

B.A. Second Year
English Literature, Paper - II

FICTION



मध्यप्रदेश भोज (मुक्त) विश्वविद्यालय – भोपाल
MADHYA PRADESH BHOJ (OPEN) UNIVERSITY – BHOPAL

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INTRODUCTION

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* is written in a self-instructional format and is divided into five units. Each unit begins with an Introduction to the topic followed by an outline of the Objectives. The content is then presented in a simple and easy-to-understand manner, and is interspersed with Check Your Progress questions to test the reader's understanding of the topic. A list of Self-Assessment Questions is also provided at the end of each unit and includes short-answer as well as long-answer questions. The Summary and Key Terms section are useful tools for students and are meant for effective recapitulation of the text.

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UNIT 1 FORMS OF FICTION AND ASPECTS OF NOVEL

*Forms of Fiction and
Aspects of Novel*

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Structure

- 1.0 Introduction
- 1.1 Objectives
- 1.2 Fiction
 - 1.2.1 Short Story (1830)
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 - 1.4.4 Some Other Forms of Novels
- 1.5 Answers to 'Check Your Progress'
- 1.6 Summary
- 1.7 Key Terms
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- 1.9 Further Reading

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Fiction is a general term which describes an imaginative work of prose, either a novel, short story and novella. There are various prose forms like novels, short stories, and works of criticism. Other examples include comedy, drama, fable, fiction, folk tale, hagiography, legend, literature, myth, narrative, saga, science fiction, story, articles, newspaper, journals, essays, travelogues and speeches. Each form of prose has its own style and has to be dealt with in its own particular way. In this unit, you will understand the concept of fiction. Fiction, as a form of art, may be categorised such as historical, biographical, sentimental, psychological, or realistic. To cite some examples, the novels of Jane Austen are based on her experiences of life; the novels of Sir Walter Scott have history mingled with fiction; those of Virginia Woolf are experiments in psychology.

The unit also discusses about the meaning and types of novel. A novel is a work of moderately lengthy descriptive fiction. It is generally in the form of prose, which is characteristically printed in the form of a book. The genre 'novel' has been defined as consisting of a nonstop and all inclusive history which dates back to almost two thousand years.

1.1 OBJECTIVES

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

- Know about different ages of fiction
- Learn about short story, its definition and objectives

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- Understand the difference between short story and novel
- Identify the status of fiction writing in India
- Discuss the meaning and types of novels
- Analyse the development of various genres of novel in English Literature
- Discuss the contribution of various authors and their works in developing novel as a literary form
- Interpret the characteristics of various forms of novels

1.2 FICTION

Fiction, as a form of art, may be categorised such as historical, biographical, sentimental, psychological, or realistic. To cite some examples, the novels of Jane Austen are based on her experiences of life; the novels of Sir Walter Scott have history mingled with fiction; those of Virginia Woolf are experiments in psychology.

Definition

Fiction is a literary narrative usually in prose. It is based on imagination, and not reality. It could be an account of truth that is wrapped in fantasy. It is a narrative that has a free play of imagination, structure, characters, dialogue, theme, style, and setting. A fictional piece is a liberal form of art that conveys a theme while aiming to entertain the reader. Whether based on the writer's real life experience or a complete fantasy, a fictional piece has a theme and plot. Fiction therefore refers to a story that has a plot, time, place, characters, dialogues and events that follow the classical example of an exposition, climax and resolution.

Different Ages of Fiction

The fictional novel emerged as a popular and public literary form in the eighteenth century with the coming of writers like Richardson, Fielding, Smollett, Sterne and Defoe. While this was a late development, several sub-genres or forms of the novel can be traced. Given below are some forms of the novel according to the timeline of their development.

The Beginning of the English Novel (1719-1770)

This period can be termed as the first flowering of the English novel. It was aimed at satisfying the taste of the readers from the middle-class. Daniel Defoe's Robinson Crusoe published in 1719 was based on the picaresque novel tradition that originated in the sixteenth century in Spain. Picaresque novels / prose told the stories of low and common rogues and their actions. Daniel Defoe's Robinson Crusoe tells the tale of a seminal castaway in this style. Samuel Richardson's (1689-1761) Pamela or virtue Rewarded (1740), Clarissa: Or the History of a Young Lady (1748), and The History of Sir Charles Grandison (1753) fall under the category of Epistolary novels; which are novels in the form of letters or documents. Richardson's works had profound moral and they all displayed sentimentality. As a reaction to Richardson's sentimentality, Henry Fielding (1707-1754) took to novel writing. His subtle use of irony, satire and humour was

exemplary and the plot in his novels were very well-structured. The development of plot was noteworthy in the hands of Henry Fielding and could be traced in his *Joseph Andrews* (1742), *Tom Jones* (1749), *Amelia* (1751), *Jonathan Wilde*, etc. Other important novelists of this period are Lawrence Sterne, Samuel Johnson, and Tobias Smollett. Lawrence Sterne and Tobias Smollett wrote in the picaresque tradition. Lawrence Sterne (1713-1768) wrote *Tristram Shandy* and *A Sentimental Journey through France and Italy* (1760-1767). Tobias Smollett (1721-1771) wrote *Roderick Random* (1748), *Peregrine Pickle* (1751) and *Humphrey Clinker* (1771). Oliver Goldsmith's *Vicar of Wakefield* (1766) became an inspiration to the following generation of writers.

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Novel of Terror and Romance or Gothic Novel (1764-1818)

Among the prominent categories of novels, the Gothic novel was a popular one. The Gothic novel usually had an Italian setting and recalled the medieval period. It had elements of horror, romance, mystery, and cruelty. The Gothic novels came about as a reaction against the prosaic common sense of the eighteenth century and the strict neo-classical trend of writing. It was full of romance and an expression of liberty and rebellion. The first novel in this tradition was *The Castle of Otranto* (1764) written by Horace Walpole. He combined horror, romance, mystery and cruelty in his novel. After Walpole, Ann Radcliffe tried her hand at this kind of fiction and introduced a serious, Byronic villain as her hero. Gothic is related to a type of medieval architecture and the authors used these as a setting for their tales. The setting in most Gothic novels is a lonely, far away castle where mysterious events take place. *Mysteries of Udolpho* (1794) by Radcliffe is cited as a notable work in this genre. William Beckford's *Vathek* (1786), and *The Monk* (1796) by Matthew Lewis are a few other notable Gothic fictional novels. Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* (1818) was a mixture of Gothic and the romantic. It was also a stimulant for the next generation of scientific fiction writers and is relevant even today because of the science fiction aspect. It has been a popular subject for cinematization. The Gothic fictional novels influenced the later generation of writers because of the use of fanciful, romantic and the mysterious.

Romantic Novel (1790-1832)

The romantic novel flourished in the Romantic Age of English letters, during the period of the Napoleonic Wars. Jane Austen was a major exponent. Austen's works, while being confined to a certain smaller territory of England, depict the reality of human nature and relationships. Thus they have a universal appeal and are widely read all around the world. Though she was not popular in her age, she was regarded as a master craftsman in the following generations. Her chief works include — *Pride and Prejudice* (1813), *Sense and Sensibility* (1811), *Mansfield Park*, *Persuasion*, *Emma* (1815), etc. Her *Northanger Abbey* (1798) is considered a satire on the Gothic tradition. She was supremely gifted in handling harmony and irony together. Sir Walter Scott (1771-1832) is a major romantic novelist who is known as a pioneer of the historical novel in English. He combined fact and fiction finely. His novels are categorised as historical romance. He wrote a series of novels which is called 'Waverley Novels' (1814-1831). It includes *The Antiquary*, *Ivanhoe*,

and *The Heart of Midlothian*. He worked for the upliftment of the Scottish tradition and territory throughout his life. He was a very popular writer in his lifetime.

Victorian Novel (1830-1900)

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In the Victorian Age, novels became a dominant form of literature and became more popular than poetry. Many writers in this form emerged during this period. It was in the 1830s that English novel saw some changes in style and form. It was the period after the Industrial Revolution. Various reforms in the society had started taking place and the focus was on the upliftment of the society. The middle class emerged during this phase and there was a rise in the poorer class as well. The novel was the literary form that was to please the taste and satisfy the newly emergent middle class. Authors like Dickens used the novel to elaborate the contemporary social themes in his works. Later on, the theme of novel changed from social to moral to psychological. As the writers explored various themes in this age, they also paid attention to develop the novel as a literary genre. Since this age saw the loss of faith in religion and rise of social reform and a questioning attitude in people — the novel tried to explore these in its themes. The Victorian age could be termed as the age of the morals.

Charles Dickens (1812-1870) is one of the best known novelists of this period. He has been regarded as a major pillar of the Victorian era of novel writing. In his journey from a journalist to a pioneer literary figure, he wrote many famous novels. His works focus on realism. Dickens, in his novels, draws the picture of London streets where he had passed many sleepless nights as a child. Along with this realism, he also has the gift of high imagination and a wide range of characterisation. He uses these as tools to make his novels colourful, full of humour, and very interesting. In his early writings his focus was more on incidents than a structured plot. This could be because the early novels were published as serial episodes in periodicals. But all the same, they are extremely interesting. He described what he saw with a wide range of fictitious characters. His major works include *Pickwick Papers*, *Oliver Twist*, *Great Expectations*, *A Tale of Two Cities*, *Little Dorrit*, *Nicholas Nickleby*, and *Hard Times*. His works mainly dealt with social problems raising sympathy and awareness in the mind of his readers for the labour class, the education system, politics, and the effects of industrialisation.

The Brontë sisters: Charlotte, Emily and Anne are known for their emotionally charged worlds in their novels where they described experiences, mostly their own. *Jane Eyre* (1847), *Villette*, *Shirley* are Charlotte Brontë's (1816-1855) famous works. The character Jane Eyre is based on her own life. *Agnes Grey* (1847) and *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall* (1849) are the only two works to Anne's (1820-1849) credit. Both of these relate to the experiences of the novelist herself. *Wuthering Heights* (1847) by Emily Brontë is an emotional drama of an orphan called Heathcliff who is a character synonymous with darkness. He is a tragic figure whose love and hatred brings disasters upon two generations of the two central families around which the whole story is woven.

William Makepeace Thackeray (1811-1863) was the second most prominent novelist after Dickens of that period. His worldview differed from that

of Dickens. He focused on the society and human behaviour. His novels are called the novel of ideas. His story developed through his characters. His *Vanity Fair* (1847) is a classic novel. It is an excellent example of a novel where characters display certain nature types. It is akin to Ben Jonson's comedy of humours. His other works are *Pendennis* (1849-1850), *The Book of Snobs*, *The Newcomes* (1855), and *The Virginians* (1859). He also wrote an historical novel called *Henry Esmond* (1852).

Anthony Trollope (1815-1882) was the novelist from the upper class. His focus was on the lives of ruling and the professional class of the then society. His novels were chiefly 'an entertainment of an idle hour'. His novels are called *Barsetshire* novels. He focused on the power of money in the society. *Barchester Towers* (1857), *The Warden* (1855), *The Way We Live Now* are a few of his famous novels.

There was a large group of Pre-Raphaelite poets, novelists and artists among John Ruskin's (1819-1900) associates. William Morris (1834-1896) was chief amongst them as a novelist. He was a painter, poet and a writer of fantasy fiction. *The Wood Beyond the World*, and *The Well at the World's End* are among his notable works. He revived the genre of medieval romance.

Another prominent novelist was Wilkie Collins (1824-1889) who revived the tradition of epistolary novel. *The Moonstone* (1868) is the first novel in the detective fiction sub-genre. *The Women in White* is another popular work by him.

George Eliot (1819-1880), the pen name of Mary Anne Evans, was another great novelist during this period who perfected the art of novel writing. She is known for her portrayal of village-life and the simplicity of characters. She is also known for the psychological analysis of her characters. Her novels reveal the pathos of woman. She believed deeply in the law of moral and used it to instruct readers. Her *Mill on the Floss* (1860), *Silas Marner* (1861), *Middlemarch* (1871-72), and *Daniel Deronda* (1876) are very famous novels to this day. Set in provincial England, the works are known for their realism and psychological insight. She was a pioneer novelist who established the genre of 'literary realism'.

Thomas Hardy (1840-1928) is known for his series of *Wessex* novels and poetry. *Under the Greenwood Tree* (1872), *Far From the Madding Crowd* (1874), *The Return of the Native* (1878), *The Mayor of Casterbridge* (1886), *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* (1891), *Jude the Obscure* (1895) are a few of his best known works. As a realist, setting his works into *Wessex*, an old county, he focused on the society, human relationship, social constraints, and much more. He is an important figure to have introduced classical tragedy into the English novel. He enhanced the dignity of country-side and rural landscapes of England.

Nature was an important factor in his works; almost featuring as a universal character looking over other characters as a guardian. Hardy is known for his marvellous tragedies that are gloomy and sombre. While his tragedies are unsurpassed, it is not known that Hardy has written lively, thriving romances and fantasies like *A Pair of Blue Eyes*, *Two on a Tower* and *The Well-Beloved*.

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H.G. Wells (1866-1946) wrote his famous *Time Machine* (1895) and many other works during this period thus initiating the sub-form of science fiction. He has been called the father of Science Fiction in English literature. *The War of the Worlds* (1898), *The Invisible Man*, *Tono-Bungay*, *The Shape of Things to Come* (1933), *The Wheels of Chance* (1896), are his other novels from this genre. He concentrated on man and his scientific ability to progress and developed this plot with a little play of irony.

20th Century English Fiction (1900-2000)

The Modern Age of English literature was an age of the two great World Wars and the period after that. In this age, there were many new trends in English novel which flourished in this period. Different group of writers influenced by different thoughts or movements associated themselves with novel writing during this period and this brought about a change in the genre. Some prominent novelists of this time period are mentioned below-

David Herbert Lawrence (1885-1930) was a popular modern novelist. He was influenced by Charles Darwin's philosophy of nature. He was a major influence on his contemporary and succeeding generation of writers. Lawrence wrote against the crippled industrialised society of the early twentieth century that made man mechanical and impotent. He set his novels in harmony with nature and natural urges of mankind. His chief works include *The Rainbow* (1915), *Women In Love* (1920), *The White Peacock* (1910), *Sons and Lovers* (1913), and *The Trespassers*. Lawrence inspired great writers such as T.S. Eliot, F.R. Leavis and E.M. Forster. His *Lady Chatterley's Lover* (1928) was banned initially after its publication initially because of obscene language and frank portrayal of sex. It was later in the twentieth century that Lawrence came to be regarded as the greatest amongst the novelists of the world by the critics.

Virginia Woolf (1882-1941) is one of the most influential feminist writers of the twentieth century. She is known for her daring experiments with the form of novel. She used the 'Stream of Consciousness' technique in her novels. 'Stream of Consciousness' was a phrase used by William James in his *Principles of Psychology* (1890) to describe the unbroken flow of perceptions, thoughts, and feelings in the waking mind; it has since been adopted to describe a narrative method in modern fiction.' (A Glossary of Literary Terms, M.H. Abram) It relates to the beginning of the psychological novel which has its example in Richardson's *Pamela* (1740). By the end of the 19th century, Dorothy Richardson applied this narrative technique into her thirteen novel sequence called 'Pilgrimage'. 'Pointed Roofs' written in 1915 is credited to be the first stream-of-consciousness novel. Following her, Virginia Woolf adopted the same technique with more polish and sophistication in her works. The most notable of Mrs. Woolf's novels are *Mrs. Dalloway* (1925), *To the Lighthouse* (1927), *Orlando* (1928), *The Waves* (1931), *A Room of One's Own* (1929), and *Between the Acts*. Often this technique comes across as an interior monologue of one character.

E.M. Forster (1879-1970) was another famous novelist in this period. He is best known for his well-organised plot and structure. He also uses mystery, irony, and moral instruction as techniques in his novels. Human relationships, cultural invasion,

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class differences and hypocrisy of people form the major themes in his novels. In his own words, the one principle underlying all his writings was ‘*only connect*’. His characters are gathered from different societies, countries and classes, and make up a harmonious whole. His approach is humanistic and is tinged with sympathy and positivity. His chief works include *A Passage to India* (1924) which explores a colonised Indian society. In this novel, he focused on Hinduism as a very deep and mystical religion — almost a living enigma. Also, he tried to bring many cultures together with human sympathy that is remarkable for an Englishman. His other works include *Howards End*, and *A Room With A View*.

John Galsworthy (1867-1933), Nobel Laureate, was a very famous novelist and playwright in the last century. His *The Forsyte Saga* (1922) was a trilogy which deals with the theme of eponymous family and connected lives. His *Forsyte Saga* along with his other novels like *A Modern Comedy* (1924-1928) and *A Family Man* dealt with the social problems of the upper middle class. He highlighted man’s self-centred, snobbish, acquisitive nature with a humane voice. He is considered one of the first authors who challenged the Victorian values and ideals of English literature. He spoke about the unhappy life of woman in marriage. Through his works he championed various social causes such as prison reform, women’s rights, animal welfare, and opposition of censorship. However, he did not highlight the burdens of the lower class in the changing face of society. He was awarded the Nobel Prize for literature in 1932.

Arnold Bennett (1867-1931) was a very famous novelist of his age. His origins were humble and modest and he was kind towards others who had humble beginnings. His most famous works are *Clayhanger* (1910) (a trilogy) and *The Old Wives Tale* (1908). He saw ordinary people as interesting subjects for his stories.

Aldous Huxley (1894-1963) was a political thinker, essayist, and novelist. His works foresee the future of man. Born in a family of scientists, Huxley’s novels taught man how to live and deal with the changes in modern society. He hailed the *Bloomsbury group* of English writers. The Bloomsbury group was a set of writers, philosophers and intellectuals who met in Bloomsbury through the twentieth century. Some of its prominent members included E.M. Forster, Virginia Woolf and Lytton Strachey. His works concentrated on the dehumanising effect of our scientific progress. His *Brave New World* (1932) anticipated the development in ‘*reproductive technologies*’ and ‘*sleep learning*’ that combined to change society. *Eyeless in Gaza*, *Ends and Means* are his other notable works.

W. Somerset Maugham (1874-1965) was a famous modern novelist, dramatist, short story writer and critic. Maugham was a very keen observer of human nature. His *The Magician* (1907) is a supernatural thriller. *Of Human Bondage* (1915) is an autobiographical novel which was initially criticised. It was eventually recognized as a masterpiece and this was aided by the positive criticism of Theodore Dreiser. Maugham loved discipline and showed in his works that what we inculcate in childhood is a part of us throughout our lives.

Evelyn Waugh (1903-1966) was a prominent novelist of the modern age. He wrote *Decline and Fall*, *Vile Bodies*, *Black Mischief* (1932), *A Handful of Dust* (1934), and *Brideshead Revisited* (1945). His novels satirised ‘*bright young*

things' of the two decades 1920s and 1930s. But his *Brideshead Revisited* is about theology. He had travelled wide and far in his life and his works reflect this beautifully.

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James Joyce (1882-1941)) was an Irish novelist and a contemporary of Mrs. Woolf. He experimented with the form of novel throughout his life. He was one of the most influential writers of the modern England. He practised the *Stream-of-Consciousness* technique most vigorously and effectively. He left an immovable imprint on the mind through his works. His major works are *Dubliners* (1914), *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* (1916), *Ulysses* (1922) and *Finnegans Wake* (1939). He is chiefly considered for his experimental narrative, literary allusions, and free dream associations. He not only explored the world of themes, but also the language, plot, form, technique, everything. He was a thorough artist who lived by the principle *Art for Art's sake*. In all senses, Joyce's only three, but perfect novels, remain as icons of modern literature.

Agatha Christie (1890-1976) was a writer of Crime fiction. She wrote many detective novels. Her works introduced the legendary characters Hercule Poirot and Miss Marple. They were the sleuths in her fiction. She explored mysterious happenings, the typical outcome of modern life, with a deft handling of plot. *Murder on the Orient Express* (1934), *Death on the Nile* (1937), *And then There Were None* (1939) are a few of her notable novels. Dorothy L. Sayers is also a great writer of this genre.

Graham Greene (1904-1991) wrote novels which explored human psyche and reflected human actions related to the psyche. He based his novels in the colonial states of Britain. As a practising Roman Catholic, his novels depicted the theme of sin and guilt. *Brighton Rock*, *The Power and the Glory*(1940), *The End of The Affair* are a few of his Catholic novels. *The Confidential Clerk*, *The Third Man*, *The Quiet American*, *Our Man in Havana* and *The Human Factor* are a few of his novels related to international politics and espionage. Crime was a major theme in Greene's works. He portrayed the modern world most minutely with its complexities. He was one of the most prolific writers of the post-modern era.

Born to Polish parents, Joseph Conrad (1857-1924) was a very prominent English novelist. For a major part of his life, he worked with the British Merchant Marine and remained at sea. His novels are set either in sea or on a sea port. His novels have the British colonial States as a background. Using the point-of-view technique, he explored the human psyche in his works. *Victory*, *Lord Jim*(1900), *The Secret Agent*, *An Outcast of the Islands*, *Heart of Darkness*(1902), and *Nostromo* are some of his notable novels.

William Golding (1911-1993) received the Nobel Prize for literature for his *Lord of the Flies* (1954). In this novel, he explored the psychology of man. He said that the obstinate, cruel and sinning nature of man is inborn. His another famous novel is *Pincher Martin*(1956). Golding came across as being a realist and innovator in his works.

1.2.1 Short Story (1830)

*Forms of Fiction and
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Short story goes back to its tradition from Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey* as a method of oral story-telling. It is as a 'prose tale' that can be read on one sitting covering the length of half an-hour to two hours and should be limited to 'a certain unique single effect' to which all the details would be subordinate.

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Definition

It is a literary form in prose. It has elements similar to novel such as plot, style, technique, theme, characters, and dialogues. Short stories can be romantic, experimental, tragic, and abstractedly philosophical. It can reflect modes of fantasy, realism, naturalism, or can be psychological as *The Duchess and the Jeweller* by Virginia Woolf. Its length is short. It has limits of 7,000 to 9,000 words.

Objectives

In a short story, the focus of interest is always on the occurrence of events or on the detection of events that have happened. Sometimes they are full of adventure or mystery to charm the popular taste. Sometimes there are stories of character which stress on psychological representation, or stress on moral qualities of the protagonist for example, in Anton Chekhov's stories where nothing else takes place than a conversation between two people or just a meeting or an encounter. An innovative writer Ernest Hemingway's classic short story *A Clean, Well-Lighted Place* captures only 'a curt conversation between two writers about an old man who each day gets drunk and stays on in the café until it closes'. It also includes their inferences of the issue. So a short story is supposed to maintain one classical unity and that is the Unity of Action. The reason that it does so is it being short in duration. It may maintain traits common to novel as well.

Difference Between Short Story and Novel

A short story differs from a novel in its dimension. Novel has been estimated by the term 'Magnitude'. This term has been invented by Aristotle in the context of drama. A novel is supposed to be more than hundred pages long. A short story is supposed to cover a maximum of twenty to thirty pages. The length is the most important feature of the short story. Short stories are supposed to be less complex, however every work of art has exceptions to it. It focuses on one incident having a simple plot, single setting, a small number of characters and has to cover a short span of time. In a short length it has to look unified. Short stories have an exposition, crisis and resolution like novels. They should often give some message — moral or philosophical. Modern short stories occasionally display an exposition or opening of events. However nothing can be certainly remarked as its form varies from writer to writer. When a short story carried a moral message, it was classified as a parable or Fable. Edgar Allen Poe, the famous American short story writer, was responsible for establishing the short story as a genre of literature. He is called the father of the modern short story. He defined short story as a 'prosetale' that can be read on one sitting covering the length of half an-hour to two hours and should be limited to 'a certain unique single effect' to which all the details would be subordinate.

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Practitioners

Short story originated as a part of a magazine or periodical in the beginning. Its early practitioners were Washington Irving(1783-1859), Nathaniel Hawthorne(1804-1864) and Edgar Allen Poe(1809-1849) in America; and Sir Walter Scott(1771-1832), Mary Shelley(1797-1851) in England; T. E. Hoffmann(1776-1822) in Germany; Balzac(1799-1850) in France; and Gogol(1809-1852), Pushkin(1799-1837), and Turgenev(1818-1883) in Russia. It was after these noted writers that the form was adopted seriously by other writers. Almost all notable novelists of all European languages have contributed greatly in the realm of short stories. This form has been practised vigorously in the United States. Frank O'Connor (1903-1966) has named short story writing as their 'the national art form'. The famous American short story writers including the above ones are — Mark Twain(1835-1910), William Faulkner(1897-1962), Katherine Anne Porter(1890-1980), Eudora Welty(1909-2001), Flannery O'Connor(1925-1964), John O'Hara(1905-1970), J.F. Powers(1917-1999), John Cheever(1912-1982), and J.D. Salinger(1919-2010).

Charles Lamb(1775-1834), Sir Walter Scott, R. L. Stevenson(1850-1894), Arnold Bennett, Thomas Hardy, H. G. Wells, Oscar Wilde(1854-1900), Virginia Woolf, James Joyce, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle(1859-1930), W. W. Jacobs(1863-1943), John Galsworthy, Joseph Conrad, D. H. Lawrence, Aldous Huxley, Walter De La Mare(1873-1956), A. E. Coppard(1878-1957), H. E. Bates(1905-1974), and Rhys Davies(1901-1978) are few notable short story writers of England.

Famous Short Stories: The short story as a form originated as anecdote. It was in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries in the English literature, that short story became popular as an individual form of literature. The best short stories in English are Geoffrey Chaucer's *The Canterbury Tales* and Boccaccio's *Decameron* written in the fourteenth century. The former belonged to England and the latter Italy. Antoine Galland's Translation of the Thousand and One Nights (or The Arabian Nights) in 1710-12, Brothers Grimm's *Fairy Tales* (1824-26), Nikolai Gogol's *Evening on a Farm Near Dikanka* (1831-32), Brown's 'Somnambulism' (1805), Irving's *Rip Van Winkle* (1819), and *The Legend of Sleepy Hollow* (1820), Poe's *Tales of the Grotesque and Arabesque* (1840) and Hawthorne's *Twice-Told Tales* (1842), Anton Chekhov's(1860-1904) 'Ward No. 6' (1892). In England, Charles Lamb was a famous essayist and short story writer. His '*Tales from Shakespeare*' is still the part of study curriculum in India. Ernest Hemingway's (1899-1961) novella *The Old Man and The Sea* is regarded as the 'longest story and the shortest novel' of the world and it claimed the Nobel Prize for literature in 1954.

Magical Realism has been a feature in the modern short stories of 1990s. Its chief practitioners are Steven Millhauser (1943-), Robert Olen Butler (1945-). Tim O'Brien's (1946-) '*The Things They Carried*' speaks of the Vietnam War. Salman Rushdie's (1947-) *Luka and The Fire of Life* (2010) is a recent

publication. Jhumpa Lahiri (1967-), Karen Russel(1981-) are recent short story writers. Stories of Birbal and Akbar (1542-1605), Amar Chitra Katha, tales about religious deities are very popular in India.

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1.2.2 Tales

A tale is a story using imagination especially one that is full of action and adventure. It is also a spoken description of an event which may not be completely true (Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary). Its basic purpose is to entertain the listener. A tale is usually in oral form.

Kinds of Tales

Cautionary Tales: There has been a tradition of warning kings, courtiers, warriors telling or them of some impending event in order to save their lives. The tale of Chand Bardai(1149-1200) to Prithvi Raj Chauhan was told to save his life from Muhammad Ghori. It is a famous tale in this category.

Fairy Tales: It is a fictional story which has folklore characters such as fairies, goblins, witches, giants, nymphs, and animals who speak and fly. In it inanimate objects are made to function like living beings. The listening audience are usually children and the tales are invented to catch their attention. Shakespeare's *The Tempest* (1610-11) is an exception. It is in the fairy tale tradition but is a drama meant for all ages. There have been fairy tales in countries across the world. In fact, each country has its tradition of fairy tales. Brothers Grimms's Fairy Tales (1824-1826) is an example of the kind.

Folk Tales: These stories are handed over from generation to generation and are historical. It is dependent on the culture and significance of its place and population. It is passed on from one generation to another orally, keeping the local tradition alive. A folk tale is a concept of a village. So it will always relate itself to that context. The Three Dancing Goats is an example.

Fables: It is a short story having a moral lesson and includes characters like animals, plants and forces of nature. These characters are made to live and given voices. In it, for example a cloud may laugh and speak. Aesop's Fables (550 B.C.) include stories such as The Crow and the Pitcher, and The Tortoise and the Hare. This is an example of fables.

Invented/Frame Tales: It is a narrative technique the introductory main story is composed generally in part to present an invented narrative. It is a story within a story. It leads the readers from the first tale into the smaller one which is in the same story. Vishnu Sharma's Panchatantra, The Book of One Thousand and One Nights, and The Mahabharata are a few examples.

Urban Legend: An Urban Legend is a modern folklore which is believed to be true by whom it is written. As in a folklore the story is passed down through generations and has reached a point where no one can ascertain its actual period of occurrence or veracity. It is preserved by the community. Sociologists have termed this a 'contemporary legend'. The Black Cat (1843) by Edgar Allen Poe is an example.

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Old Wives' Tale: A tale told by the older generation of ladies in order to transfer a wise suggestion or wisdom to the younger generation. It is similar to an Urban Legend. Books such as *Nani-Dadi ki Kahanian*, *Akbar and Birbal*, *Punchatantra* (3rd century B.C) are its examples. It recalls a tradition where the small children while going to sleep listen to a story from a family member. These tales are usually interesting.

Tall Tale: A Tall Tale is a story comprising unbelievable elements which look like true or factual. Such tales speak about the reason for some natural phenomenon or happening. Here the narrator seems to be the part of the story itself. The *Selfish Giant* by Oscar Wilde, *Gulliver's Travels* (1726) by Jonathan Swift are its example.

All novels are called tales in a popular say but all tales cannot be novels. Nevertheless, the history and culture of telling tales is perhaps older than man's conjecture of it. It may have elements of reality fictionalized and may not. It may be completely fictitious. Thus the tradition of telling tales owes its existence to being fictitious only. Their main objective is to give enjoyment to the hearer.

Check Your Progress

1. When did the English novel originate?
2. What was Agatha Christie famous for?
3. Which story is regarded as the longest story and the shortest novel of the world?
4. Name some Indian short stories which are still popular today.
5. What is the most important element of a tale?

1.3 STATUS OF FICTION WRITING IN INDIA

Most Indian writers of fiction are bilingual. They are proficient in English as well as their mother tongue. Many readers and critics feel that it is quite a challenge for such writers to express the values and nuances of one culture in the language spoken by another culture.

As a result, Indian prose writing in English is based on situations and backgrounds that are usually Indian, but in a foreign language that has been so comfortably adopted in the country.

Today, not just Indian English, but Indian writing in English has its own identity.

Anita Desai, won the Man Booker Prize for the year 2006, for her work *The Inheritance of Loss*. Her debut novel created ripples in the literary firmament. *Hullabaloo in the Guava Orchard* (1998) went on to win the Betty Trask Award, an award given by the Society of Authors for the best new novels by citizens of the Commonwealth of Nations under the age of 35. With two enviable achievements, Desai has joined the new breed of young, energetic writers who are responsible for making Indian fiction popular globally.

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Unprecedented growth of Indian English Literature began in the 1980s with Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children*. This book won the Booker Prize, and also featured in Time Magazine's list of 100 best novels of all times. His subsequent novels – *Shame* (1985), *The Satanic Verses* (1988), *The Ground Beneath her Feet* (1999) and *Shalimar the Clown* (2005) have created ripples in global literary circles. Critics, publishers and writers acknowledge the power of his writing. *Midnight's Children* provided inspiration to several Indians to not only start writing fiction in English, but also begin writing in a daring and confident manner.

Following Rushdie's success, probably the first Indian writer to get inspired was Amitav Ghosh whose *The Circle of Reason* (1986) earned worldwide acclaim. The same year Vikram Seth came up with his verse-novel *The Golden Gate*.

Githa Hariharan won the Commonwealth Best First Book award in 1993 for *The Thousand Faces of Night*. Two years later, Vikram Chandra came up with *Red Earth And Pouring Rain*.

Other writers who have become popular names for their works include:

- *The Great Indian Novel* (Shashi Tharoor)
- *God of Small Things* (Arundhati Roy)
- *A Strange and Sublime Address* and *Afternoon Raag* (Amit Chaudhuri)
- *Shards Of Memory* (Ruth Praver Jhabvala)
- *Looking Through Glass* (Mukul Kesavan)
- *The Ghosts of Vasu Master* (Githa Hariharan)
- *Byculla Boy* (and Ashok Banker)
- *A Fine Balance* (Rohinton Mistry)
- *The Calcutta Chromosome* (Amitav Ghosh's)
- *The Impressionist* (Hari Kunzru)
- *The Interpreter of Maladies* (Jhumpa Lahiri)
- *Shangrila* (Anju Mohan)
- *Last Train to Innocence* (Jayabroto Chatterjee)
- *Beethoven Among the Cows* (Rukun Advani)

In 1988–1990, Indian fiction saw a whole lot of treats in the form of Amitav Ghosh's *English August: An Indian Story*, by Upamanyu Chatterjee, Rohinton Mistry's *Such a Long Journey*, which was short-listed for the Booker followed by Vikram Sethi's *A Suitable Boy* soon after.

Arundhati Roy bagged the big booker for *The God of Small Things* and the big Booker. Jhumpa Lahiri's *Interpreter of Maladies* in 1999 caused a stir in the publishing world bagging many awards including the O. Henry Award for the short story 'Interpreter of Maladies'. She also won the New Yorker's Best Debut of the Year and the Pulitzer Prize for fiction in 2000.

Raj Kamal Jha won the 2000 Commonwealth Writers' Prize for Best First Book (Eurasia region) for his debut work *The Blue Bedspread*. His second novel

If You Are Afraid of Heights was nominated for the Hutch-Crossword Book Award in 2003.

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Actually speaking, the most interesting aspect of fiction writing in India is the emergence of new talent. Although, it is true that Indian English fiction has finally come to be recognized globally, market researches and experts are not very optimistic. The trend of getting published abroad they feel is a deliberate attempt to ensure domestic attention.

A number of recent Indian novelists have produced significant novels, making a mark in the literary world.

Many critics have admitted that Indian writing in English is seen as something novel in the West. No doubt writers like Seth, Mistry, Ghosh, Shashi Tharoor and Amit Chaudhuri get rave reviews, but the works do not always translate into huge sales. Although, publishing circles in England expect a couple of great novels from India every year, Indian writers have misconceptions about their popularity in the West. Not all of them understand that Indian writers and their works are curiosities there; and that their first audience exists here within India.

The good news, however, still remains that Indian writers are increasingly being recognized and given the fame they so rightly deserve. The national and international awards and acclaim coming the way of our Indian authors, their extraordinary works, their popularity and sales and the widespread marketing by the media go on to suggest that Indian English fiction has certainly come of age. It enjoys a definitive place in world literature. Writers such as Hanif Kureishi, Meera Syal, Manju Kapur, Bapsi Sidhwa and Shobha De and not to forget, veterans like Khushwant Singh and Anita Desai, have made their presence strongly felt in the global literary arena.

Modern Indian fiction has seen an increase of feminist writings or woman-centered approach. It aims to project and interpret experiences from the feminine perspective and sensibility. Feminism believes that women experience the world in a different way.

It is not as if feminism suddenly arrived on the Indian literary scene recently. It has taken its time to grow gradually with some of its features being anticipated by writers of the past including Bankimchandra Chatterji and Rabindranath Tagore in Bengali and Jainendra Kumar in Hindi.

Saratchandra Chatterji, who is known for creating the best and often remembered portraits of women in Indian literature, was a feminist of sorts. Naturally, some of his heroines, such as Kamal and Kiranmoyee were also feminists.

In Urdu, author Ismat Chughtai had created quite a stir with her outspoken themes. In the 1930s, Rashid Jahan's works *Angare* (Embers) and *Aurat* (The Woman) focused on women's problems alone, especially those belonging to the Muslim community. She was one of the rare writers who dared to go the unconventional way. Marathi literature too had its pearls including Vasumati Dharker, who published several stories between 1930 and 1950. Her heroines and protagonists were strong, daring and full of thought ahead of their times.

Clearly, premonitions of feminism became visible in Indian fiction in the 1920s and 1930s. In the post-Independence period, especially from 1960 onwards, Indian novelists began not just questioning but even rejecting conventional portrayal and interpretation of women's role and status in society. Ideals of womanhood underwent transformation.

Oppressed and exploited women suffocating in a patriarchal society were common figures in novels by Premchand and Saratchandra Chatterji.

While, in the past many prose writings glorified women's suffering, Indian writers in the last couple of decades have opted to present a more real picture. Some of the famous Indian writers are discussed as follows:

Rabindranath Tagore (1861–1941)

Rabindranath Tagore was the father of English language in India. He was a great poet and a prose writer. He was born in Calcutta in 1861 and had his initial education in Oriental Seminary School. He promoted and propagated the naturalism form of education. According to him, nature is the best teacher and so he founded Shantineketan, which was far from the madding crowd of Kolkatta. There he emphasized on Rabindro *sangeet*. He strongly believed that one could get peace, solace and tranquillity of mind through music.



Fig. 1.1 Rabindranath Tagore

Rabindranath Tagore used English in countless letters. He delivered innumerable lectures, gave numerous talks, speeches and addresses and composed many poem and essays in English.

If Tagore himself is to be believed on most occasions his English writings are not good at all. Skimming through the excellent Selected Letters of Tagore edited by Krishna Dutta and Andrew Robinson, one is bound to find Tagore degrading his own prose or acknowledging apologetically his poor command over the language, or apologizing for writing in the language at all. Initially, he would even request people who he knew were excellent in the language to help him edit his work. For example, he wrote to Ezra Pound:

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I am not at all strong in English grammar—please do not hesitate to make corrections where necessary. In my use of words there must be lack of proportion and appropriateness'. In another letter to Pound he wrote that he was afraid that in his English version of *Gitanjali* poems would be bereft of their language and suggestiveness. The success of the English version of his *Gitanjali* poems and the demand for him in the American Lecture Circuit was even before he received Nobel Prize. Not only *Gitanjali* but many others of his writings attained almost wholly because of Tagore's artistic skills. In addition to the strength of his ideas and the intensity of his feelings, the main reason why his prose works found an appreciative audience for a long time in the West can often be attributed to his skillful use of the English language in his letters, lectures, essays and speeches and his ability to adjust his style in accordance with the occasion.

Sadhana: The Realization of Life is the first book of prose that Tagore published. It came out from London in October 1913, and it had eight essays that he read out at the Harvard University. In the book he compared the walled civilization of Greece with the forest habitation that Aryans built when they came to India. The city walls that the Greeks built, he stresses euphoniously, 'left their mark in the minds of men'. By developing these contrasting image patterns, he says that while westerners did not 'realize their kinship with the world' and lived in a 'prison house whose walls are alien' to them, in India 'men are enjoined to be fully aware to the fact that they are in the relation to things around them, body and soul, and that they are to hail the morning sun, the flowing water and the fruitful Earth.

The rest of *Sadhana* continued to display Tagore's adroitness in wearing images and sounds and manoeuvring syntax while utilizing stylistic devices such as repetition, balance and parallel structures. His overall performance in these essays suggested that far from being a novice writer of the English prose he had everywhere in them an admirable control over the language as well as a poet's liking for rhythm and figures of speech.

S. Radhakrishnan (1888–1975)

S. Radhakrishnan was born on 5th September 1888, at Tiruttani in Chennai. His early years were spent at Tiruttani in Tirupati. He graduated with Master's degree in Arts from the Chennai University. He wrote a thesis on the ethics of Vedanta titled *The Ethics of the Vedanta System had no Rooms for Ethics*.



Fig. 1.2 S. Radhakrishnan

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In April 1909, he was appointed as a lecturer in the Department of Philosophy at the Chennai Presidency College. From then onwards, he was engaged in the serious study of Indian Philosophy and religion. From 1936–1939 he was professor of Eastern Religion and Ethics at the Oxford University. From 1939–1948 he was appointed as the vice chancellor of the Banaras Hindu University. He was the ambassador of India to the USSR from 1949–1952. From 1952–1962 he held the office of the Vice President of India and after that he became the second president of the independent India. Aldous Meexley, observed that Dr Radhakrishnan is the master of words and no words. George P Longer said ‘.....Never in the history of philosophy has there been quite such world figure. With his unique appointment at Banaras and Oxford, like a wearer’s shuttle, he has gone to and fro between East and west, carrying a thread of understanding and wearing it into fabrics of civilization.

Dr Radhakrishnan has written several books. It is noteworthy to say he has published at least one book every year.

Some of his books are as follows:

- The Ethics of Vedanta and its Metaphysical Presupposition
- Essentials of Psychology (1912)
- Philosophy of Rabindranath Tagore (1918)
- The Reign of Religion in Contemporary Philosophy (1920)
- Indian Philosophy Volume I (1923)
- The Hindu View of Life (1927)
- The Bhagavad-Gita (1948)
- Great India (1949)
- The Dharmapada (1950)
- True Knowledge (1978)
- Towards the New World (1980)

Dr Radhakrishnan enriched the English writing in India although he started writing in English when it was in infant state in India. He tried to establish the philosophical fervour and the richness of English in India. This attributed a unique re-evaluation of our country in world. His translation of the Bhagavad-Gita in English is a master price. No one in any other language has surpassed his translation and commentary on the Gita. He is considered as a forerunner of prose writing in English in India and abroad.

Jawaharlal Nehru (1884–1964)

Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru, the first prime minister of India was born on 14th November. His father’s name was Motilal Nehru, and his mother was Kamala Nehru. Nehru deserves to be seen, independently of the political man, as one of the Indian prose writer of 20th century. Nehru was a man of letters in a more abiding sense.

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Fig. 1.3 Jawaharlal Nehru

Nehru's style shows a vigour and clarity as pleasing and compelling to the ear as to the mind. 'Indeed, Nehru was among a handful of Indian writers, among which Gandhi and Tagore were also prominent, who found a way to domesticate what for most other Indians born in 19th century was an often puzzling colonial tongue. A language the rules and moves of which could of course be learnt, as did many young people wanting to make a career under the Raja, but could never be used with the same vigour or pliability. English may have been the language of the enemy, yet both Nehru and Gandhi wished to accommodate it alongside other Indian languages, recognizing it as a vital link not just to the wider world but also between Indians themselves. Nehru wrote up on every possible subject on which opinions were divided, from cow slaughter to public health. *The Discovery of India* is a classic example of Nehru's elevating style—a sentence multi-claused, expansive yet syntactically balanced and clear in sense and proceeding steadily.

Nehru had a naturally metaphoric cast of mind. He is often seen comparing history to a great river. In a speech to the constituent assembly in 1947, he imagines himself, 'standing on the sword's edge of the present between the mighty past and the mightier future.'

The most stirring sentences of 20th century Indian writing in English were composed by Nehru. These are the opening lines of his speech to the constituent assembly on the hour of India's independence. It was a situation made for a man of his talents and liking. 'Long years ago, we made a tryst with destiny and now the time comes, when we shall redeem our pledge, not wholly in full measure, but were substantially. At the stroke of the midnight hour, 'when the world sleep India will awake to life and freedom,' he begins, before moving onto a majestic seven part sentence. 'A moment comes, which comes but rarely in history, when we step out from old to the new, when an age ends, and when the soul of a nation long suppressed finds utterances.'

Nehru never wrote a better or more deeply felt line—it was what he had been waiting to say almost all his life.

Toru Dutt (1856–1877)

Toru Dutt was the first Indian woman poet who wrote in English. Her prose is also marvellously alive. The letters written by her are affectionate, observant, satirical and touching. Her prose is completely modern. Toru Dutt's literary influences were many. The Dutt's were Christians. They were baptized in Kolkatta in 1862. They were known to missionaries from her great-grandfather's time, and had deep rooted connections with English literature as the Dutt family Album, a compilation of works by family members, reveals.



Fig. 1.4 Toru Dutt

The works of Toru Dutt included *A Sheaf Gleaned in French Fields: Ballads and Legends of Hindustan* with an introduction by Edmund Grosse (1882), a novel in French entitled *Le journal de mademoiselle D' Arvers* (1879), published in Paris and *Bianca or The Young Spanish Maiden*—an unfinished novel in English, published posthumous in the Bengal Magazine in 1878. Her letters written to an old friend in Cambridge, Mary Martin, is the main collection of her prose. In these letters she comes across as lively, warm, caring person who felt as deeply about life and living as she did about the work in which she was constantly involved. After the death of her brother and sister from consumption, Toru's perspective in her poetry changed, as she struggled to rise above the physical. She said 'I knew in such a world as this, no one can gain his heart's desire, or pass the years in perfect bliss; like gold, we must be tried by fire'.

Toru died at the age of twenty one, leaving behind only a suggestion of what she could have accomplished had she lived longer to further develop her skills. In her *Life and Letters of Toru Dutt*, Harihar Das quotes the French writer and critic James Darmesteter who said of her: 'This daughter of Bengal, so admirably and so strangely gifted Hindu key race and tradition, an English women by education, a French women at heart, poet and prose writer in English and French, made India acquaint with the poets of France and English at the age of eighteen. She blended in herself three souls and three traditions, and died at the tender age of twenty-one, in the full bloom of her talent and on the eve of awakening of her genius.'

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Pandita Ramabai (1858–1922)

Pandita Ramabai is considered as the greatest woman produced by Modern India, and one of the greatest Indians in all history. Her achievements as a champion of women's rights and as a pioneer in the field of women's education and social reform remain unrivalled even after lapse of nearly a century since she first appeared on the scene.



Fig. 1.5 Pandita Ramabai

Ramabai's '*Famine Experience*' published in 1897 is noteworthy not just for the autobiographical details it provides, but also for her scathing criticism of the way British officials dealt with the famine. It is poignant in parts, when she describes her father's decision to drown himself to escape starvation and how she and her brother buried themselves up to their necks in sand to escape the winter in Punjab.

Ramabai's life was an arduous one. Her father was prosecuted for trying to educate his wife Laxmibai. To escape their prosecution, the family set out for a long pilgrimage during which Laxmibai taught Ramabai Sanskrit. At twenty she was honoured by Shastris of Calcutta. In 1880, just eighteen months after marriage, her husband died of cholera, leaving Ramabai with her infant daughter Manorma.

Ramabai travelled to England in 1883 to study medicine. After many years in England she went to the US where she was praised for her work. She lived there from 1886 to 1888 and in 1887, published *The High Caste Hindu Women*.

She was reputed to be the first woman to have read the Vedas in modern times. She wrote in both, English as well as Marathi. Her writings in English included *The Cry of Indian Women* (1883), *An Autobiography Account* (1883) and *India Religion* (1886). All were published in England. Her some other books are as follows:

- *Famine Experiences* (1897)
- *A Short History of Kripa Sadan* (1903)
- *A Testimony of our Inexhaustible Treasure* (1907)

Vijayalakshmi Pandit (1900–1990)

Born on 18th August 1900, Vijayalakshmi Pandit was the daughter of nationalist leader Motilal Nehru, and sister of Jawaharlal Nehru, the first prime minister of the independent India. She was the leader of the Indian delegation to the United Nations in 1946–1951.



Fig. 1.6 Vijayalakshmi Pandit

In 1921, after receiving education in India and abroad, she married Ranjit Singh Pandit, a fellow congress worker who died in 1944. In keeping with her family tradition, she became an active worker in the nationalist movement for which she was imprisoned thrice by the British.

From Ministry to Prison is a famous book written by her. In this, she has given a vivid, day-by-day account of her time in prison. The small notes written by her take into account everything from the politics and corruption that she encountered while she was there, to the quality of prison food, lack of humanity and the daily tragedies that befell poor young Indian women who were arrested.

She played an important role in the All India Women's Conference, having been its president from 1940 to 1942. In 1972, she published another book named *The Scope of Happiness: A Personal Memoir*. She spent the last years of her life at Dehradun.

Sarojini Naidu (1879–1949)

Sarojini Naidu was a poetess, political activist, feminist and ardent nationalist. Often known as Nightingale of India; Sarojini Naidu lived up to all these roles with equal elegance. She was born in Hyderabad in an environment shaped to a large extent by her father Aghornath Chattopadhyay—a brilliant scientist, linguist and a respected scholar.

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Fig. 1.7 Sarojini Naidu

Sarojini Naidu contributed greatly to the women's movement, lecturing all over India, along with Annie Besant on the welfare of youth, dignity of labour, women's emancipation and nationalism. In 1924, Sarojini travelled to Eastern Africa and South Africa in the interest of Indians there and became the first woman president of the National Congress the following year. Her anti-British activities earned her a number of prison sentences. She also accompanied Gandhiji to London for the second session of the Round Table Conference of Indian–British cooperation in 1931.

A deep love for her country and affection for Nehru and Gandhi are obvious in her writing. Also evident is a love for nature as this excerpt from a letter written to Nehru in 1925 shows: bravely I have dressed my post for a few weeks because my soul needed and cried out for an atmosphere of beauty, burgeoning trees, nesting birds, lyric poets, the children and dogs and old friends and a little leisure from the constructive programme and the self-destructive programme of our so-called politics.

There are bunch of other letters that suggest that Hindu–Muslim unity and a secular India were the main mission of her life. 1917 to 1919 is considered to be the most dynamic phase of her career as a public figure. She rallied public opinions on the Khilafat issue, Rowlatt Act and Black-bills Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms, Sabarmati Pact and the Satyagraha pledge. She went on to become Gandhi's most faithful lieutenant when he launched Civil Disobedience Movement in 1919.

With independence Sarojini Naidu became the first woman Governor of the United Provinces. She published four collections of poems, all in English—*The Golden Threshold* (1905), *The Bird of Time* (1912) and *The Broken Wing* (1917). She still remains a compelling figure who, apart from her contribution to the Indian poetry in English, can be looked upon as an integral part of a group responsible for shaping a new independent India.

Kamaladevi Chattopadhyay (1903–1988)

Kamaladevi Chattopadhyay was born in a wealthy Saraswat family of South Karnataka. She was educated at a Catholic Convent and St. Mary's College in

Mangalore. She married young—became a child widow while still in school—before breaking with orthodoxy to marry the poet Harindranath Chattopadhyay, the brother of Sarojini Naidu.

*Forms of Fiction and
Aspects of Novel*



Fig. 1.8 Kamaladevi Chattopadhyay

She was an ardent nationalist and among the foremost leaders of the women's movement in India, actively participating in the freedom struggle and the emergence of the nationalist women's movement of the 1920s. During this period she served three prison terms and later went on to court arrest a number of times.

As a leading socialist Kamaladevi set up labour organizations and extended her fullest cooperation to the formation of the All India Women's Conference in 1926 where she served as Secretary and later as President. Her research and concern for women is obvious when one reads *The Awakening of Indian Women*, where she takes the reader through a range of facts, statistics and hard-hitting truths about the condition of women. 'It is class that determines the fate of women, not sex', she says, adding 'while men seek new pastures to enliven their idle hours and take to intellectual pursuits, they deny entrance therein to women. Women are thus reduced to the status of a reproductive machine, and while man's sphere keeps expanding, hers keeps contracting.'

While discussing man–woman relationship, Kamaladevi notes, not without sarcasm that 'The greater her submission to man and more the suffering at his hands the surer and quicker is her road to heaven.' She also attacks what she calls the 'double standards of morality' that create severe codes for women as the preservers of social morals.

Kamaladevi was interested in empowering villagers by revive traditional handicraft industries. She interacted with them, helped redesign traditional handicrafts to make them marketable and was actively involved in developing the cottage industries emporium as an outlet for crafts. Many claim that the acceptance the ethnic traditional weaving enjoys today is largely due to the work of people like her.

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Mulk Raj Anand (1905–2004)

Mulk Raj Anand, a stalwart in the field of Indo-Anglican fiction was born on December 12, 1905, in Peshawar (now in Pakistan) in a Kshatriya family. Anand's mother, Ishwar Kaur, belonged to an agricultural family. He had inherited the typical qualities of both his parents. Moreover, the class of society to which he belonged is responsible for endowing him with a great sense of compassion for the poor, exploited and the down-trodden people. Anand's early life was lived in the midst of poverty and misfortune. The suffering that he saw and underwent in his childhood left a deep impression on him and later on reflected in his creative writing. An early acquaintance with suffering prepared him to face the gross realities of life, which later on became the inspiration for his creative writing. You can compare Mulk Raj Anand with Charles Dickens in regards to a miserable childhood. Dickens, Premchand and Mulk Raj Anand; all were brought up in the dark shadow of poverty and destitution.



Fig. 1.9 Mulk Raj Anand

In the history of Indian fiction, the most prominent writer that contributed very significantly to Indo-Anglican literature is Mulk Raj Anand. He was indeed the true representative of the 20th century Indian literary scenario. His literary works reveal that he was not merely a great intuitive observer but penetrating commentator on life as well. The 20th century opened with gigantic upheavals in India. Freedom movement of unparalleled magnitude forged a new moral order in the national and international spheres. Anand, the internationally known novelist and short story writer is considered by many critics to be one of the best Indian writers in English. Anand has established the basic form and themes of the Indian literature that is written in English. He is one of the most renowned writers in this field. He has written sixteen novels, novelette and nine collections of short stories to his credit, which rank him the most prolific writer of Indian–English prose. In the form of book it is around 100 volumes of highly creative, as well as profoundly scholastic works. Mulk Raj Anand was a path breaker. He, in compare with Raja Rao and R.K. Narayan, inaugurated the age of what is labelled the Indian English or the Indo-Anglican novel.

Whatever the genres—prose, verse, biography criticism—Anand’s works bear the stamp of excellence and hall-mark of culture.

*Forms of Fiction and
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R.K. Narayan (1906–2001)

R.K. Narayan was born in a middle class family of Chennai, on 10 October, 1906. He is one of the most significant writers of Indian English literature, known for his simple style and humour. Narayan has contributed to the growth of Indian English literature in a big way. He began writing when Indian English writing was still in its infant stage. Narayan won a magic with his most endearing character—Swami and locating him in his fictional town of Malgudi. The characters are extremely endearing because of their unpretentious simplicity and graceful charm. Almost all his works are infused with a sense of humour which arises from happenings in the ordinary lives of the residents of Malgudi. One factor which accounts for the immense popularity of Narayan is that he weaves magic through his characters which are brimming with life.

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Fig. 1.10 R.K. Narayan

Narayan’s prose style is full of pathos and humour. Besides mastery in representing the beauties of provincial life, Narayan’s works have a pervading sense of irony. His work reveals the influence of various eminent writers. The endings of his short stories show a strong influence of O’Henry.

Narayan has been criticized for many reasons but mostly for his simplicity of narration. Critics opine that his works lack depth and therefore, his narration appears colourless. He is best known for the following works:

- *Swami and Friends*
- *The Bachelor of Arts*
- *The English Teacher*
- *The Financial Expert*

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He was awarded the Sahitya Akademi Award for his novel *The Guide*. A Hindi movie by the same name has also been made based on the theme of this book. R.K. Narayan was also awarded the Padma Vibhushan, the second highest civilian award in India.

Khushwant Singh (1915–2014)

Khushwant Singh, the great novelist and columnist was born on 2 February 1915 at Hadali (now in Pakistan). He was educated at Government College, Lahore, and went to King College, Cambridge University and the Inner Temple in London for further studies. He practised law at Lahore High Court for several years before joining the Indian Ministry of External Affairs in 1947. Then he took up journalism and served as a journalist with the All India Radio in 1952. He has been the founder editor of *Yojana* and *Illustrated Weekly of India* (1979–1980). His Saturday column ‘With Malice Towards One and All’ in *Hindustan Times* is by far one of the most popular columns today.

He is known for his outstanding ability to observe and comment on society. He was conferred with the Honest Man of the Year Award in 2000 for his courage and honesty in his brilliant incisive writing. During the prize giving ceremony, the chief minister of Andhra Pradesh referred to him as a homogenous writer and an incorrigible believer in human goodness with a devil-may-care attitude and a courageous mind.

Among the several books published, one of the significant ones is the classic of two volumes in which he describes the history of the Sikhs. His other works include:

Delhi, Train to Pakistan and *The Company of Women*. He has also done a number of translations and written non-fiction books on Delhi, nature and current affairs. The Library of Congress has ninety-nine works on and by Khushwant Singh.

He became the member of the Rajya Sabha (Upper House) from 1980–86. He was conferred with the Padma Bhushan in 1974 by the President of India.

Amitav Ghosh

Amitav Ghosh was born on 11th July 1956 in Kolkatta. He is best known for his work in the English language. Amitav Ghosh was educated at Doon School, and then at St. Stephens College, Delhi University. Later he went to St. Edmund Hall, Oxford where he was awarded a D. Phil. in social anthropology. His first job was at the Indian Express newspaper in New Delhi. He has been the visiting professor to the English Department of Harvard University since 2005.



Fig. 1.11 Amitav Ghosh

His major works are as follows:

- *The Circle of Reason* (1986)
- *The Shadow Lines* (1983)
- *The Calcutta Chromosomes* (1995)
- *The Glass Palace* (2000)
- *The Hungry Tide* (2004)
- *River of Smoke* (2011)

His work provides a transnational understanding of the self. This is seen as the intersection of the many identities produced by the collision of language and cultures; displacement and exile. Lives torn between India, Burma, England and elsewhere; families torn by the violence, psychological rule and post-colonial dispossession.

His fiction is distinguished by its precise, beautifully rendered depictions of characters and setting. It also stands out because of its sweeping sense of history unfolding over generations against the backdrop of the violent dislocation of people and regimes during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

The impact of western science and technology on the non-western world and the consequent entanglement of political and environment upheaval often lies at the centre of Ghosh's work.

Amitav Ghosh's work offers a panoramic treatment of twentieth century history from a post-colonial perspective.

He was awarded the Padma Shree in 2007, and elected as fellow as the Royal Society of Literature.

Salman Rushdie

Ahmed Salman Rushdie was born into a middle class Muslim family on June 19, 1947 in Mumbai, Maharashtra. His father was a businessman educated in Cambridge while his grandfather was an Urdu poet.

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Fig. 1.12 Salman Rushdie

Rushdie published his first novel *Grimus*, a science fiction story inspired by the 12th century Sufi poem, the *Conference of the Birds*. However, Rushdie's literary fortune changed in 1981. His second novel *Midnight's Children* brought him international fame and acclaim. The story is a comic allegory of Indian history, and involves 1,001 children after India's declaration of Independence, each of whom possesses a magical power. It won the Booker prize for fiction, an Arts Council Writer's Award and in 1993 and 2008 was named the 'Booker of Bookers', acknowledging it as the best recipient of the Booker Prize for fiction in the award's history. His third novel *Shame* (1983) was commonly regarded as a political allegory of Pakistani politics.

He published a book of children's stories in 1990 titled *Haroun and the Sea of Stories*, which won the Writers Guild Award (for Best Children's Book) followed by a collection of short stories, *East West* (1994). Then came another novel *The Moor's Last Sigh* (1995), *The Ground Beneath Her Feet* (1999) was Rushdie's sixth novel. His latest work is the novel *Shalimar the Clown*, published in 2005 and a finalist for the Whitbread Book Awards.

Salman Rushdie is in fact one of the leading Anglo-Indian novelists of the twentieth century, taking inspiration from a variety of genres in his writing. His style is often likened to magic realism fantasy and mythology into reality. The way in which he treats religion has also provoked criticism. Ayatolla of Iran had issued a death threat in response to *The Satanic Verses*, his fourth novel.

Most of Rushdie's works have been admired for their fusion of myth, history, politics and fantasy. While some critics find his most recent novels pretentious and unfocussed, there are others who appreciate the themes.

Raja Rao (1908–2006)

Raja Rao was born on Nov 8, 1908 in Hassan, in Mysore in South India. Rao published his first stories in French and English. During 1931–32 he contributed four articles written in Kannada to *Jaya Karnataka*, an influential journal.

Rao's involvement in the nationalist movement is reflected in his first two books. The novel *Kanthapura* (1938) was an impact of Gandhi's teaching on non-violent resistance against the British. The story revolves around a small Mysore village in South India. Rao borrows the style and structure from Indian vernacular tales and folk epic. The work is highly praised by the English writer E.M. Forster, whose *A Passage to India* (1924) criticized British imperialism. However, Rao's India is not a certain geographical or historical entity, but more of a philosophical concept and a symbol of spiritual calling. Rao returned to the tenet of Gandhism in the short story collection, *The Cow of the Barricades* (1947). In 1998, he published Gandhi's biography *Great Indian Way: A Life of Mahatma Gandhi*.

The Serpent and the Rope was written after a long silence during which Rao lived in India and renewed his connection with his roots.

Cat and Shakespeare (1965) was a metaphysical comedy that answered philosophical questions posed in the earlier novels. In the book, the Hindu notion of Karma is symbolized by a cat. The hero discovers in his attempts to receive divine grace, that there is no dichotomy between himself and God.

Raja Rao has received due acclaim for his innovative contribution to Indian English Writing. He is clearly one of the founding authors of modern literature.

Ela Sen

Ela Sen was born in Bengal in 1899. She was one of the promoters of the 'Stri Sammelani' and was associated with the management committee of the Blind School. She was also a member of the Provincial Child Welfare Committee and the Lady Stevenson Hall Management Committee.

Ela Sen has published biographies of Mahatma Gandhi and Indira Gandhi. As a freelance journalist, she contributed to all leading Indian national dailies between 1938 and 1945. From 1946–54 she was special columnist for the Hindustan Times contributing to Indian, British and other overseas broadsheets. She has also translated Tarasambar Banerjee's *The Eternal Lotus* (1945) and Premendra Mitra's *Kaleidoscope: A Novel* (1945).

Ela Sen has written two other collections of short stories. *A child is Born and Other Stories* (1943) and *Midnight on the Lakes and Other Stories* (1943). *Testament of India* (1939) is a collection of essays on major figures such as Subhash Chandra Bose, Jinnah and also on subjects like younger socialists and terrorism.

Her masterpiece, *Darkening Days*, was a narrative of famine-stricken Bengal in which she describes the suffering during the great famine that swept through Bengal. Her strong feelings about corruption, hoarders, rationing and price control come to the forefront in this work.

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A short story, *The Queue* from *Darkening Days*, focusses on a long queue for food formed by victims of the famine, and presents the perspective of different people as the line keeps moving forward gradually. While the queue keeps moving without stopping for anyone, irrespective of their condition, one woman loses her baby, another sells herself for food, and yet another gives birth. Based on situations in real life, the stories are all powerful.

The essay *A Woman of Spain* is as popular and powerful as her stories. This essay is about Dolores Ibarruri also known as La Pasionaria, and documents her fight against fascism. She is courage and heroism personified and described as the unconquerable spirit of Spain.

Vikram Seth

Vikram Seth was born on June 20, 1952 in Kolkata, India. Although born in India, Vikram Seth spent some of his early years in London. His father Prem Seth was an executive in Bata Limited and his mother Leila was the first woman Judge of Delhi High Court.

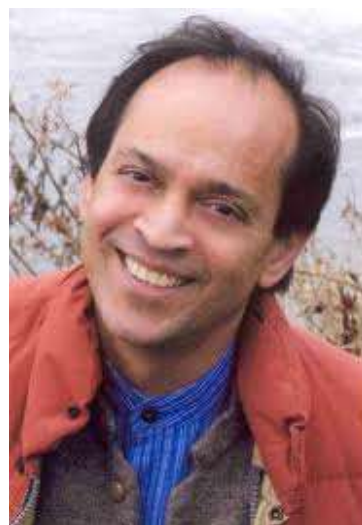


Fig. 1.13 Vikram Seth

Vikram Seth's first prose novel *A Suitable Boy* (1993) has been considered by critics and reviewers as a return to traditional ways of writing, particularly after the 1980s, a decade of experimentation in the novel. The book was heralded as the return to more traditional ways of writing. At a time when the novel written in English was considered to be in a state of expansion, explaining new possibilities the novel by Seth was seen as solid ground to stand on in the confusion. The novel begins with the search for an adequate husband for Lata the youngest girl of the Mehra family.

Seth is a writer who avoids being classified in one movement as he avoids being attached to just one culture. Prior to *A Suitable Boy*, he had published some volumes of poetry and a celebrated novel in verse, *The Golden Gate* in 1986.

Check Your Progress

6. What do you mean by feminist writings?
7. When was S. Radhakrishnan appointed as a lecturer in the Department of Philosophy Madras Presidency College?
8. Who accompanied Gandhi to London for the second session of the Round Table Conference of Indian—British cooperation?
9. Who was honoured with the Honest Man of the Year Award in 2000?

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1.4 NOVEL AND ITS TYPES

The term 'novella' has been derived from an Italian word which was used for a short story to differentiate it from a novel. The word 'novel' has been in vogue in English ever since the beginning of eighteenth century, for something which happens be someplace in middle. In Ian Watt's *The Rise of the Novel*, written in 1957, that the novel came into existence for the first time in some part of early eighteenth century.

Types of Novels

Novels, which are widely read and enjoyed by millions of readers across the globe, take the reader into a world spun by the author. This fictitious world is very different from the practical world that the reader lives in. Hence, he gets completely engrossed and is transposed to the make belief world created by the author. Some novels however, are inspired by real people's lives so the reader is easily able to relate to them. Authors write about numerous topics so a novel may belong to any one of these genres, for example, historical, picaresque, sentimental, gothic, psychological, epistolary, pastoral, apprenticeship, roman a clef, antinovel, detective, mystery, thriller, dramatic, science fiction, cult or coteries, western, best seller, fantasy and prophecy, proletarian.

In the following section, we will discuss about the types of novels.

Epistolary Novel

The epistolary novel is that genre of novel in which the novelist expresses the story with the help of documents. The most customary way to understand is that an epistolary novel is carved out of series of letters. There are some authors who however enlarge the scope of their resource foundation by using things like newspaper cuttings, diary entries, magazine articles, etc., as resource material. The epistolary novel has been in existence in numerous shapes and comprehensions. The Roman poet, Ovid was the first one to have ever used letters (also known as epistles) in his works. The form however took its true customary shape somewhere in the 1600s and touched the pinnacle of fame in the 18th century.

Some experts of this variety of novels are of the opinion that the epistolary genre is 'particularly suited for the female voice' (Goldsmith vii), a notion learnt by the historical perspective of its rise. Initially, males used to imitate 'female voice'

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and thus, came up with epistolary text. In the 18th century, the epistolary variety of novels was 'the favored mode of moral instruction for women' (Gilroy and Verhoeven 2). As women started being educated, they learnt how to read and write. In order to master this newly found talent of theirs, they started to practice writing by writing. 'Newly educated women could easily learn to write letters, and, as epistolary theory became more adapted to worldly culture, women's letters began to be considered the best models of the genre' (Goldsmith viii).

During the time of rise popularity of epistolary novels in markets started in the 18th century, more and more male authors, including Rousseau and Richardson, started to acquire mastery over the method of copying female text seen in previous publications (Goldsmith vii-viii). 'Female letters traditionally focused on domestic life or on love; they spoke in the private voice appropriate to women whose roles were increasingly circumscribed within the constraints of bourgeois ideology' (Gilroy and Verhoeven 2). That is the reason why maximum epistolary narratives are centered on these subjects. The reason behind such a happening could be that the male authors who produced original epistolary novels built their reproductions on the basis of letters written by real women. Epistolary writing has a tradition of having non-fictional features in epistolary novels; examples of such inclusions have been seen far more in epistolary novels than any other genre of fiction.

With respect the genre Linda Kauffman opines that epistolary novelists usually blur 'the lines between fiction and reality by including morsels of information that seem to be about [their] 'real [lives]'' (205). They are known to use events from their actual existence in their plots. The epistolary method involves a kind of breaking of the narrative. The person reading the novel is aware of more than the writer or the reader of the letter, because 'the reader of the epistolary novel is aware that within its boundaries there is another reader' (Campbell 336). The person reading the novel, nevertheless, is not able to know more than what the characters divulge. Thus, it is important for the reader to visualize and comprehend both, the writer as well as the reader. Just as the writer ceases writing the letters the novel also comes to an end.

Thus, epistolary novels 'refuse the kind of closure informing other narratives' (Campbell 333). An epistolary novel always leaves unanswered questions. Letters can be compared with comics in many ways; like in comics the epistolary novels also require their readers to take part in some actions. The writers of the letters, however, do not define these actions in as much a detail as is witnessed by a reader of narrative fiction. McCloud is of the opinion that, 'every act committed to paper by the comic's artist is aided and abetted by a silent accomplice. An equal partner in crime known as the reader' (68). He makes use of an illustration in which one structure in a comic consists of an attacker and an assumed victim, and the very next frame or structure consists of constructions and a shriek. The reader is accused by McCloud of being guilty of committing the murder, in her thoughts. Likewise, in epistolary novels the writer of the epistle may possibly deliberate upon the consequence of a happening or a doing and it is left to the novel's reader to visualize it, to 'commit the crime'.

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In the modern era, due to the comprehensive usage of Internet, broadcastings, television and other means of mass media, the customary epistolary novel has practically vanished just like the traditional habit of writing letters. In order to still persist, in some form or the other, the epistolary novel in the modern era tryout different ways with the customary method, and writers make use of blogs, emails, instant messaging (IM), memos, and other electronic forms of communication to tell narrate stories. Present-day epistolary works also consist of travel tickets by various means such as train or plane, duplicate symbols or bills of fare, and contain illustrations or pictures. Similar to the published novel which comprised traditions of the manuscript, and the manuscript echoed spoken traditions which had been in prevalence earlier than that, new expertise though unable to continue it in the same way, but it certainly carries it on in a diverse way.

Ester Milne opines that, 'the epistolary body of email is a figure for thinking through the relations between new and old media'. The new kinds of letters 'borrow iconography, codes of composition and modes of social practice from its predecessor' (Milne 85). Layouts of email reveal earlier methods of communication: the similarity between the present day email and the erstwhile letter lies in the addressed 'to' and the addressee 'from', which is similar in both. The terms 'CC' and 'BCC' used in an email have been derived from the memo form of office communication which was in vogue before advent of the Internet. Other signs of earlier epistles can be seen in the form of paper clips representing 'Attach file'. The paper clip was actually used to attach documents with each other before dispatching them for correspondence. This similarity between the old practice of letter writing and the newer one of sending emails has been best stated by Keskinen, she says, 'the technology of writing implements – whether quill or ball-point pens, typewriters, or computers - undoubtedly have some influence on the particulars of the epistolary genre but do not necessarily change its overall form' (386).

The genre of epistolary novels is considered to be the female genre as these novels are supposed to be for women and also written in the female style of writing. Many literary specialists, though, are of the opinion that this genre of novels is better termed as 'a history of restrictions or failed interactions' (Goldsmith xii). Several scholars see this female genre as a specimen of suppression by men. Even after women got some sort of freedom and began to taste success in domains considered worthy only for men, the traditional past of women of being invisible and helpless still remain stuck to them for a very long time. Epistolary novels finally came a first form expression of women's voice but the irony of it was that it was only as established by men. Men were the ones to put into place rules at a very early stage. The custom of men impersonating women's writing inhibited the freedom of women to be able to utilize the genre by invoking models and determining the 'feminine' characteristics of writing.

According to men in the 1600s, as women began letter writing, women possessed 'superior emotional expressiveness' (Jensen 29). This sole higher characteristic was not sufficient to be circulated or acknowledged by people as a form of art.

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Actually, women's writing was used by male authors as a beginning mark. Menfolk were of the belief that the style of writing gave away the gender of the author. 'The feminine is subjective, disordered, associative, illogical; the masculine is objective, orderly, controlled, logical' (Kauffman 228). By musing over the writings by women and by copying them, male writers 'improve[d]' the 'imperfect' feminine epistolary model (Jensen 30). Men found women's writings devoid of style, so they took upon themselves to make a correction in this regard and while doing so the male writers had no regard for the women writers.

With the increase in popularity of this genre and the increase in number of women beginning to reading, writings by women started to be published by men. Some females however, got their work published secretly, but most of these epistles written by women formed a part of novels authored by men and they were even accredited to those male novelists. Most epistolary novels are stories of love, highlighting distance, concealment, and confidentiality.

1.4.1 Detective Novels

The detective genre of fiction revolves around a crime committed by an unknown person or group of people, which is ultimately solved by the efforts of a detective. These novels are full of clues which keep cropping up throughout the book and readers are challenged to find out the criminal with help of the clues given. Revelation of the actual criminal is made just before the novel is about to finish, so that there is excitement throughout. Introduction of the crime committed is generally done in the beginning of the novel. It generally appears to be a perfectly committed crime with whatsoever no traces anywhere. The detective starts to collect hints and evidences and sometimes he or she seems to be going in the wrong direction it even feels like that she might not be able to solve the crime. Sometimes, in order to build up the suspense and to make the novel more interesting, the author plots to get the wrong person accused. In the end, however, the detective is able to cleverly join all pieces together and pin point the wrong doer. The crime is solved by the detective and the guilty is punished.

History of Detective Genre

It is difficult to ascertain as to which story should be given the title of the first ever detective story of the world. According to some experts, *The Three Apples* in *Arabian Nights* is fit to be called the first ever detective story written. While others differ with this view because the lead character in the story fails in the endeavor of solving the crime, he is not able to find the woman's murderer. Some scholars hold the story *The Three Princes of Serendip*, which is a medieval Persian fairy tale, worthy of the title. In this story the princes have been depicted as the 'detectives' who are able to locate the missing camel more due to luck rather than their intellectual capabilities.

The Murders in the Rue Morgue, written by Edgar Allan Poe in 1841 is often said to be the first contemporary detective story, but in reality *Das Fräulein von Scuderi*, written by E. T. A. Hoffmann was recorded to have been written 20 years before the former. Another claimant to the title of the oldest detective story

in the world is *The Secret Cell*, which is said to have been written in 1837 by, William Evans Burton, this is older than Edgar's *Rue Morgue* by about four years. It is the story of a policeman who needs to find the kidnapper of a young girl.

Sherlock Holmes is name which needs no introduction in the genre of detective fiction. He can be easily called the most celebrated fictitious detective to have ever been created. The character of Sherlock Holmes was fashioned, by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle. This character is a combination of Poe's Dupin. This can be seen in the various tricks used by Holmes which are actually original creation of Poe, used by Dupin.

Sherlock Holmes does not actually come to conclusions. It won't be wrong to say that, his logical thinking is shaped into induction, which is not really the same. In logic, to deduce means to come to decisions keeping common statements in mind, while induction is based on precise specimens, e.g., the lipstick mark on a man's collar, scratches on a person's arm, etc. After the success of Sherlock Holmes' detective stories and increase in acceptance of ghost stories and horror fiction towards the end of the 19th century, a new subgenre came to fore which was known as the 'psychic detective', this was based on crimes committed by (probably) paranormal beings, these crime stories were solved in the same way as Sherlock would solve crimes. The most famous character to arise from this subgenre was that of, John Silence or the 'psychic doctor.' Silence was a creation of horror author Algernon Blackwood.

The most famous detective fiction novelist of all times is perhaps Agatha Christie. Agatha Christie's detective novels generally started with the murder. The author worked upon the way the murder was to be committed, she then dwelled upon the murderer and ultimately she came to the motive behind the murder. Christie was of the opinion that less number of words worked best for detective stories. She did not want to bore the reader by repeating one account many times and liked to keep things as brief (but very substantial) as possible.

Besides the brevity of her explanations, the language used in her novels was also simple, repetitive and very easy to comprehend. Another characteristic of Christies's detective novels was her reliance on dialogue. Furthermore, the key frequently depended upon the understanding of the reader about something said by a character.

Reasons for Popularity of Detective Fiction

Industrialization of western society can said to be one of the main reasons behind this genre's popularity. With the advent of industrialization, people started to shift to big cities where they rubbed shoulders with others from various strata of society. It was with migration of enormous number of people into big cities, that crime also started to spread its wings. Before that crime was not really a prevalent part of human society. Big houses and affluent lifestyle of people living in big cities encouraged the miscreants to resort to activities like, felonies, burglaries and attacks. Crime scared people yet at the same time it even fascinated them. This sentiment of masses was exploited by authors to conjure detective stories which were widely accepted.

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Characteristics of Detective Novels

Main detective characters of early novels belonging to this genre usually used to be specialized private detectives. Later novels, however, started to have all kinds of detectives for example, crime witnesses, normal people and insurance agents. An average detective hero of a detective novel usually consists of the following characteristics:

- The main characters of detective novels were quite similar to mythical heroes like, Odysseus. These detective heroes always had to fight challenges, enticements, threat etc. They were normally found loyal to a greater authority (usually Truth)
- The protagonist was many times called the 'private eyes' which meant that nothing could be missed by his 'all-seeing' eyes.
- The detective hero was always a well-educated and cultured person and sometimes affluent too.
- His physical strength was such that no one could ever defeat him in a scuffle.
- He was always quick witted and his abilities to do things like playing cards, racing cars or shooting, were far greater than an average human being.
- His linguistic prowess also could outwit anyone.

1.4.2 Dramatic Novel

Dramatic novel is a piece of literature written in prose. This is presented in the form of dialogue or dramatic story. Stories of dramatic novels involve clash or distinction between characters of the book. Many of these creations are presented before an audience in the form a play on a stage. The dramatic representation of drama novels requires focus on the physical attributes of all characters; various settings to give the viewers a real feel of the environment of the drama. Dialogues for a very important constitute of a dramatic novel as the events of the drama and the message conveyed to the audience is done primarily through the medium of dialogues.

1.4.3 Picaresque Novel (1742-1768)

'Picaresque' as a term means relating to an episodic style of fiction dealing with the adventures of a rough and dishonest but appealing hero. Its origin is from French, and Spanish picaresco, or picáro meaning 'rogue' in the sixteenth century. 'Picaro' means 'rouge' in Spanish. Such a story deals with the escapades of a careless young man who lives by his wits and is hardly a subject to change of character through the succession of adventures which he undergoes. Spanish, writer Cervantes's *Don Quixote* (1605) is its most celebrated example. *Gil Blas* (1715) by Le Sage, a Frenchman, is also a very famous picaresque narrative. This kind of novel is realistic in style, episodic in structure, and often satiric and ironical in tone. This is an episodic recounting of the adventure of a single hero or an anti-hero on the road. In England, the followers of this tradition were many and all presented stories through their own point of view adding some new element in it.

Henry Fielding (1707–1752) is one of the most known figures of English letters. He was a great explorer of human nature and had wide experience of life. His works were lively and strong. Though in his lifetime, he was seen as ‘dirty and low’ as a writer, he appears to have influenced the following centuries. He had been the pioneer of English novels. His masterpiece *Tom Jones* (1749) is ranked by Maugham among the ten greatest novels of the world. His novels are categorised as novels of reason. He had lively realism, great play of humour, irony and satire; stuck to sanity, to tolerance for human weaknesses, had keen eye for humour, engaging narrative, gift of strong plot and theme, vivid characterisation, comic dialogues and much more. Through Fielding’s narrative – a reader is never bored. He had been frank in describing human folly.

Contribution: A sound technique and logical following of life are Henry Fielding’s gift to English novels. Fielding influenced the posterity more than any other novelist of his age. As per as developments of novel as a form of art is concerned, Fielding’s contribution remain far above his contemporaries. He can be called the father of the modern English novel.

Realism: Fielding is a pioneer of realism in English literature. In fact, the English novel was born with the characteristics of realism. He began novel writing late in reaction to Richardson’s *Pamela* and sentimental novels of morality. It did not mean that he was immoral. His novels too instruct but with comic and humour. His sentiments are put in a right place without exaggeration. His canvas is big with wide range of characterisation. His prose is realistic and at ease. Even tense or pathetic situations are imbued with irony and humour like Ben Jonson. His whole range of character describes reality. His novels are pictures of his age and people. He speaks his truth pungently but through the vein of comic. He has greater philosophy and spirit of the age. He speculates into the nature of man very deeply in an intellectual and moral way.

Humour, Comic and Irony: He is considered one of the greatest humorists of his age. He had been gifted with dramatic devices which because he was earlier a dramatist. In fact, it was for Fielding’s political satires that the Licensing Act had been passed. He had followed into Cervantes’s footsteps. His humour has a wide range: it may be a humorous fight of his hero on a highway or the pathetic side of human life ironically. His humour is subtle, not boisterous. His humour is not pungent but pleasant and full of irony. *Tom Jones* is considered among world’s ten best novels. He considered his *Joseph Andrews* a ‘comic epic in prose’. His parson of Adams is a product influenced by Sancho Panza of *Don Quixote*. Fielding is considered ‘cheerful, sunshiny, breezy spirit that prevails everywhere strongly’, said Coleridge. He smiled like Chaucer. His humour is soft, mild and unpretentious.

Philosophy and moral: Fielding began writing as parodying *Pamela* by making *Joseph Andrews* her brother. It was in order to laugh at the exaggerated morality and sentimentality of Richardson. However as compared to *Pamela*, in *Joseph Andrews*, he shows an intellectual depth with greater human philosophy having broad insight into human nature. His characters are genuine products of higher intellect and observation of morality and ethics. They do not pose but breathe it. It is inherent in their nature. Born in a rich family, Fielding himself had seen quite

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a lot of human life because of the vicissitudes that he underwent. His characters are generous, good humoured and thoughtful. They act with wisdom and presence of mind.

Gift of solid plot: Fielding is known for strong plot narrative. *Tome Jones*, *Joseph Andrews*, *Amelia* and *Jonathan Wilde* are all great examples of well made plot-construction. Coleridge compared him with Sophocles and Ben Jonson in this regard. A strong plot means that a story never falls down the level of interest through different incidents. His novel is considered an 'amazing tour de force of plot-construction'. His novels are comedies.

Art of characterization: Plot moves through incidents and characters. Fielding's characters are though sometimes caricatures like Andrews or Shamela (1741) but they are 'not men but manners, not an individual but the species'. There is a wide variety of characters in his novels. His characters create humour and amuse the readers through their nature and events both. His characters do not attack on anything but their behaviour and its outcome is humorous. Sometimes their activities are humorous like Parson Adams'. His range of characters is compared to that of Chaucer and Jonson.

Fielding's works: *Joseph Andrews* (1742) is considered 'a comic epic in prose' by Fielding himself. It is his first published work. It is about Joseph Andrews, the brother of Richardson's *Pamela*, and his adventures. It is a satire. In this novel, he targeted to satirise Richardson's exaggerated morality and sentimentalism portraying it in a man. It tells how Lady Booby aims at the virginity of Andrews and puts him under trial. She tries her best to separate him from Fanny, his beloved but after a targeted to satirise Richardson's exaggerated morality and sentimentalism portraying it in a man. It tells how Lady Booby aims at the virginity of Andrews and puts him under trial. She tries her best to separate him from Fanny, his beloved but after a lot of fun – the two are married at the end. Parson Adams is their friend and sabotage throughout his humorous encounters here and there.

Jonathan Wild (1743) is about a real story and a political satire aimed on Robert Walpole. It is considered a loose narrative inspired by his age. It is a great example of irony. Wild, born to a poor family, becomes a Thief-Taker General, who while working on the side of law became dishonest to fill up his own pocket. He is arrested, tried and executed.

Tom Jones (1749) is divided into 18 books, making a thick volume which relates the history of a foundling. It is a comic novel and Fielding's masterpiece for which he has been placed amongst world's greatest novelists. Tom Jones, a ward of Squire Allworthy, falls in love with Sophia and he is a vigorous and lusty youth but honest and soft-hearted. Sophia is his neighbour and from a rich family and the elderly gentleman opposes their love and at last they are united. The novel has portrayal of wide range of nature and it is a social criticism of the English society. Low birth is mocked at where it is proved to be one of the mistakes by those who are of high birth.

Amelia is considered as his last great contribution to the English letters. It is a different story which is pathetic in tone about a patient and virtuous wife whose sufferings are portrayed. It is a domestic and serious novel.

Tobias Smollett (1721–71) is considered a great novelist of the eighteenth century after Richardson and Fielding, though his work is ranked not as great as theirs. His novels are steeped deep in the picaresquian style. *Roderick Random* (1748), *Peregrine Pickle* (1751) and *Humphrey Clinker* (1771) are some of his famous novels. As an artist, he was a realist gifted with a fine flow of narration and colourful events. He was a sharp observer of life and its rough sides, especially of the sea-life. He put brutal and coarse facts of life into fiction devoid of moral and had a coarse humour. He is not as lively as others of his age but realistic in nature. His novels are full of new situations and events.

Lawrence Sterne (1713–68): Lawrence Sterne was also one of the four notable writers of the eighteenth-century English novel. *Tristram Shandy, The Gent* (1759–1767) is his masterpiece which is in nine volumes: a mixture of unconnected incidents, it comprises of fancies, knowledge of human life, humour, pathos and many other important aspects of human life. His plot is considered rather scattered and his story develops late. Sterne is sentimental in his approach. He is still characterised by his streak of sentimentality. His art of characterisation is wide and vivid. His influence on his following generation is on Henry Mackenzi and his uncle Toby is an immortal character.

1.4.4 Some Other Forms of Novels

In this section, we will discuss some of the other major forms of novels.

Sentimental Novel (1740-1780)

The sentimental novel is characterised as novel of character or psychological novel. Samuel Richardson is called the father of sentimental novel. His *Pamela, or Virtue Rewarded* (1704) has been written in an epistolary manner which is regarded as the first English novel. Here Richardson has narrated the story of a meek and pious lady of low birth. He has depicted a rustic lady's emotion that carefully fights for her modesty in the presence of a dissolute master. She is, at the end, married to the same man who changes morally. His other work was *Clarissa Harlowe* (1747–48) written in epistles in eight volumes. It is conveyed only through the exchange of letters. It is the story of a tragic heroine Clarissa who is a beautiful and virtuous young lady. She is a neo-rich whose grandfather has left property to her but only if she marries Richard Lovelace, an enemy to their family. Lovelace at one point of time, under his passion of love and hatred for her family, drugs and rapes her. She becomes more adamant and abhors him because he had put her into a brothel. She escapes from there and commits suicide. She makes a will which irrespective of her hatred is passed over to Lovelace. He becomes ashamed to see what way Clarissa returned him his villainy with a good heart and that pains him very much. Lovelace feels ashamed of himself as he comes to know its purport. He goes to Italy fights a duel and knowingly becomes injured and dies. His last novel is *Sir Charles Grandison* (1754) in which the hero is a virtuous Christian gentleman who has been very careful and scrupulous in his love affair.

Richardson's gifts: Samuel Richardson has dealt very keenly into the female psychology. He was a great reader of human behaviour. He was also adept in describing the emotional problems of human life. He made a great effort in liberating

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novel as a form from a conservative outlook which those who regarded it as a reading for pleasure. He is known for his psychological analysis and introspection and social realism. His stress on morality and sentimentality made him popular across Europe. But he is often considered a writer of lengthy novels; his morality is called smug or prudish. His description of the emotional details of the protagonist's psychology is a quality which makes him an immortal writer.

Lawrence Sterne (1713–68): Sentimental novels depend on emotional response of both the characters and the readers. The plot in a sentimental novel advances in an emotional manner rather than in action. Lawrence Sterne is also a notable writer of this genre. His novel *Sentimental Journey* (1768) is a famous sentimental novel. Sterne's journey through France and Italy is the subject here. It is travel writing: a discussion of personal taste and sentiments of men's manners and morals over classical learning. The narrator is Reverend Yorick whose adventures are recorded in this book. This is an amorous type of tale representing a series of self-contained episodes. In style, it is more elegant than his *Tristram Shandy*, *The Gent* which is the story of an eccentric Shandy family. The story is about Yorick who travels to France when the country is at wars with his nation; has problem with his passport for which is imprisoned; gets his passport by count in one of his misgivings. Then he goes to Italy after consoling Maria, a character whose influence is there on him. He spends night at an inn where he is forced to share with a lady and her servant-maid. Therein at an incident in the night the novel ends because Sterne died finishing it half-way. His close friend John Hall-Stevenson who is identified as Eugenius in the novel finished it with a continuation called 'Yorick's Sentimental Journey Continued: To Which is Prefixed Some Account of the Life and Writings of Mr. Sterne'.

Henry Mackenzie: Henry Mackenzie's *The Man of Feeling* (1771) depicts a series of moral pictures which Harley, the simple-hearted hero observes either by him or someone else speaks about the things related to him. It also has elements of romance. There is a priest also who narrates some episodes to Harley. Harley is an orphan who has clamouring guardians and they advise him to seek a relative with a view to have fruitful chances of inheritance. He moves out to acquire a patron and has several encounters with different men. There are complex episodes of goodness and his love with Miss Walton. At last, he dies having confessed his love to her which revives her. The novel deals chiefly with the rising middle class and their problem of money and inheritance.

Other important novelists: Tobias Smollett's *The Expedition of Humphrey Clinker* (1771), Frances (Fanny) Burney's *Evelina* (1778) are good examples of this type. In *Evelina*, the heroine, intrinsically good and raised in a village, is educated and trained for proper living. Henry Fielding's *Tom Jones* and *Joseph Andrews* are stories of emotional and sentimental people. But they are a subtle comment on excessive emotionalism and sentimentality. These novels focused on the weaker society such as orphans and convicted men. It aimed at softer punishment and not a harsh one. Goethe's *Werther* (1774) and Richardson's *Pamela* are the greatest examples of the Sentimental Novel. The Sentimental Novel gave birth to the following generation of Gothic novel.

Gothic Novel or Novel of Terror and Romance (1717-1850)

*Forms of Fiction and
Aspects of Novel*

In the age of transition, between the changes of the strict classical and realistic depiction of the society into novels of the eighteenth century and the nineteenth century where new liberties were taken regarding this form of art we have Gothic novel which recalls medieval set-up of Italy having elements of romance in it. It deals with cruelty and sins of the hero. It is also associated with the Gothic architectural revival of distant past. It portrays the appreciation of the joys of extreme emotion, mysterious atmosphere, thrill, fearfulness and calmness.

English Gothic writers associated medieval Gothic architecture and creating an atmosphere where darkness dominated day and night. The pictures are full of terror having harsh laws of human nature enforced on certain characters by torture. It also embodied mysteries fantasy and superstition. Nature ruled such primitive buildings very harshly. The image of anti-hero prevailed in a mysterious, dark atmosphere in the Gothic tales. The movement of classicism and realism prevailed into the eighteenth century English literature and in such a time, the Gothic novel revived romanticism and the middle ages. Thus, it was a reaction against the literature of the eighteenth century.

Horace Walpole (1717–97): Son of the Prime Minister Richard Walpole, Horace Walpole was a famous antiquary and originator of the Gothic Fiction and the harbinger of the great romantic age of English literature like his friend Thomas Grey. Rich and widely travelled, he and his friend Grey both looked beyond their age. The crass realism and mechanical depiction of the then literature forced these intellectuals to rebel against the set norms of poetry, drama and prose. His first novel, *The Castle of Otranto* (1764) was the first Gothic fiction. It was his reaction against the realism, sentimentalism and didacticism of the eighteenth century literature. For this he chose a set-up quite distant in age of the twelfth or thirteenth century Italy where mystery, romanticism and supernatural prevailed. It had the element of criminality in it also.

Walpole created a Gothic mansion at Strawberry Hill where Manfred, the lord of the castle, lived with his family. The beginning of the novel marked the wedding day of his sickly son called Conrad and Princess Isabella. After the wedding, Conrad is crushed to death by a huge, gigantic helmet which falls on him from the above. Manfred himself marries Isabella being afraid of his death as the ownership of this castle had to automatically pass on to its real owner not on any member of the family. He divorced his wife Hippolita who could not become mother. Isabella escapes to a church having been helped by Theodore, a peasant to avoid Manfred's physical touch. Manfred ordered to murder Theodore taking the help of a Friar but Theodore is later recognised as the Friar's son by him at the point of his murder. There are people from other kingdom who come to free Isabella. Manfred murders Mattilda in lieu of Isabella. At last, Theodore is revealed as a true Prince of Otranto and he marries Isabella. Manfred is murderous and he is repentant on his acts. It is a mixture of tragedy and comedy: mystery and romance: terror and crime – all. It has elements of supernatural and fantasy. In his presentation of horror, romance and mystery, Walpole is compared to Shakespeare. Though this type of novel is considered an escape from the real world – it had a trail of followers who tried their deft hands on the same line of thought and plot.

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Ann Radcliffe (1764–1823): Radcliffe began as an imitator of Horace Walpole but it was she who explored the wider range in the perspectives of the Gothic novel. She was more articulate and successful as a writer. Her famous novels *The Mysteries of Udolpho* (1769) and *The Italian* (1797) are unique of this tradition of fictions. *The Mysteries of Udolpho* has the setting of Italy which is used for a formula or pattern to give the desired background to the story. A beautiful youth is put into prison by a hard-hearted sadistic villain in a lonely castle. He is rescued by the hero who is not much heroic as traditionally heroes are. His heroes and heroines are almost the same in all of her works with a slight change of complexion and gait but not of heart. There are components in the story to evoke terror like the dungeons, secret vaults, hiding places and all culminate to create the effect of Gothic.

She did not use supernatural elements as Walpole did. She explained what seemed supernatural but it was reckoned as something else at the end of the story when she revealed their truth. She also used the natural description to make her pictures more colourful. She dwelt on scenic beauty and its description more powerfully which Walpole did not. Walpole had widely travelled and had seen such constructed castles in reality and based his world of imagination on what he saw. But Radcliffe had never seen about what she wrote in. So her picture of the Gothic was her own creation based completely on her imagination and fancy. Both she and Walpole lacked the proper knowledge of history. The years referred in her novels cannot be as ascertained as real. She presents a mixture of the eighteenth century didacticism and sentimentalism with romance. In this sense, she differs from Walpole who constructed his world of Gothic fictions with the essence of romanticism only.

Matthew Gregory Lewis (1775–1818): Lewis's *The Monk* (1797) has different elements than Mrs. Radcliffe's novels. It is a tale of blood and terror. The story is about Ambrosio who is a pious, revered monk of Spain and his story of decline and downfall. He goes mad after physical lust for his student, Matilda, a woman in disguise of a monk who allures and tempts him to it. But once he comes into the trap of this indulgence and sin, he enjoys his lust fulfilled by a pupil every now and again. He becomes addicted to this fulfilment and makes the innocent Antonia his prey forcefully. Matilda helps him to do so because she is secretly empowered by Satan and a Satan in the female form. She helps him to rape and kill Antonia. She causes Ambrosio's downfall from the beginning. The novel has some other Gothic tales within the story like *Bleeding Nun*. Ambrosio faces Inquisition and prefers an escape like Faustus by selling his soul to Satan. There is a devil which prevents Ambrosio from the final repentance and he has a prolonged, torturous end. Later on, the devil reveals to him that the woman he raped and killed was his own sister.

Other Writers of the Age

Miss Clara Reeve (1729 – 1827): Ms. Reeve's *Champion of Virtue*, later to be called *The Old English Baron*, was inspired by the Gothic tradition. In it, she deals with an historical event like Walpole without the clear picture of history. Charles Robert Maturin (1782–1824) also wrote novels in the Gothic manner.

The Fatal Revenge (1807) was inspired by Mrs Radcliff. His masterpiece is *Melmoth the Wanderer* (1820) which is considered as the greatest novel bearing the trade name of terror. It has a strong plot and analysis of motifs.

Mary Shelley (1797–1851): Shelley's wife, Mary Shelley wrote *Frankenstein* (1817) which is a tale of terror having the elements of science in it. It is about the devastations caused by a machine man which itself is destroyed at the end. The theme has time and again exhausted by movie-makers and proved to be a successful and entertaining story. She was an only novelist of this period who seems to have inspired the entire generation of science fiction writers of the modern age.

William Beckford (1760-1844): Beckford is considered a novelist of very fertile imagination. His work, *Vathek* (1786) has been set in Arabia and he seems to be inspired by the oriental stories. The story belongs to Vathek, a Caliph and sort of Muslim Faustus who sells his soul to Eblis or the devil. It is his story of life till death and hell which is very much terror-evoking. The description of his death is a terrific and horrifying picture. The description of blood-shed and crime and is woven with the very texture of the novel. The novel is in the tradition of Gothic fictions.

Historical Novel (1814-2009)

The historical novel is that which uses setting or background from the true history of a period and attempts to convey the spirit, manners, social, economic and political conditions of that age aiming to give realistic and lively descriptions with truthful approach. The historical fact should be true to its existence and the past is made live to the doorstep of the readers. It informs the readers about the period in which it is written. *The Wolf Hall* by Hillary Mantel of the 21st century deals with the period of Cromwell and King Henry VIII. Thus the tradition of the historical novel has not died.

Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* (1719) was also an attempt in the picaresquian and historical representation of the hero. The German author Benedikte Naubert (1756–1819) wrote around fifty historical novels. In technique, he focused his attention on the person of minor historical significance and explained the incidents and events which they experienced. The same trend was followed by Sir Walter Scott, the greatest of all English novelists of this genre. The historical novels began as a literary form of art in the nineteenth century England by Sir Walter Scott. Though Horace Walpole and Mrs. Radcliffe tried to base their Gothic historically, but their knowledge of history failed to give a true historical charm to their stories. For historical representation of an event or person should be based on true facts.

Sir Walter Scott (1771–1832) was a notable Scottish writer of historical novel. He had explored the works of Shakespeare, the Bible, Spenser, Dryden, Swift, and historical stories greatly. He was the first English writer who had an international career and had his followers in Europe, Australia and North America. He was also a poet and playwright at the same time. Scott had worked throughout his life to revive the history of Scotland. Not only did he revive his country's

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historical past, but also made it live and presentable to the readers. He had studied his culture deeply and had lively imagination to support the true facts. In other words, he made history live and walk in his times: he took rather real men from history and the dates and transformed them into an imaginary literature. The stories which were dry and uninteresting as merely had happened once, he made them live and colourful. But he did not transcend his time like Walpole but remained there making the ghosts live in his days. As Prospero controlled spirits, Walter Scott called the dead historical figures to live and breathe. He had explored a lot in history. He was a voracious reader. Since he picked up history as his setting and filled in his ideas to live those men and women, his fictions are called historical romance.

He began by translating works from German and first published his three-volume set of collected ballads, *The Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border*. This at once made him popular. Since then he delved deep into the historical past of Scotland to revive it in the memory of his generation. His historical figures of Scotland were men and women who were not famous. They were minor historical figures. This might be the influence of his age as the entire age of romanticism sought its refuge in humanism and uplift of the society.

As a novelist he had a wide range and his novels are popularly termed as 'Waverley Novel'. They are a long series of publications. He did not write his name on his first venture as a novelist called *Waverley* (1814). Later too, he used this phrase to denote his identification, 'by the author of Waverley', instead of his name. *Waverley* (1814) is a tale of the Jacobite rising of 1745 in the Kingdom of Great Britain. The hero is Edward Waverley who had been bought up in the Tory family and so, he was sympathetic to Jacobite's cause. His novels became very popular. The time when he began writing, he became a popular subject of conversation in England and was a famous name at the Royal family because George, Prince Regent invited and dined with him. He was anxious to see the author of Waverley. Scott's central interest was a subject related to chronicle. He did not centralise the novel on a certain character but on a historical period or event. As a novelist, his range is surprising for he wrote incessantly.

In 1819, he chose a subject that related to England and not specifically Scotland in his *Ivanhoe*. This novel is about a Jew called Rebecca who is a sympathetic character. The novel came at the time of struggle for the Emancipation of the Jews in England. His *The Bride of the Lammermoor* is based on a real story of two lovers in the backdrop of Lammermuir Hills. In this novel, Lucie Ashton and Edgar Ravenswood promise each other in love but it is later discovered by Lucie's mother that the man is the enemy of their family. She forces her daughter to marry Sir Arthur Bucklaw, a rich inheritor. But Lucie, on her wedding ceremony stabs her groom, becomes mad and dies. Scott was a very famous author throughout his life and career as a novelist. He was popularly read and liked throughout the world. He was granted the title of Baronet for his excessive popularity and was regarded very much everywhere. He became Sir Walter Scott in 1820. In service to his country, he organised the visit of King George IV to Scotland. He was a man on whom the glory of the importance of Scottish literature rests.

It was in the 1827 that he announced himself as a writer of Waverley novel publications. The following may be considered among his famous novels: *Waverley* (1814), *Guy Mannering* (1815), *The Antiquary* (1816), *Tales of My Landlord* (1816–1818), *Rob Roy* (1818), *Ivanhoe* (1819), *The Abbot* (1820), *Kenilworth* (1821), *The Talisman* (1825), *Scottish Borders*, *The Fair Maid of Perth* (1828), *Anne of Geierstein* (1829), *Count Robert of Paris* (1831) and *Castle Dangerous* (1831). The name Waverley which Scott chose for his title for the long series of publications is a local government district in the status of borough in Surrey, England. Through his novels Scott aimed at exploring history of the middle ages. Scott had also established a printing press. He was equally famous in the US in his times. Mark Twain, a popular American novelist, ridiculed Scott in his *Huckleberry Finn* by calling a sinking boat as Walter Scott.

There have been critics who have praised and regarded his works optimistically but there were those who wrote against his popularity. In his lifetime, Scott was one of the most famous novelists of the world. He always served his country and men. He often fought for public causes. He never bores the readers by repetition. He did not describe his characters psychologically. He did not portray the troubles inherent in our life. His characters are often accused of being important only in the context of history but he himself condemns them by calling Waverley a ‘sneaking piece of imbecility’. He did not care much for plot. But in the words of Leslie Stephen, he ‘is the most perfectly delightful story-teller natural by fire-side’.

The period after Scott: Scott laid down the foundation of historical fictions in England but it spread its luminous wings towards countries such as France and Germany influenced by him. In England, Mrs. Anna Eliza Bray came to be known as Scott’s successor whose novel, *The Protestant* (1828) pasteurizes the persecution of the Protestants in the reign of Queen Mary Tudor. G R P James was also a famous minor writer who wrote almost hundred historical novels in the period of 1825 to 1850. William Harrison Ainsworth (1805-1882) was also a popular novelist for two decades who first work was *Rockwood* (1834). Bulwar Lytton (1803-1873) wrote five historical novels among which *The Last Days of Pompeii* (1834) was the most popular. He stuck to moral instruction and historical truth in all his works. His historical novels therefore, are mere representation of facts and they are not as lively as Scott’s. His novels are full of historical accuracy and details.

Some Victorian history novel writers used the theme of history for the sake of sectarian bias. Charles Kingsley’s (1819-1875) *Hypatia* (1853) attacked the Roman Catholics. Newman’s fiction called *Callista: A Sketch fo the Third Century* represented the same kind. Thackeray’s *Henry Esmond* (1852) is also a chronicle novel about the life of the eighteenth century England. Dickens’s *A Tale of Two Cities* and *Barnaby Rudge* are also the novels of this genre. George Eliot’s *Romola* describes the life of Italy in the period of Renaissance. In the twentieth century, Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch (1863-1944) wrote *Hetty Wesley* (1903) and *The Splendid Spur* (1889); Jacob Wassermann (1873-1934) wrote *The Triumph of Youth*; Ford Madox Hueffer (1873-1939) wrote *The Fifth Queen* (1908); Ms Phoebe Gay wrote *Vivandiere* (1929).

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There were many other minor writers of historical fiction also during the centuries after Scott. In the 21st century, Hilary Mantel (1952-), an Englishwoman wrote *Wolf Hall* (2009) which is an historical novel. It won the Man Booker Prize for literature in 2009. This novel is set in the period from 1500 to 1535, a fictionalised biography which embodies the rapid rise of power of Thomas Cromwell, First Earl of Essex in the court of Henry VIII of England. It illustrates the old Latin saying 'Man is wolf to man'. Some critics have called the historical novel historical romance or romance novel also. The French writer Alexandre Dumas's (1802-1870) *The Three Musketeers* (1844) is a famous historical novel.

Psychological Novel (1890-1950)

The psychological novel is the product of modern outlook chiefly explored by the Georgians—Aldous Huxley, D. H. Lawrence, Virginia Woolf and James Joyce. They were all conscious innovators of the art of novel writing and added particular change of style into the art of narration. They were more interested in exploring human subconscious, a salient gift of the modernity, and noting image atom by atom as it falls to mind. They present the picture of the determination of characters as the subconscious receives images through our conscious. There the plot becomes dwarf to the subject of psychological research. Sometimes it records merely the images one by one as they fall to human consciousness with little or no coherence as in *Mrs. Dalloway* by Virginia Woolf. Such a psychological research is called stream-of-consciousness technique: it is an unbroken flow of perceptions, thoughts, and feelings in the waking mind. (M. H. Abram) it describes long passages of introspection in which the narrator records in detail what passes through a character's awareness. They were all inspired by the psychological theory of Sigmund Freud. They adopted the method for freedom of expression. Their candid expression, put innovatively, breaks all the conventional norms of novel writing.

This form was used for spinning 'contemporary vision of and reality'. The vision was influenced by the theories of Henry Bergson and Freud. Bergson changed the old concept of Time and Freud, of human consciousness. The new concept of Time was that of continuous flow while the conventional one was that of a series of separate incidents. This was the contribution of Bergson and William James's scientific analysis of human consciousness. They believed that a human mind is open – to the past, present and future alike. It is changing still 'continuous, multiple yet one'. According to the theories of Marcel Proust (1871-1922), human mind can be very flexible and is exposed to the present and the recapitulation of the past simultaneously. It is intuitive. So the old concept of chronological fall of events in order was laid aside now.

The theories of Freud and Jung, the psychologists, explored that the objective science could describe a man better where human consciousness could carry not only his own but all the ancestral experiences, and stressed on its flexibility and multiplicity. This consciousness could travel back and stay at the present observing happenings at the same time. This theory affected the art of characterisation in the modern novel where the conscious handled the nature of man. Its best examples can be cited in David Herbert Lawrence's novels as observed by E.M Forster 'the greatest imaginative writers of the twentieth century'. Technically Lawrence

did not go as deep into the exploration of the conscious as Mrs. Woolf or Joyce. His novel, *The Women in Love* is an expression of deep symbolism where the pattern is in harmony but *The White Peacock* displays Jamesian 'point-of-view' technique where the main coherence is the consciousness of one of the characters. His *Sons and Lovers*, *The Trespasser* and *The Lost Girl* express the conventional flow of events and the conscious and symbolism. He dwelt on man's psychological demands and settled his descriptions there, especially the suppression of sexual urge due to the modern outlook and demands of life. His novels are free and frank expressions of human urge of the subconscious which a man suppresses in order to show control over his purpose of existence in a civilized society. But it is the consciousness with which he is created. His notable fictions are *Aron's Rod* (1922), *Kangaroo* (1923), *The Rainbow* (1915), *The Plumed Serpent* and *Lady Chatterley's Lover*.

More subtle explorer of the subconscious was Dorothy Richardson (1873-1957)'s *Pilgrimage*, a series of twelve novels where the first one called *Pointed Roofs* (1915), was the one which initiated this technique. James Joyce (1882-1941) experimented with the stream-of-consciousness technique most vigorously. He was the most dominating experimentalist, unconventional, complex and precise in details, among the modernists. He was linked with the Aesthetic Movement of the nineties which apparently resulted in his *Dubliners* (1914) and *A Portrait of the artist as a Young Man* published in *The Egoist* (1916). His novel is a rebel literature against the conservative Irish life and Roman Catholicism but it reveals that both very strong influence upon him. *A Portrait of the artist as a Young Man* depicts the early to youthful years of Stephen whose wish to pursue education clashes with the traditional background of his family and its present condition. The novel describes his family background, atmosphere and love life and sex at sixteen, clash in the college. It ends declaring him a rebel in all.

The language and style of narration are highly stylistic and technical. Its prose has musical effect. *Ulysses* (1922) is a continuation of Stephen's life embodying motives of 'Art for Art's sake' where Stephen returns from Paris after his mother's death having completed his education and decides where to start his career. The theme of these novels explores the Greek story of Telemachus. But Leopold Bloom having lost his son in infancy is the real hero here. Joyce was the inventor of the technique called 'epiphany'. He wove mythology and the present together, a method used by Eliot in his *Waste Land* (1922). Finnegans *Wake* (1939) written after seventeen years of effort is his last novel which depicts a Dublin Publican's life, his family and customers. It is through these that the author presents a complete picture of human life. The very title of the novel represents true Irish connotation of death, funeral and resurrection. It is a complex novel. Such books can be appreciated well-qualified, intellectual and learned class.

Virginia Woolf (1882-1941) was a very famous novelist who exploited the narrative technique Stream-of-Consciousness in each of her fiction. Her novels represent mind's experience. Her characters speak about their inner experience. *Mrs. Dalloway*, the protagonist, recapitulates the time-scheme of one day in the life of an MP's wife. She is describing about a party that is to take place at night when an old friend whom she loved once has just arrived from India. The novel

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describes only what her conscious follows whether it is past or the present. The narrative looks incoherent and not so comprehensive though it is stylised particularly to display the stream-of-consciousness technique. In her latter novels, there is a message interwoven as in *To the Lighthouse*, a place on an island where the family of Mrs. Ramsay and a few close acquaintances arrive to celebrate holiday. This method of capturing the unconscious and conscious is quite improved here because it seems to relate itself to the plot in a harmonious manner. She has the gift of moral which Joyce lacked. Her other prominent works are *Between the Acts*, *The Waves* and *Orlando*. *The Waves* is called her most articulate exercise of all the artistic potentialities. Her novels show an experimentalist's way of expression with a new style and for this she is regarded amongst most prominent and influencing writers of the modern age.

Science Fiction

The Victorian age was growing in industrialization and scientific researches in its last phase. The trend of loss of faith and questioning gave birth to two tendencies: one to praise and hail the growth of science; and the other, to hold it in sarcasm. There were novelists who explored the genre of science fiction among whom H G Wells (1866-1946) is called the most 'scientifically trained'. He served the taste of those who expected science to do wonders in man's life by his use of scientific descriptions and background. In *Tono-Bungay* (1910), he speaks about business; in *The New Machiavelli*, he serves the moral purpose; in *Joan and Peter*, he writes about education; and in *The Soul of a Bishop*, he tells about the religion. All his science fictions were aimed to please the popular taste. *The Shape of Things to Come* (1933) and *The Time Machine* (1895) are influenced by Jules Verne. They describe the future of man. However Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* was the originator of science fiction. *Two Men in the Moon*, *the War of the Worlds*, *the Wonderful Visit* are also some of his famous science fictions.

Check Your Progress

10. What do you understand by the term 'Picaresque'?
11. Why are dialogues an important part of dramatic novels?
12. What is a historical novel?
13. What do you understand by the term streams of consciousness?

1.5 ANSWERS TO 'CHECK YOUR PROGRESS'

1. The writing of English novel started in the eighteenth century.
2. Agatha Christie (1890-1976) was a writer of crime fiction. She wrote many detective novels.
3. Ernest Hemingway's (1899-1961) novella *The Old Man and The Sea* is regarded as the 'longest story and the shortest novel' of the world and it claimed the Nobel Prize for literature in 1954.

4. Stories of Birbal and Akbar (1542-1605), Amar Chitra Katha, tales about religious deities are very popular in India.
5. Action and adventure are the most important elements in a tale.
6. Feminist writings or woman-centered writing aims to project and interpret experiences from the feminine perspective and sensibility. Feminism believes that women experience the world in a different way.
7. S. Radhkrishnan was appointed as a lecturer in the Department of Philosophy at Madras Presidency College in April 1909.
8. Sarojini Naidu accompanied Gandhiji to London for the second session of the Round Table Conference of Indian—British cooperation.
9. Khushwant Singh was conferred with the Honest Man of the Year Award in 2000 for his courage and honesty in his brilliant incisive writing.
10. 'Picaresque' as a term means relating to an episodic style of fiction dealing with the adventures of a rough and dishonest but appealing hero.
11. Dialogues are an important part of the dramatic novel as the events of the drama and the message conveyed to the audience is done primarily through the medium of dialogues.
12. The historical novel is that which uses setting or background from the true history of a period and attempts to convey the spirit, manners, social, economic and political conditions of that age aiming to give realistic and lively descriptions with truthful approach.
13. Stream of consciousness is an unbroken flow of perceptions, thoughts, and feelings in the waking mind.

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1.6 SUMMARY

- Fiction is a literary narrative usually in prose. It is based on imagination, and not reality. It could be an account of truth that is wrapped in fantasy. It is a narrative that has a free play of imagination, structure, characters, dialogue, theme, style, and setting.
- Among the prominent categories of novels, the Gothic novel was a popular one. The Gothic novel usually had an Italian setting and recalled the medieval period. It had elements of horror, romance, mystery, and cruelty.
- The romantic novel flourished in the Romantic Age of English letters, during the period of the Napoleonic Wars. Jane Austen was a major exponent. Austen's works, while being confined to a certain smaller territory of England, depict the reality of human nature and relationships.
- In the Victorian Age, novels became a dominant form of literature and became more popular than poetry. Many writers in this form emerged during this period. It was in the 1830s that English novel saw some changes in style and form.

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- There was a large group of Pre-Raphaelite poets, novelists and artists among John Ruskin's (1819-1900) associates. William Morris (1834-1896) was chief amongst them as a novelist. He was a painter, poet and a writer of fantasy fiction. The *Wood Beyond the World*, and *The Well at the World's End* are among his notable works.
- The Modern Age of English literature was an age of the two great World Wars and the period after that. In this age, there were many new trends in English novel which flourished in this period.
- Agatha Christie (1890-1976) was a writer of Crime fiction. She wrote many detective novels. Her works introduced the legendary characters Hercule Poirot and Miss Marple. They were the sleuths in her fiction.
- Short Story is a literary form in prose. It has elements similar to a novel such as plot, style, technique, theme, characters, and dialogues. Short stories can be romantic, experimental, tragic, and abstractedly philosophical.
- A short story differs from a novel in its dimension. Novel has been estimated by the term 'Magnitude'. This term has been invented by Aristotle in the context of drama. A novel is supposed to be more than hundred pages long. A short story is supposed to cover a maximum of twenty to thirty pages. The length is the most important feature of the short story.
- A Tale is a story using imagination especially one that is full of action and adventure. It is also a spoken description of an event which may not be completely true (Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary). Its basic purpose is to entertain the listener. A tale is usually in oral form.
- There are different kinds of tales cautionary tales, fairy tales, folk tales, fables, invented / frame tales, urban legend, old wives' tales, tall tale.
- Indian prose writing in English is based on situations and backgrounds that are usually Indian, but in a foreign language that has been so comfortably adopted in the country.
- Modern Indian fiction has seen an increase of feminist writings or woman-centered approach. It aims to project and interpret experiences from the feminine perspective and sensibility. Feminism believes that women experience the world in a different way.
- *Sadhana: The Realization of Life* is the first book of prose that Tagore published. It came out from London in October 1913, and it had eight essays that he read out at the Harvard University. In the book he compared the walled civilization of Greece with the forest habitation that Aryans built when they came to India.
- Toru Dutt was the first Indian woman poet who wrote in English. Her prose is also marvellously alive. The letters written by her are affectionate, observant, satirical and touching. Her prose is completely modern. Toru Dutt's literary influences were many.
- The term 'novella' has been derived from an Italian word which was used for a short story to differentiate it from a novel. The word 'novel' has been

in vogue in English ever since the beginning of eighteenth century, for something which happens be someplace in middle..

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- Authors write about numerous topics so a novel may belong to any one of these genres, for example, historical, picaresque, sentimental, gothic, psychological, epistolary, pastoral, apprenticeship, roman a clef, antinovel, detective, mystery, thriller, dramatic, science fiction, cult or coteries, western, best seller, fantasy and prophecy, proletarian.
- The epistolary novel is that genre of novel in which the novelist expresses the story with the help of documents.
- The detective genre of fiction revolves around a crime committed by an unknown person or group of people, which is ultimately solved by the efforts of a detective. These novels are full of clues which keep cropping up throughout the book and readers are challenged to find out the criminal with help of the clues given.
- Dramatic novel is a piece of literature written in prose. This is presented in the form of dialogue or dramatic story. Stories of dramatic novels involve clash or distinction between characters of the book. Many of these creations are presented before an audience in the form a play on a stage.
- ‘Picaresque’ as a term means relating to an episodic style of fiction dealing with the adventures of a rough and dishonest but appealing hero. Its origin is from French, and Spanish picaresco, or picáro meaning ‘rogue’ in the sixteenth century. ‘Picaro’ means ‘rouge’ in Spanish.
- The sentimental novel is characterised as novel of character or psychological novel. Samuel Richardson is called the father of sentimental novel.
- English Gothic writers associated medieval Gothic architecture and creating an atmosphere where darkness dominated day and night. The pictures are full of terror having harsh laws of human nature enforced on certain characters by torture.
- The psychological novel is the product of modern outlook chiefly explored by the Georgians—Aldous Huxley, D. H. Lawrence, Virginia Woolf and James Joyce.
- The Victorian age was growing in industrialization and scientific researches in its last phase. The trend of loss of faith and questioning gave birth to two tendencies: one to praise and hail the growth of science; and the other, to hold it in sarcasm.

1.7 KEY TERMS

- **Fiction:** Fiction is the classification for any story, or element of a story, derived from imagination and not based strictly on history or fact.
- **Novel:** A novel is a long narrative, normally in prose, which describes fictional characters and events, usually in the form of a sequential story.

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- **Short story:** It is a story with a fully developed theme but significantly shorter and less elaborate than a novel.
- **Old wives' tale:** An old wives' tale is a supposed truth which is actually spurious or a superstition. It can be said sometimes to be a type of urban legend, said to be passed down by older women to a younger generation.
- **Picaresque:** It refers to an episodic style of fiction dealing with the adventures of a rough and dishonest but appealing hero.
- **Epistolary Novel:** It refers to a genre of novel in which the novelist expresses the story with the help of documents.
- **Detective Novel:** It refers to a novel which revolves around a crime committed by an unknown person or group of people, which is ultimately solved by the efforts of a detective.
- **Dramatic Novel:** It refers to a piece of literature written in prose. This is presented in the form of dialogue or dramatic story.
- **Sentimental Novel:** It refers to a novel which is characterised as novel of character or psychological novel.

1.8 SELF-ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

Short-Answer Questions

1. What is fiction? What are the different types of fiction? Give examples.
2. Write a short note on the genre of short story.
3. What are the differences between novel and short story?
4. What was the critical response to Vikram Seth's prose novel *A Suitable Boy*?
5. Write a short biographical note on Salman Rushdie.
6. Write a short note on epistolary novels.
7. Briefly mention the main characteristics of detective novels.
8. State the main theme of Henry Fielding's *Jonathan Wild*.
9. Why is James Joyce considered as one of the most dominating experimentalists?
10. What are psychological novels?
11. Name some of the famous works of historical fiction.
12. Why is Henry Fielding considered as a pioneer of realism in English literature?
13. Write a short note on science fiction.

Long-Answer Questions

1. Discuss the main theme of James Joyce's *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*.
2. Give your estimation of the Victorian novel.
3. Discuss the evolution of detective genre as a major form of novels.
4. Analyse the contribution of Henry Fielding in the development of the novel.
5. Explain the concept of Gothic genre.
6. Discuss the contribution of authors such as Virginia Woolf and D H Lawrence in developing psychological novels.
7. Why is Samuel Richardson known as 'the father of sentimental novel'? Discuss.

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1.9 FURTHER READING

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UNIT 2 JANE AUSTEN AND JOHN BUNYAN

Jane Austen and
John Bunyan

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Structure

- 2.0 Introduction
- 2.1 Objectives
- 2.2 Jane Austen: About the Author
- 2.3 *Pride and Prejudice*: An Overview
- 2.4 *Pride and Prejudice*: Important Characters
 - 2.4.1 Critical Appreciation
- 2.5 First Impressions to *Pride and Prejudice*
 - 2.5.1 *Pride and Prejudice* as a Domestic Novel
- 2.6 John Bunyan: About The Author
- 2.7 *The Pilgrim's Progress*: An Overview
 - 2.7.1 John Bunyan's *The Pilgrim's Progress* as a Religious Allegory
 - 2.7.2 Women in *The Pilgrim's Progress*
 - 2.7.3 The Writing Style in *The Pilgrim's Progress*
 - 2.7.4 Symbols in *The Pilgrims Progress*
 - 2.7.5 Other Ideas in *The Pilgrim's Progress*
- 2.8 Answers to 'Check Your Progress'
- 2.9 Summary
- 2.10 Key Terms
- 2.11 Self-Assessment Questions and Exercises
- 2.12 Further Reading

2.0 INTRODUCTION

Jane Austen was one of the greatest woman novelists of the nineteenth century. She was the daughter of a humble clergyman living at Stevenson, a little village among the Chalk hills of South England. Her full length novels are *Sense and Sensibility*, *Pride and Prejudice*, *Mansfield Park*, *Northanger Abbey*, *Emma* and *Persuasion*.

Pride and Prejudice is a novel of manners by Jane Austen, first published in 1813. The story follows the main character, Elizabeth Bennet, as she deals with issues of manners, upbringing, morality, education, and marriage in the society of the landed gentry of the British Regency. Elizabeth is the second of five daughters of a country gentleman living near the fictional town of Meryton in Hertfordshire, near London.

The Pilgrim's Progress actually has two publication dates, corresponding to the two books that comprise it. The first book was published in 1678 and had the title *The Pilgrim's Progress: From This World to That Which Is to Come, Delivered Under the Similitude of a Dream*. It tells the story of the spiritual journey of the protagonist named Christian from the City of Destruction to the Celestial City (meaning heaven). John Bunyan (1628– 1688), is the author of *The Pilgrim's Progress*. He is one of the most famous preachers in English history as well as a popular British author.

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2.1 OBJECTIVES

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

- Analyse Jane Austen as a novelist
- Describe the major themes and events of *Pride and Prejudice*
- List the significant works of John Bunyan
- Examine the position of women in *The Pilgrim's Progress*

2.2 JANE AUSTEN: ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Jane Austen was one of the supreme artists in fiction. She was a highly sophisticated artist. In the opinion of the critic, W.L. Cross, 'She is one of the sincerest examples of our literature of art for art's sake.' Her experience was meagre and insignificant, but from it sprang an art finished in every detail, filled with life and meaning. She possessed the magic touch and a talent for miniature painting. No doubt her range was limited, but her touch was firm and true. She use a 'little bit two inches wide of ivory' and she worked on it 'with no fine a brush as produces little effect after much labour.'

Jane Austen was a very careful artist. She wrote her novels with care, constantly revising them. There was nothing in her novels that did not have a clearly defined reason, and did not contribute to the plot, the drama of feelings of the moral structure. She knew precisely what she wanted to do and she did it in the way that suited best.

Her Limited Range

The range of Jane Austen's novels was limited. She drew all her material from her own experience. She never went outside her experience, with the result that all her scenes belonged to South England where she had spent a considerable period of her life. Austen exploited with unrivalled expertness the potentialities of a seemingly narrow mode of existence. From the outset she limited her view of the world that she knew and the influences that she saw at work.

Jane Austen defined her own boundaries and never stepped beyond them. These limitations were self-imposed and she always remained within the range of her imaginative inspiration and personal experience. The characters of the novel are neither of very high nor of very low estate, and they have no great adventures. A picnic, a dance, amateur theatricals, or at the most an elopement are some outstanding events. The stories and events are told from a woman's point of view and deals only with such persons and events that naturally come within the range of her novels. Lord David Cecil, a British biographer and historian remarks, 'Jane Austen obeys the rule of all imagination composition; that she stays within the range of her imaginative inspiration. A work of art is born of the union of the artist's experience and imagination. It is his first obligation, therefore, to choose themes within the range of this experience. Now Jane Austen's imaginative range was in some respect a very limited one. It was, in the first place, condoned to

human begins in their personal relations. Man in relation to god, to politics, to abstract ideas, passed her by. It was only when she saw him with his family and his neighbours that her creative impulse began to stir to activity.'

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Jane Austen was finely alive to her limitations 'and out of these unpromising materials, Jane Austen composed novels that came near to artistic perfection. No other writer of fiction has ever achieved such great results by such insignificant means; none other has, upon material so severely limited, expanded such beauty, imaginary and precision of workmanship.'

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Fig 2.1 Jane Austen

Lack of Passion

Jane Austen's novels do not represent stormy passions and high tragedy of emotional life. She was primarily concerned with the comedy of domestic life. But with her very mental makeup she was incapable of writing a tragedy or romance. Jane Austen was absolutely incapable of writing adventurous tales dealing with romantic reveries and death scenes.

Austen chose a limited background for her novels. Her novels are recognized as 'domestic' or 'the tea-table' novels and the reader seeking anything like high romance in her works would be disappointed. There is hardly any feeling for external nature in her stories and there is little passion in her pictures of life. Whatever language of emotion is used, is forced and conventional. The kind of life that she has depicted is the one which she had put in the mouth of Mr. Bennet in *Pride and Prejudice*. 'For what do we live but to make sport for our neighbours and to laugh at them in our turn?'

Her Realism

Jane Austen was a supreme realist. Her stories are all drawn from the life that she knew. Emma tells us of a delightful girl who is as she was in the years when Napoleon was emperor. The ordinary commonplace incidents and the day-to-day experience formed the warp and woof of her novels. Sir Walter Scott wrote in his diary that the talent of Jane Austen as a realist was the 'most wonderful' he had ever met with. 'That young lady had a talent for describing involvements, feelings and characters of ordinary life which is to me the most wonderful I have ever met with.'

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Jane Austen described the English country scene with skill and fidelity. She gives a vivid and glowing picture of the social manners and customs of the eighteenth century. She created numerous realistic characters. Jane Austen is nearer to life than any of the earlier novelists. Speaking of Jane Austen's age, the critic G.E. Milton wrote: 'Jane Austen was the first to draw exactly what she saw around her in a humdrum country life, and to discard all incidents, all adventures, all grotesque types, for perfect simplicity.'

Plot Construction

Austen's great skill lies in plot-construction. Her skillfully constructed plots are really the highest objects of artistic perfection. Her novels have an exactness of structure and symmetry of form. All the incidents that are introduced have their particular meanings.

Jane Austen's plots are not simple but compound. They do not compromise barely the story of the hero and the heroine. In *Pride and Prejudice* for instance, there are several pairs of lovers and their stories form the component parts of the plot. In the novels of Jane Austen the parts are so skillfully fused together as to form one compact whole.

In the plots of Jane Austen action is more or less eliminated. Action in her novels consists in little visits, morning calls, weddings, shopping expeditions, or the quizzing of new arrivals. These small actions and incidents go to make up the plots of Jane Austen's novels. Her novels are not novels of action, but of conversation. The place of action is taken up by conversation and scene after scene is built up by the power of conversations. In *Pride and Prejudice*, for instance, dialogues form the bulk of the novel.

Referring to the great skill of Jane Austen's plot-construction, W.L. Cross remarks in *The Development of the English Novel*: 'No novelist since Fielding has been master of structure. Fielding constructed the novel after the analogy of the ancient drama. *Pride and Prejudice* has not only the humour of Shakespearean comedy, but also its technique.'

Characterization

Jane Austen is a great creator of characters. She has created a picture-gallery filled with so many delightful characters. Her characters are not types but individuals. She portrays human characters with great precision and exactness. Her male characters are almost perfect. She creates living characters both male and female, and draws them in their private aspects.

Jane Austen has an unerring eye for the surface of personality and records accurately the manners, charms and tricks of speech of her characters. Nothing escapes her notice. In this respect she can be compared with her great successor Dickens, who is unique in drawing surface peculiarities. Dickens does not go below the surface while Jane Austen does. She penetrates to the psychological organism underlying speech and manner, and presents the external relation to the internal. In *Pride and Prejudice* the scene wherein Darcy proposes to Elizabeth at Hunsford Parsonage is a fine psychological study. Darcy is outwardly composed

and taciturn, is driven within by a conflict between his love for Elizabeth and hatred for her stupid relations which prevent him from marrying her.

Jane Austen and
John Bunyan

Sir Walter Raleigh wrote of Jane Austen, 'She has a great sympathy for all her characters and their follies and foibles do not annoy her. Jane Austen is never angry with her characters. In *Pride and Prejudice* Mr. Collins and Lady de Bourgh are figures of fun, monstrous puppets of silliness and snobbery, to be elaborated and laughed at.'

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As a Satirist and Moralist

Jane Austen is a satirist as well as moralist. Satire is an element in which Jane Austen lives but there is no trace of the savage indignation in her writings. Her attitude as a satirist is best expressed in the words of Elizabeth when she says: 'I never ridicule what is wise or good. Follies and nonsense, whims and inconsistencies, do divert me, I own, and I laugh at them whenever I can.' It is evident that her satire was sympathetic. Walter Allen, literary critic and novelist rightly points out, 'Jane Austen was a moralist – an eighteenth-century moralist. In some respects, she was the last and finest flower of that century at its quintessential.'

Dramatic Nature of Her Art

Jane Austen developed the dramatic method both in the presentation of her plots and characters. Instead of describing and analysing the characters, she makes them reveal themselves in their action and dialogues. The plot is also carried forward through a succession of short scenes in dialogues. Though keeping the right to comment, she relies more on dialogue and that is her main forte. The plot of *Pride and Prejudice* is dramatic. Baker points out that both the theme and the plot-structure of *Pride and Prejudice* are remarkably dramatic. He divides the novel into five acts of high comedy.

Her Humour

Jane Austen's attitude towards life, presented in her novels, is that of a humorist, 'I dearly love a laugh', says Elizabeth in *Pride and Prejudice*, and this statement equally applies to the novelist. She laughs at follies and nonsense, whims and inconsistencies. Folly is the chief source of laughter in the novels of Jane Austen and she creates comic characters who provoke nothing but laughter. Her comic characters are Mrs. Bennet, Sir Walter Eliot, Mrs. Norris, Mr. Collins and Mr. Woodhouse. She laughs at each one of them because of their foolishness and foolish actions. Irony is a conspicuous aspect of Jane Austen's humour. There is enough of verbal irony in her novels.

Style

Jane Austen rendered a great service to the English novel by developing a flexible, smooth-flowing prose style. She is sometimes a shade artificial. But at her best her prose moves nimbly and easily and enables her narrative to proceed onward without any obstruction. 'It does not rise to very great heights, being almost monotonous in its pedestrian sameness except when relieved by an occasional epigram or well-turned aphorism. It achieves its greatest triumphs in dialogue. It is not a prose of

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enthusiasm or exaltation. But it is wonderfully suited to dry satiric unfolding of the hopes and disappointments of the human heart.'

W.L. Cross aptly remarks, 'The style of Jane Austen cannot be separated from herself or her method. It is the natural easy flowing garment of her mind, delighting inconsistencies and infinite detail. It is so peculiarly her own that one cannot trace in it with any degree of certainty of the course of her reading.'

Jane Austen is undoubtedly the greatest woman novelist as Shakespeare is the greatest dramatist. Faithful observation, personal detachment, and fine sense of ironic comedy are among Jane Austen's chief characteristics as a writer. Austen's novels mark a big step forward in the development of English novel. Her range is limited but her touch is firm and true. Her stories may not be exciting and thrilling, but the picture of life that she presents has all the charm of vivid narration. Dialogues form a prominent feature of the narrative of Jane Austen. Her stories are dramatic in nature. Her characters are taken mostly from the aristocracy and upper middle class of the English village and its vicinity. She created numerous realistic characters. She presents remarkable psychological studies of men and women, avoiding passion and prejudice. Her novels have a distinct moral purpose. She is the greatest English novelist because of her craftsmanship, purity and simplicity of her style and themes.

Check Your Progress

1. State one distinction feature of Jane Austen in plot construction of her novels.
2. What is Jane Austen's style of writing?

2.3 *PRIDE AND PREJUDICE: AN OVERVIEW*

Mr. and Mrs. Bennet, and their Five Daughters

Mr. and Mrs. Bennet live in the village of Longbourn which is situated in the County of Hertfordshire. They have five daughters – Jane, Elizabeth, Mary, Catherine (or Kitty), and Lydia. The youngest is fifteen years old. Mrs. Bennet's chief desire in life is to see all her daughters suitably married and happily settled. In fact, the marriages of her daughters have become an obsession with her.

Mrs. Bennet's Expectation

A rich young man by the name of Mr. Charles Bingley takes a palatial house called Netherfield Park on rent. This country house is situated at a distance of about three miles from the village of Longbourn. Mr. Bingley begins to live in this house with his sister, Caroline Bingley, as his housekeeper. He has a friend by the name of Mr. Darcy who joins him at Netherfield Park for a short stay, but continues to stay there for a couple of months. Mrs. Hurst, a married sister of Mr. Bingley, also comes with her husband to stay at Netherfield Park. Mrs. Bennet feels very glad to know that the new occupant of Netherfield Park is a rich bachelor. She tells her husband that there is every possibility that Mr. Bingley would choose one of their daughters as his would-be wife. Mr. Bennet does not share his wife's enthusiasm

though he too would like Mr. Bingley to choose one of his daughters as his future wife. As Mrs. Bennet is a woman of a mean intelligence, and as her talk is very often foolish, Mr. Bennet had got into the habit of making sarcastic remarks to her and about her. In other words, he often pokes fun at her.

*Jane Austen and
John Bunyan*

Mr. Darcy, a Very Proud Man; Elizabeth's Prejudice against Him

An assembly is held periodically in the town of Meryton which is situated at a distance of about one mile from Longbourn. This assembly is a kind of social gathering which is attended by all the respectable families of the town and the neighbouring villages. At the first assembly, which is attended by Mr. Bingley and the other inmates of Netherfield Park, Mr. Bingley feels greatly attracted to Jane Bennet who is the prettiest of the Bennet sisters. He asks Jane for a dance, and she gladly accepts his request. In fact, he dances with her a second time also. Mr. Bingley suggests to his friend Mr. Darcy that the latter should not stand idle but should dance. He suggests that Mr. Darcy should dance with Elizabeth Bennet who is sitting nearby. Mr. Darcy, however, replies that this girl is not attractive enough to tempt him to dance with her. Elizabeth overhears this remark and conceives a dislike for the man who has made such a disparaging remark about her in her hearing. In fact, from this time onwards, she becomes prejudiced against him. Darcy, on his part, is a very proud man. Like Mr. Bingley, Darcy is also a very rich and a handsome bachelor. Any girl in this neighbourhood would be glad to marry him, but this pride is a most disagreeable trait of his character. Mrs. Bennet describes him to her husband as a haughty and horrid man. In fact, everybody at the assembly finds him to be too proud.

Mr. Bingley, Expected to Propose Marriage to Jane

Mr. Bingley's preference for Jane Bennet is noticed by everybody at the assembly. In fact, both Mr. Bingley and Jane have felt mutually attracted to each other. Mr. Bingley's two sisters, Miss Bingley and Mrs. Hurst, also develop a liking for Jane. In fact Miss Bingley invites Jane to dinner at Netherfield Park; and the Bennet family considers this invitation to be a great honour and also a golden opportunity for Jane. Jane goes to Netherfield Park but catches cold on the way because it has been raining. The consequence of her indisposition is that she has to stay on at Netherfield Park for about a week during which Elizabeth also joins her in order to attend upon her. The intimacy between Jane and Mr. Bingley's sisters now increases; and both Jane and Elizabeth begin to think that Mr. Bingley would surely propose marriage to Jane soon. However, Miss Bingley does not feel any liking for Elizabeth. In fact, Miss Bingley begins to feel jealous of Elizabeth.

A Change in Mr. Darcy's Attitude to Elizabeth

In the meantime, Mr. Darcy's attitude towards Elizabeth changes. On a closer acquaintance with her, he finds that there is, after all, a good deal of charm about this girl. She has a very intelligent face; and she has dark eyes which add the charm of her countenance. She also has a pleasing figure and a lively temperament. Mr. Darcy begins actually to like this girl of whom he had originally disapproved even for the purpose of dancing. Miss Bingley begins to dislike Elizabeth all the more because she finds Mr. Darcy feeling inclined towards her (Elizabeth). Miss Bingley

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wants Mr. Darcy for herself. In other words, she hopes that Mr. Darcy might marry her; and therefore Miss Bingley would not like any other girl to catch Mr. Darcy's fancy and thus to come in her way. It is during Elizabeth's enforced stay with her sister Jane at Netherfield Park that Mr. Darcy gets the opportunity to interact with Elizabeth with Mr. Bingley and Miss Bingley participating in those conversations.

Miss Charlotte Lucas, the Daughter of Sir William Lucas

Within a walking distance of Longburn, there lives a family which is on visiting terms with the Bennet family. The head of that family is Sir William Lucas, and he lives in a house, which he has named 'Lucas Lodge' with his wife and several children, the eldest of whom is Charlotte Lucas, aged twenty-seven years. Charlotte is a great friend of Elizabeth; and they always like to talk to each other frankly.

Charlotte expresses to Elizabeth her view that Mr. Bingley has felt greatly attracted by Jane and might marry her if Jane encourages him and reciprocates his interest in her. Elizabeth agrees with this view.

Elizabeth's Continuing Prejudice and Darcy's Continuing Pride

Elizabeth finds herself no closer to Mr. Darcy. If anything, the rift between them has become wider. Mr. Darcy would certainly like to marry Elizabeth but he finds that she belongs to much lower status than he does, and he, therefore, finds it most improper on his part to marry a girl of that status. Elizabeth continuing to harbour her original prejudice against Mr. Darcy does not show any special attention to him. In fact, in the course of a conversation, Elizabeth says to him that he has a strong tendency to hate everybody, while he says in reply that she has a strong tendency deliberately to misunderstand everybody.

Mr. Collins's Proposal of Marriage, Rejected by Elizabeth

Mr. Collins now appears on the scene at Longburn. He is a cousin of Mr. Bennet; and he is the man to whom Mr. Bennet's whole property is entailed. On Mr. Bennet's death, Mr. Collins would inherit Mr. Bennet's property because Mr. Bennet has no male issue. On Mr. Bennet's death, therefore, Mrs. Bennet and her daughters would find themselves impoverished. Mr. Collins comes on a visit to the Bennet family, his intention being to choose one of the Bennet sisters and propose marriage to her. As Jane is expected by everybody to marry Mr. Bingley, Mr. Collins makes a proposal of marriage to Elizabeth. Elizabeth, however, has found Mr. Collins to be an oddity, that is, a queer kind of man. Mr. Collins speaks a good deal about his patroness, Lady Catherine de Bourgh who has been kind enough to him to confer living upon him and appoint him the rector at Hunsford. The manner in which he talks about Lady Catherine shows him to be an accomplished flatterer. At the same time, he has too high an opinion of himself. Elizabeth, therefore, rejects Mr. Collins.

Elizabeth's Prejudice Deepened by Mr. Wickham's Account

Another character now enters the story. He is Mr. George Wickham, an officer in the militia regiment which is stationed near the town of Merytown. Mr. Wickham and Mr. Darcy had known each other since their boyhood because Mr. Wickham's

father was the steward to Mr. Darcy's father. Mr. Wickham has certain grievances against Mr. Darcy, though these grievances are baseless and show only Mr. Wickham's ill-will towards Mr. Darcy. In the course of a social gathering, Mr. Wickham gets acquainted with Elizabeth and tells her his grievances against Mr. Darcy, emphasizing the fact that Mr. Darcy is a very handsome man and whose talk is very interesting. In fact, she fancies herself as being in love with Mr. Wickham. If Mr. Wickham were to propose marriage to her, she would probably have accepted the proposal. In any case, she now feels further prejudiced against Mr. Darcy because of Mr. Wickham's tale of injustices and wrongs which, according to his account, he has suffered at Mr. Darcy's hands. At the ball which Mr. Bingley has arranged at Netherfield Park, Elizabeth is told both by Mr. Bingley and Miss Bingley that Mr. Wickham is an undesirable man, and that he seems to have told many lies to her about Mr. Darcy; but Elizabeth is not convinced by what she is told by them. She cannot believe that Mr. Wickham could have told any lies. In this, of course, she is badly deceived because later she discovers the reality of this man.

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Mr. Collins, Married to Miss Charlotte Lucas

Mr. Collins visits Longbourn again. Having come into contact with Miss Charlotte Lucas, he decides to propose marriage to her. He is very anxious to get married because Lady Catherine has been pressing him to get married, and because he thinks that a clergyman should set an example of his marriage to his parishioners. So he proposes marriage to Miss Charlotte Lucas who is only too pleased by this proposal because having already attained the age of twenty-seven, she is very keen to get married at the earliest opportunity. And thus, Mr. Collins and Miss Charlotte Lucas get married. Mr. Collins takes his newly wedded wife to the personage at Hunsford where Lady Catherine is quite pleased to meet the reactor's wife.

A Setback to Jane's Hope of Marrying Mr. Bingley

Instead of receiving a proposal of marriage from Mr. Bingley, Jane now receives a letter from Miss Bingley informing her that all the inmates of Netherfield Park are leaving for London. This piece of information comes as a great blow to Jane's hopes. Then Miss Bingley writes another letter to Jane, this time from London. Miss Bingley, through this letter, informs Jane that Bingley and the others might not return to Netherfield Park. Mr. Bingley is thinking of marrying Mr. Darcy's sister, Georgiana, who is a very beautiful and highly accomplished girl. Thus, Jane finds that her hopes of marrying Mr. Bingley have been dashed to letter, feels as disappointed and distressed as Jane herself. Elizabeth is deeply attached to Jane; and therefore, she fully shares all anxieties and joys of Jane.

Elizabeth's Visit to Hunsford

Elizabeth now pays a visit to Charlotte at Hunsford. She goes there in the company of Charlotte's father, Sir William Lucas, and Charlotte's younger sister, Maria. Charlotte introduces her friend and her relatives to Lady Catherine de Bourgh. Lady Catherine is a very proud woman and takes every opportunity to impress upon others the fact that she is socially superior to them. Lady Catherine invites

them all to a dinner at her house ('Rosings Park') which is a splendid mansion and splendidly furnished. Sir William and Maria are deeply impressed and awed by the splendour around them; but Elizabeth remains calm and composed.

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Elizabeth's Rejection of Mr. Darcy's Proposal of Marriage

A new development now takes place. Mr. Darcy, accompanied by a cousin, Colonel Fitzwilliam, comes on a brief visit to Lady Catherine who is Mr. Darcy's and Colonel Fitzwilliam's aunt. And now the stage is set for another meeting between Mr. Darcy and Elizabeth. At a party which is held by Lady Catherine at her house, Elizabeth plays piano and also has much conversation with Colonel Fitzwilliam who impresses her as a very kind man. Mr. Darcy and Colonel Fitzwilliam now begin to call at the personage daily to meet the inmates. However, Mr. Darcy's chief interest in paying these visit is to meet Elizabeth. Actually, Mr. Darcy is now more in love with Elizabeth than he had been before. And so one day he makes a proposal of marriage to her. However, in the course of making this proposal, he emphasizes on her social inferiority to him, and he makes her conscious of the fact that he is doing her a favour by proposing marriage to her. As a self-respecting girl, Elizabeth does not like the condescending and patronizing tone in which Mr. Darcy proposes marriage to her. She, therefore, declines his proposal. She gives two other reasons for her refusal. One is that Mr. Darcy had been unjust and cruel to Mr. Wickham; and the other is that Mr. Darcy had advised Mr. Bingley not to marry Jane. The information about Mr. Darcy's having obstructed Mr. Bingley's proposal of marriage to Jane was given to Elizabeth by Colonel Fitzwilliam who, however, is not himself aware of the exact particulars regarding Mr. Darcy's intervention in Mr. Bingley's plans of marriage. Elizabeth has not been able to infer the correct situation from Colonel Fitzwilliam's talk.

Mr. Darcy's Defense against Elizabeth's Charges

On the following day Mr. Darcy hands over a letter to Elizabeth. On-going through the letter, Elizabeth is filled with astonishment. This letter contains Mr. Darcy's defense of himself against the charges which Elizabeth had levelled against him on the previous day. In this letter, Mr. Darcy states the true facts about Mr. Wickham, exposing that man as a most unreliable fellow and a rogue. In this letter he also admits that he had prevented Mr. Bingley from proposing marriage to Jane but he defends himself by saying that he had done so under a genuine belief that Jane was not really in love with Mr. Bingley. This letter produces a deep effect on Elizabeth. In fact, her reading through this letter marks a turning-point in her attitude towards Mr. Darcy. She begins to think that she had been totally wrong in her judgment of Mr. Darcy's character and also that she had grossly mistaken in having relied upon Mr. Wickham's account of his relations with Mr. Darcy. At the same time, Elizabeth finds that Mr. Darcy's letter, though containing a defense of himself, is written in a tone, which is insolent and haughty. Thus, Mr. Darcy's pride still remains intact, though Elizabeth's prejudice has begun to crumble.

No Development in the Jane-Bingley Affair

Mr. Darcy leaves Rosings Park for London before Elizabeth can take any action on the letter which he had handed over to her. On her way home, she stops in

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London for a day with her uncle and aunt Mr. and Mrs. Gardiner with whom Jane has already been staying for the past three months. Although Jane had been staying in London for such a long period, she had not been able to meet Mr. Bingley who also lives there. Jane had during this period called on Miss Bingley but even she had shown some indifference to Jane. This creates an impression in Jane's mind that perhaps she is now permanently alienated from Mr. Bingley whom, at one time, she had hoped to marry. Both sisters now return home. Elizabeth informs Jane of what had passed between Mr. Darcy and herself. She also tells Jane of Mr. Wickham's real character as revealed in Mr. Darcy's letter to her. Jane feels shocked to know that such a handsome and smart man as Mr. Wickham possesses a wicked heart.

Lydia, Invited by Mrs. Forster to Brighton

The militia regiment stationed near the town of Meryton has now shifted near the city of Brighton. Lydia feels very depressed because she would no longer be able to lead a gay life. However, Mrs. Forster, the wife of the colonel of that regiment invites Lydia to accompany her to Brighton. Lydia feels delighted by Mrs. Forster's invitation because, by going to Brighton, she can continue her contacts with the officers. Elizabeth privately urges her father not to give so much freedom to Lydia. Her father, however, does not wish to stop Lydia from going there.

An Unexpected Meeting between Elizabeth and Mr. Darcy

Mr. and Mrs. Gardiner come to Longbourn on their way to Derbyshire where they intend to go on a pleasure trip. They would leave their two children with the Bennet family, and themselves proceed to Derbyshire. They had previously arranged with Elizabeth that she would also accompany them on their trip. Originally, they had wanted to go to the Lake District, but subsequently they had changed their minds. In any case, Elizabeth now goes with them. On the way they pay a visit to Pemberley House which is tourist attraction. Pemberley House is a splendid mansion and belongs to Mr. Darcy. When going round this great country house, they happen to meet Mr. Darcy himself. Mr. Darcy was not expected at the house till the following day when he was to arrive here from London; but he has come a day earlier because of a change in his schedule. Mr. Darcy greets Elizabeth most cordially and shows a lot of courtesy to her uncle and aunt. There is not the least touch of arrogance in Mr. Darcy's attitude at this time. Both Mr. and Mrs. Gardiner's get the feeling that Mr. Darcy is in love with Elizabeth. On the next day, Mr. Darcy calls on Mr. and Mrs. Gardiner and Elizabeth at the inn where they are staying in the nearby town of Lambton. He brings his sister Georgiana with him. This visit further strengthens Mr. and Mrs. Gardiner's belief that Mr. Darcy is in love with Elizabeth. Elizabeth too gets the same impression.

The News of Lydia's Elopement with Mr. Wickham

Now Elizabeth has also begun to feel attracted towards Mr. Darcy. This attraction had begun at Hunsford after Elizabeth had gone through Mr. Darcy's letter. It is now likely that Mr. Darcy would renew his proposal of marriage to Elizabeth. But an unexpected event occurs to disturb the peace of the Bennet family. Colonel Forster informs Mr. Bennet by an express letter that Lydia, who was staying with

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Mrs. Forster in Bridgton, had eloped with Mr. Wickham whom she had been meeting frequently. When Elizabeth learns this sad news from a letter written to her by Jane, she tells her uncle and aunt that she must get back home to provide whatever comfort she can to her parents in this crisis. She also tells Mr. Darcy of what has happened.

Elizabeth, Back at Longbourn

Mr. and Mrs. Gardiner now cut short their holiday and return with Elizabeth to Longbourn. Mrs. Bennet is almost crazy with grief at Lydia's misconduct and at the disgrace which Lydia has brought to the family. Mr. Gardiner now also proceeds to London in order to help Mr. Bennet in his efforts to trace Lydia. After a few days Mr. Bennet returns to Longbourn, having failed in his efforts to trace Lydia or Mr. Wickham. Mrs. Gardiner now leaves Longbourn with her children, and joins her husband in London where they have their home. Mr. Bennet feels most repentant of having always indulged Lydia's desires and whims.

After a few days, Mr. Bennet receives a letter from Mr. Gardiner. According to the information contained in this letter, Mr. Wickham and Lydia have been traced and are staying in London without having got married. Mr. Wickham has said that he would marry Lydia only on certain conditions. These conditions include the payment of a certain amount of money to him. At the same time, Mr. Gardiner has informed Mr. Bennet that everything is being settled with Mr. Wickham and that Mr. Bennet should not worry about the welfare of Lydia. A marriage duly takes place after Mr. Wickham's demand for money has been met. The Bennet family gets the impression that the money has been paid by Mr. Gardiner. But Elizabeth soon learns from her aunt, Mrs. Gardiner, that the whole settlement had been arrived at by the intervention of Mr. Darcy, and that the entire money had been paid by Mr. Darcy himself. This information produces a profound effect upon Elizabeth regarding the character of Mr. Darcy who has done a great service and a great favour to the Bennet family by saving the good name of the family. But for Mr. Darcy's intervention, Mr. Wickham would never have married Lydia but would have forsaken her. Lydia would in that case have been a deserted girl with a shameful past.

Mr. Bingley's Proposal of Marriage to Jane

A change now takes place in Mr. Bingley. This change is as sudden as the change which had been responsible for his having given up his intention to marry Jane. Accompanied by Mr. Darcy, he now goes to Netherfield Park and gets in touch with the Bennet family. He makes a proposal of marriage to Jane which she most gladly accepts.

Elizabeth's Acceptance of Darcy's New Proposal of Marriage

Lady Catherine de Bough now pays a visit to Longbourn and has a private interview with Elizabeth. She warns Elizabeth not to agree to marry Mr. Darcy in case he makes a proposal of marriage to her. Lady Catherine says that Mr. Darcy has to marry her own daughter, Miss Ann de Bourgh, and that Elizabeth should, therefore, not come in the way. Elizabeth, however, refuses to give Lady Catherine any

promise in this connection. After a few days, Mr. Darcy comes to Longbourn and proposes marriage to Elizabeth. By this time Elizabeth's attitude towards Mr. Darcy has undergone a complete change. All her prejudices against him have disappeared. She now feels that he would be the right kind of husband for her. She, therefore, accepts his proposal without the least demur or hesitation. Thus, Mr. Darcy whose pride has by now completely melted away, and Elizabeth whose prejudices have completely disappeared, are united in wedlock. In fact, the marriage of Mr. Darcy and Elizabeth takes place on the same day as the marriage of Mr. Bingley and Jane.

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Check Your Progress

3. Where do Mr. and Mrs. Bennet live?
4. Who is Mr. Collins in *Pride and Prejudice*?

2.4 PRIDE AND PREJUDICE: IMPORTANT CHARACTERS

Character sketch of some of the important characters of *Pride and Prejudice* has been discussed in this section.

1. Elizabeth Bennet

Her physical charm: Of all her heroines, Jane Austen likes Elizabeth Bennet most. During the last one century and a half, countless readers and critics have fallen in love with her. Elizabeth is certainly not as beautiful as Jane, still she is graceful and charming. There is something indefinable about her charm which cannot be easily analysed. Her beauty does not strike at first sight but takes time to make impression. Darcy does not find her beautiful when he first meets her. She is tolerable. Darcy does not find her beautiful enough to tempt him. But later Darcy says that she is 'one of the handsomest women of my acquaintance.' Elizabeth is a complex character.

Understanding of human nature: Elizabeth has a good understanding of people. She claims that she fully understands Bingley and she is right. She looks through the mask of friendship of the Bingley sisters and discovers their conceit. She had known Mr. Collins to be an affected fool from the first letter he had written to them. She alerts her father to the impending dangers of Lydia's flirtations. She is aware of the vulgarity of her mother, the simplicity of Jane, the pedantry of Mary and the frivolity of Kitty and Lydia. It does not take her long to feel the cynical irresponsibility of her father. Elizabeth, however, fails to understand some intricate people like Charlotte Lucas, George Wickham and Darcy. Charlotte is an intimate friend. Her feeling of affection blinds Elizabeth to her demerits. In case of Darcy, his slighting remark, in the beginning of the novel, about her being just 'tolerable' hurts her pride. This makes her prejudiced against him. As a result of this prejudice, she misunderstands every word and every action of his. Wickham appears, she misunderstands every word and every action of his. Wickham appears graceful

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and charming. Being singled out by such a charming officer gratifies her and she succumbs to his charms.

Willingness to learn: Elizabeth is willing to learn. The process of her self-awakening begins after she reads Darcy's letter. She begins to read it with a strong prejudice against him. But gradually she realizes the truth of his statements. She now feels mortified at her spiritual blindness. She grows absolutely ashamed of herself. She realizes that she had been blind and prejudiced. This dramatic moment of self-revelation gradually brings about a total awareness of reality. She comes to know that Wickham is a charming unprincipled flirt. She begins to understand that Darcy is exactly the man who, in nature and talent, would most suit her. Her prejudice was wrong, but there was an element of honesty about it. And we love her for her honesty of mind.

Her moral courage: Elizabeth has great moral courage. She declines two marriage proposals: both undesirable but both attractive in their own way. Her father's estate is entailed on Mr. Collins. Her connections are very low and vulgar. Her mother warns her that she will not be able to maintain her after her father's death. Mr. Collins's proposal at least promises the comforts and security of a home, if no love. Mr. Darcy's proposal is still more attractive because she realizes that it would be a great honour to be the mistress of Pemberley. In these circumstances, it needed great moral and spiritual courage to reject these proposals. But Elizabeth did not want to marry where there was no love. She is indeed gifted with rare strength of character.

Elizabeth shows her strength of character in other matters also. Whenever she faces an act of absurdity, she asserts her independence of mind. She faces Lady Catherine with calm composure and unruffled dignity. When this lady tries to pressurize her to promise that she will not marry Darcy, Elizabeth refuses to be browbeaten by her. She never loses an argument. She is really a spirited and independent girl. She asserts her individually whenever required.

Her sense or wit and humour: Elizabeth is gifted with an irrepressible sense of wit and humour. Mr. Bennet is also very witty but he is often cynical. Elizabeth's wit pleases but it never hurts. In her brilliance of wit she reminds us of Rosalind in Shakespeare's *As You Like It*. There runs a strain of innocent raillery in all her conversation. Incorrigibly humorous, she does not spare anyone. She is capable of laughing as much at herself as at others. She loves Jane dearly but does not spare her from her raillery. She cannot help laughing even in most serious situations in life. When Elizabeth gives Jane the news of her engagement to Darcy, Jane asks, 'But are you certain – forgive the questions – are you quite certain that you can be happy with him?' Elizabeth, with cool and delightful irony, replies, 'There can be no doubt of that. It is settled between us already that we are to be the happiest couple in the world.' But she never oversteps the limits of propriety. There is no doubt that Elizabeth's wit, besides being refined and subtle, never outruns discretion.

Her warm-heartedness: Another quality of Elizabeth is her selflessness and warm-heartedness. The concern she shows for Jane during her stay at Netherfield, the

way she walks all the way to Netherfield speaks well for her. She feels concerned at Bingley's removal from the neighbourhood and is genuinely happy when Jane is engaged to him.

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Elizabeth is indeed a lovable heroine. Of all Jane Austen's heroines, she impresses and delights us most. We can conclude with Shakespeare's words: 'Time cannot wither her nor custom stale her charm.'

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2. Mr. Darcy

Darcy is the hero of *Pride and Prejudice*. He is the owner of the Pemberley estate worth ten thousand pounds a year. He is twenty seven, tall, handsome and of majestic appearance. He is one of the complex characters in the novel. While comparing Bingley and Darcy, Jane Austen tell us that in judgement and understanding, Darcy is definitely the better of the two.

His pride: The first characteristic that we note about Darcy is his pride. It is evident right from the moment he makes his appearance. He refuses to be introduced to any other lady except the two in his own party. He is declared to be 'the proudest, most disagreeable man in the world.' Several instances of his pride can be cited. He refuses to dance with Elizabeth: 'She is tolerable but not handsome enough to tempt me.' In Chapter 11, he tells her, 'I cannot forget the follies and vices of others so soon as I ought, nor their offences against myself. My temper would perhaps be called resentful.' When he makes his first proposal to Elizabeth, his tone is very proud and haughty.

However, there are attempts to justify his pride. Charlotte Lucas does not feel offended by it: 'One cannot wonder that so very fine a young man, with family fortune, everything in his favour should think highly of himself. If I may so express it, he has a right to be proud.' Wickham tells Elizabeth that 'almost all his actions may be traced to pride, and pride has often been his best friend.' Some characters in the novel think that his pride is the result of his shyness. But after Darcy has been engaged to Elizabeth, he himself confesses his having been proud:

'I was given good principles, but left to follow them in pride and conceit. Unfortunately, an only son (for many years, an only child), I was spoiled by my parents, who, though good themselves, allowed, encouraged, almost taught me to be selfish and overbearing – to care for none beyond my own family circle, to think meanly of all the rest of the world, to wish at least to think meanly of their sense and worth compared with my own.'

He is shy, but his pride is not just his shyness. And he is not just proud; he is even prejudiced against other people. Hence, when he first insults Elizabeth, he is motivated by his prejudice against the rural people who are much beneath him in social status.

Humbled by love: Darcy falls in love with Elizabeth quite early in the novel. Darcy feels that she is rendered intelligent by the beautiful expression of her dark eyes. He is also attracted by her pleasing figure and the easy playfulness of her manners. He gets an opportunity to observe her more closely at Netherfield where she has gone to nurse the ailing Jane. He notices her exuberance of spirits, and her

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warm-heartedness. He is impressed by her intellectual sharpness and her sparkling wit. Darcy next meets her when she is on a visit to Hunsford. He repeatedly calls at the parsonage. He is again struck by her refinement and his sense of appreciation is shown in his compliment. 'You could not have always been at Longbourn.' no duplicity about him. In his proposal of Elizabeth, he does not hide the struggle he has undergone before he finally professes his love. When he is rejected by Elizabeth, he is not ashamed of his feelings. He makes it clear: 'But disguise of every sort is my abhorrence.'

His love and kindness: Darcy's relationship with Bingley, Georgiana and his tenants gives other side of his character. It is his pride and haughty manners that are shown aside when he is in Elizabeth's company. But it is quite another Darcy that others speak of and admire. To Bingley he is an esteemed friend. He has the highest regard for his opinion and judgement. To Georgiana, Darcy is a very loving brother, very eager to fulfill every desire of hers. To his tenants 'he is the best landlord and the best master that ever lived; not like the wild youngmen now-a-days, who think of nothing but themselves.'

Some critics feel that Darcy's transformation in the second half of the novel is incredible. They regard him as one of Jane Austen's serious failures. They attribute this failure to either her immaturity or to her general weakness in portraying male characters. The fact is that the action is unfolded from Elizabeth's point of view. We see Darcy through Elizabeth's eyes, and her eyes are prejudiced. We have to put together all the qualities of his character to get a correct picture of his personality. The writer has emphasized his negative qualities in the first half of the novel, but his inherent goodness cannot be hidden for long. His pride is slowly humbled through the love of Elizabeth. Darcy's portrayal in no way can be seen unconvincing.

It is Elizabeth's angry refusal of his proposal that marks the beginning of the great change in him. Elizabeth charges him with having broken Jane's heart and having ruined Wickham's life. She also accuses him of not behaving in a 'gentleman-like manner'. This accusation humbles him. The next time, they come together at Pemberley, he takes pains to behave like a gentleman. He wishes to be introduced to the Gardiners. He requests Elizabeth to allow him to introduce her to his sister Georgiana. After Lydia's elopement with Wickham, he saves the family from disgrace. He makes provisions for the man he hates, pays off his debts, purchases him a new commission in the army and persuades him to marry Lydia. All this, he does out of his love for Elizabeth. He himself admits the miracles Elizabeth's love has brought about in him:

'What do I not owe you? You taught me a lesson, hard indeed at first, but most advantageous. By you I was properly humbled.'

His integrity of character: Darcy appears to be a man of principle. There lies beneath all his actions a conformity with high standards of conduct. There is absolutely no duplicity about him. In his proposal of Elizabeth, he does not hide the struggle he has undergone before he finally professes his love. When he is rejected by Elizabeth, he is not ashamed of his feelings. He makes it clear: 'But disguise of every sort is my abhorrence.'

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2.4.1 Critical Appreciation

Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* is one of the most popular novels in English literature. Even after so many years of its first publication, it continues to remain popular today as well. Austen wrote at a time when women novelists were struggling for acceptance and recognition. *Pride and Prejudice* in a way made a statement on behalf of all women novelists of the time. As the novel is set at the turn of the nineteenth century, it is a typical British family drama around the personal manners and social norms of pre-Victorian England.

There are a few recurrent themes in the novel which are also the centre for most action. To name a few - social status, money and marriage. Women at the turn of the nineteenth century had little individual rights. Their happiness and identity largely depended on the person they married and his social status. They were either dependent on their fathers or their husbands for economic livelihood. This, if analysed deeply is a very materialistic and superficial way of looking at marriage. But this was true in Austen's time and in some cases even now; the criteria might have shifted slightly because of women's emancipation and relative economic independence achieved over the last two centuries.

Courtship in *Pride and Prejudice* is showcased in two opposing dimensions – the thrill of romance and love and the convenience of social status. One can also see budding feminist thought in Austen's narrative, as the norms of courtship of her time reflect inequality between the sexes. This thread of feminism also contributes to the 'living organism' in the novel. According to Kris Berggren (*Marriage of True Minds*, Berggren, 2003, p. 19), Austen's subtext is:

"class and gender injustice characteristic of her time. Women with no family wealth or social connection to offer a prospective suitor often backed into a corner of reluctant consent to a semi-arranged age that least promised a home to keep and social status as somebody's wife. Whether or not she cared for the man or found him attractive—or even

knew him well—could be irrelevant; men and women alike felt the personal unhappiness of such loveless if socially convenient relationships. A widow and her unmarried daughters could be turned out of their home if the husband died and the property was entailed to the closest male relative as was the common practice.”

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We get insights into the psychology of courtship as well as the irrationality associated with romantic love by looking at the development of the relationship between Elizabeth and Darcy. Their first few social encounters show mutual dislike and indifference and are rather cold. Indeed, the characteristics making the title – pride and prejudice – are both so ingrained in Elizabeth’s mind that she misunderstands Mr. Darcy’s dignified and civilized advances towards her. At halfway in the novel Elizabeth receives a letter from Mr. Darcy, which she misreads the first time. It is only upon reading it again in a calmer frame of mind that she was able to “arrive at a closer estimation of the meaning of its words and the intention of its author. This letter functions not only as a turning point in the progress of events but as the focal point of a theme that is devoted only in part to the ways of courtship and marriage and—for it is important to note the incident Austen picks as her image—far more to the reading of texts.” (Bonaparte, 2005)

It would be easy to presume that *Pride and Prejudice* is a novel limited to interpretations of manners, mores, customs and interpersonal relationships. In other words, the question of what constitutes the ‘living organism’ of the novel can only be given a satisfactory answer by reading the novel in unconventional ways, through academic disciplines erstwhile thought of as unrelated to its content. Austen was not previously thought of as a novelist concerned with philosophical questions. Even critics like Gilbert Ryle, “who takes her to be a serious moralist and to be interested in the theory as well as the practical end of morality, begins his analysis of her views by stating that she is not a “philosopher”.” (Bonaparte, 2005) But recent research has challenged this ‘prejudice’ of older scholars and has attempted to set it right. For example, read with scrutiny, the work lends itself to philosophic and epistemological analysis. The epistolary nature of the narrative, where most of the communication between characters happens via the letters they write to each other, is an apt choice for Austen to present her philosophic point of view. Based on the discrepancies between what the characters actually write and what they actually mean, the novel offers scope for linguistic and psychological inquiry. Likewise the discrepancies between what receivers of letters read and what they actually understand is content for this line of inquiry. All these special qualities of the work constitute the ‘living organism’. Further,

“Austen is highly philosophical, alert both to ideas in general and to the currents of her time. What is deceptive is that rarely does she present these theoretically. Mostly her conceptual world is so fully dramatized in her characters and her plots that it can only be inferred from the nature of the action and the language of the narrative. But once in a while we do, in fact, find a moment so abstract as to convince us beyond doubt that Austen’s purpose is philosophical.” (Alavi, 2006, P.27)

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The dominant point of view in the novel is that of women in general, although not necessarily that of Austen's. The memorable first line from the novel serves as evidence for this assertion: "It is a truth universally acknowledged, that a single man in possession of a good fortune, must be in want of a wife". There is an element of wishful thinking in this line, as if women of the era wanted it to be true. It also carries an air of presumption in that it thinks on behalf of men what they would want. Claiming it to be a universal truth is again a little pretentious. But this is not to say that this famous line is an indication of the author's own mistaken preconceptions – either born of pride of her gender or out of ignorance. To the contrary, Austen seems to be using it as a ploy to invoke critical thinking on the part of the reader. The scrupulous reader will ask himself/herself the question, 'Does she sincerely expect her readers to adhere to such a declaration in a gesture of passive acceptance?'. The answer is firmly in the negative, as

"implicit in this initial pronouncement is an invitation to the reader to disagree with the narrative point of view, to dismiss the authorial voice, on this occasion, as a stuffy advocate of bourgeois morality. Austen frequently "reverts to the first person in her fictions" as a way of tendering "an invitation to regard the narrator as a character with opinions of her own". In proffering such an observation at the outset, Austen assumes that her reader is familiar with the tradition of the novel, in particular with the eighteenth-century ideology that frames the genre as a vehicle of moral improvement." (Mathews, 2007)

Moving on to the socio-cultural aspects of the novel, it is fair to claim that class equations are an integral part of its living organism. The complex series of social rules and conventions that the characters follow amply bring to life the quality and atmosphere of the novel's setting. All members of the Bennett family illustrate this quality through their numerous interactions with the outside world. For example, the sisters never fail to address members of their social circle through the titles they've earned – either through inheritance or through individual accomplishment. Lady Catherine de Bourgh is one such member, who also typifies another idiosyncrasy of her aristocratic status, namely, snobbishness. These complex social rules and conventions are also employed for the sake of politeness and civility.

Therefore, to be civil means that the participants are expected to act or respond in a certain manner; there are a set of unspoken norms that ensures that the participant responds in a certain manner. The response, however, is not mechanical. It also reflects the deep beliefs of the participant. In that case, civil response entails not only a person's duty to perform a particular act, but also his or her independence to refuse an action. Austen, therefore, delves into the dichotomy between a universally acknowledged desire and the actual adjustment done in relation to the universal desire.

Check Your Progress

5. Mention one essential trait of Elizabeth.
6. Who is the hero of *Pride and Prejudice*?

2.5 FIRST IMPRESSIONS TO *PRIDE AND PREJUDICE*

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Pride and Prejudice was originally entitled *First Impressions*. When Jane Austen revised the novel, she gave it the present title. The present title is perfectly appropriate and suitable. It does not need any justification. We can only discuss its significance. Jane Austen is not a psychological novelist. She is a painter of social manners. In the present novel, however, she analyses the interaction of the human emotions like pride and prejudice.

In *Pride and Prejudice*, Darcy symbolizes pride. On his very first appearance in the novel, he is declared to be 'the proudest and most disagreeable man in the world.' Wickham tells Elizabeth that almost all of Darcy's action may be traced to pride, but he calls it 'filial pride, his pride in his father now dead', and 'brotherly pride, his pride in his sister Georgiana'. Darcy's pride hurts Elizabeth when he declines Bingley's suggestion to dance with Elizabeth. He remarks, 'She is tolerable but not handsome enough to tempt me.' Elizabeth at once gets prejudiced against him and she resolves to hate him. Darcy's assertion that he cannot forget the vices and follies of others intensifies her prejudice. She begins to misinterpret all his utterances and actions. If Darcy's pride affects his judgement, Elizabeth's prejudice affects hers. Darcy fails to detect the impropriety of Wickham's derogatory statements about Darcy. She allows herself to be imposed upon. So complete is her trust in Wickham that she readily declares Darcy to be hateful.

Their process of self-discovery starts at Rosings. Embarrassed by the vulgarity of his aunt Lady Catherine, Darcy gets a new vision of life. He realizes that the refinement of manners is not the monopoly of a particular class. His rejection at the hands of Elizabeth proves to him the futility of those things in which he took pride. There must be something wrong with his values as he could not please a woman he loved. His rejection completely humbles him. Elizabeth's moment of self-awakening comes when she receives Darcy's letter. She realises the validity of his objections to the Jane-Bingley marriage. She is now ashamed to think that she has been 'blind, partial, prejudiced, absurd'. She was proud of her discernment and understanding, but she has all along been blind. She is now ready to change her notion. Darcy's role in bringing about Lydia's marriage with Wickham overwhelms her. Elizabeth realizes that Darcy is exactly the man who is nature and talent will most suit her. Both of them give up their pride and prejudice and are united in marriage.

2.5.1 *Pride and Prejudice* as a Domestic Novel

Jane Austen has rightly been described as a writer of domestic novel. She is notorious for never going out of the parlour. She makes a very candid confession that for her two or three families in a 'country village' are enough to work with.

Pride and Prejudice deals with the domestic life and aspirations of the Bennets, the Lucases, the Bingleys and the Darcys with scattered references to a few other families. These are all middle class people. The Bennets and the Lucases belong to the lower middle class, while the Bingleys and Darcys are comparatively

affluent. Since they are all landowners, they have nothing to do to earn their living. The usual tensions of working life are absent from their life. *Pride and Prejudice* consists of a ball at Meryton, another at Netherfield, Jane's visit to Netherfield and Elizabeth's visits to the Hunsford Parsonage and the Rosings. Apparently, nothing sensational happens during these visits, except that Jane catches a cold on her way to Netherfield, Elizabeth unexpectedly runs into Darcy during her visit to Pemberley, or Lydia and Wickham elope towards the end of the novel. But even this elopement does not lead to any untoward results. Darcy, who was expected to withdraw after this slur on the Bennets, does nothing of the kind and in fact plays a key role in setting the matters right.

Pride and Prejudice is concerned with husband-hunting. The chief aim for Mrs. Bennet, mother of five marriageable daughters, is to strike suitable matches for them. The Lucas family is confronted with the same problem. Miss Bingley is eager to secure Darcy's hand for herself. Lady Catherine is equally interested in her daughter's marriage with Darcy.

Jane Austen is also interested in discussing the importance of marriage taking place due to intellectual understanding and emotional compatibility, and not just for beauty or for the allurements of money. Mr. Bennet married for beauty and for good looks and soon got disillusioned. His wife had a weak understanding and an illiberal mind. Mr. Bennet sought comfort in his library or in his walks. Charlotte Lucas knows that Mr. Collins is a pompous ass. But she agrees to marry him because he is in a position to offer her financial security. She too never finds real happiness in her life. Lydia is captivated by Wickham's handsomeness. That he is utterly unprincipled is obvious to everybody, for he shifts from Elizabeth to Miss King to Lydia with great felicity. But Lydia prefers to ignore this fact. And she too ruins her life.

The novel also shows the adverse effect of ill-matched marriages on the emotional development of the children. Thus if Mary, Kitty and Lydia are unequal to the demands of life, the responsibility lies primarily with their parents, one of whom is indifferent and irresponsible, the other indulgent and concerned but stupid, Jane too lacks emotional maturity. Even Elizabeth, the best of the lot, barely escapes the ill-effects.

2.6 JOHN BUNYAN: ABOUT THE AUTHOR

The Pilgrim's Progress written by John Bunyan was published in 1678. The work has been identified as 'the prose epic of English Puritanism'¹, 'the epic of itinerant' and 'the epic of poor'². In fact, Bunyan has been referred to as 'Spenser of the people'³. John Bunyan was not someone who would conform to the demands of the state and that is why he was imprisoned for many years as he did not agree to stop preaching beyond the permitted scope of geographical legitimacy and this was against the Conventicle Act of 1593. The popularity of *The Pilgrim's Progress* scholars can be judged from the fact that it is still available in print. Scholars believe that Bunyan's allegory became so famous that at some point this was only second to Bible in terms of its circulation!

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John Bunyan (1628-88) was the eldest son of a tinker⁴. He was born at Elstow, Bedfordshire, England. He has mentioned about his humble origins in his autobiography and it is believed that he has not mentioned about his meagre origin story to gain attention, but to extend his gratitude to god for what he has achieved due to the almighty's blessings. He hardly had any education. Bunyan researchers agree that if he had ever visited school then it could be either the grammar school at Bedford or the one at Houghton Conquest. But it is clear that his association with school must have been for a very brief period. The year 1644 was of great significance for Bunyan. Both his mother and sister (Margaret) died that year; his father got into matrimonial alliance for the third time and in the same year he joined the Parliamentary Army. For the next couple of years, there has been no specific record of him being part of any military expedition. Even though uneventful, his military life exposed him to the religious point of view of certain captains and individuals who served within the army of Oliver Cromwell. They were questioning the roles of all religious authorities. They were supporting and promoting the idea of the individual conscience. This brought him close to Puritan ideas which suggested seeking divine grace on an individual level without the involvement of the public organization.

It is believed that after completing his military tenure he returned to Elstow where he continued his family profession. Bunyan got married twice. His first wife was a poor lady and nothing much is known about her. His second wife was Elizabeth who was significant in pleading his case against being prisoned.

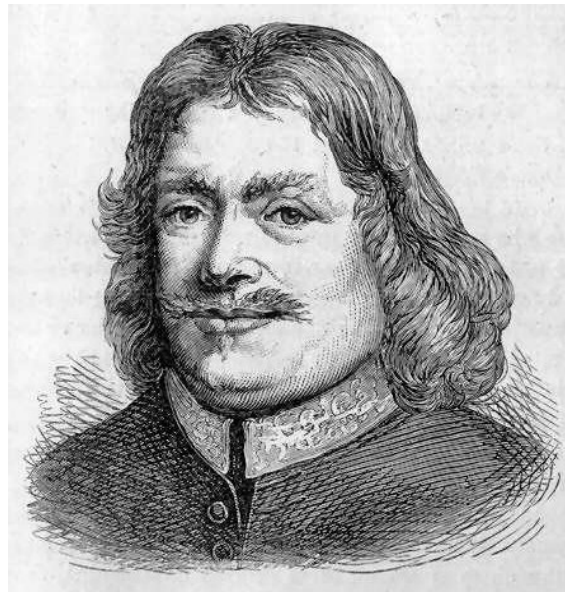


Fig 2.2 John Bunyan

Bunyan's involvement with Puritanism was a gradual process as it is reflected in his autobiography. Bunyan with his spiritual awakening became an active presence in open-communion church and debates related to religion. Soon, Bunyan became a recognized leader among the sectaries. With the Restoration of Charles II, things took a new turn and churches which had enjoyed freedom of worship

and extended some influence on formulation of government policies came to an end abruptly. On 12 November 1660, Bunyan was presented before the local magistrate at Lower Samsell in South Bedfordshire. He was pressed with charges based on an old Elizabethan act which did not allow performing any service which was not in conformity with the norms of the Church of England. But despite being booked under the law, Bunyan refused to assure the magistrate that he will not repeat the offense in future. This led to his being imprisoned in jail for 12 long years.

It was during this imprisonment that Bunyan wrote and published *Grace Abounding*, the spiritual autobiography. *The Pilgrim's Progress* (1678) was also written during his imprisonment phase. His next offering was a realistic novel called *The Life and Death of Mr. Badman* (1680). *The Holy War* was published in 1682 and this was Bunyan's second allegory. *The Pilgrim's Progress, Second Part* was published in the year 1684. *A Book for Boys and Girls* was a children's book that came out in print in 1686.

His writings are laced with human behaviour. They are pitched with awareness and moral values. He was blessed with the talent of introducing concepts of theology and reflecting them in day-to-day experiences. Bunyan wrote with the intention of celebrating his faith and making more people embark on the path of spiritual reawakening. Bunyan died in London in 1688. He was buried in Bunhill Fields.

2.7 THE PILGRIM'S PROGRESS: AN OVERVIEW

The Pilgrim's Progress begins with the narrator defending the story that he is about to unfold. This story is in the form of a dream. According to the narrator, as he fell asleep he dreamt of a man named Christian. Christian, as we are told, was suffering from spiritual anguish. Christian was visited by Evangelist who was a spiritual guide. Evangelist met Christian and asked him to leave the City of Destruction and move to Celestial City or Mount Zion where salvation can be found.

On being instructed by Evangelist, Christian undertakes the journey all by himself as his family refuses to accompany him. On his way he comes across a Worldly Wiseman who advises him to lead a life which was happy and devoid of religion. But Christian does not like the idea. In the course of his journey, he takes shelter at the house of Goodwill. Goodwill suggests to Christian to stop by at Interpreter's home. Here at the Interpreter's home, Christian gains knowledge about faith.

Christian comes across Christ's tomb and cross while walking through the wall of Salvation. Witnessing this vision, Christian's burden falls to the ground. Here a celestial creature gives him a rolled certificate which was needed to enter the Celestial City. But soon Christian falls asleep and somehow loses the certificate. As this certificate was his record to enter the Celestial City, Christian curses himself for being so careless. But soon he recovers it. As he moves forward in his journey, he comes across four mistresses of the Palace Beautiful. They provide him shelter

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during his stay. The four mistresses also provided him with means of defence. Continuing, Christian descends the Valley of Humiliation and confronts Apollyon, the monster. Christian kills Apollyon with a sword and marches towards the desert-like Valley of the Shadow of Death.

Christian comes across a traveller from his hometown named Faithful. Both Christian and Faithful are accompanied by Talkative who is a pilgrim like them. Christian does not like Talkative. Evangelist warns both Faithful and Christian about the treacherous town of Vanity and prophecies that either Christian or Faithful will die in this town.

Christian and Faithful visit the famous fair of vanity. When they do not fall into the trap of temptation they are mocked by the local people. However, unfortunately Christian and Faithful are imprisoned by the local folks for mocking their religion. Faithful unsuccessfully defends himself at the local court and loses. He is executed for his actions and he reaches heaven after death. On the other hand, Christian is sent off to prison; but he escapes.

After escape, continuing on his way, Christian meets another pilgrim, Hopeful. They also meet By-ends. By-ends uses religion to gain power. Discovering him, Christian refuses his company. Both Hopeful and Christian reach the plain of Ease. Here Demas tries to tempt them with silver, but they do not fall prey to temptation.

That night, they both rested on the grounds of Doubting Castle. In the morning, Giant Despair along with his wife imprisons them and tortures them. But Christian and Hopeful with the power of the key of Promise escape the captivity.

After sometime, Christian and Hopeful reach Delectable Mountains which was near Celestial City. Here the wise shepherds tell them about the deceptive mountains Error and Caution which could bring them death.

On their way, Christian and Hopeful come across Ignorance who is a teenager and believes that living a good life is good to prove one's faith. But Christian does not agree with this statement. Following their disagreement, Ignorance decides to leave their company. Proceeding with their journey, they come across Flatterer and Atheist. They manage to cross the Enchanted Ground.

Merrily, Christian and Hopeful reach the land of Beulah (Celestial City is located in this region). The place was beaming with flowers and fruits while the travellers were refreshed. But to reach the city gate, they must cross a river which did not have a bridge. After a long gruelling effort both Christian and Hopeful cross the river. Unlike their previous experience, the folks of the Celestial City extend a warm welcome to them.

With this, the Part One concludes and the narrator suggests that he hopes his dream will be interpreted in the appropriate manner.

John Bunyan in the Introduction to Part II mentions that this book is called as 'Christianiana'⁵. In this part, the reader is exposed to Christiana as well as the journey of her children to the Celestial City. The narrator informs the readers that he came to know about Christiana's story from an old man called Sagacity. Christiana willingly follows her husband Christian to the Celestial City along with her four sons and

Mercy (Christiana's help). They manage to cross the Slough of Despond with the help of the gatekeeper. On the way, the sons steal fruit from the Garden of Devil which angers two ruffians but fortunately all of them manage to escape.

Like the husband, Christiana and others take shelter at the Interpreter's house. The Interpreter's manservant Great-heart assists all of them to reach safely at the House Beautiful. Mr. Brisk, for a brief period courts Mercy. But after discovering that she is involved in charity work, he stops wooing her. Matthew falls ill after consuming the fruit that he had stolen from the Garden of Devil. But Dr. Skill cures him. The group successfully moves through the Valley of Humiliation and then to the Valley of Shadow of Death. They manage to slay the giant Maul and Giant Good-slay. Later on, they rescue Feeble-mind and Ready-to-Halt. Soon they cross the river of life and after killing the Giant Despair they merrily enter the Delectable Mountains.

On the way, Christiana and others meet Valiant-for-truth who joins them for the rest of the journey. After moving through the Enchanted Ground they meet Standfast who had resisted the offerings of a temptress. Upon entering the Celestial City, Christiana meets her maker—the Master.

2.7.1 John Bunyan's *The Pilgrim's Progress* as a Religious Allegory

We all know that John Bunyan's *The Pilgrim's Progress* is an allegory⁶. In this narrative, Bunyan introduces certain names to exhibit the abstract qualities they imply. Identities such as Vanity Fair, Pliable, Help, Obstinate, Faithful and others represent the traits they stand for and the book highlights the kind of impact they have on Christian.

The Pilgrim's Progress as a religious allegorical writing conveys two significant meaning. Firstly, it conveys the adventure of an individual and secondly, it highlights the life and way of a specific religious group. The book brings to light Bunyan's own life and his society. The journey undertaken to the celestial city is the allegorical representation of the spiritual journey of a true Christian. The journey moves from sin to salvation.

Christian is the protagonist of this allegory and is representative of the religion as well as of 'every man'. His pilgrimage involves travelling from the City of Destruction (the Earth) to the symbolic Celestial City (Heaven). Christianity speaks of three doctrines of salvation. St. Augustine mentions that being descendants of Adam and Eve, man carries the burden of original sin which makes it difficult for him to ask for salvation. On the other hand, St. Paul's doctrine suggests that man can achieve salvation. But this can happen only through the power of divine grace. Finally, St Calvin proposes a new religious doctrine which is different from the previous two doctrines. He believes that merely living a good and holy life cannot result in achieving salvation. Salvation can be achieved only through faith. Only a selected few are eligible for salvation.

We all know that Bunyan did not confirm himself to the Puritan dictates. Since his very childhood, Bunyan was under the impression that he was a sinner.

Jane Austen and
John Bunyan

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During the time of his own spiritual crisis Bunyan came in contact with John Gifford who was the pastor of Bedford. It is through his religious mentoring that Bunyan realised that he was the chosen one.

But before we proceed further, it would be important to mention that *The Pilgrim's Progress* is not considered as a true allegory by many including S. T. Coleridge. Critics argue that the book is actually a proto-novel that highlights the concept of individualism as we come across in later day modern novels. In the grab of allegory the text is rather individualistic. Critics have pointed out how the work shows close association of metaphor and metonymy. This collaboration of both not only creates a significant ambience for allegory, but it also projects interesting use of allegory in linguistic terms. The protagonist of the allegory, Christian is portrayed in rags who is shown to be standing with his face from his own house. He is suggested to be carrying a great burden upon his back and he is reading a book, which has been interpreted as the Bible. Soon he internalises the pains of staying in a place where there is no god. He gets scared and wonders what should he do. Continuing with the book he wonders how can he save his family and friends. His confusion and desire to save brings him to Evangelist who is identified as the preacher of right way and helps Christian identify the good and the bad. This episode in the narrative is clearly meant to highlight the Puritan helplessness which leads way to undertake a voyage on salvation. This incident also reflects his association with John Gifford. Christian's ability to release himself from the clutches of Obstinate and Pliable highlights his freedom from certain states of human mind and probably that is why he could save himself from 'Slough of Despond'.

The Pilgrim's Progress makes significant use of metaphor and metonymy to highlight the concept of individualism. Needless to say, the Slough of Despond represents a state of despair, a feeling of hopelessness and invokes a sense of doubt and fear. And this is very important for a pilgrim to overcome it to reach closer to Christ. Despite being misled more than once, Christian manages to come back to the right path with the help of Evangelist who is considered to be his own consciousness. This diversion was created to divert Christian from his ideas of Puritanism. Once the gates are opened by Good Will for Christian we realize that the protagonist has been accepted by Christ and Good Will is only a metaphorical figure for divine grace. Thus, to reach the Celestial City one must undertake a pilgrimage of soul.

The narrative structure and the individual perspective is a deviation from the earlier allegorical tradition. Even though there is no denial that there is an obvious influence of medieval allegories like that of *Everyman* yet this connection with medieval works also implies that *The Pilgrim's Progress* is also an allegory in every sense. As we see, at the House of Interpreter, the protagonist becomes more conscious of a spiritually aware life. The symbolic pictures that he encounters in this place makes him aware of the duties and responsibilities of a devout Christian. The Interpreter takes on the role of a preacher who helps interpret the Gospel in a similar manner as Gifford had done to Bunyan.

Through his allegory, Bunyan intends to throw light on important matters. When he personified the devil in the form of Apollyon he is only trying to talk

about the worldly temptations which are offered by the devil and this deviation takes one away from god. The sword through which Christian finally conquers Apollyon is representative of faith, highlighting the victory of faith over temptations.

Bunyan, being a dissenter includes some subtle hints of how he was treated by the government as a preacher. After all, he was spreading Calvinistic doctrines at a time when the authorized churches were not allowed to present such preaching. The readers come across two lions outside House Beautiful signifying very limited scope for non-conformist like him to carry out his free will. The chained lions are metaphoric representation of him being in prison. As Christian approaches the cross (which is Representative Christ) we see he is free of sin or burden and that is why he is given the certificate to enter the Celestial City. Even though his journey implies that Christian has been selected for salvation yet the overcoming of his physical and spiritual hurdles signify his deep faith in almighty.

John Bunyan has set his story in a location which is unidentifiable because he intended to make his work relatable to a wider audience. The dream like setting helps him transcend time and place, thus, making people from any country or time period to appreciate it. The author is writing about various aspects of life as well as of Christian truth. Thus, the dream sequence fits perfectly to narrate the allegorical tale that he was proposing to share with the readers.

2.7.2 Women in *The Pilgrim's Progress*

At the outset, one might feel that the women in *The Pilgrim's Progress* are weak. After all, they are identified as 'poor', 'weakly' and so forth. They are addressed as 'daughters', 'dear heart' and others and we see them seeking the help of Great-Heart to fight against ruffians as well as to pave the right path for them. Yet, at the same time, we have men being addressed as 'dearly beloved'. We see them being scared of unexpected and instructed not to travel without a guide. We see Christian rebuking Hopeful for underestimating the powers of enemies on the basis of his overconfidence bestowed on him by his manhood.

In the beginning, we see that Christiana rejects her husband's idea of heading on an arduous journey with children. After all, they could encounter grievous danger. But her practical suggestion is identified as disobedience towards her husband's wishes. This also subtly conveys that the woman was not intelligent enough to understand the significance of a holy journey and also an undesirable trait. Yet we must realize that all these perceptions were the norm of the time and should not ignore the fact that even though Christiana and Mercy are physically and emotionally more vulnerable than men, yet they are stronger than them. They undertake the same voyage as Christian and do not hesitate to face the dangers that men have run away from.

In the Second Part of *The Pilgrim's Progress*, we see Christiana along with her four sons follow her husband in the pilgrimage being undertaken by him. She was accompanied by Mercy her handmaid during the travel. Readers witness how the village women make efforts to prevent them from leaving for the journey. They make fun of them after they leave for pilgrimage and within no time forget them even in gossips. But Christiana and Mercy disregard the negative comments

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and continue with their pilgrimage with a positive mind. In an enlightened scene, Christiana fights lions and Giant Grim⁸ which they come across in the path to the Palace Beautiful⁹. The number of suitors Mercy comes across makes it apparent that she is of favourable disposition. The Interpreter compliments her as she and Christiana emerge from the Bath of Sanctification. We come to know that Mercy dreams of being clothed in silver and gold by Christ. He also gives her a necklace, earrings and crown and holding her hands guiding her to heaven.

The women in Bunyan's writings are interesting characters but they are filled with stereotypes. This is reflexive of the fact that the society was replete with unequal gender roles. The book, in fact, chronicles the journey of a man, and not of a woman. If we take a close look at the text, we will come across numerous such examples. It is indicated in the text that a woman's beauty changes with her age. Mercy is represented as young and single girl while on the other hand, Christiana is the mature, experienced woman. Mercy can be viewed as tender-hearted and we see her weeping over the fate of her hard-hearted relatives. We find her to be humble and her most favoured place is the Valley of Humiliation¹⁰. She is shown to be the devotee of Lord and sympathetic towards the needy. This is why Mr. Brisk stops wooing her as she keeps helping the poor. We get to know that she has the remarkable ability to manage home perfectly and her hands are forever on the move. On the other hand, we have Christiana who is a godly mother and fulfils her responsibility of loving, teaching and training her children. She is wise. She is able to gather the meaning of the emblems Interpreter had shared with them within no time. We see her supervising her children's action carefully. She weeps over the failing health of her sick son and is responsible for teaching them the truth of god. Even during her death bed she shares words of encouragement with the men and women who had been her co-travellers. She becomes a spiritual mother to Mercy and helps her falling in love and guides her through dark places. We realize that both Christiana and Mercy are strong women who are afraid of nothing other than the god.

Again as we all know, in the Place Beautiful four women look after Christian, feeding and washing him. They also give him an armour. But they do not indulge in any action that was not expected of women during those days. In spite of their special powers, they were still relegated to the position of care givers and we never see them perform any physical action.

That is why, from a modern point of view, it appears as if the women are subservient to men in the narrative. That has been pointed out by many critics over the years. But Bunyan was doing what was prevalent during his times. When *The Pilgrim's Progress* was composed, it was understood that men are far superior to women. Women were considered to be intellectually inferior to men and were expected to remain submissive and obedient to their husbands. During the course of the narrative, we find women being projected as either therapeutic or comparatively less religious than men.

Critics have pointed out that Christian is none other than Bunyan himself. Many scholars have pointed out that even though the women are eventually introduced into the journey they are left under the care and guidance of others to transcend the pilgrimage. Bunyan through his writing is clearly pointing towards

male dominance that was visible in the church of his times. Without a doubt, he was writing within the social limitations of the 1600s. He does bring out the dichotomy of a wife's role in a marriage and in participation of religion but it was religion which also set limitations of participation. Thus, once again highlighting the lack of freedom within and outside religion.

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2.7.3 The Writing Style in *The Pilgrim's Progress*

John Bunyan introduces allegorical names in *The Pilgrim's Progress*. These names of characters actually help the reader to identify who or whom does the author look upto and whom does he looks down upon. A name like Mercy or Hypocrisy does not leave much scope to figure out the moral implication that Bunyan is trying to convey. This is why many critics have suggested that John Bunyan's writing voice in this work is didactic¹¹ in nature.

In this didactic parable¹², Bunyan tried to intertwine two ideas that were not popularly used in 1600s – religion and adventure journey. But the idea was innovative and helps bring together the element of goal-seeking journey which was filled with death-defying moments that highlighted the perils of moral and spiritual dangers in the most captivating manner. The idea of personifying¹³ abstract nouns such as vanity, despair, sin and so forth makes the allegory more interesting as it presents to the readers these concepts in flesh and blood form making them appear more lively and fierce.

Many critics have pointed out that the pronoun 'I' hardly appears in the narrative. At times, the readers tend to forget that there is a First Person narrator¹⁴ out there. It all appears to be a part of a dream. The dream has been intelligently intertwined to allow the Christian teachings to be narrated in an allegorical form. This dream allows Bunyan to introduce another stylistic approach and it is to do with being vague about time and place. And this gives him more freedom to incorporate real images of the physical world into the narrative. Even though at the surface level it feels this journey would appear less believable yet it actually makes the reader more engrossed in the ideas and story. It will be appropriate to add here that *The Pilgrim's Progress* as known by now is an allegory of the quest for salvation. In his effort to convey a popular allegory, Bunyan was drawing on a tradition that dated back to the Middle Ages and beyond.

Along with the Middle Ages tradition, Bunyan was drawing his inspiration from instances of everyday life. The language that Bunyan incorporates in his work was found in the everyday terms used by the common rural folks. We are introduced to terms like 'slithy rob-shop'. There are other framing metaphors like 'make hay while the sun shines' and 'all on a dung sweat'. One can find echoes of seventeenth century village life in the words of Bunyan: 'pressed to death', 'some frenzy distemper', and 'made shift to scabble on his way' and others. Bunyan displays an interesting way of incorporating proverbs like 'Every fat must stand upon his own bottom' that elevates his unique writing style. Some critics have pointed out that somewhat like the Elizabethan dramatist Bunyan identified the end of a certain section by adding a concluding couplet. Bunyan makes use of little rhymes to highlight the various stages of the pilgrimage. These rhymes not only serve the purpose of markers but also a stylistic device which would identify the beginning

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of the chapter. Bunyan uses the vocabulary of the common people and colloquial expression and seldom does he deviate from it.

The author had intended to make his text accessible to everyone and that is why he has employed an extremely simple style of writing. Moreover, the fact that the whole narrative is in the form of an allegory also meant that one could not use too difficult or complicated sentences. The sentences are easy to comprehend and the sentences are as straightforward as one can imagine. An important line reads as simple as this: 'For God can love him, and forgive his sin.'¹⁵ Another example of concepts set out in simple manner is recalling the episode of Christian trapped in Doubting Castle. During this imprisonment, Hopeful reminds him of the key of Promise which had the power to unlock any lock. Another interesting one would be the torture scene of Faithful. Without adding much frills Bunyan clearly states how the torturing process takes place. It is both raw and impactful. But what is more important is that the simple language accentuates the power of allegory reminding the reader of the pains undertaken by Christ during the crucifixion. As we are aware, Christ was tortured immensely before dying. Needless to say, this suffering is the focal point for understanding Christ's love for mankind and Bunyan wants the readers to reorient their attention to the sacrifices of Christ.

Bunyan wants readers to think about this episode. Along with the sufferings of Christ, these torments are symbolic of the hardships that a good Christian must lie through during his lifetime. The description of stoning refreshes the memory of the way the idea of judgement had been depicted historically. Stoning was a common way of punishing those who did not confirm to the established cultural norms. Bunyan is of the opinion that Christians will continue to suffer and be hurt because they will keep defying the norms (probably an indication to his own lifestyle).

Interestingly, through his writing style Bunyan is making readers understand that he is writing an allegory. He is also drawing the reader's attention to the fact that they are investing themselves in an allegory. Along with this, he is suggesting that the Bible is full of allegories. Moreover, he is asking the readers to draw their own conclusion from this allegorical text. *The Pilgrim's Progress* actually manages to bring together the traditions of the Bible and of popular culture. The primary objective of Bunyan was to promote the idea of right path to salvation.

2.7.4 Symbols in *The Pilgrim's Progress*

Being an allegory, *The Pilgrim's Progress* is laced with symbols and symbolism¹⁶. Even, if we, take a cursory look at the book, we realize that the settings of *The Pilgrim's Progress* are diverse. There are smoke-filled chasms as well as pastoral hillsides. These locations are pretty straightforward and self-explanatory in the meaning they intend to convey. A treacherous marsh land is conveniently named as the Slough of Despond. But the two cities that we encounter in the narrative are actually the two ends of Christian's journey. This is the moral tightrope that an individual is expected to travel. The two cities are named as City of Destruction and the Celestial City. In Book 1, we see Christian making efforts to move out of the City of Destruction and aims to survive the Celestial City. Again in Book 2, we have Christiana following the journey of her husband and reaching salvation.

Sleep plays a significant role in this narrative. The dream like situation created in the allegory was possible only with the help of sleep. But apart from narrative style, sleep conveys a sense of unawareness. We see that every time the pilgrims feel sleepy in their journey, they witness danger waiting for them. There is also the Enchanted Ground that makes travellers entrapped in a sleepy forgetfulness. The two characters whom we meet, through Christiana, who had almost completed their journey but could never make it were Too-bold and Heedless. This was because they had fallen asleep in the deceitful arbour. Their guide suggests them that as they have lost the use of their reason they fell short of attaining spiritual goals. In this case, sleep symbolizes a loss of direction as well as speaks about spiritual bankruptcy. But sleep is not always bad. In case of the narrator he falls asleep after losing direction. But he is drawn towards the road to salvation in dreams.

Even though Bunyan's book begins and ends in a city yet the pilgrims, time and again, wander through wilderness. Most of the journey takes place in wilderness. But this wilderness is not out of context, it has a biblical reference. It is believed that Christ spent forty days in the wilderness. The untrimmed and untaken care of nature has a strong association with spiritual growth and strengthening of faith. This is also a location for despair and hardship. But the primary difference between the biblical wilderness and Bunyan's wilderness lies in their depiction. The Biblical one represents an actual location, a desert. But in *The Pilgrim's Progress* the wilderness is not physical. Rather it is one of psychological growth. During the journey through wilderness the narrator dreams about Christian. Irrespective of the difficulty, wilderness symbolizes struggle that the soul must undertake to attain salvation. It is only by recalling his faith in Jesus Christ that he manages to survive the water body near the Celestial City.

The sensual pleasure as described in *The Pilgrim's Progress* is portrayed both negatively and positively. The physical pleasures are not appreciated much in the course of the narrative. Interestingly, neither Christian nor Christiana (or Mercy or children) ever reflect upon their previous lives. Every time, pleasure is spoken of, some or other obstacle presents itself before everyone. Even an innocent act of enjoying the fruit taken from devil's garden leads to Christiana's son falling sick. Even Madam Bubble makes unsuccessful attempts at tempting Standfast. Without a doubt, Bunyan seems to promote the Puritan idea that pleasures of the flesh must be rejected as they deviate one from the path of soul. But at the same time, the author is of the opinion that if the circumstances are right then sensual pleasure can bring positive energy. For example, in the Palace Beautiful no danger looms around despite relishing on food and rest. Even the songs of the birds hold a special significance because it helps in spiritual progress.

Another symbol that appears in *The Pilgrim's Progress* is the houses in which the characters stay. Some houses are rest houses while others are prisons. There are places where movement is restricted and in some other places salvation is rejected. Giant Despair's Doubting Castle is representative of a house where pilgrims' movement is restricted. They are kept as hostage. Yet, on the other hand, the other rest houses provide rest and nourishment while helping in spiritual

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awakening. Christian could understand his knowledge and its significance after deciding to rest at the house of Interpreter.

Another symbol that draws attention is the certificate that Christian receives after losing his burden. This was his first step towards salvation. The certificate symbolically conveys Christian's movement towards spiritual awakening and a step away from worldly responsibilities. Yet the certificate does not confirm his entry to the Celestial City. With this certificate as a boost to his journey he could only enter the Celestial City with his strength and fortitude. Surprisingly, this certificate is a written document which is rolled up but Christian never makes an effort to read it. He does not show the slightest interest in knowing its contents. Even though he shows interest in reading the contents available to him, like the book he is shown to be holding at the beginning, he never reads this document. Maybe it is best for humankind to leave a few things unread; to cherish the higher power and not interfere with its details. The certificate is nothing but the prize of every devout pilgrim. Where he knows that irrespective of his best efforts there are a few things which are best left for the almighty to take control of.

2.7.5 Other Ideas in *The Pilgrim's Progress*

Let us discuss some of the other significant notions of *The Pilgrim's Progress*.

The Limited Scope of Human Perception

In the text, Bunyan makes it very clear that humans are blinded by virtue. They are troubled by the Fall. This is precisely why they have trouble identifying the divine truth. Bunyan is of the opinion that every time a true Christian strays from his course, it is due to the limitations of his perception. In the narrative, we see Christian had not seen the stairs (in the Slough of Despond) until Help reminds him of this. Soon after Mr. Worldly Wiseman easily deceives Christian which leads him down the path towards Morality. Even the Evangelist wonders how come Christian could not see that Mr. Worldly Wiseman was actually leading him into a trap instead of bringing him out of it. From here on, Christian's visit to the Interpreter's house was all about learning to perceive meanings of life and the hidden symbols it presents. Soon enough, Faithful explains that it is in the inherent corrupt nature of the individual who cannot distinguish trouble from true works of grace. Throughout the narrative, Bunyan highlights the point that the best Christians (even someone like the protagonist Christian) remain blinded as they bear the burden of fallen humanity.

Bunyan proposes that constant vigilance as well as dedication is required to avoid the pitfalls. Towards the end of Part II, the band of pilgrims while travelling in the haze are faced with the questions related to their faith. This could have led them further to the right path. It was also necessary for Christian to follow the instructions and advice of the Evangelist. After all, the Evangelist was a representative of the Gospel that contains the kernel of Christian's faith. We see that it was Christian's faith in God that saves the group of pilgrims and brings them back from the dungeon of Giant Despair. After a night of prayer, Christian realizes that the key to their escape actually lies within himself. We are informed that Sleep, usually the one which is not accompanied by dreams, represents a lack of vigilance which becomes the key factor in being led to trouble. It is also made clear that the

pilgrim's perception related to reality is extremely compromised when s/he is in slumber. Moreover, in the course of the narrative, we see the pilgrims who have been victims of sleep are portrayed as representatives of cautionary tales. One best example is Christian falling asleep at an undesignated hour which leads to him losing the roll that confirmed his election.

But with the advancement of pilgrimage we see Christian growing stronger in faith. As a result, his perception increases, highlighting his increase of faith which keeps him away from things that might delude him. We get to know that despite his initial imperfect assessment of reality, he still manages to progress spiritually with the passage of his journey.

The Role of Fear in Faith

We see that the emotion of fear plays an important role in the lives of the pilgrims, irrespective of whether he is Christian or other pilgrims. The author points out that only with the fear of god, one can encounter the beginning of Wisdom. This idea is proposed more than once in the text. Christian also experiences the feeling of fear of god through his own spiritual journey. Once he encounters all the visions at the place of the Interpreter, Christian suggests that he has been filled with hope as well as fear. Yet, Bunyan insists that the fear of God is considered to be a valuable gift. He also clarifies that fear of god is very different from the fear that one experiences when one is acting cowardice. The idea of fear of god induces an awe and belief in the mercy, power as well as grace of god.

We are told that Christian overcomes the fear of the second type. At some point of time in the narrative Christian internalizes the idea that to move forward is moving beyond the Fear of death and experiencing a Life which is everlasting and lies beyond death. But an encounter with Mr. Fearing highlights how he is not only filled with fear but is also bound by a general lack of conviction. This is the reason why his progress slows down and he is unnecessarily burdened by life. Though Mr. Fearing is suggested as someone who is bold yet the author does not recommend that kind of boldness for Christian. He would like to advocate that it is better to stand up for one's beliefs and not be ineffective through fear and concern. During the time of Bunyan it was a difficult thing to be a Christian. But Bunyan reassures his readers that a firm faith in God and triumphing over good, can inspire courage and help battle fears.

The Alienated Community

Even though the idea might appear oxymoronic, yet we witness both alienation and community in *The Pilgrim's Progress*. Needless to say, a pilgrim leads a difficult life. That is highlighted through the scorn and malice that Christian often encounters in the book. It is interesting to note how a pilgrim temporally exists in one world as he renouncing this world and pursues a journey to another world. We must also note that the life of a pilgrim is filled with regular denials and unexpected anticipations. The pilgrims are in general alienated from the material world into which they are born. A visual difference between Christian and Faithful is established in Vanity-Fair where they are seen wearing unusual clothing and speaking in a foreign language. Without any doubt, the locals recognize them as

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pilgrims and as outsiders. Their self-willed alienation is considered to be of great value but that does not mean that they are devoid of suffering.

Although it is an expected condition that a pilgrim must alienate himself from the world, yet this does not mean that the pilgrim will remain alone. In *The Pilgrim's Progress*, we see that Christian is never alone apart from the very initial segment of the journey. He usually finds himself in the company of people who are filled with goodwill, even when Christian is travelling alone. Time and again, it has been mentioned in the text that no individual can complete the pilgrimage all by himself without the support and help of others. This association is necessary because of the inherent nature of individuals' lack of perception. And during the times of distress the pilgrims help and guide each other to overcome the problems. In fact, the author seems to appreciate this kind of association where pilgrims rely on good souls for guidance.

One best example of the alienated community is probably the church. We come across this church community in the second part of the book which is represented by the company of pilgrims. It is told that this community is welcoming as well as ever-growing. Despite being a community it was still alienated from the world (just the way Christian was). In the Second Part, we see the pilgrims rely on each other to learn and exchange truthful dialogues. We witness how Feeble-mind nurtures himself with the help from the community. We get to know that Great-Heart consoles him by saying that they will not desert him. It is told that Christianity is primarily a community based faith. Even though one must try to connect with god at an individual level, it is always for betterment that a pilgrim must surround himself with like-minded souls. And this is one idea that Bunyan makes clear in his work.

Check Your Progress

7. When and where was John Bunyan born?
8. In which year was *The Pilgrim's Progress* published?
9. What is the message of the Evangelist to Christian?
10. How has John Bunyan portrayed women in *The Pilgrim's Progress*?
11. Give one example of the use of symbolism in *The Pilgrim's Progress*.

2.8 ANSWERS TO 'CHECK YOUR PROGRESS'

1. Austen's great skill lies in plot-construction. Her skillfully constructed plots are really the highest objects of artistic perfection. Her novels have an exactness of structure and symmetry of form. All the incidents that are introduced have their particular meanings. Jane Austen's plots are not simple but compound. They do not compromise barely the story of the hero and the heroine. In *Pride and Prejudice* for instance, there are several pairs of lovers and their stories form the component parts of the plot. In the novels of Jane Austen the parts are so skillfully fused together as to form one compact whole.

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2. Jane Austen rendered a great service to the English novel by developing a flexible, smooth-flowing prose style. She is sometimes a shade artificial. Her range is limited but her touch is firm and true. Her stories may not be exciting and thrilling, but the picture of life that she presents has all the charm of vivid narration. Dialogues form a prominent feature of the narrative of Jane Austen.
3. Mr. and Mrs. Bennet live in the village of Longbourn which is situated in the County of Hertfordshire. They have five daughters – Jane, Elizabeth, Mary, Catherine (or Kitty), and Lydia.
4. Mr. Collins is a cousin of Mr. Bennet; and he is the man to whom Mr. Bennet's whole property is entailed.
5. Elizabeth is gifted with an irrepressible sense of wit and humour.
6. Mr. Darcy, the owner of the Pemberley estate is the hero of *Pride and Prejudice*.
7. John Bunyan was born in 1628 at Elstow, Bedfordshire, England.
8. *The Pilgrim's Progress* was published in the year 1678.
9. Christian who was suffering from spiritual anguish was visited by Evangelist who was a spiritual guide. Evangelist met Christian and asked him to leave the City of Destruction and move to Celestial City or Mount Zion where salvation can be found.
10. When *The Pilgrim's Progress* was composed, it was understood that men are far superior to women. Women were considered to be intellectually inferior to men and were expected to remain submissive and obedient to their husbands. During the course of the narrative, we find women being projected as either therapeutic as or comparatively less religious than men.
11. Sleep plays a significant role in *The Pilgrim's Progress*. The dream like situation created in the allegory was possible only with the help of sleep. But apart from narrative style, sleep conveys a sense of unawareness. We see that every time the pilgrims feel sleepy in their journey, they witness danger waiting for them.

2.9 SUMMARY

- Jane Austen was one of the supreme artists in fiction. She was a highly sophisticated artist. In the opinion of the critic, W.L. Cross, 'She is one of the sincerest examples of our literature of art for art's sake.'
- The range of Jane Austen's novels was limited. She drew all her material from her own experience. She never went outside her experience, with the result that all her scenes belonged to South England where she had spent a considerable period of her life.
- Jane Austen's novels do not represent stormy passions and high tragedy of emotional life. She was primarily concerned with the comedy of domestic life. But with her very mental makeup she was incapable of writing a tragedy or romance.

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- Austen's great skill lies in plot-construction. Her skillfully constructed plots are really the highest objects of artistic perfection. Her novels have an exactness of structure and symmetry of form. All the incidents that are introduced have their particular meanings.
- Jane Austen is a great creator of characters. She has created a picture-gallery filled with so many delightful characters. Her characters are not types but individuals. She portrays human characters with great precision and exactness. Her male characters are almost perfect. She creates living characters both male and female, and draws them in their private aspects.
- Jane Austen developed the dramatic method both in the presentation of her plots and characters. Instead of describing and analysing the characters, she makes them reveal themselves in their action and dialogues. The plot is also carried forward through a succession of short scenes in dialogues.
- Jane Austen rendered a great service to the English novel by developing a flexible, smooth-flowing prose style. She is sometimes a shade artificial. But at her best her prose moves nimbly and easily and enables her narrative to proceed onward without any obstruction.
- Mr. and Mrs. Bennet live in the village of Longbourn which is situated in the County of Hertfordshire. They have five daughters – Jane, Elizabeth, Mary, Catherine (or Kitty), and Lydia.
- Elizabeth finds herself no closer to Mr. Darcy. If anything, the rift between them has become wider. Mr. Darcy would certainly like to marry Elizabeth but he finds that she belongs to much lower status than he does, and he, therefore, finds it most improper on his part to marry a girl of that status.
- Mr. Collins visits Longbourn again. Having come into contact with Miss Charlotte Lucas, he decides to propose marriage to her. He is very anxious to get married because Lady Catherine has been pressing him to get married, and because he thinks that a clergyman should set an example of his marriage to his parishioners.
- Elizabeth has a good understanding of people. She claims that she fully understands Bingley and she is right. She looks through the mask of friendship of the Bingley sisters and discovers their conceit.
- Darcy is the hero of *Pride and Prejudice*. He is the owner of the Pemberley estate worth ten thousand pounds a year. He is twenty seven, tall, handsome and of majestic appearance.
- *Pride and Prejudice* was originally entitled *First Impressions*. When Jane Austen revised the novel, she gave it the present title. The present title is perfectly appropriate and suitable. It does not need any justification.
- Jane Austen has rightly been described as a writer of domestic novel. She is notorious for never going out of the parlour. She makes a very candid confession that for her two or three families in a 'country village' are enough to work with.

- *The Pilgrim's Progress* written by John Bunyan was published in 1678.
- The year 1644 was of great significance for Bunyan. Both his mother and sister (Margaret) died that year; his father got into matrimonial alliance for the third time and in the same year he joined the Parliamentary Army.
- Bunyan's involvement with Puritanism was a gradual process as it is reflected in his autobiography. Bunyan with his spiritual awakening became an active presence in open-communion church and debates related to religion.
- *The Pilgrim's Progress* begins with the narrator defending the story that he is about to unfold. This story is in the form of a dream. According to the narrator, as he fell asleep he dreamt of a man named Christian.
- Christian comes across a traveller from his hometown named Faithful. Both Christian and Faithful are accompanied by Talkative who is a pilgrim like them. Christian does not like Talkative. Evangelist warns both Faithful and Christian about the treacherous town of Vanity and prophecies that either Christian or Faithful will die in this town.
- *The Pilgrim's Progress* as a religious allegorical writing conveys two significant meaning. Firstly, it conveys the adventure of an individual and secondly, it highlights the life and way of a specific religious group. The book brings to light Bunyan's own life and his society. The journey undertaken to the celestial city is the allegorical representation of the spiritual journey of a true Christian. The journey moves from sin to salvation.
- At the outset, one might feel that the women in *The Pilgrim's Progress* are weak. After all, they are identified as 'poor', 'weakly' and so forth. They are addressed as 'daughters', 'dear heart' and others and we see them seeking the help of Great-Heart to fight against ruffians as well as to pave the right path for them.
- John Bunyan introduces allegorical names in *The Pilgrim's Progress*. These names of characters actually help the reader to identify who or whom does the author look upto and whom does he looks down upon.
- In the text, Bunyan makes it very clear that humans are blinded by virtue. They are troubled by the Fall. This is precisely why they have trouble identifying the divine truth. Bunyan is of the opinion that every time a true Christian strays from his course, it is due to the limitations of his perception.
- We see that the emotion of fear plays an important role in the lives of the pilgrims, irrespective of whether he is Christian or other pilgrims.

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2.10 KEY TERMS

- **Domestic novel:** Sometimes referred to as 'sentimental fiction' or 'woman's fiction,' 'domestic fiction' refers to a type of novel popular with women readers during the middle of the nineteenth century.
- **Moralist:** A moralist is someone who has very strong opinions about what is right and what is wrong.

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- **Allegory:** It is a representation of an abstract or spiritual meaning through concrete or material forms.
- **Autobiography:** It is the biography of a person written by the person himself.

2.11 SELF-ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

Short-Answer Questions

1. Write a short note on the style of characterization of Jane Austen.
2. Prepare a brief biographical sketch of John Bunyan.
3. Write a short note on the Lydia-Wickham episode in *Pride and Prejudice*.
4. Briefly mention the significant ideas expressed in *The Pilgrim's Progress*.

Long-Answer Questions

1. Critically analyse the title of the novel *Pride and Prejudice*.
2. How can Jane Austen be called a domestic novelist? Support your answer with examples.
3. Evaluate the structure of the novel *The Pilgrim's Progress*.
4. Discuss *The Pilgrim's Progress* as a religious allegory.

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Endnotes

- ¹ The Portable Bunyan: A Transnational History of The Pilgrim's Progress . Isabel Hofmey. Princeton University Press. P-221
- ² Some Intellectual Consequences of the English Revolution. Christopher Hill. University of Wisconsin Press. P-84
- ³ The life and times of John Bunyan. George Barrell Cheever. P-201.
- ⁴ One who repairs utensils and other similar smaller articles.
- ⁵ the name of Christian's wife
- ⁶ "the expression by means of symbolic fictional figures and actions of truths or generalizations about human existence" [<https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/allegory>]
- ⁷ in the Valley of Humiliation
- ⁸ the power of the state
- ⁹ persecuted church
- ¹⁰ Representing Humility
- ¹¹ "designed or intended to teach" [<https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/didactic>]
- ¹² "usually short fictitious story that illustrates a moral attitude or a religious principle" [<https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/parable>]
- ¹³ "Personification is a figure of speech in which a thing – an idea or an animal – is given human attributes." [<https://literarydevices.net/personification>]
- ¹⁴ "A narrative or mode of storytelling in which the narrator appears as the 'I' recollecting his or her own part in the events related, either as a witness of the action or as an important participant in it. " [<https://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/oi/authority.20110803095820156>]
- ¹⁵ The Pilgrim's Progress. John Bunyan . Courier Corporation . 2012. p-29.
- ¹⁶ "Symbolism is the use of symbols to signify ideas and qualities, by giving them symbolic meanings that are different from their literal sense." [<https://literarydevices.net/symbolism/>]

*Jane Austen and
John Bunyan*

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UNIT 3 CHARLES DICKENS AND THOMAS HARDY

Charles Dickens and
Thomas Hardy

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Structure

- 3.0 Introduction
- 3.1 objectives
- 3.2 Charles Dickens: Life and Works
 - 3.2.1 Dickens: Style and Reputation
- 3.3 *A Tale of Two Cities*: Summary
- 3.4 *A Tale of Two Cities*: Character Sketches and Themes
- 3.5 *A Tale of Two Cities*: Important Passages for Explanation
- 3.6 Thomas Hardy: Life and Works
- 3.7 *The Return of the Native*: Summary and Critical Appreciation
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- 3.12 Further Reading

3.0 INTRODUCTION

In this unit, we will discuss the life and works of the nineteenth century fiction writers—Charles Dickens and Thomas Hardy. Dickens was, in his social origin and in his ultimate social position, a petit bourgeois. He was born into the swiftly accelerating period of the industrial revolution and lived on through its culmination into the phase of the neo-feudalism of finance capital, of aborted development, disintegration, international wars, revolutions and counter-revolutions. This unit will discuss the life and works of Charles Dickens, as well as his novel *A Tale of Two Cities*. Dickens is considered to be one of the greatest writers of the English language. His novels of Victorian England continue to remain popular to this day. He used his novels to make poignant criticisms of the social ills of his day. The starting sections of the unit will look at his literary style as well as his life and works. The unit will then discuss the novel *A Tale of Two Cities*.

The unit also discusses life and works of Thomas Hardy and his novel *The Return of the Native*. The 19th century was a great age of English novel. The novels of this era presented the picture of life lived in a given society against the stable background of social and moral values. Thomas Hardy's works reflect the impact of 19th century evolutionary thought and naturalistic doctrines. He saw man as an alien in an impersonal universe, at the mercy of environment, heredity, and blind chance. Most of his fiction poignantly presents tragic human situations, and thus, Hardy earned a reputation for pessimism.

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3.1 OBJECTIVES

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

- Discuss the life, works and style of Charles Dickens
- Discuss various characters of *A Tale of Two Cities*
- Describe the theme and setting of *A Tale of Two Cities*
- Discuss the life and important works of Thomas Hardy with special emphasis on *The Return of the Native*

3.2 CHARLES DICKENS: LIFE AND WORKS

Charles Dickens was born as a son of a clerk from the lower gentry of professional class. He received varied types of schooling—sometimes no schooling and sometimes tutoring. He was sensitive about his humble origins as a member of middle-class society. The unhappy circumstances of his own childhood, which included his father's imprisonment for debt and his own much-hated job at the blacking factory as a young boy, were a sore point with him. Nevertheless, he was humane and had a sentimentally humanitarian attitude towards human problems.

He began his career as a reporter in the ecclesiastical law court of 'Doctor Commons'. Later, he was member of *True Sun* and *Morning Chronicle*.

Beginning a little more than as a comic journalist, he soon discovered his special gifts as a novelist. At twenty-five, he soon found himself as the most popular English novelist. He began as a follower of the traditions of Smollett whom, as a child, he had read with great enthusiasm and who, despite immeasurable difference between them in spirit and tone, may be regarded as his master.

Dickens began with great sense of life and little sense of form. *Sketches by 'Boz'* 1836 is lively journalism merely but with *The Pickwick Papers* (issued in monthly parts) in 1836-1837 we can see the development of his writing. He began his career in the picaresque tradition. *Pickwick* began as burlesque but soon emerged as picaresque comedy. Each of the characters develops his moral, physical and emotional quality and the interest is kept up by showing how these qualities reveal themselves in new and unexpected situations.

Dickens was the most instinctive of all the great English novelists and sentimentality was often his only way of handling difficult moral problems as in *Nicholas Nickleby*. *Oliver Twist* is the first of Dickens' novels, which concentrates on specific social ills, but the force of the indictment falls most heavily on the individuals who administer the attacked institutions rather than on the institution. It was with *Martin Chuzzlewit*, that Dickens first showed his real stature as a novelist. Here, he takes central moral situation as a focal point which links him to other Victorian novelists- Thackeray on the one hand and George Eliot on the other. *Dombey and Son* (1846-48) joins richness of character and incident to unity of moral purpose with new maturity. In *David Copperfield*, (1849-50) autobiography

has been subdued into art with remarkable skill. *Bleak House* also shows the same kind of strengths.

Charles Dickens and
Thomas Hardy



Fig 3.1 Charles Dickens

In *Hard Times* (1854), Dickens dealt with the morality of the utilitarian industrialist and its effect on the possibilities of human happiness. In this novel, there is juxtaposition of apparent and real knowledge, of mechanical and imaginative and the moments of supreme irony. In *Little Dorrit*, *Great Expectations* and *Our Mutual Friend*, Dickens achieves that careless maturity that Shakespeare achieved in his last plays. Dickens spent the last years of his life readings his works.

3.2.1 Dickens: Style and Reputation

Regarded as ‘the first great English novelist of the city,’ Charles Dickens is an urban novelist. Not only are his themes predominantly city-oriented but more significantly he writes ‘in an urban kind of way’. As Terry Eagleton points out, Dickens’ ‘prose style is alive with the swarming energies of his surroundings, full of hyperbole, extravagant gestures, unpredictable connections, rapid thumbnail sketches, melodramatic exclamations, abrupt shifts of tone and theatrical display...’ His style is florid and vivacious and he is prone to give in to frequent flights of fantasy.

The most endearing quality of his work is the humour that informs all his works. He is a pure humourist, wielding a language which abounds in comic exuberance and invention. Dickensian characters are the most memorable in English literature. Often they are whimsical and idiosyncratic with their names often hinting at their most abiding trait, for instance in *David Copperfield* we have Mr Murdstone which is a play at the words murder and stony suggesting that cruelty is what defines this character. Dickens often drew his characters on the basis of the real people he knew, for instance Harold Skimpole in *Bleak House* is based on Leigh Hunt, and *David Copperfield* is partially autobiographical. As Virginia Woolf observes that ‘we remodel our psychological geography when we read Dickens’ as he produces characters who exist not in detail, not accurately or exactly, but abundantly in a cluster of wild yet extraordinarily revealing remarks. George Santayana regards Dickens as a great mimic representing people as they really are. His characters are odd, incomprehensible, sometimes absurdly comic, terrifying. Scarcely ever they are ordinary.

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Characters emerge from the narrative only to disappear again. Commenting on Dickens' art of characterization, Raymond Williams comments that 'Dickens perceives men and women— vividly but externally, caught in a single posture or defined by one or two idiosyncratic features... these figures are at once animated and enigmatic, expressive but hard to decipher.'

As Eagleton further comments, Dickens 'defines his characters by their noses, waistcoats, boots, knees, fob watches, tricks of speech or peculiar gait. When the characters of Fielding or Austen speak, they sound roughly similar, given some differences of class, gender and the like. Almost everyone in Dickens, by contrast, has his or her inimitable quick-fire delivery, churlish mumble, wheedling whine, verbose ramblings, pious cant or portentous rhetoric.'

Characters sometimes wear their souls on their sleeves, and sometimes demand as much laborious deciphering as an ancient manuscript. They are either flamboyantly self-dramatizing or disturbingly clandestine. People either improvise themselves on the spot, or persist mysteriously in their secret being like pieces of furniture.

His comic characters fall into two groups. When he accepts them without any intervention of moral scruples, rejoices in them for their own sake, the result is pure humour: Pickwick, the Wellers, Micawber, Boffin or, greatest of them all, Mrs Gamp. When sympathy is withheld or he feels a strong moral disgust or contempt, the result is a character not so much of humour as of savage comedy. These characters are most evident when he is attacking social injustice, or flaws in the social code. Bumble, Heep and Gradgrind are typical examples of savage comedy.

Critics have criticized Dickensian humour for lacking in subtlety, but while it lacks in subtleness, it is compensated by its depth and humaneness. Although his novels deal with some social malady they are remarkable for not being dark and dismal. The mood is buoyant and full of effervescent energy instead. Another very significant aspect of his work is that he is 'the first English novelist, indeed one of the first English writers of any kind, to place children at the centre of his fiction.'

In fact until the nineteenth century children were scarcely recognized as beings deserving attention. Surprisingly no novel in the eighteenth century gives even sparse attention to children. It is Dickens who brings children as victims of social oppression to the forefront, for instance *Oliver Twist* and *Paul Dombey*, *David Copperfield* and *Amy Dorrit*. Dicken's fiction is thronged with prematurely aged children and childish adults. 'The Artful Dodger, Smike, Little Nell, Paul Dombey, Little Dorrit and Jenny Wren are examples of the former, while Mr. Pickwick, the Cheeryble brothers, Mr. Dick, Mr. Micawber, Dora Copperfield, Harold Skimpole... are instances of the latter.'

Reputation

According to F.R. Leavis, Dickens was a great genius and he places him among the immortal classics. Leavis sees in Dickens the qualities of a great entertainer. 'He is 'a great poet'; 'in range and ease [of command of word, phrase, rhythm, and image] there is surely no greater master of English except Shakespeare.'

Dickens has often been railed against for his art of characterization. Instead of complex characters which are rich in suggestiveness and 'round' to use E.M. Forster's

terminology, Dickens characters are ‘flat’, easily described by an adjective. They are either hypocritical grotesque characters like Uriah Heep in *David Copperfield*, pervers, or amiable idiots. Yet this does not imply that they are defectively drawn. His novels are very rich on account of the multiplicity of characters, as Edward Albert points out, ‘He creates for us a whole world of people.’

F. R. Leavis, while assessing the literary merit of Dickens dismissed, him as a mere entertainer, but eventually revised it saying that he ranked as a serious novelist. ‘What he failed to note was a third possibility: that Dickens is both a serious novelist and a great entertainer.’

To conclude in the words of Terry Eagleton, ‘Dickens has none of the intellectual resources of George Eliot, and little of the psychological subtlety of Henry James... He was rather, a writer of prodigious imaginative power and superb rhetorical mastery, who unlike Eliot or James remains in touch with caricature, lampoon, melodrama, sentimental ballad, oral legend, popular theatre and everyday culture. No other classic English novelist has been so wildly popular, and hardly has been so uproariously funny. Dickens takes the popular arts of farce, caricature, sentiment and polemic and harnesses them to complex aesthetic ends. The vivid flatness of his figures may reflect the art of the streets; but... it also says a great deal about the streets, raising grotesque and broad brush portraiture to a new kind of artistic perception.’

Tolstoy regarded Dickens as the best of all English novelists, and considered *David Copperfield* to be his finest work. James Joyce has paid it reverence through parody in *Ulysses*, whereas Virginia Woolf who held a poor opinion of Dickens’ works, confesses to the merit of *David Copperfield*.

Charles Dickens and
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3.3 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

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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.

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

*Charles Dickens and
Thomas Hardy*

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 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

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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 sumptuousness, 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 Monseigneur'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, Darnay 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.

*Charles Dickens and
Thomas Hardy*

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

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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-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

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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 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 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

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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’.

3.4 A TALE OF TWO CITIES: CHARACTER SKETCHES AND THEMES

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 for Lucie and her loved ones and above all his own special place in the hearts of his loved ones.

Themes, Issues and Context

Let us analyse the themes, issues and context of *A Tale of Two Cities*.

A Tale of Two Cities not only asserts Dicken's 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.

The Ever-Present Possibility of Resurrection

Charles Dickens has stressed on the possibility of resurrection and transformation in individuals as well as society in his widely acclaimed novel *A Tale of Two Cities*. The novel suggests that the death of Sydney Carton has led to a new and peaceful life for Lucie Manette, Charles Darnay and even Carton. By offering himself to the guillotine, Carton truly achieves the status of a hero and becomes a Christ-like figure whose death saves the lives of others. Therefore, Carton's life assumes meaning and purpose. Also, the final section of the novel indicates that

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Carton will be resurrected just like Christ; He will be reborn in the hearts of those whose life he saved. Similarly, the novel also suggests that the fall of the old regime in France has paved the way for a renewed Paris that Carton had envisioned when he was supposedly before the guillotine. Although Carton's life throughout the novel is marked by a sense of apathy and indolence, the final act absolves him of his flaws. The selflessness displayed by him in the final act speaks volumes. A major part of the novel focuses on the atrocities of both the aristocracy and the irate peasants; however, it eventually expresses the idea that violence will lead to a better and reformed society.

Dickens has elaborated on this theme further with his depiction of Doctor Manette. At the beginning of the novel, in the imaginary conversation between Lorry and Doctor Manette, the former says that Manette has been 'recalled to life'. This implies that Doctor Manette's eighteen-year imprisonment has created a vacuum. But, Lucie's love has led to Manette's spiritual renewal and when she cradles him on her breast maternally, it reinforces the idea of rebirth.

The Necessity of Sacrifice

Closely associated with the theme of resurrection is the idea that sacrifice is necessary for happiness. This theme of sacrifice is found both on a national and personal level. For instance, the actions of the revolutionaries prove that a sacrifice is needed in order to achieve the dream of an egalitarian French republic. Further, the guard who apprehends Darnay for the second time in Book the Third, Chapter Seven, reminds Manette of the dominance of state interests over personal loyalties. Similarly, Madame Defarge disparages her husband for his devotion to Manette as it clouds his devotion to the revolutionary cause. More importantly, Carton's transformation is determined by his sacrificing his former self. When Carton chooses to die for his friends, it not only ensures their happiness but also his spiritual rebirth.

Tendency towards Violence and Oppression in Revolutionaries

In this novel, it is to be noted that Dickens has dealt with a historical subject with ambivalence. On one hand, he has supported the cause of the revolutionaries. On the other hand, he has also depicted the evil side of the revolutionaries as well. Overall, Dickens has extended his support for the plight of the French peasantry and highlighted their need for liberation. Several chapters involving the Marquis Evrémont show that the aristocracy has viciously exploited and oppressed the poor. While Dickens criticises the oppression, he also does not condone the strategies adopted by the peasants in order to overcome it. Dickens' stance is obvious and clear. The scene of people sharpening their weapons at the grindstone in the novel creates a bleak image. His opinion regarding revolution is accentuated in the last chapter wherein he stresses the thin line between the oppressor and the oppressed. He writes, 'Sow the same seed of rapacious license and oppression over again, and it will surely yield the same fruit according to its kind'. To sum up, Dickens saw the French Revolution as the great symbol of transformation and resurrection, but also criticized the violence that accompanied it.

Sacrifice

Another important theme found in the novel is that of sacrifice. The most apparent example of this is Sydney Carton's decision to take the place of Charles Darnay, even though it meant that he would be executed. When he is asked by the seamstress if he is dying for the sake of Charles Darnay, he agrees and adds, 'For his wife and child'. It is because of his love for Lucie and her daughter that he feels ready to sacrifice himself. Carton is also aware of the fact that he had by and large led a dissolute and unproductive life. Therefore, he believes that his act of sacrifice would redeem everything else and make his life meaningful. He reflects, 'It is a far, far better thing that I do, than I have ever done before'.

Class

Class conflict and social inequality are two primary reasons for violence and revolution in France. Aristocrats like Monseigneur have only been concerned about their own pleasure and luxury. The narrator puts forward the pretensions of the upper-class by sarcastically describing how there are four servants who are serving a cup of chocolate to an aristocrat. He writes, 'Deep would have been the blot upon his escutcheon if his chocolate had been ignobly waited on by only three men'. Dickens' depiction of French aristocrats shows them as lazy and spoiled who are equally heartless and inconsiderate about the lives of the lower-classes. Monseigneur callously tells the working class Parisians that 'I would ride over any of you very willingly, and exterminate you from the earth'. The theme of class conflict adds a moral complexity to the novel as Dickens depicts the cruelty of both the upper-class as well as violence of the lower-class.

Levels of Conflict

Conflict is one of the key elements of any fiction. *A Tale of Two Cities* is set against the conflict of the French Revolution. However, the novel not only depicts the conflict between the peasants and aristocrats, but also shows conflict at personal level. The conflict between Charles Darnay and Sydney Carton who are both vying for Lucie's hand is one example of conflict in the novel. However, the prominent conflict in the novel is internal conflict. Dr. Manette's battling his demons, Darnay's conflict with accepting his heritage, and Sydney Carton's conflict with self-loathing are some of the conflicts that add layers of complexity to the novel.

3.5 A TALE OF TWO CITIES: 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.

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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 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".

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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".

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.

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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.

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 Charles'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

1. How did Dickens handle morality problems in his novel?
2. Name the novel in which Dickens first showed his real stature as a novelist.
3. How does Eagleton describe Dickens' literary style?
4. What did Tolstoy, Woolf and Joyce think of Dickens novels?
5. Briefly mention the setting of the novel *A Tale of Two Cities*.
6. What is the significance of the broken cask of red wine?
7. What does Manette's letter reveal?

3.6 THOMAS HARDY: LIFE AND WORKS

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Except for the period in London during young manhood, Thomas Hardy lived his whole life near Dorchester, close to where he was born in 1840 and died in 1928. His personal experience was bound up with people and customs, the monuments and the institutions of Dorset and contiguous counties of south western England, which he placed permanently on the literary map by the ancient name, Wessex. As a writer, Hardy was a living paradox. A natural poet, much of his poetry is nevertheless in prose. He had the poet's largeness, minuteness and intensity of vision—a threefold faculty displayed throughout his novel. The irony in Thomas Hardy's novels is not directed at human egotism but at the very conditions of human existence. He saw his characters as elemental figures whose passions were doomed to run the course that human conditions had set for them.

Hardy was neither a philosophical novelist nor a subtle psychologist. His view of man is neither wholly consistent nor in any degree profound. His prose has an air of being self-taught—it is often clumsy, sometimes pretentious and generally rough-hewn and unequal. Hardy's vision of life was genuine and he wrestled it alone. The underlying rhythm of his novel is sound and what Henry James called the 'sense of felt life' is movingly present.

'Critics can never be made to understand that the failure may be greater than the success... To have the strength to roll a stone weighing a hundredweight to the top of a mountain is a success, and to have the strength to roll a stone of then hundredweight only halfway up that mount is a failure. But the latter is two or three times as strong a deed.' (Hardy in his diary, 1907)



Fig. 3.2 Thomas Hardy

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Hardy was born to a master mason and building contractor in the village of Higher Bockhampton, on the edge of Puddletown Heath. His mother, who had literary tastes and read Latin poets and French romances, had a huge impact on him. Early training as an architect gave him intimate knowledge of local churches utilized to advantage in his writings. He married Emma Lavinia Gifford in 1874. At the age of 22, Hardy moved to London and started to write poems which idealized the rural life. Emma Lavinia Gifford encouraged him and he started to consider literature as his 'true vocation.'

Under the Greenwood Tree, written in 1872, is an idyllic tale of rustic life. *Far From the Madding Crowd*, 1874, use a wider canvas and takes a closer look at the nature and consequences of human emotions. Misfortune, coincidences and the intrusion into the pastoral life makes this love story tangled and violent. *The Return of the Native* 1878, is a more ambitious work. Egdon Heath, sunk in his tree, representing both the indifferent world of nature and the stage on which human drama have been enacted from time immemorial sets the tone for this somber story of trapped human passion. Fulfillment for one is frustration for the other. Maternal love and pride is a mysterious and paradoxical combination of selfishness and self-sacrifice.

Characters are active or passive according to their natures but actions never have their expected consequences and the interweaving of passions produces strange patterns. The march of the events, though continually instigated and affected by human will, is in the long run at the mercy of impersonal logic of fact and coincidence. The dark violence of Eustacia Vye, the idealistic intelligence of Clym Yeobright, the will and affections of Mrs. Yeobright, the weakness of Will Devere, produced in their mutual interactions a tragic pattern in which seen against the background of death, seems to reduce all life in doom that is never final. Tragedies occur, hopes are crushed, expectations are cruelly disappointed, self-knowledge comes through sad or bitter experience but life has been before and will go on. The novel has a combination of earthiness and visionary truth.

In the novel *the Mayor of Casterbridge* (1886), nature, civilization and human character work on each other continually. The novel *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* outraged the religious conscience of 1891 and his novel *Jude the Obscure* is fatally injured by his ruthlessness. In 1896, disturbed by the public uproar over the unconventional subjects of two of his greatest novels, *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* and *Jude the Obscure*, Hardy announced that he would never write fiction again. In April, 1912, Hardy wrote: 'Then somebody discovered that Jude was a moral work— austere in its treatment of a difficult subject—as if the writer had not all the time said in the Preface that it was meant to be so. Thereupon many uncursed me, and the matter ended, the only effect of it on human conduct that I could discover being its effect on myself—the experience completely curing me of the further interest in novel-writing.'

During the remainder of his life, Hardy continued to publish several collections of poems. 'Hardy, in fact, was the ideal poet of a generation. He was the most passionate and the most learned of them all. He had the luck, singular in poets, of being able to achieve a competence other than by poetry and then devote the

ending years of his life to his beloved verses.’ (Ford Maddox Ford in *The March of Literature*, 1938) Also, their marriage did not result in any offspring. Hardy and Emma stuck to each other even though theirs was not a very happy union. Hardy had affairs with other women passing briefly through his life. Emma died in 1912 and a couple of years later he married Florence Emily Dugdale, his secretary, who was a woman in her 30s and approximately 30 years younger than him.

Hardy breathed his last on 11 January, 1928, in Dorchester, Dorset. Hardy was popular as a lyrical pastoralist. He was also a modern, even revolutionary writer. It may be a sign of the times that some of us take his books to bed, as if even his pessimistic vision was one that enabled us to sleep soundly’ (Anatole Broyard in New York Times, May 12, 1982).

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3.7 THE RETURN OF THE NATIVE: SUMMARY AND CRITICAL APPRECIATION

At the beginning of the novel, Thomasin Yeobright is being taken over the heath by the reddleman Diggory Venn in the back of his wagon. She was to marry Damon Wildeve but this marriage is delayed due to an error in the marriage certificate. On hearing this news, Thomasin had collapsed. She then asked the reddleman to take her home. The reader soon learns that Wildeve had devised this error himself. Damon Wildeve is in love with Eustacia Vye, and he hopes to ignite her jealousy by using Thomasin. Venn comes to know of the romance between Eustacia and Damon and intervenes on behalf of Thomasin who he is in love with. Throughout the novel he tries his best to get the two together. Venn pleads with Eustacia to allow Wildeve to marry Thomasin but in vain. He also doesn’t get any further with his own proposal to Thomasin.

There is confusion all around which is only aggravated with the presence of Clym Yeobright, Thomasin’s cousin and the son of the strong-willed widow Mrs. Yeobright, who also serves as a guardian to Thomasin. Eustacia is attracted to the suave and sophisticated Clym and looks on him as a means to escape from the heath she hates. Even prior to meeting him, she is influenced into falling in love with Clym. She therefore breaks off with Wildeve who then marries Thomasin. Eustacia’s scheming and the hand of fate work simultaneously to bring her together with Clym and the two have a romantic relationship which culminates in marriage much to the indignation of Mrs Yeobright. When Wildeve comes to know of Eustacia’s marriage, he again wishes to make her his own in spite of the fact that he is now married to Thomasin. In marrying Eustacia, Clym gets distanced from his mother who was against this alliance. Problems creep up between the newlyweds too and their relationship starts to sour.

Eustacia dreams of moving to Paris but Clym wants to start a school in his native country. Meanwhile, Wildeve inherits a large fortune and he and Eustacia start meeting again. They are spotted at the local dance by Diggory Venn and again when Wildeve visits Eustacia at her home when Clym is asleep. It is at this time that Mrs Yeobright too decides to visit the couple in the hope of making

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amends. Eustacia gets anxious when she hears the knocking on the door and as she doesn't want Wildeve to be discovered in her house, she ignores Mrs Yeobright's knocking. Mrs Yeobright turns away, sad and dejected with this rejection by her son that she succumbs to heat and snakebite on the walk home, and dies. The shocked son then takes the blame of his mother's death upon himself. When he further learns from his wife how she was instrumental in his mother being turned back from his house and about her clandestine relationship with Wildeve, he separates from her. Eustacia now wants to leave the heath and Wildeve helps her escape. The story comes to a climax when on a stormy night, Eustacia drowns on her way to meet Wildeve and in trying to save her, Wildeve drowns as well. Only through heroic efforts does Diggory Venn save Clym from the same fate. The last part of the novel sees the growth of an affectionate relationship, and an eventual marriage, between Thomasin and Diggory. Clym, much reduced by his travails and by weak eyesight brought on by overly arduous studies, becomes a wandering preacher, taken only half-seriously by the locals.

3.7.1 *The Return of the Native: Themes*

This novel is typically modern. Unlike the classical tragedies, which show man's greatness, it only shows the triviality of man and his helplessness in the face of nature and circumstances. Man finds his life full of unhappy events. Times are not fair: 'Men have oftener suffered from the mockery of a place too smiling for their reason than from the oppression of surroundings over sadly tinged'. For this reason perhaps, Hardy chooses Egdon Heath as the stage for the enactment of the tragedy of Eustacia, Clym and Mrs Yeobright. In the opening chapter of the novel, we are given a description of the gloomy stage.

To this sombre and gloomy place, our heroine was confined. She was full of Promethean rebelliousness against circumstances and fate, but all her efforts, all her contrivances, and all her rebellion proved to be of no avail and in the end she fulfilled her own prophecy regarding her doom in relation to the heath—'Tis my cross, my shame, and will be my death.' Clym, on the other hand, did not hate the heath, Instead of rebelling against it, he was attracted towards it. He was fed up with life in Paris and came back to spend the rest of his life here. The heath received him as it received Eustacia. Just as Eustacia on the barrow was so much like an organic part of the entire motionless structure, so also Clym was permeated with its scenes, with its subject. The heath did not differentiate between human beings. It treated them alike. Clym's attitude towards the heath is opposite to that of Eustacia. 'Take all the varying hates felt by Eustacia Vye towards the heath and translate them into loves and you have the heart of Clym'.

But the only return that the heath could give to either of them was to submerge his individuality into its own, When Mrs Yeobright looks at Clym from a distance; she is unable to recognize him. Clym 'appeared of a russet hue, not more distinguishable from the scene around him than the green caterpillar, from the leaf it feeds on. He appeared as a mere parasite of the heath'. But according to their different attitudes towards the heath, towards nature and circumstances, Clym and Eustacia meet different fates. Eustacia used to think of the heath alone as an uncongenial spot to be in: she felt it now of the whole world'. And so, unable to

escape from the heath in her life, she escaped from the whole world by committing suicide. Clym, on the other hand, loved his surroundings, and tried to accept whatever fate gave him.

As a result, Clym could find a partial fulfillment of his meager ambition. But the impression that we get on the whole is that life is full of difficulties, more sad than happy, and that nothing but tragedy lies in store for characters like Eustacia, Mrs Yeobright and even Clym. Hardy had to add the sixth book, the '*Aftercourses*', only to please the readers of the magazine in which his novel appeared serially. So we may consider the end of the fifth book as the real ending. And according to that, none of the main characters is left with any prospects of happiness. Mrs. Yeobright, Eustacia and Wildeve have all died unhappily, Clym is half blind and Thomasin has lost her husband. One may ask who is to blame for such tragic events.

We cannot agree fully with Eustacia that she may have done Heaven no harm, but she did do Thomasin harm when she tried to attract Wildeve back from her for a very selfish and trivial motive to show her 'power' and to get rid of her boredom. She says she tried to be a splendid woman, but Hardy proves that she was a splendid woman in many ways. We are struck by the precision and artistry of Hardy when he tells us in a single sentence how her specialty—her greatness was the cause of her doom and her fall. Even though she is a modern girl she reminds one of things and people of the grand past.

She was gloomy and lonely because she was conscious of her beauty and her extraordinariness. Moreover, she wanted to be different from the ordinary. She could not mix with the common lot and behave and feel as they did. Because of her hankering after uniqueness, she could not be satisfied with the common things that life offered. So she tried to achieve things for herself with the help of her 'power', but she could only influence Wildeve and Clym a little, she could not change her fate. She wanted 'what is called life and all the beating and pulsing' that one can find in a busy part of the world. But Clym could not give her these things. She might have got them somehow if she had not been a proud woman. So, instead of humiliating herself, she prefers to die. At this point, we are struck by the resemblance between Eustacia and Ibsen's heroine Hedda Gabler. Hedda too, when she learns that she must be at the mercy of Judge Brack—a slave to him, shoots herself. Both Hedda and Eustacia prefer death to a life of humiliation. They both have dignity and pride and they both want a life of glamour.

Eustacia also reminds us of Flaubert's heroine. Emma Bovary. Both of them are romantic by temperament but cabined and cribbed by environment and circumstances. We are told about Emma Bovary that 'true to her favourite theories, she longed for love'. About Eustacia we learn that to 'be loved to madness—such was her great desire'. Both of them are leading a dull and lonely life, while their temperament goads them to seek excitement and adventure indiscreetly.

But in spite of all these similarities there is a great difference in Hardy's depiction of Eustacia from Flaubert's of Emma. Emma's character is exposed to us with relentless realism, whereas Eustacia is romanticized and glorified as 'the raw material for divinity' and a being fit for Olympus.

*Charles Dickens and
Thomas Hardy*

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Before meeting Eustacia, Clym was unhappy because of the unhappiness of the whole world and because of his eager desire to give happiness to others. After he fell in love with Eustacia, he could not be happy because his mother disapproved of her. The relationships between Mrs. Yeobright, Clym and Eustacia are faintly similar to the relationships depicted in Lawrence's *Sons and Lovers*. Mrs Yeobright too expects Clym to succeed in life. After the death of her husband, she did not marry again and have another family; she devoted her life to Clym. Naturally, she expects her son to give her affection and obedience but when she finds that he is ready to sacrifice her wishes for the sake of Eustacia, we discern in her a jealousy similar to that of Mrs. Morel in *Sons and Lovers*, Mrs Yeobright's speech. 'You answer me; you think only of her. You stick to her in all things', is similar to the speech of Mrs Morel, '...you only want me to wait on you—the rest is for Miriam'. Clym also loves his mother very much. His following speech is similar to Paul's speeches towards the end of *Sons and Lovers*:

O, my mother, my mother! Would to God that I could live my life again, and endure for you what you endured for me.

These lines are surprisingly similar to the lines of the poem 'The End' that Lawrence wrote after the death of his mother:

*And Oh, my love, as I rock for you tonight
And have not any longer any hope
To heal the suffering or to make requite
For all your life of asking and despair,
I own that some of me is dead tonight.*

But this does not prove that Lawrence must necessarily have been influenced by Hardy's *The Return of the Native* in his writing of the above lines or of *Sons and Lovers* for there are great differences between the situations of the two novels. Mrs. Yeobright is not possessive. The Oedipus complex does not play any part in the lives of Mrs Yeobright and Clym. Mrs Yeobright is not opposed to Clym getting married but she is opposed to his marrying Eustacia because she feels that she is not a good woman. Thomasin is not selfish. She does not want Clym in place of her husband and she thinks only of his good. That is why when Clym learns of Eustacia's cruelty, he cries out—'May all the murderesses get the torment they deserve!'

One of the intentions of Hardy in this novel seems to have been to show the insignificance of man in this world. Life is a ruthless struggle and nature is indifferent to the individual. Life is not only difficult; it is incomprehensible with its 'inequality of lots' and 'perpetual dilemmas'. Science has so disillusioned man that he cannot find solace in a religious or spiritual vision of life.

The truth seems to be that a long line of disillusionive centuries has permanently displaced the Hellenic idea of life, or whatever it may be called. What the Greeks only suspected we know well; what their Aeschylus imagined our nursery children feel. That old-fashioned reveling in the general situation grows less and less possible as we uncover the defects of natural laws, and see the quandary that man is in by their operation.

Clym makes efforts to change the plight of the whole community, Eustacia tries to change just her own fate, but both of them fail because a human being is as

insignificant as an insect in the world of *The Return of the Native*. Mrs Yeobright has to die ‘on the heath like an animal kicked out’ and looking at Clym from a distance she finds him like a caterpillar, he ‘seemed to be of no more account in life than an insect. He appeared as a mere parasite of the heath, fretting its surface in his daily labour as a moth.... We are reminded of the evaluation of man in King Lear: ‘Man’s life is cheap as a beast’s’, a comrade with the wolf and owl’,I such a fellow saw, which made me think a man a worm...’, ‘As flies to wanton boys are we to the gods.’ Hardy convincingly shows us the insignificances and pettiness of human beings.

Such views about life and people and the dramatic structure of the novel tempt us to class *The Return of the Native* as a modern novel; but the cross-references to the ancient tragedies and the evocation of the world of antique grandeur compel us to regard it also as a work in line with the ancient tragedies.

3.7.2 *The Return of the Native: Characters*

Clym Yeobright: Clym Yeobright, the ‘native’ in the story, is the son of the widowed Mrs. Yeobright, and cousin of Thomasin Yeobright. He leaves his native land to work as a diamond merchant in Paris. However, he soon realizes that material wealth is not what he desires in life and he eventually returns home to the heath. Eustacia Vye pursues him and he marries her. She wants him to return to Paris but he has other plans. He wishes to stay on Egdon Heath and teach in a school. This is the cause of their conflict and the marriage turns sour. Clym is intelligent, cultured and deeply introspective. He is patient and generous, but also deeply determined, and fierce when angered. It is this determination which is the cause of his drift with his mother and later his separation from Eustacia. At the end of the novel, weakened by a degenerative eye condition and by the ordeal of losing his mother and Eustacia—for whose deaths he blames himself—he becomes a wandering preacher, sermonizing about simple moral topics.

Diggory Venn: Venn is a semi-nomadic ‘reddleman’ who travels throughout the region selling the dye that farmers use to mark their sheep. As a result of his exposure to the dye, his entire body and everything he owns are dyed red. Entirely red, camping out on the heath in his wagon, and emerging mysteriously from time to time, Venn functions as an image of the heath incarnated. Throughout the novel he keeps an eye on Thomasin Yeobright’s interests but also preserves his own interests: he has long been in love with her, and at the end of the novel they marry. Venn is very clever and perceptive, and can be a conniving conspirator.

Eustacia Vye: Eustacia was born in the busy port town of Budmouth and loved city life. She was later moved to Egdon Heath to live with her grandfather. Eustacia hates the heath and is always looking for a way to escape. Nevertheless, in her deep brooding passion, she seems to be a vital component of its wild nature. Eustacia has a love affair with Damon Wildeve but gives him up for the more suave and sophisticated Clym Yeobright as she feels she will have a better and more interesting life with him. Unfortunately, this marriage does not work and she is once more drawn to Wildeve and enters into an illicit relationship with him which eventually spells doom for both of them.

Charles Dickens and
Thomas Hardy

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Check Your Progress

9. Why was the marriage between Thomasin Yeobright and Damon Wildeva delayed?
10. Why did Clym Yeobright return to Egdon Heath?
11. Why is Mrs. Yeobright against her son's marriage to Eustacia?

3.8 ANSWERS TO 'CHECK YOUR PROGRESS'

1. Dickens was the most instinctive of all the great English novelists and sentimentality was often his only way of handling difficult moral problems as in *Nicholas Nickleby*.
2. It was with *Martin Chuzzlewit* that Dickens first showed his real stature as a novelist.
3. As Terry Eagleton points out, Dickens' 'prose style is alive with the swarming energies of his surroundings, full of hyperbole, extravagant gestures, unpredictable connections, rapid thumbnail sketches, melodramatic exclamations, abrupt shifts of tone and theatrical display...' His style is florid and vivacious and he is prone to give in to frequent flights of fantasy.
4. Tolstoy regarded Dickens as the best of all English novelists, and considered 'David Copperfield' to be his finest work. James Joyce has paid it reverence through parody in *Ulysses*, whereas Virginia Woolf who held a poor opinion of Dickens' works, confesses to the merit of *David Copperfield*.
5. The novel 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.
6. 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.
7. 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.
8. 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.

9. The marriage between Thomasin Yeobright and Damon Wildeve WAS delayed due to an error in the marriage certificate.
10. Clym Yeobright returned to Egdon Heath as he was fed up with life in Paris.
11. Mrs. Yeobright is against her son's marriage to Eustacia as she feels she is not a good woman.

*Charles Dickens and
Thomas Hardy*

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3.9 SUMMARY

- Charles Dickens began his career as a reporter in the ecclesiastical law court of 'Doctor Commons'. Later, he was member of True Sun and Morning Chronicle.
- Dickens was the most instinctive of the great English novelists and sentimentality was often his only way of handling difficult moral problems as in Nicholas Nickleby. Oliver Twist is the first of Dickens' novels, which concentrates on specific social ills, but the force of the indictment falls most heavily on the individuals who administer the attacked institutions rather than on the institution.
- Regarded as 'the first great English novelist of the city,' Charles Dickens is an urban novelist. Not only are his themes predominantly city-oriented but more significantly he writes 'in an urban kind of way'.
- *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.
- 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.
- 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

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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.

- Thomas Hardy lived his whole life near Dorchester, close to where he was born in 1840 and died in 1928. His personal experience was bound up with people and customs, the monuments and the institutions of Dorset and contiguous counties of south western England, which he placed permanently on the literary map by the ancient name, Wessex.
- The irony in Thomas Hardy's novels is not directed at human egotism but at the very conditions of human existence. He saw his characters as elemental figures whose passions were doomed to run the course that human conditions had set for them.
- Hardy was neither a philosophical novelist nor a subtle psychologist. His view of man is neither wholly consistent nor in any degree profound. His prose has an air of being self-taught— it is often clumsy, sometimes pretentious and generally rough-hewn and unequal.
- *The Return of the Native* revolves around five people and the Egdon Heath. Clym, the native who returns to Egdon, changes the life of Mrs. Yeobright, Eustacia, Thomasin, Mr. Wildeve and his own.
- The novel *The Return of the Native* is typically modern. Unlike the classical tragedies, which show man's greatness, it only shows the triviality of man and his helplessness in the face of nature and circumstances. Man finds his life full of unhappy events.

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3.10 KEY TERMS

- **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.'
- **Humanitarian:** Humanitarian is concerned with or seeking to promote human welfare.
- **Utilitarian:** It is relating to or adhering to the doctrine of utilitarianism.
- **Burlesque:** It refers to a literary, dramatic or musical work intended to cause laughter by caricaturing the manner or spirit of serious works, or by ludicrous treatment of their subjects.
- **Reddleman:** A reddleman travels the country marking flocks of sheep with a red mineral called 'reddle', a dialect term for red ochre.

3.11 SELF-ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

Short Answer Questions

1. Why is Charles Dickens known as an urban novelist?
2. Briefly summarize Dickens' novel *A Tale of Two Cities*.
3. What is the significance of the golden strands to Dr Manette?

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4. Write a short note on the setting of the novel *A Tale of Two Cities*.
5. List few prominent works of Thomas Hardy.
6. Give a character sketch of Clym Yeobright.
7. What are the contradictions in Eustacia's character?

Long Answer Questions

1. Discuss the major themes in the novel *A Tale of Two Cities*.
2. Analyse the various character sketches in *A Tale of Two Cities*.
3. Assess the plot construction of the *A Tale of Two Cities*.
4. How does Hardy depict the hopelessness of life through his characters? Give adequate examples from *The Return of the Native*.
5. Discuss the prose writing style in Hardy's novels.

3.12 FURTHER READING

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UNIT 4 GEORGE ORWELL AND VIRGINIA WOOLF

George Orwell and
Virginia Woolf

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Structure

- 4.0 Introduction
- 4.1 Objectives
- 4.2 George Orwell: About the Author
- 4.3 *Nineteen Eighty-Four*: Summary And Critical Appreciation
 - 4.3.1 *Nineteen Eighty-Four*: A Dystopian Novel
 - 4.3.2 Use of Symbols in *Nineteen Eighty-Four*
 - 4.3.3 Use of Motifs in *Nineteen Eighty-Four*
- 4.4 Virginia Woolf: Life and Works
 - 4.4.1 Feminism in the Novel and Feminist Narrative Technique
 - 4.4.2 Modern Novel
 - 4.4.3 Narrative Strategy
 - 4.4.4 Aspect of Time in the Novel
- 4.5 Answers to 'Check Your Progress'
- 4.6 Summary
- 4.7 Key Terms
- 4.8 Self-Assessment Questions and Exercises
- 4.9 Further Reading

4.0 INTRODUCTION

George Orwell was an established literary figure of his times and he rightfully satirized the socio-political insecurity and instability among the masses by depicting the feeling of futility, gloom and despair. *Nineteen Eighty-four*, also published as *1984*, is a dystopian novel by Orwell is a warning against totalitarianism. The novel was published in 1949 and it was Orwell's ninth and final book completed in his lifetime.

In addition to George Orwell's *1984*, the unit also discusses Virginia Woolf's *Mrs Dalloway* which was published in 1925. The novel soon generated interest among readers both in Britain and the United States despite its experimental approach to storytelling. *Mrs Dalloway* and Woolf's later works such as *To the Lighthouse* have generated interest in academics, and are the most popular among all of Woolf's novels.

In this unit, you will study about a political novel by Orwell written with the purpose of warning readers in the West of the dangers of totalitarian government. Also, you will learn about the feminist aspect, modern elements, narrative technique and the aspect of time as presented by Virginia Woolf in *Mrs Dalloway*.

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4.1 OBJECTIVES

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

- Know about life and works of George Orwell
- Assess George Orwell as a novelist
- Understand Orwell's dystopian fiction *Nineteen Eighty-Four*
- Discuss the symbols and motifs used in Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four*
- Analyse the life, works and achievements of Virginia Woolf
- Discuss the narrative strategy used by Woolf in *Mrs Dalloway*
- Analyse the modern elements and aspect of time in the novel

4.2 GEORGE ORWELL: ABOUT THE AUTHOR

George Orwell was born on 25 June 1903 in Bihar, India. His father Richard Walmseley Blair named him Eric Arthur Blair, the name which he forsook for his pen name George Orwell. His childhood was not a happy one as he did not have pleasant memories of his parents. Even his school life at St. Cyprian's was very miserable and lonely. He won a scholarship to Eton despite his depression and nightmarish experiences at school.

For some time he worked as an assistant to the District Superintendent of Police in the capital of upper Burma and then resigned and returned to England in 1927. He worked at various positions and also participated in the Spanish Civil War. To begin work on *Animal Farm*, Orwell resigned from the post of literary editor of *The Tribune*. After the publication of *Animal Farm* in 1945, he became very famous and financially prosperous for the first time in his life. Another famous work *Nineteen Eighty Four* was published in 1949. However, he did not live long enough to enjoy his popularity and succumbed to pulmonary tuberculosis in 1950, at the age of 46.

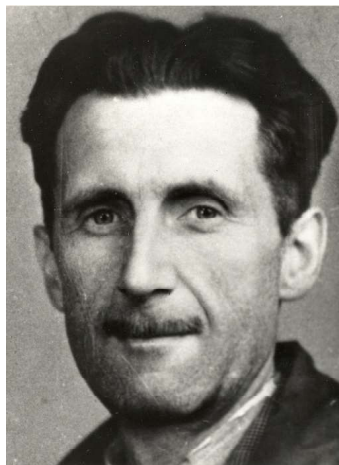


Fig. 4.1 George Orwell

4.3 **NINETEEN EIGHTY-FOUR: SUMMARY AND CRITICAL APPRECIATION**

George Orwell and
Virginia Woolf

Nineteen Eighty Four (also written as 1984) is a novel written by the author George Orwell. The book came out in the year 1949 and it was widely appreciated by both critics and readers alike. "In this futuristic novel '1984,' the English political novelist George Orwell gave a tragic illustration of what the world would be without the freedom to think." ¹It is still considered to be one of the most compelling texts written as a warning against the idea of totalitarianism. Some of the terms used in the book like 'Thought Police' and 'Big Brother' are still part of the main stream discourse. The ideas promoted in the book had such massive influence on the society that only a few books can achieve. *Nineteen Eighty Four* is more of a political point of view. The novel does not proclaim itself to be the torch bearer of mankind rather it is only a piece of warning text. The author did not live long enough to see his ideas translating into reality but he did claim through his work that if individuals did not become aware of their personal freedom then they might not be allowed to have their own thought process.

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4.3.1 *Nineteen Eighty-Four: A Dystopian Novel*

Dystopian² fictions are the counter narratives for utopian³ fiction. Utopian fictions were extremely popular in the sixteenth century and believed in the perfection of human beings. They were against introducing any form of alternate social and political structures. The term 'Utopia' was introduced by Thomas More. Based on its Greek origin it could have meant a Nowhere Land or a better world. Writers who subscribed to the idea of utopia expressed the mood of hope and self-confidence. The proposed utopian world displayed a great longing for man⁴.

Dystopian writers argued that human nature was such that it was impossible to achieve utopia. They insisted that there was no way for the society to improve, in fact it was perpetually on the path of doom. For things to not turn worse it was important for people to actively withstand the corrupting forces perpetuated by power and greed. As we see in 1984, which criticises utopian social programming because it had a tendency to take human beings in wrong direction as is clear from the behaviour of Winston Smith, the protagonist of the novel. He is primarily selfish and implies that under the circumstances of fear and deprivation people tend to act in the worst manner. And most importantly, governments create these conditions to exploit the inherent weakness that human beings carry and manipulate situations to their benefit. The story revolves around Oceania which is a super state and has resemblances to former England. The people are subjected to live in fear and poverty. Individuals are exposed to awful living conditions. They never have enough to eat and they survive in slums. Most importantly they are constantly spied upon. They have the power to get denounced or executed anytime without reason. The dystopian setting is too intense. Winston Smith serves the Records Department of the Ministry of Truth. By profession he is a journalist and his role involves rewriting and distorting historical facts. Even the media in *Nineteen Eighty Four* makes

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generous changes to newspaper articles so that they are more in line with the current doctrine as proposed by the government.

The novel highlights how the governing power tries to control the minds as well as the bodies of its citizens. One best example is Winston Smith. When he does not agree to subscribe to their belief system, they try to manipulate his mind through a variety of methods. One prominent example of the way the government is keeping track of lives is exposed through the large posters which carry the caption 'Big Brother is Watching You'. Within no time we are informed about the 'Thought Police'. Their primary job is to 'snoop in on conversations'. They are always watching every move made by the citizens and are busy controlling the minds as well as the thoughts of the people. But as we soon realise that the corrupted government does not consider physical control as good enough. They understand that in order to eliminate physical opposition completely, one must first eliminate any opposition at mental level. The government puts effort to control our minds. They believe that thoughtcrimes do not bring one closer to death. The thoughtcrime itself is death. As the story progresses the government tries to incorporate even more drastic methods through which it can control people. We see, the predictions of Big Brother change with the time. Without hesitation, the government lies about figures related to production. At some point the Chess Committee list does not reflect the name of Syme. And soon he vanishes as if he never actually existed. Winston Smith, in the novel suggests that people are actually not being human enough. He insists that the only way one can remain human is by not allowing the government to get inside the individual. Corruption is only one of the many issues that Orwell presents in 1984. Orwell insists that providing absolute power in the hands of the government can mean deprivation from basic freedoms and rights that human beings are entitled for. Interestingly, Orwell uses Soviet Union as the basis of 1984 yet he sets the story in England. Thus, highlighting the fact that absolute power irrespective of whether in a Communist state or a Democratic one will lead to an autocratic ruling power. In a situation when government lies becomes the gospel of truths while no one is allowed to oppose then anything has the power to become a fact. With the power to control the mind and the body, the government becomes hopeful of achieving a utopian society. The minds of people do not belong to them anymore. In an unexpected twist, the government tells the individuals how to think. And conformity with this unilateral thinking among the population at large was bound to bring disastrous results.

Critics have pointed out that Orwell has been influenced by his literary precursors like Yevgeny Zamyatin. Zamyatin wrote a novel in 1921 called '*We*'. The novel had a dystopian setting and criticised Soviet social engineering. Many critics have mentioned about the similar plot structures of *We* and *Nineteen Eighty Four*. In *We*, the readers come across an individual who is known only by a number. He lives in a society characterized by futuristic totalitarian regime. Here one encounters mass surveillance, population control, sexual repression etc. In *We* the protagonist comes across an alluring woman who inspires him to resist the wrong doings in the society. In addition to this, it is well known that Aldous Huxley's novel *Brave New World* was familiar to Orwell. Orwell was particularly impressed by the theme of social conditioning pitted against human nature. The book

highlighted an extremely controlled society that was preoccupied with mindless entertainment. *The Iron Heel* by Jack London also had a significant impression on Orwell. The work highlighted the rise of fascism (sometimes in distant future) in the United States. This has echoes to the idea of the Revolution and the Party as one witnesses in *Nineteen Eighty Four*. But after the publication of *Nineteen Eighty Four*, many writers were influenced by Orwell and his ideas. Some of the best examples are *A Clockwork Orange* by Anthony Burgess and *Fahrenheit 451* by Ray Bradbury.

With the advancement of technology during the period of 1950s and early 1960s many writers pointed out the encroaching role of technology especially with respect to human behaviour. Novels like *Nineteen Eighty Four* and others composed prior to technological advancement spoke about societies ruled by humans. But in the later period we had dystopian novels pointing out the societies ruled by and powered by machines. By the late 20th and early 21st century we come across themes and issues pertaining to the environment and social justice being highlighted in dystopian fictions. In 2005, *The Road* by Cormac McCarthy came out in print. The fiction narrates the life story of a father and son who are trying to survive in America (of future period) where the natural world is no longer available and majority of the animals are extinct. The genre of dystopian fiction was explored by feminist writers to comment on political realities which highlighted the plights of gender inequity prevalent in society. *The Handmaid's Tale* by Margaret Atwood revolves around a Christian movement which was totalitarian and fundamentalist in nature. This movement overthrows the government of United States. But the new power suspends nearly all women's rights and women who are able to bear children were assigned to high-ranking men without much rational like property. Dystopian popular fictions like *The Hunger Games* introduce a fear of environmental catastrophe which leads to social injustice and government surveillance. It has been mentioned by many that *Nineteen Eighty Four* is to twentieth century what Hobbes's *Leviathan* was to the seventeenth century readers.

4.3.2 Use of Symbols in *Nineteen Eighty-Four*

George Orwell makes extensive use of symbolism in his novel *Nineteen Eighty Four*. They appear in the dialogues as well as in the plot spun throughout the novel. These symbol used in the novel appears in the form of people or things which represent certain ideas as expressed by the author.

Big Brother: He represents the totalitarian government that rules Oceania. This government is controlled by the ruling Party and both are used interchangeably across the narrative. In the course of the novel, Winston comes to know through Goldstein's book that 'Big Brother' is not an actual human being but rather a creation of the Party. His main functions is to arouse the feelings of reverence and fear among people. In fact worshipping of Big Brother is considered as substitute for organized religion as the Party has already outlawed religion.

Glass paperweight: The glass paperweight that is sold to Winston is representative of the past. We are informed that the level of craftsmanship that is

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required to make a product like that is no longer available in the state as the quality of it has deteriorated. Moreover, the Party no longer supports the use of beauty for its own sake. There are tiny fragments of coral which are decorated in the paperweight and this is representative of the fragility of relationships of human beings like the bond that is established between Julia and Winston. This relationship is easily destroyed by O'Brien the same way as the paperweight is broken by the 'Thought Police' without any remorse. This becomes the symbol of the room where in Mr Charrington resided. It was considered as private sanctuary for the lovers which according to Winston was a different world that was frozen in time.

The Prole Woman: The prole woman is a red-armed woman who represents Winston's one legitimate hope for the long-term future. She symbolises fertility as well as reproductive capacity. She is also representative of the strong and vital power of the lower classes. In the novel, she is compared to a mare then to a rose-hip and later on to an overripe turnip. We are told Winston nurtures a certain 'mystical reverence' for her. But just before the lovers are taken into custody, Winston gets a sight of her laundry which is in hanging the courtyard and is convinced that the proles are 'immortal'. He is sure that someday they will rise, rebel against the ruling Party and overthrow it.

Emmanuel Goldstein: Emmanuel Goldstein is a fictional character and according to critics' suggestion it is very likely that someone like Emmanuel Goldstein definitely does not exist. Yet he symbolizes the power that can be attributed to groupthink. Needless to point out that the Party is always in a lookout for something or someone to compare itself in order to highlight its superior nature. In that context, Goldstein symbolizes everything that is not reflective of the Party. That is why for some people he becomes an object of hatred while on the other hand, he is an object of hope for many others.

The Telescreen: The telescreen described in the novel 1984 is a symbol or tool of the continual surveillance that the people by the Party are continuously subjected to. The telescreen is representative of the total power of a regime that it wields over the citizens. And the access could be as intimate as having knowledge about their private lives that is taking place inside their homes. We come across this concept for the first time in Chapter 1 of Book 1. The telescreen is seen transmitting both ways which is representative of the propaganda that promotes the Party's ever-changing truth model. Telescreens are omnipresent so that even thoughtcrimes can be detected by identifying the expression on the face of a person.

A Boot Stamping on a Human Face: O'Brien tells Winston in Book 2, that the purpose of the Party is to obtain power for its own growth and it has no intentions of making life better for others. He points out that with the passage of time the Party's power will only grow many folds and their desire to oppress people will also grow. To highlight his point O'Brien informs Winston that in future there will be like 'a boot stamping on a human face—forever.' The boot represents a government that is in complete control of the people it is ruling. The boot is identified with execution, torture, arrest etc. which is meant to crush human emotion as well as freedom.

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2 + 2 = 5: The equation is a symbol of the lies which the Party extends as truth and make people accept it as they were suggesting. We all know, the equation is naturally false, but the people insists on identifying it as true because the Party suggests it is so. Anyone who decides to not subscribe to the ideas were subjected to torture as well as death. In Book 2, Winston believes that people must consciously believe that $2 + 2 = 4$ and this will bring fall of Big Brother. In Book 3 O'Brien shows four fingers and makes Winston to say that it is five, but Winston sees four and insist on saying it as 4 only. He says reality is never outside because it exists in the human mind. The incorrect equation is also symbol of Winston's defeat (as it is shown in the end of the book). After his release from Room 101, Winston traces $2 + 2 = 5$ in his table while playing chess, implying that he no longer holds his humanity and has accepted lies as truth.

Newspeak and the Memory Hole: Newspeak represents total thought control by the Party. It takes recourse to continual revision and excessive reduction of the number of words used in English. On the other hand, the memory hole is the place where all previous authentic documents and photographs are kept and symbolizes the thought control and the way truth is restructured. In Book 1 we have Syme bragging to Winston that he is engaged in producing the 11th edition of the Newspeak dictionary. But as someone who is a part of orthodox Outer Party, he is proud of helping the Party in trying to achieve the goal by controlling consciousness of individuals through the efforts of limiting the expressions of the people. It is explained that if people don't have enough vocabulary to express themselves they will not be able to tell what they are actually thinking. In that way, if people receive written materials in a language that is controlled by the Party, then their knowledge and thoughts will be controlled by the Party to a great extent. The memory hole served a similar purpose by removing every evidence that people knew was considered to be true. The Party always promotes its own version of truth as the only actual one. As it has been mentioned, Newspeak is influential in limiting the thought by destroying words and thereby nuance. With the passage of time, entire real knowledge of Oldspeak (i.e., Standard English) will be removed and writers like Geoffrey Chaucer, John Milton, William Shakespeare et al will be inaccessible to the general mass. People will never know the words and that is why they cannot read anything but only those composed in Newspeak. In case, people are not given a context and wisdom of the past they will have nothing to learn from it. Newspeak works towards keeping the citizens ignorant of the past and thus being devoid of any significant knowledge. The memory hole too does not help much in making knowledge accessible as it burns up events of the past and disappearing it. Anybody who insists on narrating the past is forced to acknowledge that s/he is wrong. Both Newspeak and the memory hole stand for total ignorance and any actual knowledge of history or knowledge. Everything is false unless approved by the Party.

4.3.3 Use of Motifs in *Nineteen Eighty-Four*

In his novel, George Orwell creates in a highly symbolic as well as a tightly spun narrative structure. This structure is inter woven with authorial intrusion as well as

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black humour. Orwell deftly create a dystopian feel by using symbols, images, phrases, and precise use of words. Orwell manifests himself within the story in some fashion and involve authorial intrusion. But Orwell is a master story teller and he introduces the narrative elements most subtly into the narrative. One interesting element introduced into the narrative is motif which is a recurring pattern or element of a story. Here we will discuss a few major motifs that are used in the novel.

Prophetic Dreams: We see that Winston dreams consistently turn real in the novel. Along with his dreams there is also the waking premonitions that Winston visualises which raises concerns regarding his fate or the fate of other people that always turns out to be right.

Propaganda Contrasting Reality: One motif that continuously keeps appearing throughout the novel is the use of propaganda by the Party. This is directly in contrast to the available reality. The best example is the ‘Ministry of Love’ which is a section of the government and is involved in promoting torture. This motif takes an important place because it is employed by actual governments. They use it to reorient the thought process of the populace through euphemism. It will not be wrong to mention here that Orwell wrote *Nineteen Eighty Four* towards the end of World War II and therefore one can find innumerable allusions to various aspects of Nazi Germany.

Check Your Progress

1. What was the real name of George Orwell?
2. List some of the terms used in the novel *1984* which are still part of the main stream discourse.
3. What kind of novel is *Nineteen Eighty-Four*?

4.4 VIRGINIA WOOLF: LIFE AND WORKS

Virginia Woolf (1882–1941) was the daughter of Sir Leslie Stephen and his second wife Julia Duckworth. Woolf was taught by tutors at home in the Hyde Park Gate area. In 1904, the Stephen family lost Sir Leslie Stephen. After her father’s death, Woolf shifted to Bloomsbury with her brothers Thoby and Adrian, and her sister Vanessa. Vanessa later married English art critic Clive Bell. The house where Woolf and her siblings stayed was the initial meeting hub of the Bloomsbury Group. 1906 turned out to be another year of misfortunes for Virginia as she lost her brother Thoby. Her brother’s death broke her mentally. This was just the beginning of a series of mental problems that plagued her later in life.

1912 turned out to be a pleasant year for Virginia. She tied the knot with English political theorist and author Leonard Woolf and finished her first novel *The Voyage Out*, which was eventually published in 1918. The Woolf couple founded the Hogarth Press, which brought out some major books including Katherine Mansfield’s *Prelude* (1918), and T. S. Eliot’s *Poems* (1919) and *The Waste Land* (1923). In 1913, Virginia had another major nervous breakdown.



Fig. 4.2 Virginia Woolf

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The next work that Virginia Woolf published was *Night and Day* (1919). Based in London, the novel sounds rather realistic and juxtaposes the lives of two friends, Mary and Katherine. In 1922, she wrote *Jacob's Room*, which was based on the life and death of her brother Thoby. With the publication of *Mrs Dalloway* (1925), *To the Lighthouse* (1927) and *The Waves* (1931), Virginia Woolf consolidated her position as a modernist writer.

Woolf wrote two biographies, namely, *Orlando* (1928) and *Flush* (1933). The former was dedicated to a close androgynous friend, V. Sakville-West and the latter narrates the romance between prominent English poets Elizabeth Barrett Browning and Robert Browning as seen from the point of view of Elizabeth's pet dog (Cannine). The experimental work *Between the Acts* (1941) was published posthumously.

The world of literature considers Virginia Woolf as a major proponent of the 'stream of consciousness' technique. Her contribution to feminist criticism has been rather significant. *A Room of One's Own* (1929) and its sequel *Three Guineas* (1938) are now acknowledged as the most important creations of the era. Virginia Woolf drowned herself during one of her nervous attacks.

Summary of Mrs Dalloway

The novel begins with a depiction of the eponymous character of the novel Clarissa Dalloway who is walking through her neighbourhood in London to prepare for a party. The pleasant day reminds her of the time she spent in Bourton as a youth and makes her wonder about her decision to marry Richard Dalloway. She turned down the marriage proposal of the enigmatic Peter Walsh for Richard Dalloway. The conflict is reintroduced after Peter pays a visit to Clarissa that morning.

The point of view then shifts to Septimus Warren Smith who is a veteran of the First World War. Septimus, who is suffering from post-traumatic stress, spends his day in the park with his Italian wife Lucrezia. It is here that Peter Walsh observes Smith. Septimus suffers from shell shock and has frequent hallucinations, mostly

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about his friend Evans who died in the war. Later that day, when Septimus is being taken to a mental asylum, he commits suicide by jumping from a window.

Clarissa's party is attended by members of high society. She hears about Septimus' suicide at the party and then retreats to a small room to think about it. She gradually begins to admire the act of the stranger for taking the plunge and not compromising with his soul.

4.4.1 Feminism in the Novel and Feminist Narrative Technique

To understand the feminist issues and ideas that Woolf raises in the novel, we have to be first clear about what qualifies as feminism—both for Woolf and for us. One meaningful way is to use the conclusion of (an Australian and British academic) Sara Ahmed's article 'Killing Joy: Feminism and the History of Happiness' as a point of entry:

We might say that feminism is an inheritance of the sadness of becoming conscious not only of gender as the restriction of possibility but also of how this restriction was not necessary. Feminism involves a sociality of unhappiness not only by generating talk about the collective nature of suffering that is concealed and reproduced by the figure of the happy housewife (which is perhaps how we can describe consciousness-raising) but also by passing books around. It is not simply that feminism coheres around the inheritance of books such as *Mrs Dalloway*, which offer new forms of consciousness of the world in their exploration of gender as loss. After all, if we were to assume that feminist consciousness took the form of consciousness of gender as the restriction of possibility, then we would be excluding other kinds of political consciousness from our idea of feminism.

Sara is self-conscious about the limitations of this way of thinking about feminism, she nevertheless provides two ideas which are valuable to us in this context. The first is that looking at feminism through a history of happiness/unhappiness is a good point of entry to study a novel like *Mrs Dalloway* and the second that such a reading should not have any pretensions of exhausting the wide and complex field called feminism, even if it is in relation to *Mrs Dalloway*. Using three important points in the novel—Clarissa's walk on the streets, her party and her reaction to Septimus's death, we can study Clarissa's unhappiness and the feminist issues Woolf raises through her depiction. However, first let us place the idea of happiness/unhappiness in a theoretical perspective. Ahmed looks at it from a historical perspective:

In its earliest uses, unhappy meant 'causing misfortune or trouble'. Only later did it come to mean 'miserable in lot or circumstances' or 'wretched in mind'. We can learn from the swiftness of translation between causing unhappiness and being described as unhappy. We must learn.

The question that arises is: When did this transition in meaning take place? Sara does not specify. Yet the fact that it did is interesting because a woman's unhappiness could begin to be felt not as something that causes misfortune or trouble to others but as a state in which she was either 'miserable in lot or

circumstances' or 'wretched in mind'. That itself indicates a feminist consciousness in action though in a very rudimentary way for referring to someone as a wretch is definitely not sympathetic. Sara Ahmed in *The Promise of Happiness* says:

The word wretched also has a suggestive genealogy, coming from wretch, referring to a stranger, exile, or banished person. The wretch is not only the one driven out of his or her native country but is also defined as one who is 'sunk in deep distress, sorrow, misfortune, or poverty', 'a miserable, unhappy, or unfortunate person', 'a poor or hapless being', and even 'a vile, sorry, or despicable person'.

The understanding of a woman as an unhappy person because she is a wretch cannot really be alleviating of the woman's condition in any significant way. In order to address the issue of a woman's existence in a society, one has to first redefine the concept of unhappiness as indicating a state which can be helped and ought to be helped if living happily is a fundamental right of everyone in a society.

Woolf's writing can be seen as an effort to analyse what constitutes a woman's unhappiness, how it can be linked to a particular modernist predicament of that era and what, if anything, can be done to alleviate it. This involves studying unhappiness from the point of view of the wretch.

If we listen to or study sympathetically those considered wretched, then perhaps their wretchedness would no longer belong to them. The sorrow of the stranger might give us a different angle on happiness, not because it teaches us what it is like or must be like to be a stranger, but because it might alert us to the role of other individuals and factors in making them unhappy.

This is what one strand of feminism analyses. It tries to understand what women are asked to give up for happiness, thereby, becoming unhappy. While happiness remains a goal that may be elusive or achievable, unhappiness becomes the default state of the woman in this analysis. As someone looking to reach her goal or even when she has reached her goal at a particular expense, as in the case of Mrs Dalloway, her state remains one of fundamental unhappiness. Sara Ahmed explains this further in the following manner:

Indeed, in even becoming conscious of happiness as loss, feminists have already refused to give up desire, imagination, and curiosity for happiness. There can be sadness simply in the realization of what one has given up. Feminist archives are thus full of housewives becoming conscious of unhappiness as a mood that seems to surround them: think of Virginia Woolf's *Mrs Dalloway*. In the world of the novel, the feeling is certainly around, almost like a thickness in the air. We sense the unhappiness seeping through the tasks of the everyday. There she is, about to get flowers, enjoying her walk in London. During that walk, she disappears: 'But often now this body she wore (she stopped to look at a Dutch picture), this body, with all its capacities, seemed nothing—nothing at all. She had the oddest sense of being herself invisible; unseen; unknown; there being no more marrying, no more having children now, but only this astonishing and rather solemn progress with the rest of them, up Bond street, this being Mrs Dalloway; not even Clarissa anymore; this being Mrs Richard Dalloway.'

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Becoming Mrs Richard Dalloway is itself a form of disappearance. Clarissa feels that what is before her is a kind of solemn progress, but it ends up destroying something that she feels is essential in her. It is almost as if she is living somebody else's life, simply going the same way others are going. If happiness is what allows us to reach certain points, it is not necessarily how we feel when we get there. For Mrs Dalloway, to reach these points is to disappear. The point of reaching these points seems to be a certain disappearance, a loss of possibility, a certain failure to make use of the body's capacities, to find out what it is that her body can do. To become conscious of this possibility can involve mourning for its loss.

The novel, however, does not present this as a personal loss of Clarissa but as a predicament of the modern world. Each sentence of the book takes thoughts and feelings as if they are objects in a shared world. As Clarissa goes out to buy flowers for her party, she walks into a world with others. They all might be in their own world (with their own tasks, their own recollections), and yet they share the world of the street, if only for a fleeting moment. More importantly, they share the feeling of unhappiness with her, some because of similar goals and challenges, others because of different ones. This is not a text committed to the exploration of feminist issues in a narrow sense. If anything, the novel tries to understand and depict Clarissa's problem as a product of a much larger social malaise.

This malaise is productive of a number of other problems in other people, Septimus being the most obvious example. The effects produced by this malaise that concern the feminists most are not the only ones that Woolf fictionalizes.

The link between Mrs Dalloway and Septimus allows unhappiness to be shared, even if they do not share their feelings. These are two characters who do not know each other, though they pass each other, and yet their worlds are connected by similar strands of unhappiness. Septimus suffers from shell shock, and we feel his feelings with him, the panic and sadness as the horror of war intrudes as memory. His suffering brings the past into the time of the present, the long time of war, its persistence as an aftermath.

Clarissa suffers from a social and cultural shock that did not really explode in her face or by her side rather every unit of its explosive energy has seeped into her through the years. Septimus acts insane, Clarissa feels like one, though her social conduct is in certain senses impeccable.

Their wars have been at different frontiers and the nature of their resistances different. The common factor is that the wars have damaged their selves significantly. One will end with a literal suicide, the other in a metaphorical one.

It is, therefore, not surprising that Mrs Dalloway's stream of consciousness offers itself as a consciousness of death: 'Did it matter, then, she asked herself, as she walked towards Bond Street, did it matter that she must inevitably cease completely; all this must go on without her; did she resent it; or did it not become consoling to believe that death ended?' Clarissa in becoming Mrs Dalloway and in becoming Mrs Richard Dalloway and leading the life that she does 'must inevitably cease completely'. Feminist histories show us how following the paths of happiness for women requires a cessation.

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The themes of death and imprisonment are linked with Mrs Dalloway's planned party. To some feminist readers, it is the preoccupation with the party that makes the novel disappointing. For Simone de Beauvoir (a French author and existentialist philosopher), Mrs Dalloway's enjoyment of parties is read as a sign that she is trying to turn her 'prison into glory', as if as a hostess she can be 'the bestower of happiness and gaiety'. For Beauvoir, the gift of the party turns quickly into duty, such that Mrs Dalloway, 'who loved these triumphs, these semblances', still 'felt their hollowness'. For Kate Millett (an American feminist writer), Mrs Dalloway is a rather disappointing figure. She exposes Woolf's failure to turn her own unhappiness into politics:

Virginia glorified two housewives, Mrs Dalloway and Mrs Ramsey, recorded the suicidal misery of Rhoda in *The Waves* without ever explaining its causes.

The party is one thing on the surface and another under it. Mrs Dalloway is apparently distracted from the causes of unhappiness by the party but the party is also the event in which unhappiness comes to life. For Mrs Dalloway, her party is life. It is how she can make things happen; it is a gift, a happening. At one level, the party is a ritual enactment of an illusory freedom within a prison. However, if we question what happens in the party, yet another level of significance emerges. It is at the party that Septimus's life touches Mrs Dalloway most directly. It touches her through death:

What business had the Bradshaws to talk of death at her party? A young man had killed himself. . . . He had thrown himself from a window. Up had flashed the ground; through him, blundering, bruising, went the rusty spikes. There he lay with the thud, thud, thud in his brain, and then a suffocation of blackness. So she saw it. But why had he done it? And the Bradshaws talked of it at her party!

Notice the details with which Clarissa visualizes Septimus's death, the agonizing details of the last moment of his life. It is almost as if these states are real for her, may be because she has metaphorically visited this state more than once. What deeper reflection will do is make her answer the question: Why had he done it?

The sense of waste clearly comes into her mind for she is reminded of a time when she had thrown a shilling into the Serpentine. However, he had flung his life away. This leads to a reflection on the value of what she had conserved in not flinging away her life. In fact, it is this reflection that leads to the recognition of the core similarity between her and Septimus's life. What was valuable in her life lay wreathed, defaced and obscured:

They went on living (she would have to go back; the rooms were still crowded; people kept on coming). They (all day she had been thinking of Bourton, of Peter, of Sally), they would grow old. A thing there was that mattered; a thing, wreathed about with chatter, defaced, obscured in her own life, let drop everyday in corruption, lies, chatter.

Septimus's death becomes a question that takes Mrs Dalloway away from the party. She attends to his death and wonders about it. She becomes a retrospective witness even though she was not and could not have been there. His

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death becomes material and fleshy through her thought. His death announces that not only sadness can be unbearable but also that we do not have to bear it, and that you can fling it away. In this moment, when death intervenes in the life of the party, life becomes chatter, becomes what goes on—‘they went on living’—what comes and goes: ‘people kept on coming’. It is at this moment—the moment of wondering about what has happened to a stranger, to someone whom she does not and will not know—that Mrs Dalloway becomes conscious of a loss, of having lost something as her life has become chatter.

The important point is the indirectness with which the truth of her existence dawns on her. She learns through indirections what assaults Septimus directly and forces him to kill himself. Sara Ahmed analyses the significance of this fact as follows:

What is striking about Mrs Dalloway is how suffering has to enter her consciousness from the edges, through the arrival of another, another who is an intruder, who has not been invited into the room. It is the suffering of an intruder that exposes the emptiness of life’s chatter. Suffering enters not as self-consciousness—as a consciousness of one’s own suffering—but as a heightening of consciousness, a world-consciousness in which the suffering of those who do not belong is allowed to disturb an atmosphere. Even when unhappiness is a familiar feeling, it arrives like a stranger to disturb the familiar or to reveal what is disturbing in the familiar. The arrival of suffering from the edges of social consciousness might teach us about the difficulty of becoming conscious of suffering or teach us about our own resistances to gathering together those seemingly little uneasy feelings of loss or dissatisfaction into recognition of unhappiness. The party might expose the need to keep busy, to keep going in the face of one’s disappearance. So much sadness revealed in the very need to be busy! So much grief expressed in the need not to be overwhelmed by grief! It is hard labour just to recognize sadness and disappointment when you are living a life that is meant to be happy but simply is not, which is meant to be full but feels empty. It is difficult to give up an idea of one’s life when one lives a life according to that idea.

Powerful and interesting as this analysis is, it begins to suggest why and how social and cultural forces relating to gender and class can perpetuate themselves. Perhaps by making people unhappy in the quest for and achievement of happiness. That is the power certain ideologies exercise on our lives. It needs the piercing vision of a literary genius to show us how we can be blind in our vision, a blindness that we experience as a part of our day-to-day life but remain impervious to because we have worked so hard to achieve that vision.

Feminist Narrative Technique

It is not the same thing to write as a man and a woman. The two wield the pen differently. In the nature of the thoughts that come into one’s mind, the words one chooses, sentence structure and discourse building—women and men are different. They are different because language, the medium of communication, is utilized differently by both the sexes. This is a realization that has been articulated both in theory and practice by Modern thinkers and writers. For Raymond Williams,

‘The reality of conventions as the mode of junction of social position and literary practice remains central’.

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The idea may sound difficult, but it is actually simple. A literary convention, that is the way things are written in literature, is the central place where social position and literary practice intersect. A deprived social position will find expression in its own literary practice. Narrative conventions, thus, become a site of struggle, involving ‘the embodiment and performance of known but excluded and subordinated experiences and relationships; the articulation and formation of latent, momentary, and newly possible consciousnesses’.

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Woolf is one of the early modernists to articulate and demonstrate this ideology in the realm of gender. She raised a set of deeply-searching formal questions about narrative conventions in ‘Modern Fiction’ but actually engaged with them in ‘Women and Fiction’. Here the sentence, the plot, narrative convention and subject matter are all scrutinized by the female novelist because these narrative forms and modes, she believes, are loaded with gender ideology. Woolf argued repeatedly that the prevalent values of fiction are androcentric, devaluing or rendering minor and suspect female experiences.

... as men are the arbiters of that [social] convention, as they have established an order of values in life, so to, since fiction is largely based on life, these values prevail there also to a very great extent. It is probable, however, that both in life and in art, the values of a woman are not the values of a man. Thus, when a woman comes to write a novel, she will find that she is perpetually wishing to alter the established values—to make serious what appears insignificant to a man, and trivial what is to him important.

Woolf’s argument strongly proposes female difference. The question that arises is: What is different about women, or at least sufficiently different to make these claims plausible? Feminist critic and scholar Rachel Blau Duplessis in her study of Woolf’s narrative technique explores this question. In this process, she borrows and extends (feminist sociologist and psychoanalyst) Nancy Chodorow’s concept of oscillation which summarizes the female’s ‘emotional, if not erotic bisexual oscillation between mother and father - between pre- occupation with ‘mother-child’ issues and ‘male-female’ issues.

The psychosexual and sociocultural structures of female identity are elucidated in two oscillations repeatedly visible in the texts and careers of women writers. The process of oedipalization traced by Freud contains the crucial ‘admission’ that this crisis of gendering ineluctably contains a massive oscillation between oedipal and pre-oedipal situations and resolutions. Hence, the goal of heterosexual object choice is repeatedly coloured by, and in some tension with, female bonding, mothering and the mother-daughter dyad.

As Rachel says in *Essentials of the Theory of Fiction*:

The narrative and cultural implications of this neo-Freudian picture of gendering are staggering. With no easy or one-directional passage to ‘normal femininity,’ women as social products are characterized by unresolved and continuous alternations between allegiance to males and to females, between heterosexuality and female-identified, lesbian, or bisexual ties. The ‘original bisexuality’ of the individual female is

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not easily put to rest or resolved by one early tactical episode. Further, the emotional rhythms of female identity involve repeated (and possibly even simultaneous) articulations of these two principles or states, which are taken (ideologically) as opposing poles....

In the social and cultural arenas, there is a constant repositioning between dominant and muted, hegemonic and oppositional, central and colonial, so that a woman may be described as (ambiguously) nonhegemonic, or, with equal justice but less drama, as (ambiguously) hegemonic if her race, class and sexuality exist within dominant paradigms.

A woman's psychosexual and sociocultural structures, Rachel would have us believe, is subject to an oscillation. This oscillation is suggested in Freud's writings as having its roots in a dual sexual relationship with the mother and the father, from the pre-oedipal and oedipal stages. These relationships are different, the first homosexual and the other heterosexual, each colouring the other through a relation of tension. The experience of this tension at the psychosexual level has important implications for the narrative that the woman spins. The heterosexual self aligns itself with the hegemonic centre, while the homosexual part builds up the narrative of resistance.

The woman's text is, thus, necessarily split in its origin, because the authoring consciousness is originally split.

Woolf discusses this oscillating consciousness in *A Room of One's Own*:

'It [the mind] can think back through its fathers or through its mothers, as I have said that a woman writing thinks back through her mothers. Again if one is a woman one is often surprised by a sudden splitting off of consciousness, say in walking down Whitehall, when from being the natural inheritor of that civilization, she becomes, on the contrary, outside of it, alien and critical.'

Ready to bend that goal to any convention or tradition for those are ideologically suspect. There is a radical originality to the project and its execution which is what makes it a classic. To understand how Woolf makes this point at the level of character, the reader can take Clarissa's reaction to Bradshaw's disclosure of Septimus's death. It begins with anger on Bradshaw and moves on to an analysis of the commonality in their condition.

What business had the Bradshaws to talk of death at her party? A young man had killed himself. . . . He had thrown himself from a window. Up had flashed the ground; through him, blundering, bruising, went the rusty spikes. There he lay with the thud, thud, thud in his brain, and then a suffocation of blackness. So she saw it. But why had he done it? And the Bradshaws talked of it at her party!

A little later, a parallel is drawn with her own life but with a difference:

They went on living (she would have to go back; the rooms were still crowded; people kept on coming). They (all day she had been thinking of Bourton, of Peter, of Sally), they would grow old.

A thing there was that mattered; a thing, wreathed about with chatter, defaced, obscured in her own life, let drop everyday in corruption, lies, chatter.

4.4.2 Modern Novel

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Novels written from 1880s to 1940s are classified as modern novels. When they were written, they were new, so then the adjective modern fitted them somewhat aptly. However, with the passage of time, newer texts replaced them and they no longer remained modern in the sense of new. However, the tag modern continues to be associated with texts written during this period. Derivatively, texts written during this period are called modern texts—

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Woolf's *Mrs Dalloway* is one such text. Literary historian and critic David Daiches asks this question in a different way:

What was the modern novel? It was the work of Proust and Kafka and Joyce and Lawrence and Virginia Woolf and others. Yet, we can do more than point to individual works. We can see now that what I have called the modern novel represented a literary movement common to the western world which reflected certain dilemmas felt in that world, and that even the most professional technical experiments are related in some way to those dilemmas. In this sense the modern novel is over, partly because the dilemmas have changed. In America, Faulkner was a modern novelist; Saul Bellow (in this meaning of the term) is not. In Europe, Proust and Joyce were modern novelists; Doris Lessing and Iris Murdoch are not. Of course, history is continuous and literary history, which is part of history, is also continuous. Yet, we can tell when a movement is over, even though we cannot be precise about the moment of its passing.

As Daiches points out, the Modern age witnessed the emergence of a variety of themes and modes of writing, all of them different and some even opposed to each other. Hence, it is difficult to agree about a set of ideas that can be considered common to all writers of the era. Different critics detect different currents flowing through the age. Let us discuss David Daiches' idea of the modern novel to understand *Mrs Dalloway* as a modern novel here.

Daiches begins speaking about the topic with recognition that the theory he propounds is his and, thus, may not be agreed by others:

My theory of the modern novel involved three factors. The first was what I called the breakdown of the implicit agreement between author and readers about what was significant in human experience, an agreement which, in the eighteenth and nineteenth-century novel, provided the criterion of selection employed by the novelist in deciding what sort of event to select from the multifarious details of daily life in order to construct his plot pattern. From Defoe to Hardy the novelist had assumed, with his readers' agreement, that what was significant was what led to movement upward or downward in the class structure, gain or loss of fortune, and change of marital situation. Even such a rebellious novelist as Hardy, at odds with so much in the Victorian ethos, patterned the plots of such novels as *Tess* and *Jude* in terms of class, money, and marriage. The real change came when the novelist grew increasingly uncertain about the validity of such public factors in rendering the true reality of felt life.

As Woolf herself puts it: 'To believe that your impressions hold good for others is to be released from the cramp and confinement of personality.'

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This, according to Daiches, is the most important attribute of a modern text. The second factor relates to French philosopher Henry Bergson's theory of time and the narrative techniques built around it. Daiches has explained this in the following manner:

The second factor was the new concept of time and its relation to consciousness which manifested itself in Europe in Bergson's theory of *la dure* and in America in William James's theory of the 'specious present': time was not, as Virginia Woolf observed, a series of gig lamps symmetrically arranged but a luminous halo. Or, as William James put it, the present moment did not exist in human consciousness, which was a continuous blend of retrospect and anticipation, a flow of the 'already' into the 'not yet'. The third factor was the new concept of consciousness itself, which was now seen to exist simultaneously on different levels, the surface level being qualified and in a sense conditioned by deeper levels which were the product of the whole earlier history of the individual and perhaps even (in Jungian terms) of the race.

The section on narrative technique explains how Virginia Woolf's model of narration is built on this view of time and the present, giving a radically different flavour to it. It is to be noted that the modern novelist was concerned about how to depict his real experiences. A number of new techniques, each bearing the artist's unique imprint, emerged. However, such play with narration and depiction gave rise to the problem of communication.

If public gestures were too coarse to be available for really effective human communication, if a sense of what was significant in human experience depended not on public agreement but on private intuition, if our interpretation of signals put out by other people depended on our reading them in the light of the history of our own private consciousness, and if the whole of our past was always present at some level in our consciousness to condition our response to any new event, then in a sense everybody was trapped in his own private history, and the problem of communicating with anybody else was almost insoluble....

However, the modern novelist was relatively unconcerned about whether the common reader could experience in his writing what he intended to convey. The first step of evolving a technique to express what he was brimming over with was itself such a big challenge that other issues lost their importance. However, history tells us that some readers, with or without help from the author and critics, did figure out the purpose of such writing and managed to experience its intended effect.

This sense of a fragmented society with people as so many islands is something that is brought on the surface in Clarissa's party. Mrs Dalloway wants to give a party because parties are a way of bringing people together but only in a physical sense. The kind of communication with each other that they experience at the party is however superficial and formal, perhaps justifying the aphorism that we can be lonely even in a crowd. Conversation in that functional sense proceeds very efficiently at the party as the guests float on the grey tide of service. However, look at the state of Mrs Dalloway in her own home among her invited guests.

Clarissa refused Peter Walsh's offer of marriage because his personality was too aggressive, too dominant, too threatening of her own individuality. Yet having married the less demanding Richard Dalloway, she was haunted by thoughts of isolation, of being shut up in a lonely tower when others were blackberrying in the sun, of being condemned to a lonely narrow bed.

Here in the crowd, Mrs Dalloway remains lonely. There is no one with whom she can share her predicament in relation to Septimus, and because it is so powerful, she has to withdraw into her shell. Not only are the people experienced as no help, they are perceived as a hindrance, necessitating the withdrawal.

Septimus is another case in point. His sense of the reality of other people has been permanently damaged by his experiences in the First World War because of a shell shock. This has also impacted his capacity to communicate normally. He is now the victim of insensitive doctors who think they can drag him into a world of true communication by insisting that he follow the external conventions of society. Such a recipe destroys him, as in another sense, it has destroyed Lady Bradshaw, suffering under her insensitive husband's procrustean view of human relations.

Critics like Maria DiBattista point out 'the novel's vague but universal sense of malaise, of spiritual incapacity, of frustrated expectations' that emerges as another attribute of the modern protagonist. This malaise arises from each character's perception of an inadequacy in his world view to encompass a world that increasingly seems inexplicable. The Europe of the early twentieth century was characterized by a breakdown of traditional models, as Woolf emphasized throughout her work. Clarissa is 'modernist' in outlook, fundamentally a non-believer. With her 'horror of psychological engulfment', Clarissa rejects society's common props against the void: Walsh's passion, Kilman's religion, Bradshaw's proportion, the simplistic patriotism of her husband and Lady Bruton. As a result, she must face disordered reality without accepted props and create her own meaning for it.

This is not the fate of Clarissa only but all modern artists. If the reader understands the need for the discovery of new forms to represent new versions of reality, it originates in this impulse of the modern artist. Hence, the next question that arises is: Why does the modern artist experience the 'horror of psychological engulfment' in response to which emerges her personal negotiation with reality? One answer to this question can perhaps be found in the politicization of the common man's view of the world and the increasing need to preserve the individual in a society and culture as it was growing increasingly individualistic. The modern artist is not an eighteenth century common man who will let a position of cultural or political authority tell him what is real and significant for him. The growing individualism and the spirit of democracy and freedom of the age ensures this aspect.

According to Daiches, Joyce's *Ulysses* and Woolf's *Mrs Dalloway* most effectively embody the characteristic stylistic insights of the modern novelist. In the second edition of his work *Virginia Woolf*, Daiches writes:

The delicate movement of her prose rhythms, suggesting, evoking, illuminating, seem to me to be a remarkable achievement; more and more in reading her beautifully modulated transcriptions of consciousness at bay I have the feeling that here is the definite

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rendering of a particular kind of modern sensibility, of modern dilemma, and that I know it and respond to it with a deep inward awareness. Some critics have argued that her symbolism leads nowhere, that the awareness of her characters is altogether too preposterously rarefied. To which in the last analysis all that I can reply is that I do not find it so.

4.4.3 Narrative Strategy

Virginia Woolf has basically made use of stream of consciousness, interior monologue and indirect interior monologue. Apart from these three narrative strategies, Woolf has used a host of conventional techniques, like flashback, sometimes with a difference. The key question about a narrative strategy to be asked is what purpose it serves when used at a particular point in the novel.

First let us look at the three terms in some detail. The twentieth century writers understood that it was impossible to reproduce the complexity of the human mind using traditional techniques, and looked for more suitable means of expression. Stream of consciousness as a narrative technique developed in response to this need. The technique seeks 'to depict the multitudinous thoughts and feelings which pass through the mind'. It attempts to give the written equivalent of the character's thought processes, either in a loose interior monologue or in connection to his or her actions. The term was coined by philosopher and psychologist William James:

...consciousness, then, does not appear to itself as chopped up in bits ... it is nothing joined; it flows. A 'river' or a 'stream' are the metaphors by which it is most naturally described. *In talking of it hereafter, let's call it the stream of thought, consciousness, or subjective life.*

In the following example of stream of consciousness from James Joyce's *Ulysses*, Molly seeks sleep:

a quarter after what an unearthly hour I suppose they're just getting up in China now combing out their pigtailed for the day well soon have the nuns ringing the angelus they've nobody coming in to spoil their sleep except an odd priest or two for his night office the alarmlock next door at cockshout clattering the brains out of itself let me see if I can doze off 1 2 3 4 5 what kind of flowers are those they invented like the stars. The wallpaper in Lombard street was much nicer the apron he gave me was like that something only I only wore it twice better lower this lamp and try again so that I can get up early.

Interior monologue, as the word suggests, is a person's speech as it plays out in his mind, something like an inner speech spoken by one consciousness. While many sources use the terms stream of consciousness and interior monologue as synonyms, the Oxford Dictionary of Literary Terms suggests that 'they can also be distinguished psychologically and literarily. In a psychological sense, stream of consciousness is the subject matter, while interior monologue is the technique for presenting it.' For literature, 'while an interior monologue always presents a character's thoughts "directly", without the apparent intervention of a summarizing and selecting narrator, it does not necessarily mingle them with impressions and perceptions, nor does it necessarily violate the norms of grammar, or logic but the stream of consciousness technique also does one or both of these things.' Similarly,

the Encyclopaedia Britannica Online, while agreeing that these terms are ‘often used interchangeably’, suggests that ‘while an interior monologue may mirror all the half thoughts, impressions, and associations that impinge upon the character’s consciousness, it may also be restricted to an organized presentation of that character’s rational thoughts.’

Interior monologue can exist in two forms: direct and indirect. Direct interior monologue is directly spoken by a character without any authorial intervention. It is a part of the dialogue and is within inverted commas.

A character can reveal his thoughts to the reader by directly reacting to a situation. For example: ‘I love going to the Golden Palace’, he thought, before planning the trip to Jaipur. In direct interior monologue, there is no chance of intervention by the author. It is the character who is in focus, not the author.

However, when the author comments upon the thoughts of a character, then it is called indirect interior monologue. The author’s voice creeps in just a bit to add a feeling to a sentence. For example, ‘You dipped it in!’ Mira exclaimed, looking at the swollen pancake floating in the water with utter astonishment. Such megalomania could only be expected from Mira.

The sentence in bold is an indirect monologue, as the opinion about Mira is being hinted by the writer, not by any of the characters. The reader might not have judged till now that Mira has a huge ego, but when the writer so forcefully dictates it in a sentence, the reader, at once, starts to see her in that light.

Literary critic Lawrence Bowling’s article, ‘What Is the Stream of Consciousness Technique’ and (American author and journalist) Robert Humphrey’s book *Stream of Consciousness in the Modern Novel* also explore the relationship between these terms. Bowling defines stream of consciousness as a technique distinct from interior monologue in that the latter covers only the linguistically coherent area of consciousness, while the former reaches deeper, non-verbal areas of image and sensation. Bowling makes no mention of indirect interior monologue.

Humphrey, on the other hand, wants stream of consciousness to denote a genre or subject rather than a literary technique. He reminds readers of the term’s origin as a psychological process rather than a literary-critical term. He then suggests four techniques used to convey stream of consciousness, one of which is indirect interior monologue. Following this line of argument, Harvena Richter in *Virginia Woolf: The Inward Voyage* divides Woolf’s portrayal of subjectivity into three voices. Although she does not mention indirect interior monologue, her explanations of two of the three voices seem to be moving towards a definition of the technique.

Anna Snaith (Professor of twentieth century literature at Kings College of London) argues that indirect interior monologue, which Woolf used in eight of her nine novels, is the most important technique used by Woolf, especially in *Mrs Dalloway*. Indirect interior monologue represents a character’s thoughts in the third person by the narrator. Snaith explains this in the following manner:

The narrator enters the mind of the character and reports his or her thoughts verbatim, but the first—and second—person pronouns of direct interior monologue are absent. Passages of indirect interior monologue can be pages in length or consist merely of one phrase in

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a narrated or dialogic context. Indirect interior monologue can be signalled by the narrator with, for example, the usage “she thought,” or the move into the character’s mind can be left to the reader to locate. In either case, the reader has to be alert for signs such as the character’s idioms, components of direct speech such as exclamatory phrases, and signs of internal thought such as free association and fragmented sentence structure. Often the line between reporting and showing what a character is thinking is difficult to discern.

Let us now understand the above passage from an extract from *Mrs Dalloway*.

What a lark! What a plunge! For so it had always seemed to her when, with a little squeak of the hinges, which she could hear now, she had burst open the French windows and plunged at Bourton into the open air. How fresh, how calm, stiller than this of course, the air was in the early morning; like the flap of a wave; the kiss of a wave; chill and sharp and yet (for a girl of eighteen as she then was) solemn, feeling as she did, standing there at the open window, that something awful was about to happen;

Notice the manner in which the narrator sits in the mind of the character surveying the thoughts and the landscape from a stable and secure vantage, reporting the thoughts verbatim, without the first and second person pronouns of direct interior monologue being present. Indirect interior monologue is here signalled by the narrator with, ‘For so it had always seemed to her...’. the reader finds signs such as the character’s idioms, components of direct speech such as exclamatory phrases in ‘What a lark! What a plunge!’ and enough signs of internal thought such as free association and fragmented sentence structure. The reader can also probably feel that the line between reporting and showing what a character is thinking is difficult to discern here.

There is also disagreement as to whether the term ‘stream of consciousness’ can be applied to Woolf at all. As Snaith argues:

If one does not agree that indirect interior monologue is a technique for rendering stream of consciousness, then Woolf is not a stream of consciousness writer because apart from rare, isolated phrases of direct interior monologue, Woolf captures private thought through indirect interior monologue. Although this means that the consciousness is transcribed verbatim, the presence of the narrator prevents it from being stream of consciousness. To call it such is to ignore the narrator, or public element of the technique. However direct indirect interior monologue may seem, it is not so; the consciousness is always reported, mediated. Furthermore, to call Woolf an exponent of the stream of consciousness technique is to ignore her dislike of the technique in Joyce. While in the process of conceiving Jacob’s Room, Woolf wrote in her diary: ‘I suppose the danger is the damned egotistical self; which ruins Joyce & [Dorothy] Richardson to my mind: is one pliant & rich enough to provide a wall for the book from oneself without its becoming, as in Joyce and Richardson, narrowing & restricting?’ This suggests that it is not Joyce’s own egotistical self that Woolf is complaining about, but the excessive interiority of the characters, caused by a complete separation between author and characters.

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James Harley is one of the few critics to conclude that Woolf chose not to use the stream of consciousness technique because it was 'completely out of accord with her vision'. He defines the technique as a 'transcription of verbal thought so direct that it seems to bare a human mind. The reader has the illusion of receiving everything; the author creates the illusion of having selected nothing, rejected nothing, corrected nothing.' Woolf, by contrast, 'is always present in her novels'.

Woolf's choice of indirect interior monologue rises from the ability it gave her to represent difference, to give voice to a wide array of major and minor characters. Sudden and frequent shifts in direct interior monologue would have been jarring, whereas with indirect interior monologue, the narrator can move the focus swiftly and smoothly from voice to voice. This shifting of perspective allows Woolf to undercut the dominance of the narrator without replacing it by what she saw as the tyranny of the first-person monologue.

In *Mrs Dalloway*, indirect interior monologue helps Woolf combine a private focus on Clarissa Dalloway's thoughts on a day in June 1923 with the public world of London. Indirect interior monologue allows her to negotiate between the two, as well as to move between the thoughts of a wide cross-section of characters on the London streets. Snaithe puts her analysis of this feature as follows:

The public scene is always related to the characters as they make their way through London. 'Bond Street fascinated her; Bond Street early in the morning in the season; its flags flying; its shops; no splash; no glitter; one roll of tweed in the shop where her father had bought his suits for fifty years': here, the narrator filters his or her descriptions through Mrs Dalloway's impressions. In another sentence—'Away and away the aeroplane shot, till it was nothing but a bright spark; an aspiration; a concentration; a symbol (so it seemed to Mr Bentley, vigorously rolling his strip of turf at Greenwich)'—a public event visible to many people is described through its perception by one of them. The public is intimately linked to the private; the external is rendered at the moment when it becomes internal. Recognizing the inevitable subjective representation of public spaces, Woolf portrays London not as a monolithic, fixed realm, but as the meeting of empirical fact and private interpretation and response. There is a continuous dialectic between inner and outer.

The first thing to note here is that there can be no absolutely objective, public or outer description of anything. All descriptions must come filtered to the readers, even though filtered through the consciousness of the narrator or the author. Some larger arguments emerge. There is no stable outer world that can be represented that appears to be the primary realization on which all modernist narrative experimentation is based.

By bringing in the character's perspective, however, Woolf alters the effect. Speaking derivatively, the significance of any external description lies not in the telling of the place but in the telling of the mind through which the place is described. For authors like Woolf, Bond Street becomes a signifier of a particular state of Clarissa's mind. Bond Street is described as fascinating not because 'Bond street is fascinating' but because Clarissa craves for a grand simplicity in her life, for fond memories of her past. Notice how the aeroplane dissolves into 'a bright spark; an

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aspiration; a concentration; a symbol for Mr Bentley. Aspiration, concentration...’ Woolf does not tell us what this symbolizes. She, however, shows us that Mr Bentley’s mind is striving to ascribe meaning to a phenomenon which appears increasingly abstract.

This dissolving of reality into a series of individual perceptions has a devastating impact on figures of public authority in the novel. They dissolve into so many perceptions losing the solidity of their authority. So the Prime Minister appears to be a bakery counter salesman and the dignitary’s car a melee of responses.

Woolf derives this scene, perhaps from the Viceregal Cavalcade in the Wandering Rocks chapter of Joyce’s *Ulysses*. However, in contrast to Joyce, Woolf subverts the authority figure. She achieves this by leaving the identity of the figure in the car unknown. This scene depicts an empty centre around which the characters can construct their own narratives. The sex of the figure is in dispute and even the chauffeur, ‘who had been opening something, turning something, shutting something’ contributes to the uncertainty. The irony in the narrator’s voice adds an element of mockery to the scene as well, undercutting the bystanders’ awe for the invisible personage.

The figure is of ‘the very greatest importance’, breathes the ‘dark breath of veneration’ on the onlookers and represents an ‘immortal presence’. These examples of the narrator’s hyperbole work in order to convey the characters’ overreactions.

Only three people see the face of the figure and only for a few seconds, the narrator tells us: the other bystanders see only ‘a square of dove grey’. Through indirect interior monologue, the characters themselves fill the centre. For Septimus, the focus of the car signifies the arrival of some horror which threatens to burst into flames; for Lucrezia, his wife, it is the Queen going shopping; for Clarissa, the Queen is on her way to perform some charitable deed; and for Moll Pratt, the passenger is definitely the Prince of Wales. As the crowd gathers at Buckingham Palace, Sarah Bletchley, Mr Bowley and Emily Coates are added to those bystanders and are given a voice through indirect interior monologue. Their private narratives are given in reaction to the public event, and there is no one reaction that assumes priority. Tony E. Jackson (Professor of English at the University of North Carolina) describes the subversiveness of this scene as follows:

‘This entire section consists of what would, in a conventional novel, become subplots But the narrator pointedly provides just enough information to open a vein of narrative anxiety for each one and then leaves the character and never returns... us to a conclusion.’ Not only does the narrator provide information through omniscient narration, but the characters also speak for themselves through indirect interior monologue.

This crowding of perspectives on the motor car perhaps emphasizes the community of characters. As Snaith puts it:

Woolf uses what I shall call communal indirect interior monologue, internal thoughts which are not attributable to any one character, to create the sense of the crowd’s unity: ‘Was it the Prince of Wales’s,

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the Queen's, the Prime Minister's? Whose face was it?' Then, however, the narrative breaks away to the preoccupations of one character, creating fluidity and movement in the scene. Clarissa, for example, seeing the 'white, magical, circular' disc in the footman's hand—signifying the vacant center of authority—is reminded of a party at Buckingham Palace, where she was surrounded by 'the gentlemen of England.' Clarissa creates her own image of authority. The narrative voice constantly shifts, omniscient narration and communal indirect interior monologue being broken by a cross-section of individual perspectives. Without a voice or name, the figure must stand as an 'enduring symbol of the state,' and the onlookers must create their own interpretations and reactions. Rather than dominating the characters, in terms either of voice or of position, both the dignitary and the narrator—who also is ignorant of the figure's identity—leave the characters free to maintain their own voice in the narrative. The public figure is silenced, left without identity or voice. Although there is omniscient narration in the scene, the narrator is not party to any knowledge about the person in the car, thereby allowing the private thoughts of the onlookers equal weight. Had the narrator revealed the person's identity, putting the reader in a privileged position, the incorrect guesses of certain of the onlookers would emphasize their lack of authority. As it is, their narratives are not ranked; there is no competition for the right answer, because it is nonexistent.

As Woolf deals with the notion of audience or public reaction, she finds herself oscillating more than ever between public and private points of view. The way to keep the audience heterogeneous is to portray the many individual voices which make up the audience. She includes what those individuals say publicly as well as what they think privately. Yet again, indirect interior monologue allows her layers of perspective, a technique whereby she can create a sense of rapid oscillation. Again, we find heterogeneity of perspective, intertextuality, resistance to summation and linearity. No questions are finally answered.

The reader is constantly perplexed with Woolf's conscious use of features like multiple perspectives, community monologues, external through internal and others, and refusing to give the reader a stable world of significance and ideas. Virginia Blain (Professor of English at Macquarie University) argues that 'Under the conditions of this male-dominated tradition which Virginia Woolf inherited, to adopt the all-knowing voice of omniscient narration was, in effect, to adopt a thoroughly masculine tone.' In other words, this was a conscious political act aimed at creating a particular relationship between the reader and herself as the author of the text, the reader had chosen to read.

Woolf does not reject tradition in favour of experiment, but rather tenses one against the other, thus, in part undoing the opposition. 'Rewriting sustains and disperses, dispels, restores, and interrupts.' Woolf writes in 1928: 'And what is my own position towards the inner and the outer? I think a kind of ease and dash are good;—yes: I think even externality is good; some combination of them ought to be possible. Indirect interior monologue makes the combination possible.'

Indirect interior monologue also allows Woolf flexibility and multiplicity, two other emphases central to her thinking. She gives a voice to many; the narrator is

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continually surrendering the story to the various characters. The narrator, being omniscient, can enter the characters' minds as well as describe their thoughts, relinquishes his authority, often, as in *Mrs Dalloway*, making pure narration secondary to the indirect interior monologue.

In this way, Woolf's technique is more innovative than direct interior monologue, for it looks forward to postmodernism with its continual shifting and sharing of voice. Woolf displays the artificiality of the omniscient narrator and his unproblematic method of conveying of subjectivity. Her use of multiple voices through indirect interior monologue acknowledges the variety, fragmentation and sense of being situated that are inherent within subjectivity.

Direct interior monologue is restrictive, in Woolf's view, because it traps the reader within a single subjectivity. Her rejection of definition in general is seen in her avoidance of a single, defining point of view. Ann Marie Herbert (literary critic) notes that 'for Woolf, multiplicity was at the heart of her ontological and epistemological explorations, her experiments with form, and her representations of subjectivity'. Rather than imposing form or unity on this multiplicity, Woolf accepts plurality as such and seeks structures in her writing which will allow ambiguity. To 'tolerate the spasmodic, the obscure, the fragmentary, the failure,' as she writes in 'Mr Bennett and Mrs Brown' is not the fate but the duty of the artist. It has been suggested that such tolerance was intensified by the threat of fascism. Marlow Miller (literary critic) rightly argues: 'In *Between the Acts*, Woolf rejects the modernist beliefs in art as unified and the artist as unifier; such artists and artwork too easily serve the agenda of fascism.' Woolf resisted totalizing narratives and narrators even before she saw their link with fascism.

4.4.4 Aspect of Time in the Novel

When a review in the *Times Literary Supplement* described the novel as 'experimental', Woolf was surprised. She thought that in this novel, she had been able to find a way of expressing her view of reality and presenting the complexities of life (of a human being) fairly consciously. Woolf's view of reality and its presentation has been described as organic.

One way of understanding the meaning of life in an organic universe is by studying how time and action are conceived in this universe.

Anna Shaw Benjamin (Professor Emerita of Douglass College, Rutgers University) explains it as follows:

The method of presenting action and time as they are conceived in the organic universe is circular—actually spherical may be a better adjective—as opposed to the traditional linear development and representation of events in time. A circular method is used to present an organic world because the traditional linear outline-form, which divides people and events into a single moment and a single place, cannot convey the organic reality. To arrange the plot in linear form places the emphasis wrongly upon action and physical events which are, in the organic world, only the superficial expression of a profounder reality.

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Let us now understand the above passage in detail. In the traditional linear form, the present derives from the immediate past and leads to the immediate future. The emphasis is upon a string of actions unfolding in a linear string one after the other, indicated by the phrase 'and Then...' This, according to the organicists, is an inadequate representation of reality. If an individual tries to link the present to multiple points in the distant past and similar points in the future, the linearity of the representation will collapse and instead we will get a structure more like an internally linked sphere.

The modern novelist's contention is that this is how the present links to the past and future, and that is what they want to show in their writing. So instead of seeing a continuity or cause and effect relationship between the present and the immediate past, Woolf shows a network of associations with the past and highlights the one that is most relevant in the context of her current argument. Notice how the action of the novel spans about 12 hours, but how ideas and events that surface during the day link to events as far as the characters' childhood or distant past. Here is a concept of time within which a moment cannot be isolated, but is a part of a continuity in which present, past and future are inseparable and interpenetrated, thus, rendering the measuring of time inadequate by the clock.

This is what Benjamin builds up here:

... the author has woven the plot into a complicated structure which reveals the action in bits and pieces throughout the entire novel. As constructed, the first page is not fully revealed until the last page when the nexus of intertwined lives and places is completely rounded out. To the technique of ordering the plot and time as she does, Woolf has added a series of lyric metaphors and images and of literary allusions, the suggestiveness of which adds a further dimension to the meaning as in poetry. The method is not new. It is the method of the monumental *parodos* of Aeschylus' *Agamemnon* where the story of Agamemnon's departure for Troy and of his crimes is unfolded in somewhat the same non-chronological order: the events are related as they apply to the present and are embellished by or couched in the language of image not only pertinent to the present action, but also appropriate to the past and foreshadowing the future.

Woolf did not work out this method and impose it upon her material; on the contrary, she warns us in her preface of 1928, 'It was necessary to write the book first and to invent a theory afterwards.' The novelist did not work on a classical Greek narrative model, but struggled to evolve a technique which could convey what she wanted to the reader. It is obvious that the narrative technique contributes as much as the content in producing the effect on the reader in *Mrs Dalloway*.

Let us begin exploring Woolf's treatment of time by noting a few basics. Time is tangibly present, the characters hear the hours strike but the suggestive language around de-emphasizes the mechanical measurement of time. Despite Woolf's precision in indicating the passing of time and dividing the hours into about ten great blocks of time the exact hour when the novel begins and ends are not precisely stated. We may safely assume that the hour being struck by Big Ben when the novel opens is 10:00 a.m., and that the hour being struck during Mrs Dalloway's moment of insight at the end of the novel is either ten, eleven, or what

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is most probable, midnight, not later, since the clock strikes three strokes, then strikes some more and its 'leaden circles' dissolve.

The reason for this lack of precision in the opening and closing includes the technical consideration that the opening and closing need not be stated precisely so as to keep the reader aware of where he is in the plot. Besides, nothing is really gained by time precision in the plot. It does not help to know that the action begins at 10.00 a.m. What is relevant is that it begins as Mrs Dalloway leaves her home in the morning on the day of the party. When time is stated exactly by Woolf, as many have pointed out already, it is done first to indicate the simultaneity of certain acts; second, to provide a transition from one character to another; and thirdly, to provide a transition from the present to past; or perhaps to suggest the fact that the characters are bound together by time.

The way the past comes into the novel is in accordance with its significance to the present. Benjamin explains further as follows:

'This is a modification of the flashback technique by which the flashback is presented part by part in non-chronological order according to each part's pertinence to the present. The effect may appear vague, but close examination of the events proves them to be presented precisely in enough detail to clarify the present. Thus, within the orderly framework of the hours in the present mechanically struck by Big Ben and St. Margaret's, the crucial events of the past come to light bit by bit from several points of view, in non-chronological sequence as they form the present. This is the way the new (Bergsonian) time is presented in its full dimension.'

French philosopher Henri Bergson introduced the concept of duration in the study of time. Bergson observed the fact that the moment one attempted to measure a moment, it would be gone: one measures an immobile, complete line, whereas time is mobile and incomplete. For the individual, time may speed up or slow down, whereas for science, it would remain the same. Hence, Bergson decided to explore the inner life of man, which is a kind of duration, neither a unity nor a quantitative multiplicity. Duration can only be shown indirectly through images that can never reveal a complete picture. It can only be grasped through a simple intuition of the imagination.

In 'An Introduction to Metaphysics', Bergson presents many images of duration. The more accessible among them is the image of a spectrum of a thousand gradually changing shades with a line of feeling running through them, being both affected by and maintaining each of the shades. Yet even this image is inaccurate and incomplete, for it represents duration as a fixed and complete spectrum with all the shades spatially juxtaposed, whereas duration is incomplete and continuously growing, its states not beginning or ending but intermingling. Bergson attempts to explain this unfixability of duration in the spatial and temporal dimensions with yet another image:

Instead, let us imagine an infinitely small piece of elastic, contracted, if that were possible, to a mathematical point. Let us draw it out gradually in such a way as to bring out of the point a line which will grow progressively longer. Let us fix our attention not on the line as line, but on the action which traces it. Let us consider that this action,

in spite of its duration, is indivisible if one supposes that it goes on without stopping; that, if we intercalate a stop in it, we make two actions of it instead of one and that each of these actions will then be the indivisible of which we speak; that it is not the moving act itself which is never indivisible, but the motionless line it lays down beneath it like a track in space. Let us take our mind off the space subtending the movement and concentrate solely on the movement itself, on the act of tension or extension, in short, on pure mobility. This time we shall have a more exact image of our development in duration.

As you may have begun to feel, Bergson's concept of duration is not to be confused with a unit of time, say a minute or a second. This is the sense in which current popular usage employs it. This is also the sense in which the linear model of narration uses it, building an interlinking chain of thoughts and events that progress from one moment to the next in linear time. You can perhaps begin to see how the technique stream of consciousness apart from the organic universe derives from this theory.

Literary critic Enid Starkie feels that:

The effect of retelling the past and relating the present through the characters and places in their full depth, results in the complete subordination of deeds and events to thoughts—a subordination amounting almost to the elimination of the conventional plot.

It is the conventional plot that is eliminated and not the plot.

There is a change of emphasis; a plot can still be reconstructed. If we return to the beginning and the ending with these remarks in mind, we notice that Clarissa has had a letter from Peter Walsh that she has not opened and read. She has mentioned his letters previously: they are called 'dull' and 'dry sticks'. We may infer that these thoughts are not just chance bits from her stream of consciousness, but a rationalization for her not daring to open the letter she has received. We must guess that the reason she does not read it is that she knew it contained the actual date of his arrival from India.

The letter has aroused all of her old doubts and fears and memories of Bourton with which the novel opens. Pages three to sixty, then, take place in view of an unopened letter, but we are not aware of this fact until we come across a parenthetical statement on page sixty. The novel really begins with the arrival of a letter—left unopened, a fact insignificant as compared with the thoughts it occasioned and the past it recalled. The insignificance of the fact is put into correct perspective by the brief mention it receives and the point where it receives it.

Benjamin explains this technique through the ending of the novel:

The ending of the novel brings us face to face again with the central event of the novel: the scene by the fountain at Bourton when Clarissa rejected Peter's proposal of marriage. We see this central event as it happened in the past where the rejection cannot be considered final in view of Clarissa's own doubts about her choice and her failure to accept her action; secondly, as it acts upon the present; and thirdly, as it will be completed in the future when Clarissa will make the rejection final. The way the scene happened in the past and acts upon the present is presented bit by bit throughout the novel in the new-fashioned flashback technique.

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The following graphical presentation in Benjamin’s article is particularly helpful in figuring out how readers reconstruct this complex sequence that affect their reading:

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The rejected scene by the fountain must be reconstructed from the following passages and references:		
pp. 3-4	Between 10-11 a.m.	Clarissa is thinking of the garden at Bourton.
p. 10		Clarissa thinks of her doubts about the rejection.
p. 62	Between 11-11:30 a.m.	Clarissa unintentionally reminds Peter of the rejection.
p. 70		Clarissa sitting by Peter re-experiences doubts about the rejection.
p. 74	Between 11:30-11:32 a.m.	Peter, after leaving Clarissa, thinks of the rejection.
pp. 95-97	Between 11:32-11:45 a.m.	Peter relives the rejection scene.
p. 285	At the Party	Peter thinks of the rejection and of Sally’s part in it.
pp. 293-295		The rejected scene, though not openly referred to, is implicit in the conversation between Sally and Peter.

All Page numbers refer to the following edition: *Mrs Dalloway*. New York: Methuen, 1928.

The organic view of universe also views characters in different relation with each other. The Septimus–Clarissa relation is a case in point. In a rationally discursive text modelled on linear time, characters are related to each other through social or political identities. They appreciate similarities and bondings with each other based on blood ties, friendship, profession, and so on. The organic view, however, suggests that the link between people can be deeper, with commonality at the level of feeling, understanding and perception. Septimus and Clarissa relate to each other in this way. People in this view are related to each other through spirit, sensibilities and communities of feeling without having any blood ties, friendship or even professional links. It takes a very small amount of time for one person to detect this commonality with another, if it exists. Sometimes, as in the case of the Septimus—Clarissa relation, just a statement or a reference to an action strikes the chord—in Clarissa’s words, ‘each is a part of the other though they had never met.’

Hence, Woolf, in her introduction to the 1928 edition of *Mrs Dalloway*, called Septimus Clarissa’s ‘double’. Not that the two are intended to be the same person; rather, here each is a separate individual, yet an individual in the organic sense by which, to quote Clarissa again, ‘each is a part of the other though they had never met.’ As individuals, they extended like mist ever so far, interpenetrating their worlds. Clarissa does actualize her organic relation with Septimus, though Septimus, of course, is not able to communicate with those about him. Clarissa sensed that he had not died ‘holding his treasure’ like Othello, ‘If it were now to die, ‘twere now to be most happy,’ but that he had found life intolerable and had flung it away, in spite, to judge from his final words, ‘I’ll give it you!’ Though she could understand his solution and exclaim that she felt very much like him, yet she could feel the beauty of life and, thereby, not fling it away. This is because of the

difference in generation between Septimus and Clarissa. His life is ruined by the war; Clarissa's generation, too old to fight (their children had fought), had 'died' for other reasons. As their promising youth came to nothing, the new generation arose with new promising youths—many of whom were to be cut off like Septimus.

George Orwell and
Virginia Woolf

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Check Your Progress

4. State any three important works written by Virginia Woolf.
5. Mention the themes that are linked with *Mrs Dalloway*'s planned party.
6. Name any two modern novels.
7. What are the different narrative strategies used by Woolf in *Mrs Dalloway*?
8. Who is referred to as Clarissa's 'double' by Woolf?

4.5 ANSWERS TO 'CHECK YOUR PROGRESS'

1. George Orwell's real name was Eric Arthur Blair, a name given to him by his father but he forsook it for his pen name George Orwell.
2. Some of the terms used in the book *1984* like 'Thought Police', 'Big Brother', 'Memory Hole', 'Newspeak' etc, are still part of the main stream discourse.
3. George Orwell's novel *Nineteen Eighty-Four* is dystopian novel that explores social and political structures.
4. The important works written by Virginia Woolf are *Mrs Dalloway*, *A Room of One's Own*, *Three Guineas* and others.
5. The themes of death and imprisonment are linked with Mrs Dalloway's planned party.
6. Two modern novels are Virginia Woolf's *Mrs Dalloway* and Joyce's *Ulysses*.
7. The different narrative strategies used by Woolf in *Mrs Dalloway* are stream of consciousness, interior monologue and indirect interior monologue.
8. Woolf, in her introduction to the 1928 edition of *Mrs Dalloway*, called Septimus as Clarissa's 'double'.

4.6 SUMMARY

- George Orwell was born on 25 June 1903 in Bihar, India. His father Richard Walmseley Blair named him Eric Arthur Blair, the name which he forsook for his pen name George Orwell.
- *Nineteen Eighty Four* (also written as 1984) is a novel written by the author George Orwell. The book came out in the year 1949 and it was widely appreciated by both critics and readers alike. "In this futuristic novel '1984,' the English political novelist George Orwell gave a tragic illustration of what the world would be without the freedom to think."

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- Some of the terms used in the book like ‘Thought Police’ and ‘Big Brother’ are still part of the main stream discourse.
- Dystopian fictions are the counter narratives for utopian fiction. Utopian fictions were extremely popular in the sixteenth century and believed in the perfection of human beings. They were against introducing any form of alternate social and political structures.
- The term ‘Utopia’ was introduced by Thomas More. Based on its Greek origin it could have meant a Nowhere Land or a better world. Writers who subscribed to the idea of utopia expressed the mood of hope and self-confidence. The proposed utopian world displayed a great longing for man.
- Dystopian writers argued that human nature was such that it was impossible to achieve utopia. They insisted that there was no way for the society to improve, in fact it was perpetually on the path of doom.
- The novel highlights how the governing power tries to control the minds as well as the bodies of its citizens. One best example is Winston Smith.
- Critics have pointed out that Orwell has been influenced by his literary precursors like Yevgeny Zamyatin. Zamyatin wrote a novel in 1921 called ‘*We*’. The novel had a dystopian setting and criticised Soviet social engineering. Many critics have mentioned about the similar plot structures of *We* and *Nineteen Eighty Four*.
- George Orwell makes extensive use of symbolism in his novel *Nineteen Eighty Four*. They appear in the dialogues as well as in the plot spun throughout the novel. These symbol used in the novel appears in the form of people or things which represent certain ideas as expressed by the author.
- In his novel, George Orwell creates in a highly symbolic as well as a tightly spun narrative structure. This structure is inter woven with authorial intrusion as well as black humour.
- Orwell deftly create a dystopian feel by using symbols, images, phrases, and precise use of words.
- Virginia Woolf’s *Mrs Dalloway* was published in 1925. It soon generated interest among readers both in Britain and the United States despite its experimental approach to storytelling.
- Virginia Woolf (1882–1941) was the daughter of Sir Leslie Stephen and his second wife Julia Duckworth. Woolf was taught by tutors at home in the Hyde Park Gate area.
- The world of literature considers Virginia Woolf as a major proponent of the ‘stream of consciousness’ technique. Her contribution to feminist criticism has been rather significant.
- The link between Mrs Dalloway and Septimus allows unhappiness to be shared, even if they do not share their feelings. These are two characters who do not know each other, though they pass each other, and yet their worlds are connected by similar strands of unhappiness.

- Novels written from 1880s to 1940s are classified as modern novels. When they were written, they were new, so then the adjective modern fitted them somewhat aptly.
- Critics like Maria DiBattista point out ‘the novel’s vague but universal sense of malaise, of spiritual incapacity, of frustrated expectations’ that emerges as another attribute of the modern protagonist.
- According to Daiches, Joyce’s *Ulysses* and Woolf’s *Mrs Dalloway* most effectively embody the characteristic stylistic insights of the modern novelist.
- Interior monologue, as the word suggests, is a person’s speech as it plays out in his mind, something like an inner speech spoken by one consciousness.
- A literary convention that is the way things are written in literature is the central place where social position and literary practice intersect.
- Despite Woolf’s precision in indicating the passing of time and dividing the hours into about ten great blocks of time, the exact hour when the novel begins and ends are not precisely stated.
- In ‘An Introduction to Metaphysics’, Bergson presents many images of duration.

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4.7 KEY TERMS

- **Totalitarianism:** It refers to a system of government that is centralized and dictatorial and requires complete subservience to the state.
- **Dystopian Fiction:** It refers to a genre of fictional writing used to explore social and political structures in ‘a dark, nightmare world.’
- **Stream of consciousness:** A narrative technique used mostly in fictional prose works which intends to introduce the readers with the thought process of the characters.
- **Megalomania:** A psychopathological condition characterized by delusional fantasies of wealth, power or omnipotence.
- **Androcentric:** It means centred or focused on men.
- **Shell-shocked:** It refers to post-traumatic stress disorders that soldiers engaged in active combat sometimes experienced.

4.8 SELF-ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

Short-Answer Questions

1. Why is *Nineteen Eighty-Four* considered as dystopian novel?
2. What are the major highlights of *1984*?
3. Name the literary precursors who influenced Orwell.

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4. Write a note on motifs used in *Nineteen Eighty Four*.
5. How did Clarissa change after becoming Mrs Richard Dalloway?
6. Outline the modern elements present in the theme and the narrative technique of *Mrs Dalloway*.
7. Briefly mention the relation between past, present and future in the concept of stream of consciousness.

Long-Answer Questions

1. Discuss the usage of symbols in *Nineteen Eighty-Four*.
2. Critically examine the view of critics on *Nineteen Eighty-Four*.
3. How much do you think is Clarissa's life an adaptation and reflection of the life of Virginia Woolf? Base your response on a comparison between the two lives.
4. What are the main differences between stream of consciousness, direct interior monologue and indirect interior monologue? Using examples from the text, explain when Woolf uses these techniques and to what effect.
5. 'Woolf's narrative technique is especially suited to her critique of modern patriarchy in *Mrs Dalloway*.' Do you agree? Give reasons.

4.9 FURTHER READING

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Endnotes

1. <https://www.nytimes.com/1984/01/01/nyregion/the-message-for-today-in-orwell-s-1984.html>
2. "relating to a very bad or unfair society in which there is a lot of suffering, especially an imaginary society in the future, or to the description of such a society" (<https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/dystopian>)
3. "relating to or aiming for a perfect society in which everyone works well with each other and is happy" (<https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/utopian>)

4. In literature, one can track back impressions of Utopian tradition to as early as Plato's Republic. The utopian world makes a comeback off and on in every generation.

We have The New Atlantis (1626) by Francis Bacon. This book suggests that human beings are living in a society which has the complete control over nature. It talks about a world which is in the verge of launching new inventions like submarines, telephones, airplanes etc.

Jonathan Swift in the 4th Book of Gulliver's Travels (1726) talks about a land ruled by horses and there is peace everywhere. Samuel Butler in 1872 published Erewhon (which is an anagram for the word 'nowhere'). This chronicles the journey of a young traveller who comes across a land that is way different from the ideas prevalent in the English Victorian society. By the time we reach 20th century, focus of Utopia shifted towards Technological Utopia as we witness in many Science Fiction Novel. One very popular example is Herbert George Wells' The Time Machine (1895). The book chronicles the travel through time of the last man on the earth and his confrontation with the alien.

*George Orwell and
Virginia Woolf*

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UNIT 5 SOMERSET MAUGHAM AND ISAAC ASIMOV

*Somerset Maugham and
Isaac Asimov*

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Structure

- 5.0 Introduction
- 5.1 Objectives
- 5.2 Somerset Maugham: About the Author
- 5.3 *Of Human Bondage*: Critical Analysis
 - 5.3.1 Bondages in Somerset Maugham's *Of Human Bondage*
 - 5.3.2 Misery in *Of Human Bondage*
 - 5.3.3 Concept of Freedom in *Of Human Bondage*
 - 5.3.4 Meaning of Life in *Of Human Bondage*
 - 5.3.5 Representation of Art & Religion in *Of Human Bondage*
- 5.4 Isaac Asimov: About the Author
- 5.5 *Fantastic Voyage*: Summary and Critical Analysis
- 5.6 Answers to 'Check Your Progress'
- 5.7 Summary
- 5.8 Key Terms
- 5.9 Self-Assessment Questions and Exercises
- 5.10 Further Reading

5.0 INTRODUCTION

Of Human Bondage (1915) is considered as a masterpiece of Somerset Maugham. This novel depicts the solitary journey of the protagonist who delves and tries to identify the meaning of one's existence. *Somerset Maugham* was an English playwright, novelist, and short story writer.

Issac Asimov is a Russia born, American author who attained recognition in the 20th century for his science fiction writings. He is largely a prolific writer who has written numerous short stories, novels, essays and books of humour. *Fantastic Voyage* (1966) is capable enough of keeping the attention of readers intact throughout its pages.

In this unit, you get to critically analyse *Of Human Bondage* (1915) written by Somerset Maugham and *Fantastic Voyage* (1966) written by Issac Asimov.

5.1 OBJECTIVES

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

- Prepare a brief biographical sketch of Somerset Maugham
- Critically analyse the novel *Of Human Bondage*
- State the main works of Isaac Asimov
- Identify the distinctive features of *Fantastic Voyage*

5.2 SOMERSET MAUGHAM: ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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The real name of Somerset Maugham is William Somerset Maugham. He was born on 25th January 1874 in Paris, France. He is remembered as a renowned novelist, short-story writer and playwright. His writings are marked by simplistic style, urban settings and an unexpected insight into human nature.

Maugham became an orphan at the age of 10. That is when his custody was given to his uncle and aunty. He studied at King's School, Canterbury. He joined St. Thomas medical school in London. In the year 1897, he qualified as a doctor. His experiences as an obstetrician are chronicled in *Liza of Lambeth* (1897). The timid success of this work made him leave the field of medicine. During 1908 he travelled in Spain and Italy and achieved success through theatre. He had four of his plays running in London at the same time. This success was coupled with financial stability. Maugham worked as a secret agent during World War I. Post war he once again got back to travelling. In the year 1928 he bought a villa in France.

People still remember Maugham primarily for his novels. *Of Human Bondage* was published in 1915. This is a semi-autobiographical narrative of a young medical student. In 1919 comes *The Moon and Sixpence* which recounts the life of an unconventional artist. In 1930 we have *Cakes and Ale* that is about a famous novelist then in 1944 he publishes *The Razor's Edge* which tells the story of a young American war veteran. Among his plays the Edwardian social comedies soon lost their relevance and popularity. Nevertheless, his craftsmanship has been always praised. Maugham unfolds his philosophy of life, atheism and scepticism in *The Summing Up* (1938) and *A Writer's Notebook* (1949). Maugham died on 16th December 1965.



Fig. 5.1 Somerset Maugham

5.3 OF HUMAN BONDAGE: CRITICAL ANALYSIS

Somerset Maugham and
Isaac Asimov

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Of Human Bondage by Somerset Maugham was published in 1915. The work got the distinction of being regarded very close to being an autobiographical work. Maugham composed it over the course of a few years. The experience was cathartic for him. It has been claimed that the novel moves around masochistic relationship of a young man. But scholars argue that *Of Human Bondage* is a quest and his relationships are a part of the narrative structure. *Of Human Bondage* is a long narrative of around 700 pages. This chronicles the life of Philip. It tells about Philip's uncomfortable childhood, his frustration at struggling to understand the meaning of life then being part of relationship that has a negative impact on him.

It must be pointed out that the novel is a fictional autobiography and that is why not everything should be considered as real nor should we consider it as all fiction. But between the blurring lines of fiction we see that the emotions are actual. While Maugham was on top of his popularity in the role of a playwright, he decided to focus his attention towards *Of Human Bondage*. He did not consider going back to novel writing leaving his plays but he did and *Of Human Bondage* was born. The bildungsroman was born out of deeply fractured emotions coupled with inner conflicts that was experienced by the artist. The artist in context is an emotional being and had to write this work to express himself. He had to find a way to vent out his pent up feeling. Maugham has mentioned a number of times that *Of Human Bondage* was written because there was no other way to give expression to his feelings.

Having taken over novel writing, he never went back to writing plays. He had earned enough and had an affluent life and did not hesitate to go back to composing short stories, essays and novels. *Of Human Bondage* was not widely appreciated by critics on its release. It appeared no one will read it and suddenly an American novelist and journalist; Theodore Dreiser revived interest in the work by his great review. He wrote: 'Here is a novel of the utmost importance. It is a beacon of light by which the wanderer may be guided. . . . One feels as though one were sitting before a splendid Shiraz of priceless texture and intricate weave, admiring, feeling, responding sensually to its colors and tones.'

It will not be wrong to say that *Of Human Bondage* is one of the most famous novels of Maugham. The first part appears to be real in terms of its autobiographical narrative. One finds echoes of Maugham's childhood in Philip Carey's life. Philip is the protagonist of the novel. Philip is made to stay with his uncle after the demise of his parents. But his uncle is extremely religious and absolutely cautious with money. Philip feels lonely here. His aunt who loves Philip had never seen the outside world and keeps meekly serving her selfish husband. Philip is groomed to be a good Christian who is expected to follow the path of the Lord.

Philip was a club foot and limp. And he is cruelly teased by his classmates for this physical deformity. Due to this physical limitation he is left emotionally

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scarred. His first exposure to the world outside as a boarding student was not a pleasant one. Philip felt vulnerable. His physical deformity was a grim reminder of the inadequate life he had. In a state of extreme pain one day, he prays to God to cure him next day and make him normal. But naturally nothing happens and Philip encounters his first disenchantment with religion.

In the next phase of his life he was struggling to find his life's calling. Philip's uncle and aunt wanted him to be part of Church or accept something conventional. That is when Philip engrosses himself in accounting for few months but gets bored of it. With his limited ability to paint he decides to go to Paris and become a painter. This does not go well with his uncle but he still heads for Paris. Philip being in the threshold of youth and hope thinks his uncle and aunt have wasted their lives. He intends to achieve greatness. Paris opens a new avenue and world for him. He finds the experience thrilling. But soon he realizes that he could never make it big in the art circuit and with funds starting to fade and Fanny, the zealous artist, commits suicide because of poverty and disillusionment; Philip decides to abandon his plans to become an artist. He was again back to the state of cluelessness. After all youth is an illusion and happy time but once the reality comes face to face the young are left wounded and bruised.

Eventually, Philip takes up medicine to study. He encounters Mildred a waitress. He is besotted by her and soon falls madly in love with her. She was not cultured, was not at all good-looking but Philip still could not stop falling for her. He invests a lot on her even though he hardly has any money. Mildred does not love him and goes out with other men whenever she feels like. Philip tries to keep her happy as well as spends money on her child from other man. But eventually this relationship ruins Philip.

Philip is left with no money. He takes up work as a common worker in a shop. During this period, Phillip realizes that ultimately life is meaningless and he has to make efforts to make it successful. By this time both his uncle and aunt had died. The realization about the futility of life makes him feel better. This philosophical awareness meets its logical end with Philip's marriage to Sally. Sally was the daughter of a poor worker and her family had taken care of Philip when he was homeless.

Of Human Bondage functions at numerous levels. It explores the human psyche. The emotions expressed in the novel are universal in nature and appeal to all. They also unfold the deep-seated complexes that we all suffer from. It is generally believed that Philip being club foot is a resonance to Maugham's stammering. Yet many others suggest that it could be an allusion to his homosexuality. It must have been difficult to walk out of the closet during those days. Many insist that the masochistic relationship that he narrates with Mildred could refer to some homosexual partner that Maugham had. This theory could be real because Mildred is described as some who looked like man, bare-chested and possessed no attractive feminine features. Moreover, the surreal and abrupt nature of the affair might make one feel as if this was real. But this is extremely ambiguous and nothing

can be spoken of with surety. After all, life is way more complex than how we encounter it in stories. Of course, the speculations have grown stronger because there has been no hint as to why Philip decided to fall for a woman who had not a single redeemable quality about her. Till Philip meets Mildred, we see he has had enjoyed female attention. It is also told that he had rejected few women. Hence, falling for Mildred appears to be a bit unexpected. But, at the same time, it highlights how complex human lives can be and that Philip is essentially a complex being.

Philip through his relationship with Mildred highlights his need to be humiliated as well as abused. It seems that his physical incompleteness (club foot), unsuccessful career choices (painting) and general sense of despair made him long for a relationship that could lead him to suffer so that he can return to emotional stability. On number of reasons Philip invites suffering upon himself. Despite being aware of Mildred's character Philip introduces a wealthy good looking friend to her. As expected they end up in an affair. Interestingly, Philip pays them for going on a vacation. Philip continues with this association until he is forced by poverty to get over this relationship. Philip moves out of a perfectly normal relationship with Norah while preferring to go back to Mildred. He was ready to suffer with one than to stay happy with the other. It no longer mattered to him if she was heartless and vulgar. One can also suggest that Philip's obsession to remain associated with Mildred could be a reason for promoting his own self-esteem. He willingly suffers her because by being with a woman so low in class and character made him feel better about himself. Her deep flaws made him feel more important. Philip continues being with Mildred because he was deeply fond of the emotional violence that was inflicted on him in the relationship and it had nothing to do with affection or respect.

A prominent theme that appears in the novel has to do with the damning nature of love. This probably is a step beyond Maugham's ideas on love which revolves around the concept that one partner loves while the other one lets himself/herself to be loved. In an absurd way, most of the characters in the novel are fond of the notion that they need to love and they look down upon those who love them.

Many will agree that Maugham's need to provide a conventional ending for Philip's life appears a bit forced. But this also means that Philip has reached a stage of emotional maturity and is rational enough to accept Sally and does not let her go like Norah. Though this time around he does not love her. Philip has understood the transient nature of life and wants to get married and have a life with children. With clarity seeping into life, Philip accepts life with a more charitable view and knows what he wants from his future.

Of Human Bondage will always appeal to generations because of its transcendental emotional connections. There is also a very controlled irony which makes the writing interesting and the sardonic observations on life more acceptable. The writing displays an emotional power coupled with philosophical insight making *Of Human Bondage* a creative delight.

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5.3.1 Bondages in Somerset Maugham's *Of Human Bondage*

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Maugham's masterpiece *Of Human Bondage* was published in the year 1915. Initially, the novel was criticized. It was considered to be a romantic obsession of a young lad which did not hold much value. But Theodore Dreiser gave an unexpected compliment to the work and compared it with Beethoven's Symphony. The novel is autobiographical in nature containing appearances of Maugham in Philip Carey, the protagonist of the novel.

The clubfooted protagonist shares a resemblance with the stammering author in his physical deformity. Being an autobiographical work the realms of fiction and non-fiction are blurred in the novel. The work chronicles the emotional isolation of a young man and how he perceives his life. Like many other people with deformity, Philip Carey displays high level of sensitivity about his physical condition. His clubfooted condition makes him more confident. He meets different women with various personalities and gets into relationships with them. Philip Carey's extraordinary confidence is the highlight of these relationships. Carey's first romantic association was with Mildred. This had significant impact on him. He could never forget her amidst other relationships. But after his marriage his emotional stability gets established. Philip marries Salley at the age of 30 years of age.

We are told Philip Carey was an orphan. His mother had died after giving birth to him. Later on his father too died of blood poisoning. The young orphan Philip Carey gets an impression that everyone treats him like a murderer. But he does not realise that no one has any say in deciding the time of death. However, nurturing such negative attitude about death only creates more environmental bondage. Again Philip Carey realizes that deformation is a bondage in itself and creates self-suffering. The women who are unable to reproduce are bound by self-guilt and underestimation. For Philip Carey, his school was nothing less than prison where most children nurtured a similar attitude. In the novel, maid of Vicarage Mary Anne suggests that domestic servitude is a form of mental bondage. On the other hand, domestic bondage does not allow an individual to live freely, the best example of this would be the life of Mrs. Cary. As we see, she does not have the permission to wear flower or feather. Monetary limitations bring undue stress on an individual. Human beings are caught in many such social constraints from birth till death.

Human beings are born into a prison of bondage and they have no way to escape from it. One must comply with the rules of living, once one is born. We are told Philip was born with a clubfoot. But he was not an ordinary boy. Soon after his birth both his parents die. The society holds him responsible for his parents' death as well as looks down upon because of his physical disability. Nature has an interesting way of gifting people. It hands over the genetic characteristics of the parents to the progenies making them original. But nature leaves an imprint of his own bondage in this manner. These specific genetic characteristics are carried by individuals throughout their life. Due to these aspects, an individual remains imprisoned in the DNA structures and cannot act otherwise. Soon his subconscious mind too supports the order of the nature. It is the bondage of birth that makes a child part of a rich or poor family which eventually becomes the source of happiness or desperation.

We are told that nature wields power over the body. We do not see the body functioning freely. The human body must follow certain rules and norms. Again, in case of the body of an old man, we know it is not in harmony with all his desires. The joy of living is restricted by old age. Again a man attached to life while still in his death bed is nothing more than a leech. In this context, we can consider Mr. Carey who is an old man and desires to live long but is not listened to by his body. Moreover, Miss Wilkinson makes efforts to enjoy life to the fullest. It appears as if the spirit inside the human body helps fight against desires. But in a normal situation the body refuses to obey the command of the spirit. And it is needless to say that it is impossible for human beings to free themselves from this bondage.

It is explained in the novel that the spirit rebels violently against the body. One such example is Mildred. Mildred is described as ‘tall and thin, with narrow hips and the chest of a boy’. Mildred worked as a waitress in a restaurant. Philip fell head over heels in love with her. But as Mildred comes across a rich suitor she rejects Philip and accepts the wealthy person. But in the later part of her life, Mildred comes across terrible misfortune and becomes a street prostitute. Mildred looks forward to having Philip back in her life but he is not in a position to accept her at that juncture. His spirit rebels against a refusal of this nature. Philip desires to have Mildred as his own but underestimates her as a girl of good demeanour. At one point, he uses her to satisfy his carnal needs but cannot move beyond and accept her as his life partner. He oscillates between need and morality. It is the desires of the spirit because of which Miss Wilkinson decides to have sexual relationship with Philip. The same is repeated with Norahan as well. It is told that Philip becomes jealous when he realises that other men are vying for Mildred’s attention. On the other hand, Miss Wilkinson gets jealous when Philip develops friendship with the daughters of the Major who had arrived from India. The human mind tries to release itself from the agonies through enjoyment. Physical pleasures are some source of joy but it the unrequited love that inflicts pain on human mind. We know Philip longs to see Mildred but he is afraid of doing so. The desire of physical intimacy is due to the compulsion of spirit. We see human body as an embodiment of a medium to seek enjoyment. It is important to satisfy the desires and this is necessary for both the body and the spirit. Yet this does not at all mean that one will not pay attention to one’s spirit and get involved in wild needs of body. Philip wonders whether his desire to see Mildred is born out of love or out of fear. After all, death brings an end to human life. And we see Philip paying close attention to death and understanding it with more curiosity. As it is always the case, death allows the spirits to escape from the prison of body.

The norms of the society entail a person from deprived socio-economical background to disregard moral and ethical values. The girls who model for the art studios undergo humiliation of posing nude. At times, they are subjected to molestation as well as harassment. But the human self-experience is an extreme example of economic bondage. In *Of Human Bondage*, we come across characters who are continuously in search of carnal pleasures or money. These two elements are the priority of the characters. We see that carnal pleasures satisfy physical needs. But without money the existence itself is in trouble. Without money nothing is possible. Morality has no place in the company of money. To lead a life

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of luxury and to sustain themselves the girls are shown to be selling their body. It is the material needs for survival which forces one to take up jobs in the flesh market or gamble for money. Money acquires a position which is higher than that of God. In the beginning, Philip's income is very meagre. He struggles to get hold of a steady income. He has to sell off the domestic articles in auction to fetch some money. Each individual seems to be disturbed by the thought of money. When the tenets decide to vacate their rooms we see Professor Frau getting worried over their decision as it will create an economical pressure on his income.

Of Human Bondage is a bildungsroman. Maugham's work highlights the ease and simple style that was the hallmark of French writing in the late 19th century.

5.3.2 Misery in *Of Human Bondage*

Of Human Bondage excels both in terms of form and content. Many critics argue that Maugham's work does not display any profound meaning. But *Of Human Bondage* and *The Razor's Edge* are the only such two works where critics have appreciated the heroes' quest for a meaning of life. Maugham in general is credited as a good story-teller but not as someone who likes to introduce philosophical, moral or transcendental ideas into his work. But the greatness of *Of Human Bondage* lies in its completeness in which life is picturized. And the other aspect is integrity in which a personality is presented.

Among the autobiographical novels that he composed *Of Human Bondage* is more close to his life. The work was written as a catharsis meant to liberate himself from uncomfortable memories which were tormenting him. The only reason which stops us from calling this an autobiography is because of the blurring lines of fact and fiction. *Cakes and Ale* is definitely autobiographical. And he mentions those episodes which he had not mentioned in *Of Human Bondage*.

While dealing with the biographies written on Maugham one must be extremely careful as and when he had gained some enemies through his writings. One such example will be Beverley Nichols who was a friend of Maugham but turned against him after Maugham wrote the article 'Looking Back'. Here Maugham criticized his dead wife who had no scope of defending herself. We see this reflected in *A Case of Human Bondage*. Maugham acknowledges that he wrote the book as a catharsis until the later part of his life he was bothered by the memories of the past life. According to him, he was so overburdened by the past that it interfered while rehearsing plays, while at a party or at walks and; hence, he had to write his experience.

Before we proceed further with *Of Human Bondage* we must bear in mind that this is an autobiographical novel and not an autobiography. Despite being marked by reality it still contains elements of fiction. *Of Human Bondage* is important for the real emotions it displays. And that is why it becomes more appropriate to focus on the emotions rather than events. In the beginning itself, we are told, 'The day broke grey and dull' on setting the ominous air. What worse can we think of than the death of a child's mother? With this we are let into the miserable life of Philip Carey (As well as that of Maugham's). This incident had such an

impact on him that even at the age of ninety Maugham would be found crying holding his mother's photograph.

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Of Human Bondage tells how a young boy made his way into life. His initial years of suffering help him come to terms with life. That is how he is exposed to depressing in the beginning of his life. But this is also the only instance in the novel where he introduces a depressing weather to express feelings of unhappiness or misery. But given its space in the narrative structure, it is an unimportant reference. Once we encounter good weather, we realize that Philip is experiencing (or about to experience) a sense of happiness. Like when he appears delighted looking at the sunshine; or he says he stopped to look at the sunset because he was happy. Philip was happy with the idea of meeting his friends again and then the day turned out to be fine. The most significant part is the ending of the novel it talks about the shining sun.

In the beginning, bad weather is indicated with a dull, grey day while the happy ending is suggested by the coming of sun in the sky. A significant aspect *Of Human Bondage* is the element of misery. As already mentioned, the beginning was marked with the death. Being a single child, he always led a lonely childhood. But without mother he became even more lonely. The misery cumulates when he is sent to live with his uncle and aunt once both his parents die. The uncle and aunt are childless despite having been married for many years. But the introduction of a child in their late years disturbs the pattern of their universe. For Philip the religious ambience of his new home is too much to bear. But life turns worse when he starts going to school. His clubfoot makes it difficult for him to gain access among his friends. Due to this he could not join the games that the other boys played. He is continuously mocked at by his friends in school. As a child he felt as if his life was a dream. Nothing was real - his mother's death, life at school, living in Vicarage and so forth.

Just like every aspect *Of Human Bondage* this long episode of suffering freed Philip from various social bondages and though left him emotionally scarred yet made him more mature through his experience.

5.3.3 Concept of Freedom in *Of Human Bondage*

Scholars have suggested that the quest for freedom is the motivation for all the action that takes place in the ambit of this autobiographical novel; though many argue that Philip is not particularly looking for freedom in his journey of life. Yet without a doubt freedom plays an important role in *Of Human Bondage*. We need to understand freedom from Philip's unhappy point of view. Philip's misery was result of his life at the Vicarage as well as his wretched condition in school. This was coupled with the strenuous relationship that he had developed with Mildred. This must be analysed in connection with his attitude to life and the circumstances that surround him. Such circumstances make him feel like an outsider. But his primary objective is to find his way back to himself. Thus, his problem was the problem of freedom. The condition of perfect freedom is both an unavoidable fate as well as an attainable goal. But to achieve this freedom he must free himself from all the bondages that bind him. To walk on the path of freedom he must outgrow himself from the oppressive environment that surrounded him. In Vicarage, he was

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negatively affected by two factors: home and religion. With respect to home Philip was never comfortable at his uncle's place. Of course, at some point of time he comes to love his aunt once he realizes her love for him. She had tried to be like a mother to him. And had loved him like he was his own son. But for his uncle, Philip never uttered a single word of appreciation. As per him, his uncle was a weak and selfish man. His uncle was reverend of the village. Thus, Philip finds himself obliged to comply with certain strictness of life that is expected of his uncle's position. For example, he is made to attend the Mass regularly and say his prayers every night. The uncle had advised Philip to say his prayers in his nightshirt because then his prayers will more acceptable to God. But Philip's disenchantment with religion is primarily derived from his uncle's behaviour. His uncle lighted the stove if the weather was very bad and the Vicar had a cold, but he will not light the stove if Mrs. Carey had a cold. If the uncle wanted to go on a holiday he would go on his own because there was no money for the two of them. His examples were not the best of the kind.

The burdensome faith which had been forced upon Philip could not continue for long because it was too much to bear. So once Philip ceased to believe in Christianity he felt as if great weight has been taken off from his shoulders. He experienced an unexpected sense of liberty. But this was not the first hurdle that he had to overcome to gain freedom. It was his school. He believed that the solution for all his problems could be handled through a miracle that could cure his clubfoot. In that way, he would be more like the other children and will find him more acceptable. But unfortunately, that miracle does not happen. Rather he suffers through a good deal of terrible treatment. Philip is seen to be extremely eager to leave school and start a new life. But in his haste he does not stop to consider the consequences it might bear on his future. His rush leads him to miss a grant to go to Oxford. Philip usually is not depicted as someone who regrets his actions. But this is one such moment where we see him regretting his hasty action. We see this being reflected in *The Razor's Edge* where he says he never went to Cambridge like his brothers did. He mentions he had the chance, but he refused it. He says how he regretted his decision to get out into the world.

This brings us to the next point about passion. The character realizes that he cannot be truly free if he cannot control his passion. In *Of Human Bondage* Philip displays his passion for Mildred. But without a doubt this relationship was a kind of bondage for which only Philip was responsible. He realises that the passion was not doing him any good and he desperately wanted to get rid of the love which he was obsessed with. This feeling was both degrading as well as hateful. But the interesting thing is that it is not Philip who marches towards his own freedom. It is actually Mildred who takes the final step. But this was always the case in their relationship.

And then we come across the last bondage, Philip's need to emancipate himself from his surroundings by understanding the meaning of life. He had to do so to free himself from cultural, religious, environmental, physical and other forms of confinement. But anyone who wants to know what is the meaning of life is already considered to be sick because the meaning of life is inherent in life itself. Philip's emancipation starts when he leaves school as well as the Vicarage and moved to Heidelberg. His discontentment with his present life makes him search

for something better. He feels as if he is completely out of place in the society in his current surroundings and sets off to discover himself. This itself is not a right approach towards life. But at this point, he is unaware of the wrongs he is committing. He has still not understood that his life is the problem in itself. But soon Philip gets to know the answer for the riddle of life. His journey takes him from Heidelberg to London then from London to Paris, and then back to England. He returns more mature than before but without having found what he was looking for (the meaning of life). But this time, he starts focusing on what is wrong with his life. He decides to live life as he was tired of preparing for life. Yet he still does not realize that by thinking of the future he was actually letting go off his life. And this was another form of enslavement. This involved living in a world of illusion where one is unable to see life in its reality and thus, suffering regularly with the pain of disillusionment. In case, Phillip is not happy in one place he makes an effort to move to a different location or try something new. Yet when he reaches there he is filled with disappointment. After all, things are never as he expected them to be. Philip is continuously in a state of illusion and that is why his dreams are never fulfilled. In his efforts to overcome his unhappiness Philip puts too much faith in the future and this is the trait of an of unsatisfied individual. The main reason to have fantasies is because one struggles with unsatisfied dreams. And with fulfilment of each fantasy one wish is fulfilled realizing one unsatisfied reality. But he was yet to internalise that the solution to all his problems was hidden within him. It was not possible for anyone else to help him discover the meaning of life.

Then we come to the Persian Rug segment that Cronshaw had gifted him. This brings Philip the solution. He understands life is without meaning. Just living is of no use. Life would remain insignificant while death will be of no consequence. It was as if the final burden of responsibility was taken from him. And this was probably for the first time that he was free. Philip was unable to reconcile himself to the believe that life had no meaning by itself. However, everything he witnessed as well as all his thoughts made him more convinced about this aspect. He soon realized that life was not as horrible if understood that it was meaningless. Philip accepted this with a strange sense of power. Since, escaping from reality was no option at all. Life is what one makes out of it. He starts to believe in this existentialist principle. Meaning is not subscribed in life per say, but the meaning comes from the individual efforts that one puts in to make life meaningful. There is no eternal or absolute power which attaches meaning to it.

5.3.4 Meaning of Life in *Of Human Bondage*

We need to understand that life has no meaning per se. We do not find that in the initial segments of the novel because probably Maugham himself (like Philip) thought that life has some meaning. But that might appear a bit hypothetical because at no point Maugham has mentioned that also this is fictional narrative of autobiography. But it has been understood that all the miseries in Philip's life force him to wonder about the meaning of life and he figured out that it has no meaning. Let us see how Philip draws this conclusion about life. For both Philip and Maugham, the main reason which prevented them from integrating with the society was their physical deformity. This makes them appear as outsiders. We have seen Maugham's hero in

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two cases have wondered about the meaning of life. But in search of this meaning of life one tends to either commit suicide or set off in search of happiness. Either way one looks for satisfaction in life. We can call this feeling happiness or fulfilment or contentment. Irrespective of terminology, this search is geared towards giving meaning to the meaningless life. This gives some special insight into life and make our lives worth living (or that is what the meaning seekers believe). We also understand that any individual who is unhappy with his circumstances can become happy by altering his circumstances. And in some other cases, he can alter his attitude towards his circumstances. Rationally, the first option is difficult. Most of the Maugham's work also suggests the same. As we see in case of Philip Carey, he first realizes he is not happy with his circumstances and leaves both school and the Vicarage. He leaves for Germany in his effort to be happy. Though we must not forget that this was much before he started wondering what was wrong with him. But in pursuit of happiness, he visits numerous places. And each place disappoints him. He carries a sense of unhappiness with him to every place which he visits. He is yet to realize that he is looking for freedom. His sense of oppression is due to the various bondages surrounding him. Post his school days he was free. Yet the wild exultation that he was expecting was not there. With the release of each bondage he expects a greater change than would be available to him. Philip deliberately enters a new life. Yet his loss of faith does not bring much difference in his behaviour as he had expected. It was as if another of his dreams which did not have much scope for change. Since he is oppressed by various external things he could not feel happy. He is unable to act freely. Finally, in the end, he agrees that freedom like everything else is just an illusion. He insists that the illusion of free will has been so strongly etched in his mind that he cannot run away from it. Yet he realizes that this is only an illusion. But this illusion also sets the strongest motives for his actions. This also brings one to wonder does Philip really strive for his freedom. Even though it seems Philip wants to get rid of all his bondages, he is unable to do so for Mildred because he finds it to be degrading and hateful. But it might appear that he remains stuck with her for the fear of loneliness. The novel is replete with references to Philip's loneliness. The solitary journey began as a child even when his mother was still alive. The protagonist lives a lonely life since his childhood. He has very few friends. He was envious of people because they had friends. At times, due to loneliness he could not read. One instance that is a proof of how great his fear of loneliness is when Philip learns that Sally is not pregnant and, hence, he does not have to marry her. This leaves him dismayed. With a sunken heart he visualizes a future full of desolate emptiness. He is not ready to confront loneliness again. He feels the dual desire to be free as well as be a part of the world he lives in. As an outsider, his first desire is to stop being an outsider. He wants to be free but not alone.

But for Philip being happy is difficult because he does not possess the things which are considered necessary for one to be happy. He has no love, affection, family or friends. This is the core of Philip's actual problem and not freedom as he realizes towards the end of the narrative. He has a sense of freedom. So, he finally comes to discover why he is so unhappy. He analyses that he has always lived a solitary existence devoid of companionship. He instantly realizes that what he longs for is 'a wife, a home, and love'.

As readers, we understand that the change of circumstances does not comfort Philip. He does not find the contentment that is required to go on with life. He had to look for a change of attitude to find happiness. There was the scope of accepting life in its actuality to remove all negative conception of life. But acceptance can either be through accepting one's fate and stand the meaningless life until that person reaches the death bed. Or else, one can fit oneself with the existentialist principle of understanding that human being is what he makes of himself. Here acceptance is accompanied by a quest for a life that is happy.

We are told that only two things make life worth living – one is love and the other is art. It looks like Maugham seems to offer that the problem of life can be tackled through the right approach. But it is always difficult to find solution through right approach (i.e., love and art) as we will see in the book.

One thing that troubles most individuals during their lifetime is loneliness. This was a real problem for Philip as well. It is difficult for men to be truly happy unless there is someone to share failures and successes of life. Even Plato proposes that man needs friends. And friends are required for personal needs. It appears as if Philip internalizes this idea in *Of Human Bondage*. At no point, we see Philip asking Mildred to love him. On the contrary, he only desires that she should let him love her. But by the end of the novel, we see Philip letting himself be loved by Sally. In fact, he wants that more than anything else. He soon realizes that love leads to passion which is not good as it had happened in case of Mildred. But for Sally he nurtures loving-kindness (the same as the 'Persian rug' is addressed). Even John suggests something similar only in different language when he says that life in itself has no value and what you put in it provides the real worth.

5.3.5 Representation of Art & Religion in *Of Human Bondage*

In the novel, we witness a real distinction is made between truth or faith or God. While on the other hand, we have to differentiate between religion and church. As we all know in Maugham's works, the Church is projected as an entity with no help. The same happens in *Of Human Bondage* too. The Church denotes a negative connotation. It is after all one of the bondages from which Philip tries to emancipate himself. Even the representatives of the Church are not considered to be very good. In both the works, *Of Human Bondage* and *Cakes and Ale* we see that the Church is represented by Maugham's reverend uncle.

Along with religion, art plays another prominent role in Maugham's works. One recurrent metaphor that is used in the novel is that life is a work of art that is produced by men (the artists) from the chaos of the universe. We all must create our own pattern. And in *Of Human Bondage* a Persian rug brings solution to the riddle of life. This is one concept that Maugham shared with Nietzsche. Even for Nietzsche, life is primarily valueless as well as meaningless, while at the same time, it is also a work of art. It is believed that the lack of inherent values dissuades one from taking a moral cue. This leaves an individual to generate his own gratuitous values into the material world.

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Philip understands that beauty has the power to give meaning to life. Both Philip and Fanny meet similar fate in *Of Human Bondage*. In his search for self, Philip ties his luck with arts. But unfortunately, he does not have the necessary aptitude to be an artist. He realizes he can become a mediocre artist but never a great one. Even if he decides to become an artist, he would never be happy since he would not get satisfaction from the art works that he would create. Like Philip's art teacher remarks, that it is cruel to discover that one is mediocre in his efforts at a later stage. It only adds to the woes. On the other hand, Fanny too tries her luck with art. But she turns out to be more unfortunate than Philip. As she realizes art was not her means of expression, she commits suicide. Fanny Price was an English girl. She visits Paris because she wants to become an artist. In her School of Art, where she goes for the art lessons, she is one of the 'oldest' students. She nearly starves herself so that she could afford her lessons. But as luck would have it, she has no talent for the craft and she refused to believe this as well. Finally, she realizes her teachers were right and her suffering was not worth it. After all, she can never become an artist. All that Fanny ever wanted was to become an artist and in her maddening persuasion she had not made any friends and her family did not care about her. And in a state of disillusionment she kills herself.

Check Your Progress

1. When and where was William Somerset Maugham born?
2. When was *Of Human Bondage* published?

5.4 ISAAC ASIMOV: ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Isaac Asimov was born on 2 January 1920 in Petrovichi, Russia. When he was three years old, his family Judah Ozimov and Anna Rachel Berman, migrated to the United States of America (USA). He completed his graduation from the Columbia University in 1939. In 1942, he wed Gertrude Blugerman. After the Second World War was over, he completed his Ph.D. in chemistry from Columbia in 1948. Thereafter, he became a faculty member (associate professor of biochemistry) at the Boston University in 1955. Gradually, with the passage of time, he became a professor at the university by the late 1970s.

Even though he was a professor by vocation, writing was his passion. Asimov's first short story to be sold, 'Marooned Off Vesta', was published in *Amazing Stories* in 1938. However, it was in 1950, that his first book, a science fiction novel *Pebble in the Sky* was published. He released another collection of stories titled *I, Robot* in 1950 which introduced the Three Laws of Robotics. In 1950, he published another novel *Foundation*, which looked at the end of the Galactic Empire and a statistical method of predicting outcomes. The story was followed by two more installations, *Foundation and Empire* (1952) and *Second Foundation* (1953), with the series continuing into the 1980s.

Isaac Asimov wrote not just on science but on other topics as well including biology, math, religion, astronomy and so forth. Some of his works include *The Human Body* (1963), *Asimov's Guide to the Bible* (1969), the mystery *Murder at the AB A* (1976) and his 1979 autobiography, *In Memory Yet Green*.

Asimov died in New York City on 6 April 1992, at the age of 72 from heart and kidney failure. He has won numerous awards during his wide spanning writing career. He is today remembered as one of the most prolific writers of the 20th century.



Fig. 5.2 Issac Asimov

5.5 *FANTASTIC VOYAGE*: SUMMARY AND CRITICAL ANALYSIS

Summary

The novel revolves around a team of scientists who venture into the body of a scientist named Benes. They are compelled to take this step as the man is wanted by two prominent world powers, also known as the Other Side and the United States. Both the world powers want access to Benes' knowledge. However, an assassination attempt on Benes leaves him with a blood clot in the brain. Once Benes' condition is stabilized at the CMDF (Combined Miniature Defense Force), a team of scientists travel through his body with the help of a miniaturized submarine. They must travel from the neck to the clot in the brain and complete the task within sixty minutes before the effects of miniaturization begins to reverse.

The novel is scientific and the plot revolves around biological specimen and their treatment. The third-person omniscient narrator mainly focuses on the character

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Grant. Grant is the only member of the crew who lacks medical or scientific expertise. He is a member of the police force who does not know anything about anatomical sciences. Due to this, the other characters have to explain the concepts which are otherwise unknown to him. For instance, in the novel, Michaels, a member of the team who is a scientist, had to explain the position of the submarine. It was supposedly travelling through a pleural membrane instead of the bloodstream. At several instances, Asimov gives a detailed explanation of the human body. Asimov does not resort to simply stating medical facts. He also adds an element of suspense in the novel.

The addition of a military man to a team of scientists leads to a suspicion regarding the motives of the scientists. This obviously means that a higher member of the United States is suspicious of the scientist's intentions. Over the course of the novel, several conflicts are introduced. For example, the laser which was supposed to be used in the operation turned out to be damaged. Despite conflicts, the team is able to remove the clot and successfully escape Benes' body.

Critical Analysis

The 1966 scientific fiction *Fantastic Voyage* has impressed the science fiction community for a long time now. It had a major cult following especially among the pre-2001: *Space Odyssey* generation. The script was written by Harry Kleiner. The script was given the shape of a novel by Isaac Asimov. Since the film was released after the publication of the novel, many people assume that the film was based on the novel. But in reality, it was the other way round. Scholars point out that *Fantastic Voyage* is more of an inward journey as opposed to the space-exploration fantasies that were popular in the 1960s. At the surface level, *Fantastic Voyage* is a variation of the earlier *Gulliver's Travels* or the popular comedy, *Honey, I Shrunk the Kids*.

As a narrative, Isaac Asimov manages to translate a lot of concepts (as one encounters on the screen) into the book and composes a captivating read. Though short, *Fantastic Voyage* is quite a page turner. The story narrates about a team of scientists who get into the body of a mastermind to gather information. The need to do so arises because the mastermind in question is being looked for by two different world powers. The two world powers are identified as the United States and the Communist Russia, on the other side. Both the world powers want to acquire the knowledge that this man possessed. But even before he could tell the right people about the knowledge he possesses he is planned to be killed. As a result, he develops a blood clot in his brain. This leads to him being in a coma and struggles for his life. The mastermind is identified as Benes. The team of scientists move around the body of Benes through a miniaturized submarine. The whole process is expected to be completed in 60 minutes. The team is expected to travel from the neck through the brain and then through the brain to the clot and then to the original position after which they all will return to normal size.

Fantastic Voyage offers a narrative which is conducive to a science fiction atmosphere. We come across a biological specimen and how it is treated. The story unfolds from the perspective of a third person. The omniscient narrator fills us with the required information with a special focus on Grant. Grant is the only

member of the crew who is devoid of any scientific or medical training. Grant is part of the police force and is responsible for fixing any emergency situations. As he is completely ignorant of scientific knowledge he is explained by the teammates about the technicalities. It is through Grant that the readers get knowledge about the concepts. At some juncture in the narrative, a scientist named Michaels has to explain the position of the submarine. At that time, the submarine is travelling through a pleural membrane. But Grant has naively suggested they were moving through the bloodstream. In a similar fashion, time and again, Asimov gives a detailed explanation of the anatomy that the scientists were exploring. But, of course, the book is not a chronology of medical facts. It creates enough drama to keep the narrative afloat.

Like a good science fiction thriller the story introduces a sense of suspense even though it might appear an extremely absurd plot twist to throw in a military man with a team of scientists to take care of someone's brain. But soon, we realize that this is done because the motive of one of the scientists was unclear and hence, higher members of the United States wanted an accurate understanding of the situation and motives of individuals. There are numerous subplots and hindrances that one encounters in the narrative which eventually lead to the mole in the group.

The novel plays around the old enmity of the Americans and the Soviets. They both are fighting to master a certain miniaturization of technology. The key member of the scientific group who was trying to improvise on this still-imperfect process gets critically injured. The injury was due to an assassination attempt made by the other side. The only way the team could help the patient and unlock the secrets is by adopting the in-progress scientific experiment on miniature stories. The novel gives a completely new dimension to the concept of invasive surgery where laser guns are used to clear blood clot. Moreover, time is of absolute significance in the process; any disregard to it would lead to the host body being attacked, but this is also true that even the miniaturized scientist was vulnerable to white blood cells attack on them.

There have been numerous concerns regarding the scientific accuracy that the narrative has provided. The journey is all about obstacles and being awestruck with the solution that nature provides highlighting the wonder of the human body. Like, we see that during an unexpected detour cardiac arrest is induced so that the team can avoid turbulence. When the team is faced with dwindling oxygen supply the group stops by at the lungs to refuel. During another course change, the team lands up in the inner ear. This results in the observation of complete silence in the operating theatre that lies outside the body. The group gets into a scuba-diving gear every now and then and make their vessel combat the antibodies. But neither the film script nor the novel shows any interest in actual science. We come across a discussion that takes place among the surgeons. They suggest about putting intelligent design against evolution. But the concept is used to identify a standard villain.

More than the novel, it is the movie which keeps the action alive. Before directing *Fantastic Voyage* Fleischer had been the director of *20,000 Leagues*

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Isaac Asimov*

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Under the Sea (1954). This as we all know is a submarine adventure. The appearance of cinema might not be of much appeal to a later generation but the movie created quite a sensation in the 1960s. Moreover, with majority of science-fiction lover having read Asimov's version right before the release of the movie found it even more exciting to watch it on screen. *Fantastic Voyage* won the coveted award for visual effects as well as for art direction at the Oscars. Surprisingly, *Fantastic Voyage* had a supporter in Salvador Dali who was influential in getting the movie a New York release. The film as well as the novel reiterates an aesthetic attitude that belongs to the pre-digital era. *Fantastic Voyage* is a product of paranoia created by Cold War while carrying with it a techno-utopianism that was prevalent in the mid-twentieth century.

As we know that the screenplay for *Fantastic Voyage* was brought out in a novel form and none other than Isaac Asimov was responsible for its novelization. The film is still recalled for its use of special effects and the fact that Raquel Welch (Cora, the scientist) appeared in a prominent leading role. Asimov introduces the reader for the trip with utmost care. The journey to the brain receives its due respect. We see that nearly fifty per cent of the book is spent trying to pursue Albert Morrison (the American scientist) that it is possible to miniaturize humans. Asimov makes effort to bring some scientific consistency into *Fantastic Voyage* (not too authentic but an effort nonetheless). Asimov's journey with scientific world started with the robot series *I, Robot*. This was published in 1950. The novel tries to accurately outline the concepts that were used to create industrial robots. In the same way, he tries to introduce the concept of miniaturization. He uses the ideas from thermodynamics and neurophysics to convey the point. In the narrative, we see that Morrison is horrified at the thought of being miniaturized. That is why he refuses to proceed with the work and thus, gets kidnapped and is brought to the Soviet Union. The scientist decides to participate because he had to salvage his failing career and a success with the miniaturization could offer him one last opportunity to prove his credibility.

It might be added here that in 1987 Isaac Asimov wrote *Fantastic Voyage II: Destination Brain*. But this is not a sequel to the *Fantastic Voyage* of 1966. Rather this is more of a rewriting of the original narrative. This too is about a team of scientists who miniaturize themselves so that they can enter the human brain and can retrieve memories of a colleague who was in a state of coma. Many of the readers will agree that the exposition that takes place in *Destination Brain* after a point appears to be tedious. Yet the patience is worthy of the action that follows. As soon as we have Morrison along with the four Soviet scientists entering the bloodstream of Shapirov, the book becomes difficult to be ignored. One interesting aspect of the novel is the way it shows how the characters grow in complexity. We have Natalya Boranova. She is the captain of the vessel and an accomplished task master and highly manipulative. She comprehends the politics of each situation and then tries to judge how her role in each of the instances will be perceived. Arkady Dezhnev is introduced as the engineer of the ship. Dezhnev is the

quintessential happy drunkard and does not hesitate to quote his philosopher-father at every given opportunity. Whenever things get tense, he provides comic relief to the crew. There is Yuri Konev who is mostly angry. Yuri is obsessed with success and is obnoxious. He is more keen on Morrison's participation because he is expecting to hog the limelight through Morrison's work. Sophia Kalinin is projected as a gentle molecular physicist. Her study is on the electromagnetic properties of cells which allows the vessel to mimic any required cell in the human body. It is told that she and Konev were lovers and they have a child together. But Konev does not acknowledge the child. These personal struggles provide a great insight into their lives.

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Check Your Progress

3. Name Isaac Asimov's first major literary work.
4. In which year was *Fantastic Voyage* released?

5.6 ANSWERS TO 'CHECK YOUR PROGRESS'

1. William Somerset Maugham. He was born on 25th January 1874 in Paris, France.
2. *Of Human Bondage* by Somerset Maugham was published in 1915.
3. Asimov's first short story to be sold, 'Marooned Off Vesta', was published in *Amazing Stories* in 1938.
4. *Fantastic Voyage* was released in the year 1966.

5.7 SUMMARY

- The real name of Somerset Maugham is William Somerset Maugham. He was born on 25th January 1874 in Paris, France. He is remembered as a renowned novelist, short-story writer and playwright. His writings are marked by simplistic style, urban settings and an unexpected insight into human nature.
- People still remember Maugham primarily for his novels. *Of Human Bondage* was published in 1915. This is a semi-autobiographical narrative of a young medical student. In 1919 comes *The Moon and Sixpence* which recounts the life of an unconventional artist. In 1930 we have *Cakes and Ale* that is about a famous novelist then in 1944 he publishes *The Razor's Edge* which tells the story of a young American war veteran.
- *Of Human Bondage* by Somerset Maugham was published in 1915. The work got the distinction of being regarded very close to being an autobiographical work. Maugham composed it over the course of a few years.

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- *Of Human Bondage* will always appeal to generations because of its transcendental emotional connections. There is also a very controlled irony which makes the writing interesting and the sardonic observations on life more acceptable. The writing displays an emotional power coupled with philosophical insight making *Of Human Bondage* a creative delight.
- Maugham's masterpiece *Of Human Bondage* was published in the year 1915. Initially, the novel was criticized. It was considered to be a romantic obsession of a young lad which did not hold much value.
- *Of Human Bondage* excels both in terms of form and content. Many critics argue that Maugham's works does not display any profound meaning. But *Of Human Bondage* and *The Razor's Edge* are the only such two works where critics have appreciated the heroes' quest for a meaning of life.
- *Of Human Bondage* tells how a young boy made his way into life. His initial years of suffering help him come to terms with life. That is how he is exposed to depressing in the beginning of his life. But this is also the only instance in the novel where he introduces a depressing weather to express feelings of unhappiness or misery.
- Scholars have suggested that the quest for freedom is the motivation for all the action that takes place in the ambit of this autobiographical novel; though many argue that Philip is not particularly looking for freedom in his journey of life. Yet without a doubt freedom plays an important role in *Of Human Bondage*.
- Isaac Asimov was born on 2 January 1920 in Petrovichi, Russia. When he was three years old, his family Judah Ozimov and Anna Rachel Berman, migrated to the United States of America (USA).
- The 1966 scientific fiction *Fantastic Voyage* has impressed the science fiction community for a long time now. It had a major cult following especially among the pre-2001: *Space Odyssey* generation. The script was written by Harry Kleiner.
- *Fantastic Voyage* offers a narrative which is conducive to a science fiction atmosphere. We come across a biological specimen and how it is treated. The story unfolds from the perspective of a third person. The omniscient narrator fills us with the required information with a special focus on Grant.

5.8 KEY TERMS

- **Masochist:** This term refers to an individual who derives sexual gratification from being subjected to physical pain or humiliation.
- **Vicarage:** It alludes to the residency of a vicar.
- **Bildungsroman:** It is a literary form of writing which primarily focuses on the psychological and moral growth of the main character of the work.

5.9 SELF-ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

Somerset Maugham and
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Short-Answer Questions

1. Write a brief note on the life and works of William Somerset Maugham.
2. How has the concept of freedom dealt with in the novel *Of Human Bondage*?
3. Prepare a brief biographical sketch of Isaac Asimov.
4. What are the features of science fiction evident in *Fantastic Voyage*?

Long-Answer Questions

1. Discuss the concept of misery and bondage in *Of Human Bondage*.
2. Critically evaluate the presentation of art and religion in *Of Human Bondage*.
3. Summarize the work *Fantastic Voyage*.

5.10 FURTHER READING

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