Mr Williams.

Squire Thornhill: Squire Ned Thornhill is a young, rich and villainous appearance in the novel. Due to his licentiousness and ill-repute, his uncle Sir William Thornhill had seized his rights over the property. When the vicar joined his village parish and farm as his tenant whom he had given his fields to look after, he allures the vicar's daughter Olivia, elopes with her for a secret wedding and tries to sell her as a prostitute after having used her. He was popular for his lewdness in the villages as he had done false marriages with many girls and sold them or forsook them after using. He contrived to torture the vicar and his family in various ways. It is at the end of the story that his vileness is discovered by his uncle, the Baronet through Jenkinson and Olivia is restored as his wife with punishments. But till the end of the novel, he had not accepted her.

Sir William Thornhill: The Baronet Sir William Thornhill appears only at the end of the novel as an angel to set everyone in his or her position and pass on justice to all characters in the novel. Humorously, he is a man in disguise called Mr Burchell: an indigent, intelligent, handsome, bachelor vagabond not yet thirty in want of food and lodging who shared gifts and happiness with people in the village where the story is located. Burchell is reprimanded and cast off the Primrose house as the master and mistress thought he was loitering around Sophia, their youngest daughter to entrap her into a love-affair, and since he had no wealth or social distinction, he did not deserve to be an acquaintance to them.

He is seen occasionally visiting them. Notwithstanding being always condescended, he warns Olivia and Mrs Deborah Primrose against Squire Thornhill's ill-intention, lustfulness, wantonness and indulgent character. When his letter to drive away the two London-based whores comes to be highlighted, they react to him with animosity and throw him out of the door with affront, humiliation and insolence, which is not their normal demeanour. But they are repaid for this shameless act when at the end it is discovered that he is the Baronet and is to decide who would receive what to conclude the story. He loves Sophia, the impoverished vicar's daughter and marries her by protecting them from all evils of the world. He fixes Olivia and Ned Thornhill as couple and arranges Miss Arabella Wilmot-George Primrose tie up. It was only he who stands as an icon of justice and penalizes Ned Thornhill and his gang of pimps. He is always held in reverence and awe by his people as a righteous benefactor.

Check Your Progress

10. What themes cover the whole plot of Goldsmith's novel?
11. Which character is the active agent in the story who brings in the main action to the plot?

13.7 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS QUESTIONS

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1. Goldsmith completed writing *The Vicar of Wakefield* in 1762.
2. The prominent works of Oliver Goldsmith are *The Hermit* (1765), *The Deserted Village* (1770), *An History of the Earth and Animated Nature* (1774), *The History of Little Goody Two-Shoes* (1765), *The Vicar of Wakefield* (1766), *She Stoops to Conquer* (1773), *An Enquiry into the Present State of Polite Learning in Europe* (1759) and *The Citizens of the World, or, Letters from a Chinese Philosopher* (1762).
3. Goldsmith's short life was a rare combination of talent and dissolution where at points he produced quality literature, and at others he was often a staunch wastrel. This compelled Horace Walpole to adorn Goldsmith with the epithet 'inspired idiot'.
4. The novel is subtitled 'A Tale, Supposed to be written by Himself.'
5. Thornhill has more sway on the vicar's family because he is rich despite being socially disregarded because of his characterlessness.
6. The 'Advertisement' in the beginning of *The Vicar of Wakefield* is addressed to its readers.
7. Burchell is in fact Sir William Thornhill in disguise.
8. From the commencement of the novel till its end, the author has shown Nature in her most soothing complexion. The Primrose family has a life close to Nature when it shifts to the other place of work after the vicar's loss of fortune. Away from artificiality of life, they enjoy sitting under honeysuckle.
9. Oliver Goldsmith has given a complex design to his novel *The Vicar of Wakefield* by amalgamating many literary genres in one form: fiction. It contains letters, a ballad, elegy, fable, story, discourse and songs.
10. The overlapping wings of prospects in matrimony, harmony in matrimony and family balance cover the whole plot of Oliver Goldsmith's novel.
11. Mrs Deborah Primrose is an active agent in the story who brings in the main action to plot.

13.8 SUMMARY

- Oliver Goldsmith was a noted novelist, playwright, poet, essayist and prose writer of the Augustan Age of English letters, who hailed from Ireland.
- Goldsmith was short and stout, blessed with wit, very simple-natured and devoid of a single streak of cunningness.

- Leaning on autobiographical roots, his novel *The Vicar of Wakefield* which was completed in 1762, presents the picture of a rural life enthralling in the dews of sentimentalism, idealistic views, moralising and melodramatic occurrences trimmed with soft humour, pathos, vivacious gaiety and subtle irony.
- *The Vicar of Wakefield*, published in 1766, written about 1761 or 1762, has a native English setting of two village parishes: the first one is named Wakefield, and the other is never mentioned, save hinting at a dominant family name: Thornhill.
- The novel is a first person narrative where the vicar, Dr. Charles Primrose is speaking about his family and difficult life conditions.
- The English village where the majority of the action is set reiterates Goldsmith's memories of his Irish home of childhood days in Lissoy.
- The hero of the novel is a virtuous man, who having left behind a lavish life and modern facilities in his previous job, appreciates his hard and close-to-nature life.
- The story is often held in esteem as Goldsmith's memoir represented in the first person but his experiences are shared by many characters here, not one.
- Oliver Goldsmith's in his masterpiece *The Vicar of Wakefield*, has carefully woven some important themes which he has tried to validate by his hero's life and those of others characters.
- The overlapping wings of prospects in matrimony, harmony in matrimony and family balance cover the whole plot of Oliver Goldsmith's novel.
- The Baronet Sir William Thornhill appears only at the end of the novel as an angel to set everyone in his or her position and pass on justice to all characters in the novel. Humorously, he is a man in disguise called Mr. Burchell.

13.9 KEY WORDS

- **Vicar:** It refers to a priest in the Church of England who is in charge of a church and the religious needs of people in a particular area.
- **Squire:** It refers to a man of high social standing who owns and lives on an estate in a rural area, especially the chief landowner in such an area.
- **Karma:** It refers to the sum of a person's actions and previous states of existence, viewed as deciding their fate in future existences.
- **Matrimony:** It is the state of being married.

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13.10 SELF ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

Short Answer Questions

1. What chiefly does *The Vicar of Wakefield* exhibit as a work of art?
2. Apart from Charles Primrose, which character employs the characteristics of Oliver Goldsmith in the novel?
3. Identify the elements of eighteenth century polished society and style of expression in Goldsmith's *The Vicar of Wakefield*.

Long Answer Questions

1. What is the significance of the advertisement and the ballad in *The Vicar of Wakefield*? Explain with reference to the context.
2. Discuss major themes in Goldsmith's *The Vicar of Wakefield*.
3. Examine *The Vicar of Wakefield* as a proponent of the sentimental and domestic fiction genre told in a satirical vein.

13.11 FURTHER READINGS

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UNIT 14 *EMMA:* JANE AUSTEN

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Structure

14.0 INTRODUCTION

Emma written by Jane Austen was first published in 1815. The novel was a slight departure from the earlier novels written by Jane Austen due to the fact that the heroine, Emma like that of the previous novels does not exhibit any romantic inclination. It is only towards the end of the novel does Emma realize her love interest in Mr Knightley. The novel largely deals with the theme of love and matrimony and simultaneously delineates various characters of the novel.

14.1 OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- List the significant works of Jane Austen
- Discuss the main characters of the novel *Emma*
- Summarize the novel *Emma*

14.2 *JANE AUSTEN:* LIFE AND WORKS

Jane Austen was the greatest of all novelists of manners who raised the genre of novel to a new level of art. She produced some of the greatest novels in history with her quietly penetrating vision of man, her ironic awareness of the claims of personal morality and those of social and economic propriety, her polished and controlled wit and her steady moral assessment of the nature of human relationships.

Since her childhood, she was encouraged to write and pen down her ideas. Her life in the midst of the English country provided her with the opportunity to

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learn about the world of social pretentions and ambition, of dance balls and visits and speculations about marriage.

Jane Austen was born on 16 December 1775 at the church house in Hampshire. She was the seventh child of George Austen and Cassandra. She was educated mainly at home. She was extremely close to her elder sister, Cassandra. She read extensively using her father's library and got material from there in order to write short satirical sketches when she was a child. She had begun writing at an early age though only for her family circle. She found the raw materials for her novels in her daily routine, visits, shopping, sewing, gossip and other trivial matters. The world, which her books present to us, is essentially the eighteenth century world in its habits, tastes and appearances.

Sometime around Jane's pre-adolescence phase, she and Cassandra were sent to boarding school so that they could gain more concrete and formal knowledge. Unfortunately, both Jane and Cassandra fell victim to typhus, and it seemed impossible for Jane to recuperate back at that time. Post recovery, the sisters spent some more time attending school, but their education was unexpectedly terminated as the family underwent severe financial crisis. Due to this, the sisters returned home and resided with their family.

She did not gain her due as a writer during her own time. But Austen's tongue-in-cheek take on the amorous lives of the landed gentry found its due popularity only after 1869. Her stature as a writer of substance evolved more prominently in the twentieth century. Her popular novels like *Pride and Prejudice*, *Sense and Sensibility*, *Emma*, *Persuasion*, *Northanger Abbey* and *Mansfield Park* hold great significance as they are literary classics, bringing about a seamless blending of romance and realism of the Victorian Age. The leading characters of her novels were women of fine upbringing and contemporary views. Since her novels did not conform to the Victorian and Romantic expectations that strong emotions need to be authenticated by a superfluous display of colour and sound in the writings, nineteenth century audiences and critics usually preferred the works of George Eliot, Thomas Hardy and Charles Dickens. Although her novels were re-published in England in the 1830s and remained continual sellers, they were not able to gain the privilege of becoming bestsellers.

Jane Austen was forever attracted towards stories. Her fascination for them initiated her to write in notebooks in the early stages of her writing career. During the 1790s, when Jane was in her adolescence, she composed her novel *Love and Friendship*. It was a collection of a parody of amorous letters which were written with the intention to sketch the genre of romantic fiction. This work set the tone for her later writing. It clearly displayed Jane Austen's dislike for an excessive romantic attitude or sensibility. The year after completion of *Love and Friendship,* Jane wrote *The History of England*. It was another parody which ridiculed the historical writing. This thirty-four page work also contained illustrations sketched by her sister Cassandra. These notebooks of Jane Austen, containing her short compositions, poems, novels and dramas are collectively called Jane's *Juvenilia*.

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Jane's youth was spent trying to help maintain her family. She also played the piano and like a good Christian, was a regular at Church. She socialized with the people in her neighbourhood as well. She was an accomplished dancer and regularly read aloud to her family during the evening hours. In the meantime, she kept honing her writing skills and developing her distinctive style. In her youth, she wrote *Lady Susan*, a more accomplished work than her previous attempts. This was also an epistolary story which dealt with the life of a woman who knew how to manipulate situations to suit her purposes by using her charm, intelligence and sexuality. She also started composing *Elinor and Marianne*, another epistolary effort, which was later published as one of her famous masterpieces, *Sense and Sensibility*.

Jane Austen's first three novels fetched her both commercial as well as critical success, which she was able to experience in her lifetime. But it was only after her demise that her brother revealed to the world that his sister was an author of high repute and immense talent by publishing her later works.

Jane Austen is definitely one of the most popular authors of our times, her novels genuinely liked and widely read by all. She has been a darling of both critics and readers alike.

Jane Austen did for the English novel precisely what the Lake poets did for English poetry. One of the ways in which Jane Austen is different from other eighteenth century novelists is that she does not share their standard picaresque form and comic epic in prose. On the contrary, she isolated herself from the elements of mock-heroic and picaresque, which were the hallmarks of the eighteenth century novel. The primacy of emotion, preference for the marriage of love, urges for adventure, attraction for the uncommon, and above all, the superiority of sensibility in the novels of Jane Austen are definitely romantic traits. All of Austen's major novels are dominated by the female protagonists and are primarily concerned with the twin themes of love and marriage.

Jane Austen stays on the middle ground between the extremes of sense and sensibility, which constitutes one of the shades on the spectrum of Romanticism. Her concern with the inner life of her characters rather than their external interests is what stands out conspicuously in her novels. Beneath the outward pursuit of marriage, security and status, the driving force in her female protagonists is always the inner, human urge for a delicate life of sense and emotion as well as peace and harmony.

In the year 2002, the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) conducted a poll where she was honoured with the seventieth position on a list of '100 most famous Britons of all time'. Scholars of the 1920s have contributed immensely towards 'rediscovering' Austen as a great literary figure and reestablishing her popularity. The fans of Jane Austen prefer to call themselves 'The Janeites'. The widespread popularity of her writing in the modern period is established from the fact that her work has been adapted into films and TV programmes. In the year

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2007, author David Lassman submitted various manuscripts of Jane Austen with very few modifications under a disguised name to some publishing houses. He was shocked to discover that all the manuscripts were rejected. He wrote this experience in one of his articles called 'Rejecting Jane'. This article was a tribute to the author who was an unbeatable champion of wit and humour.

In July 1809, the women of the Austen house moved back to Hampshire countryside when their brother Edward offered them a permanent home at his Chawton Estate. The place provided a perfect setting for Jane Austen to write. She stayed in this house for seven and a half years and these years turned out to be a phase of intense literary activity for her. Between 1811 and 1813, she revised *Sense and Sensibility* and *Pride and Prejudice* and published them. *Mansfield Park* was published in 1814 and *Emma* in 1816 and she completed *Persuasion* (which was published together with *Northanger Abbey* in 1818, the year after her death). All her novels were said to be written 'By a Lady'. She died on 18 July 1817 when she was 41 years old. She is buried in Winchester Cathedral.

Let us list out some of the popular novels by Jane Austen:

- Sense and Sensibility – Published in 1811, it was Austen's first published novel. The novel is about Eleanor and Marianne, two daughters of Mr Dashwood, who encounter the sense and sensibility of life and love through the course of the novel.
- Pride and Prejudice (1813) – The novel was first published in 1813. The story follows the protagonist Elizabeth Bennet as she deals with issues of etiquettes and marriage in the society of nineteenth century England.
- Mansfield Park (1814) – Mansfield Park was written when Austen was at Chawton Cottage.
- Northanger Abbey (1818, posthumous) – At first, the novel was called Susan. It was written in 1798–99. Austen revised it in 1803 and sold it to a London bookseller for £10. The publisher decided not to publish the novel. In 1817, the bookseller sold it back to Henry Austen, Jane Austen's brother for £10 not knowing the popularity of the author at that time. The novel was further revised and was published in 1818.
- Persuasion (1818, posthumous) – *Persuasion* is another novel by Jane Austen that was published after her death.

Short fiction written by Jane Austen

- *Lady Susan* (1794, 1805)

Unfinished fiction written by Jane Austen

- *The Watsons* (1804)
- *Sanditon* (1817)

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Other works by Jane Austen

- *Sir Charles Grandison* (adapted play) (1793, 1800)
- *Plan of a Novel* (1815)
- *Poems* (1796–1817)
- *Prayers* (1796–1817)
- *Letters* (1796–1817)

Juvenilia — Volume the First (1787–1793)

- *Frederic & Elfrida*
- *Jack & Alice*
- *Edgar & Emma*
- *Henry and Eliza*
- *The Adventures of Mr. Harley*
- *Sir William Mountague*
- *Memoirs of Mr. Clifford*
- *The Beautifull Cassandra*
- *Amelia Webster*
- *The Visit*
- *The Mystery*
- *The Three Sisters*
- *A beautiful description*
- *The generous Curate*
- *Ode to Pity*

Juvenilia — Volume the Second (1787–1793)

- *Love and Friendship*
- *Lesley Castle*
- *The History of England*
- *A Collection of Letters*
- *The Female Philosopher*
- *The First Act of a Comedy*
- *A Letter from a Young Lady*
- *A Tour through Wales*
- *A Tale*

Juvenilia — Volume the Third (1787–1793)

- *Evelyn*
- *Catharine, or the Bower*

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Check Your Progress

1. When and where was Jane Austen born?
2. Name the popular novels written by Jane Austen.

14.3 *EMMA*: SUMMARY

The twenty year old protagonist Emma is a resident of the village of Highbury. Although she is convinced that she herself will never marry, she imagines herself to be naturally endowed with the ability to conjure love matches. She is thrilled with the successful matchmaking between her governess and Mr Weston, a widower.

Emma takes up the responsibility to find a suitable match for Harriet Smith. The parentage of Harriet is not known. However, Emma believes that Harriet deserves to be a gentleman's wife and asks her friend to consider Mr Elton for marriage, who is the village vicar. Harriet is inclined towards Robert Martin, a well-to-do farmer, but Emma convinces Harriet to reject his marriage proposal. Due to continuous encouragement by Emma, Harriet starts to develop feelings for Mr Elton. The situation becomes ironical when Emma fails to realize that Elton is inclined towards her and not Harriet. Emma feels shocked when she realizes that she is losing touch with the reality of life due to her obsession with matchmaking.

Mr Knightley, Emma's brother-in-law and her good friend, critically observes Emma's matchmaking efforts. He considers Mr Martin as a worthy match for Harriet. Mr Knightley and Emma quarrel with each other over the latter's meddling role in Harriet's matchmaking. Mr Knightley proves to be a wise person in this quarrel.

During a conversation with Elton, Emma's implication that Harriet is his equal offends him and he leaves for the town of Bath and immediately marries a girl there. Emma tries to comfort her friend. Emma then speculates about Mr Weston's son, Frank Churchill, who is expected to visit Highbury. Frank is raised by his aunt and uncle in London and they have taken him as their heir as well. He has not visited his father for a long time. Mr Knightley is suspicious towards Frank and the incident of Frank's rushing back to London just to have his haircut makes him more suspicious towards him. On the other hand, Emma finds Frank charming and feels that he is inclined towards her. She decides to discourage these charms but ends up flirting with the young man. Emma meets Jane Fairfax, another visitor to Highbury. Jane is beautiful but Emma does not like her. Mr Knightley defends Jane saying that she deserves empathy because she does not have an independent fortune and might have to leave home to work as a governess. According to Mrs

Weston, Mr Knightley's defence is due to his romantic feelings towards Jane but Emma opposes this opinion. Everyone feels that Frank and Emma are inclined towards each other but Emma dismisses Frank as a prospective match for her and sees him as a suitor for Harriet.

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At a village ball, Knightley offers to dance with Harriet because she was humiliated by Mr Elton and his new wife. This kindheartedness of Knightley helps him earn Emma's approval. The next day, Frank saves Harriet from Gypsy beggars. When Harriet shares with Emma that she is in love with a man who is above her social class, Emma thinks that she is talking about Frank. Knightley suspects that Frank and Jane are inclined towards each other and he tries to warn Emma. Emma feels amused by Knightley's implication and laughs at him. She again flirts with Frank and insults Jane's aunt, Miss Bates, who is a kindhearted spinster. Knightley reprimands Emma for this action.

Everyone comes to know that Frank has lost his aunt. This event paves the path for the unfolding of the secret that Frank and Jane have been secretly engaged and he flirted with Emma in order to conceal his engagement with Jane. With his uncle's approval, Frank later marries Jane.

Emma feels worried about Harriet but comes to know that Harriet is in love with Knightley, not Frank. Harriet believes that Knightley also loves her. Emma feels sad with this revelation and her sadness on this revelation makes her realize that she is in love with Knightley. After this, Emma expects that Knightley would tell her that he loves Harriet but to her joy, Knightley declares his love for Emma. Robert Martin proposes to Harriet and she accepts his offer. The novel ends with the marriage of Emma and Mr Knightley and that of Harriet and Mr Martin.

Check Your Progress

3. Who is a worthy match for Harriet as per Mr Knightley?
4. Why does Mr Knightley offer to dance with Harriet at a village ball?

14.4 *EMMA:* THEMES

Emma is the story of a girl who is clever as well as rich. She genuinely desires to change the lives of her social inferiors as well as her equals. Her overconfidence and her desire to change people's lives make her go through some shocks, which later help her achieve a higher degree of self-knowledge. This self-realization helps her find her true love, Mr Knightley, who is the brother of her elder sister's husband.

Her self-deception and haughtiness sometimes turns her into a comic figure. It is through her that the theme of self-deception is presented in the novel. In spite of this, she does not lose the sympathy of her readers. In the opening line, Austen explains: 'Emma Woodhouse, handsome, clever, and rich, with a comfortable home and happy disposition, seemed to unite some of the best blessings of existence;

and had lived nearly twenty-one years in the world with very little to distress or vex her.'

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There are a number of traps for Emma's vanity and self-importance throughout the novel and she falls into each one of them. She decides to protect Harriet Smith, 'the natural daughter of somebody', and decides to find a suitable match for her. In this attempt, she goes to the extent of breaking off Harriet's incipient love affair with Mr Martin, a worthy and suitable match for her. Emma feels that Mr Elton is a more suitable match for Harriet but Mr Elton, a foolish young man, misunderstands Emma's behaviour and proposes to her.

In her second attempt to marry off Harriet, Emma gets involved in serious trouble. She tries to get Harriet interested in Frank Churchill. Harriet, misunderstanding Emma's elegant hints, thinks she is referring to Mr Knightley and falls in love with him. It is a shock for Emma when Harriet makes clear that she would not allow anyone to marry Mr Knightley but herself. The moral pattern is carefully woven and Emma's attempt to play God involves her in a variety of situations, which contribute to her self-knowledge in the end. Emma wants Frank Churchill to marry Harriet but she is also attracted to him. There is an interesting tension between her admiration for his vitality and wit and her half-realized love for Mr Knightley 'one of the few people who could see faults in Emma Woodhouse'. Mr Knightley is a wealthy landowner, around seventeen years older than Emma. He is generous, kind to his tenants, intolerant towards deceit and cruelty and does not have superficial gaiety like Frank Churchill.

While Emma is scheming for Frank and Harriet's match, Mr Knightley feels that she herself is falling in love with Frank. The situation is enriched with ironies with the introduction of Jane Fairfax. Jane is a foil for Emma; she has no fortune but is equally talented and at music, even more talented than Emma. This fact perhaps raises an unconscious jealousy in Emma. Emma amuses herself by hinting and speculating about Jane's relationship with Mr Dixon and joking about it with Frank. It appears that Frank and Emma make fun of Jane. The fun is not wholly innocent on Emma's part; there is an element of jealousy in it if not spite. Further, Jane's lack of fortune means that if she does not marry soon she will have to take up a position as a governess and the horrors and humiliation of that kind of work are made abundantly evident through Mrs Elton's insufferably patronizing offers to help her in getting a job. Emma therefore has no moral right to laugh either at Jane or at her garrulous aunt, a character on whom Emma vents a momentary irritation and Mr Knightley castigates Emma for this. It emerges at last that the relationship between Jane and Mr Dixon, which Emma has conjured up and about which she has joked so often with Frank, has no basis and Jane and Frank are secretly engaged. Emma suddenly realizes that she is and has been a dupe. At every point, Emma's wit and knowingness leads to her humiliation but Mr Knightley stands by her. The exploration of different kinds of selfishness as well as the sharply ironic character sketches of characters like the Eltons and Miss Bates gives the novel real depth underneath the surface brilliance.

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The character of Emma's father, whose concern for other people is a way of implementing a profound selfishness, opens and closes the book. The novel symbolizes the ambiguities of selfishness, which is one of the themes of this novel. The moral pattern is spelled out more clearly in *Emma* than in *Pride and Prejudice*, but in other respects, it is a less sharply drawn novel, standing midway with respect to subtlety and complexity between *Pride and Prejudice* and *Mansfield Park*.

In the early nineteenth century, the status of women was defined in terms of their accomplishments that would make them a suitable 'property' to get married and acceptance of marriage proposal by a person of high social status. Every mother desired to marry off their daughters in wealthy families because they saw this as the shortest and surest way to climb the social ladder. The bride's family would choose a suitable match for her on the basis of the family's reputation and their inheritance. It was the only area laid open by society for women to exercise their choice and freedom and feel the sense of empowerment on getting the right groom. The entire structure of the novel *Emma* is based on the theme of marriage.

There is a significant point raised in the novel. The ritual of marriage should be consummated between families of equal social status only then would they be successful otherwise they become void. Mr Weston's marriage to Miss Churchill was not successful and suffered many hardships. On the other hand, his marriage to Mrs Weston, shown in the beginning of the novel, is quite successful as both the families stand on equal footing. Mrs Weston was a governess before marriage and was more than happy to be rescued from it. Emma's fruitless attempts to consummate the marriage of the otherwise incompatible Harriet and Mr Elton form another point. She compels Harriet to reject her feelings for Robert Martin who would have proved a suitable match for Harriet. Martin hails from the family of tradesmen so he would have been a suitable match for Harriet. Frank Churchill's engagement to Jane Fairfax is a relationship in question. The marriage of Emma with Mr Knightly is successful because they have a similar social status, compatibility and temperament.

During this period, the privileges given to women were shockingly limited. If she had the freedom to go out, it was not for work but for social visits, charity visits or music and art. The limitation of social space for women hampered their development of personality. There was little room to display their intellectual abilities. Their entire energies and capabilities were directed towards fulfillment of marital aims. The only active work they could do was getting the right kind of marriage proposal, preparing for the marriage and working towards successful consummation of it. Quiet shockingly, there were characters like Jane Fairfax, who saw marriage as a route to be a woman of fortune without undergoing the drudgery of working for it. For example, Jane compared the work of governess to slave trade.

Another significant feature of the novel is the way in which it brings forth the idiosyncrasies of personal prejudices of the characters. Thus, the novel also deals with the theme of prejudices of people. Emma guides Mr Elton in pursuing his love

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because she thinks that he is in love with Harriet. Meanwhile, Mr Elton misunderstands her concern and proposes to her. Emma and Mr Elton's personal prejudices blind them to the real situation. Both are oblivious to each other's feelings and desires. Emma tries to build a relationship between Harriet and Frank but it takes a turn when Harriet develops desires for Mr Knightley. Frank's desire to use Emma as a screen for his real preference makes him believe that Emma is aware of the relationship between him and Jane. A detached narrator can see that the personal prejudices of characters create a lot of misunderstandings. It creates a lot of humour and a dramatic space for the interplay of irony.

Does that mean that interactions among the characters on various platforms of social propriety like the dance balls; music and art circles should be minimized or eliminated as they give rise to a lot of misunderstanding and confusion? According to Austen, elimination is not the answer but restraint should be practiced. She says that the emphasis should be on clear communication and open expression among the interacting partners. Austen says that there should be certain codes of communication and verbal decency. The bantering of Emma is misleading because it is full of gregariousness and vanity. She hurts Miss Bates and hates Jane in an indiscreet fashion. Mr Elton has a flimsy, ostentatious and insincere style of praising people. Frank also tells people what they want to hear. Mr Knightley proves right in being suspicious of Frank's integrity.

Check Your Progress

5. State two significant traits of Emma's character.
6. Who is a foil to Emma's character in the novel?

14.5 *EMMA*: CHARACTERS

Let us study the major characters of the novel, *Emma*.

Emma

In the opening lines, she is described as 'handsome, clever, and rich, with a comfortable home and happy disposition,' Emma 'had lived nearly twenty-one years in the world with very little to distress or vex her.' However, the narrator also tells us that Emma possesses 'the power of having rather too much her own way, and a disposition to think a little too well of herself.'

Emma's obstinacy produces many conflicts in the novel. In the novel, Emma makes three major mistakes. First, she tries to help Harriet marry a gentleman when Harriet's social position commands that the farmer, who loves her, is best suited to her. Second, she flirts with Frank Churchill even though she does not have any intention to marry him and makes unfair comments about Jane Fairfax. Third, she claims that she is committed to staying single and does not realize her

own feelings that she is in love with Mr Knightley and wants to marry him. These mistakes threaten Harriet's happiness, make Emma embarrassed and create problems in Emma's path to find her true love.

Although the omniscient narrator speaks in the third person yet many events are observed through Emma's point of view. This narrative strategy forces the readers to sympathize with Emma and make ironic judgment on her behaviour. It also makes Emma a multidimensional character.

Emma is compared implicitly with other women in the novel. This allows the readers to assess her character. There are a lot of similarities between Jane and Emma but the fact that Jane is not financially independent highlights Emma's privileged nature. Mrs Elton is independent like Emma but the former's crude behaviour and pride forces the readers to observe Emma's refined nature. Emma's sister, Isabella, is described as a stereotypical traditional woman who is tender and entirely devoted and dependent on her family. The narrator seems to prefer Emma's independence to her sister's traditional outlook.

Mr Knightley

In the novel, Mr Knightley is a model of good sense. Right from the beginning of the novel, we find him correcting the excesses and mistakes of people around him. He is honest but knows where to temper his honesty with diplomacy and compassion. Readers find him a trustworthy person who can provide them the accurate assessment of the other characters' behaviour. He is compassionate and protective towards women. He is considerate towards Jane, Harriet and Miss Bates and helps them as well.

Knightley's love for Emma is the only emotion, which he is not able to handle properly. He decides that Frank is not a good person even before meeting him. Gradually, the unfolding of the events reveals that he is jealous of his 'rival'. When Knightley notices that Emma is a bit inclined towards Frank, he acts impulsively and leaves for London. When he comes back, he declares his love for Emma in an uncontrollable manner. However, this fact does not make him a failure but humanizes his character.

Knightley is also compared implicitly with various male members of his community. His brother, Mr. John Knightley is clear-sightedness but not kindhearted and tactful like him. Both Frank and Knightley are intelligent, observant, affectionate and vibrant; but Frank uses his intelligence to conceal his true emotions and please others, whereas Knightley uses his intelligence to correct the excesses and mistakes of people around him.

Frank Churchill

Frank Churchill is known for his attractive personality. He uses Emma as a screen to hide his secret engagement with Jane. He flirts with Emma even though he does not love her. He says what people want to hear in order to please them.

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Jane Fairfax

Jane is a foil for Emma. The fact that she is not financially independent highlights Emma's privileged nature. She has no fortune but is equally talented and at music more talented than Emma. She sees marriage as a route to be a woman of fortune without undergoing the drudgery of a working woman. Her lack of fortune means that if she does not marry soon she will have to take up a position as a governess. She compares the work of governess to slave trade.

Harriet Smith

She is Emma's friend in the novel. Emma takes the responsibility to find a match for her. In the beginning of the novel, Harriet is believed to an illegitimate child though her parentage is not known. It is only at the end of the novel that we come to know that she is a daughter of a well-to-do tradesman. Harriet is easily led by others; for instance, she refuses to marry Robert Martin just because Emma feels that he is not a 'gentleman' and is beneath her in social status. She is a catalyst through which Emma's misguided matchmaking attempts are depicted in the novel. It is because of her attraction towards Mr Knightley that makes Emma realize that she loves Mr Knightley. At the end of the novel, Emma supports Harriet's desire to marry Mr Martin.

Philip Elton

He is a good-looking young vicar. Emma feels that he is a suitable match for Harriet. However, the situation becomes ironical when Emma comes to know that he is inclined towards her and not Harriet. Emma's implied remark that Harriet is his equal offends him and he quickly rushes to Bath and marries another girl there.

Augusta Elton

She is Philip Elton's wife. She is wealthy but a dominant and ostentatious woman who always tries to seek people's attention. Emma does not approve of her behaviour and dislikes her. She patronizes Jane Fairfax in the novel.

Mrs Anne Weston

Formerly known as Miss Taylor, she was Emma's governess for 16 years before she marries Mr Weston due to Emma's matchmaking attempts. She admires and adores Emma and remains her confidante throughout the novel. She also acts as her surrogate mother.

Mr. Weston

He marries Miss Taylor who was Emma's governess. He is Frank Churchill's father by his first marriage. In the novel, he is shown as a cheerful man who loves socializing.

Isabella

She is Emma's elder sister and John Knightley's wife. In the novel, she is shown as a traditional girl who spends most of the time in taking care of her house and her children.

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John Knightley

He is George Knightley's younger brother and Isabella's husband. He indulges in visits and vacations as per his family's wishes. However, he personally prefers to stay at home.

Check Your Progress

7. How has Isabella been contrasted with Emma in the novel?
8. How is Emma used as a façade by Frank Churchill?

14.6 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

1. Jane Austen was born on 16 December 1775 at the church house in Hampshire.
2. The popular novels written by Jane Austen are *Pride and Prejudice*, *Sense and Sensibility*, *Emma*, *Persuasion*, *Northanger Abbey* and *Mansfield Park*.
3. Mr Knightley considers Mr Martin as a worthy match for Harriet.
4. At a village ball, Knightley offers to dance with Harriet because she was humiliated by Mr Elton and his new wife. This kindheartedness of Knightley helps him earn Emma's approval.
5. Two significant traits of Emma's character are that she is overconfident and extremely haughty.
6. Jane is a foil for Emma in the novel. She has no fortune but is equally talented and at music, even more talented than Emma. This fact perhaps raises an unconscious jealousy in Emma.
7. Emma's sister, Isabella, has been presented as a stereotypical traditional woman who is tender and entirely devoted and dependent on her family. On the other hand, Emma is an independent thinking lady with a positive outlook in life.
8. Frank Churchill uses Emma as a facade to hide his secret engagement with Jane. He flirts with Emma even though he does not love her.

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14.7 SUMMARY

- Jane Austen was the greatest of all novelists of manners who raised the genre of novel to a new level of art.
- Jane Austen was born on 16 December 1775 at the church house in Hampshire. She was the seventh child of George Austen and Cassandra.
- She did not gain her due as a writer during her own time. But Austen's tongue-in-cheek take on the amorous lives of the landed gentry found its due popularity only after 1869.
- Her popular novels like *Pride and Prejudice, Sense and Sensibility, Emma, Persuasion, Northanger Abbey* and *Mansfield Park* hold great significance as they are literary classics, bringing about a seamless blending of romance and realism of the Victorian Age.
- Jane Austen's first three novels fetched her both commercial as well as critical success, which she was able to experience in her lifetime. But it was only after her demise that her brother revealed to the world that his sister was an author of high repute and immense talent by publishing her later works.
- The twenty year old protagonist Emma is a resident of the village of Highbury. Although she is convinced that she herself will never marry, she imagines herself to be naturally endowed with the ability to conjure love matches.
- Mr Knightley, Emma's brother-in-law and her good friend, critically observes Emma's matchmaking efforts. He considers Mr Martin as a worthy match for Harriet.
- Emma feels worried about Harriet but comes to know that Harriet is in love with Knightley, not Frank. Harriet believes that Knightley also loves her. Emma feels sad with this revelation and her sadness on this revelation makes her realize that she is in love with Knightley.
- *Emma* is the story of a girl who is clever as well as rich. She genuinely desires to change the lives of her social inferiors as well as her equals. Her overconfidence and her desire to change people's lives make her go through some shocks, which later help her achieve a higher degree of self-knowledge.
- The character of Emma's father, whose concern for other people is a way of implementing a profound selfishness, opens and closes the book.
- In the early nineteenth century, the status of women was defined in terms of their accomplishments that would make them a suitable 'property' to get married and acceptance of marriage proposal by a person of high social status.

- Another significant feature of the novel is the way in which it brings forth the idiosyncrasies of personal prejudices of the characters.
- In the novel, Mr Knightley is a model of good sense. Right from the beginning of the novel, we find him correcting the excesses and mistakes of people around him.
- Jane is a foil for Emma. The fact that she is not financially independent highlights Emma's privileged nature.
- John Knightley is George Knightley's younger brother and Isabella's husband. He indulges in visits and vacations as per his family's wishes. However, he personally prefers to stay at home.

14.8 KEY WORDS

- **Romanticism:** It is a movement in the arts and literature that originated in the late eighteenth century, emphasizing inspiration, subjectivity, and the primacy of the individual.
- **Epistolary:** An epistolary novel or story is one that is written as a series of letters.
- **Lake poets:** This term refers to the English poets William Wordsworth, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, and Robert Southey, who lived in the English Lake District of Cumberland and Westmorland at the beginning of the nineteenth century.

14.9 SELF ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

Short Answer Questions

1. Briefly mention the life of Jane Austen.
2. Write short notes on the following characters of the novel:

   (a) Mr Knightley (b) Jane Fairfax
3. What was the position and status of women in society as depicted in Austen's novel, *Emma*?

Long Answer Questions

1. 'Jane Austen did for the English novel precisely what the Lake poets did for English poetry.' Explain the statement.
2. Summarize the novel Emma in your own words.
3. Critically analyse the significant themes of the novel, *Emma*.

14.10 FURTHER READINGS

NOTES

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