



**M.A. ENGLISH**  
**SEMESTER - I**  
**PRE 20TH CENTURY FICTION**  
**SUBJECT CODE : 73482**

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# I

## **M.A. English PRE 20<sup>th</sup> CENTURY FICTION**

### **Objectives of the course:**

- To familiarize learners with different genres in fiction.
- To familiarize them with different types of fictional narratives.
- To provide the learners with an idea of the growth of fiction over the period of the last three centuries.
- To make the learners aware of the social, cultural and psychological implications of fiction

### **Semester I**

#### **Unit 1 Terms/Concepts for study**

1. Bildungsroman / Künstlerroman
2. Picaresque
3. Sentimental Novel
4. Historical Novel
5. Gothic Novel
6. Epistolary Novel
7. Sociological Novel
8. Realistic Novel
9. Satirical Novel
10. Romantic Novel

#### **Unit 2: Tobias Smollett: Humphry Clinker**

Jonathan Swift: Gulliver's Travels

#### **Unit3 Mary Shelley: Frankenstein**

Jane Austen: Sense and Sensibility

#### **Unit 4: Thomas Hardy: The Mayor of Casterbridge Charles Dickens: Bleak House**

Internal Evaluation (40 marks)

A student should select two novels belonging to two different categories mentioned above and show how it has all the features of that category.

Project: 20 marks

Presentation: 10 marks

Viva-voce: 10 marks

Students of Distance Education to submit one additional assignment in place of presentation and viva voce

## II

### **B) Semester End Examination Pattern 60 Marks**

Question 1: Essay on concepts (any 1 out of 3 to be attempted) :  
15 Marks

Question 2: Essay on unit 2 : one out of two - 15 Marks

Question 3: Essay on unit 3 : one out of two - 15 Marks

Question 4: Essay on unit 4 : one out of two - 15 Marks

### **Reading:**

1. Laurence Sterne: Tristram Shandy
2. Henry Fielding: Tom Jones
3. Jane Austen: Emma
4. Emily Bronte: Wuthering Heights
5. George Eliot: The Mill on the Floss
6. Charles Dickens: Bleak House
7. Anthony Trollope: Barchester Towers
8. Thomas Hardy: Tess of the D'Urbervilles

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### III

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# Unit-1

## FIRST FIVE LITERARY TERM'S PART I

### Unit Structure:

- 1.0 Objectives
- 1.1 Introduction
- 1.2 Use of Concepts
- 1.3 Concepts Under Study
  - 1.3.1 Bildungsroman
  - 1.3.2 Picaresque
  - 1.3.3 Sentimental Novel
  - 1.3.4 Historical Novel
  - 1.3.5 Gothic Novel
- 1.4 Let's Sum Up
- 1.5 Questions
- 1.6 References

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### 1.0 OBJECTIVES

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- To introduce students to various concepts centred around Fiction
- To help them study the literature of any era with the help of these terms

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### 1.1 INTRODUCTION

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This Unit along with the next unit, introduces learners to various types of a novel. As a literary text, a novel covers a number of areas such as social milieu, historical periods, economic issues, political situations, cultural influences, psychological viewpoints so on and so forth. These concepts are incorporated within the structure of the text, giving the text its complex narrative. They do not occur singularly, but almost always in combination with each other. However, the overall development of a novel takes place on a primary conceptual line. Each type of the novel carries its own characteristics. Understanding the types of novels helps in critically studying the text.

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## 1.2 USE OF CONCEPTS

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Literary terms are techniques that writers use to express their ideas and enhance their writing. Literary terms highlight important concepts in a text, strengthen the narrative, and help readers connect to the characters and themes.

These devices serve a wide range of purposes in literature. Some might work on an intellectual level, while others have a more emotional effect. They may also work subtly to improve the flow and pacing of your writing. No matter what, if you're looking to inject something special into your prose, literary terms are a great place to start.

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## 1.3 CONCEPTS UNDER STUDY

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### 1.3.1 Bildundroman

This German word literally translates to “novel of formation.” It was coined in an 1820 text titled *Über das Wesen des Bildungsromans* by Johann Carl Simon Morgenstern, and slowly entered common use as a literary term during the period known as German Enlightenment.

A bildungsroman is rather more than a simple “coming of age” novel. This genre is characterized by a more specific focus on the psychological and moral development of the character rather than the adventure itself. Many folklorists agree that this genre evolved from the oral tradition, of tales talked about the lucky fool, or youngest son, who leaves his family to seek his fortune and ends up becoming a king or lord of those who once scorned him.

### ***Harry Potter, David Copperfield, Jane Eyre, Tom Sawyer:* -**

These characters are well known. Each of their stories follow a certain path, one whose theme is quite familiar.

You join this character as their story begins, when they are but children beleaguered by a difficult life and developing their world outlooks on the world. In this crucible of experience, they soon encounter some sort of trouble that causes them to have a reason to travel or offers them a quest to pursue. The characters experience the world around them, maturing over time. They grow and find themselves clashing with their traditional cultural and societal standards as they progress, until they realize that they embody the values they struggle against and manage to find a peace within their society.



Some other well-known examples of popular bildungsroman: ***Candide*** (French title: *ou l'Optimisme*) is a French satire written in 1759 by Voltaire, a philosopher of the Age of Enlightenment.

The novella begins with a young man, Candide, who is living a sheltered life in an Edenic paradise and being indoctrinated with Leibnizian optimism by his tutor, Pangloss. The work describes the abrupt cessation of this lifestyle, followed by Candide's slow, painful disillusionment as he witnesses and experiences great hardships in the world.

*Candide* is characterized by its sarcastic tone and its erratic, fantastical, and fast-moving plot. With a story similar to that of a more serious bildungsroman or picaresque novel, it parodies many adventure and romance clichés, the struggles of which are caricatured in a tone that is mordantly matter-of-fact.

***To Kill a Mockingbird*** is a Pulitzer Prize-winning novel by Harper Lee that tells a story similar to something the author experienced as a child.

The book follows three years in the life of Scout Finch, her brother Jem, their father Atticus, and their town of Maycomb, Alabama during the Great Depression. The first half of the novel focuses on Scout and Jem's childhood, and the second part of the book is the ongoing trial of a black man accused of raping a white woman, whom Atticus has been called to defend, and the children's coming of age.

### 1.3.2 Picaresque

The picaresque novel (Spanish: picaresca, from pícaro, for "rogue" or "rascal") is a genre of prose fiction that depicts the adventures of a roguish, but "appealing hero", of low social class, who lives by his wits in a corrupt society. Picaresque novels typically adopt a realistic style, with elements of comedy and satire. This style of novel originated in Spain in 1554 and flourished throughout Europe for more than 200 years, though the term "picaresque novel" was only coined in 1810. It continues to influence modern literature. The term is also sometimes used to describe works, like Cervantes' *Don Quixote* and Charles Dickens' *Pickwick Papers*, which only contain some of the genre's elements. Picaresque novels typically adopt a realistic style, with elements of comedy and satire. It has a picaro or a semi-criminal as its central figure who has to shift for himself to earn his living. He is born of poor and degraded parents or he is illegitimate. There is no plot. The story is told in a series of thrilling events only loosely connected together by the fact that the same central character figures in them all. The plot is episodic and the incidents thrilling and sensational. A picaresque narrative is usually written in first

person as an autobiographical account. There is little if any character development in the main character. Once a picaresque hero, always a picaresque hero. The picaresque hero's story is told with a plainness of language or realism. Satire is sometimes a prominent element. The aim of the novelist is to delight and entertain and not to reform or improve. The behavior of a picaresque hero or heroine stops just short of criminality. Carefree or immoral rascality positions the picaresque hero as a sympathetic outsider, untouched by the false rules of society.

*Lazarillo de Tormes* is a Spanish novella, published anonymously because of its anticlerical content in 1554. It is variously considered either the first picaresque novel or at least the antecedent of the genre. Another early example is Mateo Alemán's *Guzmán de Alfarache* (1599), characterized by religiosity. *Don Quixote* is a Spanish novel by Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra (1547-1616), published in two volumes, in 1605 and 1615. The "single most important progenitor of the modern novel", that M. H. Abrams has described as a "quasi-picaresque narrative".

*Moll Flanders* is a novel by Daniel Defoe (1660-1731), first published in 1722. It purports to be the true account of the life of the eponymous Moll, detailing her exploits from birth until old age. This novel enlarges the scope of this genre as it depicts the life of a dissolute heroine and not of a hero.

*The History of Tom Jones, a Foundling*, often known simply as *Tom Jones*, is a comic novel by English playwright and novelist Henry Fielding, first published in 1749. It is both a Bildungsroman and a picaresque novel. It totals 346,747 words divided into 18 smaller books, each preceded by a discursive chapter, often on topics unrelated to the book itself. It is dedicated to George Lyttleton. The novel is highly organized, despite its length. It became a best seller, with four editions being published in its first year alone. *Tom Jones* is generally regarded as Fielding's greatest book and a very influential English novel.

*The Adventures of Peregrine Pickle* is another picaresque novel by the Scottish author Tobias Smollett (1721–1771), first published in 1751 and revised and published again in 1758. It tells the story of an egotistical man who experiences luck and misfortunes in the height of 18th-century European society.

Elements of the picaresque are found in Charles Dickens's *The Pickwick Papers* (1836–37). Mark Twain's *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* (1884) was consciously written as a picaresque novel. Rudyard Kipling's *Kim* (1901) combined the influence of the picaresque novel with the modern spy novel.

### 1.3.3 Sentimental Novel

The sentimental novel or the novel of sensibility is an 18th-century literary genre which celebrates the emotional and intellectual concepts of sentiment, sentimentalism, and sensibility. Sentimentalism, which is to be distinguished from sensibility, was a fashion in both poetry and prose fiction beginning in the eighteenth century in reaction to the rationalism of the Augustan Age. Sentimental novels relied on emotional response, both from their readers and characters. They feature scenes of distress and tenderness, and the plot is arranged to advance both emotions and actions. The result is a valorisation of "fine feeling", displaying the characters as a model for refined, sensitive emotional effect. The ability to display feelings was thought to show character and experience, and to shape social life and relations.

An emotionally extravagant novel of a kind that became popular in Europe in the late 18th century. Partly inspired by the emotional power of Samuel Richardson's *Pamela, or Virtue Rewarded* (1740). The sentimental novels of the 1760s and 1770s exhibit the close connections between virtue and sensibility, in repeatedly tearful scenes; a character's feeling for the beauties of nature and for the griefs of others is taken as a sign of a pure heart. An excessively sentimental example is Henry Mackenzie's *The Man of Feeling* (1771), but Oliver Goldsmith's, *The Vicar of Wakefield* (1766) and Laurence Sterne's, *A Sentimental Journey* (1768) are more ironic. In Europe, the most important sentimental novels were J.-J. Rousseau's *La Nouvelle Héloïse* (1761) and J. W. von Goethe's *The Sorrows of Young Werther* (1774;). The fashion lingered on in the early Gothic novels of Ann Radcliffe in the 1790s. For a fuller account, consult R. F. Brissenden, *Virtue in Distress* (1974).

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. The genre began with Catharine Sedgwick's *New-England Tale* (1822) and remained a dominant fictional type until after 1870. It derives in part from the eighteenth-century "sentimental novel" or "novel of sensibility," of which Henry Mackenzie's *The Man of Feeling* (1771), Oliver Goldsmith's, *The Vicar of Wakefield* (1766), and one of the earliest American novels, *The Power of Sympathy* (1789), written by William Hill Brown but ascribed circa 1860 to Sarah Wentworth Morton (*Feminist Companion to Literature in English* 766), are examples. In their reliance on the inherent goodness of human nature and the power of feelings as a guide to right conduct, these novels were in part a reaction against Calvinistic doctrines that viewed humanity as inherently depraved.

The characteristics of a sentimental novel may include the following

1. The plot focuses on a heroine who embodies one of two types of exemplar: the angel and the practical woman (Reynolds) who sometimes exists in the same work. Baym says that this heroine is contrasted with the passive woman (incompetent, cowardly, ignorant; often the heroine's mother is this type) and the "belle," who suffers from a defective education.
2. The heroine struggles for self-mastery, learning the pain of conquering her own passions (Tompkins, *Sensational Designs*, 172)
3. The heroine learns to balance society's demands for self-denial with her own desire for autonomy, a struggle often addressed in terms of religion.
4. She suffers at the hands of abusers of power before establishing a network of surrogate kin.
5. The plots "repeatedly identify immersion in feeling as one of the great temptations and dangers for a developing woman. They show that feeling must be controlled..." (Baym 25). Frances Cogan notes that the heroines thus undergo a full education within which to realize feminine obligations (*The All-American Girl*).
6. The tales generally end with marriage, usually one of two possible kinds:
  1. Reforming the bad or "wild" male, as in Augusta Evans's *St. Elmo* (1867)
  2. Marrying the solid male who already meets her qualifications.  
Examples: Maria Cummins, *The Lamplighter* (1854)  
Susan Warner, *The Wide, Wide World* (1850)
7. The novels may use a "language of tears" that evokes sympathy from the readers.
8. Richard Brodhead (*Cultures of Letters*) sees class as an important issue, as the ideal family or heroine is poised between a lower-class family exemplifying poverty and domestic disorganization and upper-class characters exemplifying an idle, frivolous existence

### 1.3.4 Historical Novel

Historical fiction is a literary genre where the story takes place in the past. Historical novels capture the details of the time period as accurately as possible for authenticity, including social norms, manners, customs, and traditions. Many novels in this genre tell fictional stories that involve actual historical figures or historical events.

Historical fiction as we know it in contemporary Western literature dates back to the early 19th century. Sir Walter Scott, Honoré de Balzac, James Fenimore Cooper, and Leo Tolstoy were among the first novelists to explore the historical setting as its own concept for a book.

By the early 20th century, the genre was thriving in the United States with a focus on war stories, like Kenneth Roberts' *Arundel* about the American Revolution or William Faulkner's *Absalom, Absalom* about the American Civil War.

## 5 Common Elements of Historical Fiction

1. **Setting:** The setting is the most important part of a historical fiction novel. It should take place during an authentic period in history and be set in a real historical place. For example, New York City during the Great Depression or Paris, France during World War II.
2. **Plot:** The plot in a historical fiction novel is a combination of real events and fictional events. You can invent characters, cities, and events, but they still must make sense to the time period. For example, a novel set in London, England in 1666 would benefit from incorporating the Great Fire of London, a major turning point in the city's history.
3. **Characters:** The characters can be real, fictional, or both, but they should all look, speak, and act in ways that accurately reflect the era. For example, if you are writing a book about Mary Tudor, it shouldn't disregard or reinvent her family history as the daughter of Henry VIII and sister to Elizabeth I, who both played an important role in Mary's reign.
4. **Dialogue:** The dialogue must be authentic to the time period and should reflect the status of the characters who are speaking. For example, British soldiers in the Revolutionary War wouldn't use Western slang of today.
5. **Conflict:** The problems the characters encounter should be conflicts people of that era would encounter. For example, your book might describe the hesitation and fear German soldier feels as he is to the Eastern Front, where he knows he is likely to die.

6. Historical fiction as we know it in contemporary Western literature dates back to the early 19th century. Sir Walter Scott, Honoré de Balzac, James Fenimore Cooper, and Leo Tolstoy were among the first novelists to explore the historical setting as its own concept for a book.

A powerful cultural touchstone of modern American literature, ***The Color Purple* by Alice Walker** depicts the lives of African American women in early twentieth-century rural Georgia. Separated as girls, sisters Celie and Nettie sustain their loyalty to and hope in each other across time, distance and silence. Through a series of letters spanning twenty years, first from Celie to God, then the sisters to each other despite the unknown, the novel draws readers into its rich and memorable portrayals of Celie, Nettie, Shug Avery and Sofia and their experience. *The Color Purple* broke the silence around domestic and sexual abuse, narrating the lives of women through their pain and struggle, companionship and growth, resilience and bravery. Deeply compassionate and beautifully imagined, Alice Walker's epic carries readers on a spirit-affirming journey towards redemption and love.

***War and Peace* by Leo Tolstoy** broadly focuses on Napoleon's invasion of Russia in 1812 and follows three of the most well-known characters in literature: Pierre Bezukhov, the illegitimate son of a count who is fighting for his inheritance and yearning for spiritual fulfilment; Prince Andrei Bolkonsky, who leaves his family behind to fight in the war against Napoleon; and Natasha Rostov, the beautiful young daughter of a nobleman who intrigues both men.

As Napoleon's army invades, Tolstoy brilliantly follows characters from diverse backgrounds--peasants and nobility, civilians and soldiers--as they struggle with the problems unique to their era, their history, and their culture. And as the novel progresses, these characters transcend their specificity, becoming some of the most moving--and human--figures in world literature.

### ***A Tale of Two Cities* by Charles Dickens**

It was the time of the French Revolution -- a time of great change and great danger. It was a time when injustice was met by a lust for vengeance, and rarely was a distinction made between the innocent and the guilty. Against this tumultuous historical backdrop, Dickens' great story of unsurpassed adventure and courage unfolds.

Unjustly imprisoned for 18 years in the Bastille, Dr. Alexandre Manette is reunited with his daughter, Lucie, and safely transported from France to England. It would seem that they could take up the threads of their lives in peace. As fate would have it

though, the pair are summoned to the Old Bailey to testify against a young Frenchman -- Charles Darnay -- falsely accused of treason. Strangely enough, Darnay bears an uncanny resemblance to another man in the courtroom, the dissolute lawyer's clerk Sydney Carton. It is a coincidence that saves Darnay from certain doom more than once. Brilliantly plotted, the novel is rich in drama, romance, and heroics that culminate in a daring prison escape in the shadow of the guillotine.

### 1.3.5 Gothic Novel

A story of terror and suspense, usually set in a gloomy old castle or monastery (hence 'Gothic', a term applied to medieval architecture and thus associated in the 18th century with superstition). Following the appearance of Horace Walpole's, *The Castle of Otranto* (1764), the Gothic novel flourished in Britain from the 1790s to the 1820s, dominated by Ann Radcliffe, whose *Mysteries of Udolpho* (1794) had many imitators. She was careful to explain away the apparently supernatural occurrences in her stories, but other writers, like M. G. Lewis in *The Monk* (1796), made free use of ghosts and demons along with scenes of cruelty and horror. The fashion for such works, ridiculed by Jane Austen in *Northanger Abbey* (1818), gave way to a vogue for historical novels, but it contributed to the new emotional climate of Romanticism. In an extended sense, many novels that do not have a medieval setting, but which share a comparably sinister, grotesque, or claustrophobic atmosphere, have been classed as Gothic: Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* (1818) is a well-known example; and there are several important American tales and novels with strong Gothic elements in this sense, from Poe to Faulkner and beyond. A popular modern variety of women's romance dealing with endangered heroines in the manner of Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre* (1847) and Daphne du Maurier's *Rebecca* (1938) is also referred to as Gothic

#### ***The Mysteries of Udolpho***

In the 1790s, novelists rediscovered what Walpole had imagined. The doyenne of Gothic novelists was Ann Radcliffe, and her most famous novel, *The Mysteries of Udolpho* (1794) took its title from the name of a fictional Italian castle where much of the action is set. Like Walpole, she created a brooding aristocratic villain, Montoni, to threaten her resourceful virgin heroine Emily with an unspeakable fate. All of Radcliffe's novels are set in foreign lands, often with lengthy descriptions of sublime scenery. *Udolpho* is set amongst the dark and looming Apennine Mountains – Radcliffe derived her settings from travel books. On the title page of most of her novels was the description that was far more common than the word 'gothic': her usual subtitle was 'A Romance'. Other Gothic novelists of the period used the same word for their tales, advertising their supernatural thrills.

### ***Frankenstein and the double***

A second wave of Gothic novels in the second and third decades of the 19th century established new conventions. Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* (1818) gave a scientific form to the supernatural formula. Charles Maturin's *Melmoth the Wanderer* (1820) featured a Byronic anti-hero who had sold his soul for a prolonged life. And James Hogg's elaborately titled *The Private Memoirs and Confessions of a Justified Sinner* (1824) is the story of a man pursued by his own double. A character's sense of encountering a double of him- or herself, also essential to *Frankenstein*, was established as a powerful new Gothic motif. Doubles crop up throughout Gothic fiction, the most famous example being the late 19th-century Gothic novella, Robert Louis Stevenson's *Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*.

This motif is one of the reasons why Sigmund Freud's concept of the uncanny (or *unheimlich*, as it is in German) is often applied to Gothic fiction. In his 1919 paper on 'The Uncanny' Freud drew his examples from the Gothic tales of E T A Hoffmann in order to account for the special feeling of disquiet – the sense of the uncanny – that they aroused. He argued that the making strange of what should be familiar is essential to this, and that it is disturbing and fascinating because it recalls us to our original infantile separation from or origin in the womb

### **The Gothic in mainstream Victorian fiction**

Meanwhile Gothic had become so influential that we can detect its elements in much mainstream Victorian fiction. Both Emily and Charlotte Brontë included intimations of the supernatural within narratives that were otherwise attentive to the realities of time, place and material constraint. In the opening episode of Emily Brontë's *Wuthering Heights*, the narrator, Lockwood, has to stay the night at Heathcliff's house because of heavy snow. He finds Cathy's diary, written as a child, and nods off while reading it. There follows a powerfully narrated nightmare in which an icy hand reaches to him through the window and the voice of Catherine Linton calls to be let in. The vision seems to prefigure what he will later discover about the history of Cathy and Heathcliff. Half in jest, Lockwood tells Heathcliff that *Wuthering Heights* is haunted; the novel, centred as it is on a house, seems to exploit in a new way the Gothic idea that entering an old building means entering the stories of those who have lived in it before.

Two of Charlotte Brontë's novels, *Jane Eyre* and *Villette*, feature old buildings that appear to be haunted. As in the Gothic fiction of Ann Radcliffe, the apparition seen by Jane Eyre in Thornfield Hall, where she is a governess, and the ghostly nun glimpsed by Lucy Snowe in the attic of the old Pensionnat where she teaches, have rational explanations. But Charlotte Brontë likes



to raise the fears of her protagonists as to the presence of the supernatural, as if they were later day Gothic heroines. Gothic still provides the vocabulary of apprehensiveness. Similarly, Wilkie Collins may have introduced into fiction, as Henry James said, 'those most mysterious of mysteries, the mysteries which are at our own doors', but he liked his reminders of traditional Gothic plots. In *The Woman in White*, all events turn out to be humanly contrived, yet the sudden appearance to the night-time walker of the figure of 'a solitary Woman, dressed from head to foot in white garments' haunts the reader as it does the narrator, Walter Hartright. *The Moonstone* is a detective story with a scientific explanation, but we never forget the legend that surrounds the diamond of the title, and the curse on those who steal it – a curse that seems to come true. The final triumph of Gothic is to become, as in these examples, a vital thread within novels that otherwise take pains to convince us of what is probable and rational.

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## 1.4 LET'S SUM UP

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In this unit, we have tried to understand five types of novels; Gothic, Bildungsroman, Picaresque, Sentimental, and Historical.

Bildungsroman novel traces the growth of the protagonist from youth to adulthood, with a focus on moral and psychological development. Picaresque novel enlists adventures of the semi criminal central figure in episodic structure. Sentimental novel, an 18th century literary genre is marked by its sentiment, Sentimentalism, and sensibility, to achieve the emotional effect. Historical fiction captures the details of the particular time period with the focus on accuracy and authenticity, including social, cultural, and other such aspects surrounding the lives of characters. A Gothic story is set within the carefully created atmosphere of horror and suspense. The development of these genres was according to need and temper of the age.

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## 1.5 QUESTIONS

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Explain in detail, following terms.

- i. Bildungsroman
- ii. Picaresque
- iii. Sentimental Novel
- iv. Historical Novel
- v. Gothic Novel

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## 1.6 REFERENCES

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<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bildungsroman>

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Picaresque\\_novel](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Picaresque_novel)

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sentimental\\_novel](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sentimental_novel)

<https://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/oi/authority.20110803100455492>

<https://public.wsu.edu/~campbelld/amlit/domestic.htm>

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Historical\\_fiction](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Historical_fiction)

<https://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/oi/authority.20110803095901381>



# Unit-2

## LAST FIVE LITERARY TERMS PART II

### Unit Structure:

- 2.0. Objectives
- 2.1. Epistolary Novel
- 2.2. Sociological Novel
- 2.3. Realistic Novel
- 2.4. Satirical Novel
- 2.5. Romantic Novel
- 2.6. Let's Sum Up
- 2.7. Questions
- 2.8. References

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### 2.0 OBJECTIVES

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In this unit, the students are going to learn the concepts of five different types of novels which will enable them to critically understand and interpret the prescribed novels for their study.

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### 2.1 EPISTOLARY NOVEL

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The epistolary novel is a specific literary genre that was particularly loved by European authors during the Eighteenth century. The genre first appeared in England and France and, later, in Germany. In fact, the epistolary novel is a millennium old if we consider that one of the first examples is *Heroines* by Ovid who reproduced the fictional correspondence between two lovers. Except for the three letters produced by men, all the women write to absent husbands and lovers, who apparently have other things to do. During the Middle-Ages and the Modern Age several real epistolary exchanges (Saint Catherine from Siena, Erasmus, Cromwell and Madamede Sévigné) were published and read by a large audience. But it's especially the rediscovery of Ovid's work during the Renaissance that saw an increase in the number of readers of those letters; and this has put their authenticity in question. However, the first epistolary French novel, *Astrée* by Honoré d'Urfé was published at the beginning of the seventeenth century (between 1607 and 1627). But the epistolary novel became very popular only in the second half of the seventeenth century, after the publication of *Lettres portugaises* (1669) by Guilleragues (1669). The novel is focused on Marianne's suffering: the girl, who

is abandoned by a young and charming French officer, writes a series of letters in which she expresses her grief after her lover's escape. The technique is not innovative because it is inspired by Saint Augustine's *Confessions*. However, Marianne describes her interior struggle as being characterized by flux and reflux between reminiscences and dreams, judgements and emotions, questions and answers, decision and irresolution, regret and desperation (Jost, 1996: 412). And yet, *Lettres portugaises* represents the first example of an epistolary novel with one voice centered on feelings and it inaugurates a long tradition according to the Portuguese model. Among different writers using the epistolary technique, Laclos is the only one able to personalize the epistolary novel transforming it into a war bulletin in which characters confess to each other their battle plans and strategic lies.

Thus, the fictional epistolary novel is one in which the author conveys the story through documents. In the most traditional understanding, epistolary novels are series of letters. Some authors expand their novels to include newspaper clippings, diary entries, and articles. For the purposes of this memo and all others relating to this topic, we include novels which use documents other than letters, but borrow Janet Altman's clarification that the "letter's formal properties... create meaning' (4)" (qtd. in Keskinen 384). Altman also states that letters addressed to confidants of the writer are "the fundamental vehicles of epistolary narrative" (48). Letters that advance the story or plot must be included for the novel to be considered epistolary.

In conclusion, "The term Epistolary novel refers to the works of fiction that are returned in the form of letters or other document."

'Epistolary' is simply an adjective form of the noun, 'epistle' from the Latin word for letter. The epistolary novel really came into its own with the immensely popular novels of Samuel Richardson in the mid-18th century *Pamela* in 1740. Previously in the epistolary novel only major two or three characters were shown in writing the letters throughout the story. But in later stage in many epistolary novels a wide range of characters wrote letters to each other.

Characteristics includes that the genre emerged in 16th and 17th century, readers have chance to hear from characters, it explores multiple forms, it makes it feel authentic and natural, it is unique form of novel and it is having psychological aspect.

The reader comes to know the whole story of the novel only through the letters or Diaries or other documents presented by the novelist with the medium of characters. The epistolary novel can add greater realism to a story, because it mimics the actual life incidents of that particular character. It was one of the earliest

forms of novel to be developed and remained one of the most popular genres up to the 19th century. In its modern form it can be any series of documents including letter, telegrams, Diaries, emails, Newspaper, clippings and other. Following are some examples- *Pamela*- Samuel Richardson, *The Diary of a Young Girl*- Anne Frank, *The Color Purple*- Alice Walker, *The White Tiger* - Aravind Adiga.

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## 2.2 SOCIOLOGICAL NOVEL

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“Social novel is a work of fiction in which a prevailing social problem is dramatized through its effect on the characters of a novel.” The Social novel is also known as the social problem novel. Mostly social novels are based on social issues. These novels are realistic in manners. They try to cover all important social issues. Social novelist possessed with the depiction of social problems. Their work exposed the social injustice which affected the workers and poor class people. Social novels deal with the relations between employers and workers.

Its narrative adopted the view of the miserable life and exploitation of poor class. Sometimes they depicted poverty, the unhealthy living conditions, and exploitation of workers by money lenders, the corruption of the legal system etc. They tried to touch most of the political and social issues of the society. One can easily find out the keen observer and very minute detailing of the life of middle class and lower-class people. Following are some of the examples of social novel: *Hard times*, *Oliver Twist* - Charles Dickens, *Amelia*- Henry Fielding, *War and Peace* - Leo Tolstoy, *Jane Eyre* - Charlotte Bronte etc.

The term ‘social novel’ was used by Louis Cazamian in *Le Roman social en Angleterre* ([1903] 1973) to identify a body of fiction written on urban and industrial issues, and published between 1830 and 1850. This essay shares his focus, although the definition is to some extent an arbitrary one. As Robert Colby has demonstrated in *Fiction with a Purpose* (1967), the English novel from the 1840s to the 1860s was characteristically concerned with social and moral issues. Further, the term ‘social’ could be applied to many later novels, through to such works as Robert Tressell’s *The Ragged Trousered Philanthropists* (1918) in the twentieth century.

Cazamian’s definition is, however, useful. It not only brings together a group of works with a shared concern but different emphases, including ‘the condition of England’, ‘the industrial’ and ‘the social problem’ novel, it also identifies the way in which they approached their subject. The ‘social novel’ as Cazamian explored it grew out of a profound realignment of public consciousness,

brought about by the urban and industrial changes at the beginning of the nineteenth century. The genre lost its impetus as this concern merged into an acceptance of sociological forces which denied the individual capacity for moral action. For a matter of some thirty years the novel became an imaginative arena in which human issues could be argued. By the time George Gissing and Arthur Morrison wrote, characters in 'social' fiction had become helpless victims in the web of social evolution. The novel had lost its role as an area of significant debate. Further, the growing concern with 'realism' from the 1860s paradoxically limited the novel's ability to explore social issues, for the focus on accuracy of description, the emphasis on 'objective truth', emptied the subject of its symbolic and metonymic significance.

Since Cazamian wrote his study, different approaches to the subject have evolved. It is therefore useful to preface a brief account of the genre itself with some notice of the ways in which the subject has been analyzed since 1903. For Cazamian, the 'social novel' was a historical fact, a group of fictional works growing from and influencing the Victorian period. In form, it combined the arts of reportage and literature, and was affected by biographical and historical factors. This approach is well illustrated in Kathleen Tillotson's *Novels of the Eighteen-Forties* (1954).

By the 1950s current criticism was being challenged by Leavis's focus on reader response to the 'life-enhancing' values of literature (his study of the novel, *The Great Tradition*, had appeared in 1948) and from the insights of Marxism. Georg Lukács's *The Historical Novel* was written as early as 1936–7, but it was published in England only in 1962. Marxist influence on British and American novel criticism has been late, indirect and generalized. Nevertheless, Arnold Kettle's *Introduction to the English Novel* (1951–3) and Raymond Williams's *Culture and Society 1780–1950* (1958) brought socialist perspectives to bear on the subject as have, more recently, such works as David Craig's *The Real Foundations: Literature and Social Change* (1974) and Igor Webb's *From Custom to Capital: The English Novel and the Industrial Revolution* (1981). Although not specifically on the 'social novel', Terry Eagleton's Marxist study of the Brontës, *Myths of Power* (1975), has also been influential. It is now difficult to consider the novel without an awareness of class perspectives.

This includes considering the audience for which the fiction was written. The Victorian novel as conventionally identified was in fact read by a small minority of the Victorian public: as Gertrude Himmelfarb has noted (1984, p. 435), the 'social novels' most Victorians read were not by George Eliot or even by Dickens, but by an author few academic critics have noticed, such as G. W. M. Reynolds. Works read by the Victorian masses for entertainment

such as Reynolds's *The Mysteries of London* (1845–8), or those read by Radical working-class readers as sampled in Y. V. Kovalev's *An Anthology of Chartist Literature* (1956), still await extended study. As the implied reader has been given greater consideration in interpreting the text, the focus has shifted from the fiction as documentary evidence to examination of the discourse of the 'social novel' itself. Particular attention has been paid to the 'the poor', which has become recognized as a symbol rather than an objective reality.

Sheila Smith's, *The Other Nation: The Poor in English Novels of the 1840s and 1850s* (1980) approached the issue through a multidisciplinary approach, exploring the transformations of 'reality' that occur between fiction and the visual arts, and parliamentary reports and journalism. Gertrude Himmelfarb in her massively researched study *The Idea of Poverty* (1984) took a more directly historical approach.

Starting her investigation with the political economy of Adam Smith and Malthus, she examined the different modes in which the poor were portrayed. These include the various images in Dickens, the 'Gothic Poor' of G. W. M. Reynolds, Mayhew's journalism, and the 'Industrial Poor'. Thus, a genre which Cazamian saw as a reflection of the times, now focuses a debate concerning the way the novel shapes and refashions history. This approach is implicit in Kate Flint's anthology of source materials for use in studying the fiction, *The Victorian Novelist: Social Problems and Social Change* (1987).

Finally, contemporary theory has considered the way the rhetoric of discourse through which the novel is told themselves have social significance. Although he died in Russia in 1975, the impact of M.M. Bakhtin in the West has come largely in the 1980s. His work *The Dialogic Imagination* (trans. 1981) contains little specific criticism of the Victorian social novel, but its ideas have influenced work in the field. (From Coyle et al. *Encyclopedia of Literature and Criticism*. Cardiff: University of Wales)

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## 2.3 REALISTIC NOVEL

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A type of novel that places a strong emphasis on the truthful representation of the actual in fiction. Generally, the realist is a believer in pragmatism, and the truth he seeks to find and express is a relativistic truth, associated with discernible consequences and verifiable by experience. A realist is a believer in democracy, and the materials he elects to describe are the common, the average, the everyday. --Holman's *Handbook to Literature*.

A type of novel characterized as the fictional attempt to give the effect of realism by representing complex characters with mixed motives who are rooted in a social class, operate in a highly developed social structure, interact with many other characters, and undergo plausible and everyday modes of experience. --Abrams' Glossary of Literary Term.

One of the difficulties of any discussion about realism is the lack of any really effective vocabulary with which to discuss the topic. Most discussions turn on the problems of the production of discourse which will fully adequate the real. This notion of adequacy is accepted both by the realists and by the anti-realists<sup>1</sup>. The notion of the real is a notion, which is tied to a particular type of literary production - the nineteenth century realist novel. The dominance of this novel form is such that people still tend to confuse the general question of realism with the particular forms of the nineteenth century realist novel.

Realism is an issue not only for literature: it is a major political, philosophical and practical issue and must be handled and explained as such - as a matter of general human interest<sup>2</sup>. Realistic fiction is totally different from "romantic fiction". Realism is to present an accurate picture of life as it is. The realist is selective in his material.

He prefers as protagonist an ordinary citizen, engaged in the real estate business. The technical term 'realistic novel' is usually applied to works, which are realistic both in subject and manner. The centenary of 'realism' as an English critical term occurred but was not celebrated in 1956. Its history has been so vast, so complicated and so bitter that any celebration would in fact have turned into a brawl. Yet realism is not object to be identified or appropriated. It is a way of describing certain methods and attitudes and the descriptions, quite naturally, have varied in the ordinary exchange and development of experience.

There has been a simple technical use of 'realism' to describe the precision and vividness of a rendering in art of some observed detail. The most ordinary definition was in terms of an ordinary, traditionally heroic, romantic or legendary subjects.

In the period since the Renaissance, the advocacy and support of this 'ordinary, everyday contemporary reality have been normally associated with the rising middle class, the bourgeoisie. Such material was called 'realistic' and the connections are clear. A common adjective used with 'realism' was 'startling' and 'within the main stream of ordinary, contemporary, everyday reality' a particular current of attention to the unpleasant, the exposed, the sordid could be distinguished.'



Realism thus appeared as in part a revolt against the ordinary bourgeois view of the world; the realists were making a further selection of ordinary material, which the majority of bourgeois artists preferred to ignore.

Engels defined 'realism' as 'typical characters in typical situations', which would pass in a quite ordinary sense, but which in this case has behind it the body of 'Marxist thinking.' The major tradition of European fiction in the nineteenth century, is commonly described as a tradition of 'realism', and it is equally assumed that, in the West at any rate, this particular tradition has ended.

According to Wallace Stevens 'Realism is a corruption of reality' Henry James claimed, 'the novel remains still under the right persuasion, the most independent, most elastic, most prodigious of literary forms'<sup>5</sup> then the word 'realism' must surely be the most independent, most elastic, most prodigious of critical terms.

One can sympathize with George J. Becker's mild suggestion that 'it would add to ease of discourse in the future if what ever happens next would be given a new name and not be tagged by some variant or permutation of the word "realism". Also, with the practicing critic who reminds us that 'realism is a notoriously treacherous concept' perhaps with some impatience - 'I do not want to get bogged down in definitions of the word 'realism'.<sup>8</sup> Roland Stromberg authorizes this skepticism of theory when he says that 'realism and naturalism must be defined by their historical content. The terms were shorthand for certain cultural phenomena of the times and can be grasped only through a study of this phenomena'. Rene Wellek deliberately avoids what he sees as 'the whole fundamental epistemological problem... of the relation of art to reality.

Realism is a critical term only by adoption from philosophy: it comes weakened from loss of blood in earlier battles and one needs atleast to be able to distinguish the opposing sides before one can decide which advanced.

It was in the eighteenth century with Thomas Reid's 'commonsense school' that realism assumed in philosophy the sharply different sense which was to have such a fatal attraction for writers, critics and theorist in literature.

With its loyalties divided between idealism and materialism it may seem that realism is forgotten its duty to reality itself. Philip Rahv observes that it is no longer possible that to use realistic methods 'without taking reality for granted' - and this is precisely what artists cannot now do: 'it is reality itself which they bring into question.'

It is impossible to avoid the charge of equivocation in using the noun 'reality' or the adjective 'real' at all. Vladimir Nabokov exercises the same question with 'reality' as Ortega does with 'realism': he says in his postscript to *Lolita* that it is one of the few words which can mean nothing without quotes.' 'As to what reality is, I take no great interest,' said the new realist E. B. Holt.<sup>13</sup>

Reality is not only located in mind but is at the mercy of the moods and caprices of that mind, dilates and contracts with the degree of activity of the consciousness. Reality is 'for the time being'. Here is no path for the philosopher or theorist to follow. Reality runs before the mind.

Reality is like a float that rides all efforts of the irritated mind to fame its definition: or a fish, that swallows up all other forms of life and then drinks off the sea in which it swims. A more sophisticated theory sees language not simply as an image of reality but as an instrument in terms of which reality is realized made real; carrying within its own declarative structure the material of truth, so that there can be no appeal made outside the inclusive conventions of this system to the dumb materiality of the world of things. Truth and falsehood become properties of language alone, to which 'reality' - that impossible hypothesis- and both indifferent and irrelevant.

It is in the spirit of this realism that literature seeks to deliver itself up to the real word, to open its gates submissively to the horses of the instruction; to ballast its giddy imagination with the weight of truth and submit its forms, conventions and consecrated attitudes to purifying ravishment of fact. This realism is the 'appeal open for criticism to nature', which Johnson allows in his 'Preface to Shakespeare.'

In philosophy, realism means an interpretation of life as opposed to idealism. It involves the beliefs that time, space and their attributes are real (Transcendental realism), that phenomena exist apart from our consciousness or conception (Empirical Realism), and that our perception of them is governed by direct intuitive cognition, not by the mediate process of representative ideas. It has figured in philosophy from the beginning, e.g., in Socrates, Plato and Aristotle. During the middle ages the term 'realism' was used in scholastic philosophy to denote the teaching of the 'reality' of the universal ideas.

The term 'realism' as used in literature also originated in an anti-idealistic reaction, as in the anti-romanticism of Flaubert's *Madam Bovary*. Hence realistic literature has tended to concentrate on every day's life and roles of sex, money etc. rather than ideals. Though occasionally appearing in the visual arts (e.g., in Van

Gogh's early works) realism has been most successful in the novel, its exponents ranging from Tolstoy, Hardy and Dreiser to Sholokhov and Solzhenitsyn. In a would-be scientific form popularized by Zola, it is known as naturalism.

In conclusion, Realistic novels were created specifically about the common man and struggles of the lower class. Earlier in the romantic period the most popular form of the Literature was poetry and realistic novel changed that tendency. Realistic novel used journalistic techniques in order to make the literature closer to real life by using facts and general depiction of the details of human life. The notable thing is that the purpose of the realistic novel is to just report the facts and not commenting or judging on the scene or characters.

With the development and industrialization of Victorian Era as well as innovations in the printing, many newspapers, journals, periodicals and magazines were easily accessible to all the common people. People began to take interest in reading novel which was the realistic depiction of their own life. Realistic novel accurately interprets and represent the reality. Different narrative techniques like sometimes by hiding some truths from the reader, narrator deliberately created the suspense. Instead of accepting the imagination and dreamy ideas, realistic novels adapted realism. They used Different techniques of characterization to make their plots complex. Following are some examples: *Jane Eyre* by Charlotte Bronte, *The God of Small Things* by Arundhati Roy and *Jude the obscure* by Thomas Hardy.

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## 2.4 SATIRICAL NOVEL

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Satire is loosely defined as art that ridicules a specific topic in order to provoke readers into changing their opinion of it. By attacking what they see as human folly, satirists usually imply their own opinions on how the thing being attacked can be improved.

Perhaps the most famous work of British satire is Jonathan Swift's *Gulliver's Travels* (1726), where the inhabitants of the different lands Gulliver visits embody what Swift saw as the prominent vices and corruptions of his time.

Like *Gulliver's Travels*, George Orwell's *Animal Farm* is a satirical novel in which Orwell, like Swift, attacks what he saw as some of the prominent follies of his time. Broadly speaking, *Animal Farm* satirizes politicians, specifically their rhetoric, ability to manipulate. (from Cliffs Notes)

"Satirical novel is a literary genre in which follies abuses and shortcomings are depicted ridiculously in order to criticize individuals, corporations, government or society."

It is loosely defined as that ridiculous specific topic in order to provoke the readers into changing their opinion of it. By attacking what they see as human Folly that it is usually imply their own opinions on how the thing being attacked can be improved. there are two major types of satirical novel

**Horatioan Satire** - tolerant stopped in the language with voice and self-effacing kind of genre for example *Gulliver's Travels* by Jonathan Swift

**Juvenalian satire** - it is angry in mood Harsh in language caustic recent full and personal. For example, *Animal Farm* of George Orwell. In this type of novel, they create absurdities in the plot via conversations in the characters and they compare the readers to feel the purpose of their absurdity. They present the things exaggeratedly in order to achieve absurd length. They deliberately create the humor by arranging funny scenes and dialogues. They use parody to attack on the society by mocking imitations. Sometimes they use irony to convey the opposite meaning of what is expected. Following are some examples: *Gulliver's Travels* by Jonathan Swift, *Animal Farm* by George Orwell.

Satire is the mind/wits; irony is the reasoning/rhetorical tool; humor is the substance. Satire is a genre of literature, and sometimes graphic and performing arts, in which vices, follies, abuses, and shortcomings are held up to ridicule, ideally with the intent of shaming individuals, and society itself, into improvement. Although satire is usually meant to be funny, its greater purpose is often constructive social criticism, using wit as a weapon and as a tool to draw attention to both particular and wider issues in society. A common feature of satire is strong irony and sarcasm - "in satire, irony is militant" - but parody, burlesque, exaggeration, juxtaposition, comparison, analogy, and double entendre are all frequently used in satirical speech and writing. This "militant" irony or sarcasm often professes to approve of (or at least accept as natural) the very things thesatirist wishes to attack. Satire is nowadays found in many artistic forms of expression, including literature, plays, commentary, television shows, and media such as lyrics.

Satire is a technique employed by writers to expose and criticize foolishness and corruption of an individual or a society by using humor, irony, exaggeration or ridicule. It intends to improve the humanity by criticizing its follies and foibles. A writer in a satire uses fictional character, which stands for real people to expose and

condemn their corruption. A writer may point a satire toward a person, a country or even the entire world. Usually, a satire is a comical piece of writing which makes fun of an individual or a society to expose its stupidity and shortcomings. In addition, he expects that whosoever he criticizes improves his character by overcoming his weaknesses.

Satire and irony are interlinked. Irony is the difference between what is said or done and what is actually meant. Therefore, writers frequently employ satire to point at the dishonesty and silliness of individuals and society and criticize them by ridiculing them. Most political cartoons which we witness every day in newspapers and magazines are examples of satire. These cartoons criticize some recent actions of political figures in a comical way. Some shows on television are examples of satire like “The Daily Show”, “The Colbert Report”, and “The Larry Sanders Show”. These shows claim to target what they think are stupid political and social viewpoints. There are numerous examples of satire in Mark Twain’s *Huckleberry Finn*. He uses satire as a tool to share his ideas and opinion on slavery, human nature and many other issues that afflicted American society at that time. Alexander Pope’s, *The Rape of the Lock* is an example of poetic satire in which he has satirized the upper middle class of eighteenth-century England. It exposes the vanity of young fashionable ladies and gentlemen and frivolity of their actions. For example, Pope says about Belinda after losing her lock of hair:

“Whether the nymph shall break Diana’s law,  
Or some frail china jar receive a flaw,  
Or stain her honor, or her new brocade”

The line mocks at the values of the fashionable class of that age. The trivial things were thought of equal to significant things. For Belinda, loss of her virtue becomes equal to a China jar being cracked. Jonathan Swift’s *Gulliver Travels* is one the finest satirical works in English Literature. Swift relentlessly satirizes politics, religion, and Western Culture.

The role of satire is to ridicule or criticize those vices in the society, which the writer considers a threat to the civilization. The writer considers it his obligation to expose these vices for the betterment of humanity. Therefore, the function of satire is not to make others laugh at persons or ideas they make fun of. It intends at warning public against and changing their opinions about the prevailing corruption in the society. Outstanding among the classical satirists was the Greek dramatist Aristophanes, whose play *The Clouds* (423 BC) satirizes Socrates as the embodiment of atheism and sophistry, while *The Wasps* (422) satirizes the Athenian court system. The satiric styles of two Roman poets,

Horace and Juvenal, became models for writers of later ages. The satire of Horace is mild, gently amused, yet sophisticated, whereas that of Juvenal is vitriolic and replete with moral indignation. Shakespeare later wrote Horatian satire and Jonathan Swift wrote Juvenalian satire.

From the beast fables, fabliaux, and Chaucerian caricatures to the extended treatments of John Skelton, Shakespeare, Ben Jonson, Erasmus, and Cervantes, the satirical tradition flourished throughout the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, culminating in the golden age of satire in the late 17<sup>th</sup> and early 18<sup>th</sup> centuries. The familiar names of Swift, Samuel Butler, John Dryden, Alexander Pope, Richard Steele, Henry Fielding, and William Hogarth, in England, and of Nicolas Boileau-Despréaux, La Fontaine, Molière, and Voltaire, in France, suggest not only the nature of the controversies that provided a target for the satirist's darts in both nations, but also the rediscovery and consequent adaptation of the classical models to individual talents.

In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, satire gave way to a gentler form of criticism. Manners and morals were still ridiculed but usually in the framework of a longer work, such as a novel. However, satire can be found in the poems of Lord Byron, in the librettos of William S. Gilbert, in the plays of Oscar Wilde and G. B. Shaw, and in the fiction of W. M. Thackeray, Charles Dickens, Samuel Butler, and many others. American satirists of the period include Washington Irving, James Russell Lowell, Oliver Wendell Holmes, and Mark Twain.

Although 20<sup>th</sup>-century satire continues to register Horatian or Juvenalian reactions to the enormities of an age dominated by fear of the atom bomb and plagued by pollution, racism, drugs, planned obsolescence, and the abuse of power, critics have discerned some shifts in its source. In some instances, the satirist is the audience rather than the artist. The so-called put-on, whether a play (Samuel Beckett's *Breath*, in which breathing is heard on a blacked-out stage), a joke (Lenny Bruce's nightclub routines), or an artifact (John Chamberlain's smashed-up cars), seeks to confuse its audience by presenting the fraudulent as a true work of art, thus rendering the whole concept of "art" questionable. More conventional contemporary satirists of note are Sinclair Lewis, James Thurber, Aldous Huxley, Evelyn Waugh, W. H. Auden, Philip Roth, and Joseph Heller. George Orwell, *Candide* by Voltire others, and insatiable lust for power.

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## 2.5 ROMANTIC NOVEL

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“Romantic novel or romance novel is a genre of literature which depicts the feelings and behavior of two people who are in loving and sexual relationship with each other.”

The first romantic novel, *The Black moth* was written by George Heyer published in 1751. The main theme of the romantic novel is human feeling. Mostly these novelists lived as emotional being. They tried to depict natural human emotions of characters. The main focus of emotions and sensual relations can easily achieve the highest peak of feelings of reader. They created many characters but focused on two major relations. Their plots are actually structured according to the emotions.

Characteristics includes Primary focus on the relationship and romantic love, depiction of natural human emotions, complex plot and characters, a romance novel can be set in any time period and in any location, new style of historical romance, heroines were independent and strong-willed and etc.

It can be set in any time period and in any location. Their Heroine has been showing as an independent and strong-willed woman. These novels are the best platform of feminism. They tried to depict women equally are stronger than male characters. Mostly they interested in showing women's feelings. Following are some examples of romantic novel: *Pride and Prejudice* by Jane Austen, *Wuthering Heights* by Emily Bronte, *Jane Eyre* by Charlotte Bronte etc.

Thus, a romance novel is a work of extended prose fiction with a theme of love. A romance novel focuses on the development of a romantic relationship between two people, and contains an emotional through line with a build toward an optimistic conclusion.

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## 2.6 LET'S SUM UP

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This unit, we have tried to understand five types of novels; Epistolary, Sociological, Realistic, Satirical, and Romantic. Epistolary novel is one in which the author conveys the story through a series of letters, creating authentic and natural feel in the text. Also known as the social problem novel, a Social novel is a work of fiction that is based on social issues and in which a prevailing social problem is dramatized through its effect on the characters of a novel. Realistic fiction is one that emphasizes on the truthful representation of the real life of ordinary people, and their struggles in life. A Satirical genre ridicules human shortcoming in order to criticize the object of the satire. A Romantic novel

focuses on the relationship between lovers and the romantic love that builds towards the optimistic conclusion.

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## 2.7 QUESTIONS

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Explain in detail, following terms.

- i. Epistolary Novel
- ii. Socialistic Novel
- iii. Realistic Novel
- iv. Satirical Novel
- v. Romantic Novel

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## 2.8 REFERENCES

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# Unit-3

## STUDY OF TOBIAS SMOLLETT'S HUMPHREY CLINKER- PART –I,

### Unit Structure:

- 3.0 Objective
- 3.1 Introduction to the Form of Epistolary Novel
- 3.2 Introduction to the Form of Picaresque Novel
- 3.3 Tobias George Smollett : A Short Biographical Sketch
- 3.4 The Political Background
- 3.5 The Social Milieu
- 3.6 Literary Ethos of the Era: The Rise of the Novel
- 3.7 The Mid –Eighteenth Century Novel – ‘The New Species’
- 3.8 Let's Sum Up
- 3.9 Questions
- 3.10 References

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### 3.0 OBJECTIVES

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The unit attempts to look at the various factors responsible for a creative writer. The students would understand here an author and appreciate his literary feasts in a given period of time. A writer is the product of his time and so it becomes important to have a prior knowledge of the age in which he or she was born. Therefore, this unit will focus on the social, political and literary ethos of the times in which the prescribed author was born along with the dominant literary forms of the era so that a better understanding can be fostered.

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### 3.1 INTRODUCTION TO THE FORM OF EPISTOLARY NOVEL

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The 18<sup>th</sup> century saw rapid expansions of the postal routes and literacy. This led to associate the age with the prolificacy of letter writing where the individual used to form to explore and describe the self and the everyday experience. As a consequence of the familiarity of the form, epistolary novel emerged as a tremendously successful genre.

**Epistolary Novel** is a form of writing where **the narrative advances through the exchange of letters between the characters**. The form was specifically suitable to the 18<sup>th</sup> century writers and readers in their pursuit of writing realistic novel. As Dr. Jonson while defining novel in 1950 in '*The Rambler*' said that it 'exhibits of life in its true state, diversified only by accidents that daily happen in the world.' Jonson's focus here was on the death of the heroic 'romance' and the preference for a newer, more realistic form which was called as the 'novel'. So, realism was the distinguishing factor of novel from the French 'romances'. Epistolary novel with its capacity to mimic the workings of life and with its capacity to lend credibility through the first-person narrative mode offered wonderful prospect for delivering realism.

Another important strategic device in the epistolary novel for creating the authenticity of the letters is the fictional editor that serves to organize and comment on the letters. All of Richardson's novels hold testimony to this fact.

Ambiguously sitting between two different worlds-the private and the public-the domestic seclusion and public self-appearance, the letters offer an enticing glimpse into the innermost thoughts and feelings of another person.

For the first time, the so called 'private letters' were published in this period just to promote and sustain literary celebrity. The 18<sup>th</sup> century figures carefully constructed themselves through these letters for particular audience keen to read this kind of works just like social media constructions today. These personal letters were connected with the ideas of sincerity and truth in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. As Addison and Steele mentioned in their popular periodical – *The Spectator*, that 'there is nothing that discovers the true temper of a person so much as his letters'.

The epistolary form was also subject to much ridicule in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, resulting in a number of savage [burlesques](#). One of the most notable examples of these was [Henry Fielding's \*Shamela\*](#) (1741). Written as a parody of Richardson's most popular novel *Pamela*, *Shamela* depicts the female narrator of the novel using her pen and dashing off her diary entries under the most dramatic and unlikely of circumstances.

The form slowly died by the late 18<sup>th</sup> century although we get to see some rare attempts even in the subsequent centuries.

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## 3.2 INTRODUCTION TO THE FORM OF PICARESQUE NOVEL

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The **picaresque** form is another suitable and most experimented form in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. The traveling in the picaresque style is equipped to offer a swiping panorama of the society that could be depicted in the fiction to render realism.

The word picaresque comes from the [Spanish](#) word 'picaresca', and then 'pícaro', meaning a "[rogue](#)" or a "rascal". The form embodies the adventures or misadventures of a 'roguish' but 'appealing hero' usually belonging to a low [social class](#). The hero lives in a corrupt society by his wit. The form typically adopts a realistic style. The form originated in Spain in 1554 and flourished for at least 200 years throughout Europe. The term picaresque was comparatively new as it was coined only in 1810 although the form was existent since the 16<sup>th</sup> century. Cervantes' [Don Quixote](#) is often included under the popular picaresque novels but it actually contains only some of the genre's elements. Charles Dicken's [Pickwick Papers](#) also contain some of this popular genre.

The picaresque style is specifically suitable for social satire as the travelling hero has the liberty to see and experience life in all spheres of society. The realistic descriptions of the low life provide the genre its popularity during a time when moral instruction was made primary in any kind of writing.

[Henry Fielding](#) in the mid-18<sup>th</sup> century, proved his mastery of this artistic genre in [Joseph Andrews](#) (1742), [The Life and Death of Jonathan Wild, the Great](#) (1743) and [The History of Tom Jones, a Foundling](#) (1749), though Fielding attributed his style to an "imitation of the manner of [Cervantes](#), author of [Don Quixote](#)".

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## 3.3 TOBIAS SMOLLETT: A SHORT BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

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Associated primarily with his picaresque novels, Tobias George Smollett (1721-1771) was one of the major literary figures of eighteenth century but he remained quite underrated among the canonical writers of his time. One attribute of this is that the critics found his earlier picaresque novels -*Roderick Random* (1748), *Peregrine Pickle* (1751), *Ferdinand Count Fathom* (1753) and *Sir Launcelot Greaves* (1760) to be too violent in terms of the content and too satirical to be dealt in a picaresque novel. But, his last novel, published few months before his death in 1771, *The Expedition of Humphrey Clinker*, quickly became one of the most successful British epistolary novels and brought the much deserving canonical status to the author.

Smollett was born in Dunbartonshire, Scotland on March 19, 1721. After graduating from Dunbarton Grammar School, he went to Glasgow University to study medicine but he did not receive any formal medical degree from Marischal College, Aberdeen, until 1750. So, he took up an apprenticeship as a surgeon in Glasgow. After a brief span of three years of his apprenticeship, he went to London. In December 1739, he cleared his final examination qualifying him to practice as a surgeon. In 1740, he took up a post as surgeon's mate aboard on the warship of H.M.S. Chichester of the British Royal Navy. This job exposed him to the grim realities in the Royal Navy and supplied him with the raw material for his vivid scenes of life at sea that he incorporated into *Roderick Random* and other novels.

In 1743, Smollett sailed to Jamaica where he met and married Anne Lassalls. Smollett came back to London in 1744 and began to write. He displayed great talent for satire and farce but failed in his tragic plays. He started to translate Lesage's *Gil Blas* from French, and in the process the young surgeon-writer was inspired to write and publish his first, strongly autobiographical, picaresque novel: *The Adventures of Roderick Random* in 1749.

Eventually writing began to take the front seat. In fact, his livelihood rested mainly on writing rather than on his medical practice. This period in his life saw Smollett writing satires on Fielding, on contemporary personal hygiene, and another picaresque: *The Adventures of Ferdinand Count Fathom* (1753)-the fierce story of a rogue finally brought back to the path of virtue.

The next seven years (1748-55) were spent on translating Cervantes's *Don Quixote* and after that he took up to write *Complete History of England*. The year 1756 was crucial as it was the most productive phase of his career. He co-founded the *Critical Review* in 1756 and it marks the beginning of Smollett's creative fecundity. An unrestrained, savage attack on Admiral Knowles in his paper in *Critical Review* landed him into prison for libel from November 1760 to February 1761.

The changing political scenario had an impact too on Smollett. In 1760, George II's grandson succeeded to the throne as George III. In 1761, the cabinet reshuffled and the Stuart Lord Bute, the king's friend and substitute father, became the secretary of state. Smollett extended his support to his fellow Scot who wanted to end the seven years long, on-going war with France. Since 1756, the war had been proving devastating in terms of bloodshed as well as in terms of loss of wealth.

He founded a weekly for this purpose: *The Briton*. But, as an immediate consequence, Smollett found himself in the middle of an

extremely fierce ideological struggle. His primary rival was John Wilkes (*The North Briton*), who finally was bound to leave the country. The pressure took a toll on Smollett's health and also on Bute's position. In June 1763, he gave up *The Briton* after he lost his only child Elizabeth at the age of fifteen. Peace was restored by this time and he could thus leave his project. He went to France and Italy with his wife but soon returned to Britain. He resided in London and Bath alternately and also kept visiting Scotland. When he was living in Italy, he had already embarked on presumably his favourite project - *The Expedition of Humphry Clinker*.

Immediately after the enthusiastic welcome by the public and the critics, Tobias George Smollett succumbed to death. Smollett had remained a devoted Tory throughout his life. He maintained a very pronounced opinion about what society should be like. He saw order and peace in the traditional system of monarchy and therefore always approved for a strong, robust 'home-grown' monarch in Britain's balanced constitution.

Charity for him was nothing less than public welfare but it was to be paid for and returned with thankfulness and loyalty by the receivers. The receivers, in Smollett's vision of the world, were the 'inferiors' in their social position. These views, of course, inform his satires and are integral parts of his fiction and his historical, as well as critical, work.

The wide exposure to the diverse fields of life has equipped Tobias Smollett with a kind of insight that led him to scatter in his writing a kind of raw humour that was not easy for the contemporaries to digest easily. His phlegmatic Scottish nature, the grossness and sting of his satires, the gusto of his caricatures lent the uniqueness to his works. The depiction of the shocking violence and brutality and the coarseness of language that Smollett incorporated into his novels set him apart from the three other major English novelists of the mid-18th century: Samuel Richardson, Henry Fielding and fellow physician Oliver Goldsmith.

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### 3.4 THE POLITICAL BACKGROUND

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The reign of George II from 1727 to 1760, was marked by temporary peace after the political and religious strife that brutalized the country. The short and bloody interlude of Cromwell's Commonwealth, the much less bloody Glorious Revolution of 1688, the Jacobite Invasion of 1715, the change in the dynasty of 1714 and Jacobite Rising of 1745 were the distressing precedence of the rule of George II.

**Sir Robert Walpole**, a **Whig** statesman, holds the record of serving exceedingly long leadership from 1721-1742 in the cabinet of Great Britain. Therefore, the period of George II was also the period of the rise of the Whigs in power. The Whigs were a political offshoot first and then a party in the parliament in the U.K. The Whigs believed in '**constitutional monarchism**' and **opposition to absolute monarchy**. The Tories were the oppositional force who believed in the **traditional and conservative** system of **monarchy**. Whigs contested the Tories between 1660 to 1850. In 1850s, the Whigs merged into the new Liberal Party. The Whig ideology played a central role in the [Glorious Revolution](#) of 1688. They were the prime enemies of the Roman Catholic Stuart kings. The Whigs came to full power in 1715 after the Hanoverian succession of George I in 1714 and remained in power till George III ascended the throne in 1760.

George III was responsible for bringing the Tories back in power. Frederick, the Prince of Wales, was the eldest but estranged son of King George II and the father to George III. He was the apparent heir to the British throne from 1727 until his sudden death at the age of 44 due to lung injury. His sudden death brought his twelve years old son George III to be the successor to the throne. He was impressionable, naïve and immature to rule the kingdom. He inherited the views of his father Frederick who did not have a good relation with his father-the king, George II. Without even understanding that the opposing views of his father were only the ways to tire and harass the old king, George III went on holding on to the opinion of his father. To rule the administration, he chose John Stuart Lord Bute as his guide. Lord Bute was a family friend and alleged lover of his mother. Lord Bute never actually was the mighty knight in shiny armour George thought he was and George himself was never fit to be the head of the Empire of Scotland and Wales. In 1760, when George III succeeded his grandfather, he wanted to slay dragons just like the patron saint of England whose name he bore. His dragons were corruption, sloth and vice. Unfortunately, he did not understand the complex relations between a parliamentary government and the accompanying ideologies. As a result, his first decade in office was a perpetual crisis of government, and in the second decade the American settlers' colonies claimed and won their independence. Analysing the regime of George III, the British journalist Walter Bagehot stated that a British monarch should leave politics to the politicians.

Having an inefficient boy as the King, his grandfather's and William Pitt's government was at the brink of collapse. They had to agree to the alignment of Bute in the government. From 1760-61, Bute achieved very quickly a very important position in the parliament. By this time, his disciple George had inherited the throne as George III. Bute had a fantastic fortune and the

leadership of the Scottish parliamentary group. Now he, politically little experienced, was the key figure in the government. But the phase did not last long. Pitt had urged to expand the on-going war with France to Spain before the treasure fleet from her colonies arrived. Bute, supported by Smollett's *Briton*, had tried to stop the war. Pitt had resigned by this time. On January 4, 1762, Spain entered the war. During the year 1756, Britain's colonial possessions were at the top and also a national debt unprecedented in history. Spain had aligned with France. Their fleet had arrived and made Spain a much more dangerous enemy to England. Peace talks were kept up, but their final success alienated England's only Continental ally Prussia.

Britain was completely isolated in Europe after the war was over in 1763 but still remained the most powerful colonial power. The American settlers already started to create nuisance. Slowly minor problems turned to be major crisis in the government. The king failed to reconcile with the warring parties. The superficially radical populist John Wilkes started an organization called *Society for the Defence of the Bill of Rights* in 1769, which resembled a political party.

In 1768, Smollett's and Bute's nemesis John Wilkes came back from his French exile to take his personal revenge as he was forced to leave the country years before for the legal trouble. He tried to bring a revolution or create a civil war like situation in England. At the same time an anonymous writer who called himself Junius and Philip Francis, an officer in the War Office, conducted a slander campaign that added to the general instability.

Later, only in 1770, when the government collapsed, the stability began in the kingdom which lasted for twelve years.

This was the political landscape Matthew Bramble, the sarcastic protagonist of Smollett's novel *The Expedition of Humphry Clinker* has been living with for a few years when he does his tour of Britain.

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### 3.5 THE SOCIAL MILIEU

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The social structure during the mid-eighteenth century was totally hierarchical. In fact, as Watson calls it, the society followed a 'squirearchy' implying the dominance of the squires-the rich and the aristocratic gentry. The local landlords were the focal figures in the political and economic life. This economic and political power gave them the liberty to monopolise all branches of the legal profession. Even to become a 'Justice of Peace' (JP), it was important to be a landowner in most part of Britain. In the area of Middlesex, the

tasks of the JPs were carried out by 'mercenary JPs' –men who were not gentlemen but lived on the fees they received in return of their services. Most of the time, these mercenary JPs were corrupt. Even to vote, a man had to own, not rent, an estate worth 40 pounds a year. The local government of any provincial region was made up of its JPs. It was almost impossible to appeal against the verdict of the JP.

The irritable protagonist of the novel-'Humphry Clinker' - Matthew Bramble was a member of his day's ruling class.

The trade was flourishing in England but most people still lived on agriculture. The popularity of investing in trade and industry was growing. Many landlords too began to invest in trade rather than in agriculture once their land parcel was enclosed.

After the seven years long war with France came to an end, Britain rose to the largest and most powerful empire ever. The importance and prestige of the trade rose subsequently. The status assigned to the trade was much inflated than was in real. Wealth began to pour in from the new colonies and it profoundly changed the social hierarchies. There was the rise of a strong, self-conscious urban middle class, the rise of the literacy, and a new literary genre that by the end of the century was virtually unanimously referred to as the 'novel'.

With the wealth pouring in, a bank system began to emerge and in the 1760s, the first canals were built. They were the greatest means of transport till the railway lines were established.

In the field of agriculture, the Green Revolution had taken place after the introduction of scientific farming. But it required literacy, capital and large strips of land. The requirements suggest that it turned out to be a top-down revolution of leaving many small farmers landless. The winners again were the big gentlemen farmers.

The investments extended to the colonies abroad and the exceedingly handsome returns concentrated in the city of London and other cities.

Britain in the second half of 18<sup>th</sup> century was a country in transition – from a pre-modern, feudalist to an early modern, capitalistic society. The transition was quick but surprisingly smooth.

Quite unlike France, no revolution took place in Britain. The reason can be attributed partly to the new religious movement like Wesley's Methodism and partly to the fact that the gentry



understood that there was money in new technologies and trade. Sir Watt's invention of the electric bulb was financed by a squire-turned fabricant and it was the Duke of Bridgewater who got the first canals built from the Worsley coal fields to Manchester.

Amidst these glorious economic developments, there was another development taking place - the crime. Crime was one of the major diseases that the society was inflicted with. The dimensions of the crime were impressive and the ineffective judicial system rather than solving the issues, created more scope for further crimes. Stealing a loaf of bread and a pint of ale was enough to be hanged. It made punishment appear like a particularly hard fate, since hardly any criminal was ever caught. The people on the gallows were mainly clumsy hungry paupers who did not run quick enough. Many judges were corrupt, and virtually no one was qualified.

From Defoe to Dickens, the novels of the time portrayed vividly the failure of the judicial system. Humphry's juristic problems in London are untypical only insofar as he has a gentleman patron to help him out.

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### **3.6 LITERARY ETHOS OF THE ERA: THE RISE OF THE NOVEL**

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The 18<sup>th</sup> Century, known as the Age of Reason, saw quick transitions in terms of social, economic, political and scientific dimensions. Although to call the 18<sup>th</sup> century as the Age of Reason would be primarily flawed, but the term offers a wonderful functional validity as reason remained an ideal passionate aspiration. Of course, the term fails to acknowledge the other undercurrents existent in the time and primacy of reason was glorified in other historical period also, but, it efficiently captures the goal of every aspect of life in the eighteenth century. The innovations in science had given a carefully reasoned theoretical framework on which other theories could be hung.

Two basic impulses dominated the age- Reason and Passion. The reverence paid to reason was seen in the pursuit of order, symmetry, [decorum](#), and scientific knowledge. One cannot ignore the passion with which reason was pursued. The passion of the era can be seen in the cultivation of enthused philanthropy, adulation of personal relationships, religious fervour, and the cult of sentiment or sensibility.

With the exaltation of wit and reason, satire, in the 18<sup>th</sup> century received very special position dominating almost every form of writing. The Horatian and Juvenalian satires of the popular

classical writers were re-read and the form was to be used by the greatest poets of the era. Through keen observation and sharp sprightliness, the follies and moral corruption of the society were exposed. Beneath the ideals of rationality, order and knowledge, society embraced a pervasive obsession with 'decorum',-a cloak of established traditions and vanities of an elite class and a sense of moral and political supremacy. These shortcomings and hypocrisies of the society were exposed and chastised through the satires of the time.

Satire as a mode flourished not only in poetry but also in the new form. The prime purpose of satire is moral instruction through constructive social criticism offered in a humorous way. Wit was the vehicle to draw attention to both particular and wider issues in society.

Irony and sarcasm are the features of a satire. As Northrup Frye says- 'In satire, irony is militant.'

The pursuit of Reason, intellect, correctness and the moral responsibility for instruction and censure through the satirical spirit dominated the prose, poetry drama and the newly emerging genre-the novel. Drama saw a steady decline and the novel reached its highest literary point. The cult of wit, satire, and argument is evident in England in the writings of [Alexander Pope](#), [Jonathan Swift](#), and [Samuel Johnson](#), continuing the tradition of Dryden from the 17<sup>th</sup> century.

With the rise of the middle class, the [novel](#) slowly established itself as a major art form in [English literature](#). The rational appeal shown by realism was perhaps a great attraction to the new form. The realistic appeal that the epistolary and picaresque form offered to the writers made them to be the most experimented forms of the eighteenth century. The works of Richardson, [Henry Fielding](#), [Daniel Defoe](#), and [Tobias Smollett](#) opened widely an intensive prospect for the new genre. The other subgenres of the novel during the 18th century were the sentimental novels, historical novels, the gothic novel and the libertine novel. The 18th Century Europe started in the Age of Enlightenment and gradually moved towards **Romanticism**.

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### **3.7THE MID-EIGHTEENTH CENTURY NOVEL-'THE NEW SPECIES'**

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Daniel Defoe had already established a model of autobiographical writing and the subsequent writers of the century did not exactly reject the trend. They rather amplified and finally superseded the form postulated by Defoe. Dr. Jonson wrote in

1950 in '*The Rambler*' about the work of fiction as 'exhibits of life in its true state, diversified only by accidents that daily happen in the world.' Jonson implied here the death of the heroic 'romance' and the preference for a newer, more realistic form. The fiction of the 1940s was ample proof to his statement. The phenomenal popularity of Richardson's and Fielding's novels not only in Britain but abroad is well attested.

Richardson's *Pamela* is written in the form of a correspondence between its main characters. Richardson's own voices acts as the editor compiling and arranging these letters. Like Defoe, Richardson insisted on mingling aesthetic pleasure with moral instruction but some critics found some episodes of the novel to be immoral and to be too obsessed with economic class. His subsequent novels *Clarissa* and '*The History of Sir Charles Grandison*' remained equally popular. In the subsequent years, Henry Fielding appeared with his equally successful parody 'Shamela'. Fielding's reputation also continued to grow with his masterpiece - *The History of Tom Jones, A Foundling*. This is a boisterous story in which Jones makes his way in the world through a series of misadventures and romances portrayed in a light but often erotic way. But even these erotic scenes had an infusion of moral purpose. The novel concludes with the hero renouncing his wayward past, marries, and settles down into a more decent, sensible life.

The search for a more realistic form gave rise to the epistolary novel as they lend a kind of first-person voice associated with more credibility. That explains the rise of the epistolary novel in the mid-eighteenth century. The travel form or the picaresque style is equipped with the capacity to offer a swiping panorama of the society that could be depicted in the fiction to render realism. Fielding used the form to an impressive success. Smollett, in his most famous novel blended well both these popular forms of the eighteenth century.

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### 3.8LET'S SUM UP

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The splendid scientific discoveries and innovations of the eighteenth century paved the way for a spirit of rationality and exploration in all spheres of life. The new money poured in from the colonies and the scientific spirit infused a kind of confidence to experiment. The new writers emerged who tried various forms from 'letters' to the new 'novel'. Against this backdrop of scientific temper, rationality, pressing need felt by the writers for social reforms, Tobias Smollett came out with his most popular novel – 'Humphrey Clinker' a novel uniquely experimental and innovative in its form.

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### 3.9 QUESTIONS

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1. Throw light on the life and work of Tobias Smollett.
2. Write a note on the political scenario of the time of Smollett.
3. How was society in the time when Smollett wrote? Write a short note focusing on the social scenario.
4. Write a short note on the literary ethos of 18<sup>th</sup> Century
5. What were the factors responsible for the rise of the novel? What were the distinguishing factors of a novel from a romance?
6. Write short notes on-
  - a) Epistolary novel and the 18<sup>th</sup> century
  - b) Picaresque novel and the 18<sup>th</sup> century.

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### 3.10 REFERENCES

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# Unit-4

## STUDY OF HUMPHREY CLINKER- PART II

### Unit structure:

- 4.0 Objective
- 4.1 Introduction
- 4.2 Plot Overview
- 4.3 Characters
- 4.4 Themes
- 4.5 Satire in the Novel
- 4.6 Humor in the Novel
- 4.7 Critical Assessment of the Novel
- 4.8 Let's Sum Up
- 4.9 Questions
- 4.10 References

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### 4.0 OBJECTIVES

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The objective of this unit is to offer in a nutshell the various aspects of the novel 'The Expedition of Humphry Clinker' that can be unlocked for thorough study and analysis. Therefore, the students are advised to study the text for appreciating the humour, satire and the simple pleasure of the travelogue and also other material to prepare better for the examination.

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### 4.1. INTRODUCTION

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Blending two most popular forms of novel writing in the eighteenth century – the epistolary and the picaresque - Tobias Smollett has finally given the world his most satisfying novel 'The Expedition of Humphry Clinker'. Published few months before his death in 1771, the novel depicts a family journey from the estates of Matthew Bramble in Wales, through eastern England to London and then northwards to Smollett's native Scotland.

The narrative is told through a series of eighty-two letters exchanged between six characters: Matthew Bramble, a Welsh Squire; his sister Tabitha; their niece Lydia and nephew Jeremy Melford; Tabitha's maid Winifred Jenkins; and Lydia's suitor

Wilson. Twenty-seven of these letters are written by the elderly, petulant protagonist Matthew Bramble.

The title character Humphry Clinker does not appear until letter 28. Humphry is poverty stricken; naïve servant picked up during the journey who later turns out to be the son of the protagonist Mathew Bramble.

The travelogue form offered a swiping panoramic view of the society and its flaws to the author. His portrayal of the people, places and events of the time remained admirably real. Smollett's own stay in France, Italy and Scotland, his varied experiences at the sea as an assistant surgeon provided much of the raw material for the truthful depiction of the situations. Andrew Sanders in his *History of English Literature* says that- 'The topographical exactness and the sharp, succinct observations of social and geographical whims, particularly those of Bath, seem to have been calculated to appeal to an audience alert to the literary attractions of sentimental journeys'.

The epistolary form also allowed wonderful freedom for the plurality of voices. The letters helped for an overlap in the narration of the events, people and places encountered during the journey and for a multiplicity of opinions and viewpoints along with different epistolary styles representing the temperament of each character. The canvas of the novel tracing various places was enormously wide. The form helped to shape the haphazardness of the 'large diffused picture'.

The fun and the humor arise from the differences in the descriptions of the same events and places encountered in the course of the journey by the participants. All the characters have different motives to undertake the journey. The wild variations in the motives and descriptions of the behavior of the characters add to the subtle humor of the novel.

Smollett's setting of his novel amidst the high-society spa towns, inns, and seaside resorts of the 18th century provides him with the opportunities for derision and ridicule of the English and Scottish social and political life and manners.

The novel also offers an unusual Celtic flavour. The Welsh origin of the family undertaking the journey, portrayal of Edinburgh's significance as an archetypal 'big city' and many descriptions reveals the pull of the author's own Scottish-ness. The novel, typical of its time offers ridiculous coincidences, snobbish gentries, and violent duels.

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## 4.2 PLOT OVERVIEW

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The plot involves delightful romances, an illegitimate child and entertaining quixotic character Lieutenant Obadiah Lismahago and most importantly the moral instructions- the inevitable 18<sup>th</sup> century spirit. The novel brings in all the 'good things' as recommended by Sir Walter Scott's dictum "what the deuce is a plot for except to bring in good things?" There are long discussions and deliberations on the Enlightenment, Methodism, the Union and the Freedom of the Press. Besides, numerous accounts of the different forms of hospitality available in each place, also add to the good things that his audience would enjoy.

The plot primarily depends on the voyage Mathew Bramble and his family undertakes through England and Scotland. The primary motivation for the expedition is to restore the health of gout-ridden Matthew Bramble. Matthew Bramble is the splendid patriarch of the family. Matthew Bramble constantly writes to his doctor Dr. Lewis complaining about his ailments. The journey is undertaken as the visiting places holds prospects of improving his health. He is accompanied by his family members - his sister Tabitha; their niece Lydia and nephew Jeremy Melford; Tabitha's maid Winifred Jenkins; and Lydia's suitor Wilson. But each member of the family has their own personal motif to undertake the journey. They leave Bramble's estate, the Brambleton Hall, in the south-western corner of England passing through many cities. The family makes either long or significant stops at many cities like Gloucester, Bath, London, Harrogate, Scarborough and Edinburgh.

Bramble begins to hate Bath the moment he arrives there but his younger companions love it. Tabitha Bramble hunts for a husband and manages to interest an Irish Night in spite of her rare charms. But he immediately is disenchanted when Mr. Bramble opens his eyes to his sister's actual financial condition.

After the spell of the fashionable city of Bath, Matthew Bramble moves his journey to London. Lydia, young niece with her romantic disposition had never seen the Big City –the hub of England's political, economic and social life. If Bramble hated Bath, he detested London even more. The city meant for him to be the epitome of corruption of the age with the fading class distinction and the rising political power of the layman.

While travelling to London, the family meets a young peasant called Humphry Clinker. Humphry's help to the family after a mishap wins the heart of Matthew Bramble. Bramble dismisses both his coachman and his valet and appoints Humphry as the new coachman. Being thankful at the charity shown by Matthew Bramble in relieving him from the worst economic condition,

Humphry offers himself to be the coachman for the next trip for free. Humphry had problems with a corrupt judge in the City and having a charitable master, he moved ahead with the family to Scotland. He saves Win Jenkins, Tabitha Bramble's maid from rape. He also reveals his devotion, enthusiasm and a natural talent for preaching his Methodist ideology - much to Bramble's dislike.

Bramble's ceaseless criticism of the society goes on making him sick. Jery learns to enjoy looking beyond his uncle's Grumpiness and hypochondria and appreciating his sense of observation and sympathy. Tabitha's bitterness keeps on growing as her hunt for a husband and Lydia keeps dreaming of Wilson.

Win Jenkins feels affectionate towards Jery's dandy footman Humphry but not sure whether to display her feelings to him. Humphry proves to be tremendously useful but sometimes over-zealous. While approaching the Scottish border, the company meets Obadiah Lismahago, a Scottish veteran and retired lieutenant who had worse time in America.

In Scotland, Bramble recovers his health and returns to England as a dynamic, strong and optimistic-a changed man.

Matthew Bramble gets sufficient opportunities to display his renewed energy on the way back home to Wales. Lismahago, re-joins the company on English ground and wins Tabitha's heart, making an end to her misery and distress with Bramble consenting for the happy union.

Bramble displays of his new-found energy in restoring the estates of an old friend, ruined primarily by the corruption of the age-the negative influence of a snobbish woman addicted to luxurious indulgences and extreme display of wealth almost to the point of its destruction.

Bramble meets a college friend on the way back home and some shocking but happy revelations takes place. Lydia's love interest Wilson turns out to be the son of his college friend and Humphry turns out to be the illegitimate son of Matthew Bramble from a relationship with a barmaid during his wilder university days. Thus, two of the characters are uplifted to the position of gentlemen to restore traditional order and happiness in the narrative.

Tabitha won Lismahago, Lydia her 'Wilson' who is now George Dennison, Win Jenkins her Humphry and last but not the least Mathew his Loyd. Three marriages of the younger ones take place before Matthew Bramble marries his love Loyd. Mr. and Mrs. Lismahago return to Brambleton Hall and the youngsters are drawn back to Bath.



The novel has a conventional, romance like happy ending. The voyage in the novel is used as a chance to change Bramble and his companions realise their prejudices against the Scots in particular in their Caledonian trip and anyone different in general. It was a bold political endeavour. While Smollett was supporting his fellow Scot Bute in the parliament of George III through his weekly 'The Briton', John Wilkes, his dreadful political opponent was strengthening up anti-Scottish feeling in the pages of the *North Briton*. On another side, Horace Walpole had claimed that Smollett was trying to create sympathy for the Scots. Walpole commented that 'Humphry Clinker' was "the profligate hireling Smollett" attempting to "vindicate the Scots".

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## 4.3 CHARACTERS

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### 1. Matthew Bramble

Matthew Bramble, the misanthropic protagonist in his fifties, is a Welsh archetypal country squire. His correspondence is primarily with his physician, Dr. Lewis. It is through his correspondence to Dr. Lewis and those of Jeremy, the reader comes to know that Bramble is misanthropic and a hypochondriac. He appears largely reasonable and extremely charitable to the people he meets on his travels as well as to his servants. It is his letters that introduce the readers with the significant eighteenth-century concerns like medicine, the growth of urban life, class, the growth of the periodical press and the public sphere making a cynical ridicule of them at the same time. His disillusionment at the rapidly changing moral and social landscape of England not only reveals his conservative outlook but also expose the absurdities of contemporary British culture.

He functions as the satiric spokesperson of Smollett on the ills of civilisation of his time. Obsessed with his health, the patriarch of the family is in constant quest of his lost health. He frequently writes to his doctor Dr. Lewis complaining about his ill health and is seeking panacea for his problem. Jeremy Melford, his young nephew describes him as hypochondriac and worrisome but essentially playful and good humoured –

"Those follies, that move my uncle's spleen, excite my laughter. He is as tender as a man without a skin; who cannot bear the slightest touch without flinching. What tickles another would give him torment; and yet he has what we may call lucid intervals, when he is remarkably facetious - Indeed, I never knew a hypochondriac so apt to be infected with good-humour. . . . A lucky joke, or any ludicrous incident, will set him a-laughing immoderately, even in one of his most gloomy paroxysms..." (April 30).

Bramble returns to England as a changed man-his health is restored and thus with it is restored his optimism.

## **2. Jeremy Melford**

Jeremy Melford, the young nephew of Matthew Bramble and an Oxford graduate, presents himself as a complete contrast to his uncle. In contrast to Matthew Bramble who perceives the world as degenerate and raucous overcrowding, Jeremy is always in search of amusement everywhere. He undertakes the journey too as an amusement project. He writes primarily to Sir Watkin Phillips of Jesus College, Oxford. Although Jery also focuses upon the same issues his uncle chooses to focus, the approach and the perspectives are totally different. The difference brings in the difference of two generations-the outlook of the young and the old. Jeremy turns out to be the mouthpiece for a more progressive generation with progressive outlook than that of his rather traditional uncle. But, in spite of his liberal and democratic opinions and incisive observations of the hypocrisy and absurdity of others, he appears to be impulsive and 'hot-headed' through the letters of his uncle.

## **3. Tabitha Bramble**

Tabitha Bramble, Matthew Bramble's unmarried sister displays her bitterness in life through her selfish and malicious dealings with the poor and the needy. The bitterness that her brother Matthew Bramble displays at the socio-political ills of the society is well balanced by his essentially helpful, sympathetic nature and his desire to bring back order and health to the society; the bitterness of Tabitha Bramble remains too personal and unjustified. She reveals her temperament and selfishness through her correspondences with Mrs. Gwyllim, the house-keeper at Brambleton Hall. She is cold and lacks sympathy and generosity towards servants and the needy. Her snobbishness and her social pretensions along with her frequent misunderstandings, misuse of common idioms and terrible spellings are the stock of scornful laughter. She is unattractive -

"Mrs. Tabitha Bramble is a maiden of forty-five. In her person, she is tall, raw-boned, awkward, flat-chested, and stooping; her complexion is sallow and freckled; her eyes are not grey, but greenish, like those of a cat, and generally inflamed; her hair is of a sandy, or rather dusty hue; her forehead low; her nose long, sharp, and towards the extremity, always red in cool weather; her lips skinny, her mouth extensive, her teeth straggling and loose, of various colours and conformation; and her long neck shrivelled into a thousand wrinkles" (May 6).

Her nephew Jery explains the reason behind her malice in the lines-

"In her temper, she is proud, stiff, vain, imperious, prying, malicious, greedy, and uncharitable. In all likelihood, her natural austerity has been soured by disappointment in love; for her long celibacy is by no means owing to her dislike of matrimony" (May 6).

**4. Winifred Jenkins** Winifred Jenkins or Win Jenkins is Tabitha's servant and makes correspondence with the other servants at Brambleton Hall. It is only his letters that are not related to Matthew Bramble and offers a sympathetic and humorous perspective on the family and their travels. He appears as the comic foil to Tabitha Bramble. It is Jenkins who shares the innumerable misspellings and malapropisms of Tabitha Bramble.

#### **5. Lydia Melford**

Lydia Melford, another significant character in the novel is Matthew Bramble's niece. She is young and only seventeen years old with romantic disposition. She chooses to make the journey to overcome her unhappy romantic entanglement with a stage actor named Wilson. Wilson later turns out to be a gentleman named George Dennison. Lydia corresponds with Miss Letitia Willis, her friend at Gloucester. Her letters reveal her dilemma. She is stuck between familial duty and her affection for Wilson. Style, fashion, upper class society, and young men fascinate her. While Matthew Bramble detested Bath, Lydia appreciated it romantically. She writes to her friend about the entertainments in Bath:

"Hard by the Pump-room, is a coffee-house for the ladies; but my aunt says, young girls are not admitted, inasmuch as the conversation turns upon politics, scandal, philosophy, and other subjects above our capacity; but we are allowed to accompany them to the booksellers' shops, which are charming places of resort; where we read novels, plays, pamphlets, and news-papers, for so small a subscription as a crown a quarter" (April 26).

Her discussions on the places she is allowed to visit in Bath (hitherto considered improper for a young lady), provides a picture of a society where women were seen as intellectually incapable to comprehend politics and other serious matters during the 18th century.

#### **6. Humphry Clinker**

Humphry Clinker, the title character is poor - a stableman at an inn. He appears quite late in the story- after letter 28. He is picked up by Matthew Bramble and his family as their servant while they are traveling towards London. Humphry Clinker, although primarily appears to be foolish, earns the esteem of Matthew Bramble through his good-natured earnestness. He offends Tabitha but amuses Matthew Bramble. He is presented mainly through the letters of Matthew Bramble and Jeremy Melford. Notwithstanding

his regular misunderstandings; he is portrayed as a passionate, talented and gifted orator. The readers can see him attracting a devoted following of parishioners during a brief oratorical stint in London. Soon after some varied romantic interludes, Humphry suffers imprisonment on a false accusation of being a highway robber. None the less, he retains the confident support of Matthew Bramble and his family. He is finally freed and returned to his sweetheart, the maid Winifred Jenkins. Eventually, the exposé takes place that Humphry is Mr. Bramble's illegitimate son from a relationship with a barmaid during his wilder university days.

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## 4.4 THEMES

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### 1. Social Class and Manners

Social class and manners are one of the most obvious themes noticeable in the novel. When Mrs. Bramble meets Humphry Clinker for the first time, she is repulsed by his clothing choices. Clinker is poverty stricken and cannot afford a shirt. His loose pants, too big for his thin and shrunken body, begin to slip down his backside. Mrs Bumble assumes herself to be a lady with highly refined manners belonging to the gentry and cannot put-up with her carriage driver Clinker who for her, was a 'beggarly rascal, that he had ne'er a shirt to his back; and had the impudence to shock her sight by shewing his bare posteriors' (May 24). Here, Mrs. Bramble appears to be more concerned with what other people might think about her own status for having a half-naked man as her driver rather than understanding and helping the poor.

### 2. Parliamentary Politics

Smollett's Matthew Bramble is politically a Tory, much like the author in real life. Tories were the group of people who supported conservative politics against the dominant Whig ideology upholding 'constitutional rule' in place of absolute monarchy. Typical of a Tory, Matthew Bramble displays his displeasure at the chaos created in the city because of the fusion of the classes and the lack of hierarchy. But we have to remember that political parties were not as clearly formed and organised in the eighteenth century as it is today. The Whigs and Tories then, were not absolutely distinct tendencies in the political class then. Watson writes –'[...] it may be said that anyone calling himself a tory was glorying his lack of political common sense and lack of ambition for office. Whigs were those who aspired to ministerial status, but also included those who –even if as anti-court as any tory- gladly accepted the existing order [...] The country Whigs cannot be logically distinguished from the Tories.'

Mr. Bramble feels that the fusion of the classes and the lack of hierarchy are the prime cause of the chaos and disorder in the

city. As an antidote to the problem, Mr. Bramble offers a model for rewarding rural environment of the Highlanders of Cameron:

"Landers of Cameron: "The connection between the clan and the chiefs is, without all doubt patriarchal. It is founded on hereditary regard and affection, cherished through a long succession of ages. The clan consider the chief as their father. they obey him as their lord all while he exerts a paternal authority, commanding, chastising, rewarding, protecting, and maintaining them as his own children." (Latter dated September 30)

### 3. Medicine

While providing a realist portrayal of the ills of civilisation of the eighteenth century, the novel pervades into the world of medicine in the most pertinent way. The journey is primarily undertaken as a quest for regaining the lost health of the gout-ridden, hypochondriac protagonist Matthew Bramble. Bramble's quest for health can also be read as a co-related quest for the panacea for the ills of the Nation. England's social, political and cultural conditions are also diseased in his perception and needed cure. As the Bramble family moves from one place of healing to the next, Brambles tries a wide range of cures and meets different people suffering from other different diseases. He considers his doctor as his friend and companion. Smollett's own experience in the field had given him the skill to describe the medical concepts of the period. Even for the socio-cultural and political ills, Bramble always offers a model which he feels to be the cure for the problems at his own homeland.

### 4. Religion

Although not central to the tone and outlook of the novel, cynical observations on the religious changes of the time is well strewn over the passages of the novel. Smollett's satire is primarily lashed upon the social and political activities of his time but he doesn't forget to bring in this important aspect of life also to his massive social saga.

The novel doesn't say much about the established Anglican Church but what it says about its clergy is definitely not flattering. The glimpses that reader gets about the clerical system are that the most of the work at the grass-root level were carried out by the underpaid drudges and the well-paid senior clergies involved themselves with all the luxuries of a secular aristocracy. The pre-occupation of the clergy with worldly comfort and their skill in taking advantage of the spiritual position is described well when Matthew Bramble describes their presence in the luxury spas in Bath- "there is always a great shew of the clergy at Bath: none of your thin, puny, yellow, hectic figures exhausted with abstinence and hard study, labouring under the *Morbieruditorum*; but great overgrown

dignitaries and rectors, with rubicund noses and gouty ancles or broad bloated faces, dragging along great swag bellies, the emblems of sloth and indigestion' (JM May 17).

The caricature of the luxury-loving, ambitious, worldly clerics is enhanced with the immediately following account of the duel through which the corrupt activities of Tom Eastgate is revealed. Tom Eastgate, apparently unlikely candidate for spiritual honour and a man of worldly pleasures, extorts his well-paying clerical living from his erstwhile patron George Prankley. Later in the novel, both Jerry Melford and Matthew Bramble observe the absence of the clergy when they attend a levee of the Duke of Newcastle after the duke's loss to the parliament.

Smollett's most significant presentation in the novel about the religious cross currents of 18<sup>th</sup> century England is given through his more directly condemnatory look at the Methodist Movement of the time. Methodism or Methodist movement referred to a historically related group of Protestant Christianity who followed the doctrine and ideals of Social Gospel given by John Wesley. They emphasised charity and support for the poor and the sick. Methodism for Smollett was against order and reason. It faced two main charges during its time – 'enthusiasm' and 'hypocrisy' and the novel illustrates these charges thorough the character of Humphry Clinker. Humphry's enthusiasm to preach wherever he gets a chance is caricatured effectively in the novel.

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## 4.5 SATIRE IN THE NOVEL

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Satire was the distinctive attribute of the 18<sup>th</sup> century literary ethos and typically representing the temperament of his age, Tobias Smollett in his 'The Expedition of Humphry Clinker' lashes out strongly at the ills of civilisation observed by him.

Matthew Bramble, the cynical hypochondriac protagonist of the novel functions as the satiric spokesperson on the 'unfortunate transfusion of values' in the socio-political scenario of Smollett's time. But Smollett doesn't limit his powerful satire only to a criticism of the ills of the society but also provides an alternative model of the opposite virtues as the much-required cure. The model provided serves as the standard of imitation so that the ailing nation can heal itself. All the models that Bramble provides as the panacea signify a reaffirmation and commitment to the old moral standards-typical of Smollett's own ideology.

Bramble's satire becomes all the more bitter and serious in the city of Bath. For him -"They look like the wreck of streets and squares disjointed by an earthquake, which hath broken the ground into a variety of holes and hillocks; or as if some Gothic devil had

stuffed them altogether in a bag, and left them to stand higgledy piggledy, just as chance directed. What sort of a monster Bath will become in a few years, with those growing excrescences, may be easily conceived".

All the criticism that Matthew Bramble makes for the city is juxtaposed with the applause he makes for the country life. For example, when he complains Bath as "a compound of villainous smells," he craves for the "pure, elastic animating air of the Welsh mountains. He vouches for the returns of the country life in opposition to the failings of the city life. The "insomnia" in the city could be replaced by the "refreshing sleep" in the country side and the simple bread in London could be replaced by a "deleterious paste."

Matthew Bramble's position as an educated, upper class, well-informed, emotional but rational man and his patriotic concerns for the welfare of his fellow beings qualifies him to criticize the society in which he lives. In this perspective, Matthew Bramble's austere criticism on the evils of the society becomes a valid, justified outburst. His pungent criticism is directed at individual evil which is the cause of the social evil.

Smollett has been criticised by Sterne as "Smelfungus" for his sullen, cynical sarcasm in the novel. Many of the aspects that Smollett comments in 'Humphry Clinker' are concerned with the changes being fashioned in English society in the 1760s. Amidst the fast-swelling standards of living, the rise in social status of the new wealthy class and the urbanization of English life, Smollett observes the changing scenario in the politics too. The English populace was gaining political power and the aristocratic were losing control over the government. Like Swift, Pope and Johnson, Smollett was dismayed to see the tenor and tempo of English life and was alarmed at the threat posed by Whiggish ideology, middle-class tampering with tradition and violation of established decorum. As a satiric spokesperson of Smollett, Matthew Bramble reacts quite bitterly to these disorders wrought in the society. The picture of the future foreseen amidst these social chaos and political anarchy is ghastly. The chaotic, diseased nation needs its cure just like Matthew Bramble and the cure lies in the establishment of order and harmony through the old, traditional political and moral values.

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## 4.6 HUMOUR IN THE NOVEL

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In spite of the outrageous satire prevalent throughout the travel narrative of 'Humphry Clinker', it doesn't fail to entertain the readers with its zestful humour. Much of the fun and keen humour arise from the ludicrously eccentric characters and the multiple

narrations of the same events and places seen through the variegated lenses of the characters' individual perspectives. The novel provides a charming physical journey through a delightful cast of characters and locale making it a literary tour of Europe in the 18<sup>th</sup> century.

Brilliant word plays mingled with the situational and observational humour enriches the appeal of the novel.

The novel provides observational humour through the character of Matthew Bramble, the witty protagonist. His social position, education and essentially good nature make him reliable for such observations and assert him as the satiric commentator.

Reference to the bodily functions, taboo language, breaches of manners across social class boundaries add to the fun and humour of the novel.

The novel also provides ample of situational comedy that depends primarily on the plot elements. While Matthew Bramble chooses to observe and comment on the people and the places of their journey, his young counterpart Jerry Melford chooses to focus on the events and the situations of the journey. Situational comedy relies on the practical jokes, mistaken identity, and physical humour employed in the text. Jerry, an Oxford graduate, focus on the people of a lower class to generate this kind of humour. While corresponding with his peer, Jerry refers to the subjects of his letters as "beasts," "lessers" and if people of higher classes are involved in Jerry's stories in any situation, it is always because of the presence of someone of a lower class. Class distinction comes even in the generation of humour. The use of hilarious word-plays and bodily language are employed and targeted at the lower-class.

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#### 4.7 CRITICAL ASSESSMENT OF THE NOVEL

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'The Expedition of Humphry Clinker' earns its author his special place among the canonical writer of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. The novel attains a unique position because of its unique blend of epistolary and picaresque elements and the inventive experiments with form and the themes. But it also retains the essential 18<sup>th</sup> century spirit of moral, political and social reformation through satire.

Unlike Smollett's earlier novel, Humphry Clinker deviates from the typical picaresque novel. The protagonist is not a real '*picaro*'. A real '*picaro*' is a rogue who makes a living by his wits and often drawn into violent, grotesque, adventures. Although we see a Quixotic figure in Obadiah Lismahago, Matthew Bramble, the protagonist is not a '*picaro*' living by his wits or landing himself



into violent adventures. While a real '*picaro*' is forced to travel as a means to escape the prosecution for a crime committed, Matthew Bramble undertakes the travel to secure his failing health.

The loosely connected episodic structure of picaresque novel provides Smollett with the capacity to bring in diverse elements into the text of '*Humphry Clinker*'.

The novel also capitalises the idea of multiple perspectives – the Bakhtinian polyphonic voices within a novel.

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#### 4.8 LET'S SUM UP

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'Humphry Clinker' in its unique experimentation with form and content, remains one of the significant novels of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. The indignant satire on the ills of civilising, although unsuitable for a ludicrous picaresque form, makes a wonderful entry into a seemingly pleasant and delightful travelogue. Smollett has simultaneously used and also deviated from the typical picaresque and the epistolary form.

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#### 4.9 QUESTIONS

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1. Write a note on the plot-structure of the novel 'Humphry Clinker'.
2. Discuss the importance of the novel
3. Throw light on the character of Matthew Bramble and his role as a satiric spokesperson.
4. Write a note on the humour of the novel.
5. Critically evaluate the strength of the novel.
6. Write short notes on the role and character of
  - a) Matthew Bramble
  - b) Tabitha Bramble
  - c) Jeremy Melford
  - d) Winifred Jenkins
  - e) Lydia Melford
  - f) Humphry Clinker

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#### 4.10 REFERENCES

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# Unit-5

## STUDY OF GULLIVER'S TRAVELS PART I

### Unit Structure:

- 5.0 Objectives
- 5.1 Introduction
- 5.2 About the Author: Jonathan Swift
- 5.3 *Gulliver's Travels* as a Satire
- 5.4 Jonathan Swift as a Satirist
- 5.5 Preface of *Gulliver's Travels*
- 5.6 Gulliver's First Voyage to Lilliput
- 5.7 Gulliver's Second Voyage to Brobdingnag
- 5.8 Gulliver's Third Voyage to Laputa
- 5.9 Gulliver's Fourth Voyage to the Land of Houyhnhnms
- 5.10 Let's Sum Up
- 5.11 Questions
- 5.12 References

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### 5.0 OBJECTIVES

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This unit aims at making the students familiar with:

- The author of *Gulliver's Travels* - Jonathan Swift
- Jonathan Swift as a Satirist
- *Gulliver's Travels* as a Satire
- A basic approach to the text of *Gulliver's Travel*

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### 5.1 INTRODUCTION

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*Gulliver's Travels* by Jonathan Swift is one of the finest examples of satire in English literature. Early eighteenth century England was the golden age of satire. Not only did brilliant minds of the neo-classical age were at work, but the political situation and development of prose proved fertile to the development of satire.

Swift creates the real life like persona of the protagonist captain Lemuel Gulliver. The book contains four voyages to remote and strange places that test adaptability, patience, courage and wisdom of the protagonist.

## 5.2 ABOUT THE AUTHOR - JONATHAN SWIFT (1667-1745)

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Among the English writers of the Neo-classical age, no other writer leaves an indelible impression upon the readers in the genre of satirical writings as Jonathan Swift. Swift was born in Dublin, Ireland, to English Parents in 1667. He lost his father much before he was born and mother was poor, thus making him reliant upon the grudging relatives for his upbringing. He studied at Kilkenny school and later at Dublin University. He detested the curriculum there but was compelled to study to receive a degree. Upon graduation, one of his distant relatives, Sir William Temple, an English statesman and a diplomat accepted him as his private secretary, upon the word of his mother. Swift had begun to grow bitter with the compelling circumstances in his early life. Here, he came in contact with Esther Johnson, a young family friend of Temple, with whom he is believed to be in close and ambiguous lifelong relationship and to whom many of Swift's poems are addressed in the name of 'Stella'

*The Battle of the Books*, Swift's first notable satire upon the two parties indulged in the literary controversy concerning the comparative merits of the classics and the modern literature gets written around this time. His relation with Temple influenced him to develop his love of reading and writing as he was entrusted with the work of the former's correspondence and assistance in memoir writing. Later, upon Temple's death, he entered the Church of England. Few years later, he joined the little church of Laracor, Ireland, which exposed him to prevalence of corrupt practices in the institution. He was too proud to bring himself to seek any favours from the authorities but continued to serve the poor masses. He wrote *A Tale of a Tub*, another scathing satire directed at the churches of the day during this period, which gets published in London in 1704, along with *The Battle of the Books*. His work brought him instant fame as the most powerful satirist of his age. He became a sought-after figure in the world of literary writings. Swift commanded the respect for writing scathing pamphlets, which was considered as a powerful political tool in the Neo-classical age. The Tories celebrated his companionship while the Whigs feared his satirical aim towards them. He soon entered the world of politics, leaving behind the world of religion, which he was to again join after the decline of Tory power in politics. He was offered the position of Dean of St. Patrick's Cathedral in Dublin, which he bitterly accepted.

It was in Ireland around this phase of his life that his best-known literary work, *Gulliver's Travels*, was being shaped. His growing bitterness towards humanity gets reflected amply in the work. It became a celebrated work as soon as it was published

(1726) and printed. However, his personal sorrows and frustrations culminated in the death of Esther Johnson in 1728. Gradually, he displayed symptoms of a brain disease and towards the end of his life, he had turned into a maniac. Swift died in 1745, leaving his property to found St. Patrick's Asylum for lunatics. Among some of his other notable literary contributions include *Drapier's Letters* (1724-25), *A Modest Proposal* (1729) and *A Journal to Stella* (1710-1713)

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### 5.3 GULLIVER'S TRAVELS AS A SATIRE

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Swift's *Gulliver's Travels* (1726) has continued to achieve popularity as a scathing criticism of his contemporary society i.e., European society of the Eighteenth century. It is considered a prime example of satirical works in English Literature and characteristic of the writing style of its author. Satire becomes a literary tool in the hands of an author to not only highlight the existing vices and corruptive practices in human world but attempts to propose reforms and correctives to overcome the shortcomings. In his words, "Satire is a sort of glass, wherein beholders do generally discover everybody's face but their own; which is the chief reason for that kind of reception it meets in the world, and that so very few are offended with it" Through *Gulliver's Travels*, Swift tries his hands brilliantly at mocking and undercutting the existing lofty ideas of human progress with the help of scientific knowledge and technology. The British eighteenth century is also referred as 'The Age of Enlightenment' with its emphasis upon human rationality and superiority.

The primary structure of the narrative of *Gulliver's Travels*, at the onset, mocks the idea of the travelogue writing, which was much in vogue during the eighteenth century. Swift criticises the veracity of the travelogue narratives of his contemporary times by making Lemuel Gulliver as an adventurer, traveller and inquisitive explorer, by structuring the narrative into four different voyages that he undertakes. It is significant to note that *Gulliver's Travels* does not become a travel-writing rather, it shapes itself into a satirical presentation of four different lands. Gulliver is also presented as an unreliable and gullible narrator in the manner he conducts himself in these four strange lands.

Through his first voyage to Lilliput, Swift makes the local political conditions as his object of satire. The technique of satire employed by the author is irony and ridicule here. The short heights of the Lilliputians, about six inches longer evokes a certain shocking response from Gulliver, who 'appears' almost as a giant to them. Swift makes use of dimensions and proportions to highlight the irony in the miniature world of Lilliput. He attributes to them his critical observations and insights which he personally witnessed

and experienced in the political atmosphere of England and Ireland. During the eighteenth century, the politics involved a continued conflict between two of the major political factions in English parliament i.e., Whigs and the Tories. The former represented the liberal ideologies while the latter believed in the conservative policies. These two factions have been mocked by Swift as in the way they fought over the height of the heels. Reldresser, the Secretary of the Private Affairs in Lilliput, introduces Gulliver to the volumes of books devoted to the controversy which also dealt with the conflicts based upon religious differences of beliefs. The Big Endians and the Little Endians, who represented the Protestants and the Catholics are criticised in their beliefs regarding the end from which an egg should be broken. Swift makes a caricature of the human greed, pride and selfishness through creating the Lilliputians as only six-inches of height. The lofty ideas inherent in the world of Lilliputian about pride, authority and display of power have been reduced by portraying them as insignificant. Though small in size, the emperor desires to 'become the sole emperor of the world', by defeating his rival nation, Blefuscu, with the assistance of Gulliver. Swift makes fun of the nations of Europe who developed rivalries to gain power over one another. The dousing of the fire by Gulliver through the act of urinating not only offends the Queen but all his assistance is forgotten and he is given punishment. With this episode, Swift wants to mock the sudden changes in the mood of the powerful and mighty, who could punish the loyalist if offended. This is indicative of Swift's personal experience of causing displeasure to the Queen while he protested to demand certain reforms in the Irish Church. The satire employed in the first voyage is primarily political. The contemporary readers must have comprehended the Lilliputians political controversies as those reflecting the English politics of the day. Swift's reduction of the political ideas of his day equating them to the (in)significance of height of heels or the manner of eating eggs is a deliberate tool in the hands of the satirist.

Through his second voyage to the land of Brobdingnag, Gulliver finds himself amongst the giants, a complete contrast to the Lilliputians. Here, he becomes a 'Lilliputian' for these giants. The perspectives undergo a radical change. Swift uses irony once again to caricature the European ideals of human progress and development. Gulliver's learning of the governing principles of Brobdingnagians makes him perceive the shallowness of the European mindset, who were proud of their knowledge of using gunpowder to destroy the enemy nations. The response of the Emperor to Gulliver while he defends his nation's governing laws and principles, is evident in the expression, 'odious vermins'. The Europeans are reduced to the stature of the vermins by the emperor. This is an outsider's perspective upon the European world and though quite similar in human figure and behaviour, the giants

display an alternative and moral perspectives, as emphasised by Swift.

The third voyage of Gulliver takes him to a unique land called Laputa and related regions. Swift's satire takes a dig at the strange principles of living in this land. He has criticised the over-emphasis of his own age in the learning of the abstract theories which have no practical values in real life through Gulliver's journey to Laputa. Abstract behaviour characterises the Laputans at every walk of their lives and they appear so lost in their own that they have no time or energy to think about the everyday realities such as proper clothing, food, relationships etc. Their complete dependence upon mathematics, philosophy and astronomy governed their lives in every aspect. Laputans were more concerned with the theory than the practical in their lives. The King himself disapproved of the intellectual pursuits and concerns that differed from his own nation. He did not concern himself with the public welfare. However, his official seal depicted a picture of a king lifting up a lame beggar from the earth. Through the controlling means of Flying island, Swift directs the attention of the readers towards the Anglo-Irish conflict. Further, his introduction of the character of Munodi has been set up to bring about the contrast to the people filled with abstract principles. Munodi comes across as the 'ideal man' according to Swift. He uses his traditional knowledge to develop his estate. On the other hand, Swift's descriptions of the grand experiments and projects in Laputan Island, which result in disasters, is an ironic view upon the Royal Academy and its intellectual pursuits of his contemporary times. He criticises the knowledge of such science which is distant from its application in real lives to make it convenient.

Swift's gradual reduction of the man as a pigmy, a giant, a weird scientist/rationalist through the voyages ultimately lead him to proclaim that animals are much better beings than human beings after he meets the Houyhnhnms in his last voyage. His satire adopts the crudest form in the last voyage which makes him totally disillusioned with the man. He rejects the company of men when he returns home in England. He finds the civilised behaviour of the horses far better than the so called 'perfect' humans. He prefers to depict the men as Yahoos, the degraded creatures in the land of the horses, who controlled the former. Swift's invective against mankind is evident when he compares the simple yet innocent world of animals against the powerful, controlling, biased and greedy human world. Swift's technique of satire not only targets the local but the global as well. The entire mankind becomes his target in *Gulliver's Travels*.

The voyages of Gulliver satirise different aspects of the eighteenth-century English society in terms of its politics, wars with

neighbouring nations, emphasis upon newer knowledges in fields of science and technology etc. Among the three primary kinds of satire, Swift makes use of the Menippean satire, which is not very harsh but has no fixed one target. As *Gulliver's Travels* depict, Swift targets various ideas including the human society in general. The effectiveness of *Gulliver's Travels* as a satire lends it a popular reading across readers of all ages.

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## 5.4 JONATHAN SWIFT AS A SATIRIST

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Swift is universally recognised as predominantly a great writer of satire in Neo-classical age of English literature. He represents the popular genre of literary writing of the eighteenth-century England. The century is often referred to as the golden age of satire and the politics found itself the subject of popular satire in the age. Among his well-known prose writings include *The Battle of the Books* (1704); *The Tale of a Tub* (1704); *Predictions for the Ensuing Year* (1708); *The Drapier's Letters* (1724); *Gulliver's Travels* (1726) and *A Modest Proposal* (1729)

The satire of Swift is sprinkled with irony and an attitude of mockery towards the subject. In one of his letters addressed to Alexander Pope, he makes it clear, "I hate and detest that animal called man, although I heartily love John, Peter, Thomas and so forth" His target is not an individual or specific vice but humanity in general. It assumes the nature of satire aimed at human nature and not a single person. This is evident in the fourth voyage in *Gulliver's Travels*.

*The Battle of the Books* had been a result of a popular controversial discourse in the contemporary period. The controversy related to the dispute about the comparative merits of Ancient and Modern literature. Swift was drawn into the controversy on account of his relative and patron, Sir William Temple, who had earlier written an essay on the topic in which he had praised the spurious *Epistles of Phalaris*. He was severely criticised by William Wotton and Bentley. As a 'good-humoured' response to them, Swift wrote *The Battle of the Books*. He describes the battle in a symbolic manner which emerges out of the request by the moderns that the Ancients should evacuate the higher of the two peaks of Mount Parnassus. The Ancients include Plato, Aristotle, Pindar, Homer and others, who are led by Sir William Temple while the Moderns have a team including Milton, Dryden, Hobbes and others, assisted by Momus, a deity of ridicule and Criticism, a malignant deity. Later, a peace talk ensues and the book leaves the subject undecided.

*A Tale of a Tub* is an allegorical satirical tale that revolves around the question of religion and state. Swift weaves a tale to bring home the point. It is a tale of a father who leaves a coat for

each of his son, with directions that it should be never altered by them. The three sons symbolise the different sects of religion practiced in England in Swift's time. Peter symbolises Roman Catholic Church, Martin represents the Anglican Church while Jack symbolises the Puritan Church. The sons disobey their father and change their coats as per the current fashion of the day. Subsequently, over a period of time, Martin and Jack quarrel with Peter (most arrogant) but in some time, they fight with each other and finally separate.

*A Modest Proposal* is Swift's is most popular scathingly satirical tracts on state of affairs of Ireland. It is a mocking proposal written in protest against the indifference of English politicians towards the sufferings and demands of the Irish people.

*The Drapier's Letters* were written in response to the introduction of false half-pennies in Ireland by William Wood. Swift's forceful arguments prophesised the ruin of Irish economy if they were introduced into circulation. The government realised the adverse effects of the policy and was forced to abandon the mighty project.

*Predictions for the Ensuing Year* is another significant satire on a cobbler, John Partridge, who claimed to be an astrologer and had published predictions in the manner of almanac. Through the satire, Swift offers a parody in the name of Isaac Bickerstaff, who foretells the death of Partridge on 29<sup>th</sup> March, 1708. The very next day, he published a letter describing the death of Partridge and the next day, an 'Elegy of Mr Partridge'. When the real Partridge protested, Swift wrote a vindication claiming the veracity of the astrological rules which proved his death and the fact that the person claiming to be Mr Partridge is a fake one.

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## 5.5 PREFACE OF GULLIVER'S TRAVELS

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*Gulliver's Travels* begins with the inclusion of two letters, much before the travelogue narrative begins. Swift uses the strategy of penning these letters to give the appearance of the book as a true travel account. The letter titled 'The Publisher to the Reader' is written by the imaginary publisher of the text, Mr. Richard Sympson and it shares with the readers the information about the author of the text, Mr. Lemuel Gulliver and his supposed background. The letter is an attempt by Swift (the real author) to build up a persona of Gulliver (the protagonist) as a genuine person and to vouch the truthfulness of the voyages, which the readers might read as mere tales of fantasies.

The blurring of reality and fantasy prevails over throughout the two prefaces. The furious reply of Capton Gulliver to Mr.



Sympson forms the content of the second preface. Gulliver is angry for certain omissions as well as insertions of texts without seeking his approval and goes on to describe sarcastically his opinion on humankind. Referring to humans in degrading terms as 'Yahoos' and the entire humankind as 'Herd', he condemns them as he finds no 'reformation' in their conduct after reading his book. Listing out a number of grave and irreparable faults in mankind, he distances himself from them. Swift makes a clever use of overlapping of reality with illusion to lend the text a real presence.

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## 5.6 GULLIVER'S FIRST VOYAGE TO LILLIPUT

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Swift introduces the character of Lemuel Gulliver to the readers by presenting his past background in detail. Gulliver, the narrator of the travels, recounts his past and family history. He hails from a humble background, born in Nottinghamshire. His family was poor so he was sent to London to be a surgeon's apprenticeship after completing his studies at Cambridge. Under the guidance of a person by the name of James Bates, he learns navigation skills and mathematics. He also learns Physics and becomes a surgeon on a ship for three years. Later, he settles in London as a doctor and gets married. After the death of his patron, his business begins to dwindle. The information on his humble background depicts him as an uncorrupted, innocent and gullible person, who is quite unlike his contemporaries, those who knew how to deceive people and make money. After his failure to generate money from waning business, he decides to go to sea and travels for six years. Before he decides to return home from his travels, he accepts the job on a ship called *Antelope* for one last time. *Antelope* is struck within a violent storm and Gulliver gets separated from his companions. He manages to swim across to the shore and soon falls asleep after the tiresome adventure.

Upon waking up, he finds his entire body being bound by very tiny threads and people of miniature sizes, up-to six inches or so, crawling up his body and expressing their amazement and curiosity at his magnanimous body. Soon he discovers that he is amongst 'Lilliputians' and he can see and feel numerous Lilliputians around him, some of whom march upon his body with bows and arrows when he tries to move. These diminutive people are though hospitable enough to feed the curious visitor the food and water in larger proportions. The Lilliputians come across as ingenious people, who could arrange for a vast carriage carrying food and water for giant Gulliver in few hours. Though smaller in size, they are not intimidated by the huge sized stranger rather they are all prepared to fight him with all their might. He is presented to the emperor of Lilliput, who provides the largest temple in the kingdom as house for Gulliver. He is chained however; he could stand and move. Gulliver does not hesitate to describe his defecation on the

floor for the first time out of his desperateness to relieve himself. It reinforces Swift's attempts to portray Gulliver as honest character, who does not conceal any facts, however disgusting they might sound. This is to establish credibility for his persona.

Gulliver is quick to understand the social, political, religious and cultural atmosphere of Lilliput. He is treated humanely by the Lilliputians. He begins to learn their language and begs for his release from the emperor. He has to surrender his belongings including his handkerchief, pen-knife, pipe, pocket-watch etc. before his release. Later, he has to sign an official agreement agreeing to the conditions that he will not use his physical prowess to harm the citizens of Lilliput and he will assist them against their enemies. As observed by Gulliver, the state of Lilliput has a novel way of determining a candidate's eligibility to fill up a vacant official post. The members of the court who are agile enough to jump over a thread and can dance on a rope are preferred for such official jobs. It is the physical power which is tested rather than the moral power and reasoning capacity. Swift ironically depicts the corrupted nature of the members in contemporary English politics. Agility of Lilliputians refer to the sycophancy and flexible behaviour of members of Whig and Tory parties of Swift's time.

The First Voyage to the land of Lilliput has been read as a satirical commentary upon the topical English politics. Reldresal, the principal secretary pays a visit to Gulliver and explains that Lilliput inherently faces 'Two Mighty Evils' The first being the enmity between the Tramecksan (high-heeled shoe wearers) and Slamecksan (low-heeled shoe-wearers) The reference to 'high heels' and 'low heels' could be the two political factions of England, the Tories and the Whigs. The second 'Evil' is the danger of an impending invasion from the neighbouring enemy country Blefuscu. Reldresal refers to Blefuscu as 'the other great empire of the universe', which indicates his refusal to believe in any of the accounts of Gulliver about his nation and the people. Blefuscu could be a reference to France, with whom, England was continuously at war. The enmity is on the account of whether to break eggs on the bigger or smaller end. Lilliputians prefer the smaller ends while some of the Big-endians have left Lilliput and joined Blefuscu. The reference to endless conflict between two factions, the 'high endians' and the 'low endians', could be an indication towards the Catholics and Protestant sects in English Christianity. Swift makes a parody of the doctrinal disputes between these sects. Both 'the mighty evils' referred by Reldresal come across as absurd and Swift establishes this absurdity to create humour as well as to make a critique upon the absurdity of the idea of warfare in general. Gulliver achieves the highest title of honour of 'nardac' from the emperor of Lilliput upon his crossing the channel separating Blefuscu from Lilliput and sewing the military fleet of the

former to drag them to Lilliput. However, when the emperor wants him to enslave the Blefuscuns, Gulliver refuses and earns cold response from the emperor. Gulliver's perspective of privileging moral power over physical power is not shared by the Emperor.

Things begin to take worst shape for Gulliver after some representatives from the Blefuscu court pay visit to Lilliput as peace-offering ambassadors and invite him to visit their country. The emperor reluctantly allows him but Gulliver observes the role of rumours taking rounds in the court spread by the chief courtier, Flimnap and Bolgolam, a court minister that his friendliness with Blefuscuns is a sign of disloyalty to the state of Lilliput.

The character of Flimnap, the treasurer of the Lilliputian kingdom was probably fashioned upon the English Prime Minister, Robert Walpole, representing the Whig party. However, things take an ugly turn for Gulliver on account of his urinating upon the royal palace in his attempt to save the queen from the fire. He was already found to be favouring the rival country by making the emperor understand their perspective. The emperor though pardons him but the queen is disgusted and refuses to live in the royal palace ever.

Swift devotes a chapter to the description of life in general in the state of Lilliput as observed by Gulliver. He understands that while the Lilliputians are small in size, their surroundings, animals and other material and worldly objects are in proportion to their own sizes. The principles of governance value honesty and truth with extreme seriousness so much so that anyone faltering in these is sentenced to death or paid generously if he suffers inconveniences for falseness or corruption. Ingratitude and fraud were considered as capital crimes and punishable by death. Those citizens, who sincerely followed the state principles throughout their lives received the title 'Snilpall' and accorded the state privileges. Gulliver, when apprises them of his own country's laws of only punishing the citizens to reinforce the laws and no rewards are accorded, Lilliputians express surprise at the stranger laws. Further, Gulliver makes a mention of the rearing of children in Lilliput. It is similar to the philosophy of Plato that the children are best reared when apart from their parents and family. Children are raised by professors and servants in public nurseries on the principles of egalitarianism. The girls are raised upon the same principles as those of boys. The parents are required to pay pensions and monthly sums to these nurseries.

The clothes of Gulliver become a topic of discussion at one of the royal dinners and Flimnap, brings to the notice of emperor to the unnecessary costs incurred upon his clothing and feeding. He also accuses Gulliver of having an illicit affair with his wife. Though

it is absurd but Swift downplays the idea of political deception in the court and the involvement of government officials with certain motives. It culminates into a secret preparation of the courtiers along with the emperor to punish Gulliver for 'treason' against the state by putting out his eyes and starving him to death in a gradual manner. The state of Lilliput is revealed to be brutal towards those who are understood to be going against the norms. Gulliver resolves to escape to Blefuscu

He makes an escape to Blefuscu, the neighbouring and a rival nation to Lilliput, where he is welcomed and later, he discovers an old broken ship in the sea. Meanwhile the emperor of Lilliput sends a message to Blefuscu that Gulliver is an accused and should be sent back. However, the Blefuscu's emperor refuses to comply on the grounds of friendship. He supplies Gulliver with all help and provisions to get back to his home country. Gulliver repairs the ship and sets sail once again towards his home country, England, after being picked up by an English merchant ship on his way. Once back home, his countrymen find it hard to believe his tale of Lilliput. Gulliver is able to convince them with the help of some animals that he had carried from Lilliput before embarking upon his journey towards home.

Swift parodies the empire of Lilliput through the persona of Gulliver. It is represented as a miniature English empire, which has its numerous absurd laws and codes. It also reiterates the fact that 'little people' (in terms of mental evolution and physical power) reflect a tendency to complicate their lives with greater complexities. It is their size, which is ridiculed. The smaller size and conceited behaviour reflect upon the English sense of pride in unnecessary ideas of superiority. Gulliver emphasises upon the absurdity of war in a mocking manner. The competition among the courtiers to jump highest upon the rope, which would determine their success level in the political office is a topical reference to the prevailing corrupt practices and sycophancy in English politics. The author satirises the absurdity of Englishmen of creating artificial differences where none at all exist. The Lilliputians are similar to the Englishmen of Swift's country but through them, he perceives them from a critical distance as an outsider by creating Gulliver as his mouthpiece.

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## **5.7 GULLIVER'S SECOND VOYAGE TO BROBDINGNAG**

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Gulliver has once again set sail on a ship called *Adventure*. Unfortunately, it gets stuck in a storm at the north of Madagascar and the sailors are stranded in the strange waters till they finally spot an island. They get separated and Gulliver is isolated when a huge 'monster' approaches them and his companions desert him

while rowing back to their ship. He finds himself on the island surrounded by giant grass and fields.

Gulliver has landed in Brobdingnag, a land of giants. The 'monster' that had frightened his companions was no other than one of the inhabitants of this strange land. He becomes a 'Lilliputian' for the Brobdingnagians. Viewed from Gulliver's perspective, everything and everybody has enormous size. While Lilliput had shocked him for its tiny size, Brobdingnag amazes him with its gigantic framework. The giants, on the other hand are amused to see a miniature form of human being. Gulliver wisely reflects upon the fact that nothing in this world is absolute truth. Everything that exists around us is always in relation to other. i.e., with a perspective. He thinks "undoubtedly philosophers are in the right, when they tell us that nothing is great or little otherwise than by a comparison" At the very beginning, he encounters a reaper in a farm, who picks him up as a tiny creature and observes him curiously. It is the similar feeling of awe and wonder as he had felt while gazing at the mini-Lilliputians for the first time. Quite contrary to what Gulliver expects, the reaper gently puts him in his pocket and runs up to his master, the farmer. He does not display his physical power to crush the doll-sized Gulliver. The farmer and his associates are full of awe upon looking at Gulliver's stature and wonder upon his miniature size. He feels utterly frightened and vulnerable to be surrounded by the giants all around and attempts to offer his gold valuables to them in order to be saved. For them, the gold seems worthless and they return it back but want to communicate with this curious being. The master farmer takes Gulliver along to his home. He is provided with a meal along with the family members. Gulliver's entire meal is merely some crumbs of food for the family. The son of the farmer is delighted to see a tiny living-doll at home and wants to play with him but the father boxes his ears and later Gulliver wants to seek forgiveness of the son by kissing his hand, to which the farmer agrees.

Smaller creatures which are often ignored by everyone as harmless seem too dangerous for little Gulliver for their enormous size was enough to frighten him out of his wits. He would have been easily gobbled up by any of them in the house. The cat's baby almost squeezed him into death but he managed to escape. Later, two rats attack him while he is made to sleep under a handkerchief and he manages to save himself by killing one of the rats with his sword. Everything around him gets magnified and the effect of this is evident in the enormity of the things as perceived by him. For instance, the features and complexion of the farmer's wife seem disgusting to him since these get enlarged and the shortcomings also get magnified along.

It is the farmer's daughter, Glumdalclitch, who tends him gently by making him new clothes, washing them regularly and teaching him their language. The symbol of clothes appears once again in the second voyage. Acquiring of new clothes makes him adopt new perspectives to understand the new society. The Brobdingnagians are no different from the Gulliver's own Englishmen and the Lilliputians in the way of exploiting his presence to reap monetary benefits. Upon the advice of a money-minded neighbour, the farmer decides to put him up for the public show and earn money. The farmer exploits him by making him perform for the entertainers. It becomes popular in no time so much that the farmer decides to take the show to the country-wide scale. Gulliver had treated the little animals from Lilliput in his home-town in the similar manner of abusing them for money. He is made to perform continuously at the cost of his failing health and growing wealth of the farmer. Swift takes us to a place where size can be exploited for comic purposes of irony and satire. He depicts Gulliver as a small helpless creature to bring home the point of the manner in which the human beings view and treat the small helpless animals around them. In human world, size implies superiority which further implies power. This voyage deliberately reduces the man's sense of superiority of himself vis-à-vis other creatures.

Gulliver is relieved of the farmer once the queen takes a liking for him and takes him along to the royal palace with the farmer's daughter, Glumdalclitch, as a caretaker. When he expresses his desire to be treated in better manner, the queen is impressed to see that the tiny creature possesses human rationality and power of reasoning. The king believes him to be a mechanical object in the manner of a clock-work. He observes the new world around him and is grieved to be belittled by even the smallest of creatures in Brobdingnag. He soon discovers through his varied experiences that identity of anyone and anything lies in the perspective of the beholder. The giants are fond of him but they amuse themselves at the cost of his powerless physique.

The king dismisses the claims of Gulliver of his belonging to a powerful nation such as England and considers these to be made-up stories by the farmer and his daughter. Since the king is not exposed to the rest of the world, unlike Gulliver, he fails to be convinced of Gulliver and his tales of belonging to a powerful nation. Swift deliberately plays with the notion of power and powerlessness. The philosophers of the state are called in to examine the 'creature' but they also remain puzzled. The prince makes an observation about "how contemptible a thing was human grandeur, which could be mimicked by such diminutive insects as [Gulliver]" The abusive treatment of the queen's dwarf of Gulliver reflects the existence and the significance of the thirst for the power-play in human world. Everyone wants to exert some power

over other, who is either physically weaker or vulnerable. This is human nature and the dwarf being the smallest in queen's palace must have felt vulnerable all the time till Gulliver, now smaller than him, entered. On account of his 'small' size, he was exposed to some great griefs of his life at Brobdingnag, which he might have enjoyed, had he been in the company of his countrymen. His physical powerlessness attributes him vulnerability and almost dehumanizes him. The maids of the queen do not consider him man and play with him, dress him up like a baby, undress him and urinate in front of him. He gets exposed to their grotesque bodily features, which remains disgusting to him. The flaws of the human body get magnified, filling him up with disgust and irritation.

In one of his conversations with the king, he describes the system of governance of his own country, England with a certain pride. After listening patiently to Gulliver and his account of English people, the King feels pitiable towards Gulliver and his countrymen. Having understood various political, social and other systems of England, the king calls the Englishmen as "the most pernicious race of little odious vermin" The response of the king is about how he perceives the account narrated by Gulliver. While for Gulliver, his country represents the best of the human societal practices and governance, the king can only feel pity for the poor people. Swift makes a sad critical commentary upon the state of affairs in England through the Brobdingnagian king's response to Gulliver.

While charting out the ignorance of the Brobdingnagians and especially the king through the narrator of Gulliver in matters of laws, state policies and regulations, it is Swift, who makes a sad and ironic commentary on the hollow perceptions and self-conceited Englishmen, who considered themselves to be the most rational and superior beings on earth. The king is appalled at the mention of gunpowder and dismisses it as 'such an inhuman idea', when Gulliver attempts to glorify its powers to destroy others. The irony underlying Gulliver's speeches reveals mankind's narrowness and this finally culminates in king's total dismissal of humankind.

Once while Gulliver is taken to a trip to the ocean in his cage, it is carried away by an eagle and dropped into water accidentally. He makes frantic signals with his handkerchief and fortunately for him, some Englishmen came to his rescue. However, when they come up to him, he feels disgusted at the sight of these 'pygmies', after his insightful journey to Brobdingnag. This marks a significant development in his psychology since till this point, Gulliver had been portrayed as absurd but true character but from now onwards, he will be completely confident with his newer knowledge and insights. A sense of reduction of humanity begins to take route not only in his mind but also in his behaviour, which will culminate in his total disregard of mankind in fourth voyage.

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## 5.8 GULLIVER'S THIRD VOYAGE TO LAPUTA

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The voyage to Laputa was composed by Swift much after the Fourth voyage was written. Gulliver continues his sea adventures and amidst a pirate attack, is abandoned in a small canoe. He rows to a nearby island and waits for his impending death lying in a cave. The next morning, he gets to see 'a vast opaque body' crossing the sun and moving towards the island. He can see through his binoculars that it is a flying island with men on it. Filled with hope, he begs for help. He needs to supplicate on account of his physical powerlessness and he is taken up on the island. He finds himself landed on the flying island called Laputa.

The island is held up in the air and Gulliver soon discovers that the inhabitants of Laputa are strange beings. Many of them are cross-eyed, some of them don't hold their heads up straight. They seem lost in their own abstract worlds, with very little attention spans and appear very busy. Curiously, he spots some servants amongst these inhabitants of the island, called 'flappers', who are given the task of striking the mouths and ears with pebbles and peas of those, who have been distracted from their conversations in the manner of reminding them. Swift highlights upon their powerlessness to control their own bodies which make them dependent upon these 'flappers'. Gulliver is led to the king of Laputa, who is so engrossed in a maths problem that he does not realise Gulliver's presence. Gulliver is fed food cut into geometrical figures. He is also provided with a tutor to train him into their native language. The clothes to be provided to him are all without shape due to failure in calculation. This reflects the inability of the tailor to apply his knowledge practically. The island floats above Lagado, the capital city of the kingdom.

The symbol of flying island represents no connection with the earth. i.e. reality. Also, it exerts physical power to control its subjects, located downward. The king manages the population below by lowering the island too much, depriving the commoners of any sun or rain. At times, he pelts stones at them for their misbehaviour. It is the most inhabited part but remains the most absurd. Their houses are built without any right angles since they hate practical geometry. They are not familiar with the words such as 'imagination' and 'invention'. Gulliver's observations of Laputan life becomes a commentary of Swift's thoughts upon the Englishmen, who believe in the superiority of philosophical and theoretical knowledge over its practical application. It is only the Laputan women, who seem to have control over their bodies and they exhibit hatred towards their absurd husbands. Thus, most of the women find their lovers from the capital down below. They try to leave Laputa but the Laputan king does not permit them. It is evident that the women are controlled by the state in the form of



men i.e., patriarchal control. The queen is also not allowed to leave Laputa till she has borne children for the royal family. Gulliver doesn't feel connected to the Laputans. However, he speaks to the women, flappers, tradesmen and the outcasts from the society. These people represent the same lack of knowledge and power as he does.

Gulliver, after observing the Laputans closely, sets off to Lagado. Here, he comes across Munodi, who is one of the friends of the king. Gulliver finds the city and its surroundings to be utterly disordered. He is surprised to see Munodi's estate to be quite ordered and symmetrical with rectangular house. He is relieved to see something of the same kind as that in his own country. Munodi informs him that his estate is one of the last hold-outs of the remnants of the prior civilization. Few years before, a group of Lagadans had gone to Laputa to learn and imbibe new mathematical theories to reconstruct the society on new principles. As a result, the town is replete with various academies and professors who continue to invent new methods and rules of agriculture. But these experiments have utterly failed and resulted in a disarray everywhere. The people, though disregard Munodi and his allegiance to the traditional methods. He has sincerely obeyed the traditions and common sense rather than the impractical reason associated with the 'modern knowledge'

The town of Lagado and its academic centres are a spoof on the Royal Society of England, famous for extremes of experimental science and intellectual discourses representing the age of enlightenment during Swift's era. Emphasis was laid upon theories rather than common sense and practicality. Swift was contemptuous of these ideas since he believed in the practical use of the knowledge and not just the theoretical one. The men who are involved in the experiments, are called projectors. They experiment in abstract and absurd findings. Some of them are involved in extracting sunbeams from cucumbers, someone on building houses from the roof down; some on training hogs to plough fields; some on treating colic diseases by pumping air into people's anuses etc. All the activities are bizarre and useless. Gulliver also gets to see the academic world and the learning process in progress. The lessons given by the professors on the ways to learn mathematics are to eat the wafers with equations written upon them. These scholars have also come upon a novel idea of enabling people to stop speaking and communicate only by demonstrating to the object that they wanted to speak about. Further, Gulliver pays a visit to academy's political projectors, who believe in managing politics by managing the physical ailments and corporeal bodies of the politicians. To solve the political arguments, they propose performing surgeries on their brains and exchanging one half of politician's brains with each other. The tax system of Lagado also

comes across as weird. There are policies to tax people for their vices, follies, sexual prowess, wit, valour and politeness but not ever for justice, wisdom, honour or learning, since the latter are worthless. Similarly, women could be taxed upon for beauty and style but not on constancy, chastity and good nature. Gulliver shares his knowledge of other society's dishonest political strategies and the projectors welcome the information.

The Laputans have lost all normal human qualities in their abnormal absorption with aimless mental activity. The flying court of the Laputan king is a spoof on the court of the English king, George I, who favoured the Whigs. In the opinion of Swift, George I was interested in and supported both musicians and scientists as their patron but in neither case was, he much knowledgeable. Gulliver also makes an attack on the policies of the island and points towards the political tyranny of the Laputan king, who attacks the Lagado region (placed below the Laputa) Swift depicts a parallel between Laputan king's ill-policies and England's prejudiced treatment towards Ireland. The king can cut off the rain and sunshine to Lagado. This could be a topical reference to the severing of trade ties of England from Ireland.

Gulliver decides to go to the island of Glubbudubdrib, which is governed by magicians, who perform necromancy. It is a region of ghosts and interestingly, Gulliver is offered to summon any dead person from the past. He responds by desiring to meet Alexander the Great, Pompey, Caesar, Hannibal, Brutus and the Roman senate. The journey becomes an account of uncovering the alternative perspectives other than what the history books have been informing the readers. Swift underlines the fact by bringing the spirits of the dead back to retell their 'true' histories. Again, this is a spoof on the kind of knowledge being disseminated in his time, which was considered 'true' after considerable 'research'. Swift questions the veracity of the new knowledges of the contemporary times. Gulliver gets to meet numerous heroes of the past. He calls upon the established philosophers to know about the truth however, among them, Aristotle recognises that the absolute truth does not exist. Truth is all about perspectives at a given time in a given space. After spending some time here, Gulliver leaves for Luggnagg. As per the customs of the land, he is forced to crawl on his belly licking the floor to approach the king. This illustrates the king's abuse of his physical power upon the subjects. The king dominates over the subjects as an authoritarian and controls them by threatening to punish them. He is kind towards Gulliver and provides him with the food and lodging along with an interpreter for his stay of three months in Luggnagg. Swift picks upon the subject of the obsession of humanity to achieve immortality through Gulliver's interaction with one of the Luggnaggian. Some of the children are born as the immortals but they suffer on account of

their immortality. Swift enumerates a long list of ill-consequences of immortality of human beings through the conversation of Gulliver with the local. These immortals are called struldbrugs and the mortals despise them in Luggnagg.

Gulliver is sent with riches and a letter of introduction to the emperor of Japan, when he expresses his wish to leave from Luggnagg. Upon his arrival in Japan, he pretends to be a Dutch and requests the emperor to find a Dutch ship for him to travel back. His wish is complied with and soon he begins his journey towards his home country, England after a period of five long years. The third voyage of Gulliver is thoroughly satirical in its attacks on contemporary science, learning and politics. It lacks a structure of a narrative. It comes across as a miscellany of several absurd experiences. Unlike the other three voyages, one finds no emotional involvement of the narrator here. Swift might be emphasising that when reason becomes important, emotions take a backseat.

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## **5.9 GULLIVER'S FOURTH VOYAGE TO THE LAND OF HOUYHNHNMS**

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After a stay of five months in England, Gulliver receives another opportunity to travel overseas and leads him to his next voyage on the ship called Adventure. Unfortunately, he comes across the pirates in the form of the men that he hires on the ship. His crew mutinies against him, imprisoning him below deck and abandoning him on an unknown shore.

The fourth voyage of Gulliver leads the readers to another strange land. As he walks towards the region, he comes across several ugly creatures, which he calls as 'animals'. Animal imagery is used to describe these creatures and words such as 'paw', 'herd' are used. These have thick hair upon their heads, breasts and genitals but they have no tails like animals, can walk upright and climb trees. Upon close observation, he is filled with surprise when he realises that the Yahoos are no-one else but human beings, but without clothes. One of them approaches Gulliver but he shoos them away with his sword and they climb the trees. However, they begin to run away at the sight of a horse approaching towards them. The horse expresses his disgust at Gulliver's touch and moves away. Meanwhile, another horse approaches and both the horses begin a formal conversation. Gulliver is amazed at the formal and civilized behaviour of these horses. He begins to believe that these must be dignified humans at large. These horses examine Gulliver and his clothes for a long time. The horses, who call themselves, Houyhnhnms, do not make much difference between the disgusting Yahoos and Gulliver, initially. They continue to refer to him as 'yahoo' and one of them invites him to follow after

him. He leads him into a house and Gulliver expects to find a human being in the house, which is very well-organised. On the contrary, he is shocked to see the horses as the masters of the house. He could see a number of polite horses sitting calmly in poised states in the clean rooms.

The horses are shown to be the natural inhabitants of this country rather than human beings. Among them is a Gray horse, who acts like the master horse and every other horse follows him patiently. He receives a setback to see the filthy creatures being tied up and given raw meat to eat in the backyard of the house owned by the horses. These are uncivilized human beings but without clothes. His perspective undergoes a serious turn when he realises that the behaviour of civility expected from human beings is practiced by the horses in this land while the humans have degraded themselves into animalistic patterns of behaviour so much that they are being controlled by the horses. These are superior and intelligent creatures who govern the nation on rational principles rather than the human beings. The 'Yahoo' is a denigrating term used for humans (by Swift as author) to ridicule and mock upon the negative aspects in human nature. This is the fourth and final voyage for Gulliver in 'Gulliver's Travels' and by the time Gulliver undertakes this peculiar experience of understanding human nature, he is disillusioned with the 'innate goodness' of the humans so much that the 'lower creatures' such as the horses begin to appeal him much more than the former.

This part of narrative also reflects a great deal of the multiple perspectives including those of the reader, Gulliver and the Houyhnhnms. As Gulliver continues to depend upon his view that civility is innate to human beings and their world, it comes as a radical shock to him that his viewpoint has been challenged. This notion seems to undercut the idea of the enlightenment and inherent belief in the fact that humans are the superior and most civilised among all the creatures in nature. The Houyhnhnms observe Gulliver and his polite behaviour. They try to feed him with raw meat as those of the Yahoos but Gulliver gives a repulsive reaction and asks for milk. They find him a little different than the degraded Yahoos therefore, they give him a place behind their house but separate from the stable meant for the Yahoos. The master horse takes upon himself to teach lessons in the language of Houyhnhnms to Gulliver.

The Houyhnhnm master wonders at the learning and reasoning abilities of Gulliver while he teaches their language to him. He cannot bring himself to believe that human beings have the capacity to govern an entire nation, when Gulliver narrates to him about his country and the people. Gulliver makes his best attempt to explain to the master horse of the perspectives of the European

nation according to which the horses are treated as beasts and trained for utility purposes. While Gulliver proudly states that the European Yahoos i.e. humans from his native land do differ from the Yahoos of Houyhnhnms land in terms of dignity, civility, moral superiority and other virtuous qualities, the master horse has a different perspective. He notes that physically, Yahoos surpass the qualities mentioned by Gulliver. Since Gulliver's body type lacks the strength, agility and tough features of the Yahoos, which help them to sustain the physical difficulties and make them able to walk on their fours, it is weaker. The master horse criticises the unattractiveness of Gulliver's physical body and understands it as weaker in comparison to Yahoos, thereby, its dependence upon external clothes to protect it. Gulliver's pride in belonging to the most cultured and civilized nation on the earth comes down shattering with the clear criticism he receives from the master horse. His ego in human pride is deflated.

Gulliver undergoes a great deal of pain to explain the notions of crime, corruption and vice of the human world to the master. He cannot make the latter understand the reasons for his unfortunate journey that led him towards this land. The horse's complete lack of understanding of human vices and words such as 'power', 'authority', 'crime', 'law', 'punishment' etc has been highlighted to establish the innocent and uncorrupted world of the natural beings. Gulliver, over a period of two years in the company of the master horse begins to believe in the superior refinement of the horses as compared to the English culture and language. The master horse wonders at the destructive attitude of the human beings with such 'short claws' and 'flat mouths', which he thinks are not powerful enough to hurt others. Gulliver continues to glorify the European nation in terms of its knowledge of various weapons, artillery and destructive strategies used in wars with other nations. The master horse is filled with disgust and observes that possession of such weapons cannot be reasonable and it would further increase the human vices and corruption. He pities the European Yahoos for their ignorance rather than their 'knowledges'

Through Gulliver, Swift makes a critique upon several systems and institutions prevalent in European countries. For instance, he describes the justice system as a system of bunch of liars. The lawyers, according to him are trained to manipulate the 'truths and the trials are stretched unnecessarily for years with no justice delivered in the end. He also observes the usage of tedious legal jargons, which are difficult for the common people to comprehend. The master horse reflects that such 'wise' people as the lawyers should have been teachers of knowledge. Gulliver replies the motives of the lawyers for such behaviour and he blames their greed to acquire money. The horse is not familiar with the concept of money and its significance in the human world.

Gulliver responds by charting out the functioning of the human life with the help of money and exploitation of natural resources to generate money. The amount of possession of money determines the status and privileges in the human society. This is inherently related to the notion of power. He goes on describing the statesman of the state, who is corrupt, immoral and consumed by his hunger for authority and control. Deception, lies and trickery are the means to elevate oneself to power positions. Bribery is rampant in such society. Swift also drives home the point that appearances can be deceptive and not always correct. The master horse notes that the noble features of Gulliver give him a distinct identity from the yahoos of Houyhnhnm land. Gulliver corrects the point of view of the master horse by saying that in Europe, the nobles carry 'a sick and weak look' since they have been raised in 'idleness' and 'debauchery'

Gulliver is impressed with the noble and pure thoughts of the master horse and being thus influenced, hopes to live in the company of these noble horses for ever. The master horse analyses the human being and his society as described by Gulliver in terms of 'animals' with so less reason, lesser than those of Yahoos. Also, on account of their physical strength, they are weaker than the yahoos. Gulliver often examines the Yahoos to understand the human nature more closely. He calls them as 'monkeys' for they continue to imitate others. Moreover, he wants to distance himself away from the Yahoos. Once, a female yahoo assaults Gulliver for lust while he is swimming in a river.

Gulliver describes the Houyhnhnms society to be perfect, based upon egalitarian principles and a rational behaviour that induces morals and rationality among the people inhabiting the land. It follows the pattern of utopian society, which treats all of its members equal to one another. The families observe arranged marriages and carefully practice family planning giving no thoughts to notions of 'courtship', 'settlements and 'love'. The children are educated upon the principles of 'temperance, exercise, cleanliness, strength, speed and hardiness' Both the genders are given equal treatment. The Houyhnhnm state is a truly democratic state.

Gulliver, after his encounter with the Houyhnhnms, acknowledges the shift in his perspectives towards the human beings. The company of the horses have made him 'see' the 'truth' about the human society and he is filled with everlasting contempt and disgust for humans so much so that when he comes back to his home in Europe, he cannot stand the 'repulsive' presence of humans around him. He is filled with self-loathing. He feels disgusted when he reflects upon his reflection in the water. He ultimately rejects humankind and makes his best efforts to follow the Houyhnhnms.

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## 5.10 LET'S SUM UP

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Jonathan Swift is one of the greatest satirists of his age. Through *Gulliver's Travels*, Swift attempts to mock the existing lofty ideas of human progress with the help of scientific knowledge and technology. Protagonist Lemuel Gulliver undertakes four Voyages - to the land of Lilliput, to Brobdingnag, a land of giants, to islands of Laputa and Lagado, and the land of Houyhnhnms.

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## 5.11 QUESTIONS

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- Q1) Discuss *Gulliver's Travels* as a satire on the contemporary politics of Swift's England.
- Q2) Examine the theme of perspective in Swift's *Gulliver's Travels*.
- Q3) Discuss the significance of the use of irony in *Gulliver's Travels* by Swift.
- Q4) '*Gulliver's Travels* is a critique of the Age of Enlightenment of Eighteenth Century England'. Elaborate.
- Q5) Analyse the treatment of gender in *Gulliver's Travels*.
- Q6) Throw light on the historical and political context of *Gulliver's Travels*.

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# Unit-6

## STUDY OF GULLIVER'S TRAVELS PART II

### Unit Structure:

- 6.0 Objectives
- 6.1 Introduction
- 6.2 Themes in Gulliver's Travels
  - 6.2.1 The Limitation of Human Understanding in Gulliver's Travels
  - 6.2.2 Individual and Society in *Gulliver's Travels*
  - 6.2.3 Historical and Political context of *Gulliver's Travel*
  - 6.2.4 Treatment of Women and Notion of Family in *Gulliver's Travels*
- 6.3 Let's Sum Up
- 6.4 Questions
- 6.5 References

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### 6.0 OBJECTIVES

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This unit aims at making the students familiar with:

- The themes in Gulliver's Travels
- The Historical and Political context of Gulliver's Travels
- The treatment of Gender in Gulliver's Travels

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### 6.1 INTRODUCTION

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Jonathan Swift's *Gulliver's Travels* covers four voyages undertaken by the protagonist, to distant lands. The book was written neither to instruct, nor to entertain. Primary aim of Swift was to mock. At the beginning he mocks travel writing, which was in vogue at that time. The subjects under scrutiny vary from local political conflicts, European ideals of human progress, enlightenment, to overall the superiority of human beings over other creatures, and the concept of humanity itself. With Gulliver's rejection of company of men after the fourth voyage, the target of Swift's satire seems to be the entire mankind.



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## 6.2 THEMES IN GULLIVER'S TRAVELS

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### 6.2.1 The Limitation of Human Understanding in Gulliver's Travels

Swift's *Gulliver's Travels* is structured around four voyages undertaken by Lemuel Gulliver, a fictitious character. The very introduction of the character of Gulliver to the readers creates a confounding effect upon them. The tale of adventurous journeys has been built around a narrative in the introductory part which reflects in the form of exchange of letters. At the onset, Swift makes the readers believe in the veracity Gulliver as a real persona by making him reply back to the publisher of the book. Swift has deliberately played with the idea of the limitation of human understanding, which is one of the major themes of *Gulliver's Travels*.

In the beginning, Swift had come up with the title for his travel accounts as 'Travels into Several Remote Nations of the World' This was to sound like the true accounts from travelogue writings. Such writings were popular in his day and to produce this effect, he had chosen to provide the maps of the 'strange nations', which Gulliver encounters consequent to his unfortunate voyages. Each voyage exposes him to unknown lands with strange people. These varied experiences were meant to project his (Swift's) own observations and insights of the human condition at large in his own life. The imaginary travels into these lands provided the author with the elements to satirise the various aspects of English society. One of the primary themes underlying the narrative of Gulliver's Travels is the idea of knowledge and its limitation in respect to the human world.

Gulliver represents himself as the mouthpiece of the author, Swift. He is described as an educated, rational human being, who has control over his emotions and is aware of his conduct in the society. Swift chooses to portray the character of Gulliver as an explorer, who is interested to know beyond the available knowledge. He represents the curiosity of the Englishman of the Age of Enlightenment of Eighteenth century. He had been a surgeon, who gives up as his business begins to dwindle and steers into the adventurous career of a ship captain. His willingness to take upon the occupation of a captain at a ship and become an integral part of several voyages (unknown and thus possibility of risks) reflects him to be the product of his age. Further, as he lands into regions unexplored in the human history, he does not lose confidence. He faces the strange circumstances with good spirit. At no point of time in his adventures with people of all sorts, does he exploit them for his advantage or think of harming them. He is described as conducting himself as a moral person. He exercises his sense of good and bad in those circumstances. For instance, in

Lilliput, he intends to save the royal palace from being engulfed by fire, thereby, not depending upon any external assistance, he goes on to extinguish the spreading fire by urinating upon the palace. He acted in the urgency of the circumstances rather than fearing the consequences of his act. However, he does suffer for this. Nevertheless, he behaves rationally and decides for the future course of action. Gulliver's character has been described as a mature, reasonable and sincere Englishman. He respects the customs and norms of the regions he lands into and does not exert his physical power over the miniature-sized Lilliputians. It is the knowledge gained through his exposure to other parts of unknown world that eventually sustains him through his voyages. Swift, however brings home the point that too much of knowledge can be dangerous.

With Gulliver travelling through remote and strange islands across the world, it becomes evident through his experiences that knowledge can be both useful as well as self-destructive. The human mind is capable of great thoughts and ideas but the difficulty of bringing those ideas into the real, physical world for their practical purposes, can at times lead to disastrous consequences. The voyage to Laputa becomes its primary example. Gulliver's observations and reflections project the Laputans as overwhelmed with the knowledge of Science and technology so much so that they forget that they are living human beings since they act absurd. Their entire lives get governed by these scientific principles. It reflects in their lives at all levels including food, houses, economy, inter-personal relationships. The term 'practicality' does not exist in their world. Too much of unnecessary research and experimentation leads them to absurdity at the cost of their common sense. They suffer from 'attention spans' so acutely that they carry along 'flappers' (servants), who hit them if they are lost in thinking something and therefore, need a rapt on their heads to bring them back to the real world. With constant lost in thoughts, their heads are slanted towards either left or right. They remain so engrossed in their knowledge seeking processes that they end up being cuckolded by their wives. The character of Munodi, however is an exception to the existence in Laputan island. Swift places him in the narrative to create an alternative to the absurd Laputans. He is the only one who continues to hold on to the traditional knowledge of governing lives. He is made fun of for his belief system. Only his land is fertile and abundant against the sad and barren lands of his town. The academy to conduct experiments at the town represents the centre of absurdity. The professors spending their lives into researches such as extracting sunlight from cucumbers and trying to undo a language to invent some new forms of communication are part of some of the glorious experiments at Munodi's city. Swift seems to question the

applicability of such knowledge to human life. What is the use of theoretical knowledge if it does not benefit the humankind?

Swift, if criticises the Laputans, who represent the Englishmen with unnecessary intellectual pursuits, does not leave the Houyhnhnms uncriticised in the fourth voyage of Gulliver. The idea of reliance upon too much of rationality can also be dangerous as is evident in the fourth voyage. It describes the limits and possibilities of rational principles in a society. The society of Houyhnhnms is governed by the horses and not the men. The men have been portrayed as their degenerate selves in the form of Yahoos and condemned by the horses as beasts. The Yahoos represent the extreme human instincts and emotions against the extreme rationality practiced by the master Houyhnhnms. Gulliver finds himself at loss upon realisation that he is understood as the beastly Yahoo by the refined and graceful horses. The presence of Yahoos reminds him of the lowest of the levels to which humanity can get shrunk if not taken care. He has to prove his refinement through his civility and graceful mannerisms towards the Houyhnhnms. The horses are represented as the simplest and innocent beings, unaware of terms such as 'power', 'corruption', 'destruction' etc, which is common to the human understanding. They do not seem to understand these concepts while Gulliver painfully explains to them about them. As Gulliver makes an observation about them, he perceives that their society lacks any uniform codes of behaviour. Their society does not need law or lawyers. They know not much about astronomy or science. They also lack the knowledge of documentation and preserving their philosophical debates through writing. They don't have the system of written language since they rely upon the oral tradition. Though Gulliver is impressed with the life and thought of Houyhnhnms but Swift seems to state that it is the very lack of knowledge for these horses which gives them peaceful but unidimensional lives. In other words, Houyhnhnms also receive their share of criticism by Swift for lacking the natural curiosity to excel and improve. Their lives, though depict peace and rationality, it reveals stagnancy and devoid of emotions. They are not the explorers. Rather, they represent themselves as automatons with no emotions. In contrast, Gulliver represents himself as a constant explorer and knowledge-seeker.

Once, Gulliver returns to his homeland, begins to reflect upon the idea of knowledge, especially his self-knowledge. After being to several remote lands and distant places, he is able to perceive that he is not more than a refined Yahoo. Nevertheless, he identifies himself and other human beings as Yahoos, which creates a feeling of disgust for human society in him. He understands that as humans consider themselves to be most civilised, cultured and refined as compared to the animals and

beasts, the latter might be thinking about the man in the same capacity by the animals. The idea of perspective rules the narrative of *Gulliver's Travels* throughout.

### **6.2.2 Individual and Society in *Gulliver's Travels*:**

Swift has addressed a significant debate of Individual against the Society through the narrative of *Gulliver's Travels*. The purpose of Swift to make Gulliver (as a character) undertake the several voyages is to explore the notion of a perfect society, if any around the world. His persona does not seem satisfied and at home, when he is in his native country. The pattern of the voyages undertaken by Gulliver, one after the other in succession, is uniform in terms of the time he spent at home. The readers are informed that Gulliver does not stay for more than six months in his country since he is back from the earlier voyage, than he decides to be a part of yet another adventurous journey into unknown regions of the world. Being bored of the society and its norms, he is constantly on the move. The readers are not informed of his family background in detail. Neither his relationship with the family members is described at length, nor does one see him interacting with other members of the society freely. He is not a social person. He comes across as an individual. He is described as an explorer, who seeks constant knowledge. It is the voyage that allows him to go away from his society and exert his individuality in one way or other. Though, he continues to represent himself to others in the lands he reaches, as one of the Englishmen, proud of his association with the country with knowledge. Swift attempts to find a utopia out there in the larger world with exploration into each voyage. However, towards the end of all the voyages, Gulliver ends up becoming a misanthrope and withdraws himself from any human company. The constant attempt of Gulliver to integrate into societies ultimately results in repeated failures till his complete alienation from them. By depicting Gulliver as self- isolated and alienated from the human society by the end of the book, Swift attempts to highlight his own scepticism towards practising extreme individuality.

While in Lilliput, Gulliver describes his observations of the Lilliputian lives in general. He closely observes the principles on which the individual is related to the society at large. He learns that the Lilliputians send their children to public nurseries to be taught by professors and servants. This is a public system of training and education, common to all Lilliputian children. The parents are made to pay towards the education of their children in public nurseries. This is paid as monthly sums and depending on the financial conditions of the families, the payments are accordingly adjusted. But each family, rich or poor, contributes towards the children's education. It is thought unfair towards the public nurseries to bear up the expenses of education of the children. The constitution of nurseries is such that it caters to the training of the students in

terms of gender and social class. The girls are not discriminated against and are raised to be as brave and smart as the boys. Moreover, the girls are not taught fictional stories or imaginary tales and if any nanny or maid is found to feed the girls upon entertaining stories or social gossips, she receives punishment in the form of whipping, imprisonment or permanent exile from the system.

The idea of raising the young children away from the constant company of parents is rooted in the traditional thoughts of ideal society proposed by philosophers such as Plato and Rousseau. The basis for such arrangement is to avoid introduction of corruptive practices inherent in human societies to the growing children. Though such social arrangement evokes ideals of egalitarianism which tends to treat the women equal to men and by making every family contribute towards the children's education. However, as Gulliver continues to observe the grown-up men and women in Lilliputian society, they come across as corrupt and deceiving to fulfil their self-interests. Many of them carry their egos on their sleeves. This observation gives way to the ironical criticism upon English society (Lilliput being its parallel) and its high ideals, which get punctured, when tried in practical realms. The adult Lilliputians practice corruption at all levels including displaying hypocritical behaviours, jealousies among themselves and continuous attempts to berate others. They exhibit sorry state of excessive human pride throughout. There is therefore, a wide gap between the ideals (collective education of children) and the realisation of these ideals (adult human behaviour). Thus, the society of Lilliput cannot be termed as the perfect utopian society as per the observations made by Gulliver. It remains inherently flawed. Swift creates another imaginary voyage for Gulliver to explore more into the idea of a perfect society, if any that exists on earth.

If the Lilliputians depict the excesses of English pride and ego for acquiring knowledge, it is the Laputans, who exhibit the hollow ideals associated with the ideas related to enlightenment for the Britishers. The entire Laputan island is so engrossed in conducting useless researches and endless experiments that they have forgotten their own existence as living human beings. The Laputans lead abstract lives with no room for imagination, creativity and alternate visions. They refuse to accept the practical advantages of their knowledge and thus it remains useless. However, the Laputan women display a better sense of practicality by understanding the notions of their physical bodies. They have to bear children, which makes them remain more in touch with their bodies. They loathe their self-absorbed husbands and find their lovers in Lagadans (other than the Laputans). The state tries to control them by putting several social restrictions upon them. The men need support of the state laws to control their women, who

have lost interest in their men. The ever-progressive Laputan society distinguishes itself from the traditional society in terms of leading disoriented lives at all levels. Almost everyone has devoted himself to the study of one branch of knowledge or another. There is no sense of individuality among the Laputans. They don't celebrate occasions or festivals. They are not shown to interact socially. The king of Laputa demonstrates his ability to control his subjects by abusing his powers. Laputa, being the most absurd of all the states described through the voyages thus, cannot be the kind of society, in which Gulliver finds a replacement for his own English society. As Lilliput, Laputa also is deemed as a flawed society.

It is in his last voyage that Gulliver encounters a society, which he feels to be the most closed to his conception of being a perfect society. The Houyhnhnm society is perceived by him to be the most honest, simple, uncorrupted, virtuous and based on rationality. Their society is completely governed by principles of reason. One characteristic feature of this society is that it lacks the space for individuality, though it has established itself as perfectly moral and egalitarian society. Though Gulliver is completely fascinated and thus influenced by the life of Houyhnhnms, Swift creates certain gaps in the narrative to highlight the shortcomings inherent in this society. The Houyhnhnms are so dedicated to rationality that there is no scope for imagination. They don't have the notion of the word 'opinion' thereby no scope for disagreements or arguments among themselves. They discuss the same ideas repeatedly. The society, though practices egalitarian principles of equality and justice. The marriages are arranged by the families and friends to scale the qualities of the partners in terms of beauty and strength. There is no room for ideas such as love, emotions, courtship etc. Accordingly, each couple has two off-springs. If it is two foals or two colts, then one of the young one is exchanged with another couple with same gendered children. The society follows the dictums of equality of sexes in all respects. The idea of evil and deceit are foreign to Houyhnhnms.

The society suffers from the problem of lack of individual identity. All of them look similar. There is no distinctive identity in Houyhnhnms. All are equally good and rational. They share a collective disdain for individuality. Further, they don't accept the Yahoos as their equal. They treat the latter as a different class of beings. The idea of 'otherness' is also evident in their treatment of Yahoos, who resemble the human beings. Their qualities are in complete contrast to Gulliver. He has been an individual and an explorer, who has least sense of belonging to his native society. As per his perception, the Houyhnhnms practice the best ideals as envisioned by the human society and therefore, their society is perceived as the perfect one by Gulliver. However, he is not

allowed to remain in this society forever and has to return back to his English society.

Swift has attempted to mock the excesses of both the ideas i.e., communal life as well as individual aspirations through *Gulliver's Travels* and it represents itself as a novel of alienation of the modern man in this larger world.

### **6.2.3 Historical and Political context of *Gulliver's Travel***

Since its first appearance in 1726, Swift's *Gulliver's Travels* has continued to enjoy a great deal of popularity among a wide section of readers including children and adults. Most of the children are familiar with Gulliver's tale as they read the tale as one of fantastical adventures of Gulliver. Their imaginations are caught easily with Gulliver travelling to wonderful and unknown islands full of strange people and beings. No reader can forget this tale of Gulliver, once he has read it or heard about it. It has captivated the attention of readers, critics, artists and authors alike. Among the other works of satire published by Swift, *Gulliver's Travels* remain immensely popular. The popularity of the genius of Swift was evident immediately after its publication in 1726. It instantly became a sensational best-seller. Its abridged version for children (focus on imagination and size) has remained a classic till date while its unabridged version for the adult readers offers the most scathing criticism of his contemporary age and its people, with the use of irony and black humour. Many of the contemporary readers were so much influenced by the satirical masterpiece that they took it as a true account and looked into the map for all the locales and regions that Gulliver travels into. Swift's clever and strategic use of the then much popular form of writing, Travelogues, provided him with the desired framework to make the tale most effective in its purpose. However, though it remains the most entertaining among the most of the literary tales, its author's intention was not to entertain the world, rather 'to vex it'

To understand the brilliance of the satire aimed at the specific topical targets and the human nature in general, one must have an understanding of the times to which the author belonged. One must also examine the set of conditions that must have compelled the author to adopt the 'misanthropic' viewpoint of humanity in general. The age to which Swift belonged was rife for satirical writings.

England had continued to witness unstable political and religious atmosphere since the times of Henry VIII in fifteenth-sixteenth century, who had challenged the supremacy of the Roman catholic church and its pope by establishing Anglican church in England and paving way for protestant sect in Christianity. The staunch followers of the Roman catholic church

found themselves divided against the protestants at the level of following religious ideas. The succeeding- rulers also followed either of the religious principles and accordingly treated the subjects, often prejudiced against the other religious sect, which resulted in matters of governance. The nation had achieved a period of stability however, during the reign of queen Elizabeth in Sixteenth century on account of queen not favouring either of the religious ideologies and by remaining unmarried to avoid the creation of any specific religious affiliation. The later centuries were again caught up with the religious conflicts, evident in decision of the monarch and his religious affiliation. Moreover, there was always a tussle between the powers of the king and the parliament. It was in 1649, with the beheading of Charles I, (whose supporters were in conflict with those backing the rule of the parliament) that a brief period of Parliament's rule was established. In 1660, the young son of Charles I, who had fled to France, came back to English throne, bringing with him the influence of French mannerisms and a belief in Roman catholic church. After his death, his brother James II, sat on throne, reinforcing the supremacy of catholic church.

It was with the Glorious Revolution, which took place in 1688, that the catholic ruler James II was deposed (he fled to Ireland) and replaced with the foreign ruler, William of Orange, the husband of Mary, daughter of the deposed king. England continued to face the threat of invasions from France (Catholic follower) and underwent two of the Jacobite rebellions supported by France in 1715 and 1745 during the Hanoverian reign of George I and George II respectively. The second rebellion was quelled successfully, which quieted the revolting factions by suppressing them forever with the Battle of Culloden. In 1707, with the parliaments of Ireland and England joining together in a political union, the Great Britain came into being. Few of the institutions such as Church remained separate though. England witnessed a never before transformation at various levels with the end of the long struggle for political freedom. The common people learnt the art to live together with differing opinions. The culture of increasing sociability was evident in the mushrooming of various coffee-houses, club-houses and several other public meeting places. There was a sudden surge of books, magazines and publishing activities. Schools and educational institutions were established and the reading public grew with the rise in literacy rates. The writers of the age pre-occupied themselves with voicing their interests and affiliations to either of the political parties. The growing sociability made the masses forget the divisions across politics and religion. The government was still divided into two major parties, Tories and Whigs, while the Church was divided into Anglicans, Catholics and Dissenters.



Swift had grown in these transforming times for England and his life continued to witness the several ups and downs in relation to his close associations to politics and religion at one level. To understand the genius of Swift's brilliant command over satire, one needs to look into his life to gauge the bitterness which reflects in his literary masterpieces. He had suffered immensely in his childhood on account of his mother's poverty and death of the father. Though proud, he was compelled to remain dependent upon his not-so welcoming relatives and the bruised ego of Swift continued to puff-up. After his graduation, he was to be an apprentice to Sir William Temple, one of his distant relatives and a statesman and an excellent diplomat. He served himself in the capacity of a private secretary, which was a humiliating status for him, knowing well his own genius as compared to the relative employer. Nevertheless, being bound by the financial strains, he spent about ten long years at the Temple household, growing bitter with each passing year. During this period, his *Battle of the Books* was written. He read and studied widely here. As the bitterness grew up in him and he found unbearable to serve Temple, he quarrelled with his patron and left to settle himself in the Church of England. Later on, he moved into the Church of Laracor, a country in Ireland. Here, he laboured to improve the conditions of the poor people around him. He witnessed the rampant corruptive practices in the Church, through which the men of little merit could easily advance to higher positions in no time, while he was largely being ignored despite contributing the best of his efforts. His resentment continued to grow up at the ways of the world. The bitter experiences provided him with the food for thoughts to write his *Tale of a Tub*, a satire on religion. With the publication of these two satires, he attracted the attention of the readers and critics alike, who proclaimed him as the most powerful satirist of the age. He gave up serving in the church and entered the party politics. Both the Tories and the Whigs feared the lash of his satires, though he supported the Tories initially.

With the Tory government going out of power, Swift's position became unstable and he was forced to accept the position of Dean of St. Patrick's Cathedral in Dublin, Ireland, though he was earlier promised a bishopric in England. His satire in *Tale of a Tub* had rendered him with this difficult situation. He probably had offended Queen Anne by writing the satire on religion. Upon his return to Ireland, he wrote *Gulliver's Travels*, the satirical tale on humankind, since he had achieved the most of his bitterness from the mankind by now. He gradually gave himself to insanity and was consumed by a brain disease, which lead him to be lunatic towards the end of his life in 1745. His close observations of the men and their ways around him provided with the literary matter for his satirical writings. It was possible for Swift to write biting satires in his contemporary times probably because the License Act had not

been renewed since 1695 and publishing of the books could not be censored, thereby resulting in the growth of satirical writings during the 18<sup>th</sup> century. As one of the consequences of the Glorious Revolutions, the Protestant English monarchs introduced the Bill of Rights in 1689, that literally settled the problem of a catholic ruler ever succeeding on the English throne. It also brought about a change in the foreign policy of the nation, which had continued to incessantly fight with the neighbouring nations, especially France, for supremacy of the power.

The contemporary readers of Swift's satires were familiar with the then current circumstances and the allusions to various characters portrayed in his *Gulliver's Travels*. They could not just be entertained alone but also knew the target of Swift's satires, being familiar with the contemporary political developments. However, the readers of the ages that succeeded the era of Swift found it little difficult to contextualise the aim and direction of his satires. As had been the literary trends of the age, the readers would often look for the references to contemporary political issues and satire directed at the famous political and social personalities of his times. The readers were familiar with Swift's manner of attacking those, who were in power and abused that power. For instance, the corrupt politicians. In his voyage to Lilliput, through Gulliver, Swift directs his criticism at the political world of England. The several mechanisms, which act as the part and parcel to sustain the notions of power have been highlighted through various instances. Those who wish to seek political power display set of unnecessary skills, which have nothing to do with the politics. Swift has reduced it to the level of absurdity. For instance, the act of rope-dancing, jumping through hoops and balancing oneself to prove the manoeuvring skills. The reference to Flimnap, the treasurer of the kingdom, who has been an excellent rope-dancer, by virtue of balancing himself, has achieved the present political position. Swift could be hinting at Robert Walpole, the head of the Whig party in English politics, while chalking out the character of Flimnap. Lilliput has two major political factions just as the English parliament has. These are the Tramesckams and Slamecksans, probably representing the Tory party and the Whig party.

Swift has cleverly infused the contemporary political situation into the religious conditions of the time through the narrative. The two political parties also represent the dominant religious ideologies in the form of preference over 'High heels' and 'Low heels' wherein the former represent the conservatives while the latter come across as the liberal ones. The allusion to the dominance of the High heel people as masses and Low heels as those, controlling the power refers to the Whigs in power of the political situation in England. Further, the reference to the continuous war of Lilliput with its immediate neighbour, Blefuscu on account of the dispute arising

from the argument concerned with the end from which an egg should be broken, is clearly an absurd observation on England's constant tussle for political power with France with the base as the religious inclination. The population of Lilliput is divided into two set of beliefs as the Big Endiens and the Small Endiens. The former represents the belief in Catholic church and its religious principles while the latter refers to the believers in the Anglican church i. e. the protestants. The laws in Lilliput have made difficult for the Big Endiens to assert themselves. Their books (propagation of knowledge) have long been forbidden by the Small-Endien government, thereby resulting in some of them taking refuge in Blefuscu and supporting it to attack Lilliput. Swift's own attitude towards war and policy of destruction of one's enemy is negative. Gulliver refuses to attack Blefuscu as instructed by the Lilliputian emperor. Also, the Brobdingnagian king displays his disgust at the mention of a specially constructed tool in the form of gunpowder, to destroy the enemy.

All these and several allusions used by Swift in the narrative of *Gulliver's Travels* could be understood and enjoyed by the general reading public of his contemporary times. The readers would often look forward to the exposure and criticism of the public personalities. Thus, Swift's *Gulliver's Travels* must have provided the contemporary readers with a fiction that they could relate to.

#### **6.2.4 Treatment of Women and Notion of Family in *Gulliver's Travels***

The character of Lemuel Gulliver remains dominant throughout the narrative of *Gulliver's Travels*. He is the only constant character whose perspective shapes up the narrative of the novel. He is the product of his age. Swift has sketched his character in the mould of the prototypes of an English man of the Eighteenth century. This was an era of enlightenment and the curious Englishman sought to explore new knowledges through varied experiences. Gulliver is an adventurous and ambitious man, thirsty to explore the world.

Before Gulliver is depicted to embark upon his adventurous journeys, the readers are provided with a brief glimpse of his family background. He belongs to a middle-class family. His father could barely provide for his expenses on education and lodging, while he received college education in a distant town. To fulfil his monetary requirements, as had been the practice, he seeks an apprenticeship with an eminent surgeon in London. For most part of his young life, he is away from his family and thus develops a detached attitude, which is evident in the manner of his reference to marriage and wife. 'Being advised to alter my condition, I married Mrs Mary Burton, second daughter to Mr Edmond Burton hosier in Newgate street, with whom I received four hundred pounds for a

portion' (Chapter 1) One notices that there is no sentiment of warmth in the reference made to his wife. Rather, association with her is weighed in terms of the monetary assistance that the marriage brings in for him. There is no mention of personal attachment to his wife and she is referred to as the daughter of Mr. Burton. Clearly, it is established that the identity of Gulliver's wife gets shrunk into the social identity as a daughter and a wife. The personal characteristics of Mary and her inter-personal relationship with her husband, Gulliver have not been described.

In the eighteenth century, there were strict codes of conduct for the men and women. The women were raised up to be the good daughters, wives and mothers, with no say in the decision-making business of the families. The marriages were considered a responsibility and a personal duty for the men and women. Women could not aspire for public opportunities and they were trained to perform the domestic responsibilities including bearing and rearing children, while the man of the house could move places, gaining knowledge of the world. Women could be support-systems to their families and were not allowed to nurture individual aspirations. The narrative of *Gulliver's Travels* reinforces the notion of the social relationship of the husband and wife and the latter's non-assertion in the matters of public affairs of the former. Swift devotes hardly one page describing the family background of Gulliver and poor Mary Burton receives only one or two references here and there. It is the sole decision of Gulliver to undertake the several journeys on ships as Mary Burton does not seem to protest much except for once towards the end of the narrative. However, Gulliver, being 'the man' of the house does not fall for the emotional pleas of his wife. He stays in the company of his wife and family for a very brief period of three years after his marriage. Thereafter, he is constantly on move. His marriage has been a marriage of convenience. After being to the land of Houyhnhnms, he cannot stand the sight of human beings, not even his wife. When he comes back to his home, the wife attempts to love him but his disgust for the mankind makes him exhibit his repulsion for her as well. For him, she continues to be a social being, fulfilling her duties as wife to him, and never as a companion, with whom he can share his insights and knowledge.

*Gulliver's Travels* treats women in a distinctive manner, though there are not too many references to woman. They exist by virtue of their relation to their families. In almost all the four voyages, Gulliver's attitude towards the women character is build up in the manner he perceives them. In Lilliput, Gulliver makes an observation of the educational institutions, which serve as common platforms for training both the genders of young boys and girls. At these public nurseries, girls are provided similar education as that of the boys. However, the training imparted to them is to teach

them to be better companions to their husbands after their marriages. Gulliver emphasises upon the utility of such a principle in the training of the young girls. He echoes the principles of treatment of women of his own society by supporting the training methodology. Not too many women characters have been sketched at length in Lilliput except for one or two, among which wife of Flimnap, the prime-minister of the kingdom of Lilliput and the Lilliputian Queen figure dominantly. The wife of Flimnap remains sympathetic to the woes of Gulliver on account of his gigantic size and his treatment at the hands of the corrupted and proud Lilliputians. Gulliver views it from the perspective of the feminine virtues inherent in a woman – sympathetic, concerned, helpful and understanding. While her husband, in order to trouble Gulliver, alleges her extra-marital affair with Gulliver, which amuses the latter. To converse with men other than the family members in the public sphere was considered a vice for the women, echoed by the attitude of the character of Flimnap in the narrative. The wife is being treated as a tool to ‘vex’ Gulliver, who has earned too much of appreciation from the royal house. Her dignity in the public domain does not get due consideration as compared to the honour of the husband, who represents a public office.

While referring to the episode of putting out the accidental fire caught by the royal palace of Lilliput, Gulliver makes a mention of the manner in which his act of dousing the fire by urinating on it, offends the queen. Swift makes use of his personal experience with Queen Anne of England, who was offended with his writing of *Tale of a Tub*, a powerful satire on religion and probably deprived him of the position of Bishopric in the church of England, sending him to the church of Ireland rather. Moreover, Gulliver notes that the unfortunate accident of fire was caused due to ‘the careless negligence of a maid of the queen, who fell asleep while reading a romance’ The carelessness of the maid has been attributed to her feminine nature.

Gulliver’s caretaker in Brobdingnag, Glumdalclitch, the farmer’s daughter, does not receive a good treatment by her family members. Her brother troubles Gulliver constantly, almost taking his life away with one of his pranks, but nobody reprimands him. Her father is least concerned for her. While the queen picks up a fancy for Gulliver, Glumdalclitch is sent along as his caretaker. In yet another episode, he expresses his disgust at the sight of the monstrous breasts of one of the Brobdingnagian females and speaks of the numerous flaws of the female body when magnified. His voyage to Laputa also describes the poor status of women of the island. There are laws governing the restrictions upon the women of Laputa. These women, however are intelligent and seek lovers from the lower islands since their husbands remain engrossed in abstract world of useless experiments. The Balnibarbi women are

taxed for their beauty and demeanour since these are the only qualities that the women could possess according to the rules of the island. Women characters in the last of his voyages to the land of Houyhnhnms are also not spared from his misogynistic criticism. The Yahoo females display sensuality and cannot control their primitive urges, which at a time, poses a great threat to Gulliver. They remind him of his own physicality that resembles their ill-shapes. Gulliver describes the women of each nation that he travels to significantly apart from delineating other existing systems and the general behaviour of the men. In Gulliver's description of women of different nations with varied behaviour, reflects author's own misplaced ideas of one gender. Swift's personal experiences with women (including his mother) in his life had been bitter. Nevertheless, it is not always necessary to look for the influence of the personal life experiences of the author to analyse an aspect of a novel. It tends to lose its purpose and beauty.

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### 6.3 LET'S SUM UP

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Jonathan Swift's *Gulliver's Travels* is structured around four voyages undertaken by Lemuel Gulliver, the central character. Swift creates a realistic persona of Gulliver. Limitation of human understanding, is one of the major themes of *Gulliver's Travels*. Gulliver's experiences during his travels through remote and strange islands across the world, show that knowledge can be both useful as well as self-destructive. The human mind is capable of great thoughts and ideas but it can be quite disastrous to apply them into the real, physical world. Swift also cleverly uses the contemporary political and religious situation into the narrative. *Gulliver's Travels* is a masterpiece of satire and creativity

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### 6.4 QUESTIONS

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- Q1) Discuss *Gulliver's Travels* as a satire on the contemporary politics of Swift's England.
- Q2) Examine the theme of perspective in Swift's *Gulliver's Travels*.
- Q3) Discuss the significance of the use of irony in *Gulliver's Travels* by Swift.
- Q4) '*Gulliver's Travels* is a critique of the Age of Enlightenment of Eighteenth Century England'. Elaborate.
- Q5) Analyse the treatment of gender in *Gulliver's Travels*.
- Q6) Throw light on the historical and political context of *Gulliver's Travels*.

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# Unit-7

## STUDY OF MARY SHELLEY'S FRANKENSTEIN I

### Unit Structure:

- 7.0 Objectives
- 7.1 Introduction to the Author
- 7.2 Summary
- 7.3 Critical Analysis
- 7.4 Some Important Textual Quotes
- 7.5 Let's Sum Up
- 7.6 Questions
- 7.7 References

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### 7.0 OBJECTIVES

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- To introduce the students to the author Mary Shelley and her contribution to literature
- To make the students understand the summary of the novel

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### 7.1 INTRODUCTION

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Early nineteenth century England was immersed in Romanticism. The Romantic movement in English literature of the early 19th century has its roots in 18th-century poetry, the Gothic novel and the novel of sensibility. Gothic is a genre of literature that is characterised by horror, mystery and death. By the time Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* arrived, Romanticism was well established with Horace Walpole's *The Castle of Otranto* (1764), the first Gothic fiction. *Frankenstein* makes use of elements of the Gothic novel and those of Romantic movement. However, the significance of *Frankenstein* lies in its being the first science fiction novel.

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### 7.2 THE AUTHOR- MARY SHELLEY

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Mary Shelley was born in London on August 30<sup>th</sup>, 1797. Both of her parents were well-known radical intellectual figures in the late 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19th centuries. In addition to *Frankenstein*, Mary Shelley wrote six other novels, a novella, mythological dramas, stories and articles, various travel books, and biographical studies. Her father, William Godwin, was a strong critic of aristocratic



privilege and a supporter of both utilitarianism and anarchism. His most famous works include the tract *An Enquiry Concerning Political Justice* and the novel *Things as They Are; or, The Adventures of Caleb Williams*. Godwin also wrote a curious novel called *St. Leon: A Tale of the Sixteenth Century* that follows a French aristocrat who discovers the secret to the immortality of life. Although little read today, many critics believe the ideas found within *St. Leon* influenced Shelley's creation of *Frankenstein*.

Mary Shelley's mother was Mary Wollstonecraft. Wollstonecraft was the prototypical feminist before the word "feminism" was even invented. Although she wrote many works on history, politics, and travel, Wollstonecraft will always be remembered for her tract *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*. In this classic feminist text, Wollstonecraft argued that men and women are equal in every way and that they should be given equal opportunity in education.

Mary Shelley grew up with one older half-sister named Fanny Imlay, who was the product of an affair between Wollstonecraft and a mysterious soldier. Then, within a few years, Godwin married re-married to a woman named Mary Jane Clairmont. Clairmont already had two children, and soon Godwin and Clairmont had a baby boy together.

While growing up, Mary Shelley was surrounded by some of the finest artistic and intellectual minds in the UK. Just a few luminaries Godwin was on good terms with include:

- Romantic poets William Wordsworth and Samuel Taylor Coleridge
- Literary critic William Hazlitt
- Essayist Charles Lamb

Whenever she had an opportunity to be alone, Mary Shelly could often be found reading in her father's library, outside, or even by her mother's grave. Shelly used fiction as a means of escape from her incredibly busy home life.

The first known work published by Mary Shelly was a short poem called "Mounseer Nongtongpaw" in the year 1807. Based on a song by Charles Dibdin, this humorous verse deals with an Englishman, John Bull, who visits France without understanding a word of French. Shelley was only ten when her father published this work for her.

Mary was actually born Mary Wollstonecraft Godwin, but that soon changed after she fell head over heels in love with one of England's foremost Romantic poets: Percy Bysshe Shelley.

Along with Lord Byron, Percy Shelley was one of the most radical Romantic poets of his era. Percy Shelley was an admirer of Godwin's political theories, and he became a frequent guest at Godwin's London home. However, after meeting Mary for the first time, Percy Shelley quickly became less interested in Godwin's theories and more interested in his daughter.

Percy Shelley was married to Harriet Westbrook at the time, but that didn't deter him from courting Mary. He and Mary decided to flee England together in 1815. Both Shelleys voyaged all around Continental Europe, but all was not fun and games in these early years. The couple's first child died a few after Mary gave birth, and they were both extremely poor. This action also caused a major rift between Mary and her father.

Eventually the Shelleys arrived in Geneva, Switzerland, and met up with Lord Byron, the writer John Polidori, and many other literary luminaries. The group of writers instantly formed a small bohemian community right by Lake Geneva. It was here, on an extremely stormy night, that Lord Byron suggested everyone try to write their own horror story.

After suffering from writer's block for a few days, Mary Shelley had a strange dream of doctor creating a monster in his own image. She decided to develop this dream into a novel. Within only a few weeks, Mary Shelley produced her first draft of *Frankenstein; or, The Modern Prometheus*. She was only eighteen.

In case you didn't know, *Frankenstein* tells the story of Dr. Victor Frankenstein and his dream to become like God by creating life in his laboratory. Using his knowledge of science, medicine, and technology, Dr. Frankenstein is able to animate assembled body parts taken from a graveyard. However, Dr. Frankenstein quickly becomes horrified and abandons his ghastly creation, hoping to put it out of his mind forever; but it isn't long before the creature catches up with Dr. Frankenstein and vows vengeance for giving him life without any hope for true companionship.

Just a few key influences on this work include Rousseau, John Milton, and Coleridge.

This novel continues to resonate with readers today because of the deep questions it raises about unchecked scientific "progress." Besides just being a cautionary tale against scientific exploration, some critics see Shelley's work as an argument for the humanities.

Although 1816 was a year of creative breakthrough for Mary Shelley, it was also a year of tragedy. Both Shelley's half-sister and Percy Shelley's first wife committed suicide. Despite this news, Mary and Percy Shelley decided to get officially married in December of this year.

Shelley continued work on *Frankenstein* throughout the next few years, and she published the first edition of the work anonymously in 1818. Although Mary Shelley had released a travelogue in 1817 called *History of a Six Weeks' Tour*, most people assumed only Percy Bysshe Shelley could have written a work like *Frankenstein*—especially because he wrote the initial introduction to the novel. Regardless of this speculation, the book sold tremendously in the U.K. and allowed the Shelleys to buy a home in Italy.

Then, in 1822, Percy Shelley unexpectedly drowned in the Gulf of Spezia. After Percy Shelley's death, Mary Shelley decided to move back to England to better care for Percy Florence. Percy Florence went on to study at Trinity College, Cambridge, and, once Godwin passed away in 1844, took up his role as the 3rd Baronet of Castle Goring. Until this time, Mary Shelley provided for her son by writing more novels, including *Valperga* and *The Last Man*.

Of the Mary Shelley's books, one entitled *Mathilda* was only discovered long after her death. It might not be so popular with modern readers, but *Mathilda*, which deals with the scandalous issue of a father falling in love with his 16-year-old daughter, has been puzzling scholars ever since it was discovered in the 1950s.

In addition to writing these novels and other works, Mary Shelley spent a great deal of time promoting her late husband's work. Indeed, thanks in large part to Mary Shelley's efforts, we still have much of Percy Bysshe Shelley's poetry in print.

Mary Shelley passed away due to brain cancer on the 1st of February, 1851. Mary was cremated along with her husband's preserved heart at St. Peter's Church in Bournemouth. She was 53.

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### 7.3 SUMMARY OF THE NOVEL *FRANKENSTEIN*

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The Preface explains the origin of the novel. Shelley spent the summer of 1816 near Geneva, Switzerland, where much of the novel takes place. One rainy night, Shelley and her friends challenged each other to write ghost stories. *Frankenstein* was the only one of the stories to be completed. The Preface also reveals Shelley's aim in writing the novel: to present a flattering depiction of "domestic affection" and "universal virtue."

Robert Walton, the captain of a ship bound for the North Pole, writes a letter to his sister, Margaret Saville, in which he says that his crew members recently discovered a man adrift at sea. The man, Victor Frankenstein, offered to tell Walton his story.

Frankenstein has a perfect childhood in Switzerland, with a loving family that even adopted orphans in need, including the beautiful Elizabeth, who soon becomes Victor's closest friend, confidante, and love. Victor also has a caring and wonderful best friend, Henry Clerval. Just before Victor turns seventeen and goes to study at the University at Ingolstadt, his mother dies of scarlet fever. At Ingolstadt, Victor dives into "natural philosophy" with a passion, studying the secrets of life with such zeal that he even loses touch with his family. He soon rises to the top of his field, and suddenly, one night, discovers the secret of life. With visions of creating a new and noble race, Victor puts his knowledge to work. But when he animates his first creature, its appearance is so horrifying he abandons it. Victor hopes the monster has disappeared for ever, but some months later he receives word that his youngest brother, William, has been murdered. Though Victor sees the monster lingering at the site of the murder and is sure it did the deed, he fears no one will believe him and keeps silent. Justine Moritz, another adoptee in his family, has been falsely accused based on the crime. She is convicted and executed. Victor is consumed by guilt.

To escape its tragedy, the Frankensteins go on vacation. Victor often hikes in the mountains, hoping to alleviate his suffering with the beauty of nature. One day the monster appears, and despite Victor's curses begs him incredibly eloquently to listen to its story. The monster describes his wretched life, full of suffering and rejection solely because of his horrifying appearance. (The monster also explains how he learned to read and speak so well.) The monster blames his rage on humanity's inability to perceive his inner goodness and his resulting total isolation. It demands that Victor, its creator who brought it into this wretched life, create a female monster to give it the love that no human ever will. Victor refuses at first, but then agrees.

Back in Geneva, Victor's father expresses his wish that Victor marry Elizabeth. Victor says he first must travel to England. On the way to England, Victor meets up with Clerval. Soon, though, Victor leaves Clerval at the house of a friend in Scotland and moves to a remote island to make his second, female, monster. But one night Victor begins to worry that the female monster might turn out more destructive than the first. At the same moment, Victor sees the first monster watching him work through a window. The horrifying sight pushes Victor to destroy the female monster. The monster vows revenge, warning Victor that it will "be with him on

[his] wedding night." Victor takes the remains of the female monster and dumps them in the ocean. But when he returns to shore, he is accused of a murder that was committed that same night. When Victor discovers that the victim is Clerval, he collapses and remains delusional for two months. When he wakes his father has arrived, and he is cleared of the criminal charges against him.

Victor returns with his father to Geneva, and marries Elizabeth. But on his wedding night, the monster instead kills Elizabeth. Victor's father dies of grief soon thereafter. Now, all alone in the world, Victor dedicates himself solely to seeking revenge against the monster. He tracks the monster to the Arctic, but becomes trapped on breaking ice and is rescued by Walton's crew.

Walton writes another series of letters to his sister. He tells her about his failure to reach the North Pole and to restore Victor, who died soon after his rescue. Walton's final letter describes his discovery of the monster grieving over Victor's corpse. He accuses the monster of having no remorse, but the monster says it has suffered more than anyone. With Victor dead, the monster has its revenge and plans to end its own life.

#### Analysis of Letters 1-4

We are introduced to Robert Walton, a 28-year-old sea captain who is embarking on a journey to the North Pole region in order to find a passage from the Pacific to the Atlantic. He writes the letters to his sister, Mrs. Saville, in London, England. He has talked about making this expedition for six years: it has been a favourite dream of his, and he is pleased that he finally has a chance to make good on his promise to himself. Other dreams, such as becoming a poet or a playwright, have not worked out. Therefore, this vision must succeed. The writer of letters is thrilled that he will satisfy an "ardent curiosity" by setting foot on a part of the world never visited by man. As he prepares for voyage by taking practice trips in the North Sea of Russia, he is worried that he has no friend on the trip who will be able to sustain his disappointment should the dream not work out. He admits this is a romantic, emotional need, but it is there. Unfortunately, he does not connect at all with the other men, even though he is very fond of his lieutenant and the ship's master. He is nevertheless extremely excited for his journey.

Once actually on the voyage, things are going well. But a strange thing happens. In the middle of the ocean, on sheets of ice, they spy a sleigh pulled by dogs with a large figure driving. He disappears, leaving the entire crew in puzzled wonderment. The next day, another sleigh is at the side of the ship, on the brink of destruction amidst the ice. This time, however, there is a regular-

sized human there, asking to where the ship is bound. He boards the ship, nearly frozen and completely fatigued. When he is a bit recovered, Walton asks what he is doing up here. The stranger says he was tracking someone who fled from him. Apparently, it was the large figure Walton and his men saw earlier. Walton begins to spend time with the stranger. He is morosely unhappy, and when Walton talks about how he might be sacrificing his life on this expedition for the sake of knowledge, the stranger breaks down and decides to tell him the tale he has kept secret in order to reverse that opinion.

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## 7.4 CRITICAL ANALYSIS

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The major conflict in *Frankenstein* revolves around Victor's inability to understand that his actions have repercussions. Victor focuses solely on his own goals and fails to see how his actions might impact other individuals. The monster functions as the starkest reminder of how Victor has failed to take responsibility for his actions in defying the laws of nature. The first signs of the conflict appear when Victor throws himself into his studies at the University of Ingolstadt, neglecting his family and fiancée. The conflict deepens when, having "succeeded in discovering the cause of generation and life," Victor becomes obsessed with creating a monster. He does not stop to think about what the experiences of that monster might be like, nor is he fazed by the fact that he ignores his family to pursue his work. He is so obsessed with his ambition that he does not consider anything else. The rising action of his reckless quest to create life comes to a peak when, immediately after animating the monster, he reacts with horror and disgust and runs from the room. This incident illustrates the conflict between Victor and moral responsibility: he has been responsible for making the monster and bringing him to life, but when he doesn't like the result, he simply rejects it.

The tension increases when Victor learns of the death of his brother William and the false accusation against Justine. The murder creates another situation in which Victor can choose to act, or fail to take responsibility. He heightens the conflict by allowing Justine to be executed, rather than disclosing what he knows about the monster. The conflict is heightened further when the monster meets up with Victor amidst the mountain peaks and tells him the story of all the suffering he has experienced, as well as his loneliness and alienation. The meeting between the monster and his creator is another moment where Victor could potentially turn away from his selfish path. The plot suggests potential resolution when Victor reluctantly agrees to fashion a mate for the monster in exchange for the two of them going somewhere remote.

However, the conflict is reignited when Victor is too disgusted to carry out this plan and destroys the female monster before completing it. Yet again, he doesn't think about what this reckless choice will mean, even though the monster vows revenge. Victor is genuinely surprised when his friend Henry Clerval is killed, and then again when his fiancé Elizabeth is also murdered, despite the monster's explicit statements that he is now dedicated to making Victor's life a living hell by depriving him of everyone he loves. The murder of Elizabeth shifts the conflict into its final stage, in which Victor vows to hunt down and kill the monster in revenge for all of the deaths. This vow partially resolves the conflict in that it gives the monster what he wants: he now has the total attention of his creator, and the fates of the two individuals are interlocked.

After Victor pursues the monster around the world, he arrives in the Arctic and encounters Walton, bringing the story full-circle back the point at which the narration switched from Walton to Victor. Victor's travels have exhausted him so much that he dies aboard the ship after relaying his tale, his role in the story fulfilled. The novel climaxes with Walton finding the monster in the room, gazing at Victor's dead body and weeping. Victor never acknowledges the role he played in creating the chaos and tragedy that resulted in the deaths of several innocent people, as well as the torment of his creation. Unlike Victor, the monster expresses remorse and self-loathing, suggesting that he ultimately has become more "human" than his creator. Walton finally gets to see and hear the monster from his own perspective, and he is able to feel "a mixture of curiosity and compassion." The falling action of the novel quickly concludes with the monster explaining his plan to kill himself, then setting off alone to carry out his plan.

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## 7.5 SOME IMPORTANT TEXTUAL QUOTES

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1) I saw—with shut eyes, but acute mental vision—I saw the pale student of unhallowed arts kneeling beside the thing he had put together. I saw the hideous phantasm of a man stretched out, and then, on the working of some powerful engine, show signs of life and stir with an uneasy, half-vital motion. Frightful must it be, for supremely frightful would be the effect of any human endeavour to mock the stupendous mechanism of the Creator of the world.

Shelley's image evokes some of the key themes, such as the utter unnaturalness of the monster ("an uneasy, half-vital motion"), the relationship between creator and created ("kneeling beside the thing he had put together"), and the dangerous consequences of misused knowledge ("supremely frightful would be the effect of . . . mock [ing] . . . the Creator").

2) Did I request thee, Maker, from my clay To mould me Man, did I solicit the e-From darkness to promote me?

These rhetorical questions epitomize the monster's ill will toward Victor for abandoning him in a world relentlessly hostile to him and foist responsibility for his ugliness and eventual evil upon Victor.

3) So much has been done, exclaimed the soul of Frankenstein - more, far more, will I achieve; treading in the steps already marked, I will pioneer a new way, explore unknown powers, and unfold to the world the deepest mysteries of creation.

Victor utters these words in Chapter 3 as he relates to Walton how his chemistry professor, M. Waldman, ignited in him an irrepressible desire to gain knowledge of the secret of life. Victor's reference to himself in the third person illustrates his sense of fatalism—he is driven by his passion, unable to control it. Further, the glorious, assertive quality of his statement foreshadows the fact that Victor's passion will not be tempered by any consideration of the possible horrific consequences of his search for knowledge. Additionally, this declaration furthers the parallel between Walton's spatial explorations and Frankenstein's forays into unknown knowledge, as both men seek to "pioneer a new way," to make progress beyond established limits.

4) I, the miserable and the abandoned, am an abortion, to be spurned at, and kicked, and trampled on.

In Walton's final letter to his sister, he recounts the words that the monster speaks to him over Victor's dead body. This eruption of angry self-pity as the monster questions the injustice of how he has been treated compellingly captures his inner life, giving Walton and the reader a glimpse into the suffering that has motivated his crimes. This line also evokes the motif of abortion: the monster is an unwanted life, a creation abandoned and shunned by his creator.

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## 7.6 LET'S SUM UP

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Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*, considered to be the first science fiction novel, revolves around the story of Victor Frankenstein, and the creature he has created. Victor's lack of vision regarding the plan for his creation puts in motion the disastrous chain of events. In the end the death of the creator and intended death of his creation has its seeds in the act of creation itself. The author has structured the novel within wonderfully created atmosphere of suspense and horror.



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## 7.7 QUESTIONS

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- 1) Is the Monster in Frankenstein Good? Explain
- 2) Discuss the novel's shifts in narrative perspective. What is the effect of presenting different characters' viewpoints, especially those of Victor and the monster?
- 3) Trace and discuss the role of letters and written communication throughout the novel.
- 4) Discuss the presentation of women in the novel. Do Victor and the monster differ in their view of women, and if so, how?

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## 7.8 REFERENCES

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# Unit- 8

## STUDY OF MARY SHELLEY'S FRANKENSTEIN II

### Unit Structure:

- 8.0 Objectives
- 8.1 Introduction
- 8.2 Characters
- 8.3 Themes
- 8.4 Symbols
- 8.5 Discussion
- 8.6 Let's Sum Up
- 8.7 Questions
- 8.8 Recommended Reading
- 8.9 References

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### 8.0 OBJECTIVES

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- To explain the novel Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*
- To explain its characterisation
- To discuss its thematic concerns and symbols

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### 8.1 INTRODUCTION

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This unit introduces you to the critical study of one of the important texts of Gothic literature, *Frankenstein*, by Mary Shelley. *Frankenstein* is more than just a horror story. It raises the deep-rooted questions about superiority of science, morality, humanity, unchecked ambition and pride; which are common to all ages. The novel also is an important milestone of romantic literary development. Gradual unravelling of various characters by the way of analysis is a good way to study this complex novel. The study of themes will help to reveal the primary purpose of the text.

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### 8.2 CHARACTERS

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Victor Frankenstein

At the start of the novel, Victor Frankenstein is a generally sympathetic character with an enquiring mind and an interest in scientific development. However, his ambition leads him to become arrogant and extremely single-minded. He neglects his family,

abandons his creation and fails to take responsibility for his actions which leads to the deaths of many of those who should be near and dear to him.

Gradually he comes to realise the full extent of what he has done and sets out to destroy the Monster even at the cost of his own life. Despite hunting the Monster across the length and breadth of Europe, Victor fails in this mission and dies in the Arctic wastes aboard Walton's ship.

Even as he is dying, he will not admit fully to his mistakes and the reader is left wondering whether it is Victor who is the true monster.

None of Victor's family are particularly scientific in their outlook but Victor has an enquiring mind. When he is only 13, Victor begins to read scientific books and study the works of famous scientists. He also closely observes nature acting around him. When he goes to university, Victor is encouraged by the professors who teach there. Unfortunately, Victor misuses his scientific knowledge and ability in a bid for personal glory. As he searches for knowledge, Victor studies several scientific disciplines. However, he quickly rejects all but those which he considers to be pure - among these are mathematics and natural philosophy (what we today would call science). He gives up studying natural history '*as a deformed and abortive creation*' which, considering the Monster he will go on to create, is rather ironic.

Victor's ambition knows no bounds as he sets out to create life at any expense. He makes himself ill in the pursuit of his goals and puts achieving this ambition before the health and happiness of both himself and his family. As Victor dies, he realises that ambition and obsession has been his downfall. He warns Walton, who is also risking everything for scientific discovery, that he may be pursuing a foolish and misguided course of action.

Victor is so caught up in the pursuit of knowledge and the creation of life that he feels invincible. He feels he should not have to justify his actions to anyone and that he alone has supreme power.

Victor thinks of himself as godlike, bringing light where there is only darkness and creating life where it did not exist before. He thinks he can even cheat death. Like a God he expects that his creations will show him gratitude and worship him without reservation.

Victor does not think about the consequences of creating a new life for either the individual concerned (the Monster) or the

society in general. Victor is responsible for creating the Monster and he is also responsible for abandoning it and setting in motion the train of events that result in the deaths of many of his family and friends. However, he rarely accepts that he is at fault and instead blames the Monster for its own actions

Victor's guilt over his actions transforms into a desire for revenge. He thinks that if he can eliminate the Monster this will, somehow, excuse what he has done. As with everything else in his life Victor's emotions are extreme - 'I gnashed my teeth, my eyes became inflamed'. As his mind thinks about what has happened, physical changes come over him and he claims he is prepared to travel to remote areas of the earth to achieve his aim - eventually, this is exactly what he does when he follows the Monster to the Arctic.

#### The Monster in Frankenstein

Unlike most characters in a novel, the Monster has no background, family or past history. He is Victor's creation formed out of numerous body parts and brought to life as the result of a scientific experiment.

At first, despite being enormous, he has the mind of a young child and when he is abandoned this starts a spiral of events which nobody can stop. The Monster hides from people and acquires human characteristics such as speech, rational thought and human emotions. However, his appearance works against him and he becomes the victim of human weaknesses and prejudice.

He ends up lonely and isolated and asks Victor for a mate but he will not cooperate. In desperation, the Monster turns to murder as a means of revenge.

Although the Monster has a deformed body, his brain is fully functioning and highly active. He is capable of sophisticated thought processes. He teaches himself to survive in a hostile environment and develops an understanding of language (including reading and writing) by secretly observing the De Lacey family. In his discussions with Victor, he is able to develop and deliver complex arguments. Unfortunately, his education only makes him more aware of his own loneliness.

Like Victor, the Monster makes discoveries based on observation and experimentation - this is shown in phrases such as '*I made a discovery*', '*I found*' and '*I perceived*'. The Monster gradually realises that sound is used to communicate and that the people he is observing use language to show their feelings and emotions to each other. It is ironic that the Monster describes this as '*a godlike science*' - this echoes Victor's own attitude to his

learning and discoveries and suggests that the Monster will also be at a disadvantage from his education.

From the moment he is brought to life, the Monster is constantly rejected. He is abandoned by his creator who literally runs away from what he has done. Then he suffers prejudice from other humans he meets who cannot bear his hideous appearance; they assume that because he looks terrible, he actually is terrible. The Monster therefore has no companion, friend or mate and it is this which leads him to demand that Victor create a female version of himself.

Shelley uses contrast here to show how the Monster has become isolated. Positive words such as '*benevolent*', '*glowed*', '*love*' and '*humanity*' are contrasted by '*alone*', '*abhor*', '*spurn*' and '*hate*'. Even the magnificent scenery amongst which the Monster spends its time is seen as a '*desert*' and '*dreary*'.

As the Monster faces more and more rejection and prejudice and becomes increasingly lonely, his thoughts turn to gaining revenge on all who have abused him. Thus, he becomes destructive and homicidal. He murders William, Henry and Elizabeth and is indirectly responsible for killing Justine and Alphonse. The Monster realises that by keeping Victor alive he can prolong his suffering and torment even further.

Revenge is an extreme emotion and the Monster's use of language here reflects this, such as '*imprecate curses*' and '*spirit of revenge*'. The whole of his nature has changed from one extreme ('*mildness*') to another ('*bitterness*'). The negativity of his emotions is reinforced by the key word '*not*' being placed last in the final sentence.

The Monster seems to be driven by an unstoppable force and is therefore unable to curb his own destructive nature. This is increased by his experiences of prejudice, fear and loneliness. He does, however, display the human quality of remorse or regret towards the end of the novel. As he visits Victor for the last time, he asks for forgiveness, at the same time realising that it is too late to save either of them. The Monster's remorse for his actions finally leads him to commit suicide.

The Monster's language here becomes very formal and almost outdated. Sentences are lengthy and complex and he uses '*thou*' and '*thine*' which gives his words a serious tone. It is as though he is making a speech at a funeral - as Frankenstein is dying at this point, this is very appropriate. Even though both of them have suffered, the Monster claims that he has suffered more

('my agony was still superior to thine') and suggests that to go on living would be greater torment than to die.

### **Robert Walton**

Robert Walton is a polar explorer who meets Victor Frankenstein in the Arctic. It is to Walton that Victor tells his story and he, in turn, writes the narrative down in a series of letters to his sister, Margaret Saville, back in England.

Walton has many similar characteristics to Frankenstein, being driven by a desire for discovery. He also suffers from loneliness - again, this is like Victor and, indeed, the Monster.

Walton's ambitious nature is linked to Victor's. They are both pushing the boundaries of their desire for knowledge and will stop at nothing to achieve their ambitions. Both men defy the wishes of their fathers and leave behind a quiet domestic life to seek scientific fame.

Walton wishes to make a geographical and scientific discovery that he feels will benefit '*all mankind*' not just immediately but for future generations. Walton's ambition also reveals his arrogance. Like Victor, he wants the respect and praise of his fellow humans and takes his crew into a dangerous situation in order to accomplish this. He feels that only he (or someone like him) will be able to achieve his goals.

Walton's ambition has taken him, literally, to the end of the Earth where he will have little human contact. Even though he has a crew with him he is remote from them and comes into conflict over the matter of turning back and going home. When Walton takes Victor on board, he hopes that here will be a friend for him; he repeatedly refers to Victor as 'brother'.

### **Elizabeth Lavenza**

Elizabeth is an orphan child adopted by the Frankenstein family. She becomes a devoted daughter, sister and eventually wife to Victor. She is an idealised character who is beautiful, loyal, trusting, sympathetic and caring towards others - almost too perfect. She is, however, human and eventually falls victim to the Monster's revenge on her wedding night.

Even when she is a small child, Elizabeth is presented as better looking than the other children in the family in which she is initially bought up. She grows lovelier over the passing years and her good character comes to mirror her good looks. In many ways she reminds Victor of his mother, Caroline - both women die relatively young.

The imagery which is used to describe Elizabeth concentrates on nobility ('*living gold*', '*crown*'), and religion ('*heaven-sent*', '*celestial*'). She seems like an icon (a religious statue) in a church that is to be worshipped from afar. It is ironic that she is described as though she comes from '*a distinct species*' - the reader is reminded here of the origins of the Monster.

The descriptions of Elizabeth throughout the novel set her apart as a model of beauty, patience, virtue and sympathetic understanding. At the time the novel was written, these would have been considered an ideal of femininity. One of the most important aspects of Elizabeth's character is her ability to influence and appeal to the better nature of others, particularly Victor.

Again, religious images are used to describe Elizabeth: '*saintly soul*', '*shrine-dedicated lamp*', '*celestial eyes*', '*bless*', '*the living spirit of love*' all contribute to this idea. Her ability to calm and influence ('*soften and attract*') Victor is also shown here. However, it is clear that Victor never exhibits real '*gentleness*' as he experiences only '*a semblance of this*'.

### Henry Clerval

Henry is Victor's best friend who looks after him when he is ill and accompanies him to England. Henry's purpose in the novel is to show what Victor could have been had he not been influenced by ambition and the desire for discovery - in that sense he is Victor's opposite. Like Elizabeth, Henry is an idealised character and like Elizabeth he dies at the hands of the Monster.

Like Elizabeth, Henry is an idealised character - almost a perfect example of a strong yet sensitive man. He is loyal to Victor and even places his own education and ambitions on hold while he puts his friend's needs and wishes first. Victor never even tells Henry what he has been doing or what he plans to do, yet Henry remains a true friend throughout.

After the horrors of creating the Monster, Henry encourages Victor to take delight in the simpler and rewarding aspects of life - the beauty of nature and the innocence of children. Looking back, Victor can see that Henry's true devotion is in contrast to his own abandonment of his creation and that his ambition was little more than '*a selfish pursuit*'.

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## 8.3 THEMES IN FRANKENSTEIN

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Effects of Isolation: Segregation from both familial and societal relationships recurs throughout *Frankenstein*. Both Victor Frankenstein and his creature suffer from societal rejection—Frankenstein because of his single-minded focus on his

experiments, and the creature because of his monstrous appearance. The creature's attempts to integrate with society—seen through his learning to speak, read, and reach out to De Lacey—end in disaster. Both Frankenstein and his creature, after becoming fully alienated from others, are unable to enjoy familial attachments due to each other's actions. When Frankenstein refuses to finish creating a female creature, the creature takes revenge on Frankenstein by killing Frankenstein's wife, Elizabeth, marking them both as equally alone in the world. The ending scene sees the creature, getting upset on realizing that Frankenstein's death has severed his only remaining link to the humanity, and drifts away into the ocean, for his final moments as alone as he has ever been.

**Ambition and Fallibility:** Ultimately, Frankenstein's ambition leads to his downfall and death. At the beginning of the novel, we see a proud scientist, enamoured with his godlike power; by the end, he is warning Walton against seeking similar gratification in his quest to explore the Arctic. Clearly Frankenstein believes his ambition is no longer a beneficial motivator; it has instead led to the death of all those he cares about. He has come to terms with his fallibility—he is not a god, but simply a man who has made a terrible mistake.

**Romanticism and Nature:** *Frankenstein* is considered a romantic novel, a literary movement that arose in reaction to the scientific, rational ideals of the Enlightenment. Romanticism values emotion and a connection with nature; these values, too, can be seen throughout the novel. Frankenstein goes against the nature's laws with his reanimation of dead flesh and is punished for his transgression and blind ambition toward scientific advancement. The creature enjoys his most hopeful days in the woods, having not yet been rebuffed by the De Lacey's family.

### **Exploration and Ambition**

The first character Shelley introduces to her audience is not the titular Frankenstein, but Walton, the epistolary author of the frame narrative. What is significant, thematically, is that both Walton and Frankenstein are engaged upon journeys of exploration into the unknown, which, for both of them, have become all-consuming forces. When Walton's crew pulls Frankenstein out of the freezing waters of the North Pole, Frankenstein is evidently at the end of his journey—and it has ended in disaster. Walton recognizes a kindred spirit in him, someone who, like himself, was inspired by the stories of discovery he read as a child and whose ambition compels him to carve out a “niche in the temple” of his own. Walton is exploring the world geographically; Frankenstein is exploring the world of science, but both are men driven by powerful ambition, seeking to, as Walton puts it, “accomplish some great



purpose.” Walton identifies a certain fire or spirit inside Victor, feeling at once that Victor is the “friend” he has been seeking (something which also has echoes in the hunt of the creature for a companion, later in the story). Walton is so entranced by Frankenstein's hopes and ambitions, so thoroughly understanding of his quest and sure that he is “immeasurable” as a man, that he does not recognize that the doctor also represents a moral lesson he himself would do well to follow. Through the character of Walton, Shelley indicates that, certainly, there is something admirable, and understandable, in the desire to push the boundaries of science, to explore the unexplored, and even to make one's own name in so doing. But she also uses Walton as an illustration that, in all areas of study, overstressing oneself can result in “peril” and entrapment. At the end of the story, Walton writes to his sister that he is surrounded by walls of ice from which there can be no escape. Later, when he sees hope of retreat, he determines that he will return to England, surrendering his ambition rather than allowing himself to be destroyed. Frankenstein, by contrast, has achieved his ambition and still been destroyed by it.

### **Religion and the Ethics of Creation**

The subtitle Shelley gives her novel— “the modern Prometheus”—alerts the reader to the fact that themes of ethics and religion will be of import in the story, which revolves, to a considerable extent, around the question of how far it is right or acceptable to “play God” just because one can. In mythology, Prometheus famously stole fire from the gods and gave it to humanity. If Frankenstein is a modern Prometheus, then he is not a god himself, but someone who feels it is permissible to intrude into, and interfere with, the interactions between God and humanity which would normally occur. Where God, or nature, may have decreed that what is dead is dead and that people should only be born in the natural way, Frankenstein has taken it upon himself to interrogate and challenge these paradigms.

Once he has succeeded in creating the desired offspring, however, Frankenstein finds himself faced with unanticipated problems. Where humanity was created in the image of God, Frankenstein, too, has sought to create a being of which he could be proud, but ultimately, he finds his creation so repulsive that he abandons him and seeks the creature's death. This raises another ethical question which is debated throughout the novel: how far is a creator required to be a father? Does Frankenstein, as the creature insists, have a responsibility to his creation? Should he ensure that the creature's life is happy, that he is loved, that he has a companion with whom to spend his time? The creature pursues Frankenstein, insisting that the doctor has shirked his responsibilities—he has not behaved as a father. However, elsewhere in the novel there are examples of fathers, including

Frankenstein's own, who have not behaved in a particularly nurturing or loving manner toward their offspring. By failing to care for what he has created, because he feels it to be a grotesque and monstrous reflection of what humanity should be, is Frankenstein behaving monstrously—or simply like many human fathers? Is he behaving, even, simply like the God of Milton's *Paradise Lost*, to which the novel alludes, who cast aside one of his own creations, Lucifer?

### **Beauty and the Soul**

When Frankenstein rejects his creation, it is because he cannot bear to look at him. He is so terrified by the physically repulsive appearance of his creature— “a sight which [he] abhor[s]”— that he recoils, determining that nothing so physically unattractive could possibly be anything other than evil. However, Shelley makes a conscious choice in allowing the physically grotesque creature to speak for himself and to speak eloquently and expressively. Had Frankenstein been less preoccupied with the physical appearance of his offspring, he might have been better able to see that the creature was, in other ways, an accurate reflection of humanity, capable of learning and growing, feeling “anguish” and appreciation for beauty.

It is not only Frankenstein, of course, who recoils from the sight of the creature. It is a natural human response to desire what is beautiful and reject what is not, and the creature struggles even with the sight of his own face when he sees it reflected in a puddle. He knows that he is hindered by the fact that the first reaction he evokes is one of disgust. But he feels “pleasure” at the sight of nature, “wonder” at the beauty of the moon, and emotion at the sight of the villagers interacting with each other. Shelley relies heavily upon the language of Romanticism to indicate that the creature, through his interaction with nature, is exploring his own soul. Far from being a hideous automaton, the creature is capable of very deep feeling, and possibly deep inner beauty. This then forces the reader to question how far his subsequent violence is a result of his nature and how far it is the outcome of the utter lack of nurture shown to him by his creator, the shallow and fickle Frankenstein.

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## **8.4 SYMBOLS IN FRANKENSTEIN**

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### **Light**

Light symbolizes enlightenment in *Frankenstein*. Walton expects to find the secrets of the universe unveiled in the North Pole, which he describes as “a country of eternal light.” Light also accompanies nearly all of Victor's epiphanies. When he first discovers natural philosophy, he says, “A new light seemed to dawn upon my mind.” When he discovers the secret to creating life,

he describes his feelings as if "a sudden light broke in upon me." He envisions pouring a "torrent of light into our dark world" through the creation of a new species. Yet light that's too bright is also blinding, and both Victor and Walton fail to see or consider the dangerous consequences of their quests for enlightenment.

### Fire

The complete title of Shelley's novel is *Frankenstein, Or the Modern Prometheus*. Prometheus was the titan who, in Greek mythology, gave the knowledge of fire to humanity and then suffered severe punishment at the hands of the Gods for his generous actions. In *Frankenstein*, Victor attempts to give the gift of the secret of life to humanity, but ends up suffering grave punishment as a result: the monster he creates destroys his family and his life. Fire appears throughout the novel as a dangerous force used for sustenance (as when the monster discovers fire) and punishment (as when the monster describes demons suffering in the lake of fire in hell).

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## 8.5 DISCUSSION

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1) What is the secret of this novel's continuing popularity? Explain *Frankenstein* is the story of Victor Frankenstein and his obsession with creating life. He sews various body parts to create a creature, and infuses life into it. But the first sight of his creation horrifies Frankenstein.

He understands the enormity of what he has done and runs away. The creature is gone when he returns and for a while Frankenstein is happy.

The creature tries to befriend humans but realising that its appearance horrifies people, stays in hiding. Tired of this lonely life, the creature begs Frankenstein for a companion. Frankenstein, himself on the verge of getting married, agrees to do this. Minutes before infusing life into it, however, Frankenstein realises the danger of unleashing another monster on the world and destroys it. This angers the creature and he vows revenge. The creature follows Frankenstein and kills his newly-wed wife, and later, his friend. Frankenstein's father dies of shock. All alone now, Frankenstein sets out to destroy the monster he has created and make the world a safe place. He follows the monster to the North Pole but dies there. The monster understands that with the death of its creator it is doomed to a lonely, hopeless existence and declares that death is its only option now.

The story is not narrated in the traditional format, but rather through letters. These are written by a man called Walton who is on a ship to the North Pole and saves Frankenstein. As Frankenstein

recovers, he narrates his story to Walton. Walton conveys this story to his sister through a series of letters. The readers therefore never really get to meet any of the principal characters in the book, but only learn of them through the letters. The book, considered an early example of science fiction, has inspired many adaptations for the silver screen. The phrase 'Frankenstein's monster' is today used to refer to something that becomes dangerous to its maker.

Frankenstein is a thought-provoking book and forces readers to wonder — who is the real monster? The creature or his creator? And this is perhaps the secret of this novel's continuing popularity, 200 years after it was first published.

## 2) Discuss the Role of Nature in the Novel

Mary Shelley's novel *Frankenstein* explores how destructive the pursuit of knowledge can be when it goes beyond human understanding. Given that Mary Shelley wrote *Frankenstein* in the midst of Romanticism, which was a movement against the Industrial Revolution, it follows that one of the main themes in her novel explores the responsibilities of the scientist, and the consequences of ignoring these responsibilities. The dangerous nature of pursuing certain kinds of knowledge is at the heart of this text. Mary Shelley successfully explores the various other themes as well, such as the proper relationship between man and nature and the respect that is owed to nature. She also examines the relationship between creator and creation, the duties that belong to the creator, and the consequences of using science to elevate oneself to a god-like status.

The natural imagery in "Frankenstein" is comparable to the best in the Romantic literature. Mary Shelley paints Nature and its divine grandeur with some rare strokes of a masterful hand. She deliberately juxtaposes the exalted vision of Mother Nature with the horrendous spectacle of a man-made monster and his ghastly deeds.

This steep contrast sets reader thinking about the wisdom of departing away from the set norms of Nature. Mary's message to mankind is loud and clear; do not mess with Nature for your own good. Humans should best live like humans. Any attempt to change the status quo can be very expensive and dangerous. If you will preserve Nature, Nature will preserve you.

The message is loud and clear; the untold secrets of Nature are best enjoyed when allowed to remain a secret. Any attempt to transgress or trespass the human limitation can be as disastrous as in the case of a young genius like Frankenstein. She reminds us that when it comes to Nature, one can neither look far nor deep.

The question of life and death, creation or annihilation unequivocally falls in the purview of God almighty, not man.

Victor Frankenstein's irrepressible urge to explore the tightly guarded secrets of Nature marks the beginning of his end, "I have always described myself as always having been imbued with a fervent longing to penetrate the secrets of nature". Frankenstein sits down to challenge the authority of God by giving, "life to an animal as complex and wonderful as man," but he is not alone.

The ever- watchful eye of Nature keeps a tight vigil on him, "the moon gazed on my midnight labours, while, with unrelaxed and breathless eagerness, I pursued nature to her hiding places." Victor underestimates the power of Nature and commits the tragic error of placing excessive confidence on his own scientific knowledge. Natural landscapes in "Frankenstein" help the author to bring out the theme of sublime Nature, dangers of forbidden knowledge and monstrous results of wrong actions.

Nature is visible throughout "Frankenstein" in all its glory and contrasts. Natural surroundings have been shown to have therapeutic powers. The natural beauty of St. Petersburg beckons Robert Walton to keep heading towards the North Pole. The immortal beauty of the mountains and lakes is contrasted with the ephemeral nature of human existence and grief. Nature overwhelms mankind with its gigantic presence. The realization of one's smallness in front of Nature's vast stature and mammoth power exerts a truly humbling effect.

Human ego and pride give way to an understanding of the immeasurable powers of God. The realization brings an inner light that mitigates human grief and suffering. Victor Frankenstein's bruised soul partakes the might of the mountains and the purity of the lakes by allowing his imagination to linger on them. At the same time, the desolate arctic glacial sea with its fragile icy cover accentuates the inner desolation and fragility of Frankenstein's troubled mind. The bottomless abyss and the barrenness of icy sea forebode little hope of redemption for Frankenstein and others.

"Frankenstein" has all the ingredients of Nature that one gets to see in dark Romantic literature. Nightmarish landscapes are juxtaposed with the exotic and serene. Death, destruction and the resulting despair force the protagonist to undertake desperate journeys. During such meaningless wanderings, the only relief that comes the protagonist's way is from Nature. Henry's response to Mother Nature is far more spontaneous than others because of his inner innocence. His uncorrupted imagination allows him to enjoy Nature on a much higher plane.

The natural settings in "Frankenstein" are carefully chosen and woven into the very fabric of the story. Nature plays a vital role in enhancing the impact of the story and progression of the plot and characters. Victor experiences the power of Nature first hand, "As I stood at the door, on a sudden I beheld a stream of fire issue from an old and beautiful oak which stood about twenty yards from our house; and so soon as the dazzling light vanished, the oak had disappeared, and nothing remained but a blasted stump".

Mary Shelley certainly gives a clarion call to go back to Nature, for man's own good. "Frankenstein" masterfully contrasts the beauty of Nature with the ugliness of the Frankenstein monster. The difference between the natural and artificial is stark and ghastly. While the monster is repugnant and abominable, Nature is idyllic and soothing. Wordsworth looked upon Nature as an ultimate source of peace, solace and a panacea to all problems of mankind. Coleridge, on the other hand, believed that Nature reflected man's own moods. Mary Shelley has depicted Nature both as a source of inspiration and also as an indifferent entity if the need be.

There are times when Frankenstein's troubled mind fails to find any consolation from Nature. Troubled by the sight of his horrendous creation, Frankenstein rushes out 'drenched by the rain which poured from a black and comfortless sky,' and restlessly waits for the dawn. When Alphonse takes Victor on an excursion to relieve him of his grief, the result is temporary, "Victor wanders alone toward the valley of Chamounix.

The beautiful scenery cheers him somewhat, but his respite from grief is short-lived." (Chapter 9) Victor Frankenstein's initial enthusiasm to cross the "fortifications and impediments" around the "citadel" of Nature is soon replaced by horror. The monstrosity of his creation leaves him terrified and the realization that his monster has killed his youngest brother unhinges him. The scientific world has nothing to offer him in this hour of despair.

The murder of William and the execution of innocent Justine weigh heavily upon the psyche of Frankenstein. He turns to the mountains to find comfort. Had he not been, "insensible to the charms of nature" to begin with, had his soul been alive to the delicate nuances of Nature to start with; Victor could have saved himself and his family from nemesis.

Critics point to the fact that Frankenstein's initial departure from Nature turns him into a bit of a monster himself. The way he allows Justine to die an unjust death without putting any real semblance of resistance and his burning desire for revenge make him no less inhuman. He forgot that every action has equal and

opposite reaction. He messed with Nature and Nature messed with him. Had he not forgotten Nature; it would not have forgotten him.

Frankenstein's love for Nature kindles late when a lot is lost. William is dead and Justine is gone, when the realization dawns:

"The weight upon my spirit was sensibly lightened as I plunged yet deeper in the ravine of Arve. The immense mountains and precipices that overhung me on every side, the sound of the river raging among the rocks, and the dashing of the waterfalls around spoke of a power mighty as Omnipotence—and I ceased to fear or to bend before any being less almighty than that which had created and ruled the elements" (Frankenstein).

Hence, Nature does acts as a restorative agent for Frankenstein but it is too late. His reunion with Nature spells confidence and fearlessness. Nature cements his faith in God and his omniscient powers. What to speak of man; Nature has the power to alleviate even the troubled spirits of a monster.

After being subjected to a terribly cold and harsh winter, the Frankenstein monster heaves a sigh of relief at the advent of spring season. When Victor dumps the monster, he feels awfully depressed and confused. He feels a new surge, a "sensation of pleasure" when he sees the bright moon and its gentle light. Abandoned by his creator, the monster too finds refuge in the lap of Nature.

Temporary or transient, succour and peace come to Victor Frankenstein only in the lap of Nature. Mary Shelley's "Frankenstein" does not guarantee emancipation through contact with Nature but it most certainly points to the danger of losing one's human identity by getting away from it.

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## 8.6 LET'S SUM UP

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The primary theme of isolation is the simply the other side of the theme of ambition and fallibility. The novel questions the faith in science unchecked by the moral responsibility. Walton mirrors Victor in his ambition and desire to explore the unexplored, but his decision to return home is positive as he is saved from being destroyed by his ambition.

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## 8.7 QUESTIONS

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- 1) Describe the personality of Victor Frankenstein and the monster he creates.
- 2) Discuss the role that nature plays in this novel.

- 3) How is *Frankenstein* both a Romantic novel and a Gothic horror novel?
- 4) How does the monster learn about the world in which he lives?
- 5) Trace and discuss the role of letters and written communication throughout the novel.
- 6) *Frankenstein* is often used as an example of ethical vs. non-ethical scientific/medical procedure. Do you think that the way that Victor created his creature was ethical? Non ethical? Should Victor have made his creature at all? Explain.

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## 8.8 RECOMMENDED READING

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# Unit-9

## STUDY OF SENSE AND SENSIBILITY (PART I)

### Unit Structure:

- 9.0 Objective
- 9.1 Introduction
- 9.2 Life and Works
- 9.3 Historical Elements
- 9.4 A Brief Summary
- 9.5 Plot Summary
- 9.6 Let's Sum Up
- 9.7 Questions
- 9.8 References

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### 9.0 OBJECTIVES

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The objective of this unit is to introduce Jane Austen, the most recognized author of Pre- Victorian Era. It will help students to understand the biographical details and works of the author. A brief overview of storyline introduces the literary terms of early 19<sup>th</sup> century. Chapter wise description of the plot and character analysis develop an understanding about the theme and characterization of Jane Austen.

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### 9.1 INTRODUCTION

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The English writer Jane Austen was regarded as one of the most important novelists of the nineteenth century. She was known for her epistolary and domestic novels. Her novels were also known for the extended list of characters. Interestingly her characters were the real faces of her life. Jane Austen created a profound understanding and a precise vision of the potential of the human spirit that the art of fiction has ever achieved. Austen's novels received a remarkable success and were praised for their reformative theme. She could not celebrate her fame as an author during her lifetime.

The novel *Sense and Sensibility* is written by Jane Austen. Jane Austen was an English novelist who worked on romantic fiction and she was one of the most widely read writers in English literature. Austen belong to Romantic Era (1775 – 1817)

In *Sense and Sensibility*, the antithetical characters are Elinor and Marianne Dashwood, the respective embodiments of cool, collected sense and prodigal, exquisite sensibility. In the company of their mother and younger sister, these lovely young ladies have, on the death of their father and the succession to his estate of their half-brother, retired in very modest circumstances to a small house in Devonshire. There the imprudent Marianne meets and melts for Willoughby, a fashionable gentleman as charming as he is unscrupulous. Having engaged the rash girl's affections, Willoughby proceeds to trifle with them by bolting for London. When chance once again brings the Dashwood sisters into Willoughby's circle, his manner toward Marianne is greatly altered. On hearing of his engagement to an heiress, the representative of sensibility swoons, weeps, and exhibits her grief to the utmost.

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## 9.2 LIFE AND WORKS

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Birth of Jane is considered on 16 December 1775 at Stevenson in North Hampshire, England. She was one of the eight children of Reverend George and Cassandra Austen. Her father was an Anglican Rector who served for rural community. As she grew up in a close-knit family, she remained much attached to her sister throughout her life. Because of the ignorance of the day, Jane's education was inadequate by today's standards. This coupled with Mr. Austen's meagre salary kept Jane's formal training to a minimum. To supplement his income as a clergyman, Mr. Austen tutored young men. It is believed that Jane may have picked up Latin from staying close to home and listening in on these lessons. At the age of six she was writing verses. A two-year stay at a small boarding school trained Jane in needlework, dancing, French, drawing, and spelling. All such training acclimated her to present as a young woman. Her father decided to retire and move the family to Bath.

The death of her father Reverend George Austen in 1805 left the Austen women in a precarious pecuniary position. Eventually she settled in Chawton, near Steventon. As she began writing as a young girl and by the age of fourteen had completed *Love and Friendship*. This early work of Jane was an imitation of the over dramatic novels popular at that time and showcased the talent for humorous and satirical writing. Even after hundred years of her death three more volumes of her young writings were published.

As she grew up in a close-knit family, she remained much attached to her sister throughout her life. She never married herself, but did receive at least one proposal and led an active and happy life, unmarked by dramatic incident and surrounded by her family.

Jane Austen used to share a bond of love with her brother Henry who helped her publishing her first novel, *Sense and Sensibility*. This novel originally published in October, 1811. Initially, *Sense and Sensibility* had been thought as an epistolary novel, a very common genre of early 19th century. Austen novels set among the English middle and upper classes are notable for their wit, social observation and insights into the lives of 19th century women.

Unfortunately, in 1816, Jane started feeling unwell, probably due to Addison's disease. She travelled to Winchester to receive treatment, and died there on 18 July 1817. Two more novels, *Persuasion* and *Northanger Abbey* were published posthumously and a final novel was left incomplete.

### Major Works

Jane Austen's first major novel was *Sense and Sensibility*, whose main characters are two sisters. The first draft was written in 1795 and was titled *Elinor and Marianne*. In 1797 Austen rewrote the novel and titled it *Sense and Sensibility*. After years of polishing, it was finally published in 1811. As the original and final titles indicate, the novel contrasts the temperaments of the two sisters. Elinor governs her life by sense or reasonableness, while Marianne is ruled by sensibility or feeling. Although the plot favours the value of reason over that of emotion, the greatest emphasis is placed on the moral principles of human affairs and on the need for enlarged thought and feeling in response to it.

In 1796, when Austen was twenty-one years old, she wrote the novel *First Impressions*. The work was rewritten and published under the title *Pride and Prejudice* in 1813. It is her most popular and perhaps her greatest novel. It achieves this distinction by virtue of its perfection of form, which exactly balances and expresses its human content. As in *Sense and Sensibility*, the descriptive terms in the title are closely associated with the two main characters. The form of the novel is dialectical—the opposition of ethical (conforming or not conforming to standards of conduct and moral reason) principles is expressed in the relations of believable characters. The resolution of the main plot with the marriage of the two opposites represents a reconciliation of conflicting moral extremes. The value of pride is affirmed when humanized by the wife's warm personality, and the value of prejudice is affirmed when associated with the husband's standards of traditional honour.

In the year of 1811 Jane Austen wrote *Mansfield Park*, which was published in 1814. It is her most severe exercise in moral analysis and presents a conservative view of ethics, politics and religion. The novel traces the career of a Cinderella-like heroine, who is brought from a poor home to Mansfield Park, the country

estate of her relative. She is raised with some of the comforts of her cousins, but her social rank is maintained at a lower level. Despite their strict upbringing, the cousins become involved in marital and extramarital tangles, which bring disasters and near-disasters on the family. But the heroine's upright character guides her through her own relationships with dignity—although sometimes with a chilling disdainfulness (open disapproval)—and leads to her triumph at the close of the novel. While some readers may not like the rather priggish (following rules of proper behaviour to an extreme degree) heroine, the reader nonetheless develops a sympathetic understanding of her thoughts and emotions. The reader also learns to value her at least as highly as the more attractive, but less honest, members of Mansfield Park's wealthy family and social circle.

*Mansfield Park* tells the story of Fanny Price, a girl from a poor family who is raised by her wealthy aunt and uncle at Mansfield Park. The book focuses on morality and the struggle between conscience and societal pressures and is considered by some critics to be the "first modern novel."

Shortly before *Mansfield Park* was published, Jane Austen began a new novel, *Emma*, and published it in 1816. Again, the heroine does engage the reader's sympathy and understanding. Emma is a girl of high intelligence and vivid imagination who is also marked by egotism and a desire to dominate the lives of others. She exercises her powers of manipulation on a number of neighbours who are not able to resist her prying. Most of Emma's attempts to control her friends, however, do not have happy effects for her or for them. But influenced by an old boyfriend who is superior to her in intelligence and maturity, she realizes how misguided many of her actions are. The novel ends with the decision of a warmer and less headstrong Emma to marry him. There is much evidence to support the argument of some critics that *Emma* is Austen's most brilliant novel.

*Persuasion*, begun in 1815 and published posthumously in 1818, is Jane Austen's last complete novel and is perhaps the most directly expressive of her feelings about her own life. The heroine is a woman growing older with a sense that life has passed her by. Several years earlier she had fallen in love with a suitor but was parted from him because her class-conscious family insisted that she would make a more appropriate match. But she still loves him, and when he again enters her life, their love deepens and ends in marriage.

Austen's satirical treatment of social pretensions and worldly motives is perhaps at its keenest in this novel, especially in her presentation of Anne's family. The predominant tone of *Persuasion*,

however, is not satirical but romantic. It is, in the end, the most uncomplicated love story that Jane Austen ever wrote and, to some tastes, the most beautiful.

The novel *Sanditon* was left unfinished due to her untimely death on July 8, 1817 in Winchester, England, where she had gone to seek medical attention.

In 1800, Austen's father decided to retire and move the family to Bath, a sea resort. Moving from the home she loved was difficult for Jane, especially because the family lived in several different places until 1809, when Mr. Austen died. During that period of nine years, Austen did not write. After her father's death, Austen and her mother and sister moved to Chawton, a country town where Austen's brother lent the family a house he owned. There Austen was able to pursue her work again, and she wrote *Mansfield Park*, *Emma*, and *Persuasion*.

In *Emma*, published in 1816, Austen introduces Emma Woodhouse, the "handsome, clever, and rich" heroine who fancies herself as a matchmaker. Her efforts at bringing people together, however, result in teaching her humility and her own discovery of love. Critics praise Emma Woodhouse as being Austen's most complex character, while readers find that they either love or hate Emma's story. Austen's final completed novel, *Persuasion*, was published posthumously in 1818. It deals with the broken engagement of Anne Elliott and Captain Wentworth and their second chance at love eight years later. Critics comment on the book's "autumnal feel" and note that Anne Elliott is not only Austen's oldest heroine, but also the one with the least self-confidence.

Austen lived the last eight years of her life in Chawton. Her personal life continued to be limited to family and close friends, and she prized herself on being a warm and loving aunt as much as being a successful novelist. A sudden illness, possibly Addison's disease, made her stop work on the novel *Sanditon*, and she died in 1817.

After her death, during the nineteenth-century romantic period, Austen was often looked upon with begrudging admiration, as her elevation of intelligence over feeling contradicted the romantic temperament.

Jane Austen was considered as pre-Victorian writer and Walter Scott was her contemporary writer, observed perfected to the theme of Jane such as social satire and adventure stories. That had become popular as the leading trend of British English literature of pre - Victorian Era.

The nineteenth century is often regarded as a high point in European literature and Victorian literature, including the works of Emily and (Charlotte Bronte), Robert Browning, Elizabeth Barrett, Browning, Lewis Carroll, Wilkie Collins, Charles Dickens, George Eliot, Thomas Hardy, A. E. Houseman, and Oscar Wilde, etc. are the successors of Jane Austen and remain the part of studies in most Universities and secondary schools.

Moreover, between the late 18th and early 19th centuries, English literature underwent a dramatic transition. The 18th century had seen the rise of the novel in the works of writers like Daniel Defoe (*Moll Flanders*) and Samuel Richardson (*Pamela*). These novels focused on broad social issues of morality and domestic manners. With the turn of the century and the rise of Romanticism, however, the novel began to explore human relationships with a greater degree of emotional complexity. Neither a Classicist nor a Romantic, Jane Austen is perhaps best thought of as a pioneering figure in the development of the novel, providing the bridge from the often-didactic novels of an earlier era to the great works of psychological realism of the Victorian period by writer such as George Eliot and Thomas Hardy.

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### 9.3 HISTORICAL ELEMENTS

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Austen's novels are famous for the way they seem to exist in a small, self-contained universe. There are almost no references in her work to the events of the larger world. Notwithstanding, it is worth noting that Austen's artist's impression of life in the tranquil English countryside takes place at the same time when England was fighting for its life against the threat of Napoleon, and all of Europe was entangled in war and political chaos. No mention is ever made of the imminence of a French invasion in her novels. Napoleon was finally defeated by the British at Waterloo in 1815, two years before Austen's death.

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### 9.4 BRIEF SUMMARY

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*Sense and Sensibility* tells the story of the impoverished Dashwood family, focusing on the sisters Elinor and Marianne, personifications of good sense (common sense) and sensibility (emotionality), respectively.

When Mr. Henry Dashwood dies, leaving all his money to his first wife's son John Dashwood, his second wife and her three daughters are left with no permanent home and very little income. Mrs. Dashwood and her daughters (Elinor, Marianne, and Margaret) are invited to stay with their distant relations, the Middletons, at Barton Park. Elinor is sad to leave their home at

Norland because she has become closely attached to Edward Ferrars, the brother-in-law of her half-brother John. However, once at Barton Park, Elinor and Marianne discover many new acquaintances, including the retired officer and bachelor Colonel Brandon, and the gallant and impetuous John Willoughby, who rescues Marianne after she twists her ankle running down the hills of Barton in the rain. Willoughby openly and unabashedly courts Marianne, and together the two flaunt their attachment to one another, until Willoughby suddenly announces that he must depart for London on business, leaving Marianne lovesick and miserable. Meanwhile, Anne and Lucy Steele, two recently discovered relations of Lady Middleton's mother, Mrs. Jennings, arrive at Barton Park as guests of the Middletons. Lucy ingratiates herself to Elinor and informs her that she (Lucy) has been secretly engaged to Mr. Ferrars for a whole year. Elinor initially assumes that Lucy is referring to Edward's younger brother, Robert, but is shocked and pained to learn that Lucy is actually referring to her own beloved Edward.

Elinor and Marianne travel to London with Mrs. Jennings. Colonel Brandon informs Elinor that everyone in London is talking of an engagement between Willoughby and Marianne, though Marianne has not told her family of any such attachment. Marianne is anxious to be reunited with her beloved Willoughby, but when she sees him at a party in town, he cruelly rebuffs her and then sends her a letter denying that he ever had feelings for her. Colonel Brandon tells Elinor of Willoughby's history of callousness and debauchery, and Mrs. Jennings confirms that Willoughby, having squandered his fortune, has become engaged to the wealthy heiress Miss Grey.

Lucy's older sister inadvertently reveals the news of Lucy's secret engagement to Edward Ferrars. Edward's mother is outraged at the information and disinherits him, promising his fortune to Robert instead. Meanwhile, the Dashwood sisters visit family friends at Cleveland on their way home from London. At Cleveland, Marianne develops a severe cold while taking long walks in the rain, and she falls deathly ill. Upon hearing of her illness, Willoughby comes to visit, attempting to explain his misconduct and seek forgiveness. Elinor pities him and ultimately shares his story with Marianne, who finally realizes that she behaved imprudently with Willoughby and could never have been happy with him anyway. Mrs. Dashwood and Colonel Brandon arrive at Cleveland and are relieved to learn that Marianne has begun to recover.

When the Dashwoods return to Barton, they learn from their manservant that Lucy Steele and Mr. Ferrars are engaged. They assume that he means Edward Ferrars, and are thus unsurprised,

but Edward himself soon arrives and corrects their misconception: it was Robert, not himself, whom the money-grubbing Lucy ultimately decided to marry. Thus, Edward is finally free to propose to his beloved Elinor, and not long after, Marianne and Colonel Brandon become engaged as well. The couples live together at Delaford and remain in close touch with their mother and younger sister at Barton Cottage.

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## 9.5 PLOT SUMMARY

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*Sense and Sensibility* tells the story of the impoverished Dashwood family, focusing on the sisters Elinor and Marianne, personifications of good sense (common sense) and sensibility (emotionality), respectively. They become destitute upon the death of their father, who leaves his home, Norland Park, to their half-brother, John. Although instructed to take care of his sisters, John is dissuaded of his duty by his greedy wife, Fanny. The family—which, in addition to Elinor and Marianne, includes their mother and a younger sister—moves to Barton Cottage in Devonshire. There the open and enthusiastic Marianne meets Colonel Brandon, a staid and settled bachelor 20 years her senior. Although he expresses an interest in Marianne, she discourages his attention and instead becomes infatuated with the attractive John Willoughby, who seems to be a romantic lover but is in reality an unscrupulous fortune hunter. He deserts Marianne for an heiress, and she eventually makes a sensible marriage with Colonel Brandon.

During this time, Marianne's elder sister, the prudent and discreet Elinor, and Edward Ferrars, Fanny's brother, have formed an attachment. However, she is outwardly reserved about her affections, especially after learning that he has been secretly engaged to Lucy Steele for several years. Although Edward loves Elinor, he is determined to honour his commitment to Lucy. When the engagement is revealed, Edward is disowned, and Colonel Brandon offers him a living as a clergyman. Later Elinor is told that Mr. Ferrars has married. Believing that the Mr. Ferrars in question is Edward, she is both shocked and relieved to discover that Lucy has wed Edward's brother, Robert. Edward arrives at Barton Cottage and proposes to Elinor, who accepts.

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## 9.6 LET'S SUM UP

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It is concluded that *Sense and Sensibility* is a more mature novel, Austen's characters and plot lines in *the novel* are more developed than her juvenilia work. The novel depicts deep emotions and intricate bonds and alliances among characters. In writing about the concept of sensibility, Austen represents the real



picture of the society of 18<sup>th</sup> century and highlights the societal issues of women in England, therefore she is known as the feminist novelist of Victorian age.

The novel offers a realistic account of life in 18<sup>th</sup> century and deals with societal issue where women were not being treated equally by the society. Biographical sketch of Jane highlights the problems has been faced by author to build up her literary career.

Elinor's good sense makes Marianne change her life and become reasonable. Marianne uses emotions and misplaced passions to make decisions and that is why she spends a long time complaining about everything around her.

Austen, therefore uses Marianne and Elinor to explore the theme of Sense and Sensibility and lack of it thereof, she also uses satire to spice up the story even though she adopts a sad note by including death, hurt and heartbreak in the story.

As the story concludes, it is evident that the novel outweighs the lack of the same.

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## 9.7 QUESTIONS

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1. What is the objective to study Jane Austen's life and her works?
2. Give your opinion on Austen as a successful female author in a male dominated society.

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# Unit-10

## STUDY OF SENSE AND SENSIBILITY (PART II)

### Unit Structure:

- 10.0 Objective
- 10.1 Introduction
- 10.2 Critical Commentary
- 10.3 Characters Analysis (Major Characters)
- 10.4 Critical Essays
- 10.5 Let's Sum Up
- 10.6 Questions
- 10.7 References

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### 10.0 OBJECTIVE

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This study enables students to understand the literary terms of writing. Her reformative theme and writing characterization develop analytical thinking of students. Austen explores the complications of choices, social pressures and the conventions of property and inheritance. Study of Austen life and her writing will help students to earn some ideas of her writing style, people's taste of reading and also it helps to understand perspective of life.

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### 10.1 INTRODUCTION

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This part introduces learners to critical study of various aspects of the novel, *Sense and Sensibility*. The opposing temperaments of sisters, Elinor and Marianne Dashwood, experience challenges of life and experiences differently through the ups and downs of love and disappointments to that final goal of marriage. In the backdrop of the limited social role allowed to women, the struggle of female characters to get a good marriage proposal becomes significant. Jane Austen proposes sensualness and emotionality of youth with sensible rationality to maintain that all important balance in life. She shows how lopsided behaviour makes Marianne blind enough to fall for unscrupulous Willoughby, and Elinor too reserved to appear cold outwardly. The novel beautifully traces human behaviour, and passions in minute details; which are applicable even today.

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## 10.2 CRITICAL COMMENTARY

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“Austen is one of the biggest literary figures in English,” said Woloch, chair of the Department of English. Austen's novels quickly became fashionable among opinion-makers, namely, those aristocrats who often dictated fashion and taste. The theme aims at analysing the behaviour of the character Marianne Dashwood in the novel *Sense and Sensibility*, by Jane Austen, demonstrating that her sentimental conduct is a means of protest against the behaviour expected from women in nineteenth-century England. Based on Adam Smith's Theory of Moral Sentiments and Mary Wollstonecraft's A Vindication of the Rights of Woman, the study discovers the way Austen's character contributes to a critical and feminist view of women's role in Regent society. The world has faced significant historical changes that have transformed our society considerably, especially since the Industrial Revolution, considered by Eric J. Hobsbawm (2013) as the major turning point of this period, causing a massive population growth and great development in scientific knowledge.

What is commonly thought of women's role in the patriarchal society of that time is that they were destined to play a supporting role, always shadowed by the male figures. However, according to Geneviève Fraisse & Michelle Perrot, it would nevertheless be wrong to think that time was only the period of a long domination, an absolute submission of women. In fact, this century [19th] marks the birth of feminism, an emblematic word that means both major structural changes (wage labour, autonomy of the civil subject, the right to education) as the collective emergence of women in politics(FRAISSE & PERROT, 1991, p.9)

It is therefore the time when women began to reflect upon their own condition and to look for ways to express their dissatisfaction, either consciously or unconsciously. It was in the beginning of that century that the first works of the British writer Jane Austen were published. If one thinks about the hard task of being a woman in the start of the 19th century, it is nothing compared to the even tougher undertaking of being a female writer. Virginia Woolf, a modernist writer and an advocate of feminist causes, wrote in her essay *A Room of One's Own* about the difficulties of the female writer to find her place in the history of literature, and acknowledged the achievements of 19th-century female writers like Jane Austen, George Eliot and the Brontë sisters.

According to Woolf (2014), women lacked the proper atmosphere to the act of writing, which was possible to men but denied to them: an independent and private room where she could write without being interrupted, a fair amount of money that would

allow her to buy something more than clothes, and, surely, the liberty to come and go in search of new experiences that were worth being told. "Such material difficulties were formidable; but much worse were the immaterial. "The indifference of the world which Keats and Flaubert and other men of genius have found so hard to bear was in her case not indifference but hostility" (WOOLF, 2014, p. 78). Men laughed at women's attempts to write, for they strongly believed that was a manly task, not compatible with the female intellectual inferiority. However, this hostile scenario did not entirely prevent great names of the literature written by women from arising, Jane Austen amongst them.

*Sense and Sensibility* was originally published in October, 1811. This was the earliest book by Austen to be published, even though it was not the first to be written by the author. Initially, *Sense and Sensibility* had been thought as an epistolary novel, a very common genre in the previous century, however already in decline since the beginning of the 19th. Austen's original idea was to reveal the plot through letters written by the Dashwood sisters, Elinor and Marianne. Nevertheless, this plan was discarded by the author, and the book was rewritten as a novel, the way we know it today. In fact, the novel was the most popular literary genre among women at that time. According to Virginia Woolf (2014), this is due to the fact that all the literary training that a woman had in the early nineteenth century was training in the observation of character, in the analysis of emotion. Her sensibility had been educated for centuries by the influences of the common sitting-room. People's feelings were impressed on her; personal relations were always before her eyes. Therefore, when the middle-class woman took to writing, she naturally wrote novels. (WOOLF, 2014, p. 98)

*Sense and Sensibility* tells the story of the women of the Dashwood family, who, because of the death of the family patriarch, were forced to resign their land and possessions to John Dashwood, the only son of Mr. Dashwood's first marriage. The women were thus obliged to change their residence and to drastically limit their spending. The story focuses on the lives of Elinor, the elder sister, and Marianne, the middle one, whilst they adapt to a new way of life, discover love and suffer the restrictions imposed on the female gender by the society in which they lived.

Although the novel was written over two hundred years ago, the 21st century readers still connect to the story of the Dashwood sisters. A few years back, scholars have re-discovered Austen's work and realized that, beyond the superficial novel of manners, the books of the British writer have a depth of meaning, irony and social criticism. In her essay *Austen Cults and Cultures* (2011), Claudia L. Johnson explains that this enthusiasm for Jane Austen and for the details regarding her character broke out during the last

two decades of the 19th century. According to Johnson (2011), up to the beginning of the 20th century, Austen's works were considered as a simple representation of the manners and customs of the English bourgeois class from the late-18th and early-19th centuries. It was with the publication of the essay *Regulated Hatred*, written by Professor D. W. Harding in 1940, that the criticism regarding Jane Austen changed its path.

Harding's depiction of Austen as a subversive opponent of dominant values proved helpful to the next generation of academics, especially feminists, who also considered Austen at odds with dominant values, and to all readers who took candidly non-moralistic and non-moralizing pleasure in her sarcasm (JOHNSON, 2011, p. 240).

Today Austen is considered one of the great names of English Literature. Nevertheless, it was not without difficulties that she entered the traditional literary canon, so marked by the massive presence of male writers. According to Pam Morris (2000), the tendency to regard women writers as special cases is the consequence of the "perception of a heroic tradition of literature composed entirely of a succession of great fathers and great sons. There are no mothers or daughters within the dynasty of the literary canon as constructed by male critics" (MORRIS, 2000, p. 47). Therefore, the literature written by women as it is seen today is without precedents.

Courtship is the common theme of all Austen's novels, but in *Sense and Sensibility*, the young ladies and gentlemen in love face dangerous challenges. Both Elinor's and Marianne's love affairs are threatened by mercenary forces intent on destroying their prospects of marriage. The obstacles to a marriage between reserved, sensible. Elinor and Edward are his family's greed and pride as well as his earlier indiscretion in engaging himself.

Along with courtship woman independence has also been the commonly discussed problem in Austen's novels especially in *Sense and Sensibility*. A small world of the author discusses various angles of life through her theme and characters.

Another theme has been discussed is feminism theory. The theme is analysed by Simone de Beauvoir. Beauvoir was born in Paris, France on 9 January 1908. She is a French philosopher and also a famous figure of modern feminism in the early 20th century. Besides that, she is also the author of novels and essays in the fields of politics and social science. She is known for her work in politics, philosophy, existentialism, and feminism. However, her best-known work is *Le Deuxième Sexe* (*The Second Sex*) which is

often regarded as the main work in the field of feminist philosophy which marks the beginning of the second wave of feminism.

Simone de Beauvoir opens her book *The Second Sex* with a question that is the source of the subject matter in *The Second Sex* and the beginning of the creation of the feminism theory, "What is a Woman?". The following is her statement:

"But first, what is a woman? "Tota mulier in utero: she is a womb," some says. Yet speaking of certain women, the experts proclaim, "They are not women," even though they have a uterus like the others. Everyone agrees there are females in the human species; today, as in the past, they make up about half of humanity; and yet we are told that "femininity is in jeopardy"; we are urged, "Be women, stay women, become women." So not every female human being is necessarily a woman; she must take part in this mysterious and endangered reality known as femininity." (p.23)

From the quotation above we can see that as long as this time, women are only seen from their reproductive organs. Therefore, women are only seen as "the other" or insignificant human being. Society makes the norms and rules of how to be a good woman that society wants.

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### **10.3 CHARACTER ANALYSIS: (MAJOR CHARACTERS)**

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#### **Mrs Dashwood**

The mother of Elinor, Marianne, and Margaret. Mrs. Dashwood is a kind, caring mother, who looks out for her daughters and tries to see them into happy, comfortable lives with good husbands, but is not as scheming as Mrs. Ferrars, and is generally more interested in her daughters' happiness than in their financial fortunes.

#### **Elinor Dashwood**

Elinor Dashwood is one of the two sisters at the heart of the novel; her marriage to Edward is the novel's happy ending. Elinor's composed, measured approach to life her "sense" contrasts with her sister Marianne's "sensibility" and seems, initially, the wiser of the two approaches. However, Elinor learns the limits of a cool, reasoning mind and develops a warmer balance of reason and emotion, propriety and expressiveness as she assists Marianne through her troubles.

Elinor exemplifies sense, from the novel's title. She is a rational thinker, who restrains her emotions, even when she suffers great hardships. Elinor is polite and always tries to say the right thing when around company. She often has to correct or apologize

to people for Marianne, who is less concerned with manners and propriety. Elinor is a caring sister and tries to comfort Marianne when she is abandoned by Willoughby. She is in love with Edward, but tries to ignore or put aside these feelings for much of the novel, as she believes him to be taken by Lucy. At the end of the novel, Elinor finally lets some of her emotions out: when Edward tells her that he has not married Lucy, she bursts out into tears. After marrying Edward, Elinor settles down into a comfortable, happy life.

### **Marianne Dashwood**

Marianne Dashwood is musically talented, beautiful, and lively. She favours "sensibility"—passion, emotion, and drama—over a cool, reasoned approach to life. Unlike her calmer, more restrained older sister, whom she loves but can't quite understand, Marianne throws herself into events, expecting a fairy-tale ending to love with Willoughby. Bitter experience forces Marianne to leaven her sensibility with a pinch of Eleanor's sense, preparing her to recognize Colonel Brandon's worthy love for her.

While Elinor exemplifies sense, Marianne epitomizes sensibility. The middle Dashwood sister, she is romantic, emotional, and sentimental. She often lacks the restraint, prudence, and politeness of her older sister Elinor. She falls in love easily and quickly with Willoughby and, when he abandons her, she does not even try to restrain or moderate her sadness. She bursts into tears numerous times, whether in the privacy of her room or in public. In the end, Marianne has to temper her sensibility with some good sense. She abandons her childish, idealistic notions of love at first sight and allows herself to gradually develop affections for Colonel Brandon, who she ends up loving dearly and marries happily.

The half-brother of the Dashwood sisters. John likes to think of himself as kind and generous, but his behaviour proves him to be actually rather greedy. He doesn't help his sisters, financially or otherwise, even after promising his dying father to help them. He is easily persuaded and even bossed around by his wife Fanny, and is greatly concerned with social status and prestige.

### **Fanny Dashwood**

The wife of John Dashwood. Fanny is a greedy character. She doesn't want John to give any money to his sisters, so that her son can inherit it all, and she cleverly persuades him out of giving his sisters any money. A bit of a social climber, Fanny is more concerned with wealth and status than love or character. She tries to discourage the possible marriage between Edward and Elinor early in the novel and when she finds out about Edward's engagement to Lucy she becomes hysterical and throws Lucy out of her home.



### **Edward Ferrars**

Edward is a kind, honourable gentleman and the brother of Fanny. Early in the novel, he grows close to Elinor, even though he is secretly engaged to Lucy. In Marianne's opinion, he lacks taste and artistic sensibility, but Elinor admires and loves him. He prioritizes duty and responsibility over money, as is shown when he refuses to break off his engagement with Lucy even when it means losing out on his inheritance. His relationship with Lucy is finally revealed at the end of the novel to be a mostly loveless one, and when their engagement fails, he is finally able to propose to Elinor, the woman he actually loves. Edward is content with a modest, comfortable life as a priest with a wife he loves; he has no lofty ambitions of wealth or social status (much to the chagrin of his mother Mrs Ferrars).

Edward Ferrars, brother of Fanny Ferrars Dashwood and Robert Ferrars, doesn't fit in with his family. Fanny, Robert, and their mother (Mrs. Ferrars) value wealth, status, and reputation. Edward, in contrast, values education and good conversation. Retiring and modest Edward is also loyal to a fault, which nearly costs him his marriage to Elinor.

### **Lady Middleton**

Sir John's elegant but (in Elinor and Marianne's opinion) rather dull wife. She and her husband host many social events which Elinor and Marianne attend, but Lady Middleton does not particularly like the Dashwood sisters, since they don't flatter her or her children. By contrast, she is very fond of the Steeles, who do flatter her.

Lady Middleton's mother, with whom Elinor and Marianne stay in London. Mrs. Jennings is friendly and well-intentioned, but a bit overly fond of gossip. She is obsessed with predicting marriages and matching young couples. She often irritates Marianne by joking about her supposed engagement to Willoughby, but when she learns of how Willoughby used her, she is sympathetic and compassionate toward Marianne. For all her attempts to know all the romantic gossip, Mrs. Jennings is often mistaken and misinformed. For most of the novel, she thinks that Colonel Brandon is in love with Elinor, when he actually loves Marianne.

### **Colonel Brandon**

Colonel Brandon earns the description "an officer and a gentleman." In his mid-thirties, he has seen enough of the world to be alert to manipulation, scandal, and lies, yet he is also a good judge of character and knows worthy traits when he sees them. Because he is capable and compassionate Colonel Brandon wins Elinor's admiration, Edward's friendship, and Marianne's love as he

works behind the scenes to undo the damage more selfish characters cause.

### **John Willoughby**

John Willoughby is the novel's scoundrel. Handsome and charming, Willoughby uses the people in his life to meet his needs, especially for pleasure and leisure. He relies idly on the promise of an inheritance, squanders his wealthy aunt's trust in him, and seduces and then abandons a vulnerable girl. Yet Willoughby changes to a degree when he courts Marianne; he realizes that he could actually love her and be a better man. His realization comes too late but earns Elinor's sympathy.

Willoughby is a charming gentleman who literally sweeps Marianne off her feet when he picks her up after she has fallen in a rainstorm. He shares Marianne's sensibility and artistic tastes, and the two quickly become very close. They appear to be falling in love together, but he suddenly abandons her and goes to London. When Marianne sees him there, he ignores her and claims that he was never romantically attached to her. As Elinor learns from Colonel Brandon, Willoughby has a history of seducing and abandoning women. Marianne is thus forced to reevaluate the character of the man she thought she knew and loved. When his aunt Mrs. Smith disinherits him, he is desperate for wealth so he marries Miss Grey for her money. Late in the novel, he finally offers Elinor an explanation of his behaviour, saying that he hurt Marianne unintentionally, regrets his foolish behaviour, and really does love Marianne. Marianne and Elinor (and the reader) must then reevaluate Willoughby yet again, and his ultimate character is still somewhat ambiguous at the end of the novel.

### **Mrs. Ferrars**

The mother of Fanny, Edward, and Robert Ferrars. Mrs. Ferrars' primary concern is to make sure her sons marry wealthy women. She is more concerned with gaining wealth and social status through their marriages than with the happiness of her own children. Mrs. Ferrars is particularly rude to Elinor, but is fond of Lucy when she first meets her. However, she becomes furious when she learns of Lucy and Edward's engagement. She disinherits and practically disowns Edward for this engagement. Somewhat hypocritically, though, she easily forgives Robert for marrying Lucy at the end of the novel, mainly because Robert is her favourite son. While not a particularly admirable character, Mrs. Ferrars is a rare example of how women can exercise some power in 18th century society. As her family's matriarch, she determines the inheritance of her children, and thus has an enormous amount of power (though both her sons end up thwarting her wishes).

**Eliza**

A woman who was in love with Colonel Brandon, but was married against her will to Brandon's brother. She and Brandon tried to elope but were caught. Unhappy in her marriage, her life took a downward turn while Brandon served in the army abroad. She was seduced by numerous men, divorced Brandon's brother, and ended up confined to a house because of debt. Brandon finds her there dying of consumption and promises to take care of her illegitimate daughter, also named Eliza. Arrogant and conceited, he is the son of Mrs. Ferrars, the younger brother of Edward and Fanny. His mother favours him over his older brother, and she seems pleased to disinherit Edward and give that inheritance to Robert. Ironically, Robert ends up getting engaged to Lucy Steele, the same woman whose engagement to Edward caused him to be disinherited in the first place. Robert has none of his brothers' sense or sensibility, and likes only to hear himself speak and be agreed with.

**Lucy Steele**

Lucy is a clever, socially scheming, self-interested young woman. For much of the novel she is secretly engaged to Edward Ferrars and tells Elinor that she is truly in love with him. However, after he loses his inheritance and his brother Robert gains it, she is not exactly slow to ingratiate herself with Robert, whom she ends up marrying. In the end, Lucy gets what she wants a wealthy husband who allows her to move up the social ladder through marriage. As the narrator says of her at the conclusion of the novel, she is a prime example of what someone can achieve when he or she is persistent, self-interested, and determined.

**MINOR CHARACTERS****Henry Dashwood**

The husband of Mrs. Dashwood and father of Elinor, Marianne, and Margaret, as well as (from a previous marriage) John Dashwood. On his deathbed, he asks John to look after his three half-sisters, who don't have substantial fortunes.

**Margaret Dashwood**

The youngest of the Dashwood sisters, Margaret is "good-humoured," but has even less sense than Marianne. She is a minor character in the novel, which focuses mostly on her two older sisters.

**Sir John Middleton**

A relative of Mrs. Dashwood, who invites her and her daughters to come live in a cottage on his property. Sir John hosts many dinners and parties at Barton Park, where Elinor and Marianne meet people like Mrs. Jennings, the Palmers, and the Steeles.

**Mrs. Smith**

Willoughby's aunt, who owns the property of Allenhurst, which Willoughby expects to inherit. After learning of his affair with Eliza, though, Mrs. Smith disinherits Willoughby.

**Charlotte Palmer**

The friendly sister of Lady Middleton, who attends many of the social events that Elinor and Marianne go to at Barton Park and in London. Marianne and Elinor stay with the Palmers at Cleveland before going back to Barton after their stay in London. There, Marianne falls dangerously ill.

**Mr. Palmer**

Mrs. Palmer's husband, who is normally rude to his wife and disagreeable to company. However, Elinor finds him to be a kind host when she and Marianne stay at the Palmers' home.

**Anne Steele**

Lucy's older sister, who often lacks the social intelligence and tact of Lucy—it is because of a slip of her tongue that the Ferrars family learns of Lucy's engagement with Edward. She irritates Elinor and Marianne by incessantly talking about her favourite "beaux" and romantic conquests.

**Miss Grey**

The wealthy woman that Willoughby marries for her money.

**Eliza (Younger)**

The daughter of Colonel Brandon's beloved Eliza, who is seduced by Willoughby. After he gets her pregnant, Willoughby completely abandons her, and Colonel Brandon has to take care of her.

**Miss Morton**

The wealthy woman Mrs. Ferrars tries unsuccessfully to engage Edward to. For a time, after Edward's engagement to Lucy is made public, Miss Morton is set to marry Robert Ferrars, though this engagement doesn't turn out either.

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## **10.4 CRITICAL ESSAYS**

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The arguments about man and woman in our society have been shaped in such a way. Society has given the assumption that women are weak people both physically and psychologically, and tend not to be able to provide their support in politics, art or education. Based on that argument, which has been established for centuries before, women cannot or afford to get a high education. They are only assigned to take care of the domestic works such as taking care of the house and their children. Education that they get

is only in the form of education about woman, not political or science. Therefore, what is expected of woman independence is that woman must dare to demand gender equality. Woman deserve a high education like men and earn their own money. They no longer have to rely on men and not just take care of the domestic works.

The movement of woman against patriarchal oppression is called feminism. Feminism is the advocacy of woman's right on the ground of the equality of the sexes (Oxford Dictionary). Feminism is the ideology and social movement that aims to change the subordinate status of woman in a society. Feminism is a belief that woman and man should have an equal rights and opportunities either in socially, economically, or politically. The person who believes that woman and man should be treated equally is called feminist. A feminist, Maria & Elizabeth Rahajeng in their book says "True feminism is about freedom. Freedom to choose / make your own choices. Freedom to speak. Freedom to think. Freedom to live in a way that is completely authentic to the core of who you are" (2018).

Society is a large group of people who live together in an organized way, making decisions about how to do things and sharing the work that needs to be done. All the people in a country, can be referred to as a society (Cambridge Dictionary). Traditionally the sociologist who studies literature is the use of literature as information about society. Literature is also influential in shaping and creating social action. Literary texts have been variously described as reflecting the "economics, family relationships, climate and landscapes, attitudes, morals races, social classes, political events, wars and religion" of the society that produced the texts (Albrecht; 1954, 426).

Jane Austen wrote this novel during an important transition in English cultural history when the sensible eighteenth-century enlightenment ideas were giving way to the more sensitive romantic ideas of the nineteenth century. In *Sense and Sensibility*, she creates the two Dashwood sisters, Elinor and Marianne, to embody the extremes of relational and romantic personality. The story may sometimes seem to fit a predictable formula, in which common sense is pitted against emotional sensitivity, but Austen also makes keen observations about the way to go about attaining happiness. The cool, rational elder sister, Elinor, falls deeply in love with her sister-in-law's brother, quiet, reserved Edward Ferrars. Elinor's sister-in-law Fanny regards Elinor as too poor for her wealthy brother, but he scorns his family's expectation that he marries a rich heir. Edward loves Elinor and he avoids her only because he secretly and foolishly engaged himself to Lucy Steele. This long-time clandestine engagement pains him when he realizes that he

never loved Lucy. His gentleman's code of conduct, however, does not allow him to break his engagement, so he expects to have to marry Lucy even after he falls in love with Elinor. Elinor for her part is resigned to the prospect of often meeting Edward and Lucy as a married couple. Lucy is a brilliantly portrayed character: a charming, intelligent, but completely heartless young woman who uses Edward to secure a position in upper-class society. As soon as Edward is disinherited by his angry mother and his brother Robert has better financial prospects, she shifts her affections and hopes to Robert.

Only because Lucy abandons honourable Edward does he become free to propose to Elinor. These lovers, who were guided by prudence and respect for social conventions, are finally united and win the happiness they desire because they honoured the sensible values of society.

Austen suggests that traditional ways are more trustworthy in times of need. She herself preferred life in a small country village and detested living in the elegant resort town of Bath, where sophisticated, leisured people gathered.

Austen's style adds a dramatically ironic dimension to the novel. Key characters reveal themselves in crisp, natural dialogue, at the same time showing readers that they do not completely understand themselves and their own values. Early in the story, Marianne declares to Elinor, "I have not known [Willoughby] long, indeed; but I am much better acquainted with him than I am with any other creature in the world, except yourself and mamma." Austen observes, "Marianne Dashwood was born to an extraordinary fate. She was born to discover the falsehood of her own opinions, and to counteract, by her conduct, her most favourite maxims."

Much has been written about feminist traces in Jane Austen's work, however *Sense and Sensibility* is not much prioritised by scholars in the field. When it is, the character Marianne Dashwood is usually overshadowed by her sister Elinor, considered by many the protagonist of the story.

In her work *Jane Austen, Feminism and Fiction* (1997), Margarethe Kirkham dedicates a short chapter, only two pages long, to the novel *Sense and Sensibility*. She explains the dichotomy *schema* between Reason and Sensibility, chosen by Jane Austen to represent the two sisters. Elinor characterizes "female good sense and prudence" (p.86), while Marianne is "led into error and difficulty by impulsiveness and excesses of feeling and conduct"(Ibid). Nonetheless, the author does not consider Marianne's behaviour as a non- conforming and feminist attitude.

Other feminist analyses of Austen's works have already been made. One of these which takes into consideration the Dashwood sisters' story is the essay *Northanger* out the incongruity of behaviour between the two Dashwood sisters, stating that "it is certainly easy to detect a pattern in which Marianne's extravagant demonstrations of feeling are unfavourably contrasted with Elinor's self- command and commitment to propriety" (p.33). Keymer also regards Marianne's excesses of sensibility as a demonstration of her dissatisfaction towards society.

Bycontrast, Marianne's habit of causing stirs and making scenes, while at one level a mark of culpable self- absorption, also works to disrupt the serenity of social mechanisms that empower rank and wealth at the expense of both sisters. In this sense, histrionics are her only available means of registering protest or fighting back (KEYMER, 2011, p.36).

Keymer asserts that Marianne's behaviour is a protest to the rules of the society, although he does not link it to a feminist attitude of the character.

In this work, Smith explains five main principles of his theory. The first one is the concept of *sympathy* and how it affects human relations. According to him, pity and compassion are words appropriated to signify our fellow-feeling with the sorrow of others. Sympathy, though its meaning was, perhaps, originally the same, may now, however, without much impropriety, be made use of to denote our fellow feeling with any passion whatever. (SMITH, 1790, p.06)

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## 10.5LET'S SUM UP

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This work intended to bring forward the analytical perspective of Jane Austen's characters in *Sense and Sensibility*. Such as Marianne Dashwood who usually overshadowed by her sister, Elinor, in most literary analyses. Jane Austen created deep characters, who are intensely ironic and critical to the society in which they lived. It is important to emphasize that this literary piece was written in the beginning of the 19th century, a time when women struggled to find their space in a patriarchal society.

In the field of Literature, Virginia Woolf (2014) wrote about the silence of women writers which lasted for many centuries and was only broken with the works of Jane Austen, George Eliot, and the Brontë sisters. They opened the path so other women writers could break into the masculine literary world. Their difficulties to enter the publishing market, nonetheless, were immense, and their participation was marginalized, for writing was not considered a

feminine endeavour. Despite all the hardships, Jane Austen wrote six novels which obtained great success during her lifetime, and even greater nowadays.

In order to analyse *Sense and Sensibility*, and especially its character Marianne Dashwood, Adam Smith's *The Theory of Moral Sentiments* was used as a theoretical basis. Its five main principles were explained: the concept of *sympathy*, the satisfaction derived from mutual sympathy, the relationship between affections and propriety, amiable and respectable virtues, and the degrees of compatibility between affections and the sense of propriety. Smith advocates that if we put ourselves in someone else's place, we are capable of feeling the other's passions, judging them as respectable or reproachable, according to our own beliefs and our society's. Such judgment is constant in *Sense and Sensibility*, chiefly between the two sisters. Just as Elinor condemns Marianne's exaggerated and uncontrolled behaviour, Marianne reproaches her sister's conducts for considering them coward and artificial.

In conclusion, Marianne's excessive sensibility is a lot more than juvenile whims. It is her way of protesting against the conventions of the society of her time. Her protest is, therefore, done indirectly, but not less real or effective. It is through her histrionics that Marianne externalizes her discontent with Willoughby's actions, with the male domination, the overrating of self control, the imposed female submission and her impotence of acting as she wishes, for being a woman. *Sense and Sensibility* is, in this way, a reflection on women's role in the 19th- century society and a maturation of feminist ideals. Austen's work, through this lens, shows a number of layers of meaning, which, when discovered, fascinate her readers with the capacity of this important writer in the history of the literature written by women.

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## 10.6 QUESTIONS

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1. What is the objective to study Jane Austen's life and her works? Give your opinion on Austen as a successful female author in a male dominated society.
2. Discuss about the theme of Austen's 'Sense and Sensibility'.
3. Which are the major characters of, 'Sense and Sensibility'? Analyse all main male and female characters in this novel.
4. What are the minor characters of the novel, 'Sense and Sensibility', briefly explain the importance of those characters in this novel?
5. Write down the conclusion of study Austen's 'Sense and Sensibility'.



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# Unit-11

## CRITICAL STUDY OF THE MAYOR OF CASTERBRIDGE - THOMAS HARDY PART-I

### Unit Structure:

- 11.0 Objective
- 11.1 Introduction: Socio-Cultural Background
- 11.2 Biographical details of *Thomas Hardy*
- 11.3 Hardy as a novelist
- 11.4 Plot structure of *The Mayor of Casterbridge*
- 11.5 Point of View and Style in *The Mayor of Casterbridge*
- 11.6 Character Analysis
- 11.7 Let's Sum Up
- 11.8 Questions
- 11.9 References

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### 11.0 OBJECTIVE

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The objective of this unit is to introduce students to the works of Thomas Hardy. The unit offers brief Biographical details to the author. It also acquaints students to the socio-cultural background of Victorian era. It would also inspire students to read Hardy as a Wessex novelist of his times. Students are advised to read the novel and conceptualize their own point of views on the details provided here.

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### 11.1 INTRODUCTION: SOCIO-CULTURAL BACKGROUND:

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In the month of June of 1833, Thomas Hardy and his wife Emma settled into their new home in Dorchester. Hardy spent his last few years travelling across England. However, he wanted to settle down and perhaps become a family holder. Hardy and his wife then again decided to return to Dorchester. The town Located just a few miles from his birthplace where he had spent his childhood and also to have trained himself as a young architect.

Hardy then, have returned to his home and started staying there. He had proved his love for the town. He had quickly built his

home named Max Gate in town. He was also interested in issues of Town people such as the problems of the laborers. He had studied the early records of farmers and has understood the value of farmers. Despite his efforts to return to the community, Hardy's love for writing remained unaltered. He started writing especially short stories and had almost written a novel by now. While he was checking on the historical records of farmers, he came across an article which talks about the sale of a wife in an auction. The article about the wife's sale provided him with a fantastic situation and plot for his new writings.

After few weeks of research, Hardy began to write a novel. *The Mayor of Casterbridge* was completed within next few weeks. He wrote with zeal and enthusiasm. This writing gave him the reasons and finally he completed the novel on April 17 1885. The novel was published in the literary magazine called *Graphic* in serial form. The publisher wanted to see everything beforehand. Eventually the novel was published in a serialized form from January 2nd 1886. On May 10 of the same year, *The Mayor of Casterbridge* was published in two volumes. Critics loved Hardy for his art of writing and most of them have liked the novel for its improbable and to shocking experience which increased Hardy's confidence in writing.

*The Mayor of The Caster Bridge* is set in the country of Wessex. It is the land of the farmers for centuries because the farmers are more connected to the land. They are closer to the nature

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## 11.2 BIOGRAPHICAL DETAILS OF THOMAS HARDY

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Thomas Hardy was born June 2, 1840 in a village of Blockhampton near southwestern England. He was the son of a mason who was also a violinist. His mother was also an avid reader of books.

Under the care of his parents, Hardy got most of his life's lessons, which he portrayed into his novels. His love for architecture and music is an example of it. He was very passionate about country folks and all sorts of literature. He attended his school regularly at Julia Matins School in Blockhampton. He had learned French, German and Latin by taking his own lessons. At the age of 16, Hardy's father sent Hardy to a local architect named John Hicks for apprenticeship. Under the tutelage of John, Hardy has learnt all about architecture and Drawing, He started restoring old houses and churches. This helped to develop his interest in histories of those houses and churches. Along with the architectural work, Hardy continued his academic studies. He studied in the evening regularly after his day time work, especially the Roman

scholars like Horace. Around 1862, Hardy was sent to London to learn architecture under the supervision of Bloomfield. During his five years of stay in London Hardy visited many museums and libraries where he developed his interest for writing and classical literature, along with the artistic talent of composing poems. Then within five years he chose to return to Dorchester as a church restorer. After returning to Dorchester, he again started writing and composing. After 1867, Hardy composed many poems and Novels. The early times, He dedicated himself for novels and they were very famous and acclaimed. Initially he published his work anonymously but after that he started using his own name. His few early novels were published in the magazines from London and America.

His first popular novel was *Under the Greenwood Tree*, published in 1872. The second blockbuster was *Far from the madding crowd* 1874 made him a recognized Novelist. He gave up architecture and started focusing on writing. In between he got married to Emma Gifford. In quick succession of writing he produced, *The Return of the Native* (1878), *The mayor of the Casterbridge* (1886), *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* (1891), *Jude the Obscure* (1895). In addition to these works, Hardy also wrote three short story collections and five novellas. The readers found his texts interesting but more shocking. Hardy decided to turn to his first love, Poetry. His later years, he spent in Dorchester dedicated to poetry. His poems are usually called as Wessex poems. During the last two decades, Hardy achieved a lot of fame and name. In the year 1910, He was awarded with The Order of Merit. Before his death Hardy has written over 800 poems and many of them were published when he was in his 80's. His first wife Emma died in the year 1912. In 1914 he married to Florence Dugale who was very dedicated to him. Thomas Hardy died on 11, January 1928 with a highly successful life at the age of 87. He was buried in the Westminster Abbey.

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### 11.3 HARDY AS A NOVELIST

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The novels of Thomas Hardy are set mostly in the lap of nature. His novels are called the novels of "character and environment". He has set most of his novels; poems as well as short stories around the market town of Dorchester where he had spent his boyhood, the fictional Caster Bridge. The Settings of his novels is rustic and rural. Hardy's rural backdrop is neither romantic nor idealized. He has been severely criticized for his settings being overtly Pessimist about humanity. In all of his fiction 'chance' is the "Incorporation of the blind forces" controlling human destiny. Of course, the blind forces have worked relentlessly into his writings. In *The mayor of Casterbridge* Hardy seems to apply the concept of "fortunes Falls wheels" from borrowing it from Shakespeare and

applies it to the rise and the fall of Michael Henchard. Michael has been initially shown as a poor hay Trusser with drinking habit. He consumes alcohol in excess while on the way to his work. Eventually he becomes the town's leading corn producer and mayor. At the end of the novel Henchard is ruined. Similarly, the stories of other novels are shocking. The female characters in his text also have Universal strength for spiritual power and physical beauty. He treats them with favor and love.

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#### **11.4 PLOT STRUCTURE OF THE MAYOR OF CASTERBRIDGE**

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Michael Henchard, a twenty-one-year-old hay-trusser is traveling with his wife, Susan, and their baby daughter, Elizabeth-Jane looking for employment. When they stop to eat at a furnity house, Henchard gets drunk, and in an auction that begins as a joke but turns serious, he sells his wife, and daughter to, a sailor named Richard Newson, for five guineas. In the morning, Henchard regrets his action and searches the town for his wife and daughter. Unable to find them, he goes into a church and swears an oath that he will not drink alcohol for twenty-one years.

Believing the auction to be legally binding, Susan lives as Newson's wife for eighteen years. After Newson is lost at sea Susan, lacking any means of support, decides to seek out Henchard again. Elizabeth-Jane believes Henchard to be a long-lost relative. They arrive in Casterbridge and learn that Henchard is the mayor. The parents meet and decide that in order to prevent Elizabeth-Jane from learning of their disgrace, Henchard will court and remarry Susan as though they had met only recently. He is forced to break off an engagement with a woman named Lucetta Templeman, who had nursed him when he was ill.

Meanwhile, Henchard has hired Donald Farfrae, a young Scotchman, as the new manager of his corn business, turning away a man named Jopp to whom he had already offered the job. Elizabeth-Jane is intrigued by Farfrae, and the two begin to spend time together. Henchard initially likes Farfrae, however, as the younger man consistently outdoes Henchard in every respect, Henchard asks Farfrae to leave his business and to stop courting Elizabeth-Jane. Farfrae sets himself up as an independent merchant.

Susan falls ill and dies soon after her remarriage to Henchard, leaving Henchard a letter to be opened on the day of Elizabeth-Jane's wedding. Henchard reads the letter, and learns that Elizabeth-Jane is not his daughter, but Newson's and his daughter had died as an infant. After this Henchard becomes increasingly cold toward her. Elizabeth-Jane then decides to leave

Henchard's house and live with a lady who has just arrived in town. This lady turns out to be Lucetta Templeman, had had a relationship with Henchard which resulted in her social ruin. Having learned of Susan's death, Lucetta has come to Casterbridge to marry Henchard.

While Lucetta is waiting for Henchard to call on her, she meets Farfrae, who has come to call on Elizabeth-Jane. Both get attracted to each other and are eventually married. Lucetta asks Henchard to return to her all the letters she has sent him. Henchard asks Jopp to take them to her. Jopp, who still bears a grudge for having been cheated out of the position of factor, opens the letters and reads them out loud at an inn. Some of the townspeople publicly shame Henchard and Lucetta. The event takes place one afternoon when Farfrae is away. Lucetta, devastated by the spectacle that she collapses, has a miscarriage, and dies.

While Henchard has grown to hate Farfrae, he has grown closer to Elizabeth-Jane. The morning after Lucetta's death, Newson, who is actually still alive, arrives at Henchard's door and asks for Elizabeth-Jane. Henchard tells him that she is dead, and Newson leaves in sorrow. Elizabeth-Jane stays with Henchard and also begins to spend more time with Farfrae. Eventually discovering that he has been lied to, Newson returns, and Henchard disappears rather than endure a confrontation. Elizabeth-Jane is reunited with Newson and learns of Henchard's deceit; Newson and Farfrae start planning the wedding between Elizabeth-Jane and the Scotchman.

Henchard comes back to Casterbridge on the night of the wedding to see Elizabeth-Jane, but she snubs him. He leaves again, telling her that he will not return. She soon regrets her coldness, and she and Farfrae, her new husband, go looking for Henchard so that she can make her peace. Unfortunately, they find him too late, discovering that he has died alone in the countryside. He has left a will. His dying wish is to be forgotten.

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## **11.5 POINT OF VIEW AND STYLE IN THE MAYOR OF CASTERBRIDGE**

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The Mayor of Casterbridge is a tragic and realistic fiction and has a little melodramatic twist. This novel is narrated by third person and it is an omniscient type of text where the narrator knows everything and everyone. The dialogues are well framed and quoted no extra words are added to get the realistic impact on the readers. It is revolving majorly around four characters they are Michael, Elizabeth, Lucetta and Farfrae. The ideas are expressed so well and this is another major reason why this novel was remarked during Victorian period. Language of writing used is local and simple, used in day-to-day life. The speech is so clear that one

can understand the speaker's motive and his /her personality easily. Hardy has written it in such a descriptive way that we can imagine the facial features, mood and their lifestyle as well. Written beautifully *The Mayor of Casterbridge* was a renowned and prominent novel of that time.

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## 11.6 CHARACTER ANALYSIS:

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### 11.6.1 Michael Henchard:

Michael Henchard, the hero of the novel whose dying wish was that no one remember his name after his death. It is tragic considering how important his name has been to him during his lifetime. Henchard wakes up from a drunken stupor and wonders, first and foremost, if he told any of his friends his name after committing the abominable deed of selling his wife and child. Eighteen years pass between the incident of selling his wife and daughter and Henchard's reunion with Susan in Casterbridge. But the reader realizes the value that Henchard places on good reputation. He had climbed from hay-trusser to mayor of a small agricultural town and labors to protect the esteem this higher position affords him. When Susan and Elizabeth-Jane come upon the mayor hosting a banquet for the town's most prominent citizens, they witness a man struggling to convince the masses that, despite a mismanaged harvest, he is an honest person with a worthy name. While staring out at an unhappy audience made up of grain merchants who have lost money and common citizens who, without wheat, are going hungry. Henchard laments that he can't recover past. Henchard compares grown wheat metaphorically to the wrong deeds of the past—neither can be taken back. Henchard understands the significance of this lesson at the end of Chapter IV but he does not succeed to internalize it. Guilt treats Henchard like a fuel which keeps him moving towards his own demise. He fails to forget the events which took place in the farm-house woman's tent. He repents again and again of his act. Marriage with Lucetta might have given him some relief, for instance, but he decides to make amends for the past by remarrying a woman he never loved in the first place. Henchard seems to be possessed with the feeling of a "restless and self-accusing soul". He seems to find out situations which further debasement. Although Henchard loses even the ability to explain himself, he never relinquishes his talent of endurance. He bears pain whatever comes in his way. This resilience which elevates him towards the image of a hero—a man, whose name must be remembered.

### 11.6.2 Donald Farfrae:

He is young Scotchman who serves as a foil (a character whose actions or emotions contrast with and thereby accentuate those of another character) for Henchard. Will and intuition affect the course of Henchard's life but Farfrae is an intellectual man. He has

credit of bringing to Casterbridge a method for salvaging damaged grain, a system for reorganizing and revolutionizing the mayor's business, and a mixture of curiosity and ambition which make possible to him to take interest in-and advantage of ---the agricultural advancements of the day; such as the seed -sowing machine. His motive was moral. He intends to take over Casterbridge grain trade to make it more prosperous and prepare the village for the advancing agricultural economy of the later nineteenth century. He never wishes to dishonor Henchard. Farfrae is man of science. Hardy draws his character with the stereotypical strengths and weakness of such people. He has an intellectual competence so unrivaled that it passes for charisma. He is emotionally distant throughout the novel. He is successful of winning the favor of the townspeople with his highly successful day of celebration. He does not feel any emotion deeply whether it is happiness got by his carnival or sorrow at the death of his wife. His character is in bold contrast to Henchard whose depth of feeling is so profound which causes to doom him.

#### **11.6.3 Elizabeth-Jane Newson:**

There is a drastic transformation in the character of Elizabeth-Jane over the course of the novel. The narrative does not focus on her character as much as other characters. She is kind, simple and uneducated girl. Once at Casterbridge, she begins intellectual and social development. So, she begins to dress like a lady, reads voraciously keeping her best expunge rustic country dialects from her speech. She gets this self-education but at painful time. After arriving in Casterbridge, her mother dies, leaving her in the custody of a man who has learned that she is not his biological daughter. So, he wants little to do with her. One may argue that she has share equal to that of Henchard or Lucetta. She does not only lack Lucetta's sense of drama but also lacks her stepfather's desire to bend the will of others to her own. Elizabeth freely accepts the circumstance and moves on with life when Henchard cruelly dismisses her. This approach of her to living stands as bold counterpoint to Henchard'.

#### **11.7.4 Lucetta Templeman:**

She lives recklessly according to her passions and suffers for it very similar to Michael Henchard. Lucetta becomes involved in a scandalously indiscreet affair with Henchard that makes her the pariah of Jersey before her arrival In Casterbridge. Knowing the consequence, she proceeds to love whomever she wants however she pleases. Still there is lack of boldness in her character and certainty of purpose that would elevate her to the level of "the isolated, damned, and self -destructive individualist" Albert Guerard describes her as "the great nineteenth-century myth." In the novel she emerges not as heroic but as childish and imprudent.



### 11.6.5 The Townspeople of Casterbridge:

The people of the Casterbridge are not similar to those of Weydon-Priors because they get involved in the affairs of the other townspeople. They point out that Michael's crops don't sell. Farfrae is a charming and wise man. Lucetta needs a comeuppance. They serve as a Greek chorus through these remarks.

### 11.6.6 Joshua Jopp:

This person is competitor for the position of Michael Henchard's general manager. Jopp hates Farefrae and will do anything to ruin him because he was chosen for the position of manager. He starts to behave as the typical villain from this point. He also hates Lucetta because she didn't ready to help him so he plays upon the hatred of the townspeople and tries to highlight the weaknesses to Michael to ruin her.

### 11.6.7 Abel Whittle

He is worker in Henchard's company but his nature is always a bit tardy. Once Michael becomes so angry and punishes him by making him come to work without pants. Still, he is faithful employee to the company. Michael was kind to his mother. In the final days of Michael, Abel willingly cares for him and delivers his last will to Elizabeth –Jane.

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## 11.7. LET'S SUM UP

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This part gives the details on the biography of the author. It also talks about the socio-cultural background to the text with the Victorian characteristics of the text. The short descriptions with key points pertaining to the text, of *The mayor of the Casterbridge* enables us to understand the characters and background to the text. The Mayor of Casterbridge is a landmark novel in the Victorian time. It is more a natural discourse than just a commentary of life size experiences. It seems as a real story of Henchard life. The list of Characters helps us understand the development of the novel and the story.

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## 11.8 QUESTIONS

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1. Describe Thomas Hardy as a Victorian novelist. Support your answer with suitable details and precepts of the Victorian times.
2. Bring out the biographical Details of Thomas Hardy
3. Analyze the Plot structure and style in *The Mayor of Casterbridge*
4. Comment on the Characterization of the novel *The Mayor of Casterbridge*
5. Describe the novel *The Mayor of Casterbridge* as a novel of natural elements.

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# Unit-12

## CRITICAL STUDY OF THE MAYOR OF CASTERBRIDGE - THOMAS HARDY PART-II

### Unit Structure:

- 12.0 Objective
- 12.1 Introduction
- 12.2 Chapter wise summary
- 12.3 Themes
- 12.4 Motifs
- 12.5 Symbols
- 12.6 Important quotations
- 12.7 Let's Sum Up
- 12.8 Questions
- 12.9 References

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### 12.0 OBJECTIVE

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The objective of this part-II is to provide students with the outline of the text. This also gives students the detailed chapter wise summary of the text. It acquaints students with the themes, motifs and symbols used in the text. Students are asked to read the text and formulate their own views on it.

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### 12.1 INTRODUCTION

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*The Mayor of Casterbridge* is one of the master pieces of Thomas Hardy. It is Hardy's Wessex novel. The novel wonderfully presents the lives of country people, their customs and education, work and ideas. The subtitle, *A Story of a Man of Character*, indicates the upheaval in the life of the protagonist Michael Henchard. Tragedy of Henchard is moving because of the cruel role played by fate and chance in Henchard's ruin. He is neither good, nor bad. Like a Greek tragic hero, Michael Henchard, despite all of his weaknesses, comes across as a dignified individual, standing strong in his misfortunes and sufferings.

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## 12.2 CHAPTER WISE SUMMARY

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### Chapter I

Henchard family in September 1820 travelled and reached Weydon-Priors. The father Michael Henchard his wife Susan and their little daughter Elizabeth-Jane were in search of a shelter and work. But the laborers told him there is neither so they travelled a little more and found a tent in which a Furmity woman was selling cereal mixed with rum. Michael ended up drinking too much of alcohol and he began to scream loudly and asked people to buy his wife and his daughter as he was frustrated from his married life. On the other side his wife was crying and asking him to stop the drama, but being drunk he was not in his senses. Soon a sailor named Richard Newson appeared and purchased both of them for five guineas. After a moment as they left, and Michael also passed out.

### Chapter II

Michael woke up and realized that selling his wife and daughter was not a dream, when he found five guineas in his pocket. He came out of the tent and left secretly as he was very much ashamed of himself and at the same time, he was very angry over his wife because she left him without any hesitation. Searching for his wife and daughter he walked a few miles but didn't find them. Being very upset he entered a church and took a pledge of not drinking alcohol for next twenty-one years and began his search again. He ended up being at a seaport where he found that his wife and the sailor had left for Casterbridge. Immediately he took the decision and went to Casterbridge with a hope to find his family.

### Chapter III

After long eighteen years Susan and her daughter Elizabeth-Jane were walking down the streets and reached to the same Furmity tent where they were sold by Michael because her second husband Richard Newson died in a sea war. Susan recognized the furmity lady and enquired about Michael. She was told that he left the place next morning and came back exactly after a year to ask for his wife and daughter and his current location was Casterbridge. After all the updates, the mother daughter duo left for Casterbridge to find Michael.

### Chapter IV

While passing by Susan overheard a conversation of two men speaking about Michael, she thought of asking them about his location but her daughter said that it might create problems and their image can be spoiled, so they moved on. As they were travelling for long time, they were hungry. when asked for a bakery to a stranger he informed them that the crops were not well that year, and so the bread turned out to be very bad. Roaming around

they found a shop and purchased a pack of biscuit which they shared.

### **Chapter V**

As they reached in the city, they heard some music and a speech given by a man and a group of people standing outside a restaurant. A stranger told them that Mr. Michael Henchard the mayor of the city is having a meeting with some important members of the city over the demolished crop condition. After peeping in, they were shocked and surprised that Michael was the mayor and he has reached up to such an important position in his life. Elizabeth observed that his glass was empty, to which the old man informed that he had stopped drinking and he would not drink for twenty-one years as he had taken an oath. Suddenly Michael did an announcement saying tha the would be very thankful to anyone who would help him to cope with the loss of crops.

### **Chapter VI**

A young man was passing by. Being a student of agriculture, he understood that they were in need of help. He wrote a note and handed it to the waiter standing by the door and asked him to give that to the Mayor and proceeded to his hotel. Following him Susan and Elizabeth went to the same place as they were new to that place. Michael received the note and found it interesting and generous. He asked the waiter about the Scotsman's location, and went to meet him at his hotel.

### **Chapter VII**

As Elizabeth and Susan entered the hotel, they found it to be very expensive and they were not in condition to afford a room there. Elizabeth convinced the owner of the hotel to lend them a room and that in return she would work in the hotel. The owner agreed. Susan was given a room beside the Scottish man. When Elizabeth went downstairs to work, Susan overheard the conversation between Michael and the man. She found out that the young man was named Donald Farfrae and he was going to America for his work. Michael tried to bribe him in different ways so that he could help them to improve their wheat and corn crops but he failed to do so. However, Farfrae invited Michael for a drink and during the conversation Michael disclosed about the oath he had taken long back after a life changing incident that had happened with him.

### **Chapter VIII**

When the meeting was over, Farfrae ordered food and to deliver it in the room, Elizabeth appeared with a tray. Then he went downstairs to enjoy some songs. Elizabeth found him to be exactly like her and started falling for him. The landlady asked Elizabeth to make Farfrae's bed as he was about to sleep while coming out of

the room, she had an eye contact with Farfrae and they both smiled at each other. Thinking of various tricks on how to stop Farfrae from leaving for America, Michael came up with a plan to give Farfrae the third share of the business.

### **Chapter IX**

Elizabeth woke up next morning and found that Michael and Farfrae were having a conversation standing outside the hotel. she informed Susan about the same and Susan asked Elizabeth to follow them handing her a note for Michael. She followed them, and ended up reaching at Henchard's office, where she found that Farfrae had agreed to Michael's deal and that he would be the manager for the company.

### **Chapter X**

As soon the meeting ended, Elizabeth went to meet Michael, but a man named Joshua Jopp interrupted asking for the position of manager, to which Michael responded that the seat had been filled already, and Jopp left heavy hearted. After meeting Elizabeth-Jane, Michael came across the reality of his wife and daughter. He asked Elizabeth a few questions and gave her a note for Susan, asking her to meet him later that night. Elizabeth Jane returned to her hotel with the note. After reading the note, Susan decided to meet her husband.

### **Chapter XI**

Susan went to meet Michael that night. Michael broke the silence and asked her why she didn't return to him and what took her so many years to get back in touch with him. Susan replied that she thought the deal was legally bound between the sailor and Michael who forced her to be sailor's wife and she could not move out until the sailor's death. They wanted to live together but that would have created a scandal, so, they decided to get a cottage for Susan near the town and later would get married again and not reveal their past ever.

### **Chapter XII**

After the meet Michael returned home and found Farfrae, still working on some project. Interrupting him Michael called him for the dinner. As they had become good friends lately, Michael shared his past with Farfrae, and told him how he had met Susan again and that he wanted to marry her. Farfrae suggested him to get married to her in the court, but Michael was a little anxious. On being asked by his manager, he told him about his relationship with Lucetta a woman in Jersey, whom he had met when he was on a business trip in Jersey. Lucetta was humiliated for being in a relationship with Michael, and so Michael was forced to promise her that he would marry her. But now that his wife was back, he didn't want to marry Lucetta. Farfrae, after listening to the story told

Michael to write a letter to Lucetta and break the relationship with her.

### **Chapter XIII**

As it was decided with Susan, Michael got her a cottage and started visiting her for business. But the rumours started spreading and they got married. They started living their happy life. Elizabeth also accepted Michael as her father.

### **Chapter XIV**

Michael was happy like never before and his personal and professional life was doing well. One day he observed that Elizabeth's hair colour was not same as it was when she was a child. He thought of changing her surname officially and giving her all the rights of being his daughter. Susan ignored this proposition and left the discussion, and Elizabeth felt upset and disapproved of it. Later that day Michael went to Elizabeth and asked her whether she was willing to change her surname. She asked him whether that was necessary, and he responded that it was upto her and she said that she was happy being Ms. Newson.

### **Chapter XV**

This chapter begins with a lot of anger and frustration. Michael Henchard and Farfrae were fighting over Whittle who was an employee of Henchard. Whittle was late to work regularly. Despite being warned by Michael, when he was late the other day with anger Michael entered his room and dragged him out of his bed and took him to the field, which was very humiliating and shameful for him. After this disrespectful act Whittle warned Farfrae that he would die but not work there again; and after being sympathized by Farfrae he went back home calmly. Michael and Farfrae had a heated argument over the incident, Farfrae threatened him that he would leave the job and left the field. Michael was terrified by those words as Farfrae knew all his dark secrets and might have ruined the respect and designation he held in the town.

### **Chapter XVI**

After the fight the relation between both Michael and Farfrae was affected, but still they were working together. one day Farfrae went to Michael and asked whether he could borrow some cloth to build a tent for upcoming festival. In competition, Michael booked a green lawn and organised an event too. But the fate was not with Michael and it rained heavily, ruining his event. He was very angry with Farfrae's successful event. When he went inside the tent, he saw his daughter Elizabeth-Jane and Farfrae dancing together. people were teasing Michael that Farfrae would soon overtake his business, to which is said that Farfrae would leave Casterbridge soon.

### **Chapter XVII**

While dancing with Farfrae, Elizabeth observed that her father was not happy by her gesture, therefore, she left the tent and ran outside. Farfrae followed her and asked her what had happened. She told him about her father's reaction. He told her that he was going to leave her father's job and start with his own business as he had purchased a piece of land on the outskirts of Casterbridge. She asked him not to leave but he was helpless and he left. In a few months Farfrae's business reached new heights and started growing fast because of which Michael was very upset.

### **Chapter XVIII**

It was not a good time for Henchard family as Elizabeth had sacrificed her love, Michael was facing losses and Susan was not well. Meanwhile Lucetta wrote a letter from Jersey to Michael telling him that she respected his decision of breaking up with her and he did a right by getting back with his wife. However, she asked him to return all the love letters she had written to him in the past, so that both can start a new life. She also mentioned that she was going to pass through Casterbridge and that she wanted to meet Michael once. Michael went to meet her but she wasn't there. When Michael left to meet Lucetta, Susan was in her last stage. She asked Elizabeth to give a piece of paper and pen. She wrote a letter for Michael and gave it to Elizabeth with a warning that Michael was supposed to open it only after Elizabeth's marriage. She died soon after that as her funeral was going to take place the discussions were going on which was overheard by Farfrae.

### **Chapter XIX**

Immediately within three weeks of Susan's death, Michael thought of telling Elizabeth all the truth of his past, but with a twist in it. He told her that his mother Susan and he had somehow got separated and both thought that their partner to be dead and that was the reason why Susan got married to the sailor. Michael asked Elizabeth to declare in newspaper that from then on, she was Henchard and not Newson; and she agreed. As Michael went upstairs to find his documents, he found Susan's letter. He was to open it after Elizabeth's marriage but he couldn't resist himself and opened it and found a shocking news that Elizabeth was not his biological daughter. His daughter had been died soon after he sold her to the sailor. The present Elizabeth was the daughter of the Sailor Newson. Next morning Elizabeth-Jane told Michael that she accepted him as her father completely, but Michael was in shock.

### **Chapter XX**

After learning about the truth about Elizabeth, it was difficult for Henchard to accept Elizabeth as his daughter. He started abusing her and scolding her over small things. His cruel, harsh and ill treatment made Elizabeth cry a lot. He started thinking of her



as burden. On the other hand, he got to know that he would not be the mayor after the next election, which worsened his frustration. One day while she was at her mother's grave, Elizabeth found a lady, who was reading her mother's name, but left without talking to her. Another day Elizabeth met the same lady in the church; so, she asked her about her identity and how she knew them. She told the lady about her situation and that she wanted to move out from her father's place. The lady offered her to live with her as a companion, as she was new in the town. Elizabeth said she would think over it and meet her after a week.

### **Chapter XXI**

For the whole next week Elizabeth kept roaming around the apartment of the lady, which was near High-Palace Hall; thinking of shifting with her. Finally, she asked her father about the same and he agreed, offering her some allowance. After a week the lady met Elizabeth at the church and offered her to move in immediately. Elizabeth rushed to her home, packed her bags, greeted her father and left. Father daughter duo both had heavy hearted farewell.

### **Chapter XXII**

Chapter twenty-two has a lot of characters being involved in. The same night, Elizabeth left her father's place, Michael received a letter from Lucetta informing him that she had moved out from Jersey and shifted in the High Palace Hall, and that she wanted him to meet her the next day. Michael was shocked when he found out how Lucetta had trapped his daughter, and wanted to get back with him. He ignored the letter and didn't go to meet her. Lucetta was upset as she was expecting him to see her. After a few days she sent him another letter inviting him at home. After three days, when Elizabeth was not at home, a visitor called upon Lucetta, but was not Michael.

### **Chapter XXIII**

It was Farfrae who was searching for Elizabeth and had come to meet her. Lucetta invited him pleasantly. The two talked and watched the bustling marketplace from Lucetta's window. They witnessed a farmer negotiating the employment of an old shepherd. The farmer refused to take the old man if his son was not part of the bargain, but the young man was reluctant to go, as he did not want to leave behind the girl he loved. Touched by that scene, Farfrae went out and hired the young man so that he could remain close to his love. After Farfrae left, Henchard arrived, but Lucetta had her maid tell Henchard that she had a headache and did not wish to see him that day.

### **Chapter XXIV**

As days pass by Lucetta and Elizabeth built a bond and they enjoyed each other's company. One day they saw a man

demonstrating his agriculture machine; they found it interesting, so they went downstairs to have a glance of it. But there was one man who was insulting the machine and calling it ridiculous as he turned his face, they find him to be Henchard. As he turned to leave Elizabeth thought she heard him accuse Lucetta of refusing to see him. Elizabeth-Jane's suspicions were aroused, but she decided that she must have heard Henchard incorrectly. Soon Farfrae entered and started praising the machine and Elizabeth was very happy to see him. she found that Lucetta and Farfrae had already met before. Later that night Lucetta asked Elizabeth to advise her by giving a suggestion for a friend as she was in difficult situation but deep-down Elizabeth knew that it was not a suggestion for any friend but for Lucetta. Hence, she replied she can't help in such a difficult situation and has no solution to the problem.

### **Chapter XXV**

The bound between Lucetta and Farfrae was increasing gradually and they finally fell in love. One day Michael called Lucetta and asked her to meet. He told her that he loved her and he wanted to marry her to whom in respond she refused and said she will marry the man she loves and refused to go back in her past life.

### **Chapter XXVI**

After refusing Michael's proposal Lucetta still was a good friend of him. When they were walking, he asked her if she knew Farfrae. she immediately said yes but covering up her emotions she added that she knew everyone in Casterbridge. When they reached her place, while having a word with Michael, Lucetta found that there was someone at the door when she opened the door, and it was Farfrae this led to the jealousy in the mind of Michael and he understood why and for whom Lucetta rejected his marriage proposal. He hired Jopp the guy who had come for the interview for the post of manager back when Michael had appointed Farfrae as the manager. The only job of Jopp was to increase the business and compete with Farfrae and his hay. To do so he said that he knew a fortune teller who could tell the accurate season to grow crop, and perfect plans for future success. The fortune teller told them that it would year rain heavily so purchase all the corns from the market and later sell them at higher prices. But it was a perfect climate for growing corn and the crop was the best. This led to a huge loss to Michael's business. Being angry he kicked Jopp from his business.

### **Chapter XXVII to Chapter XXX**

With a huge profit in corn business Farfrae became wealthier. Suddenly there was a fight between Michael's employee and Farfrae's wagoner to solve the dispute Michael came in. Being a witness Elizabeth and Lucetta understood that it was Michael's

employee who was wrong. Lucetta was called by him and he told her to meet but refusing his offer she went to meet Farfrae after this incident he got angry and entered her home black mailing her that he would disclose all the love letters that she had written to him in past she was astonished and afraid to which she agreed to get married to him. One day later there was a court hearing of a woman. She identified Michael and asked him whether he was the one whom she met twenty years back when he had sold his wife and daughter to a sailor of a few guineas. Feeling embarrassed he accepted it and dismissed the court. Lucetta and Elizabeth went for a walk and they saw a bull approaching towards them making them run faster they ended up being in barn. Michael arrived, pulled the bull with its nose ring and saved their lives. Being impressed by his deed Lucetta agreed to marry him. After her decision to marry him, Elizabeth packed her clothes and left her apartment later that night.

### **Chapter XXXI to Chapter XXXVI**

In previous chapters readers learnt how the woman in the court revealed Mayor Michael Henchard's past. After that everyone began to hate him and he was expelled from the position of Mayor. following it he became poor and was in debts of the city. One day passing from the same old restaurant where Elizabeth found her father, she observed a group of people standing and discussing about her father while entering the restaurant. she observed how other members of the commission were insulting her father and all his properties were auctioned to repay all his debt. His home was purchased by Farfrae and his business too. Elizabeth took her father along and went to her new home and gave him a shelter there. Few days later Jopp came and informed Michael how Lucetta and Farfrae are living a lavish life in his house. Michael decided to leave Casterbridge and leave everything behind to begin a new life. suddenly Farfrae came and offered him to stay in his ware house. At first Michael refused but later accepted the proposal. Within a couple of days, he fell ill and no one was there to take care of him. Elizabeth trespassed the property and took care of her father until he was healthy. In his mind Michael was counting last days of his oath and soon when the oath ended, he began to drink and became a drunkard. One day he was drunk and went to a hotel and sang a song insulting Farfrae and saying how he ruined his life. Being ashamed of her father's action Elizabeth took him back home. In a next few days Michael begin to go at Farfrae's field to help him with his crop but his inner intention was to kill Farfrae and conquer his will. Elizabeth warned Farfrae about her father's intention but he ignored her. Meanwhile Farfrae was informed that the new mayor was dead and he was offered to be a new mayor Farfrae accepted the offer. Lucetta was begging to Michael, not to reveal her old love letters in front of Farfrae and spare her life. Michael agreed and asked Jopp to deliver a parcel at Farfrae's doorstep and not to open it. But Jopp opened it and discovered the

love letters written by Lucetta to Michael back in past. While on his way to Farfrae's home he met a few women who gathered him snatched the envelope from his hand and started reading it loud disclosing that it was written by Lucetta to Michael.

### **Chapter XXXVII to Chapter XL**

The citizens of Casterbridge soon became aware that a "Royal Personage" planned to pass through the town. The town council met to arrange the details of the event. Henchard interrupted the meeting to ask if he could participate. Farfrae said that Henchard's involvement would not be proper, since he was no longer a member of the council. On rejection of his offer, he went back home with heavy heart. As the day arrived, he drank and stood in front of the Royal Carriage waving a handmade flag. Farfrae forcefully dragged Henchard away. Being angry about the insult Michael thought of a revenge and called Farfrae to meet him in the granary. There they had a fight, and at the end Michael was badly hurt and wounded. Michael was feeling awful after his silly decision to fight with Farfrae.

### **Chapter XLI to Chapter XLV**

After her wedding Elizabeth found out the birdcage and a bird. That now is starved. She was surprised to find it dead in a month later out of starvation. It was a gift that must have been brought by Merchant Henchard. Hence, she regrated the way she has treated him. After Farfrae came home, she asked him to help finding Henchard. However, they found Abel Whittles cottage after searching Henchard and the man gave them a paper, and told that the man was dead. The paper was Henchard's will

Themes, Motifs, and Symbols

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## **12.3 THEMES**

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### **12.3.1 The Importance of Character**

Michael Henchard as a Man of Character does not fit in the novel, though Hardy seems to be very optimistic towards life and its unavoidable mistakes, on morality ground one tends to think on the term of a "Man of Character" with high moral and righteousness. His behavior appears to be whimsical and self-centered in certain instances, even his insecurities as a father look quite deceitful. For him biological affirmation, means more countable than an emotional attachment. Henchard's end in the novel is surprisingly unremarkable, nobody mourns the death of the mayor, the work and imagination of power drops in vain. It looks interesting that Hardy is successful to present Henchard as a protagonist, due to his power of determination, ability to tolerate great pain. He not only understands his mistake but also takes the responsibility to introspect and change the fate.

Even destiny plays a cunning game with him, nowhere he is able to justify with his achievements and recognitions. He makes some unpardonable mistakes and suffers for the whole life. The way he sells out his family, mismanage the business, behaves treacherous with Newson, Lucetta jeopardizes him; all test his endurance to establish his heroic image.

Henchard's name and fame seem dubious and ineffective with characterization. He sale out his wife and daughter, and in conscious awakening realized his mistake but unexpectedly decide to move towards Casterbridge, rather than searching out his family and recorrect the mistake. In the Casterbridge, he becomes introduced as a hay-trusser's trader, who could climb to a civic leader. However, he assumes to be affirmative in every stance, and legalize his action to maintain his image. But crucially his mediocre thinking and action put him in trouble. His unpardonable decisions like jealousy and insecurity towards Farfrae, deceive with the women he loves, stoops down his reputation and in the end loses the position he governs. Once he has lost everything his character seems to be very ordinary and vulnerable to temptations. On morality ground, Henchard's character tends to be more compelling persona than a man with high morals.

### **12.3.2 The Ineradicable Past:**

The Mayor of Casterbridge is a novel, and its protagonist grappled with the past. Henchard's unfortunate decision to sell his wife and daughter, immoral intimacy with Lucetta, continue his fate after eighteen years. Even his daughter, turns out to be his most elusive adventure, and he comes to know that his daughter has already died, and Elizabeth discovered as the daughter of Richard Newson. Weyden-Priors continues to change protagonist life after eighteen years, The Roman Amphitheater dominates Casterbridge and provides a forum for discussion and deliberation. Henchard never denied that the past cannot be buried and denied, and his experiences made it strong to advocate the guilt of wrong. He could tolerate and presume the beauty of destiny but Lucetta, couldn't able to handle the guilt, past and surrender her life with no means to survive.

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## **12.4 MOTIFS**

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### **12.4.1 Coincidence:**

The Mayor of Casterbridge heavily relies on coincidences like the reappearance of Newson, furmity-women, and lately, Henchard creates a twist and turn in the story. Hardy's point of view culminates the power of sub consciousness, where deep-rooted fear, agony, and guilt reappear in front of the audience. Hardly strongly believe in universal forces tend to mold the human psyche and create some supernatural impact on behavior. It doesn't have

logic, but on the emotional ground, the reader is convinced with the thought and situation. Henchard struggles against such forces in the novel, cursing the organized destiny. In such a situation's coincidence seems to be necessary and crucial in structure and unavoidable part of universal force.

#### **12.4.2 The Tension between Tradition and Innovation:**

The setup town of Casterbridge appears to be very old with thoughts, and customs. It may not have accepted scientific lifestyle and agricultural practice. This portrays of lifestyle, business, and agriculture deliberate superstitious belief in the common consciousness.

The introduction of Farfrae's character carries a new idea of belief, grounded with scientific temper and understanding, it's business-oriented and easy to absorb. That is why people accept him; the struggle was for them, who were reluctant to change. In further progress, we could see, Hardy normalizes the tension, as the change is inevitable for those, who believe in customs and traditions and Henchard seems to be pray of destiny and his remote attitude. Hardy should be credited to accepting change for the English countryside milieu, but he also draws sympathy for customs and practices, which suddenly disappear with the advancement of technology.

#### **12.4.3 The Tension between Public life and Private life:**

Henchard's failure can be understood with his public and private life. As he loses his wife and daughter and moves to Casterbridge, he could succeed to achieve as a successful grain merchant and Mayor of Casterbridge. He was enjoying two key positions in the city. But at the same time, his private affair with Lucetta destroy his public image, the rise of Farfrae, Susan, and Elizabeth meeting, and the arrival of Richard Newson, this private incidence completely changes his life.

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### **12.5 SYMBOLS**

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#### **12.5.1 The Caged Goldfinch:**

In one of the symbolic incidences, Henchard visits Elizabeth-Jane on her wedding day; he carries a gift of a caged goldfinch. He leaves the bird in a corner while speaking with his step-daughter and forgets the act. After someday, the maid discovers the same Caged Goldfinch, the starving bird, which appears to Elizabeth as symbolical resemblances with her own stepfather, Henchard is trapped the cage of destiny's cruel game of past deeds.

#### **12.5.2 The Bull:**

The bull represents the power, destruction of brutal forces, its encounter with Elizabeth and Lucetta stands as a threatening

force to life. Henchard often presumes the power of this force. The violent bull display Henchard's strength, courage, and dominance.

### **12.5.3 The Collision of Wagons:**

The Wagon of Henchard and Farfrae collided. The incident symbolized the tension in relationship, tradition, and innovation and the rise of the new modern era with Fanfare's dominance.

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## **12.6 IMPORTANT QUOTATIONS FROM THE TEXT**

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1. "Her experience had been of a kind to teach her, rightly or wrongly, that the doubtful honor of a brief transit through a sorry world hardly called for effusiveness, even when the path was suddenly irradiated at some half-way point by day beams rich as hers. But her strong sense that neither she nor any human being deserved less than was given, did not blind her to the fact that there were others receiving less who had deserved much more. And in being forced to class herself among the fortunate she did not cease to wonder at the persistence of the unforeseen, when the one to whom such unbroken tranquility had been accorded in the adult stage was, she whose youth had seemed to teach that happiness was but the occasional episode in a general drama of pain."
2. "She had learned the lesson of renunciation and was as familiar with the wreck of each day's wishes as with the diurnal setting of the sun."
3. "Life is an oasis which is submerged in the swirling waves of sorrows and agonies."
4. "Her companion, also in black, appeared as a well-formed young woman about 18, completely possessed of that ephemeral precious essence youth, which is itself beauty, irrespective of complexion or contour."
5. "Finding this, she was much perplexed as to Henchard's motives in opening the matter at all; for in such cases, we attribute to an enemy a power of consistent action which we never find in ourselves or in our friends..."
6. "But the bitter thing is, that when I was rich, I didn't need what I could have, and now I be poor I can't have what I need!"
7. "Her suspense was terrible."

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## **12.7 LET'S SUM UP**

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The mayor of Casterbridge is a prominent Victorian English novel. The story of Merchant Henchard is heart touching and remains alive throughout the narrative. His style of writing with the

rustic elements makes it remarkably noteworthy. The elements of rusticity with additional settings make it identify as a Wessex novel. He had made his characters to read the nature and to interact with it. This novel is a finest example of personal loss at the cost of a habit. How one can become a creative or destructive force for oneself in life. This is also an introspective ideology which makes all of us contemplate and experience life so closely. His art of juxtaposing variety of ideas collectively is superb. This gives us a more pictorial quality of sensations and experience. Thus, the mayor of Casterbridge remains a great work of art both for its memorable characters and characteristics.

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## 12.8 QUESTIONS

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1. Hardy as a determinist—in other words; he believed that the course of human life was shaped by forces, internal or external, beyond human control. Does this philosophy stand true in *The Mayor of Casterbridge*? What forces are responsible for shaping Henchard's life?
2. Is Henchard a tragic Hero? Why or why not? Does he possess a tragic flaw that leads to his downfall?
3. Discuss the similarities between Elizabeth-Jane and Farfrae, as well as those between Henchard and Lucetta. What effects does Hardy achieve through these portrayals?
4. Is Henchard a sympathetic character? Should we pity him at the end of the novel, or does he seem to get exactly what he deserves?

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# Unit- 13

## STUDY OF BLEAK HOUSE – PART I

### Unit Structure:

- 13.0 Objectives
- 13.1 Introduction
- 13.2 The Author
- 13.3 Summary
- 13.4 Let's Sum Up
- 13.5 Questions
- 13.6 References

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### 13.0 OBJECTIVES

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The objective of the Unit is to introduce the readers into the world of novel writing and the role the novels play in framing and understanding the concepts and approaches of a society in particular. Society has always played a very dominant role in the novels of great authors – the vice versa technique of influencing and getting influenced. The delightful way Charles Dickens has depicted the social affairs in his novels and the role the characters play in them is highly appreciated. The Unit deals with one of Dickens' widely read novels, *The Bleak House* and the exceptional approach, through the characters, to the social order of the British judiciary system.

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### 13.1 INTRODUCTION

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Nineteenth century England has produced some of the world's greatest novel writers and Charles Dickens, with his delightful realistic appeal and brilliant character analysis touches upon the hearts of the common people. Narrative technique is one of the most popular style of writing and the realistic Victorian novels usually focuses on characters and themes mainly centering on the plight of the poor and social livelihood of the time. Dickens particularly portrays the lives of the working-class people, creating the characters in such a way that the new rising middle class could relate to. So, in his novels we come across commercial agents and political adventurers, newspaper reporters and lawyers, clerks and schoolmasters, factory workers and prudish aristocrats, homeless children, pickpockets and convicts; but Dickens' love for humankind is also visible. Dickens' wonderful depiction of offices and factories, prisons and slums of London have enriched his writing style and capacity and has brought him close to the common folk.

*Bleak House* was first published as a twenty-episode serial and it comprises of numerous characters and several sub-plots. The story is told partly by the novel's heroine, Esther Summerson, and partly by a well-informed narrator. A long-running legal case is at the center of the novel and Dickens claimed that there were many actual instances inspiring his fictional case.

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## 13.2 THE AUTHOR

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Charles Dickens (1812-1870), an English writer and social critic, considered one of the greatest novelists of the Victorian era has created some of the world's best known fictional characters. Born in Portsmouth, in a middle-class family, he was withdrawn from school and sent for manual work in a factory after his father was sent to prison for the repayment of debts. His loathing brief experience of the working class equipped him with a sympathetic knowledge of the life and its adversities that very beautifully flows into his writings. Despite his lack of formal education, he was an editor of a weekly journal for nearly twenty years, had written around fifteen novels, five novellas and innumerable short stories and non-fictional articles. Extremely good at lectures, extensively performing readings and an unrelenting letter writer, he also strongly campaigned for children's rights, education and many such social reforms.

With the serial publication of *The Pickwick Papers*, the 1836 serial publication, Dickens' journey of literary success started. Famous for his humorous satire and very intense observation of character and depiction of society, his novels gradually became one of the pioneers of English society. Weaving topical elements into his narrations, he weaved his plots very carefully and this touched the hearts of the common man. His childhood experiences of school with memories of a harsh schoolmaster, his crashing of dreams working in a blacking factory, his involvement in legal business while working for law firms, his employment as a parliamentary reporter – everything gets vividly reflected in his novels. He realized the situations and submissions of the common working class and also understood the various categories and characters of people that adorned the society – his being a part of them brought him closer to the world of reality. Having exposed to this vulnerable society from a very young age, Dickens knew how to hold the string of the instrument to bring out the perfect chord.

Along with the serialized publication of *The Pickwick Papers* Dickens also started writing *Oliver Twist* which appeared in weekly parts in a magazine, 'Bentley's Miscellany', where he worked as an editor. *Oliver Twist* expresses Dickens' interest in the lives of the slums as he traces the fortune of the innocent orphan wading through the London streets. While *Oliver Twist* kept appearing,

Dickens started monthly serialization of *Nicholas Nickleby* and to research the story he even made a trip to Yorkshire, in disguise, to explore the disreputable boarding schools there. Dickens then started a weekly magazine, 'Master Humphrey's Clock' that featured among many other stories, the story of Little Nell and his grandfather title *The Old Curiosity Shop*. The excessive popularity of the tale completely took over the weekly editions of 'Master Humphrey's Clock', excluding all other writings. It was at this time, after the completion of *Barnaby Rudge*, Dickens went on a five-month lecture tour of the United States and spoke out strongly against bondage and in support of other reforms. An extremely popular figure not just in England but in America too, he was extremely dissatisfied with the American Republic and on his return penned the promised travel book, *American Notes*, criticizing the American life as culturally backward and materialistic. Even his next novel, *Martin Chuzzlewit*, describes his protagonist's survival in America, subject to the same conceited, mercenary people Dickens came in contact there. This was the time that Dickens published two Christmas stories, *A Christmas Carol* and *The Chimes*. It is believed that the seeds of the story of *A Christmas Carol* (1843) was planted during his trip to Manchester to deliver a speech in support of education and *The Chimes* (1844) is an outcome of the adventures he sent home in letter form during his visit to Italy.

It is with the monthly serialization of *Dombey and Son*, a remarkable book where for the first time Dickens used notes which he called mems to outline the story in advance that resulted in a structured novel resulting in a good selling and firm financial footing. After a few more books like *The Cricket on the Hearth* (1845), *The Battle of Life* (1846) and *The Haunted Man and the Ghost's Bargain* (1848), he began writing an autobiography giving it a fictional account of *David Copperfield* (1850) which he always regarded as his personal favorite among novels. *Bleak House* (1853), considered his masterpiece, brings out Dickens' previous experience of a court reporter which gives shape to the story of a prolonged case in the Courts of Chancery. This was followed by *Hard Times* (1854) that surveys the English society and satirizes the social and economic conditions of the era. Dickens then returned to the painful childhood memory of his father's debt resulting in imprisonment which is very vehemently portrayed in *Little Dorrit* (published between 1855 & 1857).

After a difficult and disappointing phase in his life – both personal and professional – Dickens published his next two books, *A Tale of Two Cities* (1859) and *Great Expectations* (completed in 1861), in weekly instalments to boost the sale of the new weekly to which he got associated. He used the reference of Thomas Carlyle's 'History of the French Revolution' for his first story and used some autobiographical elements for the second *Our Mutual*

*Friend* (1864) can be considered his last completed novel and the story touched upon the familiar themes of evils and corruption that love for money brings.

With his deteriorating health and against the wishes of family and friends concerned about his physical weakness, he still made a trip to America and found that both he and America have undergone considerable change since his last visit. After a six-month stay in America, Dickens returned home refreshed and with a full load of work which he enthusiastically started by editing his weekly magazine, 'All the Year Round'. He started the monthly publication of his last novel; *The Mystery of Edwin Drood* (April 1870) but the mystery remained unfolded as Dickens expired on 8<sup>th</sup> June 1870 following a severe heart attack.

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### 13.3 BLEAK HOUSE – SUMMARY

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The story starts focusing on a hearing at the High Court of Chancery on a foggy November afternoon. The prolonged case of Jarndyce and Jarndyce finds a regular spectator in 'the little mad old woman' who patiently waits from the beginning till the end expecting some 'incomprehensible judgment to be given in her favor'. On the other hand, Sir Leicester Dedlock, an apathetic fashionable aristocrat maintains his ancestral home in rural Lincolnshire as well as another in London and his wife, Lady Dedlock, nearing fifty but 'has beauty still' and very proud and vain is 'bored to death' in her London home and decides to go for a change to Paris. Mr. Dedlock has great affection for his wife and does not even have any complaint against her though she brought neither dowry nor prestige. The Dedlocks are in connection with their legal advisor, Mr. Tulkinghorn – a rich, close-lipped and secretive solicitor who represents Lady Dedlock's interests in the Jarndyce and Jarndyce case. The legal papers, brought by their lawyer, catch the attention of Lady Dedlock who becomes interested in the handwriting and is curious to know about the writer. A suspense takes shape when suddenly Lady Dedlock faints, augmenting Mr. Dedlock's character too, who though surprised stays calm and polite, associating Lady Dedlock's swoon to bad weather.

On the other hand, Esther Summerson, raised by her aunt, Miss Barbary, was sent to a boarding school by her appointed guardian, Mr. Jarndyce after the death of Miss Barbary. Serving for six years both as a student and then as a teacher there, Esther, now twenty, moves on to be a part of Mr. Jarndyce's household, Bleak House. She meets and immediately befriends Ada Clare and Richard Carstone, the two young people who, like Esther, have been taken in custody by Mr. Jarndyce and both of them, along with Mr. Jarndyce, are a part of the complicated, incomprehensible and

long-standing legal suit called Jarndyce and Jarndyce. On their way to Bleak House, the three – Richard, Ada and Esther – halt at the Jellyby's where Esther extends her warmth and kindness towards the Jellyby children who are neglected by their mother involved in a greater cause. It is here, when they go for a morning walk that they meet the old Miss Flite who insists them on visiting her lodgings – the rooms rented above the 'rag-and-bottle' shop of an aged anomalous character, Mr. Krook, who mentions the names of Barbary, Clare and Dedlock to be involved in the Jarndyce and Jarndyce suit and also narrates the account of Tom Jarndyce's shooting himself after the suit had dragged on everlastingly.

Finding themselves unfortunately connected to a case that has made them enemies of their own relations, Richard and Ada along with Esther, leave for Bleak House where they are welcomed by their custodian, Mr. John Jarndyce, the kindly gentleman whom Esther recognizes of having shared a stagecoach six years back. The old-fashioned house triggers a liking in the young minds and Esther looks forward optimistically to her new-fangled role as a housekeeper. She gradually learns from Mr. Jarndyce that the suit in Chancery centers around a will which involved a fortune at one time but is then meaningless as the cost of the court have consumed all the fortune. Esther also comes to know from him about Tom Jarndyce, the former owner of the Bleak House, who tried unsuccessfully to extricate the suit and, after many years of wasted struggle, shot himself. Esther and Ada also pay a visit to a nearby poor bricklayer's family at the insistence of Mrs. Pardiggle, a frowningly antagonistic charity worker, and they later try to inquire about the boy who had died in their presence and also tries to reach out to comfort the boy's mother.

On the other side, the story of the 'Ghost's walk' emerges at the Dedlock's estate when Mrs. Rouncewell, the old housekeeper, recounts the two-century old story of the wife of Sir Morbury Dedlock who suffered a severe hip injury when she slipped during her fight with her husband who spied on her for having taken his favorite horse. Limping on the terrace of the Dedlock estate one fateful day, the lady fell and died vowing to haunt the estate 'until the pride of this house is humbled' and till that day when the tall French clock beats its loud music, they can still hear the footsteps of the 'walking ghost'. Mr. Jarndyce writes to Sir Leicester Dedlock, one of the distant relatives of Richard Carstone, with the intention of helping the unrealistic, impatient and aimless young man but all prospects of support look very remote. In the meantime, Esther becomes convinced through some obvious revelations that Richard and Ada are in love. Old Lawrence Boythorn, an intense and lovable but controversial person has been suing Sir Leicester whom he dislikes but has high affection and admiration for Lady Dedlock. Boythorn visits Bleak House and in connection to his legal action

Mr. Guppy, who unconsciously has recounted Lady Dedlock's resemblance to Esther, too arrives there and shocks Esther by suddenly proposing to her which she firmly and immediately rejects. Mr. Tulkinghorn visits the law stationary store owner, Mr. Snagsby, an insignificant nervous man married to a strident and fanatical woman and supported by the only help, Guster, a young woman afflicted to 'fits. The intention of Mr. Tulkinghorn is to make Mr. Snagsby identify the handwriting who copied the Jarndyce and Jarndyce affidavits, the handwriting in which Lady Dedlock took so much of interest. Mr. Snagsby recognizes the handwriting as of Mr. Nemo's ('Nemo' is Latin for 'no one') who stays above Mr. Krook's the rag-and-bottle shop. On reaching Crook's place, Mr. Tulkinghorn finds Nemo dead apparently because of opium poisoning and a probe is set. Mr. Tulkinghorn also comes to know about Nemo's kind and considerate nature from little Jo, the street-crossing sweeper, but this unfortunate man's death is confirmed as accidental and is entitled to a pauper's burial, in some bleak and deserted churchyard.

Mr. Tulkinghorn informs the Dedlocks about Boythorn's legal action against Sir Leicester and Lady Dedlock thanks him for sending her the message regarding the handwriting that had interested her. When told about Nemo's death Lady Dedlock is curious to know the whole story though she feigns a casual interest but Mr. Tulkinghorn can see the deception on her behavior. On the other hand, Richard is very confused and indecisive about his career and finally on Mr. Jarndyce's suggestion of becoming a surgeon, he enthusiastically and immediately becomes a surgeon's apprentice in the house of Mr. Bayham Badger. Richard and Ada also realize their love for each other but Mr. Jarndyce advises them not to marry till Richard is well-established in his profession. Richard leaves Jarndyce household to carry on with his career but remains irrationally optimistic of becoming rich from the Chancery suit which troubles Esther and Mr. Jarndyce. Esther is uncomfortable having noticed Mr. Guppy, a Clerk, following her wherever she goes and also casting a dejected countenance having been rejected as a suitor; on the contrary, she gets attracted towards a young surgeon of 'dark complexion' (Dr. Allan Woodcourt) at the Badger's party.

Although Tulkinghorn is the lawyer of the Dedlocks, it is Mr. Guppy who, after carrying on a long investigation, finally unveils to Lady Dedlock the fact that Captain Hawdon (Nemo) is the father of Esther and Lady Dedlock might have a 'family interest' in this information. Lady Dedlock breaks down and admits the Esther is her daughter and is surprised that she is alive; her sister having lied then that the child had died just after birth. When Guppy, along with Mr. Weevle, goes for further inquiry to the room where Mr. Hawdon (Nemo) had died and is expecting Mr. Krook to bring them the

letters Nemo had written, they become aware of some strange odor and later realizes that Mr. Krook has burned himself – ‘a victim of spontaneous combustion’ – perceptibly destroyed with him are the Hawdon letters. Guppy fails to keep his promise of delivering the letters to Mrs. Dedlock and this arouses suspicion in Mr. Tulkinghorn. The subplot of the Jellybys continues as Esther goes to visit them to see the Jellyby children, Caddy and Peepy. Though Peepy is in the same messy state, Caddy is hoping to escape her mother’s tyranny having got engaged to Mr. Prince Turveydrop, the son of the old dancing master Mr. Turveydrop, ‘the model of deportment’ who forces his son to carry out all the work of the dancing school. The future prospect has brought in a freshness in Caddy’s look and Esther also notices that Caddy has become close to Miss. Flite, who has been blessed with a good fortune and she takes the help of Caddy to use the money in the most advantageous way. Dr. Woodcourt professionally attends to Miss. Flite as well as Mr. Krook, and this is how he becomes friends with Esther, Ada and Richard. Mr. Jarndyce, Esther and Ada visit the three destitute children [13-year-old Charlotte (Chirley), 6-year-old Tom and 18-month-old Emma] after being informed about their father’s death by Mr. Skimpole where they meet Mr. Girdley who, though very rough and hostile, is surprisingly generous and helpful to the Neckett children informs Mr. Jarndyce how the delay of the Chancery Court has devastated the heritage that belonged to him and his brother.

Sir Leicester who is confined to bed with gout, a disease he considers to be a privilege to be afflicted with as it indicates aristocracy as well as an honor to follow the lineage, waits in the country house looking at his mistress’s picture; whereas Lady Dedlock disguises herself in a servant’s dress in London meets Jo, the Crossing Sweeper, and insists him to guide her to Mr. Krook’s house where Nemo resided. Though, on way, she is noticed by Mr. Tulkinghorn, who fails to recognize her, she’s finally led to the inn where the investigation happened and also the charnel-house of bones where Nemo’s body was laid. She is traumatized and vanishes giving Jo a gold coin and it is during this time that, on the other side, Mrs. Rouncewell (the old housekeeper of Chesney Wold) tells Rosa in Chesney Wold that the ‘step on the Ghost’s Walk’ has never been ‘more distinct than it is tonight’. Mr. George, the son of Mrs. Rouncewell, refuses to cooperate with Mr. Tulkinghorn when he asks George to compare the handwriting of Captain Hawdon (Nemo) and this infuriates him and it is very clearly understood that Mr. Tulkinghorn is planning some mischief. Richard does not take up his medical apprenticeship seriously and decides to forego medicine and take up law and starts working at Mr. Kenge’s office, thus, generating apprehensions in Esther and Mr. Jarndyce for the sake of Ada. Richard’s indecisiveness is further seen when he decides to abandon law and enter army as an officer and even starts with his training. Mr. Jarndyce, apprehensive

about Richard's instability, asks Ada to break off their engagement. On the other hand, Richard, for the first time, experiences real difficulties created by his own unpredictability and his leaving Ada counterparts and foretells his own premature death. Ada's love for Richard continues but Esther finds him too hostile towards Mr. Jarndyce and too preoccupied with the Chancery suit. For Esther, Ada and Mr. Jarndyce an unexpected encounter happens with Lady Dedlock in a gamekeeper's lodge and hearing Lady Dedlock speak Esther's heart, strangely enough, beats passionately, unexplainably – "... there arose before my mind innumerable pictures of myself". Lady Dedlock offends the French maid Hortense preferring Rosa and Hortense takes her revenge by walking back shoelace through the wet grass which surprises Esther, Ada and Mr. Jarndyce but is assured by the gamekeeper and his wife that Hortense is not mad, only 'passionate'. Later Hortense persuades Esther to hire her but fails.

A contrasting picture of the femininity of Esther and Ada are presented through the character of Mrs. Snagsby who suspects her husband, the law stationary shopkeeper who had employed Nemo and befriended Jo. She doubts her husband to be the father of Jo and falls into hysteria when she is convinced of her husband's guilt. Jo becomes seriously ill with a communicable disease and when Esther brings him to the house of Jarndyce so that he can be helped but later he disappears and, in the meantime, Esther contacts the disease and is on the verge of losing her eye-sight and is left with a scarring face. Esther comes to know from Ms. Flite that a lady in disguise had approached to know about the condition of Esther. Lady Dedlock then announces to Esther as her mother and hands her a letter to be read and then burnt which Esther does. Esther decides to go to London and meet Mr. Guppy to know the truth but seeing Esther's deformed face Mr. Guppy retreats (indicating him as an absurd and shallow human being) and Esther chooses to find out the fact without his help.

On the other hand, Mr. Tulkinghorn discloses the connection of Esther, Mr. Hawdon and Lady Dedlock without revealing the names. Though and Lady Dedlock stays composed and shows very little interest in the narration, later she confronts Mr. Tulkinghorn and is upset about Mr. Tulkinghorn's knowing her secret. Later when Mr. Tulkinghorn comes across Lady Dedlock's previous servant Hortense, she protests and bitterly accuses of having been used by him to dress like Lady Dedlock and trick Jo to give her information. Esther refrains from writing to her mother realizing that it might create threat to her but discloses to Mr. Jarndyce that she is aware of who her mother is. Mr. Jarndyce promises to help Esther and her mother and also agrees that Mr. Tulkinghorn is a treacherous character. Mr. Jarndyce also proposes to Esther through a letter which shocks and surprises her but she is touched



by his benevolence as he had not cared about her scarred face nor her illegitimate birth and she accepts his proposal to be the 'mistress of Bleak House'.

Dr. Allan Woodcourt starts taking interest in the life of Esther as he comes across Jo who is terribly ill and is also scared of a man (Detective Bucket) but finally Jo couldn't be saved. Lady Dedlock's non-resolved approach surprises Mr. Tulkinghorn and he threatens Lady Dedlock of informing her secret to Sir Leicester that night itself. Astonishingly Mr. Tulkinghorn is found dead just before ten at night ('shot through the heart'). George is arrested and put behind the bars by Detective Bucket on the charges of murder of Mr. Tulkinghorn and Bucket collects a handsome reward from Sir Leicester for having captured his lawyer's killer. Allan, Mr. Jarndyce and Esther are sure about George's innocence but George is not ready to keep a lawyer as he wants to prove his guiltlessness by himself. George watches Esther closely when she leaves and informs Mr. Jarndyce that a figure like hers had passed him on the dark staircase on the night of the murder.

Dr. Allan and Esther come to know each other better during Caddy's illness after delivery and at the same time she also informs Ada and Caddy about Mr. Jarndyce's proposal of marriage after which she notices a subtle change in Ada's behavior which Esther fails to determine the cause. When Richard, on the other hand, is totally shattered he agrees to seek advice from Dr. Allan and Ada reveals and shocks Esther about her secret marriage to Richard for two months and her decision of not returning to Bleak House. Esther conveys the information to Mr. Jarndyce who accepts it with serenity but pities the two.

Although George is put to prison, Bucket, the noble detective keeps his case on by questioning the whereabouts of Lady Dedlock and comes to know about her going on a lone walk on the day of the murder. He then informs Sir Leicester of his wife being a suspect that shocks him and he is thunderstruck when he comes to know about his wife's former lover, her visit to the grave and the bad connection that she had with Mr. Tulkinghorn and it such a shock for Sir Leicester that he suffers a stroke. Though George and Lady Dedlock had visited Mr. Tulkinghorn on the night of his murder but finally it is proved that it was Hortense in Lady Dedlock's clothes who committed the crime and threw the murder weapon in the lake which was recovered. After recovering a bit from the stroke Sir Leicester, he is all forgiveness for his lady. On the other hand, Mr. Bucket attains Esther's address and visits Mr. Jarndyce and asks him to allow Esther to go with him in search of her mother. On their search they come to know about a wretchedly dressed stranger and when they discover her, she is 'cold and dead' and is revealed to be Lady Dedlock, Esther's mother.

Later Esther falls ill and is taken care of by Dr. Allan who is helped by Mr. Jarndyce to secure an appointment in Yorkshire where he will provide medical care for the poor. Esther continuously visits Ada and she finds Ada's love for unenergetic Richard as strong as ever and also her worry that Richard might not survive to see the child she's carrying. Dr. Allan discloses his love for Esther but she excuses herself and both part without any discontent. Esther's concern for the couple Richard (who keeps haunting the Chancery Court and sinking gradually in mind and body) and Ada (who is totally shattered) is visible when she confronts Skimpole for having a bad influence on Richard. Esther accuses Skimpole of having accepted a bribe to betray Jo's presence at Bleak House to detective Bucket and Mr. Jarndyce is highly critical of Skimpole's character. But after five years when Skimpole dies, he leaves a diary behind where he has mentioned Mr. Jarndyce as the 'Incarnation of Selfishness'.

Esther becomes ready to be the mistress of Bleak House and informs Mr. Jarndyce who decides for the occasion the coming month. Detective Bucket discovers another signed will which reduces Mr. Jarndyce's concern and encourages that of Richard and Ada. Mr. Jarndyce settles Allan in a 'new Bleak House' and releases Esther from her promise so that she can marry Allan as she will be far happier with him and still be the 'mistress of Bleak House'. The Jarndyce and Jarndyce case finally comes to a close but they come to know that the legal costs have exhausted the entire value of the state and this revelation is so shocking for Richard that he dies. Lady Dedlock is buried in the family mausoleum by her devoted husband who keeps the cause of her death a secret from the world and moves around with George as a lonely widower.

The end of the novel moves seven years ahead with Esther and Allan well –settled with two daughters, Ada managing his son, who was born not long after his father's death and was named after his father, and shuttling between the two Bleak Houses. Mr. Jarndyce remains the foster father of Esther and Ada and they all, Mr. Jarndyce, Esther, Allan and Ada with their kids stay happy with the love and support of one another.

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### 13.4 LET'S SUM UP

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Charles Dickens' *Bleak House* considered to be one of the author's best works revolves around the story of the Jarndyce family, who wait in vain to inherit the money from a disputed fortune. The extremely extended lawsuit of Jarndyce and Jarndyce critically points out England's Court of Chancery where cases can drag on for years and finally yielding nothing. The secret of Esther's origin and then the suspense of her love and marriage set an

atmosphere of acceptance and rejection in the mind of the readers. Wonderfully set under the Victorian ambience, this novel is a true replica of the custom and the culture, the lifestyle and the characteristics of a true Victorian society.

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### 13.5 QUESTIONS

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1. Describe the characteristics of Dicken's writing in terms of style and content.
2. Did Dickens's writing reflect the social situation of his times?
3. What is the primary concern of the novel *Bleak House*?

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### 13.6 REFERENCES

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# Unit- 14

## STUDY OF BLEAK HOUSE – PART II

### Unit Structure:

- 14.0 Objectives
- 14.1 Introduction
- 14.2 Analysis
- 14.3 Major Characters
- 14.4 Themes
- 14.5 Let's Sum Up
- 14.6 Questions

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### 14.0 OBJECTIVES

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The objective of this Unit is to make the readers understand the importance of characters and how they play a major role in the setting and themes of the novel. The analysis of the story *Bleak House* brings out the concept of the Victorian social life, wonderfully amalgamating the working class and the elite class. The themes are wonderfully set and the readers get an idea of the beautiful assimilation of love and romance on the one side and legal suit and justice on the other. There is a beautiful connection between the haunting past and the sublime present and the entangled characters try their best to ensure confidence and composure, strength and stability.

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### 14.1 INTRODUCTION

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Introducing the readers to the High Court of Chancery where the case of Jarndyce and Jarndyce has moved on for generations the story travels into the complicated lives of people. On the one side the love and romance of the people are highlighted with passion and perseverance and on the other side the intensity of the legal case is described as a prolonged affair that takes away the meaning of existence. The effective integration of love and life, legal suit and secrecy, the orphan and the benefactor is beautifully brought forward to make the novel a marvelous representation of the society and its people. Dickens very clearly indicates the flaws of a legal suit on one side and the anticipation and acceptance on the other. Unanticipated, situations take a turn, relationships switch, secrets unfurled and the world moves on through twists and turns.

The beauty of the novel lies in bringing out the intricacies of life and existence.

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## 14.2 BLEAK HOUSE – ANALYSIS

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The novel initiates with the overview of the High Court of Chancery, explicitly introducing one of Dickens' major themes – the ruin that the Court of Chancery has caused and will continue to cause in the lives of the common people. Hearing after hearing has pushed the case on for years and on this foggy harsh November afternoon Lord Chancellor arrives for the proceedings of the case of Jarndyce and Jarndyce. The outside weather unintentionally matches with the fogginess of the court which, instead of producing clarity and justice, creates a fog of confusion and depression among people. The old woman's wait for justice proves the procrastination and stagnation of the court.

The superfluous world of the idly rich, expressed through the Dedlock couple can be analogous to the futile world of the Chancery Court – meaningless, monotonous, mundane. Lady Dedlock's involvement with the Jarndyce and Jarndyce suit, her hollow, impatient and vain character and yet Sir Leicester Dedlock, even with his bad-tempered self-satisfied nature, showering immense love for her, Mr. Tulkinghorn's ominous presence, Mrs. Dedlock's sudden blackout – everything adds to the suspicious ambience and a doubtful approach towards the characters. Mr. Jarndyce's magnanimity and Esther's natural good-heartedness stand as an impressive characterization against the backdrop of an uncompromising, egocentric society. Dickens' theme of vulnerability and torment of children in the hands of mismanaged elders is very vividly represented through Mrs. Jellyby, a friend of Mr. Jarndyce and a place where the three – Richard, Ada and Esther halt on their way to Bleak House, and her children who are ignored and even victimized by their mother because of her obsession with projects designed to benefit Africa. Amalgamating satiric humor and authentic anguish, Dickens' Mrs. Jellyby bothers not to take care of her own home, rather is concerned about managing others' who are far off. The suspense is emphasized when the three continue to wonder the kind of person John Jarndyce is as they have not seen him except Richard's brief encounter which retains no discrete impression followed by the destined meeting with the old Miss Flight and the bizarre Mr. Krook who highlights the version of Tom Jarndyce's extreme step of attempting suicide because of the prolonging Jarndyce and Jarndyce case.

The contrasting characters of Mr. John Jarndyce, demonstrating dynamic responsibilities with contentment, optimism and ingenuity, and Mr. Skimpole, though vociferously warm and vaguely agreeable person but his extreme irresponsibility becoming

too hazardous, reinforces Dickens' ethical enlightenment. Even Mrs. Pardiggle, the social worker, with her affectation and professional triviality stands as a contrast to the honest concern and genuine support of the impulsive and self-effacing young ladies, Ada and Esther.

At the same time, added against the backdrop, is the story of the 'Ghost's walk' augmenting the reader's apprehension of the adversity that is in store not just for the Dedlocks but perhaps for others too. The depiction of the unreasonable and unprepared Richard paves the way for his ultimate disaster. Mr. Boythorn's dislike for Sir Leicester Dedlock but a sympathetic approach towards Lady Dedlock, though it's very well known by him and others that Lady Dedlock has very apparent precincts, is extensively exposed. On the other hand, Esther's sensible perception and assertive analysis is projected through her refusal of Mr. Guppy's marriage proposal and this creates a quality impression of Esther among the readers.

Dickens makes a striking contrast between characters – on the one hand, Mr. Tulkinghorn and Snagsby's undaunted fascination with documents and , on the other hand, Esther and Jarndyce trying to eliminate themselves from the legal world and craving more on the contented life of peace and passion. So on the one side it is 'documents' and 'signatures' and on the other 'domesticity' and 'empathy' – Nemo presented as the extreme representative of the first category – a person whose name means 'no one' but is completely involved in the maze of legal documents, copying and re-copying meaningless legal reports. The plot of the story intensifies with the curious interest in the legal handwriting by Lady Dedlock's followed by the abnormal death of Nemo and the Lady's inquisitive as well as deceptive behavior.

The sub-plot of Ada and Richard, the young pair who recognize their love for each other, but is advised by Mr. Jarndyce to establish his profession of surgeon apprentice first, leads to the main plot where Esther subsequently gets attracted towards a young surgeon. On the other hand, the other sub-plot of Caddy is also established and Dickens' theme of oppressing parents is well-established through the Jellyby family. The third sub-plot gets connected when Mr. Jarndyce, Esther and Ada visit the three destitute children of Mr. Neckett, after his death and they meet Mr. Girdley who establishes his connection with the Chancery Court.

The mystery of Esther's parentage gradually deepens and the two meetings with Lady Deadlock produce a strange feeling of close connection between the two. Esther's contacting the disease, her suffering later and her accepting with grace her traumatic physical changes makes her a more adorable heroine of Dickens.

On the other hand the secretive character of Mr. Tulkinghorn becomes more suspicious when he starts prying into matters beyond his business. Dickens creates a kind of suspense with Lady Dedlock's disguised visit to Nemo's lodge and graveyard, on one side, and the more distinct 'Ghost Walk' on the other.

Dr. Allan Woodcourt appears at a time when Esther has accepted the proposal from her benefactor, Mr. Jarndyce though their engagement is not known to anyone and a romantic suspense develops. The death of the innocent Jo on the one hand and the vicious Mr. Tulkinghorn on the other balances the concept of good and evil and stabilizes the social order. George's imprisonment as a suspect of the murder of Mr. Tulkinghorn and his acknowledgement of a figure like Esther's to be seen on the night of the murder creates an atmosphere of suspense and drama.

The plot of the novel, *Bleak House*, revolves around 'the Bleak House' which is definitely not bleak but a house of passion and promise, love and life. It is in this house that Esther Summerson comes under her new guardian, Mr. Jarndyce, after the death of the aunt, Miss Barbary, who had raised her. Leaving her past behind, she moves on towards her new destination and gets entangled into various situations including being proposed to be the mistress of 'Bleak House'. The secret of her past – her legacy and her connection – overwhelms her present and she is destined towards a better future of being the mistress of the new 'Bleak House' gifted to her love by her benefactor.

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### 14.3 MAJOR CHARACTERS

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#### **Mr. John Jarndyce**

The benefactor of Esther, Ada and Richard Mr. Jarndyce is generous and noble person involved in the Jarndyce and Jarndyce case. He later falls in love with Esther and proposes her to be the 'Mistress of Bleak House' which Esther accepts as a reward of her gratitude. But Mr. Jarndyce maintains his fatherly figure by gifting a new Bleak House to the young doctor, Allan, who is in love with Esther and blesses the couple for a bright future.

#### **Ms. Esther Summerson**

A twenty-year young lady with an unknown parentage, who comes to her legal guardian, Mr. Jarndyce, after the death of her aunt who took care of her. A modest and intelligent character, she loves to be serviceable to all those who require her help and intimacy. Very close to the two other wards of Mr. Jarndyce, Ada and Robert, she stands by them with confidence and support in the most critical moments of their life. She even becomes a support for Ada and her son when, at the end, Robert succumbs into the hands of his indecisiveness and loses his life for no reason at all. Obliging

everyone with her simplicity and nobleness, she goes to the extent of accepting the marriage proposal of Mr. Jarndyce too. Though she had liked the young Dr. Allan she sacrifices her love too for the sake of her duty and obligation towards her benefactor. Luckily Mr. Jarndyce retains his fatherly figure by allowing Esther to come out of the promise. He is also kind enough to provide a new Bleak House for Dr. Allan so that Esther can be the mistress of Bleak House that she had promised.

Esther's parentage comes to the limelight when at the outset of the Chancery case many other unknown facts come to the limelight. Esther is overwhelmed to realize that Lady Dedlock is her mother but this truth does not bring any fruits as Esther meets her mother only after she had died. Esther's sense of responsibility and devotion as well as her graciousness and compassion are finally blessed with her marriage to Dr. Allan and they being blessed with two daughters.

### **Lady Dedlock**

The elegant, stylish and apathetic wife of Sir Leicester Dedlock, Lady Dedlock has a mysterious past. She keeps a cold facade on her face to avoid the craving that might lead to the disclosure of the illegitimate child she had. To conceal her heartbreak, she maintains a non-willing and non-bothered attitude even with her husband, Sir Leicester Dedlock. When the secret is gradually disclosed it is understood that she kept this non-caring approach to shield her from fear and pain. She is actually very apprehensive that her secret will shatter the Dedlock family and so she guards herself from everything with her arrogance. No one could even dream about that such a messy past thuds beneath her unwavering countenance. She is bold and courageous which can be noticed through her actions like avoiding the traps of Mr. Tulkinghorn when he chases to find her secret, her finding out Captain Hawdon's burial place, her punishing herself by self-exile which leads to her suicide. It is revealed finally that she is the mother of Esther but she had not raised her as she was informed that Esther died soon after birth.

It is only when her past starts catching up with her that she starts behaving weird – especially very peculiar for a woman belonging to the Dedlock clan – for example, disguising herself to find out from Jo, a street urchin, to show the burial ground of the dead lodger (Mr. Hawdon) who eventually is revealed to be her former lover. Even when Esther is sick, Lady Dedlock disguises herself to find out information about her doing and it is only when she fears her secret is about to come out, she leaves her jewels and money behind and escapes finally dying on the street. Lady Dedlock who always projected to have no passion finally exposes



herself to be the most passionate as she dies to protect all those whom she loves and feels defensive about.

### **Ada Clare**

Ada is a ward of Mr. Jarndyce – a simple, kind and sweet girl who becomes Esther's closest confidante and the greatest source of happiness. She falls in love with Richard though Mr. Jarndyce warns her considering Richard's indecisiveness. Eventually she marries Richard and they have a baby boy but she never attains complete happiness and solace in his company and it is mainly because of his obsession with the Jarndyce and Jarndyce lawsuit. A clear example of beauty, love and patience she ensures humility and simplicity, warmth and endurance.

### **Richard Carstone**

A handsome young man under the legal guardianship of Mr. Jarndyce – Robert lacks direction and yields easily to the suggestions and recommendations of others. Although Richard has a usual enthusiasm and optimism within him, he is unreasonable, negligent and often restless. He is in love with his distant cousin, Ada Clare, marries her and they have a baby. But finally he doesn't survive as he dies of shock when the Jarndyce and Jarndyce case comes to a close but they come to know that the legal costs have exhausted the entire value of the state. Throughout his life Richard fails to understand his priorities and thus leaps toward a sad end.

### **Dr. Allan Woodcourt**

Dr. Allan is a poor but charitable young doctor who loves Esther and also becomes a friend of Mr. Jarndyce. He proposes to Esther but she doesn't accept because by then she had accepted the proposal of Mr. Jarndyce to be the Mistress of Bleak House. But later Mr. Jarndyce favors Dr. Allan with a new Bleak House and stays a fatherly figure by making Esther marry Dr. Allan and be the mistress of the new Bleak House. Dr. Allan has throughout been projected as modest and humble, helping and understanding. This noble character finally earns the love of Esther as a reward.

### **Mr. Tulkinghorn**

Mr. Tulkinghorn is a tremendously proficient solicitor of the Chancery Court and a legal advisor to Sir Leicester. And so he believes that he has the right and the accountability to take notice of whatever action happens in and around his client. He begins his investigation on his client's wife, Mrs. Dedlock, when she starts acting strangely and inquires about the handwriting on a legal document. He becomes so much obsessive and ruthless regarding Lady Dedlock's secret that he crosses all limits to reach out to the ultimate. The suspense increases when Mr. Tulkinghorn is killed and Detective Bucket comes in to investigate the matter. It is Mr.

Tulkinghorn's extreme curiosity that paves his way towards an unfulfilling and undesirable end.

### **Jo**

Jo is a street orphan with no education, no family and neither any kind of support. He tries to ensure his living as a sweeper. Various characters of the novel are seen to be befriending him to get some evidence of the secretive past. But finally no one is capable of saving him from an early death. Jo's life points out to the negligence of the lower class who are there for the service of others but fail to save themselves from the crawling misfortune.

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## **14.4 THEMES**

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**The affairs of romance** – one of the major themes that can be seen in the Bleak House is the romantic life of the major characters. The romance of Ada and Richard where love sees no bound even when restrictions befall. The calm and poised love of Mr. Jarndyce for Esther to make her the Mistress of Bleak House and Esther's acceptance owing to her immense gratitude for her benefactor. The submissive love of Dr. Allan for Esther which he is ready to relinquish when Esther does not comply, because she has already promised Mr. Jarndyce. The secretive affair of Lady Dedlock that finally leads to a great revelation (coming to know that Esther is her daughter whom she believed to be dead as she was informed so after her birth) and the final destruction (committing suicide to save her past and present family). The immense love finally between Dr. Allan and Esther when Mr. Jarndyce releases Esther from her promise and makes her the mistress of the new Bleak House that he had gifted to Allan.

**The Court of Chancery** – the novel portrays a wonderful picture of the court of Chancery where judgements take decades to be resolved. And finally when the resolution is at hand, it makes no sense as the whole amount gets wasted in carrying on the court practices. Dickens tries to bring out the ill-practices of fighting a legal case which eventually brings out no result. Such cases usually hamper the lives of people and bring out a bad taste in relationships.

**The Absent Parent** – the problems of orphans and their various struggles related to it becomes a major concern of Dickens's novels. Characters like Esther might be saved to some extent as he is lucky enough to have a benefactor as Mr. Jarndyce. But her emotional pain can be seen when she sacrifices her love for the young Doctor and accept the proposal of Mr. Jarndyce to become the Mistress of Bleak House as she feels an obligation for her benefactor. On the other side, Jo, the down-trodden orphan belongs nowhere. Living on the streets as a sweeper he is inflicted

with a contagious disease and finally lets his body rest in the hands of death. The bleakest of all characters, this poor orphan attains only a little sympathy in lieu of the torturous pain and suffering he undergoes throughout.

**The World of Truth and Secrecy** – Lady Dedlock's character revolves around the strange world of secrecy and truth. Being informed about the death of her daughter (through an illegal relationship) just after birth, she definitely becomes a tragic character. Unaware of her daughter's existence, she stays in darkness for a long period of time and devotes herself as the wife of Sir Leicester Dedlock. It is only when she gets interested in a particular handwriting that leads her to Captain Hawdon (Nemo) with whom she had an affair and who was no longer alive, that she comes to know about her surviving daughter, Esther.

**The Discomfort of Uncertainty** – Throughout there is a kind of uncertainty in the novel, be it the legal case of Chancery or the employment of Richard or the love affair of Esther or the life of Lady Dedlock. The case goes on; no one knows on whose favour the decision will be but in its pretext the entire amount is consumed. Nothing is left for the person who wins the case and this shocks Richard and takes away his life. Richard has always been indecisive about his career and this uncertainty had led to a lot of confusion and pain. Even though Ada and Richard were in desperate love for each other, their benefactor, Mr. Jarndyce, had warned Ada to rethink her decision. Though they married later, the uncertainty continued in the life of Richard till the end. Esther fails to understand the type of love that needs to be showered on people around her – when Mr. Jarndyce proposes her to be the mistress of Bleak House she accepts it because she felt her obligation demands so. She did not even look back at Dr. Allan, the person she had liked and wanted to be with. Had not Mr. Jarndyce taken the fatherly step of gifting Dr. Allan with a new Bleak House and liberating Esther from her promise and making her marry Allan, Esther's uncertain behavior would definitely have taken her to a greater crisis. The life of Lady Dedlock is filled with uncertainty – she wants to forget the past but the past keeps haunting her. Uncertainty keeps looming over her as her secretive past enters into her poised present.

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## 14.5 LET'S SUM UP

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The major themes, the wonderful setting, the expressive characters build a kind of a wonderful bond that enriches the novel and entrusts a great reading. Every character seems to be searching for something and most importantly searching for love. Love has throughout been justified – the love of Ada and Richard – whatever the crises and the consequences they stick to each other;

the love of Esther and Mr. Jarndyce –Esther accepting Mr. Jarndyce's proposal and then calling off realizing that Esther will not be happy, and, on the other hand, she accepting due to her obligated love for him; the love of Mrs. Dedlock – frightfully she keeps searching for her past, the love that had engulfed her into the fire of passion. The characters keep moving often challenged with surprising revelations and uncompromising circumstances but they try to adjust, accept and accommodate for the sake of existence and endurance.

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## 14.6 QUESTIONS

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1. What role does Bleak House play in the novel and how is it related to the lives of Mr. Jarndyce and Esther?
2. Comment on the major female characters of the novel.
3. How does Lady Dedlock's mysterious past overpower her dignified present?
4. Illustrate the Chancery suit and what is the final outcome?
5. Discuss the love, passion and marriages that take place within the novel.
6. Comment on the minor characters without whom the novel would not have taken shape.
7. Justify the title of the novel.
8. Illustrate the role Mr. Tulkinghorn plays in the novel.
9. Which, according to you, is a more dominating character – Esther or Lady Dedlock? Justify your answer.

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## 14.7 REFERENCES

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