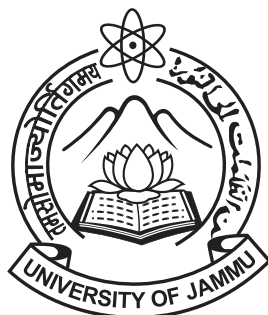


Directorate of Distance & Online Education

UNIVERSITY OF JAMMU

JAMMU



SELF LEARNING MATERIAL

M. A. ENGLISH

**Title of the Course : European Literature
Semester : III**

**Course Code: ENG-324
Unit : I-VI
Lesson : 1-24**

2024 Onwards

***Course Co-ordinator*
Prof. Anupama Vohra**

***Teacher Incharge*
Dr. Jasleen Kaur**

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M. A. ENGLISH
European Literature

Semester - III
Course No. : ENG-324

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WELCOME MESSAGE

Dear Distance Learners,

Welcome to Directorate of Distance Education !

This course on European Literature has six units.
The objective is to familiarize you with the significant works
which have world wide popularity even in contemporary times

Wish you good luck and success!

Teacher Incharge
Dr. Jasleen Kaur

Prof. Anupama Vohra
Course Coordinator
PG English

Course Code : ENG-324

Duration of Examination : 3 hrs

Title : European Literature

Total Marks : 100

Credits : 6

(a) Semester Examination : 80

(b) Sessional Assessment : 20

Syllabus for the examinations to be held in Dec. 2024, 2025 & 2026

Objective : The objective of the course is to acquaint the students with the significant works of European literature that have international influence and acknowledgment.

UNIT-I

Dante : Inferno
Cantos for detailed study I, II, IV, V, VI, VII,
X, XII, XIV, XVIII, XXXII, XXXIII, XXXIV
Remaining Cantos for non detailed study

UNIT-II

Anton Chekov : The Cherry Orchard

UNIT-III

Leo Tolstoy : The Three Question

Nikolai : The Overcoat

UNIT-IV

Franz Kafka : The Trial

UNIT-V

Gunter Grass : *The Tin Drum*

UNIT-VI

Cervantes : Don Quixote

MODE OF EXAMINATION

The paper will be divided into Sections A, B and C.

Section A Multiple Choice Questions M.M=80

Q.1 will be an objective type question covering the entire syllabus. Twelve objectives, two from each unit, with four options each will be set and the candidate will be required to write the correct option and not specify by putting a tick mark (P). Any ten out of twelve are to be attempted.

Each objective will be for one mark. **(10×1=10)**

Section B Short Answer Questions

Q..2 Comprises short answer type questions covering the entire syllabus. Four questions will be set and the candidate will be required to attempt any two questions in 80-100 words.

Each answer will be evaluated for 5 marks. **(5×2=10)**

Section C Long Answer Questions

Q. 3 Comprises long answer type questions from the entire syllabus. Six questions, one from each unit, will be set and the candidate will be required to attempt any five questions in about 300-350 words.

Each answer will be evaluated for 12 marks. **(5×12=60)**

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**INTRODUCTION TO DANTE ALIGHIERI
AND *INFERNO***

STRUCTURE

- 1.1 Introduction**
- 1.2 Objectives**
- 1.3 Introduction to Dante Alighieri and *Inferno***
- 1.4 Historical Context and Cultural Influences on Dante's *Divine Comedy***
- 1.5 Overview of The Divine Comedy and its significance in literature**
- 1.6 Let Us Sum Up**
- 1.7 Multiple Choice Questions (MCQs)**
- 1.8 Answers Key (MCQs)**
- 1.9 Suggested Reading**
- 1.1 INTRODUCTION**

Dante Alighieri, an Italian poet of the late Middle Ages, is best known for his monumental epic, *The Divine Comedy*. Written in the early 14th century, this allegorical masterpiece guides readers through the realms of the afterlife, with *Inferno* being its most famous section. In *Inferno*, Dante journeys through the nine circles of Hell, encountering vivid depictions of sin and its consequences, all while exploring profound themes of justice, morality, and redemption. This work not only reflects the medieval worldview

but also continues to influence literature and art with its rich symbolism and imaginative scope.

1.2 OBJECTIVES

The objective of this lesson is to introduce the learner to Dante Alighieri, his life and times, and to give an overview of his work *Divine Comedy*. This chapter will also contextualise Dante's place in European Literature.

1.3 INTRODUCTION TO DANTE ALIGHIERI AND *INFERNO*

Dante Alighieri was born between May 21 and June 20, 1265, in Florence, Italy. He was born into a middle-class family, and little is known about his early education. However, it is believed that he received a typical education for a young man of his social class, studying literature, philosophy, and theology. Dante's life took a significant turn when, at the age of nine, he first met Beatrice Portinari, an event that would deeply influence his poetry and shape his spiritual and artistic journey. Beatrice became the muse and central figure in Dante's poetry, especially in "*La Vita Nuova*" ("*The New Life*"). Dante became actively involved in the political life of Florence during a period of intense political strife between two factions, the Guelfs and the Ghibellines. He aligned himself with the Guelfs, who supported papal authority against the imperial ambitions of the Ghibellines. Dante held various public offices, served as a soldier, and participated in the complex political landscape of his time. The political situation in Florence became increasingly volatile, and in 1301, the opposing faction, known as the Black Guelfs, gained the upper hand. Dante, a White Guelf, found himself on the losing side and was subsequently exiled from Florence. This exile marked a turning point in his life and significantly influenced his later works. Following his exile, Dante wandered through various Italian cities, including Verona and Ravenna. He lived under the patronage of different nobles, including Can Grande della Scala. It was during these years that he likely composed a significant portion of his magnum opus, *La Divina Commedia* (*The Divine Comedy*). Dante's most famous work, *The Divine*

Comedy, was written during his years of exile. Comprising three parts—Inferno, Purgatorio, and Paradiso—the epic poem takes the reader on a journey through Hell, Purgatory, and Heaven. It is a complex allegory that explores themes of sin, redemption, and the nature of the divine. Dante died on September 13 or 14, 1321, in Ravenna. He never returned to Florence, the city of his birth. Despite his exile, Dante’s literary legacy endured. The Divine Comedy became a cornerstone of Italian literature and a seminal work in world literature. His use of the Tuscan dialect in his writings also contributed to the development of the Italian language. Dante’s influence extended far beyond his lifetime. His works inspired countless writers, poets, and artists. His contributions to the Italian language had a lasting impact, and his political treatise, “De Monarchia,” continued to be studied for its exploration of the relationship between temporal and spiritual authority. Dante’s significance in the literary canon grew over the centuries. His portrayal of the afterlife, vivid characters, and profound theological insights continue to captivate readers. Dante is often referred to as the “father of the Italian language,” and his legacy as a poet, philosopher, and political thinker remains indelible in the cultural history of Italy and the world.

1.4 HISTORICAL CONTEXT AND CULTURAL INFLUENCES ON DANTE’S *DIVINE COMEDY*

Dante lived during the late medieval period, a time marked by political turmoil, social change, and religious fervour. Italy, his homeland, was a patchwork of city-states, each with its own political structure and alliances. Florence, Dante’s birthplace, was a thriving centre of commerce and culture. The Guelphs and Ghibellines, opposing political factions, vied for power in many Italian cities. Dante aligned with the Guelphs, supporting papal authority against imperial influence. Dante’s exile from Florence in 1302 profoundly influenced his perspective. He became a wanderer, residing in various cities under the patronage of different nobles. Dante was well-versed in medieval theology and philosophy. His encounters with works of classical authors like Virgil, Cicero, and Boethius, as well

as scholastic philosophy, informed his intellectual framework. Dante's early exposure to the Dolce Stil Novo, a literary movement focused on love and human psychology, influenced his early poetry. Guido Cavalcanti, a fellow poet, significantly impacted Dante's ideas on love. Dante's encounter with Beatrice Portinari fuelled his poetic inspiration. Beatrice became a symbol of divine love and guided Dante's spiritual journey, playing a central role in *The Divine Comedy*. Dante drew from diverse literary traditions.

The Divine Comedy incorporates elements of the allegorical journey, a popular motif in medieval literature. The use of vernacular Italian, particularly the Tuscan dialect, was groundbreaking. Dante's understanding of scholastic philosophy and theology is evident in his exploration of Christian cosmology, ethics, and the nature of sin and redemption in *The Divine Comedy*. Dante's work shows a deep appreciation for classical literature. Virgil, the Roman poet, serves as Dante's guide through Hell and Purgatory, blending classical and Christian themes. *The Divine Comedy* is rich in allegorical elements, symbolising deeper meanings. The journey through Hell, Purgatory, and Heaven represents the soul's progression towards God. Dante's decision to write in the Italian vernacular, particularly the Tuscan dialect, rather than Latin, contributed to the development of standard Italian. This choice democratised literature, making it accessible to a broader audience. Dante's *Divine Comedy* had a profound impact on subsequent generations. It became a cornerstone of Italian literature and contributed to the formation of a national identity. His influence extended beyond Italy, shaping the course of world literature. This work is a product of its historical context, blending political, theological, and cultural influences. Dante's personal experiences, intellectual pursuits, and exposure to diverse literary traditions converged to create a work that transcends its time, offering timeless insights into the human condition and the journey towards spiritual enlightenment.

1.5 OVERVIEW OF *THE DIVINE COMEDY* AND ITS SIGNIFICANCE IN LITERATURE

Dante Alighieri holds a central and enduring position in the literary

canon, and his impact transcends both temporal and geographical boundaries. Dante's decision to write his masterwork, *The Divine Comedy*, in the Italian vernacular, particularly the Tuscan dialect, instead of Latin, was groundbreaking. This choice democratized literature, making it accessible to a broader audience and influencing the development of the Italian language. Dante's use of the Tuscan dialect had a profound impact on the formation of standard Italian. His linguistic choices played a crucial role in shaping the Italian language, contributing to the emergence of a unified national identity. *The Divine Comedy* is a masterful work of allegory and symbolism. Dante skilfully weaves together classical, Christian, and medieval themes to create a narrative with layers of meanings. His use of allegory influenced subsequent writers, and his work is often studied for its intricate symbolic structure. Dante's exploration of theology, philosophy, and the Christian worldview in *The Divine Comedy* has made it a profound literary and philosophical work. It delves into themes of sin, redemption, morality, and the nature of God. Dante's spiritual journey through Hell, Purgatory, and Heaven remains a seminal exploration of the afterlife. Dante's works, along with those of Petrarch and Boccaccio, played a role in the development of humanism. The emphasis on the individual, the study of classical texts, and the celebration of human achievement found in the Renaissance can trace some of their roots to Dante's intellectual contributions.

Dante's impact extends to later literary works, inspiring writers such as Geoffrey Chaucer, John Milton, William Blake, and T.S. Eliot. Elements of *The Divine Comedy*, including the journey motif, allegorical storytelling, and exploration of moral and existential themes, resonate in diverse literary traditions. Dante's influence is not confined to literature; it extends to Italian culture and national pride. His portrayal of the journey from darkness to light, mirroring the struggles of the soul, has become a cultural touchstone, and Dante is often considered the father of Italian literature. The themes explored by Dante—love, justice, the human

condition, and the pursuit of virtue—are universal and continue to resonate with readers across cultures and ages. The *Divine Comedy* remains relevant for its exploration of the complexities of the human experience. Dante's works are studied not only in literature but also in theology, philosophy, history, and comparative literature. His interdisciplinary influence reflects the depth and breadth of his intellectual contributions. Dante Alighieri's significance lies in his role as a literary pioneer, language standard-bearer, and philosophical explorer. His enduring impact on literature, culture, and thought ensures that his works continue to be studied and celebrated, making Dante a towering figure in the literary canon.

Dante's journey spans the entire cosmos, from Hell to Purgatory and ultimately Heaven. The breadth of the narrative covers a vast, symbolic landscape that explores the nature of sin, redemption, and divine love. Dante, the protagonist and pilgrim, embarks on a heroic quest through the realms of the afterlife. His journey is not only physical but also spiritual, reflecting the classical hero's quest for self-discovery and enlightenment. Dante encounters a multitude of supernatural beings, including angels, demons, and mythological figures. These encounters contribute to the epic atmosphere and reinforce the divine nature of the pilgrimage. Dante employs vivid and elaborate descriptions, often using epic similes to illustrate complex ideas. These descriptions contribute to the grandeur of the poem and enhance the reader's engagement with the narrative.

Like classical epics, *The Divine Comedy* explores universal themes of morality, justice, and the eternal struggle between good and evil. Dante's journey becomes a reflection of the human soul's moral choices and the consequences of those choices. Dante invokes divine inspiration and guidance at the beginning of each section, akin to the classical tradition of invoking the Muses. This aligns with the epic tradition, emphasizing the divine inspiration behind the poet's work. Dante employs a sophisticated and elevated language, befitting the grand themes of his epic. The use of *terza rima*, a complex rhyme scheme, adds to the poetic grandeur and contributes to the sense of formality. Much like classical epics that often reflected the

values and concerns of their societies, Dante's work is a reflection of the political, religious, and cultural milieu of medieval Italy.

The inclusion of historical and contemporary figures adds a layer of social commentary. Dante's journey is not only a quest for knowledge but also a process of purgation and transformation. The pilgrim undergoes a cathartic experience, mirroring the transformative arc often found in epic heroes. The culmination of the epic journey is the Beatific Vision in Paradiso, where Dante experiences a theophany—an ultimate revelation of the divine. This moment of divine communion is a fitting conclusion to the epic quest. The *Divine Comedy* aligns with the classical tradition of epic poetry while innovatively incorporating Christian theology and medieval philosophy. Its enduring legacy as an epic masterpiece lies in its ability to transcend cultural and temporal boundaries, offering readers a profound exploration of the human condition and the divine order.

1.6 LET US SUM UP

Dante's *Divine Comedy* is a monumental epic poem that explores the themes of sin, redemption, and the human journey towards God. The narrative follows Dante's allegorical journey through Hell, Purgatory, and Heaven, guided by the Roman poet Virgil and later by his idealized beloved, Beatrice. Each realm represents different aspects of the human soul and moral philosophy, with Hell embodying sin and punishment, Purgatory signifying repentance and purification, and Heaven reflecting divine grace and salvation. The poem's rich symbolism, intricate structure, and profound insights into medieval theology, morality, and politics have made it a cornerstone of world literature, influencing countless writers and thinkers. Its universal exploration of the human condition and quest for spiritual fulfillment continues to resonate deeply across cultures and eras.

1.7 MULTIPLE CHOICE QUESTIONS (MCQs)

1. Where was Dante Alighieri born?
 - a) Rome

- b) Venice
 - c) Florence
 - d) Milan
2. Who is Dante's guide through Hell and Purgatory in *The Divine Comedy*?
- a) Beatrice
 - b) Virgil
 - c) St. Peter
 - d) St. Bernard
3. In which century was Dante Alighieri born?
- a) 12th century
 - b) 13th century
 - c) 14th century
 - d) 15th century
4. What is the structure of *The Divine Comedy*?
- a) Three books with ten cantos each
 - b) One book with 100 cantos
 - c) Three books with 33 cantos each plus an introductory canto
 - d) Three books with 50 cantos each
5. Which sin is punished in the ninth circle of Hell?
- a) Lust
 - b) Gluttony
 - c) Treachery
 - d) Wrath
6. Who greets Dante at the gates of Purgatory?
- a) St. Peter
 - b) Cato

- c) Virgil
 - d) Beatrice
7. What is the significance of Beatrice in Dante's life and work?
- a) She was his wife.
 - b) She was his muse and symbol of divine love.
 - c) She was his sister.
 - d) She was his mother.
8. Which book of *The Divine Comedy* describes Dante's journey through Heaven?
- a) Inferno
 - b) Purgatorio
 - c) Paradiso
 - d) Elysium
9. In *The Divine Comedy*, which river must souls cross to enter Hell?
- a) Styx
 - b) Lethe
 - c) Acheron
 - d) Phlegethon
10. How does Dante portray the structure of Hell?
- a) As a mountain
 - b) As a labyrinth
 - c) As a series of concentric circles
 - d) As a series of islands

1.8 ANSWERS KEY (MCQs)

- 1. c) Florence
- 2. b) Virgil
- 3. c) 14th century

4. c) Three books with 33 cantos each plus an introductory canto
5. c) Treachery
6. b) Cato
7. b) She was his muse and symbol of divine love.
8. c) Paradiso
9. c) Acheron
10. c) As a series of concentric circles

1.9 SUGGESTED READING

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**STRUCTURE OF *THE DIVINE COMEDY* AND
ITS SIGNIFICANCE AS A LITERARY
MASTERPIECE**

STRUCTURE

- 2.1 Introduction**
- 2.2 Objectives**
- 2.3 Tripartite Structure**
- 2.4 Themes in Dante's "Inferno"**
- 2.5 References to the classics and mythology in the "Inferno"**
- 2.6 Symbolism and Allegorical elements in Dante's work**
- 2.7 Narrative Techniques: Discuss Dante's use of first-person narration and the role of the poet as the protagonist**
- 2.8 Let Us Sum Up**
- 2.9 Multiple Choice Questions (MCQs)**
- 2.10 Answers Key (MCQs)**
- 2.11 Suggested Readings**

2.1 INTRODUCTION

Dante's "Divine Comedy" is structured as a tripartite journey through three realms: Inferno (Hell), Purgatorio (Purgatory), and Paradiso (Heaven), each reflecting different stages of the soul's path towards God. This structure underscores the themes of sin, redemption, and divine grace, portraying the consequences of human actions and the possibility of salvation. Symbolism

pervades the poem, with Hell's concentric circles representing descending levels of sin, Purgatory's mountain signifying the arduous ascent of repentance, and Heaven's celestial spheres illustrating the harmony of divine order. The narrative, rich with allegory and moral philosophy, explores human nature, justice, and the pursuit of spiritual fulfillment, offering profound insights into the medieval worldview and the eternal struggle between good and evil.

2.2 OBJECTIVES

This lesson will acquaint the learner with the important aspects of *Inferno*. It will further acquaint the readers with the themes, symbols, narrative technique and the references to classical mythology.

2.3 TRIPARTITE STRUCTURE

Inferno (Hell): The journey begins in Hell, where Dante explores the consequences of sin. Each circle represents a different sin, and the punishments become progressively severe. The journey through Hell reflects the consequences of a life lived without divine guidance.

Purgatorio (Purgatory): Dante ascends Mount Purgatory, representing the purification of the soul. Here, souls atone for their sins, and the theme shifts from punishment to redemption. Purgatory signifies hope, repentance, and the possibility of salvation.

Paradiso (Heaven): The final part takes Dante through the celestial spheres, each representing a different virtue. The ultimate destination is the Beatific Vision—the direct encounter with God. *Paradiso* explores divine love, knowledge, and the harmony of the universe. Each part of the journey is laden with symbolic significance. The dark forest at the beginning represents a life astray from righteousness, and the journey itself symbolises the human quest for God. The characters Dante encounters, such as Virgil and Beatrice, are allegorical figures embodying reason and divine grace. Dante employs *terza rima*, a poetic form with interlocking rhymes (ABA BCB CDC, and so on). This intricate structure contributes to the narrative's

musicality and elegance. It also reflects the interconnectedness of sin and its consequences, reinforcing the notion of a cosmic order.

The Divine Comedy is framed as Dante's own journey, both metaphorically and literally. This personalisation engages the reader emotionally and allows Dante to comment on the political, religious, and cultural landscape of his time. The use of the first person enhances the intimacy of the narrative. Dante addresses universal themes such as morality, justice, redemption, and the nature of the divine. The journey through Hell, Purgatory, and Heaven serves as a microcosm of the human experience, making *The Divine Comedy* relevant to readers across cultures and epochs. The poem reflects Dante's views on political and religious issues of his time. The characters encountered in Hell often include historical and contemporary figures, allowing Dante to comment on the state of Florence and the broader political landscape in medieval Italy. Dante, drawing on medieval theology and philosophy, incorporates layers of meaning into his narrative. The work engages with scholastic thought, Aristotelian ethics, and Christian theology, offering readers a profound exploration of the relationship between God and humanity. *The Divine Comedy* has had a profound impact on subsequent literature. Its innovative use of the vernacular, intricate structure, and exploration of profound themes influenced writers like Geoffrey Chaucer, John Milton, and countless others. It remains a touchstone for the development of narrative art. Dante's work serves as a capstone to medieval thought, incorporating elements of classical literature, Christian theology, and medieval philosophy. It synthesizes diverse intellectual traditions into a coherent and aesthetically rich narrative. *The Divine Comedy* culminates in a mystical vision of God, providing a glimpse into the divine realm. This theophany represents the ultimate goal of human existence—union with the divine—and serves as a transcendent conclusion to the literary journey. *The Divine Comedy* stands as a literary masterpiece not only for its narrative innovation and poetic excellence but also for its profound exploration of the human condition, moral choices, and the quest

for spiritual fulfilment. Dante's intricate structure, rich symbolism, and deep theological insights contribute to its enduring significance in the literary canon.

2.4 THEMES

Sin and Punishment

Hell is where unrepentant sinners are punished for eternity. In Dante's allegorical version of Hell, God's justice requires that sinners' punishments be suited to their sins. This principle, called *contrapasso*, results in an elaborate system of categories of sin and, within each category, degrees of severity. In general, each type of sin has its own circle of Hell, and these circles are sometimes divided into subcategories. For example, the ninth and final circle is where the treacherous are punished. But within this general category, four subtypes are identified, and each is a little lower in Hell than the last and its punishment more severe. Each type of sinner is punished in a way that is somehow related to the sin committed; for example, those who were fortune-tellers, tricking people into thinking they could tell the future, have their heads attached backwards in Hell so they can only see behind them. However, one of the difficulties in reading *Inferno* is that Dante makes these sins seem so harsh. It is hard not to feel sympathy for the people who suffer so acutely forever, with no hope of relief. It is also hard to accept what Dante believes to be the truth: that it is just to punish people forever for the sins they committed during their lifetimes.

Love

To Dante, the power and nature of God is perfect love. In Canto 1 Divine Love is said to have created the sun and stars and set them in motion. In Canto 2 Beatrice says that Love prompted her to come to Virgil and speak with him about helping Dante find his way back to the true path, and it is Dante's love for Beatrice that prompts St. Lucia to bring Dante's struggles to Beatrice's attention. God's nature as the source of love requires the existence of Hell. More human loves are also part of the plot of *Inferno*.

The souls in the second circle of Hell are there because they gave in to lust, but when they speak, they speak of being overcome with love. Dante also expresses his love for Florence, his own city.

LANGUAGE

In Dante's understanding, language is a singularly human ability. It is a mark of human reason. It also allows humans to relate to one another, tell stories, share memories, communicate ideas, and make art. Using language correctly, then, is an important part of living correctly. Misusing language—to deceive, to betray, to harm—is therefore sinful. In many of the levels in Dante's Hell are those who misused language. In addition, throughout *Inferno* there are suffering sinners who are unable to speak in words or who speak in incomprehensible nonsense. Many sinners also have their own explanations of why they are there or have unresolved anger or feelings of injustice. Their speeches provide another way of understanding the punishments of Hell and show that punishing sin does not always help the sinner understand the nature of what he or she has done wrong. Language also provides a path to a kind of immortality. Throughout *Inferno*, various shades ask Dante to tell their stories, to remember them. By telling their stories, he extends their lives. Poets and philosophers also extend their lives through their great works.

PHYSICALITY

Hell in *Inferno* is not just metaphorical or representative. It is represented as having a clear geography with a gate, city walls, mountains, and so forth, and the reader is given dimensions for different levels of Hell. Moreover, while all the sinners in Hell suffer the same punishment as the virtuous unbaptized (the absence of God), everyone except the virtuous unbaptized also suffers excruciating physical torment. The Last Judgment, at which time souls will be reunited with their bodies, has not yet taken place, so this torture is actually in the sinners' minds, but they and Dante perceive it as physical anguish. The bodies of sinners are described as being torn open, deformed, and writhing in pain, and the elaborate descriptions

of tortures are frequently graphic and unsettling. Dante is trying to evoke a visceral reaction in his reader by making Hell seem as real as possible. Dante's still-living body presents frequent difficulties on his journey through Hell. Because most of those there are separated (temporarily) from their bodies, he is an anomaly. He causes boats to ride low in the water and moves rocks as he scrambles over them. Many sins punished in Hell are sins of excessive indulgence in the body's desires.

The Human Condition

Above all, humans are rational beings. Reason, symbolized by Virgil in *Inferno*, is a defining feature that sets humans apart from animals. The use of language and the ability to master the body's desires are marks of this reason. Dante also represents sinners as multifaceted, complex people, rather than as flat representations of a sinful quality. They are often good people who simply had one fatal flaw, as with Dante's teacher Brunetto Latini, who is a good and wise man but who is punished with the other sodomites. By making so many of his sinners empathetic and even admirable people, many of whom his readers might actually have known, Dante brings home the fact that sins are not abstractions committed by evil people but wrong choices that anyone can easily make. Humans are social. They relate to one another, form alliances, and establish civilizations. They create government, and Dante's focus on Florentine politics shows this aspect of human nature. Humans need divine intervention to help them stay on the true path. Dante, left to his own devices, has lost the path. He needs Heavenly guidance to find the way back.

The Perfection of God's Justice

Dante creates an imaginative correspondence between a soul's sin on Earth and the punishment he or she receives in Hell. The Sullen choke on mud, the Wrathful attack one another, the Gluttonous are forced to eat excrement, and so on. This simple idea provides many of *Inferno*'s moments of spectacular imagery and symbolic power, but also serves to illuminate

one of Dante's major themes: the perfection of God's justice. The inscription over the gates of Hell in Canto III explicitly states that God was moved to create Hell by Justice (III.7). Hell exists to punish sin, and the suitability of Hell's specific punishments testify to the divine perfection that all sin violates. This notion of the suitability of God's punishments figures significantly in Dante's larger moral messages and structures Dante's Hell.

To modern readers, the torments Dante and Virgil behold may seem shockingly harsh: homosexual people must endure an eternity of walking on hot sand; those who charge interest on loans sit beneath a rain of fire. However, when we view the poem as a whole, it becomes clear that the guiding principle of these punishments is one of balance. Sinners suffer punishment to a degree befitting the gravity of their sin, in a manner matching that sin's nature. The design of the poem serves to reinforce this correspondence: in its plot it progresses from minor sins to major ones (a matter of degree); and in the geographical structure it posits, the various regions of Hell correspond to types of sin (a matter of kind). Because this notion of balance informs all of God's chosen punishments, His justice emerges as rigidly objective, mechanical, and impersonal; there are no extenuating circumstances in Hell, and punishment becomes a matter of nearly scientific formula.

Early in *Inferno*, Dante builds a great deal of tension between the objective impersonality of God's justice and the character Dante's human sympathy for the souls that he sees around him. As the story progresses, however, the character becomes less and less inclined toward pity, and repeated comments by Virgil encourage this development. Thus, the text asserts the infinite wisdom of divine justice: sinners receive punishment in perfect proportion to their sin; to pity their suffering is to demonstrate a lack of understanding.

Evil as the Contradiction of God's Will

In many ways, Dante's *Inferno* can be seen as a kind of imaginative taxonomy of human evil, the various types of which Dante classifies,

isolates, explores, and judges. At times we may question its organizing principle, wondering why, for example, a sin punished in the Eighth Circle of Hell, such as accepting a bribe, should be considered worse than a sin punished in the Sixth Circle of Hell, such as murder. To understand this organization, one must realize that Dante's narration follows strict doctrinal Christian values. His moral system prioritizes not human happiness or harmony on Earth but rather God's will in Heaven. Dante thus considers violence less evil than fraud: of these two sins, fraud constitutes the greater opposition to God's will. God wills that we treat each other with the love he extends to us as individuals; while violence acts against this love, fraud constitutes a perversion of it. A fraudulent person affects care and love while perpetrating sin against it. Yet, while *Inferno* implies these moral arguments, it generally engages in little discussion of them.

In the end, it declares that evil is evil simply because it contradicts God's will, and God's will does not need further justification. Dante's exploration of evil probes neither the causes of evil, nor the psychology of evil, nor the earthly consequences of bad behavior. *Inferno* is not a philosophical text; its intention is not to think critically about evil but rather to teach and reinforce the relevant Christian doctrines.

Storytelling as a Way to Achieve Immortality

Dante places much emphasis in his poem on the notion of immortality through storytelling, everlasting life through legend and literary legacy. Several shades ask the character Dante to recall their names and stories on Earth upon his return. They hope, perhaps, that the retelling of their stories will allow them to live in people's memories. The character Dante does not always oblige; for example, he ignores the request of the Italian souls in the Ninth Pouch of the Eighth Circle of Hell that he bring word of them back to certain men on Earth as warnings. However, the poet Dante seems to have his own agenda, for his poem takes the recounting of their stories as a central part of its project. Although the poet repeatedly emphasizes the perfection of divine justice and the suitability of the sinners' punishments, by

incorporating the sinners' narratives into his text he also allows them to live on in some capacity aboveground. Yet, in retelling the sinners' stories, the poet Dante may be acting less in consideration of the sinners' immortality than of his own. Indeed, Dante frequently takes opportunities to advance his own glory.

On the other hand, there is an indisputable motif. Dante also pursues many political arguments. An extremely significant part of his agenda in the *Inferno* was to comment on the disastrous political atmosphere in 14th century Florence, while keeping in mind his biased and his exile from the city. He not only condemns political enemies ruthlessly but also predicts and condemns figures ahead of time due to the *Inferno* being set years before. Thirdly, Dante asserts his position as a White Guelph in his supported ideology of separation between Church and state. However, due to the sensitivity of the topic he cautiously emphasizes its divine and political importance. The last scene in the *Inferno* also emphasizes this Christian and political duality as Lucifer is chewing on both religious and infamous political figures; by chewing on Judas, betrayer of Christ, and Brutus and Cassius, infamous betrayers of Julius Caesar, the most famous classical politician. Betrayal and mutiny of religion and state both merit the most severe punishment in Hell according to Dante. However, an important note is that with this political and religious sin, there are also instances where these two spheres cross. It is here, where the instance of a priest accepting a bribe that warrants a deeper circle in Hell than one who commits murder. This is another example to Dante's emphasis on religion and state. These examples are only the tip of the iceberg in terms of this concept Dante presses on throughout the *Inferno*.

2.5 REFERENCES TO THE CLASSICS AND MYTHOLOGY IN THE "INFERNO"

As much as Dante refers back to Greek and Roman mythology, he also references Christian morality. It is interesting how Dante includes

mythological creatures and ancient creatures in a Christian Hell. He includes beasts from Centaurs and Minos, to figures such as Ulysses and places such as the river Acheron and Styx. As mentioned before he also mimics the styles of great classical writers, Homer, Ovid, Lucan and Virgil. He mixes and includes all these classical and ancient traditions not only to create a “hybrid,” or ode to the classics, but to also represent his supremacy and greatness as a poet. Dante also recognizes the dramatic potential in using these ancient elements. By including all these traditions, with the overarching one being that of Christianity, he is pushing Christianity to the top while simultaneously acknowledging that all others are real, but simply, of the past.

The symbolism in Dante’s work is endless. It is impossible to diminish the iconic intricacy of the *Inferno* to a short list of significant symbols. Because the poem is an extended metaphor, it uses symbols, ranging from the painstakingly small, to the major symbolic representation of the entire story of *The Divine Comedy* itself, to the spiritual journey of human life. For example, the white banner representing the Uncommitted in Canto III representing the insignificance of their lives. Many of the symbols in *Inferno* are clear and easy to identify, such as the beast Geryon, with the head of a man and the body of a snake, he characterizes deceit and fraud. Some others are much more nuanced and difficult to recognize, such as the three beasts that stop Dante from the path up the mountain in Canto I. While reading the *Inferno*, it’s critical to take each element of the poem into consideration in accordance to how it fits into Dante’s allegory as well.

Arguably the more significant, yet less obvious examples of symbolism in the *Inferno* are woven in the damned figures and their punishments which, as mentioned, correlate to their sins committed while they were alive. For example, the Lustful, who are blown around in a violent storm but never come into contact with one another as their punishment. Another important symbol Dante uses are figures who represent human qualities, such as Virgil and Beatrice. Virgil is the representative of reason and Beatrice is the representative of spiritual love. Settings also represent Dante’s emotions,

such as the dark forest in Canto I, demonstrating Dante's confusion and fear. Figures in Hell also represent something more than merely their sins. An example of this is Farinata, who characterizes qualities of leadership and political dedication that surpass his character as a Heretic in Hell.

2.6 SYMBOLISM AND ALLEGORICAL ELEMENTS IN DANTE'S WORK

Dante is the author of a three-part trilogy following the journey of Dante, the pilgrim. Inferno tells Virgil who leads Dante through Hell after being spurred by Beatrice, and ultimately God, to begin a passage to aid Dante in recognizing and repenting for his sins. In this journey, Dante encounters beasts, sinners, and even people from his own past in each canto, as he begins to better himself in the hopes for salvation in the future. In each canto, a particular sin and sinners who have been charged as guilty of committing that sin are revealed in an allegorical manner.

Before beginning, it is important to define what an allegory is, according to the Oxford English Dictionary, an allegory is "the use of symbols in a story, picture, etc., to convey a hidden or ulterior meaning, typically a moral or political one; symbolic representation." An allegory is a story that can be understood in a different manner to reveal a meaning that may not be a superficial one. Typically, this meaning is one of a political or moral manner. Therefore, in Dante's Inferno, each canto functions on an allegorical level in the sense that the sins and the sinners in each canto may reveal some aspect of Dante's life. Living in Florence was Dante's hell and thus much of this comedy reflects that. It takes a certain amount of background knowledge and understanding of Dante's own life to appreciate the lessons brought forth in each canto and in the Inferno as a whole.

Canto I both foreshadows and reveals the ultimate source of allegory for Dante. As mentioned, for Dante, life in Florence was his own hell. There, Dante must suffer and take time to review his actions. The entirety of the Inferno reflects this, however, Canto I does go in depth on an allegorical level regarding the journey itself. Dante wakes and finds himself "in a dark

wood” (I, 2). He has strayed from the light and cannot return to it until he has suffered for a period of time. This is reflected in the journey Dante will take from Inferno to Purgatory and eventually to Paradise. The light is Paradise in an allegorical sense. In Dante’s real life, Florence is the journey and the “dark wood” that he is caught in. Here in Florence, Dante must suffer political turmoil between the white and black Guelfs along with religious turmoil. Much of this is reflected in his allegorical depiction of the Inferno and the people in it. Canto I does well to set the scene for this reflection.

Canto XIII reveals the deeper meaning of sins and sinners’ faults through the suicides, revealing religious allegory. The suicides negated their own lives and thus had no chance to repent for their sin. This sin is explained through the story of Pier Delle Vigne who acted in violence against himself when he committed suicide after everyone thought he committed treason against the government and disobeyed the Emperor. Pier claimed he was not guilty of this. According to Pier, “That courtesan who constantly surveyed / Caesar’s household with her adulterous eyes, / mankind’s undoing, the special vice of courts, / inflamed the hearts of everyone against me,” (XIII, 64-7). Dante’s allegory in this Canto demonstrates what he has been witness to for his whole life in Florence, and that is honest people falling victim to the corruption of politics. In the case of Pier Delle Vigne, this is a double edged sword. His story reveals the potential for corruption whether or not he actually committed the crime. If Pier did, then he is a corrupt member of the government. If he didn’t, he was found guilty for a crime he was innocent of which is corruption in the government’s legal system. Dante’s allegory in Canto XIII is critiquing the web of lies surrounding the government and the people who work for it.”

In addition to its political allegory, Canto XIII has more of a religious allegorical meaning than Canto I because Pier Delle Vigne is contrasted with Saint Peter in several ways. First, in both a literal and figurative sense, Pier did not let many people in: “I let few into his confidence,” (XIII, 61).

St. Peter in a literal sense is more open than Pier, and is the one opening the gates to heaven to allow people in. He also opens his heart up to more people than Pier does. Second, a big difference between St. Peter and Pier is that St. Peter repented while Pier did not. Not only did Pier not repent but he also finds no fault in his actions: "Never once did I break faith with my lord," (XIII, 74-5). However, this is known to be false because Pier committed suicide against himself and therefore against God. It seems that Pier prides himself on being perfect and maintaining his faith when just isn't the case.

Canto XXI continues to elaborate on Dante's unique depiction of sins in the Inferno and the allegory associated with it. In this Canto, the devils' behavior is a bit more immature. They cook sinners and trick them into crossing a bridge constantly so that the sinners are punished incessantly (XXI, 54-75). The behavior of the devils is elaborated on as some form of comic relief. The devils communicate through farting sounds and are tricksters (XXI, 139).

He chose to depict the devils' behavior in this manner not only to emphasize how casual their form of evil is but also to demonstrate this behavior to display Dante's way of utilizing his imagination and embellishing allegory. In this way, the allegory can be dressed up in several fashions. The allegory that is described in Canto XXI is more of a political allegory because Dante describes the sinners who were swindlers in public offices who sinned against the state.

Hell's organization by Dante is an allegory. The first time Dante introduces Hell's organization is in Canto I when Dante, the pilgrim, is introduced to the three beasts: the leopard, the lion, and the she-wolf. The leopard is representative of incontinence, the lion of violence, and the she-wolf of fraud. It is no coincidence that Dante meets the beasts in this order. The sins the beasts embody represent the severity of sins in Dante's mind, and thus are representative of the order of sins and circles in hell.

It is important to discuss the order of the sins Dante and Virgil see through the layers of the Inferno because as the comedy continues and the two head further down Hell, the sins they encounter worsen. This order is not by mistake. Dante intentionally places sinners who are corrupt politicians, for example, closer to hell. For example, Canto XXI deals with sinners who have sinned against the state while Canto XIII deals with sins of the suicides. In Dante's mind, suicide is a lesser sin than crime against the state is. Dante's order of sins in the Inferno can be attributed to his own life experiences. The political struggles he faced caused he and many others a significant amount of grief; this struggle the reason being why Dante was exiled. The order of sins is a direct reflection of the sins that affected his life.

Dante's life experiences affect his writing in more ways than one. Whether it is in the characters of sinners and their stories it is in the Inferno's structure itself, Dante's application of life experiences fills his work with both religious and political allegory. Cantos I, XIII, and XXI each demonstrate how Dante's own life as a politician influence his work and reveal something deeper about his own life.

Examples of Allegory in *Inferno*

Dark Wood of Error	The mistakes that lead Dante and every person into a bad choice, or a bad situation in life.
Month of Joy	Represents Heaven and the pinnacle for the spirit's journey; this is where God is, and the Mountain is the spiritual journey to reach Him.
Three Beasts of Worldliness	These three beasts represent worldly sins that have blocked Dante on his path of a righteous life: malice, fraud, violence, ambition, and lack of carnal self-restraint (incontinence).
Hell	Hell is an allegory for Sin and its consequences. For Dante, it is the understanding that sin begets suffering, and if he continues on his path of Worldliness, his eternal separation from God will be inevitable.

Because the poem is an overarching allegory, *Inferno* explores its themes using dozens, even hundreds, of symbols, ranging from the minutely particular (the blank banner chased by the Uncommitted in Canto III, symbolizing the meaninglessness of their activity in life) to the hugely general (the entire story of *The Divine Comedy* itself, symbolizing the spiritual quest of human life). Many of the symbols in *Inferno* are clear and easily interpretable, such as the beast Geryon—with the head of an innocent man and the body of a foul serpent, he represents dishonesty and fraud. Others are much more nuanced and difficult to pin down, such as the trio of creatures that stops Dante from climbing the sunlit mountain in Canto I. Here are just a few of its most notable instances of symbolism.

Sinners & Their Punishment

When reading *Inferno*, it is extremely important to consider each element of the poem according to how it fits into Dante's larger system of symbolism—what it says about the scene, story, and themes of the work and about human life. Perhaps the most important local uses of symbolism in *Inferno* involve the punishments of the sinners, which are always constructed so as to correspond allegorically to the sins that they committed in life. After all, as Dante says in Canto XXVII, "Those who, sowing discord, win their burden." The Lustful, for example, who were blown about by passion in life, are now doomed to be blown about by a ferocious storm for all of time. Gluttons are "flattened by the rain," so that while they once indulged and pampered their physical bodies to excess, those bodies now become "emptiness," and the souls experience intense discomfort. Other major types of symbols include figures among the damned who may represent something more than merely their sins, such as Farinata, whose punishment is to spend eternity in a flaming tomb and who seems to represent qualities of leadership and political commitment that transcend his identity as a Heretic in Hell.

The Circles of Hell

The Hell of Dante's *Inferno* consists of a very different structure than that in other depictions, such as John Milton's *Paradise Lost*, which portrays

a chaotic geographic terrain with an intellectual Satan. In Dante's case, Hell features a highly organized series of concentric circles, each with specific delegated punishments, and a Satan who is not just grotesque and but powerless, trapped in Hell like all the other sinners. Given the highly politicized nature of the journey his character embarks upon in the story, it makes sense that Dante would choose to reflect the complicated infrastructure of Italian society, to underscore the sins of the very real citizens he's chosen to depict, along with the allegory and its message.

By providing a hierarchical system of punishments, Dante is able to explore and assess the various misdeeds, virtues, and sins of his contemporaries and weigh them against each other with far scrutiny and nuance than if Hell were merely a singular realm. This structure of Hell also speaks to the difficulty and importance of recognizing proper restorative work for each respective sinner. Dante's disapproval of the corruption within the clergy and political landscape of Florence suggests it's not as simple as merely placing saints in Heaven and sinners in Hell. Not all deeds on earth are equal, and neither is each punishment. The infrastructure Dante has developed not only grants the reader a glimpse into his own philosophical and ethical views, but also paints a portrait of the political divisions and corruptions plaguing the time in which Dante lived.

The Woods

Inferno, and thus Dante's entire *Divine Comedy*, opens in a dark forest. For an epic poem, allegorical in nature, the woods offers a perfect foundation on which the vastness of the poem unfolds. Its chaotic, disorienting nature and sparseness juxtaposes the orderly, though no less terrifying, structure that is Hell. By opening the poem in this dark forest, Dante sets an ominous tone in which danger likely lurks around every corner. In this respect, the entire poem can be seen as a dark night of the soul, one in which Dante has found himself because he is physically and spiritually lost. This is paralleled in the suicide forest in the Second Ring of the Seventh Circle; those who have ended their own lives are damned to live in Hell as immovable trees

who are still bleed and cry out. Though not directly related to the forest Dante encounters at the outset, it does nonetheless strengthen the association between forests and sin. That is, one must never stray from the “right path” lest they remain trapped forever, lost in a metaphorical forest; the woods, then, is representative of a sinful life on Earth from which one must find their way back to God.

2.7 NARRATIVE TECHNIQUES: DISCUSS DANTE’S USE OF FIRST-PERSON NARRATION AND THE ROLE OF THE POET AS THE PROTAGONIST

The narrative of *Inferno* is extremely linear and progressive; the actions unfold over a sequence of increasingly extreme scenarios. Unlike most works of fiction, in which action is driven by the complex traits and motivations of characters, *Inferno* concerns itself very little with the personal qualities of Dante and Virgil. Rather, the narrative structure of the poem is directly tied to its geographical structure; the changing settings of the novel enable its sequence of encounters. In a sense, the narrative structure of *Inferno* is based on the idea of the degree of sin found among the damned: Dante and Virgil move forward from the realm of the least offensive sinners to the realm of the most offensive sinners, so that they find themselves surrounded by a continuously increasing degree of evil and danger. By the same token, the geographical structure of the poem is based on the idea of the kind of sin committed by the damned; each new circle of Hell is designed specifically to punish a certain kind of sinner. Because of the allegorical correspondence between the type of sin and the type of punishment, the type of sin determines a great deal about the physical environment in which each scenario takes place. This cohesion between geography and story, and between type of sin and degree of sin, links the poem thematically to the idea of divine retribution and God’s justice.

Dante uses a first-person narrator in the poem, much as medieval poets did in what were called “dream-vision poems”—poems that purported to relate an enigmatic dream whose symbols needed interpretation by the

reader. Dante's poem is no dream vision—he presents it as the record of an actual event—but as the dream vision did, the Comedy's allegory challenged the reader to unlock its various levels of meaning. Thus, the first-person narrator is not to be regarded as the historical Dante Alighieri, but a fictionalized version of the poet who also becomes an allegorical figure.

To be sure the character of Dante the pilgrim is in many ways identical to Dante the poet. He is the Dante who would in 1302 suffer unjust exile from his home city of Florence, and many of the characters, with the foreknowledge of departed souls, make numerous predictions about his future exile, beginning with Ciacco's clouded prophecy in Canto 6 of the *Inferno* and culminating with Cacciaguida's straightforward warning in Canto 17 of the *Paradiso*. That we are dealing with the influential poet Dante is also clear in *Purgatorio* 24, when the Luccan poet Bonagiunta praises Dante for his "sweet new style" (*Dolce Stil Novo*). His poetic vocation is also foregrounded in Cacciaguida's charge to him in *Paradiso* 17 to write all he has seen and hold nothing back. Further, the protagonist is clearly the historical Dante, citizen of Florence, in his political beliefs—his looking forward to a world emperor to curb the secular power of the papacy, his enmity with Ghibellines like Farinata in *Inferno* 10 or the Black Guelphs whom he condemns in *Paradiso* 15. Finally, the character is also Dante the human lover in what he reveals about his love for Beatrice, the woman he had loved and whose death he writes of in the *Vita nuova*—a text with which he seems to have expected his readers to have been familiar. Thus, it is Beatrice who sends Virgil to save the protagonist, and it is the thought of actually seeing Beatrice again that sees Dante through his greatest fear—the ring of fire that bars the entrance into Paradise (*Purgatorio* 27). It is Beatrice he meets in the Earthly Paradise atop Mount Purgatory, a heavenly Beatrice who calls him by name— "Dante"— when she sees him in *Purgatorio* 30, l. 55.

It is clear, however, that the protagonist of the poem cannot literally be the historical Dante—and not only because the historical Dante never

actually visited the three realms of the afterlife. Dante the pilgrim is both the individual fictionalized depiction of the poet, and at the same time the representative of human beings in general. His wandering into the dark wood of sin in the first canto and his desire to overcome his sin and find his way to God are universal human traits, and so the pilgrim Dante becomes, allegorically, an Everyman figure in the poem. As must all human beings, according to Dante's medieval Christian viewpoint, the pilgrim must first recognize the nature of sin (as he does in the *Inferno*), make satisfaction for his sin (as he does in the *Purgatorio*), and increase in wisdom, joy, and love through holy living (as he does in the *Paradiso*). In this way the pilgrim Dante is a dynamic character, moving from sin to salvation, from ignorance to wisdom, from despair to joy, through his journey toward God.

As is true of medieval allegory in general, the character of Dante the pilgrim does not emerge as a fully rounded, multifaceted individual, as might be expected of a more modern protagonist in the realistic tradition. We know that he is 35 years old at the beginning of his journey, but even that is a symbolic age, midway through the journey of life, a turning point for the character to take a new direction and make a new start. As Everyman he displays the kinds of fears that anyone would show in, for example, entering Hell, or riding on the back of the monster Geryon in *Inferno* 17. He often weeps or shows pity for the sufferings of sinners in Hell (notably Francesca da Rimini in *Inferno* 5), until his guide, Virgil, convinces him that to do so is to question God's justice. He also displays a certain vanity when he is welcomed among the great poets of antiquity in *Inferno* 4, and righteous anger when he sees Pope Nicholas among the simonists in *Inferno* 19. As he moves through Purgatory, it is no surprise (having seen these traits in Hell) that the pilgrim expects to spend some time on the terraces of pride, anger, and lust when he returns upon his death to this part of the afterlife. Later he displays a very human eagerness to see again his beloved Beatrice after 10 years, and a very human humiliation when she chides him at their first meeting in *Purgatorio* 30. In Paradise the pilgrim's thirst for knowledge and eagerness to learn all he can about the workings of the universe also

are no surprise. Finally, the pilgrim is not presented with great particularity but is broadly defined by traits that may seem appropriate for a figure representing Everyman.

The pilgrim's reactions, however, should not generally be taken as reflecting those of Dante the poet, particularly in the *Inferno*. When the pilgrim swoons at Francesca's story of her love affair or weeps at the fate of his old mentor Brunetto Latini among the sodomites (*Inferno* 15), the reader must remember that Dante the poet has placed Francesca and Brunetto in Hell. The pilgrim's reactions, therefore, are inappropriate, but a part of the process he is going through, learning to recognize sin. On another level these reactions are part of a pattern in which the pilgrim Dante is shown participating in the various sins: Sometimes he participates through sympathy, sometimes through displaying the sin itself, as when he expresses his anger at Filippo Argenti (*Inferno* 8), or when he breaks his word to Friar Alberigo (*Inferno* 33). Even his pride at joining the group of classical poets in *Inferno* 4 is misguided, since these poets are not in Heaven, and to take pride in his position among them would be to trust in human intellect rather than divine guidance for salvation—and to end in Limbo rather than Paradise. These actions, too, can be read as part of the pilgrim's education: He is learning to see the potential of all sins within himself, and thus the need for contrition and penance as demonstrated throughout the *Purgatorio*.

Remarkably at the end of the *Paradiso* Dante the pilgrim and Dante the poet merge again, as Dante presents himself no longer as a character completing his pilgrimage and experiencing a vision of God, but as a poet, sitting in his study after his return from Paradise, trying with difficulty to remember the experience (*Paradiso* 33, ll. 60–84), and praying for the ability to put what he could remember into words. This final vision, with Dante's suggestion that this fiction is indeed no fiction, once more conflates pilgrim and poet and serves the function of conferring on the poet the authority of one who, as the pilgrim, had actually experienced this journey.

2.8 LET US SUM UP

Dante's *Divine Comedy* is divided into three parts: Inferno (Hell), Purgatorio (Purgatory), and Paradiso (Heaven), each depicting a different stage of the soul's journey towards divine union. This tripartite structure highlights themes such as sin, penitence, and divine grace, showing the consequences of human actions and the hope for redemption. Symbolism is central, with Hell's circles representing various sins, Purgatory's mountain illustrating the difficult process of purification, and Heaven's spheres embodying divine perfection. The poem delves into moral and philosophical questions, exploring the nature of humanity, justice, and the quest for spiritual enlightenment, providing a deep understanding of medieval thought and the eternal conflict between good and evil.

2.9 MULTIPLE CHOICE QUESTIONS (MCQs)

1. Who guards the entrance to the second circle of Hell, where the lustful are punished?
 - a) Minos
 - b) Cerberus
 - c) Charon
 - d) Plutus
2. Which historical figure does Dante encounter in the circle of the lustful?
 - a) Cleopatra
 - b) Alexander the Great
 - c) Julius Caesar
 - d) Brutus
3. What punishment do the gluttonous endure in the third circle of Hell?
 - a) Being blown about by strong winds
 - b) Lying in a vile slush produced by icy rain
 - c) Being submerged in boiling blood
 - d) Being turned into trees and torn apart by Harpies

4. Which sin is punished in the ninth circle of Hell?
 - a) Wrath
 - b) Gluttony
 - c) Heresy
 - d) Treachery
5. What is the symbolic meaning of the dark wood where Dante finds himself at the beginning of "Inferno"?
 - a) Political corruption
 - b) Personal despair and confusion
 - c) Divine intervention
 - d) Spiritual enlightenment
6. Who is Dante's guide through Hell?
 - a) Beatrice
 - b) St. Peter
 - c) Virgil
 - d) St. Bernard
7. What river must souls cross to enter Hell?
 - a) Styx
 - b) Lethe
 - c) Acheron
 - d) Phlegethon
8. What does the leopard symbolize in the first canto of "Inferno"?
 - a) Lust
 - b) Pride
 - c) Fraud
 - d) Violence
9. What structure does Dante use to organize the sins punished in Hell?
 - a) A straight line
 - b) Concentric circles

- c) A pyramids
 - d) A spiral staircase
10. In the ninth circle of Hell, what is Satan trapped in?
- a) A sea of fire
 - b) A forest of ice
 - c) A lake of ice
 - d) A mountain of rock

2.10 ANSWER KEY (MCQs)

- 1. a) Minos
- 2. a) Cleopatra
- 3. b) Lying in a vile slush produced by icy rain
- 4. d) Treachery
- 5. b) Personal despair and confusion
- 6. c) Virgil
- 7. c) Acheron
- 8. c) Fraud
- 9. b) Concentric circles
- 10. c) A lake of ice

2.11 SUGGESTED READINGS

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**IN-DEPTH EXPLORATION OF THE NINE
CIRCLES OF HELL**

STRUCTURE

- 3.1 Introduction**
- 3.2 Objectives**
- 3.3 In-depth exploration of the nine circles of Hell**
- 3.4 Let Us Sum Up**
- 3.5 Multiple Choice Questions (MCQs)**
- 3.6 Answers Key (MCQs)**
- 3.7 Suggested Readings**

3.1 INTRODUCTION

In Dante's "Inferno," Hell is structured into nine concentric circles, each representing a progressively severe sin and its corresponding punishment. The journey begins in the First Circle, Limbo, for virtuous non-Christians, and descends through the circles of Lust, Gluttony, Greed, and Wrath, each housing souls tormented by their specific vices. The lower circles—Heresy, Violence, Fraud, and Treachery—are reserved for the most grievous sinners, culminating in the Ninth Circle, where traitors are eternally encased in ice under the watchful presence of Satan himself.

3.2 OBJECTIVES

This lesson acquaints the learners with the nine circles of Hell in considerable detail as it discusses Limbo,

3.3 IN-DEPTH EXPLORATION OF THE NINE CIRCLES OF HELL

Dante Alighieri's "Inferno" serves as a literary journey into the depths of Hell, forming the initial part of his epic poem, *The Divine Comedy*. Completed in the early 14th century, Dante's "Inferno" stands as a vivid and intricate exploration of the afterlife, unraveling a meticulous vision of Hell. Each of the nine circles of Hell represents a different sin and its corresponding punishment, as outlined by Dante's vision.

Limbo (Circle 1)

The first circle of Hell in Dante's *Inferno* is known as Limbo. It is a unique region that serves as the dwelling place for the souls of virtuous pagans, unbaptized infants, and those who, through no fault of their own, lived before the advent of Christianity. Limbo is not a place of active torment or suffering like the other circles. Instead, it is portrayed as a spacious, melancholic, and gloomy area. It is located on the edge of Hell, just before the river Acheron, which marks the entrance to the other circles.

Inhabitants

Virtuous Pagans: This category includes notable figures from classical antiquity and other virtuous individuals who lived before the time of Christ. Examples include philosophers like Plato and Aristotle, poets like Homer and Ovid, and historical figures like Julius Caesar. "And I, who was aware of tears in my eyes, said: 'Almighty and compassionate Love,/ That dost so much esteem, why dost/ Thou take From us the trace of Thy felicity?'" (Canto IV, Lines 103- 106).

Unbaptised Infants: Infants who died before receiving the sacrament of baptism are also placed in Limbo. Dante reflects the medieval Christian belief that baptism is necessary for salvation. "That these, when violated, did not know Sin, and if they had died before Baptism,

They did not worship God aright—that far Is more than human reason can discern." (Canto IV, Lines 37-40)? The key theme in Limbo is the absence of hope. Despite their virtuous lives, these souls are deprived of the ultimate

bliss of God's presence due to their pre-Christian existence. Dante encounters several renowned classical figures in Limbo. Dante engages in conversations with several classical figures, including Homer, Horace, Ovid, and others. These discussions highlight the intellectual richness of Limbo but also emphasize the futility of their wisdom without the grace of Christ. Dante describes Limbo as having a castle surrounded by seven high walls. These walls symbolize the seven virtues and the limitation of these souls' salvation due to their lack of Christian faith. The castle is not a place of imprisonment but serves as a residence for the souls, emphasizing their separation from the higher realms of Heaven. Limbo, being the least severe of the circles, introduces Dante to the concept that not all souls in Hell are wicked sinners deserving of punishment. Instead, it emphasizes the complexity of divine justice and introduces the idea that salvation is contingent upon faith in Christ. This portrayal reflects Dante's theological and moral worldview within the context of medieval Christianity.

“Within there are the mournful souls of those Who lived without infamy or praise. They are mixed with that caitiff choir of angels Who were not rebels, nor were faithful to God, But stood apart; the heavens, that their beauty might not be less, have cast them out, nor will deep Hell receive them— Even the wicked cannot glory in them.” (Canto IV, Lines 34-39)

Lust (Circle 2)

The second circle of Hell in Dante's *Inferno* is dedicated to the sin of lust. This circle is depicted as a place where souls are punished for their excessive and disordered passion for sensual pleasure. The second circle is a vast, windy storm that symbolizes the turbulent nature of lust. The souls within this circle are constantly blown about by violent winds, representing the lack of control and restlessness associated with their earthly desires. Minos, a mythical creature with a coiled tail, serves as the judge who assigns souls to their respective circles in Hell. In the second circle, Minos judges the severity of each soul's lustful behavior and wraps

his tail around himself a specific number of times to determine their punishment. The second circle is inhabited by those who, in life, prioritized their carnal desires over reason and moral restraint.

“Here sighs, with lamentations and loud moans, Resounded through the air pierced by no star, That e’en I wept at entering. Various tongues, Horrible languages, outcries of woe, Accents of anger, voices deep and hoarse, With hands together smote that swell’d the sounds, Made up a tumult, that forever whirls Round through that air with solid darkness stain’d, Like to the sand that in the whirlwind flies.” (Canto V, Lines 25-33)

Dante encounters several historical and mythological figures in this circle, including Cleopatra, Helen of Troy, and Paris. These individuals are condemned for their roles in passionate and destructive love affairs. One of the notable episodes in the second circle involves Dante’s encounter with Francesca da Rimini and Paolo Malatesta, who were illicit lovers in life. Francesca recounts their tragic love story, “Love, which in gentlest hearts will soonest bloom, Seized my lover with passion fierce and strong, That to all others he was bombe as stone.” (Canto V, Lines 100-102) and Dante, moved by pity, faints upon hearing it. Francesca and Paolo are trapped in the whirlwind of the second circle, a symbolic representation of the stormy nature of their illicit love.

Gluttony (Circle 3)

The third circle of Hell in Dante’s *Inferno* is dedicated to the sin of gluttony. In this circle, souls are punished for their excessive and indulgent consumption of food and drink during their earthly lives. Dante vividly describes the torment suffered by the gluttonous, as well as the nature of their sin.

“And more, the rain eternal, maledict, Heavy, and cold, and impregnate with rot. The great storm, everlasting hurricane Of darkness, like a hellish tidal wave, Downpours upon the spirits all unceasingly.” (Canto VI, Lines 7-11).

The third circle is characterized by an eternal, foul-smelling rainstorm, producing a cold slush that torments the gluttonous souls. The rain symbolizes the relentless hunger and cravings that plagued these individuals in life. "Uprose the wretch, as if hell's gory scourge I had thrust through his pale and shaggy pelt." (Canto VI, Lines 13-14). Cerberus, the three-headed dog from Greek mythology, guards the third circle. Dante subdues Cerberus to gain access, emphasizing the poet's authority in this allegorical journey. The gluttonous souls are depicted as lying in the slush, face upward, completely immersed in the muck. They are described as being disfigured and monstrous due to their excessive consumption. Dante encounters various historical and mythological figures in this circle, such as Ciaccio, who predicts political events in Florence. Dante encounters Ciaccio, a Florentine, who predicts future political events in Florence. Ciaccio's fate in the third circle serves as a commentary on the consequences of gluttony within the context of Dante's political and social concerns. The incessant, foul rain in the third circle represents the excesses of the gluttonous in their earthly lives. It reflects the moral degradation and decay caused by their insatiable appetites. The third circle serves as a warning against the dangers of overindulgence and the consequences of living a life driven by excessive desires. Dante's use of vivid imagery and symbolism in this circle contributes to the overall moral and theological message of "Inferno."

Greed (Circle 4)

The fourth circle of Hell in Dante's *Inferno* is dedicated to the sin of greed or avarice. In this circle, souls are punished for their excessive and selfish pursuit of material wealth and possessions during their earthly lives. The fourth circle is a large, flat wasteland that is divided into two parts by the River Styx. The souls of the avaricious and the prodigal are condemned to roll heavy weights back and forth in opposite directions. The wasteland is devoid of any natural beauty, symbolizing the spiritual desolation resulting from the sin of greed.

“Plutus, the great enemy, Was standing there, speaking in semblance human: ‘Papae Satàn, papae Satàn, aleppe!’ (Canto VII, Lines 1-3). Plutus, a pagan deity associated with wealth, serves as the guardian of the fourth circle. However, his role is limited to symbolic representation, and he does not actively participate in the punishment of the souls. The avaricious and prodigal souls are described as being locked in a perpetual clash, pushing enormous weights against each other. Dante encounters various historical and mythological figures in this circle, including Midas, the legendary king who wished for everything he touched to turn to gold. Dante sees a group of souls who were once clergy members, and among them, he encounters Pope Adrian V. These souls express their regret for the corrupt practices within the Church. Dante criticizes the corruption of the Church, and its leaders, suggesting that their greed and avarice have led to spiritual decay, “But fix thine eyes Intently through the air, and thou shalt see A multitude before us seated.” (Canto VII, Lines 91-93)

The River Styx, dividing the fourth circle, symbolizes the barrier between the avaricious and prodigal. It reflects the chaotic and divisive nature of greed that separates individuals into different categories of sin. The fourth circle in Dante’s *Inferno* provides a moral commentary on the consequences of excessive attachment to wealth and material possessions.

Through vivid imagery and symbolic elements, Dante conveys the eternal struggle and futility inherent in the sin of avarice.

Anger (Circle 5)

The fifth circle of Hell in Dante’s *Inferno* is dedicated to the sin of wrath or anger. In this circle, souls are punished for their uncontrolled and destructive rage during their earthly lives. The wrathful and the sullen are subjected to different forms of torment in this circle. “A marsh it makes, which has the name of Styx, This tristful brooklet, when it has descended Down to the foot of the malign gray shores.” (Canto VII, Lines 106-108). The fifth circle is a swamp-like marsh called the Styx, which is a river in the classical underworld. The marsh is muddy, filthy, and filled with a

noxious, black water. The wrathful are condemned to fight and attack each other on the surface, while the sullen are submerged beneath the water, suffocating in their suppressed anger. The fallen angels, the guardians of the Styx, are responsible for overseeing the punishments in the fifth circle. These angels were cast out of Heaven during Lucifer's rebellion and are now tasked with maintaining order in Hell. Dante encounters Filippo Argenti, a political enemy from Florence. Dante witnesses the wrathful attacking Argenti mercilessly, and he expresses satisfaction at seeing Argenti suffer. This encounter reflects Dante's personal feelings and political grievances, highlighting the connection between the sin of wrath and the vendettas that often characterized political and social life in Florence.

The Styx, a river in classical mythology, symbolizes the division and separation caused by anger. The wrathful on the surface and the sullen submerged beneath represent the different manifestations and degrees of wrath. The fifth circle in Dante's *Inferno* explores the consequences of unbridled anger and the various forms it can take. Through vivid imagery and symbolic elements, Dante conveys the moral and theological lessons associated with the sin of wrath.

Heresy (Circle 6)

The sixth circle of Hell in Dante's *Inferno* is dedicated to the sin of heresy. In this circle, souls are condemned for holding beliefs or doctrines contrary to the teachings of the Catholic Church during their earthly lives. The sixth circle is described as a fiery tomb, symbolizing the burning consequences of heretical beliefs. The flames within this circle are not physical but rather spiritual, representing the eternal consequences of deviating from orthodox religious doctrines. "A place there is below, not sad with clouds, Rather with the darkness gloomy of Hell, Where well all light is mute." (Canto IX, Lines 127-129). The sixth circle is depicted as a place enveloped in the darkness of Hell, emphasizing the spiritual obscurity associated with heresy. The fallen angels, who joined Lucifer in his rebellion against God, serve as the guardians of the sixth circle. Their presence

reinforces the gravity of heresy as a betrayal of divine truth: “Fell, as you know, from Heaven for his pride; No sadder fall for no longer toil and pain.” (Canto IX, Lines 22-24)

Dante encounters various historical and religious figures in the sixth circle, including Epicurus, a philosopher, and Pope Anastasius II. These souls are condemned for their perceived heretical beliefs. Dante converses with Farinata degli Uberti, a political and military leader from Florence. Despite Farinata being a heretic, Dante expresses a sense of respect for him and his accomplishments. This interaction highlights Dante’s nuanced exploration of the complexities of damnation and the shades of gray within the context of heresy. The flames in the sixth circle symbolize the spiritual torment and separation from divine truth that heretics experience. The intensity of the flames underscores the severity of deviating from orthodox beliefs.

The sixth circle of Hell in Dante’s *Inferno* serves as a warning against heretical beliefs and the consequences of deviating from established religious doctrines. Dante’s exploration of heresy contributes to the moral and theological lessons conveyed in “*Inferno*.”

Violence (Circle 7)

The seventh circle of Hell in Dante’s *Inferno* is dedicated to the sin of violence. This circle is further divided into three rounds, each dealing with a specific type of violent transgression. The seventh circle is characterized by a river of boiling blood and fiery landscapes, symbolizing the destructive nature of violence. Souls in this circle experience various torments corresponding to the nature of their violent actions. The Minotaur, a creature from Greek mythology, serves as the guardian of the seventh circle. His role is to ensure that the violent souls are appropriately punished. Virgil, Dante’s guide, tricks the Minotaur, allowing them to proceed. This is the first circle that has been divided into rings or smaller circles. The Outer, Middle, and Inner rings are the three that contain various kinds of violent offenders. First, there are individuals like Attila the Hun who used violence

against both people and property. Guarding this Outer Ring, centaurs fire arrows at its occupants. Suicides and other acts of violence against oneself make up the Middle Ring. The harpies devour these sinners forever.

The blasphemers, or those who use violence against God and the natural world, comprise the Inner Ring. Dante's own mentor, the sodomite Brunetto Latini, is one of these sinners. (Dante addresses him with kindness.) Those who have slandered not only God but even the gods, like Capaneus who slandered Zeus, are also present, along with the usurers.

Dante encounters Brunetto Latini, his former mentor, among the sodomites. This interaction adds a personal and emotional layer to the depiction of the various sins within the seventh circle. The seventh circle of Hell in Dante's *Inferno* serves as a powerful allegory for the consequences of violence, illustrating the varied manifestations of this sin and its repercussions in the afterlife.

Fraud (Circle 8)

The eighth circle of Hell in Dante's *Inferno* is dedicated to the sin of fraud. This circle is subdivided into ten bolgias, or ditches, each dealing with different forms of fraudulent behavior. Fraud, in Dante's view, is a more severe sin than violence, and the punishments become increasingly severe as one descends through the bolgias. The eighth circle is a vast, funnel-shaped pit that descends deeper into the earth. The region is divided into ten concentric trenches, or bolgias, separated by steep ridges. Each bolgia contains sinners who committed various forms of fraud. There are several categories of people who commit fraud, including flatterers, panderers, seducers, simoniacs (those who sell church favors), sorcerers, astrologers, and false prophets, barrators (corrupt politicians), hypocrites, thieves, false counselors and advisers, schismatics (those who split off religions to form new ones), and alchemists/counterfeiters, perjurers, impersonators, and other such roles. Different demons guard each bolgia, and its denizens are subjected to varying penalties. For example, the simoniacs are made to stand head-first in stone bowls and endure fires burning beneath their feet. The

Malebranche, a group of demons led by Malacoda, serve as the guardians of the eighth circle. They patrol the various bolgias, ensuring that the damned souls are properly tormented.

Each bolgia in the eighth circle serves as a vivid depiction of the consequences of specific fraudulent actions, illustrating Dante's moral and theological commentary on the nature of deceit and betrayal. The eighth circle of Hell in Dante's *Inferno* serves as a comprehensive allegory for the various forms of fraud, emphasizing the severity of deceiving others and perverting truth.

Treachery (Circle 9)

The ninth circle of Hell in Dante's *Inferno* is dedicated to the sin of treachery. It is considered the deepest and most severe section of Hell, where souls are punished for betraying the bonds of trust and committing acts of ultimate betrayal. The ninth circle is further divided into four rounds, each dealing with a specific type of treacherous act. The ninth circle is a frozen lake named Cocytus, representing the cold and lifeless nature of treachery. The frozen lake is divided into four rounds, and the severity of the punishment increases with each round.

Like the previous two circles, there are four subdivisions in this one as well. Caina, named after the historical Cain, is the first; he killed his brother. This round is reserved for family traitors. The second is Antenora, named after the Greek betrayer Antenor of Troy, and is reserved for traitors to politics or nationalism. The third division is Ptolemy, after the son of Abubus, who is credited with killing Simon Maccabaeus and his sons after inviting them to supper at Ptolomaea. This round is for hosts who betray their visitors; they face heavier penalties due to the notion that receiving guests entails entering into a relationship voluntarily, and it is more heinous to violate a connection that was chosen rather than one that was born. Judecca is the fourth division, following the betrayal of Christ by Judas Iscariot and therefore, traitors to their lords, benefactors, or masters are found here.

Within the ninth circle, Dante encounters various historical and mythological figures who are condemned for their treacherous acts. These include betrayers from classical mythology, as well as individuals from Dante's own time and political context. At the very center of the ninth circle, Dante encounters Satan, who is depicted as a monstrous figure with three faces. Each face chews on one of the three greatest traitors: Judas Iscariot, Cassius, and Brutus. Satan's wings create the icy wind that keeps Cocytus frozen.

The ninth circle of Hell in Dante's *Inferno* serves as a powerful representation of the ultimate betrayal and the severe consequences of treachery. The frozen landscape and the monstrous figure of Satan underscore the gravity of these acts in Dante's moral and theological vision.

3.4 LET US SUM UP

The structure of Purgatory in Dante's "*Purgatorio*" is depicted as a mountain with seven terraces, each representing one of the seven deadly sins: pride, envy, wrath, sloth, avarice, gluttony, and lust. Souls undergo purification on these terraces to atone for their sins before they can ascend to Heaven. At the base of the mountain lies Ante-Purgatory, where souls who delayed repentance remain for a time. The climb up the mountain symbolizes the arduous and transformative process of repentance, as souls gradually cleanse themselves of their earthly vices through suffering and reflection. This journey reflects the theme of spiritual growth and the hope of redemption, contrasting with the irreversible punishments of Hell.

3.5 MULTIPLE CHOICE QUESTIONS (MCQs)

1. In which circle of Hell does Dante place virtuous non-Christians and unbaptized infants?
 - a) First Circle (Limbo)
 - b) Second Circle (Lust)
 - c) Third Circle (Gluttony)
 - d) Fourth Circle (Greed)

2. Which circle of Hell is reserved for the sin of lust?
 - a) First Circle
 - b) Second Circle
 - c) Third Circle
 - d) Fourth Circle
3. What sin is punished in the Third Circle of Hell?
 - a) Gluttony
 - b) Greed
 - c) Wrath
 - d) Heresy
4. The Fourth Circle of Hell punishes souls for which sin?
 - a) Lust
 - b) Wrath
 - c) Greed
 - d) Gluttony
5. Which circle of Hell is designated for the wrathful and the sullen?
 - a) Second Circle
 - b) Third Circle
 - c) Fourth Circle
 - d) Fifth Circle
6. Heretics are found in which circle of Hell?
 - a) Fifth Circle
 - b) Sixth Circle
 - c) Seventh Circle
 - d) Eighth Circle

7. Which circle of Hell contains the violent against others, self, and God?
 - a) Fifth Circle
 - b) Sixth Circle
 - c.) Seventh Circle
 - d) Eighth Circle
8. Fraudulent sinners are punished in which circle of Hell?
 - a) Sixth Circle
 - b) Seventh Circle
 - c) Eighth Circle
 - d) Ninth Circle
9. The Ninth Circle of Hell is reserved for which type of sin?
 - a) Fraud
 - b) Violence
 - c) Heresy
 - d) Treachery
10. In the Ninth Circle of Hell, traitors are encased in what?
 - a) Fire
 - b) Ice
 - c) Thorns
 - d) Darkness

3.6 ANSWER KEY (MCQs)

1. a) First Circle (Limbo)
2. b) Second Circle (Lust)
3. a) Gluttony
4. c) Greed

5. d) Fifth Circle
6. b) Sixth Circle
7. c) Seventh Circle
8. c) Eighth Circle
9. d) Treachery
10. b) Ice

3.7 SUGGESTED READINGS

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**EXAMINATION OF THE PUNISHMENTS
AND THEIR SYMBOLIC REPRESENTATIONS IN
DIFFERENT CIRCLES**

STRUCTURE

- 4.1 Introduction**
- 4.2 Objectives**
- 4.3 Punishments and their symbolic representations in different circles**
- 4.4 Let Us Sum Up**
- 4.5 Multiple Choice Questions (MCQs)**
- 4.6 Answers Key (MCQs)**
- 4.7 Suggested Readings**

4.1 INTRODUCTION

In Dante's "Purgatorio," the second part of his epic poem "The Divine Comedy," souls undergo various punishments that are deeply symbolic of the sins they committed in life. Each terrace of Mount Purgatory is dedicated to one of the seven deadly sins—Pride, Envy, Wrath, Sloth, Avarice, Gluttony, and Lust. The punishments are crafted to reflect and correct the nature of the sin: the prideful are weighed down by heavy stones to humble them, the envious have their eyes sewn shut to prevent them from seeing and coveting others' fortunes, and the wrathful are enveloped in thick smoke to symbolize the blinding nature of their anger. These purgatorial punishments are not

only corrective but also purifying, helping souls to repent and prepare for entry into Heaven.

4.2 OBJECTIVES

The significance of studying these punishments and their symbolic representations lies in the moral and spiritual lessons they impart. Through this allegorical journey, students can explore themes of sin, repentance, and redemption, gaining insights into medieval Christian beliefs about morality and the afterlife. This lesson encourages self-reflection and an understanding of how personal vices can be overcome through self-awareness and spiritual growth. By analyzing the intricate symbolism in Dante's work, students can appreciate the profound connection between literary art and moral philosophy, fostering a deeper comprehension of the human condition and the path to virtue.

4.3 PUNISHMENTS AND THEIR SYMBOLIC REPRESENTATIONS IN DIFFERENT CIRCLES

In the epic poem, the protagonist Dante, travels through nine circles of hell along with his "master" Virgil. This journey reveals all the depths of hell. When the two of them approach the first circle of hell Dante is afraid and passes out in fear (as he will continue to do throughout the story) because on the gate of hell it states, "abandon all hope, you who enter here" and this was too terrifying for him. In Dante Alighieri's *Inferno*, punishments are often presented in the form of symbolic retribution. Each circle represents a specific sin and is accompanied by punishments that symbolically reflect the nature of those sins. Let's delve into the punishments and symbolic representations in several circles of Dante's *Inferno*:

1. First Circle (Limbo):

Punishment: In Limbo, souls endure perpetual sorrow and yearning rather than active penalties. Their exclusion from God's presence stems from being unbaptised or predating the advent of Christianity.

Symbolism: Limbo epitomizes the destiny of virtuous pagans and unbaptized individuals who, though morally commendable, lacked Christian faith. The absence of active punishment underscores Dante's acknowledgment of their intrinsic goodness.

2. Second Circle (Lust):

Punishment: In this circle, souls are ceaselessly swept in a violent storm, symbolizing the unbridled nature of their desires.

Symbolism: The punishment mirrors the idea that, just as these souls were carried away by passions in life, they are now perpetually swept away by the winds of Hell.

3. Third Circle (Gluttony):

Punishment: Gluttons lie in a repugnant slush of icy rain and snow, embodying their indulgence in excessive consumption.

Symbolism: The vile slush signifies the repulsiveness of their excesses, while the cold surroundings depict the insatiable hunger that defined their lives.

4. Fourth Circle (Greed):

Punishment: Divided into hoarders and squanderers, souls push large weights in opposite directions, forever colliding.

Symbolism: The perpetual clash of greedy souls and the weights symbolizes the disorderly pursuit of wealth and the repercussions of their actions.

5. Fifth Circle (Wrath and Sloth):

Punishment: The wrathful engage in violent conflict on the Styx's surface, while the slothful remain submerged, bereft of God's grace.

Symbolism: The aggression of the wrathful and the inertia of the slothful reflect the destructive nature of these sins and their impediment to spiritual growth.

6. Sixth Circle (Heresy):

Punishment: Heretics are confined in flaming tombs, epitomizing the eternal torment for rejecting orthodox Christian beliefs.

Symbolism: Fiery tombs symbolize spiritual burning and separation from God due to deviation from the true faith.

7. Seventh Circle (Violence):

Punishment: Categorized into outer rings for murderers, warmongers, middle for suicides, and inner for blasphemers and sodomites, each ring entails specific torment.

Symbolism: Diverse punishments underscore various forms and degrees of violence, such as suicides transformed into thorny trees, representing self-mutilation.

8. Eighth Circle (Fraud):

Punishment: With ten bolgias, each for a specific fraud type (e.g., flatterers, thieves, corrupt politicians), the complex structure mirrors the diversity of fraudulent activities.

Symbolism: The intricate layout reflects the multifaceted nature of fraud, with tailored punishments within each bolgia aligning with the committed crime.

9. Ninth Circle (Treachery):

Punishment: Segmented into four rounds, traitors are encased in a frozen lake. Severity escalates from simple betrayal to the ultimate betrayal of kin.

Symbolism: The frozen lake signifies the cold-heartedness of treachery, and descending to the lowest circle underscores the gravity of betraying those closest.

Dante's "Inferno" not only vividly portrays Hell but also serves as a moral and allegorical journey. The punishments and symbolic representations

function as a didactic tool, illustrating the repercussions of diverse sins and emphasizing the significance of moral and spiritual integrity. Punishments in each circle align with the concept of *contrapasso*, where the nature of the torment corresponds symbolically to the sin committed. Each circle's landscape and elements (rivers, winds, icy depths) are rich in symbolism, representing the nature of the sins and their consequences. Dante's *Inferno* offers a profound exploration of morality, justice, and human nature through its vivid depictions of sin and its corresponding punishments. The symbolic representations in each circle contribute to the allegorical richness of this classic work.

4.4 LET US SUM UP

In Dante's "*Purgatorio*," souls undergo punishments on different terraces of Mount Purgatory, each reflecting the seven deadly sins. The punishments are symbolic and corrective, such as the prideful being weighed down by stones and the envious having their eyes sewn shut. Studying these symbolic punishments reveals medieval Christian views on sin, repentance, and redemption, offering insights into moral philosophy and encouraging self-reflection on personal vices and spiritual growth.

4.5 MULTIPLE CHOICE QUESTIONS (MCQs)

1. What is the primary punishment for the prideful in Purgatory?
 - a) They are weighted down by heavy stones.
 - b) They are whipped by demons.
 - c) They are immersed in boiling blood.
 - d) They are trapped in ice.
2. What symbolic act do the envious souls perform as their punishment?
 - a) Their eyes are sewn shut with iron wire.
 - b) They carry boulders on their backs.
 - c) They walk in darkness.
 - d) They are struck blind.

3. In Purgatory, how are the wrathful punished?
 - a) They are blinded by thick smoke.
 - b) They are lashed by wind.
 - c) They are submerged in boiling water.
 - d) They are bitten by snakes.
4. What is the symbolic punishment for the slothful?
 - a) They run continuously without rest.
 - b) They are paralyzed.
 - c) They are chained to the ground.
 - d) They are submerged in mud.
5. How are the avaricious and prodigal souls punished in Purgatory?
 - a) They lie face down on the ground, unable to move.
 - b) They are boiled in molten gold.
 - c) They are encased in ice.
 - d) They push heavy weights with their chests.
6. What is the punishment for the gluttonous in Purgatory?
 - a) They are forced to starve while in sight of abundant food.
 - b) They are surrounded by sumptuous banquets they cannot touch.
 - c) They are submerged in freezing water.
 - d) They are attacked by dogs.
7. How are the lustful punished in Purgatory?
 - a) They are purified by fire.
 - b) They are whipped by winds.
 - c) They are hung by their feet.
 - d) They are forced to walk on hot coals.

8. What does the heavy burden of the stones carried by the prideful symbolize?
- a) The weight of their sins.
 - b) The weight of their pride.
 - c) The weight of their guilt.
 - d) The weight of their earthly attachments.
9. Why are the eyes of the envious souls sewn shut?
- a) To symbolize their blindness to others' good fortune.
 - b) To prevent them from seeing beauty.
 - c) To symbolize their hatred.
 - d) To keep them from finding peace.
10. What is the significance of the thick smoke that blinds the wrathful?
- a) It represents the blinding effect of anger.
 - b) It symbolizes their dark souls.
 - c) It indicates the obscurity of their thoughts.
 - d) It signifies their loss of vision in life.

4.6 ANSWER KEY (MCQs)

- 1 a) They are weighted down by heavy stones.
- 2 a) Their eyes are sewn shut with iron wire.
- 3 a) They are blinded by thick smoke.
- 4 a) They run continuously without rest.
- 5 a) They lie face down on the ground, unable to move.
- 6 a) They are forced to starve while in sight of abundant food.
- 7 a) They are purified by fire.
- 8 b) The weight of their pride.

- 9 a) To symbolize their blindness to others' good fortune.
- 10 a) It represents the blinding effect of anger.

4.7 SUGGESTED READINGS

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**DANTE’S INFERNO IN COMPARISON TO
DIFFERENT VERSIONS OF HELL IN GREEK
MYTHOLOGY**

STRUCTURE

- 5.1 Introduction**
- 5.2 Objectives**
- 5.3 Dante’s Inferno in comparison to different versions of Hell in Greek mythology**
- 5.4 Let Us Sum Up**
- 5.5 Long Answer Type Questions**
- 5.6 Suggested Readings**
- 5.1 INTRODUCTION**

Dante’s “Inferno,” the first part of his epic poem “The Divine Comedy,” offers a vivid and imaginative depiction of Hell. In contrast to other versions of Hell found in various religious and cultural traditions, Dante’s Hell is meticulously structured into nine concentric circles, each designed to punish different types of sin. This lesson aims to explore the unique elements of Dante’s vision, compare it to other interpretations of Hell from literature, mythology, and theology, and examine how these diverse portrayals reflect their respective societies’ views on morality, justice, and the afterlife.

5.2 OBJECTIVES

Through this comparative analysis, students will gain a deeper

understanding of the cultural and philosophical underpinnings of these vivid representations of eternal damnation.

5.3 DANTE'S INFERNO IN COMPARISON TO DIFFERENT VERSIONS OF HELL IN GREEK MYTHOLOGY

One of the three regions that comprise the cosmos, the Greek underworld, or Hades, is a unique realm in Greek mythology where people go after they die. Greek mythology originated the concept of an afterlife, which holds that a person's essence (psyche) is taken from their body upon death and sent to the underworld. The underworld itself is portrayed as being at the edge of the earth, either connected to the outside bounds of the ocean (i.e., Oceanus, another god), or beneath the earth. It is frequently called Hades, after its patron god, but is also known by a number of metonyms. There is a clear contrast between the 'normality' of the land of the living, where the sun shines, and the splendor of Mount Olympus, the home of the gods, which is often connected with darkness and a lack of sunshine. As an invisible realm, the underworld is also understood to refer to a perpetual state of darkness, but it may also have some etymological connection to Hades, the 'unseen place'. There are very few heroic exceptions to the rule that the underworld is only for the dead. These include Heracles, Theseus, Orpheus, possibly even Odysseus, and Aeneas in later Roman portrayals.

Hell in Norse mythology

The most common name for the underworld, where a large number of the deceased reside, is Hel. Hel is the name of the terrifying goddess that rules over it. It is also sometimes called "Helheim," "The Realm of Hel," and other similar terms. Similar to actual cemeteries, Hel was believed to be subterranean. It is also located in the north, which is described in some accounts as being chilly and gloomy like a grave. Sometimes it is stated that a dog, like the Greek mythological Cerberus, guards the entrance. In addition, the descriptions of the underworld in the sources are generally pleasant or neutral, even though they don't occur frequently. On the opposite side of

death, it is sometimes depicted as a country of astonishingly abundant vitality, where the deceased continue to exist in some way. In Hel, the dead pass their time practicing the same activities that men and women did during the Viking Age: eating, drinking, fighting, sleeping, and so on. It was more of a continuation of life somewhere else than a realm of endless happiness or agony. The route one must take to get to Hel is described in unusually detailed detail in the Old Norse literature. It even has the name Helvegr, which means “The Road/Way to Hel,” and is mentioned frequently in Old Norse literature. The course stories seem to recount Norse shaman travels, and may even serve as models for them, given how closely they align with the narratives of other circumpolar peoples’ traditional shamanic voyages. We find accounts of such trips to Hel made by gods or mortals to retrieve a deceased person’s spirit or to learn from the dead throughout the Old Norse literature.

Hell in Judaism

The elders claim that only truly virtuous souls get straight to the Garden of Eden. The common person goes to a location known as Gehinnom, which is a place of punishment and/or purification. The name derives from a valley (Gei Hinnom) immediately south of Jerusalem, which the Canaanite pagan nations formerly utilized for child sacrifice. Gehinnom is seen by some as a region of fire and brimstone, agony and punishment. Less brutally, others see it as a location where a person examines their life’s choices and expresses regret for previous transgressions. Usually, the soul’s sentence in Gehinnom is confined to a purging term of 12 months, after which it is transferred to Olam Ha-Ba. The annual mourning cycle and the reciting of the Kaddish, the memorial prayer for the deceased, both represent this 12-month restriction. At the end of this year, only the truly evil are excluded from the Garden of Eden. What happens to these souls after their first purgatory period ends varies throughout sources.

While some believe in eternal damnation, others assert that the wicked are completely destroyed and vanish from the face of the earth.

Hell in Buddhism

The Buddhist concept of Naraka is commonly translated as “hell” or “purgatory” in English. The Chinese mythological inferno Diyu is closely linked to the Buddhist Narakas. A Naraka is different from one Christian idea of hell in two ways: first, beings are not sent to a Naraka as a result of a heavenly judgment or punishment; and second, although a being’s stay in a Naraka is typically unbelievably lengthy, it is not eternal. A person’s karma, or cumulative acts, determine their birth into a Naraka, where they remain for a limited amount of time until their karma has fully materialized. It will reappear in one of the higher worlds due to unripened karma once its current karma has been expended. Narakas are conceptualized physically as a sequence of abysmal levels that reach into the soil beneath the surface of the typical human world. There are multiple methods for listing these Narakas and explaining their suffering. The primary source describing the most often used plan, which consists of eight Cold Narakas and eight Hot Narakas, is the *Abhidharma-kosa* (Treasure House of Higher Knowledge). The realm is further divided into two broad categories, Cold Naraka and Hot Narka, both consisting of different punishments for the various sins. Every Narakas typically has a lifespan that is eight times longer than the one before it. There are five hundred or perhaps hundreds of thousands of distinct Narakas, according to some accounts. The Pretas and Naraka residents suffer from similar pains, and it is easy to mix up the two groups of beings. The most basic difference is that although the Pretas have unrestricted movement, Naraka’s beings are restricted to their underground realm. Additionally, there are two distinct hells known as Lokantarikas and Pratyeka Narakas (Pali: *Pacceka-niraya*).

Hell in Islam

According to Islam, Jahannam is the location where sinners and disbelievers go to suffer in the hereafter. This idea has played a significant role in Muslim belief and is an essential component of Islamic theology. It’s commonly referred to by its formal name, Jahannam. Nonetheless, “Jahannam”

also refers to the highest level of Hell in particular. The significance of Hell in Islamic theology stems from its central role in the Day of Judgment, one of the six articles of faith (believe in God, angels, books, prophets, the Day of Resurrection, and decree) “by which the Muslim faith is traditionally defined.” According to orthodox Islam, a person’s punishment and suffering in Hell are physical, psychological, and spiritual, and they are contingent upon the sins they have committed. The Qur’anic descriptions of its terrible agony and terror frequently resemble the joys and delights of Paradise (jannah). Muslims generally hold the notion that Muslims are only temporarily imprisoned in hell; nonetheless, there is disagreement among Muslim scholars regarding whether Hell will remain eternally (as most believe) or whether God’s benevolence will eventually cause it to go. Muslims generally believe that Jahannam is not created after Judgment Day, but coexists alongside the temporal world, much as Jannah does. Different Islamic literary works give differing physical descriptions of hell. It is situated beneath Paradise and is incredibly large. It is supposed to have seven levels, each more difficult than the one above it, as well as a large pit that the As-Sirt bridge and the path of resurrection cross. It is claimed to contain valleys, rivers, mountains, and “even oceans” full of repulsive liquids. It is also described as having the ability to walk (with reins) and to ask inquiries, much like a sentient being.

Hell in Hinduism

Naraka, also known as Yamaloka, is the Hindu form of Hell, the place where sinners suffer after death. In addition, Yama, the god of Death, resides there. It is said to be beneath the earth and in the southern region of the cosmos. Many scriptures mention 28 hells, but the exact number and names of the hells, as well as the kinds of offenders assigned to each hell, differ from one scripture to the next. All beings are brought before Yama’s court by messengers known as Yamadutas when they die. There, Yama judges each being based on their virtues and vices and renders a verdict, sending the righteous to Svarga (heaven) and the wicked to one of the hells. Generally speaking, the stay in Svarga or Naraka is considered brief. Following the

completion of their punishment, souls are resurrected as either lower or higher entities depending on their merits. Yama is known as Dharma-raja, the Lord of Justice. Yama brings the righteous to Svarga to partake in paradise's pleasures. In addition, he judges the transgressions of the deceased and assigns them to suitable hells as retribution for their transgressions, depending on how serious and varied their transgressions were. When a person's allocated pleasure in Svarga or punishment in Naraka ends, they are not released from the cycle of birth, death, and reincarnation and must once again experience birth. Chitragupta, Yama's minister, assists him by keeping a log of all the good and bad deeds committed by all living things. Yama-dhutas are also tasked with carrying out the various hells' punishments of sinners.

Dante's version of Hell

Rooted in medieval Catholic theology, Dante's Hell is a manifestation of Christian beliefs in sin, divine justice, and redemption. The structure of Hell reflects the severity of sins, with each circle representing a specific transgression. Other religious traditions, such as Norse or Greek mythology, may lack the same emphasis on a structured afterlife based on moral judgments or sin in the Christian sense. Dante's vision of Hell is highly structured, with nine circles, each reserved for a particular sin. The punishments are meticulously crafted to symbolize the nature of the transgressions. In some traditions, like Norse mythology, the afterlife may not be as explicitly structured, and punishments may not be intricately tailored to fit specific sins. Greek mythology's Hades, for instance, is more of a general realm for the deceased.

"Inferno" serves as a didactic tool, emphasizing moral lessons and the consequences of one's actions. Dante's journey through Hell is a moral and allegorical exploration. In other belief systems, such as ancient Egyptian mythology, the afterlife journey may be more focused on rituals and judgment rather than explicit moral lessons. Dante incorporates classical elements from Greco-Roman mythology alongside Christian theology. Characters from

mythology, such as Virgil, guide Dante through Hell. In contrast, other belief systems, like Islam or Buddhism, may have a more exclusive theological framework without the blending of elements from different mythologies. The concept of Hell in “Inferno” includes a timeless perspective, where souls experience eternal suffering for their sins. In certain belief systems, such as Buddhism, the suffering in realms like Naraka is often considered temporary and subject to the law of karma, allowing for eventual rebirth or transcendence. Dante’s journey through Hell is not solely about punishment but also serves as a path toward redemption. The narrative includes elements of hope and the possibility of salvation. In some other traditions, the emphasis may be more on consequences rather than redemption, or the afterlife may be seen as a natural continuation rather than a stage for moral improvement.

Dante’s portrayal of Hell in “Inferno” is unique and deeply rooted in medieval Christian theology. However, there are other cultural and religious traditions that depict their own versions of the underworld or realms of punishment. While Dante’s Hell is intricately structured with specific punishments for each sin, other traditions offer diverse perspectives, ranging from neutral realms to places of temporary suffering. The variations reflect the unique theological and cultural frameworks of each belief system. Dante’s Hell stands out for its Christian theological foundation, detailed structure, and didactic emphasis on moral lessons and redemption. Other versions of hell in various cultural and religious traditions differ in their conceptualization, structure, and the purpose assigned to the afterlife.

5.4 LET US SUM UP

Dante’s “Inferno,” the opening section of his epic “The Divine Comedy,” provides a detailed and imaginative vision of Hell, structured into nine concentric circles that punish different sins. This lesson will compare Dante’s version with various other interpretations of Hell from literature, mythology, and theology, highlighting the unique aspects of each. By examining these diverse portrayals, students will explore how different cultures and religions envision punishment and justice in the afterlife, reflecting their

moral and philosophical beliefs. This comparative analysis will deepen students' understanding of the cultural and ethical dimensions of these depictions of eternal damnation.

5.5 LONG ANSWER TYPE QUESTIONS

1. What were the major influences on Dante Alighieri's literary works, particularly *The Divine Comedy*, and how did they shape his writing style and thematic concerns?
2. Dante's exile from Florence had a profound impact on his life and work. How did this experience influence his political views, and how are these views reflected in his writings?
3. Dante is often regarded as one of the greatest poets of the Italian language. What innovations did he bring to Italian literature through his use of vernacular language in works like *The Divine Comedy*?
4. Dante's portrayal of the afterlife in *The Divine Comedy* is deeply rooted in medieval Christian theology. How did Dante's understanding of theology inform his depiction of Heaven, Hell, and Purgatory?
5. What are the various themes in Dante's *The Divine Comedy*, and how do they guide the structure of the narrative?
6. Discuss the significance of Dante's journey through Hell, Purgatory, and Heaven. How does each realm contribute to the overall moral and spiritual message of the poem?
7. Who are some of the notable historical and mythological figures Dante encounters in his journey, and what symbolic roles do they play in the narrative?
8. Dante's *The Divine Comedy* is often seen as a political allegory. How does Dante use his poem to comment on the political landscape of his time?
9. Analyse Dante's relationship with Beatrice throughout *The Divine Comedy*. How does Beatrice serve as a guide and symbol of divine grace for Dante?

10. Discuss the role of Virgil as Dante's guide through Hell and Purgatory. What qualities does Virgil embody, and what significance does he hold for Dante's journey?
11. Explore Dante's depiction of sin and punishment in Hell. How does he differentiate between various sins, and what does each punishment reveal about Dante's moral framework?
12. Discuss the concept of divine justice as portrayed in Dante's vision of the afterlife. How does Dante reconcile the idea of God's mercy with the severity of divine punishment?

5.6 SUGGESTED READINGS

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**ANTON CHEKHOV'S
*THE CHERRY ORCHARD***

STRUCTURE

- 6.1 Introduction**
- 6.2 Objectives**
- 6.3 Plot**
- 6.4 Character List**
- 6.5 Themes**
- 6.6 Multiple Choice Questions (MCQs)**
- 6.7 Let Us Sum Up**
- 6.8 Examination Oriented Questions**
- 6.9 Answer Key (MCQs)**
- 6.10 Suggested Reading**

6.1 INTRODUCTION

The Cherry Orchard by Anton Chekhov begins with Madame Ranevsky returning to Russia after a five-year stint in Paris. The play is set in 1904, when Russian foreign policy was beginning to reflect a newfound alliance with France, which had been an adversary in previous years. Ranevsky's trip to Paris after following a lover there is, sub textually, a source of shame and scandal for her and her family, possibly reflecting Russian anxieties about a new era in its relationship with France. Revolutionary ideals such as the one Trophimof spouts throughout the play

were beginning to take hold in Russia, as well—the Russian Revolution of 1905, which saw workers striking and peasants revolting, was just on the horizon—and the seeds of unrest and disquiet that would sprout into the even more destabilizing Russian Revolution in 1917 had certainly been sown.

6.2 OBJECTIVES

The lesson introduces the learners with the plot of Anton Chekhov's *The Cherry Orchard*. Also the lesson introduces the learners with a list of characters present in the play along with Themes and Examination Oriented Questions. The lesson ends up with Multiple Choice Questions and Let Us Sum Up. Besides, the learners are also provided the Answers to MCQs to help them further.

6.3 PLOT

Act I

The play opens on a day in May in the nursery of Lyubov Andreyevna Ranevskaya's home in the provinces of Russia, at the start of the 20th century. Ranevskaya has been living in France since her young son drowned. After she had tried to kill herself, Ranevskaya's seventeen-year-old daughter Anya and Anya's governess Charlotta Ivanovna have brought her home to Russia, accompanied by Yasha, Ranevskaya's valet. Upon returning, they are met by Lopakhin, Dunyasha, Varya (who has overseen the estate in Ranevskaya's absence), Ranevskaya's brother Gayev, Boris Simeonov-Pishchik, Semyon Yepikhodov, and Firs.

Lopakhin has come to remind Ranevskaya and Gayev that their estate, including the cherry orchard, will be auctioned soon to pay off the family's debts. He proposes to save the estate by allowing part of it to be developed into summer cottages; however, this would require the destruction of the cherry orchard, which is nationally known for its size.

Ranevskaya is enjoying the view of the orchard as day breaks, when she is surprised by Peter Trofimov, a young student and former tutor of Ranevskaya's dead son, Grisha. Trofimov had insisted on seeing Ranevskaya upon her return, and she is grief-stricken at the reminder of this tragedy. After Ranevskaya retires for the evening, Anya confesses to Varya that their mother is heavily in debt. They all go to bed with the hope that the estate will be saved and the cherry orchard preserved. Trofimov stares after the departing Anya in adoration.

Act II

Act II takes place outdoors near the orchard. Yepikhodov and Yasha strive for the affection of Dunyasha by singing and playing guitar while Charlotta soliloquizes about her life. In Act I it was revealed that Yepikhodov proposed to Dunyasha at Easter; however, she has become infatuated with the more "cultured" Yasha. Charlotta leaves so that Dunyasha and Yasha might have some time alone, but that is interrupted when they hear their employer coming. Yasha shoos Dunyasha away to avoid being caught, and Ranevskaya, Gayev, and Lopakhin appear, once more discussing the uncertain fate of the cherry orchard. Soon Anya, Varya, and Trofimov arrive as well. Lopakhin teases Trofimov for being a perpetual student, and Trofimov espouses his philosophy of work and useful purpose, to the delight and humour of everyone around. During their conversations, a disheveled beggar passes by, Ranevskaya gives him all her money, despite his protestations of Varya. Shaken by the disturbance, the family departs for dinner. Anya stays behind to talk with Trofimov, who disapproves of Varya, reassuring Anya that they are 'above love'. To impress Trofimov, Anya vows to leave the past behind her and start a new life. The two depart for the river as Varya calls in the background.

Acts III

It is the end of August, and Ranevskaya's party is held. Musicians play as the family and guests drink and entertain themselves. It is

also the day of the auction. Gayev has received a paltry amount of money from his and Ranevskaya's aunt, and the family members, despite the general merriment around them, are anxious while they wait for news. Varya worries about paying the musicians and scolds their neighbor Pishchik for drinking, Dunyasha for dancing, and Yepikhodov for playing billiards. Charlotta performs magic tricks. Ranevskaya scolds Trofimov for his teasing of Varya, whom he refers to as "Madame Lopakhin". She then urges Varya to marry Lopakhin, but Varya demurs, reminding her that it is Lopakhin's duty to ask for her hand in marriage, not the other way around. She says that if she had money she would move as far away as possible. Alone with Ranevskaya, Trofimov insists that she finally face the fact that the house and orchard will be sold at auction. Ranevskaya shows him a telegram she has received and reveals that her former lover is ill and has begged her to return to Paris. She is seriously considering this, despite his cruel behaviour to her in the past. Trofimov is stunned at this; they argue about the nature of love and their respective experiences. Trofimov leaves, but falls down the stairs off-stage and is carried in by the others. Ranevskaya laughs and forgives him for his folly and the two reconcile. Anya enters with a rumour that the estate has been sold. Lopakhin arrives with Gayev, both of them exhausted from the trip and the day's events. Gayev is distant and goes to bed without saying a word of the outcome of the auction. When Ranevskaya asks who bought the estate, Lopakhin reveals that he is the purchaser, and intends to chop down the orchard. Ranevskaya, distraught, clings to Anya, who reassures her that the future will be better now.

Act IV

Several weeks later the family's belongings are being packed as the family prepares to leave the estate. Trofimov enters, and he and Lopakhin exchange opposing world views. Lopakhin does not propose

to Varya. Anya enters and reprimands Lopakhin for ordering his workers to begin chopping down the cherry orchard while the family is still there. Lopakhin apologises and rushes out to stop them for the time being, in the hopes that he will be somehow reconciled with the family. Charlotta enters, lost and in a daze, and insists that the family find her a new position. Ranevskaya bids her old life goodbye and leaves as the house is shut up forever. In the gloom, Firs wanders into the room and discovers that they have left without him and boarded him inside the abandoned house to die. He lies down and resigns himself to this fate. The sound of axes cutting down trees is heard off-stage.

6.4 CHARACTER LIST

Madame Lyubov Andreievna Ranevskaya – a middle-aged Russian woman, the owner of the estate and the cherry orchard. Ranevskaya is the linchpin around which the other characters revolve. A commanding and popular figure, she represents the pride of the old aristocracy, now fallen on hard times. She has faced tragedy many times in her life, or rather has tried to escape from it. Her first name, ‘Lyuba,’ means ‘love’ in Russian, and she seems to exemplify love with her generosity, kindness and physical beauty, and sexual nature; she is the only character in the play with a lover. Her confused feelings of love for her old home and sorrow at the scene of her son’s death give her an emotional depth that keeps her from devolving into a mere aristocratic grotesque. Most of her humor comes from her inability to understand financial or business matters.

Peter Trofimov – a student and Anya’s friend. Lopakhin refers to Trofimov as the ‘eternal student,’ for he has been in university most of his adult life. An impassioned left-wing political commentator, he represents the rising tide of reformist political opinion in Russia, which struggled to find its place within the authoritarian Czarist autocracy. A student at the local university, he knows Ranevsky from tutoring her son Grisha before he died.

Boris Borisovich Simeonov-Pishchik – A nobleman, and fellow landowner, who is, like Ranevsky, in financial difficulties. Pischik is characterized mainly by his boundless optimism—he is always certain he will find the money somehow to pay for the mortgages that are due—but also by his continual borrowing money from Ranevsky. Pischik is something of a caricature; his name, in Russian, means “squealer,” appropriate for someone who never stops talking. He is constantly discussing new business ventures that may save him and badgering Ranyevskaya for a loan. His character embodies the irony of the aristocracy’s position: despite his financial peril, he spends the play relaxing and socializing with the Gayevs.

Anya – Ranevsky’s biological daughter, Anya is seventeen years old. She seems to have lived a sheltered life. She greatly enjoys the company of Trofimov and his lofty idealism, and is quick to comfort her mother after the loss of her orchard. She journeys to Paris to rescue her mother from her desperate situation. She is a virtuous and strong young woman. She is close to Trofimov and listens to his revolutionary ideas, although she may or may not be taking them in. Anya and Trofimov become so close that Varya fears they may become romantically involved.

Varya – Varya is Ranevsky’s adopted daughter, who is twenty-four years old. Varya is the one who manages the estate and keeps everything in order. She is the rock that holds the family together. The reason why Ranevskaya adopted her is never made clear, although she is mentioned to have come from “simple people” (most likely serfs). Varya fantasizes about becoming a nun, though she lacks the financial means to do so. She adores her mother and sister and frets about money constantly. Her relationship with Lopakhin is a mysterious one; everyone in the play assumes that they are about to be married, but neither of them acts on it. She is in love with Lopakhin, but she doubts that he will ever propose to her. Varya is hard-working and responsible and has a similar work ethic to Lopakhin. She is also something of cry-baby, often in tears; but this may reflect her sense of powerlessness, as she is the one character in the play who may be most affected by the loss of the estate. She is the estate’s manager, so she will

lose her job if Ranevsky loses the estate, but, lacking money or a husband, she has no control over its fate or her own.

Leonid Andreieievitch Gayev – Gayev is Ranevsky's brother. One of the more obvious comic characters, Gayev is a talkative eccentric. His addiction to billiards is symbolic of the aristocracy's decadent life of leisure, which renders them impotent in the face of change. Gayev tries hard to save his family and estate, but ultimately, as an aristocrat, he either lacks the drive or doesn't understand the real-world mechanisms necessary to realize his goals. He has several intriguing verbal habits; he frequently describes tricky billiards shots at odd and inappropriate times. He also will launch into overly sentimental and rhetorical speeches before his niece Anya stops him, after which he always mutters 'I am silent' at least once. Gayev is a kind and concerned uncle and brother, but he behaves very differently around people not of his own social class. He is fifty-one years old, but as he notes, this is "difficult to believe", because he is in many ways an infant. He constantly pops sweets into his mouth, insults people (such as Lopakhin) with whom he disagrees, and has to be reminded to put on his jacket by Firs.

Yermolai Alexeievitch Lopakhin – a merchant and the son of peasants on Ranevsky's estate. He is middle-aged, but somewhat younger than Ranevsky. Lopakhin is by far the wealthiest character in the play, but comes from the lowest social class, as his grandparents were in fact owned by the Ranevsky family before freedom was granted to the serfs. This contrast defines his character: he enjoys living the high life, but at the same time is uncomfortably conscious of his low beginnings and obsession with business. Lopakhin is extremely self-conscious, especially in the presence of Ranevsky, perpetually complaining about his lack of education and refinement, which he attributes to his upbringing as a peasant on Ranevsky's estate. His memories of the brutality of a peasant child's life on the estate contrast with Ranevsky's idyllic memories as a child of the landowning class. He is often portrayed on stage as an unpleasant character because of his greedy tendencies and ultimate betrayal of the Gayev family, but there is nothing in the play to

suggest this: he works strenuously to help the Gayevs but to no avail. Lopakhin represents the new middle class in Russia, one of many threats to the old aristocratic way of doing things.

Charlotta Ivanovna – Anya’s governess. Charlotte traveled from town-to-town performing tricks such as “the dive of death” when she was young, before her Father and Mother both died. Charlotte is something of a clown, performing tricks for the amusement of the elite around her, such as Yasha, Ranevsky, and Yopakhin, while, at the same time, subtly mocking their pre-occupations. By far the most eccentric character, Charlotta is the only governess the Gayevs can afford and is a companion for Anya. She is a melancholy figure, raised by a German woman without any real knowledge of who her circus entertainer parents were. She performs card tricks and ventriloquism at the party in the third act and accepts the loss of her station when the family disbands with pragmatism.

Simon Yepikhodov – Yepikhodov is a clerk at the Ranevsky estate. He is a source of amusement for all the other workers and amusement for all the other workers, who refer to him as “Simple Simon”. He is unfortunate and clumsy in the extreme, earning him the insulting nickname “Twenty-Two Calamities” (the nickname varies between translations) mostly invoked by Yasha. He considers himself to be in love with Dunyasha, whom he has asked to marry him. Yepikhodov provides comic relief, with his self-conscious pose as the hopeless lover and romantic, often contemplating suicide.

Dunyasha – A maid on the Ranevsky estate. Like Lopakhin, she is another example of social mobility in Russia at the time. A peasant who is employed as the Gayev’s chambermaid, Dunyasha is an attention seeker, making big scenes and dressing as a lady to show herself off. She is in some respects representative of the aristocracy’s impotence, as a lowly chambermaid would not in the past have had the freedom to dress like a lady and flirt with the menservants. Although pursued romantically by Yepikhodov, she is in love with Yasha, attracted to the culture he has picked

up in Paris. She functions mainly as a foil to Yasha, her innocent naïveté and love for him emphasizing and making clear his cynicism and selfishness. She is also the object of Yephikodov's affections, a status about which she is very confused.

Firs – Ranevsky's eighty-seven-year-old manservant. An aging eccentric, Firs considers the emancipation of the Russian serfs a disaster and talks nostalgically of the old days when everybody admired their masters and owners, such as Gayev's parents and grandparents. He is possibly senile, and is constantly mumbling. He is the only surviving link to the estate's glorious past, and he comes to symbolize that past. His senility is a source of much of the play's poignancy, symbolizing the decay of the old order into muttering madness.

Yasha – Yasha is the young manservant who has been traveling with Ranevsky ever since she left for France. Yasha represents the new, disaffected Russian generation, who dislike the staid old ways and who will be the foot soldiers of the revolution. A rude, inconsiderate and predatory young man, Yasha, like Dunyasha and Charlotta, is the best the Gayevs can afford. He toys with the girlish affections of Dunyasha, the maid. He is always complaining about how uncivilized Russia is when compared to France, exploits Dunyasha's love for him for physical pleasure, and openly tells Firs that he is so old he should die. Most of the characters besides Ranevsky regard him as repulsive and obnoxious. He has a strong taste for acrid-smelling cigars.

A Stranger – a passer-by who encounters the Gayevs as they laze around on their estate during Act II. He is symbolic of the intrusion of new ideologies and social movements that infringed on the aristocracy's peace in Russia at the turn of the 20th century.

The Stationmaster and The Postmaster – Both officials attend the Gayevs' party in Act III. Although they both play minor roles (the Stationmaster attempts to recite a poem, and the Postmaster flirts with Dunyasha), they are mostly symbols of the depreciation of the aristocracy

in 1900s Russia – Firs comments that, whereas once they had barons and lords at the ball, now it’s the postman and the stationmaster, and even they come only to be polite.

Grisha – The son of Lyubov, drowned many years ago before her sojourn to Paris. She is reminded of his existence through the presence of Trofimov, who was his tutor.

Guests, servants, and others.

6.5 THEMES

The Struggle Over Memory

In *The Cherry Orchard*, memory is seen both as source of personal identity and as a burden preventing the attainment of happiness. Each character is involved in a struggle to remember, but more importantly in a struggle to forget, certain aspects of their past. Ranevsky wants to seek refuge in the past from the despair of her present life, she wants to remember the past and forget the present. But the estate itself contains awful memories of the death of her son, memories she is reminded of as soon as she arrives and sees Trofimov, her son’s tutor. For Lopakhin, memories are oppressive, for they are memories of a brutal, uncultured peasant upbringing. They conflict with his identity as a well-heeled businessman that he tries to cultivate with his fancy clothes and his allusions to Shakespeare, so they are a source of self-doubt and confusion; it is these memories that he wishes to forget. Trofimov is concerned more with Russia’s historical memory of its past, a past which he views as oppressive and needing an explicit renunciation if Russia is to move forward. He elucidates this view in a series of speeches at the end of Act Two. What Trofimov wishes Russia to forget are the beautiful and redeeming aspects of that past. Firs, finally, lives solely in memory—most of his speeches in the play relate to what life was like before the serfs were freed, telling of the recipe for making cherry jam, which now even he can’t remember. At the end of the play, he is literally forgotten by the other characters, symbolizing the “forgotten” era with which he is so strongly associated.

Modernity versus Old Russia

A recurrent theme throughout Russian literature of the nineteenth century is the clash between the values of modernity and the values of old Russia. Modernity is here meant to signify Western modernity, its rationalism, secularism and materialism. Russia, especially its nobility, had been adopting these values since the early eighteenth century, in the time of Peter the Great. But much of late nineteenth-century Russian literature was written in reaction to this change, and in praise of an idealized vision of Russia's history and folklore. Western values are often represented as false, pretentious, and spiritually and morally bankrupt. Russian culture by contrast—for example, in the character of Prince Myshkin in Fyodor Dostoyevsky's *The Idiot*, himself a representative of the old landowning nobility, or Tatyana in Alexander Pushkin's Eugene Onegin—is exalted as honest and morally pure.

The conflict between Gayev and Ranevsky on the one hand and Lopakhin and Trofimov on the other can be seen as emblematic of the disputes between the old feudal order and Westernization. The conflict is made most explicit in the speeches of Trofimov, who views Russia's historical legacy as an oppressive one, something to be abandoned instead of exalted, and proposes an ideology that is distinctly influenced by the Western ideas such as Marxism and Darwinism.

Nature

Nature, as represented by the orchard has significant value in *The Cherry Orchard*, both as something of inherent beauty and as a connection with the past. Ranevsky is overjoyed in the presence of the cherry orchard, and even Lopakhin, who destroys it, calls it the “most beautiful place on earth”. And though he doesn't save the orchard, he talks with joy about 3,000 acres of poppies he has planted and looks forward to a time when his cottage-owners will enjoy summer evenings on their verandahs, perhaps planting and beautifying their properties.

Nature is also seen as a source of both illusion and memory in this play. For example, Ranevsky's illusory sighting of her dead mother in Act One. In Nature, Gayev sees "eternity", a medium that joins together the past and present with its permanence. But the orchard is being destroyed, the idyllic countryside has telegraph poles running through it, and Ranevsky and Gayev's idyllic stroll through the countryside is interrupted by the intrusion of a drunkard. In fact, it is the very permanence ascribed to Nature that, through the play, is revealed to be an illusion.

The Union of Naturalism and Symbolism

The Cherry Orchard is on one level, a naturalistic play because it focuses on scientific and objective details. It thus is like realism, in that it attempts to portray life "as it really is". Of course, these details are selected, sketched and presented in a certain way, guided by the author's intent. It is not actually science we are dealing with here. But throughout his career, Chekhov frequently stated his goal as an artist to present situations as they actually were, and not to prescribe solutions. And this is revealed in the way Chekhov's selection and presentation of details. Whenever we feel a desire to overly sympathize with one character, whenever we feel a desire to enter the play, so to speak, and take up their side (and their perspective), Chekhov shows us the irony in it-for example, when Lopakhin, when Lopakhin gloats about how far he has come from his brutal peasant origins, he does it in a brutal manner, thus betraying those origins. Chekhov's irony takes us out of the play and put back in our seats. This is how he creates his "objectivity".

6.6 MULTIPLE CHOICE QUESTIONS (MCQs)

1. What happened to Mrs. Ranevsky's son Grisha?
 - a) He died of tuberculosis.
 - b) He drowned in a nearby river
 - c) He ran off to join the circus
 - d) He moved to Pittsburgh

2. Why would Trofimov bring back bad memories for Mrs. Ranevsky?
 - a) He was her son Grisha's former tutor
 - b) He was her ex-lover's former tutor
 - c) He killed Ranevsky's lover in a duel
 - d) He killed Ranevsky's husband in a duel
3. What is Varya's relation to Mrs. Ranevsky?
 - a) She is her niece by marriage
 - b) She is her step-daughter
 - c) She is her sister-in-law
 - d) She is her adopted daughter
4. What does Lopakhin suggest Ranevsky do with the cherry orchard?
 - a) Burn it down, and convert it to farmland
 - b) Sell it to Deriganov
 - c) Cut it down, and build cottages on the land
 - d) Find the secret recipe that Firs is always talking about, and become cherry-jam millionaires
5. While looking out at the Orchard through her window, Ranevsky believes she sees?
 - a) Her mother
 - b) A tramp
 - c) Her father
 - d) Boris Simeonov-Pischik
6. Ranevsky views the Orchard as a symbol of
 - a) Russia
 - b) Her childhood
 - c) Her brother
 - d) Her husband

7. Who does everyone expect Lopakhin to propose to?
 - a) Varya
 - b) Mrs. Ranevsky
 - c) Anya
 - d) Dashenka
8. Why does Dunyasha think Yasha is lucky?
 - a) Because she loves him
 - b) Because he loves her
 - c) Because he has traveled abroad
 - d) Because he has traveled with Mrs. Ranevsky
9. What, according to Trofimov, is the main problem with Russian intellectuals?
 - a) They read too many books
 - b) They are not "Russian" enough
 - c) They talk about ideas, but never act on the
 - d) They are all as ugly as he is
10. Who walks by, playing the guitar, just before the "sound of a breaking string" is heard for the first time?
 - a) Yasha
 - b) Charlotte
 - c) Gayev
 - d) Yephikodov
11. What is Yephikodov's nickname?
 - a) Simple Simon
 - b) Tom Thumb
 - c) The Idiot
 - d) Wilbur

12. When was the “sound of a snapping string” last heard, according to Firs?
- a) Just one year before
 - b) When he was a small child
 - c) Just before the serfs were freed
 - d) The day before
13. Charlotte’s many talents include:
- a) Fire-eating and juggling
 - b) Ventriloquism and sleight-of-hand
 - c) Ballet-dancing and sharp-shooting
 - d) Singing and dancing
14. What does Firs represent in the play?
- a) Hope
 - b) The past
 - c) Senility
 - d) The fear of death
15. Where does Varya plan to go after she leaves the estate?
- a) To her aunt’s
 - b) To Yaroslavl
 - c) To France
 - d) To the Ragulins’

6.7 LET US SUM UP

The lesson provides the learners detailed plot of the play *The Cherry Orchard* by Anton Chekhov. The learners are further helped by providing Examination Oriented Question along with Themes to enhance their knowledge. The learning ability of the readers is judged by providing Multiple Choice Questions along with Answer Key provided at the end of the lesson.

6.8 EXAMINATION ORIENTED QUESTIONS

1. What does the cherry orchard symbolize in the play *The Cherry Orchard* by Anton Chekhov?

Ans. The orchard is the massive, hulking presence at the play's center of gravity; everything else revolves around and is drawn towards it. It is gigantic. Lopakhin implies in Act One that the Lopakhin's estate spreads over 2,500 acres, and the cherry orchard is supposed to cover most of this. There were never any cherry orchards of nearly this size in Russia. And the fact that an orchard of this gargantuan size, which, by the estimate of Donald Rayfield, would produce more than four million pounds of cherries each crop, cannot economically sustain Ranevsky is an absurdity.

But it is absurd for a reason. After all, the orchard used to produce a crop every year, which was made into cherry jam. But, as Firs informs us, now the recipe has been lost. It is thus a relic of the past, an artifact, of no present use to anyone except as a memorial to or symbol of the time in which it was useful. And its unrealistic size further indicates that it is purely a symbol of that past. In a very real sense, the orchard does not exist in the present. It is something that is perceived by the various characters and reacted to in ways that indicate how these characters feel about what the orchard represents: which is some aspect of memory.

What 'memory' means for each character and what it represents varies. Each character sees-sometimes literally—a different aspect of the past, either personal or historical, in the orchard. Ranevsky, for example, perceives her dead mother walking through the orchard in Act One; for her, the orchard is a personal relic of her idyllic childhood. Trofimov, on the other hand, near the end of Act Two sees in the orchard the faces of the serfs who lived and died in slavery on Ranevsky's estate; for him, the orchard represents the memory of their suffering. For Lopakhin, the orchard is intimately tied to his personal memories of a brutal childhood, as well as presenting an obstacle to the prosperity of both himself and Ranevsky.

Though each character has their own perspective, there is a rough division between the old and the young, with the age cut-off being between Lopakhin and Ranevsky; the young tend to view the orchard in a negative light and the old view it more positively. This further reinforces the orchard's symbolic identification with the past. The one exception to this may be Varya. But this exception proves the rule, for though Varya often talks about the estate, she never mentions the orchard itself at all. For her, it is irrelevant, and the estate is what is important, for she is its manager, and its ownership is directly connected to her livelihood.

2. Critically analyze *The Cherry Orchard* by Anton Chekhov as a clash between old and new values and an example of absurd drama.

Ans. *The Cherry Orchard* is about a country in crisis, undergoing a dramatic shift between an old, traditional way of life and a whole new system. A year after the play premiered, there would be a failed Russian revolution, a sort of 'dry run' for the Bolshevik uprising in 1917 that would lead to the establishment of Communism in Russia.

The Cherry Orchard has been called the first great Expressionist play, because Chekhov sometimes uses exaggeration for symbolic effect: as Michael Pennington and Stephen Unwin point out in their analysis of the play in *A Pocket Guide to Ibsen, Chekhov and Strindberg*, the size of the cherry orchard is too great for such a place actually to exist.

But it represents the vast estates of old, aristocratic Russia, so it needs to be big for this point to be clear to us. Similarly, Trofimov's talk of revolutionary politics was deliberately exaggerated and made absurd, Pennington and Unwin tell us, so Chekhov could get such talk past the theatre censors; but the character is making a serious point, and many of his views would feed into the Russian Revolution thirteen years later.

Despite such moments of exaggeration, however, Chekhov approaches the topic of this clash between old and new values with sympathy and subtlety. Lopakhin seems genuinely to want to help his old friend and

one-time mother-figure to keep the cherry orchard, and is exasperated when she fails to heed his advice (though he still cheerily snaps up the orchard at the ensuing auction, outbidding Gaev's meagre sum).

And Ranevskaya herself, who could easily provoke ridicule for sentimentally clinging to her childhood home and living beyond her means in Paris, and for failing to ignore the practicalities of economy (the word, we should remember, literally comes from the ancient Greek meaning 'management of the house'), is someone who also invites our sympathy, not least because of the family tragedies that precipitated her flight to Paris in the first place.

By the same token, Ranevskaya, for all her attachment to the house and the cherry orchard, nevertheless leaves it at the end having forgotten Firs, her loyal servant, leaving him behind on his own. As Pennington and Unwin note, this is a comic moment, but it is comic because it foreshadows later twentieth-century plays by Pinter and Beckett, being almost proto-absurdist in its tone.

Other symbolic touches are easier to decipher: Gaev's obsession with miming billiards and describing tricky moves in the game is symptomatic of the sort of life he has led: unlike Lopahin and other (former) serfs, he has enjoyed a life of leisure and hasn't had to work hard for a living.

There is a sense in which, to him, life remains a game, a diversion, a series of moves where the outcome isn't especially important (as his casual approach to finding a solution to the family's financial trouble reveals).

But what makes *The Cherry Orchard* such a rich and enjoyable piece of drama is the faint hint of the absurd in such details, so that they simultaneously operate on a symbolically true, but also borderline farcical, level.

6.9 ANSWER KEY (MCQs)

- 1 b) He drowned in a nearby river

- 2 a) He was her son Grisha's former tutor
- 3 d) She is her adopted daughter
- 4 c) Cut it down, and build cottages on the land
- 5 a) Her mother
- 6 b) Her childhood
- 7 a) Varya
- 8 d) Because he has traveled abroad.
- 9 c) They talk about ideas, but never act on the
- 10 d) Yephikodov
- 11 a) Simple Simon
- 12 c) Just before the serfs were freed
- 13 b) Ventriloquism and sleight-of-hand
- 14 b) The past
- 15- d) To the Ragulin's

6.10 SUGGESTED READING

Full text of *The Cherry Orchard* (in Russian).

Project Gutenberg e-text, English translations of several Chekhov plays, including *The Cherry Orchard*.

A public domain version of the play (English translation).

The Cherry Orchard public domain audiobook at LibriVox.

ANTON CHEKHOV'S *THE CHERRY ORCHARD*

STRUCTURE

- 7.1 Introduction
- 7.2 Objectives
- 7.3 Author: Life and Works
- 7.4 Outline Summary
- 7.5 Multiple Choice Questions (MCQs)
- 7.6 Let Us Sum Up
- 7.7 Examination Oriented Questions
- 7.8 Answer Key (MCQs)
- 7.9 Suggested Reading

7.1 INTRODUCTION

The lesson introduces the learners with Anton Chekhov's *The Cherry Orchard*. The *Cherry Orchard*, drama in four acts written by Anton Chekhov as *Vishnyovy sad*. It was first performed and published in 1904 and is considered as Chekhov's final play. Though Chekhov insisted that the play was "a comedy, in places even a farce," playgoers and readers often find a touch of tragedy in the decline of the charming Ranevskaya family. It is recognized as one of the three or four outstanding plays by Chekhov, along with *The Seagull*, *Three Sisters*, and *Uncle Vanya*.

7.2 OBJECTIVES

The lesson provides a brief introduction to the biography of the writer. Further, the lesson provides an outline summary of the play along with Examination Oriented Questions, Multiple Choice Question and Let Us Sum Up to provide a brief conclusion.

7.3 AUTHOR : LIFE AND WORKS

Anton Pavlovich Chekhov (29 January 1860 – 15 July 1904) was a Russian playwright and short-story writer. His career as a playwright produced four classics, and his best short stories are held in high esteem by writers and critics. Along with Henrik Ibsen and August Strindberg, Chekhov is often referred to as one of the three seminal figures in the birth of early modernism in the theatre. Chekhov was a physician by profession: “Medicine is my lawful wife,” however, his love for literature still remained intact: “and literature is my mistress.”

Anton Chekhov was born into a Russian family on the feast day of St. Anthony the Great on 29 January 1860 in Taganrog, a port on the Sea of Azov – on Politseyskaya (Police) street, later renamed Chekhova street – in southern Russia. He was the third of six surviving children. His father, Pavel Yegorovich Chekhov, the son of a former serf and his wife, was from the village Olkhovatka (Voronezh Governorate) and ran a grocery store. He was a director of the parish choir, a devout Orthodox Christian, and a physically abusive father. Pavel Chekhov has been seen by some historians as the model for his son’s many portraits of hypocrisy. Chekhov’s paternal grandmother was Ukrainian, and according to Chekhov, the Ukrainian language was spoken in his household. Chekhov’s mother, Yevgeniya (Morozova), was an excellent storyteller who entertained the children with tales of her travels all over Russia with her cloth-merchant father. Anton Chekhov appreciates the contribution of his parents, especially his mother in making him a great writer: “Our talents we got from our father but our soul from our mother.”

Chekhov attended the Greek School in Taganrog. He sang along with his siblings at the Greek Orthodox monastery in Taganrog and in his father's choirs. In a letter of 1892, he used the word "suffering" to describe his childhood. In 1876, Chekhov's father was declared bankrupt after overextending his finances building a new house and having been cheated by a contractor named Mironov. To avoid debtor's prison he fled to Moscow, where his two eldest sons, Alexander and Nikolai, were attending university. The family lived in poverty in Moscow. Chekhov's mother was physically and emotionally broken by the experience. However, Chekhov decided to remain behind to sell the family's possessions and finish his education. He remained in Taganrog for three more years, boarding with a man by the name of Selivanov who, like Lopakhin in *The Cherry Orchard*, had bailed out the family for the price of their house. It was difficult for Chekhov to manage finances and to pay for his own education. Therefore, he started doing minor jobs like private tutoring, catching and selling goldfinches, and selling short sketches to the newspapers. He proved to be an ideal son who sent every ruble he could spare to his family in Moscow, along with humorous letters to cheer them up.

During this time, he voraciously read the works of Cervantes, Turgenev, Goncharov, and Schopenhauer, which helped him to write a full-length comic drama, *Fatherless*. It was, however, detested by his brother Alexander "an inexcusable though innocent fabrication." Chekhov also experienced a series of love affairs, one with the wife of a teacher. In 1879, Chekhov completed his schooling and joined his family in Moscow, having gained admission to the medical school at I.M. Sechenov, First Moscow State Medical University. Chekhov assumed the responsibility of the whole family and in order to support them and to pay his tuition fees, he wrote daily short, humorous sketches and vignettes of contemporary Russian life, many under pseudonyms such as "Antosha Chekhonte" and "Man Without Spleen". His prodigious output gradually earned him a reputation as a satirical chronicler of Russian street life

and by 1882 he was writing for *Oskolki* (Fragments) owned by Nikolai Leykin, one of the leading publishers of the time. Chekhov's tone at this stage was harsher than that familiar from his mature fiction. Chekhov began his writing career as the author of anecdotes for humorous journals, signing his early work pseudonymously. By 1888 he had become widely popular with a "lowbrow" public and had already produced a body of work more voluminous than all his later writings put together. And he had, in the process, turned the short comic sketch of about 1,000 words into a minor art form. He had also experimented in serious writing, providing studies of human misery and despair strangely at variance with the frenzied facetiousness of his comic work. Gradually that serious vein absorbed him and soon predominated over the comic.

Thus, Antov Chekhov pioneered as a Russian playwright and master of the modern short story. He was a literary artist of laconic precision who probed below the surface of life, laying bare the secret motives of his characters. Chekhov's best plays and short stories lack complex plots and neat solutions. Concentrating on apparent trivialities, they create a special kind of atmosphere, sometimes termed haunting or lyrical. He is known for the principle in drama called "Chekhov's gun," which asserts that every element introduced in a story should be necessary to the plot, and he frequently illustrated the principle by using a gun as an example of an essential element. Chekhov described the Russian life of his time using a deceptively simple technique devoid of obtrusive literary devices, and he is regarded as the outstanding representative of the late 19th-century Russian realist school.

7.4 OUTLINE SUMMARY

The Cherry Orchard (*Vishnyovyi sad*) written in four acts, is the last play by Russian playwright Anton Chekhov. Written in 1903, it was first published by *Znaniye* (Book Two, 1904), and came out as a separate edition later that year in Saint Petersburg, via A.F. Marks Publishers. On 17 January 1904, it was performed at the Moscow Art Theatre in a production directed by Konstantin Stanislavski. Chekhov described the play as a comedy,

with some elements of farce, though Stanislavski treated it as a tragedy portrayed by the decline of the charming Ranevskaya family. Since its first production, directors have contended with its dual nature.

The play revolves around an aristocratic Russian landowner, Madame Ranevskaya, who has spent five years in Paris to escape grief over her young son's death, returns to her home in Russia ridden with debt. She is obliged to decide how to dispose of her family's estate, with its beautiful and famous cherry orchard. The coarse but wealthy merchant Ermolai Lopakhin suggests that Mme Ranevskaya develop the land on which the orchard sits. Eventually Lopakhin purchases the estate and proceeds with his plans for a housing development. The unhappy Ranevskayas leaves to the sound of the cherry orchard being cut down. The story presents themes of cultural futility – both the futile attempts of the aristocracy to maintain its status and of the bourgeoisie to find meaning in its new-found materialism. It dramatizes the socioeconomic forces in Russia at the turn of the 20th century, including the rise of the middle class after the abolition of serfdom in the mid-19th century and the decline of the power of the aristocracy.

The play is widely regarded as a classic of twentieth-century theatre and has been translated and adapted into many languages and produced around the world. Major theatre directors have staged it, including Charles Laughton, Peter Brook, Andrei 'urban, Jean-Louis Barrault, Tyrone Guthrie, Katie Mitchell, Robert Falls, and Giorgio Strehler. It has influenced many other playwrights, including Eugene O'Neill, George Bernard Shaw, David Mamet, and Arthur Miller.

7.5 MULTIPLE CHOICE QUESTIONS (MCQs)

1. Anton Chekhov was a _____ playwright.
 - a) British
 - b) American-
 - c) Russian
 - d) Spanish

2. *The Cherry Orchard* was published in
 - a) 1903
 - b) 1904
 - c) 1905
 - d) 1906
3. Anton Chekhov was also a ————— along with a writer
 - a) painter
 - b) musician
 - c) player
 - d) physician
4. *The Cherry Orchard* is written in
 - a) two acts
 - b) three acts
 - c) four acts
 - d) five acts
5. Chekhov died on 15 July 1904 at the age of 44 after a long fight with
 - a) cancer
 - b) tuberculosis
 - c) pneumonia
 - d) other ailments

7.6 LET US SUM UP

The lesson introduces the learners with the brief biography of Anton Chekhov along with his famous works. Further, the learners are also illuminated with the plot and outline summary of *The Cherry Orchard*. The lesson is concluded with MCQs to test the knowledge of the readers.

7.8 EXAMINATION ORIENTED QUESTIONS

1. What does the cherry orchard symbolize in *The Cherry Orchard*?

Ans. The cherry orchard signifies aristocratic power and the ownership of land on which it is based. Madame Ranevskaya is horrified at the thought of losing her cherry orchard, because she knows that it will represent a loss of power and social status.

When Chekhov wrote *The Cherry Orchard*, Russia was experiencing great economic and social change. In the midst of all this, the old aristocracy, the traditional ruling class of Russia, did everything it could to hang on to their economic and political power. The basis of that power was land. Land ownership didn't just confer wealth upon the aristocracy; it also represented a very public manifestation of their high social status. Without land, aristocrats would inevitably fall down the social scale.

This is the main worry of the incredibly class-conscious Madame Ranevskaya in *The Cherry Orchard*. She is genuinely horrified at the prospect of cutting down her cherry orchard, divvying up her land into one-acre plots, and renting them out to members of the emerging bourgeoisie. Yet this is precisely what she must do if she is to save her beloved estate. The world outside is changing, but Madame Ranevskaya cannot. So she clings to her cherry orchard as a living symbol of a more glorious past for the Russian aristocracy, when their status wasn't under threat from nouveau-riche upstarts like Lopakhin. Lopakhin represents the new Russia, a Russia in which wealth is becoming more important than breeding as a mark of social distinction.

The eventual destruction of the cherry orchard by Lopakhin's workmen—before Madame Ranevskaya and her family have even had the chance to move out of the house—represents the attack on the old aristocracy and their way of life by rapidly-developing social and economic forces.

2. How does Anton Chekhov use symbolism and stream of consciousness in *The Cherry Orchard*?

Ans. In Anton Chekhov's *The Cherry Orchard*, the orchard in the title is almost absurdly large, and it carries a number of different symbolic meanings for the play's characters. Let's look at some of these.

For Madame Ranevsky, the cherry orchard symbolizes her childhood, and she is unwilling to let it be cut down. She recalls her mother walking through the orchard and the innocent days when she used to look out from the nursery over the orchard. "Oh, my orchard!" she exclaims. "After the dark gloomy autumn, and the cold winter, you are young again, and full of happiness, and the heavenly angels have never left you." For her, the orchard is a place of peace and comfort. It does not have to do anything useful. It must simply be what it is.

The merchant Lopakhin, however, has other ideas about the orchard. To him, it is an obstacle. He wants to cut it down and build cottages that can be rented out in the summers. He would earn a profit that way, and Madame Ranevsky could solve her money troubles. The orchard must be sold to pay her debts in any case, and the cherries are worthless. Lopakhin notes that "no one buys them." Also for Lopakhin, the orchard reminds him of his unhappy childhood, so he is particularly willing to see it go.

Further, we also note that the characters in this play tend to speak their thoughts freely, moving from one idea to the next as they come into their minds. For example, Madame Ranevsky's meditations on the orchard represent streaks of the stream of consciousness technique and also in Lopakhin's attempts at persuasiveness which represents how characters indulge in stream of consciousness which provide a better view about situation as well as their stance on it.

7.7 ANSWER KEY (MCQs)

1. c) Russian
2. d) 1904
3. d) physician

- 4. c) four acts
- 5. b) tuberculosis

7.9 SUGGESTED READING

Petri Liukkonen. “Anton Chekhov”. Books and Writers.

Biography at *The Literature Network*.

“Chekhov’s Legacy” by Cornel West at NPR, 2004.

The International competition of philological, culture and film studies works dedicated to Anton Chekhov’s life and creative work (in Russian).

THREE QUESTIONS - LEO TOLSTOY

STRUCTURE

- 8.1 Introduction**
- 8.2 Objectives**
- 8.3 Leo Tolstoy Biography**
- 8.4 Important Short Stories by Leo Tolstoy**
 - 3.4.1 “The Death of Ivan Ilyich” (1886)**
 - 3.4.2 How Much Land Does a Man Need? (1886)**
 - 3.4.3 “The Kreutzer Sonata” (1889)**
 - 3.4.4 “Master and Man” (1895)**
- 8.5 Difference- Short and Novel**
- 8.6 Three Question (text)**
- 8.7 Summary and Analysis**
- 8.8 Thematic Concerns**
- 8.9 Social Consciousness in the stories of Leo Tolstoy**
- 8.10 Let Us Sum Up**
- 8.11 Multiple Choice Questions (MCQs)**
- 8.12 Self- Assessment Questions**
- 8.13 Answer Key (MCQs)**
- 8.14 Suggested Reading**

8.1 INTRODUCTION

Leo Tolstoy, one of Russia's greatest literary figures, is often celebrated for his monumental novels like *War and Peace* and *Anna Karenina*, yet his prowess as a short story writer is equally significant. His shorter works reflect the same profound depth and complexity found in his novels, showcasing his ability to explore human nature, morality, and society within more confined narratives. Tolstoy's short stories often distill his philosophical musings and ethical inquiries into concise, powerful tales that resonate with readers on an intimate level.

Born into an aristocratic family in 1828, Tolstoy's early life was marked by privilege and education, yet he experienced a profound spiritual crisis that deeply influenced his writing. This internal turmoil is palpable in many of his short stories, where characters frequently grapple with moral dilemmas and the search for meaning in life. Tolstoy's own quest for spiritual and existential answers is mirrored in his characters, making his stories not just entertainment, but explorations of the human condition.

Tolstoy's short stories are remarkable for their realism and keen observation of everyday life. Stories like "The Death of Ivan Ilyich" and "How Much Land Does a Man Need?" delve into the lives of ordinary individuals, revealing universal truths about human nature and society. His writing style, characterized by its simplicity and clarity, allows readers to deeply engage with the characters' experiences and the moral lessons embedded within the narratives. Through his short stories, Tolstoy critiques the societal norms and materialism of his time, advocating for a life of simplicity, truth, and spiritual fulfillment.

In addition to their philosophical depth, Tolstoy's short stories are also notable for their vivid characterizations and engaging plots. He had a unique talent for creating memorable characters and scenarios that, despite their brevity, leave a lasting impression. Whether he was depicting the tragic fate of a peasant or the existential crisis of a high-ranking official, Tolstoy's stories are imbued with a timeless quality that continues to captivate readers. Through these shorter

works, Tolstoy not only solidified his status as a literary giant but also provided profound insights into the human soul and the moral fabric of society.

8.2 OBJECTIVES

The objective of this lesson is to introduce the distance learner to the life and times of Leo Tolstoy and discuss his vast oeuvre not only as a novelist but as a writer of short stories. Subsequently, the lesson will go on to acquaint the learner with the short story titled “Three Questions”, its major thematic concerns and the questions concerning the form of a short story.

8.3 LEO TOLSTOY BIOGRAPHY

Early Life and Birth:

Leo Tolstoy, born Lev Nikolayevich Tolstoy on September 9, 1828, was born into an aristocratic family on the family estate, Yasnaya Polyana, in the Tula Province of Russia. His parents were Count Nikolai Ilyich Tolstoy and Princess Maria Volkonskaya. Tolstoy was the fourth of five children and experienced a privileged upbringing marked by the death of his mother when he was only two years old and his father’s death when he was nine. These early losses significantly shaped his character and his later philosophical inquiries.

Education and Early Influences:

Tolstoy’s formal education began at home under French and German tutors, typical for aristocratic children of his era. He later attended Kazan University, studying Oriental languages and law, but he left without obtaining a degree. His youthful years were marked by a search for purpose and frequent bouts of gambling and drinking. This period of aimlessness was captured in his early autobiographical trilogy: “Childhood” (1852), “Boyhood” (1854), and “Youth” (1856), which reflect his quest for identity and meaning.

Military Service and Early Writings:

Tolstoy joined the Russian army in the Caucasus in the early 1850s, seeking a fresh start. His experiences during this time greatly influenced his writing, leading to the publication of “The Cossacks” (1863), a novella that

explores the simplicity and hardships of Cossack life. His service in the Crimean War provided material for his “Sevastopol Sketches” (1855–56), which brought him recognition for their realistic portrayal of war.

Major Works and Literary Acclaim :

Tolstoy’s fame in Russian literature was cemented with his two epic novels, *War and Peace* (1869) and *Anna Karenina* (1877). *War and Peace*, set against the backdrop of the Napoleonic Wars, is a profound exploration of history, fate, and individual lives. *Anna Karenina*, a tragic story of love and infidelity, offers a critical look at Russian society. Both novels showcase Tolstoy’s narrative prowess, philosophical depth, and intricate character development.

Short Stories and Later Works:

Tolstoy also excelled in short fiction, where his philosophical concerns and moral questions were distilled into concise narratives. Notable stories include “The Death of Ivan Ilyich” (1886), which examines the existential realization of mortality; “How Much Land Does a Man Need?” (1886), a parable on greed and human folly; and “The Kreutzer Sonata” (1889), which critiques marriage and sexual relationships. These stories are celebrated for their penetrating insights into human nature and moral questions.

Philosophical and Religious Influences:

In the 1870s, Tolstoy underwent a profound spiritual crisis, leading to his conversion to a form of Christian anarchism and pacifism. This period saw him renounce his aristocratic lifestyle and embrace simple living. His later works, such as “The Kingdom of God Is Within You” (1894), articulate his vision of non-violence and spiritual integrity. Tolstoy’s radical views often brought him into conflict with the Russian Orthodox Church, which excommunicated him in 1901.

Legacy and Position in Russian Literature:

Leo Tolstoy’s contribution to Russian literature is immense. His novels *War and Peace* and *Anna Karenina* are considered masterpieces of world

literature, unparalleled in their depth, realism, and philosophical richness. His short stories and novellas are equally influential, reflecting his keen observation of human nature and society. Tolstoy's works have had a lasting impact on writers and thinkers worldwide, influencing figures like Mahatma Gandhi and Martin Luther King Jr. through his advocacy of non-violence and moral integrity.

Final Years and Death:

In his later years, Tolstoy continued to write extensively, including essays on ethics and religion, and plays like *The Power of Darkness* (1886). However, his relationship with his family deteriorated due to his radical beliefs and lifestyle changes. In 1910, seeking solitude and escape from family tensions, Tolstoy left Yasnaya Polyana. He fell ill and died of pneumonia at the remote railway station of Astapovo on November 20, 1910.

Leo Tolstoy remains a towering figure in Russian literature and global literary history. His exploration of moral and existential questions, combined with his literary genius, has ensured his enduring legacy. Tolstoy's life and works continue to inspire and provoke thought, affirming his place as one of the greatest writers and moral philosophers of all time.

8.4 IMPORTANT SHORT STORIES

Tolstoy has penned down many short stories, some of which are discussed below.

8.4.1 “The Death of Ivan Ilyich” (1886)

This novella is one of Tolstoy's most profound and introspective works. It tells the story of Ivan Ilyich Golovin, a high-ranking judge in 19th-century Russia who lives a life of superficiality and conformity. His seemingly successful life is upended when he falls terminally ill. As he confronts the reality of his impending death, Ivan reflects on his life and realizes the emptiness of his pursuits. The story delves into existential themes, the search for genuine

meaning, and the inevitability of death. Tolstoy's exploration of Ivan's psychological and spiritual journey is both harrowing and enlightening.

8.4.2 How Much Land Does a Man Need? (1886)

This parable-like story examines human greed and the futility of materialism. It follows the peasant Pahom, who, driven by the desire to acquire more land, is offered as much land as he can walk around in one day by the Bashkirs. However, Pahom's greed drives him to overextend himself, and he collapses and dies from exhaustion. The story concludes with the poignant realization that all the land Pahom truly needed was a small plot for his grave. Tolstoy uses this tale to critique the insatiable human desire for wealth and the illusion that material possessions bring happiness.

8.4.3 "The Kreutzer Sonata" (1889)

This story delves into themes of jealousy, sexual morality, and the institution of marriage. It is narrated by Pozdnyshev, a man who recounts how his intense jealousy and obsession with his wife's fidelity led him to murder her. The story is framed by a discussion on a train, where Pozdnyshev reveals his views on the corrupting power of sexual desire and his belief that true love can only exist without it. The title references Beethoven's "Kreutzer Sonata," a piece of music that plays a pivotal role in the story's climax. Tolstoy's exploration of the dark side of human emotions and his critique of societal norms around marriage and sexuality were highly controversial at the time.

8.4.4 "Master and Man" (1895)

This story explores themes of self-sacrifice, redemption, and the transformative power of love. It follows Vasili Andreevich Brekhunov, a wealthy landowner, and his servant, Nikita, as they journey through a snowstorm to close a business deal. Despite the worsening conditions, Vasili's greed drives him to continue the journey. Ultimately, he realizes the futility of his pursuit and sacrifices himself to save Nikita. In his

final moments, Vasili experiences a profound spiritual awakening, understanding the value of selflessness and human connection. “Master and Man” reflects Tolstoy’s deep concern with the moral and spiritual dimensions of life.

These stories are representative of Tolstoy’s literary genius and his profound engagement with existential, moral, and social issues. Each narrative, while distinct in its plot and characters, encapsulates Tolstoy’s enduring themes of human nature, morality, and the search for meaning.

8.5 DIFFERENCE- SHORT STORY AND NOVEL

A novel and a short story differ primarily in length and complexity. A novel is an extended work of fiction, often encompassing intricate plots, multiple characters, and detailed settings, allowing for deep exploration of themes and character development. In contrast, a short story is much shorter, focusing on a single event or a small number of characters, aiming to convey its message or theme concisely and with greater immediacy. The brevity of a short story often leads to a more focused and impactful narrative, while a novel provides a broader, more immersive experience.

According to Allen (1981), a short story is a piece of prose fiction, normally upto 10,000 words that can be read in one sitting. Theoretically, it is a tool through which impressions, principles, values, and symbols are developed from the writer’s perspective. Therefore, the author’s personality, workplace and way of life are part of the short story (Green, 2004, p.311-327). In an attempt to describe their nature, Singer (2000, p.38-40) noted that sometimes short stories focus on a specific time, mystery or sensitive issue, but they always define consequences and results in order to develop the awareness of the reader.

Now read this excerpt from the University of Toronto Quarterly which dwells on the difference between these two genres of writing.

“A widespread conviction exists among fiction writers in English that sooner or later one moves on from the short story to the novel. With most writers, the move is more a market decision than an artistic one, because the demands and satisfactions of the two forms are in so many ways utterly different. A short story is far less like a novel than it is like a poem. The primary difference between a short story and a poem is line breaks.

The primary difference between the short story and the novel is not word length. A novel is not a short story that kept going, though every short story writer dreams of writing such a story. Neither is a novel a string of stories with discursive and other connective tissue and padding. One of the first things the writer learns is how amazingly little room there is in a good novel for extraneousness, or noise. The primary difference between the short story and the novel is not length but the larger, more conceptual weight of meaning that the longer narrative must carry on its back from page to page, scene to scene. It's not baggy wordage that causes the diffusiveness of the novel, it's this long-distance haul of meaning. In a good short story the meaning is not so abstractable, so portable, as it must be in a novel, but is rather more tightly and ineffably embodied in the formal details of the text. A scene in a short story—and there may be only one—operates with a centripetal force of concentration. But a scene in a novel spins off a good deal of its energy looking not only backward and forward in the text but also sideways, outside the text, toward the material world, to that set of common assumptions considered ordinary life. That energy is centrifugal, opening out, not constantly seeking to revolve upon its own still centre.

Consider the difference in terms of time. Dr. Johnson said, “No man is ever happy in the present unless he is drunk.” The seeking of happiness in the present is a spiritual impulse, and also an artistic one (the other kind of happiness), and nowhere in literature is it so purely expressed as in lyric poetry and the short story. In a good short story the crisis exists in present time, it is a point of perfect, drunken poise between past and future, and every word of the text, every nuance of rhythm, every piece of shading and

point of light, has been brought to bear upon it. As Frank O'Connor said, in a short story the crisis is the story. In a novel, by contrast, the crisis is only our destination, it occurs as a point in an unfolding of time; it is the logical result of what has come before it, which is as good as to say, of the moral qualities of the hero's choices to date, and it indicates what the future has in store for one who, by having acted this way, has come to this. So while the short story, like poetry, seeks to focus time, the novel, being more like history, being the most secular of forms, seeks to survey it.

This is why when other than market forces are allowed to prevail, the novel is a form best suited to older writers. The minds of older writers have slowed down and stopped jumping around so uncontrollably, they have grown familiar if not necessarily easy with their own contents, their spiritual hunger has been dulled by time and its accommodations, and they are now interested more in the inexorable laws of moral implication than in perfect artistic moments of drunken poise. Also, of course, having more personal history to survey, they have more to work with. They have the material. Young writers are rarely able to maintain the perspective necessary to write good novels, but they do often write good short stories, and they do often write good strange hybrid longer fictions that poeticize the modes of the novel and novelize poetry. Unfortunately, by the time they're writing good novels, they are often no longer writing with the spiritual force of poets. But every once in a while, to the salvation of literary fiction, there appears a mature writer of short stories—someone like Chekhov, or Munro—whose handling of the form at its best is so undulled, so poised, so capacious, so intelligent, that the short in short story is once again revealed as the silly adjective it is, for suddenly here are simply stories, spiritual histories, narratives amazingly porous yet concentrated and undiffused, grave without weight, ordinary but strange, and the unhappy bifurcation of poetry and history is once again revealed as the pernicious cultural illusion it is.”

“Short Story vs Novel,” *University of Toronto Quarterly*, 68 No. 4 (Fall 1999). Pp. 878-79.

8.6 THREE QUESTIONS (TEXT)

It once occurred to a certain king that if he always knew the right time to begin everything; if he knew who were the right people to listen to, and whom to avoid; and, above all, if he always knew what was the most important thing to do, he would never fail in anything he might undertake.

And this thought having occurred to him, he had it proclaimed throughout his kingdom that he would give a great reward to anyone who would teach him what was the right time for every action, and who were the most necessary people, and how he might know what was the most important thing to do.

And learned men came to the king, but they all answered his questions differently.

In reply to the first question, some said that to know the right time for every action, one must draw up in advance a table of days, months, and years, and must live strictly according to it. Only thus, said they, could everything be done at its proper time. Others declared that it was impossible to decide beforehand the right time for every action, but that, not letting oneself be absorbed in idle pastimes, one should always attend to all that was going on, and then do what was most needful. Others, again, said that however attentive the king might be to what was going on, it was impossible for one man to decide correctly the right time for every action, but that he should have a council of wise men who would help him to fix the proper time for everything.

But then again others said there were some things which could not wait to be laid before a council, but about which one had at once to decide whether to undertake them or not. But in order to decide that, one must know beforehand what was going to happen. It is only magicians who know that; and, therefore, in order to know the right time for every action, one must consult magicians.

Equally various were the answers to the second question. Some said the people the king most needed were his councilors; others, the priests; others, the doctors; while some said the warriors were the most necessary.

To the third question, as to what was the most important occupation, some replied that the most important thing in the world was science. Others said it was skill in warfare; and others, again, that it was religious worship.

All the answers being different, the king agreed with none of them, and gave the reward to none. But still wishing to find the right answers to his questions, he decided to consult a hermit, widely renowned for his wisdom.

The hermit lived in a wood which he never quitted, and he received none but common folk. So the king put on simple clothes and, before reaching the hermit's cell, dismounted from his horse. Leaving his bodyguard behind, he went on alone.

When the king approached, the hermit was digging the ground in front of his hut. Seeing the king, he greeted him and went on digging. The hermit was frail and weak, and each time he stuck his spade into the ground and turned a little earth, he breathed heavily.

The king went up to him and said: "I have come to you, wise hermit, to ask you to answer three questions: How can I learn to do the right thing at the right time? Who are the people I most need, and to whom should I, therefore, pay more attention than to the rest? And, what affairs are the most important and need my first attention?"

The hermit listened to the king, but answered nothing. He just spat on his hand and recommenced digging.

"You are tired," said the king, "let me take the spade and work awhile for you."

"Thanks!" said the hermit, and, giving the spade to the king, he sat down on the ground.

When he had dug two beds, the king stopped and repeated his questions. The hermit again gave no answer, but rose, stretched out his hand for the spade, and said:

“Now rest awhile – and let me work a bit.”

But the king did not give him the spade, and continued to dig. One hour passed, and another. The sun began to sink behind the trees, and the king at last stuck the spade into the ground, and said:

“I came to you, wise man, for an answer to my questions. If you can give me none, tell me so, and I will return home.”

“Here comes someone running,” said the hermit. “Let us see who it is.”

The king turned round and saw a bearded man come running out of the wood. The man held his hands pressed against his stomach, and blood was flowing from under them. When he reached the king, he fell fainting on the ground, moaning feebly. The king and the hermit unfastened the man’s clothing. There was a large wound in his stomach. The king washed it as best he could, and bandaged it with his handkerchief and with a towel the hermit had. But the blood would not stop flowing, and the king again and again removed the bandage soaked with warm blood, and washed and re-bandaged the wound. When at last the blood ceased flowing, the man revived and asked for something to drink. The king brought fresh water and gave it to him. Meanwhile the sun had set, and it had become cool. So the king, with the hermit’s help, carried the wounded man into the hut and laid him on the bed. Lying on the bed, the man closed his eyes and was quiet; but the king was so tired from his walk and from the work he had done that he crouched down on the threshold, and also fell asleep – so soundly that he slept all through the short summer night.

When he awoke in the morning, it was long before he could remember where he was, or who was the strange bearded man lying on the bed and gazing intently at him with shining eyes.

“Forgive me!” said the bearded man in a weak voice, when he saw that the king was awake and was looking at him.

“I do not know you, and have nothing to forgive you for,” said the king.

“You do not know me, but I know you. I am that enemy of yours who swore to revenge himself on you, because you executed his brother and seized his property. I knew you had gone alone to see the hermit, and I resolved to kill you on your way back. But the day passed and you did not return. So I came out from my ambush to find you, and came upon your bodyguard, and they recognized me, and wounded me. I escaped from them, but should have bled to death had you not dressed my wound. I wished to kill you, and you have saved my life. Now, if I live, and if you wish it, I will serve you as your most faithful slave, and will bid my sons do the same. Forgive me!”

The king was very glad to have made peace with his enemy so easily, and to have gained him for a friend, and he not only forgave him, but said he would send his servants and his own physician to attend him, and promised to restore his property.

Having taken leave of the wounded man, the king went out into the porch and looked around for the hermit. Before going away he wished once more to beg an answer to the questions he had put. The hermit was outside, on his knees, sowing seeds in the beds that had been dug the day before.

The king approached him and said, “For the last time, I pray you to answer my questions, wise man.”

“You have already been answered!” said the hermit, still crouching on his thin legs, and looking up at the king, who stood before him.

“How answered? What do you mean?” asked the king.

“Do you not see?” replied the hermit. “If you had not pitied my weakness yesterday, and had not dug these beds for me, but had gone your way, that man would have attacked you, and you would have repented of not having stayed with me. So the most important time was when you were digging

the beds; and I was the most important man; and to do me good was your most important business. Afterwards, when that man ran to us, the most important time was when you were attending to him, for if you had not bound up his wounds he would have died without having made peace with you. So he was the most important man, and what you did for him was your most important business. Remember then: there is only one time that is important – now! It is the most important time because it is the only time when we have any power. The most necessary person is the one with whom you are, for no man knows whether he will ever have dealings with anyone else: and the most important affair is to do that person good, because for that purpose alone was man sent into this life.”

8.7 SUMMARY AND ANALYSIS

“Three Questions” by Leo Tolstoy is a profound short story that delves into the themes of wisdom, kindness, and the pursuit of knowledge. The story revolves around a king who seeks the answers to three crucial questions to achieve success in all his endeavours. These questions are: What is the right time to begin everything? Who are the right people to listen to? And what is the most important thing to do?

The king believes that knowing the answers to these questions will ensure his success and happiness. To find the answers, he announces a reward for anyone who can provide him with the correct responses. Learned men from across the kingdom come forward with various answers. Some suggest that the king should consult a council of wise men, others advise him to rely on a timetable, while some recommend that he should always be attentive to the present moment. Similarly, the answers to the other questions are diverse and often conflicting, leaving the king unsatisfied.

Realizing that the answers he seeks cannot be found in the opinions of others, the king decides to visit a hermit renowned for his wisdom and piety. The hermit lives in a forest and only receives common folk, avoiding the company of the rich and powerful. The king, determined to get his answers,

disguises himself in simple clothes and ventures into the forest alone. He finds the hermit digging in his garden and approaches him with his questions.

The hermit, however, does not respond immediately and continues his work. The king offers to help, and together they dig for hours. Eventually, the king repeats his questions, but the hermit still does not answer. Just then, a wounded man stumbles out of the forest. The king and the hermit tend to his injuries and care for him throughout the night. The following morning, the wounded man, who turns out to be an enemy of the king, reveals that he had planned to kill the king but was instead ambushed by the king's guards.

Grateful for being saved, the man pledges his loyalty to the king. The king, having tended to the man's wounds and saved his life, realizes the answer to his questions. The hermit finally speaks, explaining that the most important time is now because it is the only time we have any power over. The most important person is the one with whom you are, for no one knows if they will ever have dealings with anyone else. The most important thing to do is to do good to the person you are with, for that is the purpose of life.

Through these revelations, Tolstoy imparts a moral lesson on the importance of living in the present moment, being attentive to the needs of others, and prioritizing kindness and good deeds. The king learns that wisdom is not found in grand plans or abstract concepts but in simple, compassionate actions. By helping the hermit and saving the wounded man, he discovers the practical and profound answers to his questions.

The story underscores the value of humility and service. The king's willingness to assist the hermit, despite his royal status, exemplifies the virtue of humility. His act of saving an enemy illustrates the transformative power of kindness and forgiveness. Tolstoy's narrative suggests that true wisdom lies in our interactions with others and our ability to respond to the present moment with compassion.

"Three Questions" is a timeless tale that continues to resonate with readers for its deep moral and philosophical insights. It challenges individuals

to reflect on their actions, their relationships, and the way they perceive time and responsibility. Through the king's journey, Tolstoy emphasizes that the essence of a fulfilling life is found not in the pursuit of grand achievements but in the simple acts of kindness and the recognition of the present moment's significance.

Ultimately, the story is a powerful reminder that the answers to life's most profound questions are often found in the everyday actions and choices we make. By living mindfully and compassionately, we can navigate the complexities of life with wisdom and grace. "Three Questions" remains a poignant and instructive piece of literature that encourages readers to seek wisdom through humility and service to others.

8.8 THEMATIC CONCERNS

Leo Tolstoy's short story "Three Questions" delves into several major themes, each of which is intricately woven into the narrative to deliver profound moral and philosophical insights. Here are the key themes explored in the story:

The Importance of the Present Moment:

The story emphasizes the significance of living in the present. Through the hermit's wisdom, the king learns that "the most important time is now," highlighting that the present moment is the only time when we have the power to act and make a difference. This theme encourages mindfulness and attentiveness to the here and now, rather than being preoccupied with the past or future.

Compassion and Kindness:

Tolstoy underscores the value of compassion and kindness as central to human interaction. The king's decision to help the hermit with his digging and to tend to the wounded man demonstrates that the most important thing to do is to "do good to the person you are with." This theme promotes the idea that our actions should be guided by empathy and a desire to help others.

Wisdom and Humility:

The theme of wisdom is closely tied to humility in the story. The king, despite his status, humbles himself by seeking advice from a simple hermit and by engaging in manual labour. This humility enables him to discover the true answers to his questions. The story suggests that true wisdom often comes from humble, practical experiences rather than intellectual or scholarly pursuits alone.

Interconnectedness of Humanity:

The narrative illustrates the interconnected nature of human lives. The king's encounter with the wounded man, who turns out to be an enemy, demonstrates how actions can transform relationships and perspectives. The theme of interconnectedness is also evident in how the king's and the hermit's lives intersect, leading to mutual benefit and understanding.

The Nature of True Leadership:

The story explores what it means to be a true leader. The king's journey reflects the idea that leadership is not about power and control but about serving others and making wise, compassionate decisions. By tending to the needs of others and being present in the moment, the king exemplifies the qualities of a benevolent and thoughtful leader.

Forgiveness and Reconciliation:

The interaction between the king and the wounded man brings out the theme of forgiveness and reconciliation. Despite the man's initial intent to harm the king, the king's act of saving his life leads to the man's repentance and loyalty. This transformation underscores the power of forgiveness and the possibility of reconciliation even with former enemies.

Practical Wisdom Over Theoretical Knowledge:

Tolstoy contrasts practical wisdom with theoretical knowledge through the story. The diverse and often impractical answers given by the learned men stand in contrast to the simple yet profound truths revealed through the

hermit's actions and the king's experiences. This theme suggests that lived experiences and practical actions often provide deeper insights than abstract theorizing.

The Role of Service in Finding Meaning:

Serving others is portrayed as a pathway to finding meaning and fulfillment in life. The king's acts of service, from helping the hermit to saving the wounded man, bring him the answers he seeks and a deeper understanding of his purpose. This theme emphasizes that serving others can lead to personal growth and enlightenment.

Each of these themes contributes to the rich moral and philosophical tapestry of "Three Questions," making it a timeless and instructive story.

8.9 SOCIAL CONSCIOUSNESS IN THE STORIES BY LEO TOLSTOY

Tolstoy's stories frequently delve into themes of social consciousness, highlighting the moral and ethical responsibilities of individuals towards society. In "Three Questions," this theme is evident through the king's quest for wisdom, which ultimately leads him to understand the importance of selfless service and compassion in human relationships.

The story underscores the significance of social consciousness by presenting the king's realization that the most important time is the present, the most important person is the one you are with, and the most crucial action is to do good to that person. This reflects Tolstoy's belief in the moral duty to attend to the immediate needs of others, demonstrating a profound social awareness.

Throughout his works, Tolstoy advocates for a life guided by ethical principles and empathy, critiquing societal norms that prioritize wealth and power over human connection and kindness. The hermit, who lives a humble and solitary life, symbolizes wisdom and the virtues of simplicity and service to others. The king's transformation, influenced by the hermit's actions and teachings, encapsulates Tolstoy's message that true wisdom and fulfillment come from understanding and addressing the needs of those around us.

Tolstoy's focus on social consciousness is not limited to "Three Questions" but extends to many of his other works, such as "War and Peace" and "Anna Karenina," where he explores the consequences of societal inequalities and the moral dilemmas faced by individuals. In essence, Tolstoy's stories often serve as a critique of societal structures and a call to recognize and act upon our interconnectedness and responsibilities toward one another.

The consciousness in literature is a method of narration that describes happenings in the flow of thoughts in the characters' minds. The term of consciousness was initially introduced by psychologist William James in his research. He writes (1983, p77) "it is nothing joined; it flows. A 'river' or a 'stream' is the metaphors by which it is most naturally described. In talking of it hereafter, let's call it the stream of thought, consciousness, or subjective life."

8.10 LET US SUM UP

Leo Tolstoy's story "Three Questions" revolves around a king seeking the answers to three pivotal questions: the right time to do things, the most important people to work with, and the most crucial thing to do. After consulting various learned men and receiving unsatisfactory answers, the king seeks out a hermit renowned for his wisdom. Through his interactions with the hermit and an encounter with a wounded man, the king learns that the most important time is now, the most important person is the one you are with, and the most important thing to do is to do good for that person. The themes of the story include the significance of living in the present, the value of compassion, and the importance of human connection. Social consciousness is highlighted through the king's realization that serving others and addressing their immediate needs is the true path to wisdom and fulfillment.

8.11 MULTIPLE CHOICE QUESTIONS (MCQs)

1. What were the three questions the king wanted to find answers to?
 - a) What is the right time to begin everything? Who are the right people to listen to? What is the most important thing to do?

- b) How can one achieve happiness? What is the secret to wealth?
Who should one trust?
 - c) What is the meaning of life? How can one avoid suffering?
Who is the most powerful person?
 - d) When will I die? What will be my legacy? Who are my true
friends?
2. Who does the king decide to visit to find the answers to his questions?
- a) A famous philosopher
 - b) A council of wise men
 - c) A hermit living in the forest
 - d) A neighbouring king
3. Why does the hermit live in the forest?
- a) He is hiding from his enemies
 - b) He prefers solitude and simple living
 - c) He is conducting secret experiments
 - d) He was banished from the kingdom
4. What does the king do to gain the hermit's assistance?
- a) Offers him gold and treasures
 - b) Promises to build him a palace
 - c) Helps him with his gardening work
 - d) Commands him to answer his questions
5. Who interrupts the king and the hermit while they are working?
- a) A group of bandits
 - b) The king's soldiers
 - c) A wounded man
 - d) A messenger from the palace

6. What had the wounded man intended to do before he was injured?
 - a. Seek the king's help
 - b. Assassinate the king
 - c. Steal from the hermit
 - d. Deliver a message to the king
7. How does the king help the wounded man?
 - a. He carries him to the palace
 - b. He gives him medicine
 - c. He tends to his wounds and cares for him through the night
 - d. He sends him to a doctor in the village
8. What realization does the wounded man come to after being cared for by the king?
 - a. He decides to seek revenge
 - b. He pledges his loyalty to the king
 - c. He plans to flee the kingdom
 - d. He decides to join the hermit
9. What does the hermit say is the most important time?
 - a. The past
 - b. The future
 - c. The present
 - d. The time of death
10. According to the hermit, what is the most important thing to do?
 - a. To gain wealth and power
 - b. To seek knowledge
 - c. To do good to the person you are with
 - d. To conquer one's enemies

8.12 SELF-ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

Q1. What prompts the king to seek answers to his three questions, and how does he initially go about finding them?

Ans. The king, desiring to achieve success and ensure the best outcomes in all his endeavours, becomes fixated on finding the answers to three pivotal questions: the right time to begin everything, the right people to listen to, and the most important thing to do. Believing that these answers will guarantee his success, he announces a reward for anyone who can provide satisfactory responses. Despite receiving a multitude of answers from various learned men, none satisfy him, leading him to seek wisdom from a renowned hermit known for his piety and insight.

Q2. Describe the interaction between the king and the hermit. How does the king approach the hermit, and what is the hermit's initial response?

Ans : The king approaches the hermit, who is known for his wisdom and reclusive life in the forest, seeking the answers to his three questions. Disguised in simple clothes to avoid being recognized, the king finds the hermit digging in his garden and humbly offers to assist him. Despite the king's repeated questions, the hermit does not respond directly and continues his work. The king's willingness to help and wait patiently exemplifies his humility and determination. This interaction sets the stage for the king to discover the answers through actions rather than direct explanations.

Q3. How does the wounded man influence the story, and what role does he play in revealing the answers to the king's questions?

Ans.: The wounded man, who stumbles upon the king and the hermit while suffering from a severe injury, plays a crucial role in the story. Initially an enemy of the king, he intended to kill the king but was thwarted and injured by the king's guards. The king and the hermit tend to his wounds, saving his life. This act of compassion transforms the man's perspective, leading him to pledge loyalty to the king. Through this encounter, the king learns the

importance of the present moment, the necessity of attending to the needs of those around him, and the value of doing good, ultimately answering his three questions through lived experience.

Q4. What philosophical insights does Tolstoy convey through the hermit's final explanations to the king?

Ans. Tolstoy conveys profound philosophical insights through the hermit's final explanations. The hermit reveals that the most important time is now, as it is the only moment we have any control over. The most important person is the one you are with at any given moment, emphasizing the value of human connections and attentiveness. The most important action is to do good to the person you are with, underscoring the significance of kindness and compassion. These insights advocate for mindfulness, interpersonal care, and ethical living, suggesting that true wisdom and fulfillment come from our immediate actions and interactions.

Q5. In what ways does "Three Questions" reflect Tolstoy's broader philosophical and moral beliefs?

Ans. "Three Questions" reflects Tolstoy's broader philosophical and moral beliefs, particularly his emphasis on simplicity, humility, and the ethical treatment of others. The story encapsulates Tolstoy's ideas about the importance of living in the present moment, the necessity of compassion, and the pursuit of practical wisdom over theoretical knowledge. By illustrating that profound truths are often found in simple, everyday actions and interactions, Tolstoy reinforces his belief in the moral duty to help others and the spiritual fulfillment derived from such actions. The story serves as a microcosm of Tolstoy's advocacy for a life rooted in ethical principles and genuine human connection.

8.13 ANSWER KEY (MCQs)

1. a) What is the right time to begin everything? Who are the right people to listen to? What is the most important thing to do?

2. c) A hermit living in the forest
3. b) He prefers solitude and simple living
4. c) Helps him with his gardening work
5. c) A wounded man
6. b) Assassinate the king
7. c) He tends to his wounds and cares for him through the night
8. b) He pledges his loyalty to the king
9. c) The present
10. c) To do good to the person you are with

8.14 SUGGESTED READING

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THE OVERCOAT – NIKOLAI GOGOL

STRUCTURE

- 9.1 Introduction**
- 9.2 Objectives**
- 9.3 Nikolai Gogol Biography**
- 9.4 Important Short Stories by Nikolai Gogol**
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- 9.14 Answer Key (MCQs)**
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9.1 INTRODUCTION

Nikolai Gogol, born on March 31, 1809, in Sorochyntsi, Ukraine, is widely regarded as one of the most influential figures in Russian literature,

particularly known for his mastery in the short story genre. Gogol's unique blend of satire, realism, and fantasy, coupled with his keen psychological insight and vivid characterizations, has left an indelible mark on the literary world. His works often explore the absurdities and grotesque aspects of human nature and society, reflecting his critical yet humorous perspective on life.

Gogol's early life and education laid the foundation for his literary career. Raised in a Ukrainian family with a strong cultural heritage, he was deeply influenced by the rich folk traditions and stories of his homeland. After completing his studies in St. Petersburg, Gogol initially struggled to find his footing as a writer, but his first significant work, "Evenings on a Farm Near Dikanka" (1831-1832), a collection of Ukrainian folk tales, garnered critical acclaim and established him as a promising literary talent. These stories, with their vibrant depictions of rural life and supernatural elements, showcased his unique narrative style and ability to blend realism with fantasy.

As a short story writer, Gogol's most notable contributions include "The Overcoat" (1842), "The Nose" (1836), and "The Diary of a Madman" (1835). "The Overcoat" is often hailed as a masterpiece of Russian literature, telling the tragic yet darkly humorous story of a poor clerk, Akaky Akakievich, whose life revolves around acquiring a new overcoat. This story is a poignant critique of social injustice and bureaucracy, and its profound influence is evident in the works of subsequent Russian writers, including Dostoevsky and Tolstoy. "The Nose" and "The Diary of a Madman" further exemplify Gogol's talent for absurdity and satire, as he portrays the surreal and often ludicrous nature of human existence and societal norms.

Gogol's work significantly impacted the development of Russian literature, particularly the genre of short stories. His innovative approach to storytelling, characterized by a blend of humor, grotesque imagery, and social critique, paved the way for future writers to explore similar themes. His stories not only entertain but also provoke thought, encouraging readers to reflect on the deeper moral and philosophical questions of life. As a master

of the short story, Gogol's legacy endures, and his influence continues to be felt in both Russian and world literature.

9.2 OBJECTIVES

The objective of this lesson is to introduce the distance learner to the life and times of Nikolai Gogol and discuss his vast oeuvre not only as a novelist but as a writer of short stories. Subsequently, the lesson will go onto acquaint the learner with the short story titled "The Overcoat", its major thematic concerns and the questions concerning the form of a short story.

9.3 NIKOLAI GOGOL BIOGRAPHY

Gogol was born in the Ukrainian Cossack town of Sorochyntsi in the Poltava Governorate of the Russian Empire. His father Vasily Gogol-Yanovsky, who died when Gogol was 15 years old, was supposedly a descendant of Ukrainian Cossacks and belonged to the 'petty gentry'. Gogol knew that his paternal ancestor Ostap Hohol, in Polish service, received nobility from the Polish king. The family used the Polish surname "Janowski".

His father wrote poetry in Ukrainian as well as Russian, and was an amateur playwright in his own theatre. As was typical of the left-bank Ukrainian gentry of the early nineteenth century, the family was trilingual, speaking Ukrainian as well as Russian, and using Polish mostly for reading. Mother was calling his son Nikola, which is a mixture of the Russian Nikolai and the Ukrainian Mykola. As a child, Gogol helped stage plays in his uncle's home theater.

In 1820, Nikolai Gogol went to a school of higher art in Nezhin (now Nizhyn Gogol State University) and remained there until 1828. It was there that he began writing. He was not popular among his schoolmates, who called him their "mysterious dwarf", but with two or three of them he formed lasting friendships. Very early he developed a dark and secretive disposition, marked by a painful self-consciousness and boundless ambition. Equally early he developed a talent for mimicry, which later made him a matchless reader of his own works and induced him to toy with the idea of becoming an actor.

On leaving school in 1828, Gogol went to Saint Petersburg, full of vague but ambitious hopes. He desired literary fame, and brought with him a Romantic poem of German idyllic life – Hans Küchelgarten, and had it published at his own expense, under the pseudonym “V. Alov.” The magazines he sent it to almost universally derided it. He bought all the copies and destroyed them, swearing never to write poetry again.

Literary development

His stay in St. Petersburg forced Gogol to make a certain decision regarding his self-identification. It was a period of turmoil; the November Uprising in the lands of the former Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth led to a rise of Russian nationalism. Initially, Gogol used the surname Gogol-Ianovskii, but it soon became inconvenient. At first he tried to shorten it to the Russian-sounding “Ianov”, but in the second half of 1830 he abandoned the Polish part of his surname altogether. He even admonished his mother in a letter to address him only as “Gogol”, as Poles had become “suspect” in St. Petersburg. Tsarist authorities encouraged the Ukrainian intellectuals to sever ties with the Poles, promoting a limited, folkloric Ukrainian particularism as part of the heritage of the Russian empire.

In 1831, the first volume of Gogol’s Ukrainian stories (Evenings on a Farm Near Dikanka) was published under a pen name “Rudy Panko”, was in line with this trend, and met with immediate success. A second volume was published in 1832, followed by two volumes of stories entitled *Mirgorod* in 1835, and two volumes of miscellaneous prose entitled *Arabesques*. At this time, Russian editors and critics such as Nikolai Polevoy and Nikolai Nadezhdin saw Gogol as a regional Ukrainian writer, and used his works to illustrate the specific of Ukrainian national characters. The themes and style of these early prose works by Gogol, as well as his later drama, were similar to the work of Ukrainian-language writers and dramatists who were his contemporaries and friends, including Hryhory Kvitka-Osnovyanenko. However, Gogol’s satire was much more sophisticated and unconventional.

Although these works were written in Russian, they were nevertheless full of Ukrainianisms, which is why a glossary of Ukrainian words was included at the end of the volumes.

At this time, Gogol developed a passion for Ukrainian Cossack history and tried to obtain an appointment to the history department at Saint Vladimir Imperial University of Kiev. Despite the support of Alexander Pushkin and Sergey Uvarov, the Russian minister of education, the appointment was blocked by a bureaucrat on the grounds that Gogol was unqualified. His fictional story *Taras Bulba*, based on the history of Zaporozhian Cossacks, was the result of this phase in his interests. During this time, he also developed a close and lifelong friendship with the historian and naturalist Mykhaylo Maksymovych.

In 1834, Gogol was made Professor of Medieval History at the University of St. Petersburg, a job for which he had no qualifications proved to be a disaster. Gogol resigned his chair in 1835. Between 1832 and 1836, Gogol worked with great energy, and had extensive contact with Pushkin, but he still had not yet decided that his ambitions were to be fulfilled by success in literature. During this time, the Russian critics Stepan Shevyrev and Vissarion Belinsky, contradicting the earlier critics, reclassified Gogol from a Ukrainian to a Russian writer. It was only after the premiere of his comedy *The Government Inspector* (*Revizor*) at the Alexandrinsky Theatre in St. Petersburg, on 19 April 1836, that he finally came to believe in his literary vocation. The comedy, a satire of Russian provincial bureaucracy, was staged thanks only to the intervention of the emperor, Nicholas I. The Tsar was personally present at the play's premiere, concluding that "there is nothing sinister in the comedy, as it is only a cheerful mockery of bad provincial officials."

From 1836 to 1848, Gogol lived abroad, travelling through Germany and Switzerland. Gogol spent the winter of 1836–37 in Paris, among Russian expatriates and Polish exiles, frequently meeting the Polish poets Adam Mickiewicz and Bohdan Zaleski. He eventually settled in Rome. For much

of the twelve years from 1836, Gogol was in Italy, where he developed an adoration for Rome. He studied art, read Italian literature and developed a passion for opera.

Pushkin's death produced a strong impression on Gogol. His principal work during the years following Pushkin's death was the satirical epic *Dead Souls*. Concurrently, he worked at other tasks – recast *Taras Bulba* (1842) and “The Portrait”, completed his second comedy, “Marriage” (*Zhenitba*), wrote the fragment *Rome* and his most famous short story, “The Overcoat”.

In 1841, the first part of *Dead Souls* was ready, and Gogol took it to Russia to supervise its printing. It appeared in Moscow in 1842, under a new title imposed by the censorship, *The Adventures of Chichikov*. The book established his reputation as one of the greatest prose writers in the language.

Later life and death

After the triumph of *Dead Souls*, Gogol's contemporaries came to regard him as a great satirist who lampooned the unseemly sides of Imperial Russia. They did not know that *Dead Souls* was but the first part of a planned modern-day counterpart to the *Divine Comedy* of Dante. The first part represented the Inferno; the second part would depict the gradual purification and transformation of the rogue Chichikov under the influence of virtuous publicans and governors – Purgatory.

In April 1848, Gogol returned to Russia from a pilgrimage to Jerusalem and passed his last years in restless movement throughout the country. While visiting the capitals, he stayed with friends such as Mikhail Pogodin and Sergey Aksakov. During this period, he also spent much time with his old Ukrainian friends, Maksymovych and Osyp Bodiansky. He intensified his relationship with a starets or spiritual elder, Matvey Konstantinovsky, whom he had known for several years. Konstantinovsky seems to have strengthened in Gogol the fear of perdition (damnation) by insisting on the sinfulness of all his imaginative work. Exaggerated ascetic practices undermined his health and he fell into a state of deep depression.

On the night of 24 February 1852, he burned some of his manuscripts, which contained most of the second part of *Dead Souls*. He explained this as a mistake, a practical joke played on him by the Devil. Soon thereafter, he took to bed, refused all food, and died in great pain nine days later.

Gogol was mourned in the Saint Tatiana church at the Moscow University before his burial and then buried at the Danilov Monastery, close to his fellow Slavophile Aleksey Khomyakov. His grave was marked by a large stone (Golgotha), topped by a Russian Orthodox cross.

In 1931, with Russia now ruled by communists, Moscow authorities decided to demolish the monastery and had Gogol's remains transferred to the Novodevichy Cemetery. His body was discovered lying face down, which gave rise to the conspiracy theory that Gogol had been buried alive. The authorities moved the Golgotha stone to the new gravesite, but removed the cross; in 1952, the Soviets replaced the stone with a bust of Gogol. The stone was later reused for the tomb of Gogol's admirer Mikhail Bulgakov. In 2009, in connection with the bicentennial of Gogol's birth, the bust was moved to the museum at the Novodevichy Cemetery, and the original Golgotha stone was returned, along with a copy of the original Orthodox cross.

Style

D. S. Mirsky characterizes Gogol's universe as "one of the most marvellous, unexpected – in the strictest sense, original – worlds ever created by an artist of words".

Gogol saw the outer world strangely metamorphosed, a singular gift particularly evident from the fantastic spatial transformations in his Gothic stories, "A Terrible Vengeance" and "A Bewitched Place". His pictures of nature are strange mounds of detail heaped on detail, resulting in an unconnected chaos of things: "His people are caricatures, drawn with the method of the caricaturist – which is to exaggerate salient features and to reduce them to geometrical pattern. But these cartoons have a convincingness, a truthfulness, and inevitability – attained as a rule by slight but definitive

strokes of unexpected reality – that seems to beggar the visible world itself.” According to Andrey Bely, Gogol’s work influenced the emergence of Gothic romance, and served as a forerunner for absurdism and impressionism.

The aspect under which the mature Gogol sees reality is expressed by the Russian word *poshlost*, which means something similar to “triviality, banality, inferiority”, moral and spiritual, widespread in a group of people or the entire society. Like Sterne before him, Gogol was a great destroyer of prohibitions and of romantic illusions. He undermined Russian Romanticism by making vulgarity reign where only the sublime and the beautiful had before. “Characteristic of Gogol is a sense of boundless superfluity that is soon revealed as utter emptiness and a rich comedy that suddenly turns into metaphysical horror.” His stories often interweave pathos and mockery, while “The Tale of How Ivan Ivanovich Quarreled with Ivan Nikiforovich” begins as a merry farce and ends with the famous dictum, “It is dull in this world, gentlemen!”

Politics

It stunned Gogol when some critics interpreted *The Government Inspector* as an indictment of Tsarism despite Nicholas I’s patronage of the play. Gogol himself, an adherent of the Slavophile movement, believed in a divinely inspired mission for both the House of Romanov and the Russian Orthodox Church. Like Fyodor Dostoyevsky, Gogol sharply disagreed with those Russians who preached constitutional monarchy and the disestablishment of the Orthodox Church. Gogol saw his work as a critique that would change Russia for the better.

After defending autocracy, serfdom, and the Orthodox Church in his book *Selected Passages from Correspondence with his Friends* (1847), Gogol came under attack from his former patron Vissarion Belinsky. The first Russian intellectual to publicly preach the economic theories of Karl Marx, Belinsky accused Gogol of betraying his readership by defending the status quo.

Ukrainian Cultural Connections

Gogol was born in the Ukrainian Cossack town of Sorochyntsi. According to Edyta Bojanowska, Gogol's images of Ukraine are in-depth, distinguished by description of folklore and history. In his *Evenings on a Farm*, Gogol pictures Ukraine as a "nation ... united by organic culture, historical memory, and language". His image of Russia lacks this depth and is always based in the present, particularly focused on Russia's bureaucracy and corruption. *Dead Souls*, according to Bojanowska, "presents Russian uniqueness as a catalog of faults and vices." The duality of Gogol's national identity is frequently expressed as a view that "in the aesthetic, psychological, and existential senses Gogol is inscribed ... into Ukrainian culture", while "in historical and cultural terms he is part of Russian literature and culture". Slavacist Edyta Bojanowska writes that Gogol, after arriving in St. Peterburg, was surprised to find that he was perceived as a Ukrainian, and even as a *khokhol*. Bojanowska argues that it was this experience that "made him into a self-conscious Ukrainian". According to Ilchuk, dual national identities were typical at that time as a "compromise with the empire's demand for national homogenization".

Professor of Russian literature Kathleen Scollins notes the tendency to politicize Gogol's identity, and comments on the erasure of Gogol's Ukrainianness by the Russian literary establishment, which she argues "reveals the insecurity of many Russians about their own imperial identity".

Gogol's appreciation of Ukraine grew during his discovery of Ukrainian history, and he concluded that "Ukraine possessed exactly the kind of cultural wholeness, proud tradition, and self-awareness that Russia lacked." He rejected or was critical of many of the postulates of official Russian history about Ukrainian nationhood. His unpublished "*Mazepa's Meditations*" presents Ukrainian history in a manner that justifies Ukraine's "historic right to independence". Before 1836, Gogol had planned to move to Kyiv to study Ukrainian ethnography and history, and it was after these plans failed that he decided to become a Russian writer.

Influence and Interpretations

Even before the publication of *Dead Souls*, Belinsky recognized Gogol as the first Russian-language realist writer and as the head of the Natural School, to which he also assigned such younger or lesser authors as Goncharov, Turgenev, Dmitry Grigorovich, Vladimir Dahl and Vladimir Sollogub. Gogol himself appeared skeptical about the existence of such a literary movement. Although he recognized “several young writers” who “have shown a particular desire to observe real life”, he upbraided the deficient composition and style of their works. Nevertheless, subsequent generations of radical critics celebrated Gogol (the author in whose world a nose roams the streets of the Russian capital) as a great realist, a reputation decried by the Encyclopædia Britannica as “the triumph of Gogolesque irony”.

The period of literary modernism saw a revival of interest in and a change of attitude towards Gogol’s work. One of the pioneering works of Russian formalism was Eichenbaum’s reappraisal of “The Overcoat”. In the 1920s, a group of Russian short-story writers, known as the Serapion Brothers, placed Gogol among their precursors and consciously sought to imitate his techniques. The leading novelists of the period – notably Yevgeny Zamyatin and Mikhail Bulgakov – also admired Gogol and followed in his footsteps. In 1926, Vsevolod Meyerhold staged *The Government Inspector* as a “comedy of the absurd situation”, revealing to his fascinated spectators a corrupt world of endless self-deception. In 1934, Andrei Bely published the most meticulous study of Gogol’s literary techniques up to that date, in which he analyzed the colours prevalent in Gogol’s work depending on the period, his impressionistic use of verbs, the expressive discontinuity of his syntax, the complicated rhythmical patterns of his sentences, and many other secrets of his craft. Based on this work, Vladimir Nabokov published a summary account of Gogol’s masterpieces.

Gogol’s impact on Russian literature has endured, yet various critics have appreciated his works differently. Belinsky, for instance, berated his horror stories as “moribund, monstrous works”, while Andrei Bely counted

them among his most stylistically daring creations. Nabokov especially admired *Dead Souls*, *The Government Inspector*, and “*The Overcoat*” as works of genius, proclaiming that “when, as in his immortal “*The Overcoat*”, Gogol really let himself go and pottered happily on the brink of his private abyss, he became the greatest artist that Russia has yet produced.” Critics traditionally interpreted “*The Overcoat*” as a masterpiece of “humanitarian realism”, but Nabokov and some other attentive readers argued that “holes in the language” make the story susceptible to interpretation as a supernatural tale about a ghostly double of a “small man”.

The portrayals of Jewish characters in his work have led to Gogol developing a reputation for antisemitism. Due to these portrayals, the Russian Zionist writer Ze’ev Jabotinsky condemned Russian Jews who participated in celebrations of Gogol’s centenary. Later critics have also pointed to the apparent antisemitism in his writings, as well as in those of his contemporary, Fyodor Dostoyevsky. Felix Dreizin and David Guaspari, for example, in their *The Russian Soul and the Jew: Essays in Literary Ethnocentrism*, discuss “the significance of the Jewish characters and the negative image of the Ukrainian Jewish community in Gogol’s novel *Taras Bulba*, pointing out Gogol’s attachment to anti-Jewish prejudices prevalent in Russian and Ukrainian culture.” In Léon Poliakov’s *The History of Antisemitism*, the author mentions that

“The ‘Yankel’ from *Taras Bulba* indeed became the archetypal Jew in Russian literature. Gogol painted him as supremely exploitative, cowardly, and repulsive, albeit capable of gratitude. But it seems perfectly natural in the story that he and his cohorts be drowned in the Dniper by the Cossack lords. Above all, Yankel is ridiculous, and the image of the plucked chicken that Gogol used has made the rounds of great Russian authors.”

Despite his portrayal of Jewish characters, Gogol left a powerful impression even on Jewish writers who inherited his literary legacy. Amelia Glaser has noted the influence of Gogol’s literary innovations on Sholem Aleichem, who:

“chose to model much of his writing, and even his appearance, on Gogol... What Sholem Aleichem was borrowing from Gogol was a rural East European landscape that may have been dangerous, but could unite readers through the power of collective memory. He also learned from Gogol to soften this danger through laughter, and he often rewrites Gogol’s Jewish characters, correcting anti-Semitic stereotypes and narrating history from a Jewish perspective.”

9.4 IMPORTANT SHORT STORIES BY NIKOLAI GOGOL

“The Nose”- It is a satirical short story by Nikolai Gogol written during his time living in St. Petersburg. During this time, Gogol’s works were primarily focused on the grotesque and absurd, with a romantic twist. Written between 1835 and 1836, “The Nose” tells the story of a St. Petersburg official whose nose leaves his face and develops a life of its own. “The Nose” was originally published in *The Contemporary*, a literary journal owned by Alexander Pushkin. The use of a nose as the main source of conflict in the story could have been due to Gogol’s own experience with an oddly shaped nose, which was often the subject of self-deprecating jokes in letters. The use of iconic landmarks in the story, as well as the sheer absurdity of the story, has made this story an important part of St. Petersburg’s literary tradition.

“The Nose” is divided into three parts and tells the story of Collegiate Assessor (‘Major’) Kovalyov, who wakes up one morning without his nose. He later finds out that his nose has developed a life of its own, and has apparently surpassed him by attaining the rank of State Councillor. The short story showcases the obsession with social rank that plagued Russia after Peter the Great introduced the Table of Ranks. By allowing commoners to gain hereditary nobility through service to the state, a huge population was given the chance to move up in social status. This opportunity, however, also gave way to large bureaucracies, in which many of Gogol’s characters worked.

“The Diary of a Madman” - This tale is presented as a series of diary entries written by Poprishchin, a low-ranking civil servant. Through these entries, the reader witnesses Poprishchin’s gradual descent into madness.

Initially, his delusions revolve around his unrequited love for his superior's daughter and his dissatisfaction with his menial job. As his mental state deteriorates, he starts to believe he is the King of Spain. Gogol uses Poprishchin's madness to explore themes of social alienation, the oppressive nature of bureaucratic systems, and the fragile boundary between reality and insanity. The story's poignant and often darkly humorous depiction of mental illness and societal neglect remains powerful and relevant.

“Viy”- It is another of Gogol's famous short stories, combines elements of folklore, horror, and the supernatural. It follows the young philosopher Khoma Brut, who is tasked with praying for three nights over the body of a deceased witch. As he does so, he is tormented by increasingly terrifying supernatural phenomena. The climax of the story features the terrifying creature Viy, whose gaze brings death. “Viy” showcases Gogol's ability to blend traditional Ukrainian folklore with his own imaginative storytelling, creating a vivid and haunting narrative. This story highlights the conflict between reason and superstition, as well as the pervasive presence of the supernatural in Gogol's works, making it a compelling example of his contribution to the horror genre.

9.5 SUMMARY AND ANALYSIS

The story begins with the description of a man who works in a certain department of the civil service in St. Petersburg. This man is named Akakiy Akakievitch, and he fulfills the role of “titular councillor” at the unnamed department, meaning he is a clerk who performs menial tasks. At his birth, his mother was given many choices of names to give the child, none of which she liked. She named the boy after his father, who was also called Akakiy, which created his humorous name, Akakiy Akakievitch.

Akakiy Akakievitch carefully copies official documents at his office. He is treated with little respect by his fellow employees. The young officials even go so far as to tease Akakievitch and drop bits of trash on his head. They insinuate that he is beaten by his landlady and also that he may marry her. He tolerates these jokes until his actual work is interrupted, at

which point he pleads to be left alone to do his work. His cries of “Leave me alone!” affect at least one young official very deeply.

Akakievitch lives for his work and enjoys copying documents all day long and even into the night at his home. For all his enthusiasm, he doesn’t make much money at his job. He is so obsessed with work that he does not notice things happening on the street around him, and he ends up covered in the trash being thrown out of windows above the street. The other officials at his job are far more focused on how they look and how everyone else looks. Akakievitch has a shabby appearance. He eats alone at home and hardly tastes his food before swallowing it. He goes right to bed instead of seeing friends or drinking tea like the rest of the residents of St. Petersburg.

A problem arises for Akakievitch when winter arrives. His overcoat is far too thin and shabby to protect him from the cold gusts of wind and snow. He takes his worn-out overcoat upstairs to a tailor, Petrovitch, who lives in his building. Petrovitch has only one eye and is often drunk, but he is a good tailor and has mended the garment for Akakievitch many times before. This time, however, Petrovitch refuses to patch up the overcoat. He claims there is no fabric left to attach the patches to and that Akakievitch must purchase a new overcoat, which comes as disastrous news to the impoverished Akakievitch.

Akakievitch tries to meet with the tailor again when he might be in a better mood, but Petrovitch still refuses to mend the old coat. The new overcoat will cost far more than Akakievitch has stashed away, so he embarks on months of saving every last scrap of money he can. He walks more carefully in his boots so that they won’t need mending. He spends as much time as he can in his nightshirt to prevent his clothes from wearing out. He eats less. He has no tea in the evenings and burns no candles. Akakievitch gets used to this frugal lifestyle, and he even begins to relish his spendthrift behavior.

Finally, with a bonus from work and his new savings, he can afford the new coat. He and Petrovitch carefully buy the best fabric he can afford. When the new overcoat is finished, it is a fine garment and Akakievitch is

overjoyed. When he wears the coat out to go to work, the tailor follows him in the street to admire his own handiwork. At the office, everyone notices the new coat and congratulates Akakievitch. One department sub-chief even offers to throw a party to “christen” the coat with an evening out. Akakievitch does not want to go, but he cannot refuse. He relishes the new level of acceptance he receives, and he feels excited to wear the coat in the evening.

Later that night, Akakievitch journeys through the cold to the better part of town where the sub-chief lives. He attends the party and even drinks two glasses of champagne, but he quickly tires out. He does not know how to act or what to say and leaves early. He makes his way back through the wealthier part of town to his own poor neighborhood around midnight. At a dimly lit town square, disaster strikes. A gang of men viciously mug Akakievitch and steal the overcoat. Akakievitch accosts the watchman who did nothing while he was robbed. The watchman simply tells him to go to the police the next day to report the robbery.

Akakievitch’s landlady says to call the police or else nothing will be done. When Akakievitch finally gets to see the district chief, he is met with probing questions. The district chief thinks he has been out late at some “disorderly” house. Nothing is done about the robbery, and Akakievitch finds himself left without his new prized overcoat. Stunned, he returns to work in his shabby overcoat. His co-workers take little pity on him. Some ridicule him once more. One colleague advises him to visit a local “prominent personage,” or man of high rank, who may be able to use his position to help poor Akakievitch to get his cloak back.

Akakievitch visits the prominent personage and is forced to wait because he is of such low rank. When he finally sees the prominent personage, the man talks down to Akakievitch and scolds him for not going through official channels. Akakievitch tries to describe how he has already done this with nothing coming of it. The prominent personage refuses to listen to his arguments, and he dismisses Akakievitch with harsh words.

The next day Akakievitch comes down with a fever. The doctor visits and says that Akakievitch will soon die and that the landlady should order his cheap coffin now. Akakievitch says wretched things in his sickness. He finally talks back to the prominent personage and the district chief, but does so from his lonely bed. He dies. After a few days, his office tries to figure out why Akakievitch has not shown up for work and they find out he is dead. Akakievitch's replacement isn't nearly as skilled at his job, but nobody seems to notice or mind.

Soon, people begin to talk about a dead man appearing on Kalinkin Bridge at night, demanding the location of a stolen overcoat. When people do not give this dead man a good answer, he tries to rip off their cloaks. The police are tasked with catching this dead man at his attempted robberies, but when they grab him, they cannot get a good hold of him.

Meanwhile, the prominent personage feels remorse over his treatment of the late Akakievitch. Inquiring after the man he had talked down to, he learns that Akakievitch has died from a fever. He wishes to distract himself from the guilt he feels, and so he attends a party full of people of his own rank. There, he drinks champagne and begins to feel cheerful. He feels so cheerful that he plans to visit a lady, not his wife, later on that night.

While the prominent personage is on his way in a coach, the ghostly Akakievitch accosts him and rips off his fancy cloak. The prominent personage returns home terrified. From that point on, he is less mean to anyone below his social rank. After this event, no one sees Akakievitch again since the cloak he took seems to fit around his shoulders nicely. One night, a policeman sees another ghost wearing a fancy cloak and is told off in a haughty manner. He leaves the ghost alone. He must be somebody else as he is taller and more impressive than Akakievitch ever looked in his life.

9.6 THEMATIC CONCERNS

The Rigidity of Social Status

Rigid social hierarchy dominates every part of Akakievitch's life. He is ridiculed by his fellow office workers for the shabbiness of his

coat and his overall appearance, so he must have a new coat to end the abuse. Once he comes to the office with a new coat, he is instantly accepted into their company and his status elevates. His status changes so completely that they even throw him a party to celebrate the new coat. The coat ultimately becomes a symbol of Akakievitch's new place in the social hierarchy of his office, revealing how the way one dresses is of utmost importance in this society, and it dictates one's place in it.

As soon as he loses the cloak, Akakievitch is once again relegated down to the lower levels of society and given no help. He pleads with more powerful men to help him, but without his coat or other outward symbols of high social class, he is not deemed worthy of their time. When he calls on the prominent personage, the man is quick to ask what rank Akakievitch holds. Indeed, the prominent personage runs his household on the concept of rigid social hierarchy. This is a strict adherence to the social norms of his society, and it is this same strictness that makes it impossible for the man to help Akakievitch. The prominent personage must fulfill his role as a man higher up in the world than Akakievitch, and in doing so, he later ultimately labels himself a target for the enraged ghost of Akakievitch. In allowing Akakievitch to get revenge on those who wronged and neglected him in life, Gogol seems to imply only the deceased can break the rigid chains of social class.

The Cruelty of So-Called Honorable Men

Many people show cruelty to Akakievitch in the story, and their cruelty is directly tied to their position in society. The more honorable a man's position in Gogol's St. Petersburg, the crueler he acts toward people below him in the social order. Furthermore, anyone with a slight advantage over another becomes cruel in imitation of his own superiors. Gogol takes a moment to describe one instance of this when a titular councillor is given a slight promotion above his colleagues. Once he has been elevated, he then creates a separate room in which to see his fellow workers. The room is so

tiny that it barely fits a desk, but the titular councillor wants to make his subordinates wait in the same way his own bosses make him wait. This kind of imitation shows that the cruelty of honorable men is mimicked by anyone wanting to get ahead in Akakievitch's society. Therefore, these honorable men are not so honorable after all.

When Akakievitch's coat is stolen, he experiences poor treatment from authority figures. That treatment gets worse the farther up the social ladder he goes for help. First, the watchman barely notices him getting robbed, and he acts indifferently to his plight. Then, the district police chief questions him about his own actions on the night of the robbery. Rather than seek out the ones responsible for the crime, this district chief probes into Akakievitch's character and accuses him of getting his coat stolen by his own actions. Finally, the prominent personage treats Akakievitch the worst of all. He scolds him harshly for coming to see him. The strictness of the prominent personage makes him the cruelest of all the authority figures Akakievitch has come to for help. He is seen as honorable, yet he is harsh and uncaring, and ultimately pays for his strict adherence to social hierarchy when Akakievitch later haunts him.

The Meaninglessness of Work for Work's Sake

Akakievitch's world revolves around his work despite how little it gives him. As the story begins, he loves doing his job more than anything. He copies documents almost out of unadulterated joy, and he even takes his work home with him. The fact that he takes it home when he doesn't need to shows that he is fully obsessed with his tedious tasks. He copies documents in his free time just like he does on the clock. He dreams of work even when walking in the street. Without the incident of the overcoat, Akakievitch would go on in this manner for his whole life. However, while Akakievitch loves his work, he is also guilty of complacency. When offered the job of creating a new document and not merely copying one, he resists. He would rather simply copy documents created by someone else. In Akakievitch's world, work is done for the sake of the work.

Social advancement is directly tied to work in Akakievitch's world. None of Akakievitch's superiors are named in the story, so, nameless, they only fulfill their positions in society: they are the district police chief, the prominent personage, and Akakievitch's bosses. A person's name or personal life is hardly important compared to what job or social role they fulfill. Akakievitch's need for the coat is directly tied to this concept. The only reason he needs the coat is to go to work, and without that need he would not purchase a new coat. All throughout the incident of the stolen coat, Akakievitch is advised to see this or that unnamed person about it. Each of these men only fulfill a social role. Their work or status defines them in just the way Akakievitch's work defines him in the beginning of the story. Even Akakievitch's superiors work to live and live to work.

9.7 SYMBOLS

The Old Overcoat

Akakievitch's old cloak is a potent symbol of his poverty. Its very appearance reflects his status as a man of low rank and no wealth. When he wears the old coat, his fellow office workers ridicule and exclude him, granting Akakievitch no respect. These same office workers' reactions to his new coat reflect just how much they judged him for his old coat, and more than that, his poverty. After the new coat is stolen, Akakievitch must wear the old one again, and this reversal immediately returns him back to his former status as a poor man who is deemed unworthy of the care of not only his co-workers, but society itself.

The New Overcoat

Akakievitch's new overcoat is a symbol of social mobility and being accepted by one's superiors. As soon as he puts on his new coat, everyone's opinion of him immediately changes. He receives the open admiration of his peers. The coat is a sort of key which unlocks higher levels of society for Akakievitch. He goes to a party hosted in his honor, which is something he never would have done before. He even begins to have a higher opinion

of himself, and his confidence grows. However, when the coat is lost, so is that new confidence and risen place in society. He cannot speak up for himself with the district police chief or the prominent personage without the confidence boost and social clout of the new coat.

The Dead Man on the Bridge

The ghost of Akakievitch that haunts Kalinkin Bridge at the end of the story is a symbol of the guilt and remorse people feel, or should feel, after being needlessly cruel, and a reminder that all humans should be treated fairly in life. The prominent personage feels guilty at not having helped Akakievitch, and the incident on the bridge is a reprisal for his actions. Akakievitch's ghost wants to take the prominent personage's cloak as retribution for the way he was ignored and denied in life. Thus, the dead man is a symbol of not only the guilt the prominent personage feels, but also a reminder that people deserve fair treatment in life and not just after death.

9.8 TONE

From the very beginning of "The Overcoat," the narrator sets a tone of dark humor. Instead of naming the department in which Akakievitch works, the narrator demurs. The narrator says that since all offices of the government are universally hated, it does not matter which department Akakievitch works for. This tone then colors the entire story. The narrator uses humor to describe Akakievitch's naming at his birth, to describe Akakievitch's superiors and peers, and to describe Akakievitch himself. The narrator also talks about the ridiculous obsessions of Akakievitch's fellow councillors, such as clothing and rank in society. The narrator paints a comical picture of the tailor, Petrovitch, saying Petrovitch's mood is dependent on his level of drunkenness.

Despite its humor, the story at times possesses a deep sense of tragic realism. The events of Akakievitch's life are reported dutifully and succinctly. As the story progresses, the humor of the situation lessens until Akakievitch loses his new overcoat. What was at first a simple story of gain and loss

takes on a tragic tone. When the supernatural enters the story, it is never said explicitly that there is a ghost on the bridge; Gogol only notes that a dead man has been seen there accosting passersby. The tone shifts away from realism again, as a dead man cannot steal people's overcoats. The tone is still somewhat comical, however, since the ghost is at last described as inhabiting the characteristics of the prominent personage. He acts proudly and frightens the police officer with his overbearing stature and demeanor. The comical tone returns to the story at its very end, but its realism has been completely drained away.

9.9 SETTING

Gogol sets the story in St. Petersburg, which is a city divided by class. Akakievitch lives in the poorer part of town while his co-workers live in the wealthier part. St. Petersburg is also described as bitterly cold. The rigid social hierarchy of the city imbues it with another type of coldness. The coldness that is shown to Akakievitch by his peers and superiors mirrors the cold of the winter. Even the narrator and townspeople are cold toward Akakievitch's struggle, with his death coming as almost an afterthought. Usually, the death of the main character would garner more description and emotion, but instead, the doctor tells the landlady to order a pine coffin for Akakievitch because it is cheaper. The narrator tells of the death in passing, as if he wants to get to the end of the story more quickly.

The existing social hierarchy is a large part of Gogol's setting for the story, and Akakievitch is a victim of that social structure. When his coat is stolen, no one in a position of power offers to help him. Because of his low standing in society, his options are limited, and because of his poverty, the coat is of utmost importance. When he is unable to gain help in finding the coat, he becomes ill and dies. The rigid social hierarchy contributes to this death since he is scolded by the prominent personage for even asking for help. When the "dead man" haunts Kalinkin Bridge and grabs at people's overcoats, Akakievitch has in turn become part of the setting. The dead man represents the conscience of those who have more money or opportunity.

Those who are accosted by the ghost should feel guilty about the divided and cold society in which they live.

9.10 IMPORTANT QUOTES

a) It must be known that Akakiy Akakievitch expressed himself chiefly by prepositions, adverbs, and scraps of phrases which had no meaning whatever. If the matter was a very difficult one, he had a habit of never completing his sentences; so that frequently, having begun a phrase with the words, “This, in fact, is quite—” he forgot to go on, thinking that he had already finished it.

This quote appears as Akakievitch visits Petrovitch in hopes that he can repair his old coat. It illustrates how difficult it is for Akakievitch to speak with others, as he cannot finish his sentences. This speech pattern reveals his timid nature. He can hardly convey his meaning to others with words. Akakievitch is all alone in the world as shown by his inability to communicate effectively.

b) All this, the noise, the talk, and the throng of people was rather overwhelming to Akakiy Akakievitch. He simply did not know where he stood, or where to put his hands, his feet, and his whole body.

This quote appears as Akakievitch enters the party thrown by his superiors at the office. At the party, Akakievitch is out of place like a fish out of water. He would rather be copying documents, and a party flusters him to a large degree. He does not know where to stand or what to say. He is a man who does not socialize, and he does not play the same game of social advancement as the others do.

c) A being disappeared who was protected by none, dear to none, interesting to none, and who never even attracted to himself the attention of those students of human nature who omit no opportunity of thrusting a pin through a common fly, and examining it under the microscope.

This quote appears after Akakievitch is buried. Upon Akakievitch’s death, the narrator makes a harsh judgment of his life. The narrator describes

how no one cared when he died to the extent that not even social scientists would care about the man's life. This lack of attention shows the utter meaninglessness of Akakievitch's struggle. No one cared about the man to any degree.

d) The Prominent Personage

His ordinary converse with his inferiors smacked of sternness, and consisted chiefly of three phrases: "How dare you?" "Do you know whom you are speaking to?" "Do you realise who stands before you?"

This quote appears as Akakievitch meets with the prominent personage, and it is a telling character portrait. The three questions the prominent personage often poses to people are meant to frighten his inferiors. He is a bullying personality who does not approach the topic of a conversation. He only addresses the social standing of those involved. The prominent personage does not wish to engage in content and only wishes to destroy the confidence of those below him on the social ladder.

e) Otherwise he was a very kind-hearted man, good to his comrades, and ready to oblige; but the rank of general threw him completely off his balance. On receiving any one of that rank, he became confused, lost his way, as it were, and never knew what to do.

This quote appears in the prominent personage's introduction. He is mean and strict to his inferiors, but he is amenable to his friends and those of his own rank. In an ironic turn, this overbearing man's confidence is shaken by men above him on the social ladder. He becomes "confused" and does not know what to do when someone above him is in the room.

9.11 LET US SUM UP

"The Overcoat" by Nikolai Gogol is a poignant short story that centers on Akaky Akakievich Bashmachkin, a low-ranking, impoverished clerk in St. Petersburg. His life revolves around his monotonous copying work, and he is content with his meager existence until his overcoat becomes threadbare.

After saving diligently, he commissions a new overcoat, which brings him a brief period of joy and a newfound sense of importance. However, this joy is short-lived when his overcoat is stolen. Akaky's attempts to seek help from the authorities are met with indifference and cruelty, leading to his untimely death. The story concludes with a ghostly twist as Akaky's spirit is said to haunt the city, reclaiming overcoats from unsuspecting citizens.

Gogol's "The Overcoat" is a seminal work in Russian literature, highlighting themes of social injustice, bureaucracy, and human dignity. Through Akaky's tragic story, Gogol critiques the dehumanizing effects of an indifferent society and the harsh realities faced by the lower classes. The narrative's blend of realism and supernatural elements is characteristic of Gogol's style, and his use of satire and pathos profoundly impacts the reader. Gogol's importance to Russian literature is significant; he is often regarded as a precursor to later Russian literary giants like Dostoevsky and Tolstoy, influencing their exploration of the human condition and societal issues. "The Overcoat" remains a powerful, enduring story that continues to resonate with readers for its timeless commentary on the human spirit and societal flaws.

9.12 MULTIPLE CHOICE QUESTIONS (MCQs)

1. What is the main occupation of Akaky Akakievich Bashmachkin?
 - a. Tailor
 - b. Teacher
 - c. Government clerk
 - d. Shopkeeper
2. Why does Akaky need a new overcoat?
 - a. He lost his old one
 - b. His old one was stolen
 - c. His old one is too worn out to repair
 - d. He wants to impress his colleagues

3. Who does Akaky consult to repair his old overcoat?
 - a) A cobbler
 - b) A tailor named Petrovich
 - c) His landlord
 - d) A fellow clerk
4. How does Akaky save money for his new overcoat?
 - a) He takes on a second job
 - b) He sells his belongings
 - c) He meticulously cuts back on his expenses
 - d) He wins a lottery
5. What effect does the new overcoat have on Akaky's colleagues?
 - a) They continue to mock him
 - b) They become jealous and steal it
 - c) They show him newfound respect
 - d) They don't notice any change
6. What happens to Akaky on his way home from the party?
 - a) He gets lost in the snow
 - b) He is attacked and robbed of his new overcoat
 - c) He meets an old friend
 - d) He falls ill and faints
7. How do the authorities respond to Akaky's plea for help after his overcoat is stolen?
 - a) They immediately launch an investigation
 - b) They sympathize but offer no help
 - c) They dismiss his concerns and treat him with disdain
 - d) They provide him with a new overcoat

8. What ultimately happens to Akaky Akakievich?
 - a) He recovers his stolen overcoat
 - b) He becomes wealthy and respected
 - c) He succumbs to illness and dies
 - d) He moves to another city
9. What begins to happen in St. Petersburg after Akaky's death?
 - a) The authorities find the thieves
 - b) Akaky's ghost is rumored to haunt the city, stealing overcoats
 - c) The government enacts new laws for better protection
 - d) His colleagues organize a memorial
10. Who does Akaky's ghost confront in a final act of retribution?
 - a) Petrovich, the tailor
 - b) The high-ranking official who dismissed him
 - c) His landlord
 - d) A fellow clerk who mocked him

9.13 SELF- ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

- Q 1. Describe Akaky Akakievich's attitude towards his job. How does this attitude affect his interactions with others?

Ans. Akaky Akakievich Bashmachkin approaches his job as a government clerk with utmost seriousness and dedication. His meticulousness and attention to detail in copying documents reflect his conscientious nature. However, this singular focus on his work makes him socially awkward and vulnerable to ridicule from his colleagues, who mock him for his lack of social skills and meek demeanor. Despite this, Akaky remains committed to his duties, finding solace in his routine and the sense of purpose it provides.

- Q2 What role does Akaky's overcoat play in his life, and how does it impact his sense of identity?

Ans. Akaky's overcoat is not merely a piece of clothing but a symbol of his

aspirations and dignity. As a poor and unassuming clerk, his overcoat represents a modest attempt at self-improvement and social acceptance. When his old overcoat becomes too worn out to wear, Akaky's quest for a new one becomes a focal point of his life. Saving diligently and sacrificing other comforts, Akaky invests not just in a garment but in a hope for a better, more respected existence. The new overcoat transforms his self-image, giving him a newfound confidence and eliciting admiration from his colleagues, albeit briefly.

Q3. Discuss the significance of the party scene in "The Overcoat." How does it affect Akaky's life and the overall narrative?

Ans. The party scene in "The Overcoat" serves as a pivotal moment in Akaky's life, marking a rare instance of social interaction and celebration. Initially reluctant to attend, Akaky is persuaded by his colleagues to join them, showcasing his desire for acceptance and belonging. However, the theft of his overcoat after the party serves as a tragic turning point, unraveling the brief happiness and newfound respect he had gained. The incident exposes Akaky to the harsh realities of his society's indifference towards the vulnerable and marginalized, ultimately leading to his decline and demise.

Q4. How does Gogol use irony in "The Overcoat"? Provide examples from the story.

Ans. Gogol employs irony throughout "The Overcoat" to underscore the disparity between Akaky's modest aspirations and the cruelty of fate. One example of irony is Akaky's meticulous saving to afford a new overcoat, only to have it stolen shortly after its completion. Another instance is the transformation in Akaky's social status following the acquisition of his overcoat, which highlights society's shallow and fleeting judgments. The story's conclusion, where Akaky's ghost seeks retribution by stealing overcoats, further emphasizes the tragic irony of his unfulfilled life and society's disregard for the downtrodden.

Q5. Discuss the theme of alienation in "The Overcoat." How does Akaky's experience reflect this theme?

Ans. “The Overcoat” explores the theme of alienation through Akaky Akakievich’s isolation and marginalization within his bureaucratic environment. As a low-ranking clerk, Akaky is largely ignored and mocked by his colleagues, who view him as insignificant and pitiable. His inability to connect with others and his obsession with his work further contribute to his social isolation. The theft of his overcoat exacerbates Akaky’s sense of alienation, highlighting his vulnerability and the indifference of those around him. Ultimately, Gogol portrays Akaky as a tragic figure trapped in a dehumanizing system, underscoring the pervasive theme of alienation in his narrative.

9.14 ANSWER KEY (MCQs)

1. a) What is the right time to begin everything? Who are the right people to listen to? What is the most important thing to do?
2. c) A hermit living in the forest
3. b) He prefers solitude and simple living
4. c) Helps him with his gardening work
5. c) A wounded man
6. b) Assassinate the king
7. c) He tends to his wounds and cares for him through the night
8. b) He pledges his loyalty to the king
9. c) The present
10. c) To do good to the person you are with

9.15 SUGGESTED READING

<https://www.eastoftheweb.com/short-stories/UBooks/Over.shtml>

<https://www.sparknote.com/short-stories/the-overcoat/summary/>

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nikolai_Gogol

FRANZ KAFKA

STRUCTURE

- 10.1 Introduction**
- 10.2 Objectives**
- 10.3 Introduction to the writer**
- 10.4 Kafka's Times and Influences**
- 10.5 Kafka's Works**
- 10.6 Self-Assessment Questions (SAQs)**
- 10.7 Examination Oriented Questions**
- 10.8 Let Us Sum Up**
- 10.9 Answer Key (SAQs)**
- 10.10 Suggested Reading**

10.1 INTRODUCTION

Franz Kafka is regarded as one of the most influential authors of 20th century. Kafka remains in the forefront of literary discussion. "The Metamorphosis," "In the Penal Colony" and "The Judgment" are among his most extensively read stories. On the other hand it is said that the *The Trial* is Kafka's best known long fiction, with its accounts based on misinformation and presents the mythic imagery of a world gone mad. Unfortunately, most of Kafka's works were published posthumously.

10.2 OBJECTIVES

The objective of this lesson is to introduce Franz Kafka to the learner. The lesson aims to acquaint the learner with the man who has been one of the most influential writers of twentieth century.

10.3 INTRODUCTION TO THE WRITER

Franz Kafka was born into a middle-class, German-speaking Jewish family on 3 July 1883 in Prague, Bohemia, now the Czech Republic. He was the eldest of the six children. However, his two younger brothers died in infancy and three younger sisters (Gabriele, Valerie, and Ottilie) perished in concentration camps.

His father, Hermann Kafka, was a businessman who established himself as an independent retailer of men's and women's fancy goods and accessories, employing up to 15 people. But, personally, he is described as an ill-tempered domestic tyrant, who on many occasions directed his anger towards his son and did not appreciate his escape into literature. All his life Franz Kafka struggled to come to terms with his domineering father.

Kafka's mother, Julie, was the daughter of a prosperous brewer and was better educated than her husband. She helped to manage her husband's business and worked in it as much as 12 hours a day. The children were largely raised by a series of governesses and servants.

From 1889 to 1893, Franz attended the Deutsche Knabenschule, the boys' elementary school in Prague. He was sent to German schools, not Czech, which demonstrates his father's desire for social advancement. His Jewish upbringing was limited mostly to his bar mitzvah and going to the synagogue four times a year with his father, which didn't give him much to go on.

In 1901, he graduated from the Altstädter Gymnasium, the rigorous classics-oriented secondary school with eight grade levels. He did well in school, taking classes in Latin, Greek and History. After secondary school he went on to Charles Ferdinand University, where at first he decided to study chemistry, but switched after two weeks to law. In the end of his first year, he

met another student, a year younger than he was, Max Brod, who was a close friend of his throughout his life, together with the journalist Felix Weltsch, who also studied law. Kafka obtained the degree of Doctor of Law on 18 June 1906 and performed an obligatory year of unpaid service as law clerk for the civil and criminal courts.

At the end of 1907 Kafka started working in a huge Italian insurance company, where he stayed for nearly a year. His correspondence of that period suggests that he was unhappy with his working schedule—8 p.m. to 6 a.m.— as it made it extremely difficult for him to concentrate on his writing. In 1908, he resigned, and few weeks later found more suitable employment with the Worker's Accident Insurance Institute for the Kingdom of Bohemia. He worked there until 1922 where he retired for reasons of ill health.

He often referred to his job of an insurance officer as a “bread job”, a job done only to pay the bills. However, he did not show any signs of indifference towards his job, as the several promotions that he received during his career prove that he was a hardworking employee. In addition, Kafka was also committed to his literary work.

In 1912, at the home of his lifelong friend Max Brod, Kafka met Felice Bauer, who lived in Berlin. Over the next five years they corresponded a great deal, met occasionally, and twice were engaged to be married. Their relationship finally ended in 1917.

In 1917, Kafka began to suffer from tuberculosis, which would require frequent convalescence during which he was supported by his family, most notably his sister Ottla. In the early 1920s he developed an intense relationship with Czech journalist and writer Milena Jesenská. In 1923, he briefly moved to Berlin in the hope of distancing himself from his family's influence to concentrate on his writing. In Berlin, he lived with Dora Diamant, a 25-year-old kindergarten teacher from an orthodox Jewish family, who was independent enough to have escaped her past in the ghetto. Dora became his lover, and influenced Kafka's interest in the *Talmud* - a book of Jewish law.

It is generally agreed that Kafka suffered from clinical depression and social anxiety throughout his entire life. He also suffered from migraines, insomnia, constipation, boils, and other ailments, all usually brought on by excessive stress and strains. He attempted to counteract all of this by a regimen of naturopathic treatments, such as a vegetarian diet and the consumption of large quantities of unpasteurized milk.

Despite all that, his tuberculosis worsened; he returned to Prague, then went to Dr. Hoffmann sanatorium for treatment, where he died on 3 June 1924. His remains are buried alongside his parents under a two-metre obelisk in Prague's New Jewish Cemetery in Olsanske.

Before he died, Kafka asked Max Brod to destroy all of his writings after his death, but Brod didn't comply with his wishes. Over the course of the 1920s and 1930s, Kafka's works were published and translated, instantly becoming landmarks of 20th century literature. His emphasis on the absurdity of existence, the alienating experience of modern life, and the cruelty and incomprehensibility of authoritarian power reverberated strongly with a reading public that had just survived World War I and was on its way to a second world war.

At no time did Kafka seek refuge from his culturally and socially alienated situation by joining literary or social circles — something many of his fellow writers did. He remained an outcast, suffering from the consequences of his partly self-imposed seclusion, and yet welcoming it for the sake of literary productivity. Anxious although he was to use his positions, as well as his engagements to Felice Bauer and Julie Wohryzek, as a means to gain recognition for his writing, his life story is, nevertheless, one long struggle against his feelings of guilt and inferiority.

10.4 KAFKA'S TIMES AND INFLUENCES

At the time, Prague was the capital of Bohemia, part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Prague boasted of a large Jewish population that included

the Kafkas, though the family had little daily concern for the faith and rarely attended synagogue. (Kafka regarded his bar mitzvah as a meaningless joke.) Prague's working class majority spoke Czech, while the elites spoke German, the language of the empire's rulers. Kafka knew both languages but was most comfortable with German. Being a German speaker in a predominantly Czech-speaking area and a Jew with little connection to Judaism, Kafka struggled his entire life with a sense of alienation from those around him. Kafka shared the fate of much of Western Jewry — people who were largely emancipated from their specifically Jewish ways and yet not fully assimilated into the culture of the countries where they lived. Although Kafka became extremely interested in Jewish culture after meeting a troupe of Yiddish actors in 1911, and although he began to study Hebrew shortly after that, it was not until late in his life that he became deeply interested in his heritage. His close relationship with Dora Dymant, his steady and understanding companion of his last years, contributed considerably toward this development. But even if Kafka had not been Jewish, it is hard to see how his artistic and religious sensitivity could have remained untouched by the ancient Jewish traditions of Prague which reached back to the city's tenth-century origin.

In addition to Kafka's German, Czech, and Jewish heritages, there was also the Austrian element into which Kafka had been born and in which he had been brought up. Prague was the major second capital of the Austrian Empire (after Vienna) since the early sixteenth century, and although Kafka was no friend of Austrian politics, it is important to emphasize this Austrian component of life in Prague because Kafka has too often been called a Czech writer — especially in America. Kafka's name is also grouped too often with German writers, which is accurate only in the sense that he belongs to the German-speaking world.

For his recurring theme of human alienation, Kafka is deeply indebted to Prague and his situation there as a social outcast, a victim of the friction between Czechs and Germans, Jews and non-Jews. To understand Kafka, it is important to realize that in Prague the atmosphere of medieval mysticism and Jewish orthodoxy lingered until after World War II, when the Communist regime began

getting rid of most of its remnants. To this day, however, Kafka's tiny flat in Alchemists' Lane behind the towering Hradshin Castle is a major attraction for those in search of traces of Kafka. The haunting mood of Prague's narrow, cobblestoned streets, its slanted roofs, and its myriad backyards comes alive in the surreal settings of Kafka's stories. His simple, sober, and yet dense language is traced to the fact that in Prague the German language had been exposed to manifold Slavic influences for centuries and was virtually cut off from the mainstream language as spoken and written in Germany and Austria. Prague was a linguistic island as far as German was concerned, and while the Czech population of Prague doubled within the last two decades of the nineteenth century, the percentage of German Jews sank to a mere seven percent. The result was that Kafka actually wrote in a language which was on the verge of developing its own characteristics. This absence of any gap between the spoken and written word in his language is probably the secret behind the enormous appeal of his language, whose deceptive simplicity comes across in every decent translation.

To one extent or another, all of Kafka's works bear the unmistakable imprint of the nerve-racking struggle between his humility and hypersensitivity (his mother's heritage) and the crudity and superficiality of his father, who looked at his son's writing with indifference and, at times, with contempt.

The nature of Kafka's writings allows for a diverse and a variety of interpretations and critics have put his works and prose into a variety of literary schools. Some accused him of distorting reality while some others maintained that he was offering a critique of capitalism. The hopelessness and absurdity common to his works are seen as illustrative of existentialism. According to some critics, it is the expressionist movement that has had an influence on Kafka's writings; however, it is hard to deny that major chunk of his literary output was associated with the experimental modernist genre.

10.5 KAFKA'S WORKS

While Kafka strove to earn a living, he also poured himself into his writing work. An old friend named Max Brod would prove crucial in supporting Kafka's

literary work both during his life and long after it. Kafka's status as a celebrity writer only came after his death. During his lifetime, he published just a sliver of his overall work.

His most popular and best-selling short story, "The Metamorphosis", was completed in 1912 and published in 1915. The story was written from Kafka's third-floor room, which offered a direct view of the Vltava River and its toll bridge. "I would stand at the window for long periods," he wrote in his diary in 1912, "and was frequently tempted to amaze the toll collector on the bridge below by my plunge."

"The Metamorphosis", masterfully written, is a short story about Gregor Samsa, a man who devotes his life to his family and work, for nothing in return. But only when he is transformed into a helpless beetle does he begin to develop a sense of self-identity and understanding of the relationships around him. The underlying theme of "The Metamorphosis" is an existential view that suggests that any given choice made by an individual will govern the later course of a person's life, and that the person has ultimate will over making choices. In this case, Gregor's lack of identity has caused him to be numb to everything around him. Gregor Samsa, a traveling salesman, wakes up in his bed to find himself transformed into a large insect. He looks around his room, which appears normal, and decides to go back to sleep to forget about what has happened. He attempts to roll over, only to discover that he cannot due to his new body—he is stuck on his hard, convex back. He tries to scratch an itch on his stomach, but when he touches himself with one of his many new legs, he is disgusted. He reflects on how dreary life as a traveling salesman is and how he would quit if his parents and sister did not depend so much on his income. He turns to the clock and sees that he has overslept and missed his train to work.

Gregor's mother knocks on the door, and when he answers her, Gregor finds that his voice has changed. His family suspects that he may be ill, so they ask him to open the door, which he keeps locked out of habit. He tries to get out of bed, but he cannot maneuver his transformed body. While struggling to

move, he hears his office manager come into the family's apartment to find out why Gregor has not shown up to work. He eventually rocks himself to the floor and calls out that he will open the door momentarily.

Through the door, the office manager warns Gregor of the consequences of missing work and hints that Gregor's recent work has not been satisfactory. Gregor protests and tells the office manager that he will be there shortly. Neither his family nor the office manager can understand what Gregor says, and they suspect that something may be seriously wrong with him. Gregor manages to unlock and open the door with his mouth, since he has no hands. He begs the office manager's forgiveness for his late start. Horrified by Gregor's appearance, the office manager runs from the apartment. Gregor tries to catch up with the fleeing office manager, but his father drives him back into the bedroom with a cane and a rolled newspaper.

Gregor injures himself squeezing back through the doorway, and his father slams the door shut. Gregor, exhausted, falls asleep. Gregor wakes and sees that someone has put milk and bread in his room. Initially excited, he quickly discovers that he has no taste for milk, once one of his favorite foods. He settles himself under a couch and listens to the quiet apartment. The next morning, his sister Grete comes in, sees that he has not touched the milk, and replaces it with rotting food scraps, which Gregor happily eats. This begins a routine in which his sister feeds him and cleans up while he hides under the couch, afraid that his appearance will frighten her. Gregor spends his time listening through the wall to his family members talking. They often discuss the difficult financial situation they find themselves in now that Gregor can't provide for them. Gregor also learns that his mother wants to visit him, but his sister and father will not let her.

Gregor grows more comfortable with his changed body. He begins climbing the walls and ceiling for amusement. As his sister and her mother begin taking furniture away from his room, Gregor finds their actions deeply distressing. He tries to save a picture on the wall of a woman wearing a fur hat, fur scarf, and

a fur muff. Gregor's mother sees him hanging on the wall and passes out. Grete calls out to Gregor—the first time anyone has spoken directly to him since his transformation. Gregor runs out of the room and goes into the kitchen. His father returns from his new job, and misunderstands the situation, believes Gregor has tried to attack the mother. The father throws apples at Gregor, and one sinks into his back and remains lodged there. Gregor manages to get back into his bedroom but is severely injured.

Gregor's family begins leaving the bedroom door open for a few hours each evening so he can watch them. He sees his family wearing down as a result of his transformation and their new poverty. Even Grete seems to resent Gregor now, feeding him and cleaning up with a minimum of effort. The family replaces their maid with a cheap cleaning lady who tolerates Gregor's appearance and speaks to him occasionally. They also take on three boarders, requiring them to move excess furniture into Gregor's room, which distresses Gregor. Gregor has also lost his taste for the food Grete brings and he almost entirely ceases eating.

One evening, the cleaning lady leaves Gregor's door open while the boarders lounge about the living room. Grete has been asked to play the violin for them, and Gregor creeps out of his bedroom to listen. The boarders, who initially seemed interested in Grete, grow bored with her performance, but Gregor is transfixed by it. One of the boarders spots Gregor and they become alarmed. Gregor's father tries to shove the boarders back into their rooms, but the three men protest and announce that they will move out immediately without paying rent because of the disgusting conditions in the apartment.

Grete tells her parents that they must get rid of Gregor or they will all be ruined. Her father agrees, wishing Gregor could understand them and would leave of his own accord. Gregor does in fact understand and slowly moves back to the bedroom. There, determined to rid his family of his presence, Gregor dies.

Upon discovering that Gregor is dead, the family feels a great sense of relief. The father kicks out the boarders and decides to fire the cleaning lady,

who has disposed of Gregor's body. The family takes a trolley ride out to the countryside, during which they consider their finances. Months of spare living as a result of Gregor's condition have left them with substantial savings. They decide to move to a better apartment. Grete appears to have her strength and beauty back, which leads her parents to think about finding her a husband, hinting at a new beginning.

Kafka followed up "The Metamorphosis" with *Mediation*, a collection of short stories, in 1913, and then "Before the Law", a short story, a year later.

Even with his worsening health, Kafka continued to write. In 1916, he completed "The Judgment", which spoke directly about the relationship he shared with his father. "The Judgment" is the tale of a quiet young man caught in an outrageous situation. The story starts off by following its main character, Georg Bendemann, as he deals with a series of day-to-day concerns: his upcoming marriage, his family's business affairs, his long-distance correspondence with an old friend, and, perhaps most importantly, his relationship with his aged father.

Although Kafka's third-person narration maps out the circumstances of Georg's life with considerable detail, "The Judgment" is not really a sprawling work of fiction. All the main events of the story occur on a "Sunday morning in the height of spring" (49). And, until the very end, all the main events of the story take place in the small, gloomy house that Georg shares with his father.

But as the story progresses, Georg's life takes a bizarre turn. For much of "The Judgment", Georg's father is depicted as a weak, helpless man—a shadow, it seems, of the imposing businessman he once was. Yet this father transforms into a figure of enormous knowledge and power. He springs up in fury when Georg is tucking him into bed, viciously mocks Georg's friendships and upcoming marriage, and ends by condemning his son to "death by drowning". Georg flees the scene. And instead of thinking over or rebelling against what he has seen, he rushes to a nearby bridge, swings over the railing, and carries out his father's wish: "With weakening grip he was still holding on when he spied between the railings a motor-bus coming which would easily cover the noise of

his fall, called in a low voice: ‘Dear parents, I have always loved you, all the same,’ and let himself drop” (63).

Of all his stories, “The Judgment” was apparently the one that pleased Kafka the most. And the writing method that he used for this bleak tale became one of the standards that he used to judge his other pieces of fiction.

Later works included “In the Penal Colony” and “A Country Doctor”, both finished in 1919.

In 1924, an ill but still working Kafka finished *A Hunger Artist*, which features four stories that demonstrate the concise and lucid style that marked his writing at the end of his life.

But Kafka, still living with the demons that plagued him with self-doubt, was reluctant to unleash his work on the world. He requested that Brod, who doubled as his literary executor, destroy any unpublished manuscripts.

Fortunately, Brod did not adhere to his friend’s wishes and in 1925 published *The Trial*, a dark, paranoid tale that proved to be the author’s most successful novel. The story centres on the life of Josef K., who is forced to defend himself in a hopeless court system against a crime that is never revealed to him or to the reader.

The following year, Brod released *The Castle*, which again railed against a faceless and dominating bureaucracy. In the novel, the protagonist, whom the reader knows only as K., tries to meet with the mysterious authorities who rule his village. In *The Castle*, one of Kafka’s last works, the setting is a village dominated by a castle. Time seems to have stopped in this wintry landscape, and nearly all the scenes occur in the dark. K. arrives at the village claiming to be a land surveyor appointed by the castle authorities. His claim is rejected by the village officials, and the novel recounts K.’s efforts to gain recognition from an authority that is as elusive as Josef K.’s courts. But K. is not a victim; he is an aggressor, challenging both the petty, arrogant officials and the villagers who accept their authority. All of his stratagems fail. Like Josef K., he makes love to

a servant, the barmaid Frieda, but she leaves him when she discovers that he is simply using her. Brod observes that Kafka intended that K. should die exhausted by his efforts, but that on his deathbed he was to receive a permit to stay. There are new elements in this novel; it is tragic, not desolate.

In 1927, the novel *Amerika* was published. The story hinges on a boy, Karl Rossmann, who is sent by his family to America, where his innocence and simplicity are exploited everywhere he travels. *Amerika* struck at the same father issues that were prevalent in so much of Kafka's other work. But the story also spoke to Kafka's love of travel books and memoirs (he adored *The Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin*) and his longing to see the world. In 1931, Brod published the short story "The Great Wall of China," which Kafka had originally crafted 14 years before.

Kafka's writing has inspired the term "Kafkaesque", which has been used to describe concepts and situations reminiscent of his work. The term could be defined as a condition or a situation wherein one enters a surreal world in which all control patterns, all the plans, the whole way in which one has configured one's own behavior, begins to fall to pieces, when one finds oneself against a force that does not lend itself to the way you perceive the world.

"You don't give up, you don't lie down and die. What you do is struggle against this with all of your equipment, with whatever you have. But of course you don't stand a chance. That's Kafkaesque."

Examples include instances in which people are overpowered by bureaucracies, often in a surreal, nightmarish milieu that evokes feelings of senselessness, disorientation, and helplessness. Characters in a Kafkaesque setting often lack a clear course of action to escape the situation. Kafkaesque elements often appear in existential works, but the term has transcended the literary realm to apply to real-life occurrences and situations that are incomprehensibly complex, bizarre, or illogical." With much of Kafka's writing concerning troubled individuals in a nightmarishly impersonal and bureaucratic

world, critics and fans alike have interpreted the works of Kafka in the context of a variety of literary schools, from modernism to existentialism.

His emphasis on the absurdity of existence, the alienating experience of modern life, and the cruelty and incomprehensibility of authoritarian power reverberated strongly with a reading public that had just survived World War I and was on its way to a second world war.

The term '*Kafkaesque*', as a style, is seen by many as a synonymy for "surreal". His stories are strikingly strange, symbolize and signify absurdity of life. He delves deep into the psychological layers of the character and characterizes the bizarre side of one's imagination and thinking. He enjoyed playing with metaphors and his expression was metaphorical in articulation. Though his points were simple and straight but it was complex and critical to decipher. Today, people use the word *Kafkaesque* to signify senseless and sinister complexity, and Kafka's reputation as one of the most important writers of modern times is undiminished.

10.6 SELF-ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS (SAQs)

1. Franz Kafka was born into a middle-class, German-speaking _____ family.
2. Kafka's writing has inspired the term _____.
3. _____ is a short story about Gregor Samsa, a man who devotes his life to his family and work, for nothing in return.
4. In _____, one of Kafka's last works, the setting is a village dominated by a castle.
5. Franz Kafka is regarded as a leading and one of the most influential _____ century writer.
6. How is K executed by being _____?
7. *The Trial* was published in _____.

8. K. was shocked when he learned he could reach the court offices (located in the attic) by_____.
9. Kafka wanted all his manuscripts _____ after he died.
- 10 *Amerika* was published in _____.

10.7 EXAMINATION ORIENTED QUESTIONS

1 Draw a biographical sketch of Franz Kafka?

2 What does the term “Kafkaesque” mean?

10.8 LET US SUM UP

Incredibly, at the time of his death Kafka’s name was known only to small group of readers. It was only after he died and Max Brod went against the demands of his friend that Kafka and his work gained fame. His books garnered favor during World War II, especially, and greatly influenced German literature. As the 1960s took shape and Eastern Europe was under the fist of bureaucratic Communist governments, Kafka’s writing resonated particularly strongly with readers. So alive and vibrant were the tales that Kafka spun about man and faceless organizations that a new term was introduced into the English lexicon: “Kafkaesque.” The measure of Kafka’s appeal and value as a writer was quantified in 1988, when his handwritten manuscript of *The Trial* was sold at auction for \$1.98 million, at that point the highest price ever paid for a modern manuscript.

10.9 ANSWER KEY (SAQs)

1. Jewish
2. Kafkaesque
3. The Metamorphosis
4. The Castle
5. twentieth
6. Stabbed in the heart
7. 1925
8. stepping over Titorelli's bed and opening the door
9. Burned
10. 1927

10.10 SUGGESTED READING

- Flores, Angel, ed. The Kafka Debate: New Perspectives for Our Time. New York: Gordian Press, 1977.
- Gray, Ronald, ed. Kafka: A Collection of Critical Essays. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice- Hall, Inc., 1962.

FRANZ KAFKA : *THE TRIAL*

STRUCTURE

- 11.1 Introduction**
- 11.2 Objectives**
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11.1 INTRODUCTION

The Trial written by Franz Kafka and published posthumously in 1925, is a seminal work of 20th-century literature that delves into themes of existential angst and bureaucratic absurdity. The novel centers on Josef K., a senior bank clerk, who is inexplicably arrested by an unidentified authority for an unspecified crime. Throughout the story, Josef navigates an opaque and nightmarish legal system, facing increasingly surreal and bewildering circumstances. Kafka's narrative captures the disorientation and helplessness of the individual against a faceless and indifferent power.

11.2 OBJECTIVES

The objective of this lesson is to summarize the story of *The Trial*. The summary will help learners of this course to comprehend the plot with all its intricacies.

11.3 PLOT OVERVIEW

An ambitious, worldly young bank official, named Joseph K. is arrested by two warders “one fine morning”, although he has done nothing wrong. K. is indignant and outraged. The morning happens to be that of his thirtieth birthday. One year later, on the morning of his thirty-first birthday, two warders again come for K. They take him to a quarry outside of town and kill him in the name of the Law. *The Trial* is the chronicle of that intervening year of K.'s case, his struggles and encounters with the invisible Law and the untouchable Court. It is an account, ultimately, of state-induced self-destruction. Yet, as in all of Kafka's best writing, the “meaning” is far from clear. Just as the parable related by the chaplain in Chapter Nine (called “The Doorkeeper” or “Before the Law”) elicits endless commentary from students of the Law, so has *The Trial* been a touchstone of twentieth-century critical interpretation. As some commentators have noted, it has, in parts, the quality of revealed truth; as such it is ultimately unresolvable—a mirror for any sectarian reading.

The story was written during 1914-1915, while Kafka was an official in the Workmen's Accident Insurance Institute for the Kingdom of Bohemia. On

one level we can see in *The Trial* a satirical pillorying of the Austro-Hungarian bureaucracy of Kafka's day. Yet to many readers it is eerily prescient of the psychological weaponry used by the insidious totalitarian regimes to come, of the legally-sanctioned death machines Kafka never lived to see. It is also an unfinished novel, and this is apparent in the final chapters. It is at times as suffocating to read as the airless rooms of the Court that it describes. The German title, *Der Prozess*, connotes both a "trial" and a "process," and it is perhaps this maddening feeling of inevitability that leaves a lasting visceral impression: the machinery has been set in motion, and the process will grind toward conclusion despite our most desperate exhortations.

11.4 LIST OF CHARACTERS

Anna: The maid who should have brought K.'s coffee the morning of his arrest.

Assistant Manager: K.'s superior and unctuous rival at the Bank who becomes his adversary when the manufacturer complains about K. He is only too willing to catch K. in a compromising situation.

Bertold: The student lover of the usher's wife. He is a symbol of the corruption of the Court's hierarchy, himself a pyramid-climber.

Block: A tradesman and client of Huld's, whose submissiveness before Huld causes K. to dismiss the lawyer.

Fraulein Burstner: A boarder at Frau Grubach's, where K. lives. She lets him kiss her one night, but then rebuffs his advances. K.'s arrest takes place in her room. His desire for her and her refusal to deal with him put her in a unique position among the women he meets. She makes a brief reappearance in the novel's final pages.

Elsa: K.'s girlfriend at the time he meets Leni. She does not appear in the novel.

Erna: K.'s cousin who informs her father, K.'s Uncle Karl, of the trial.

Examining Magistrate: The indifferent and corrupt judge who presides at K.'s first interrogation.

Frau Grubach: The elderly lady who owns the boarding house where K. lives and is arrested. She holds K. in high esteem.

Hasterer: A lawyer friend of K.'s, whom he wants to telephone during his arrest. He does not appear in the novel.

Dr Huld: A key figure in K.'s case. His name means "grace" or "meekness" in German. Through inefficiency and sickness (or perverted religiousness), he prevents K.'s case from getting a fair trial. He stands for the ambiguity of the Court.

Inspector: He conducts K.'s arrest with Willem and Franz.

Joseph K: The hero and protagonist of the novel, K. is the Chief Clerk of a bank. Ambitious, shrewd, more competent than kind, he is on the fast track to success until he is arrested one morning for no reason. There begins his slide into desperation as he tries to grapple with an all-powerful Court and an invisible Law.

Uncle Karl: K.'s impetuous uncle from the country, formerly his guardian. Karl insists that K. hire Huld, the lawyer. Worried about K.'s trial because of the shame it brings over the family, he introduces him to his friend Dr. Huld.

Kaminer, Kullich, and Rabensteiner: K.'s three colleagues from the Bank whom the Inspector brings along. Their presence demonstrates the inseparability of K.'s case from his Bank life.

Captain Lanz : Frau Grubach's nephew, K.'s neighbour.

Leni: The servant and mistress of Dr. Huld, she reflects the corrupt atmosphere of the Court. She pretends to love K., but tries to seduce him to make him subservient to Huld.

Manufacturer: One of the countless mediators. He tells K. about Titorelli, who already knows about his case.

Fräulein Montag: Fräulein Bürstner's friend who is moving in with her. She functions as her roommate's mediator with K.

Priest: He tells K. the parable "Before the Law" in the cathedral and discusses its meaning with him.

Titorelli: The painter whom K. tracks down in his efforts to find outside help. He is the only one to tell K. about the nature of the Court he is up against and about his hopeless case. As the Court painter, he has some knowledge of K.'s case.

Whipper: He executes the ancient law that "punishment is just as it is inevitable" on the warders.

Willem and Franz: The warders who arrest K.

11.5 SUMMARY

11.5.1 Chapter 1

When his landlady's cook does not bring his breakfast at the expected hour, Joseph K. rings for her. A man whom he has never seen before knocks and steps into his bedroom. Another waits in the next room. The men inform him that he has been arrested, and request that he return to his room. They can offer no explanations—they are mere underlings, his warders. K. does not know whether this is some sort of joke or not. It is his thirtieth birthday, and perhaps his colleagues at the Bank are playing a prank. But he doesn't want to be too rash or show his hand, especially with these fools to whom he feels superior.

He returns to his room and stews. Through the windows of the apartment across the way an old man and woman have been following the proceedings. With a startling shout, one of the warders summons K. to see the Inspector. The warders make him change into a black suit and

walk him into an adjoining room. The room has recently been rented to Fraulein Burstner, a typist. Now it has been temporarily taken over by an Inspector and three young men. The Inspector can tell K. no more than that he has been arrested, and that his protestations of innocence are unbecoming. K. is infuriated, but unable to extract any useful explanation. The Inspector says that K. is free to go about his business for the time being, then departs.

K. goes to the bank, but foregoes his usual evening stroll, appearance at the beer hall, and weekly visit to Elsa, the cabaret waitress. He feels that the morning's events have caused an upheaval in the household of Frau Grubach, and wants to set things right. Frau Grubach is darning socks in her room when K. returns. K. knocks, enters, and has a chat with her. She was not troubled by the presence of the warders or the inspectors. K. is her most valued lodger, and she will find no complaint with him. He asks if Fraulein Burstner has returned. Frau Grubach says no, the young woman is out at the theater, from which she always returns quite late.

K. waits for Fraulein Burstner to return. When she does, he goes with her to her room and apologizes for its being used by strangers on his account. He explains to her what happened, and in his re-enactment of the morning, gives a shout that rouses Frau Grubach's nephew sleeping in an adjoining room. Fraulein Burstner is startled. K. rushes to her to comfort her, and ends up covering her in kisses. He returns to his room in good spirits, though he's concerned that the captain might make trouble for the landlady (she is concerned about running a respectable establishment).

11.5.2 Chapter 2

A phone call informs Joseph K. that a brief inquiry into his case is to take place the following Sunday. He is given the address where he is to go, but not the time. When the Assistant Manager of the bank, with whom he has not gotten on well, makes the overture of inviting him to join him on Sunday on his yacht, K. refuses the invitation.

Resolving to arrive at the appointed destination at nine a.m.—presumably a logical starting time for court business—K. sets out Sunday morning on foot. He does not want to involve anyone in his case, not even a taxi driver. And he does not want to lower himself before this Court of Inquiry by being too obsessively punctual. The street runs through a poor neighborhood of tenements, which on this weekend morning is alive with inhabitants, their calls, shouts, and laughter. When he reaches the building, K. is annoyed to find that it is a large one with several separate stairwells, multiple floors, and no indication of which might be the correct apartment. He chooses a stairway and ascends, maneuvering around children and pausing for their marble games. In order to gain a peek at each room, which he hopes will indicate to him where the inquiry is to take place, K. invents the ploy that he is looking for a joiner named Lanz. Door after door, floor after floor, he finds poor families who do not know Lanz but recommend other joiners or men with names similar to “Lanz.” Finally, on the fifth floor, when he is exasperated to the point of giving up, a woman washing children’s clothes in a basin opens the door and tells him to enter and go through to another door.

K. enters the second room—a meeting hall with a gallery, all quite packed with people. He is led by a small boy through the throng up to a crowded platform at the other end of the hall. There, a man whom he takes to be the Examining Magistrate rebukes him for being over an hour late (it is now past ten a.m.). K. gives a cool reply that he is here now, and at this half of the crowd bursts into applause. Emboldened by this, but concerned that the other half of the crowd remains stonily silent, he sets out to win over the entire audience. The Magistrate asks him if he is a house painter, to which he replies that he is the chief clerk of a large bank. K. then proceeds to dominate the meeting. He impugns the secret policy that is evidently at work here. He seizes the Magistrate’s notebook and holds it up with disdain before dropping

it onto the Magistrate's table. He gives a long speech describing his arrest. He sees the Magistrate apparently giving some sign to someone in the audience, and calls him to task for it. There are rumblings in the audience, then silence. Old men's eyes fix intently on him as their owners stroke their white beards. Just as he finishes condemning the entire system that has brought him here, he is interrupted by a scream from the back of the hall. The woman whom he met at the door and a man are in the corner causing some sort of commotion. The stark division that had previously existed between the two factions in the room disappears. The people move together. K. has the urge to move toward the disturbance, but hands restrain him. He leaps from the platform down into the crowd and at last perceives that all are wearing identical badges. So, these are all the corrupt officials of whom he has been speaking! They have egged him on, he declares, by pretending to be factious, when in fact they were merely amusing themselves with the declarations of an innocent man. He heads for the door, but before he can exit, the Magistrate waylays him with these words: "I merely wanted to point out that today. . . you have flung away with your own hand all the advantages which an interrogation invariably confers on an innocent man." K. claims all those who were in the audience to be "scoundrels" and heads out. The chamber comes to life behind him as the badged men begin to analyze the case.

11.5.3 Chapter 3

K. awaits a second summons but does not hear from the mysterious Court. He returns to the address on Sunday morning. The same young woman opens the door, but informs him that there is no sitting today. Indeed, the meeting hall/courtroom is empty save for a few curious books left on the table.

K. learns that the young woman (who cleans) and her husband (an usher for the court) live in the room without charge in exchange for their

labor. The woman explains that the disturbance last week was caused by a certain law student who is always after her. But she entered the courtroom in the first place because she took an interest in K. She is clearly attracted to him, and offers to help him. He is doubtful that she can, and does not want her to jeopardize her job merely to influence a sentencing that he ultimately intends to laugh off. But, she offers, perhaps she can sway the Examining Magistrate in some way, since that man has recently begun to notice her.

Just then the bandy-legged, scraggly-bearded law student enters the courtroom and motions for the woman. She excuses herself to K., says she must go to him briefly, but will return soon, and then K. can have his way with her. As the woman and the student speak in hushed tones at the window, K. reflects that he would very much like to possess her—both for the obvious reason and for the measure of revenge it would extract from the Magistrate.

K. grows impatient as the conversation wears on and the student kisses the woman. He and the student exchange words. The student lifts up the woman and begins to carry her off. K. offers to free her—which he could easily do, as the scrawny student is no match for him—but she declines. She says the Magistrate has sent for her—she is obviously not in much distress. The student labors at carrying her up a narrow flight of stairs that would seem to lead to a garret. K. watches furiously. He has been defeated, but only because he entered into a fight. The key, he realizes, is to go about his own affairs and so to remain above all this.

This resolution does not last long. The woman's husband, the usher, returns. This man complains to K. about his wife and the law student. The usher cannot throttle the student as he would like to, for fear of losing his job. But perhaps a man like K. could do him the favor. K. points out that the student might be in a position to influence the outcome of his case. Usually, says the usher, the cases are foregone conclusions.

The usher is heading upstairs, to the Law Offices, and he invites K. to accompany him. K. hesitates, but, curious to see the workings of the Court, agrees to go. They climb the stairs and enter a long, narrow lobby where various accused men wait. K. tries to have a conversation with one of them but the man is confused, demoralized, and uncomfortable. K. grows impatient with this pitiable individual. As he and the usher walk on, K. suddenly begins to feel very tired. He asks the usher to lead him out, but the usher is reluctant to do so. K.'s raised voice attracts the attention of a woman in a nearby office, who asks his business. K. feels faint and is unable to respond. The woman offers him a chair and assures him that the stuffy air similarly affects many people on their first visit to the offices. K.'s swoon intensifies to a near-paralysis. The woman suggests to a smartly-dressed man who shares her office—and who turns out to be the Clerk of Inquiries—that they take K. to the sick room. K. manages to request that they instead help him to the door. He is scarcely able to walk, even with the two officials half carrying him. He is ashamed as they pass before the accused man with whom he had been impatient before. That man meekly makes excuses for his presence to the Chief of Inquiries.

At last, K. is at the threshold of the offices. The air from outside revives him. He shakes hands with the man and woman who assisted him until he notices that the fresh air seems to have on them the debilitating effect that the office air had on him. Rejuvenated but bewildered by his body's betrayal, K. bounds down the stairs and resolves to find a better use for his Sunday mornings. In keeping with the disjointedness of the narrative, the washer woman, apropos of nothing, throws herself at K. and then disappears from the novel. She apparently sets the behavior pattern for young, working-class women when in K.'s presence (Leni will act similarly, and the lawyer will later give an explanation of her actions). She also manages, indirectly, to induce K. to ascend to the Law Offices, and perhaps this is her purpose.

K.'s calculations of sexual conquest—as a tool of power against the magistrate and thus the Court—lead to his first admitted defeat in this mental chess match in which he sees himself and the Court engaged. His second defeat must then be his debility in the Law Offices.

Stale, suffocating air is once more the hallmark of the Court and all its doings. While at the interrogation the atmosphere may have affected K.'s judgment, in the Offices it physically incapacitates him. He is rendered speechless and powerless, utterly at the mercy of the Court. How far does this association go? Is the Court like bad air in a closed room? The two seem ineffably linked; perhaps they are interchangeable. Like the air, the court seems to be everywhere, invisible, insidious, known by its effects.

There is a slight parallel between the final scene of this chapter and Chapter Ten that should be pointed out. In both cases, K. is lead away by Court functionaries who hold him by the arms. In this chapter, K. requests the escort and the support. In the last chapter, K. cannot escape it.

11.5.4 Chapter 4

K. spends several days unsuccessfully trying to speak with Fraulein Burstner. She manages to avoid meeting him, despite the considerable measures he takes to encounter her. He sends her a letter, offering to make amends for his behavior and to follow any dictates she might provide for further interaction between them. He will wait in his room on Sunday for some sign from her. His letter is not answered. On Sunday he notices that another boarder, Fraulein Montag, is moving into Fraulein Burstner's room.

His landlady, Frau Grubach, who has been tortured by his silence this past week, is relieved when K. finally speaks to her. Though K. is not particularly kind to her, it is at least a sort of forgiveness.

Fraulein Montag asks to speak with him. He goes and sees her in the dining room. She tells him that Fraulein Burstner thought it best for all parties that the interview he requested not take place. Fraulein Burstner had not intended to respond in any way, but Fraulein Montag prevailed upon Fraulein Burstner to allow her to act as intermediary and explicitly inform K. of Fraulein Burstner's opinion. K. thanks Fraulein Montag for the information and rises to leave. The Captain (Frau Grubach's nephew) enters and greets Fraulein Montag with a respectful hand-kissing. K. senses that the two of them are exaggerating Fraulein Burstner's importance to him and trying to impede his conquest of the girl. He leaves the dining room but cannot resist knocking at Fraulein Burstner's door. There is no answer. He goes in, feeling that he is doing something pointless and wrong. Fraulein Burstner must have left while Fraulein Montag was talking to him. He leaves the room, but sees that Fraulein Montag and the Captain are conversing in the doorway of the dining room. They have clearly witnessed his indiscretion.

11.5.5 Chapter 5

A few days later, as K. is ready to leave the bank for the day, he hears "convulsive sighs" coming from getting behind the door of the lumber room. He opens the door and enters. The two warders who first appeared in his apartment are at the mercy of a man dressed in leather—the Whipper. The Whipper is preparing to do what Whippers do best. The men are being whipped because K. complained about their conduct at the first interrogation. K. is horrified. He explains that he had merely described the men's behavior, did not hold them responsible for their actions; he had no idea that they would be punished, and has absolutely no desire to see them punished. He offers to pay the Whipper not to whip the pitiful, supplicating men. But a Whipper must do what a Whipper must do. The whipping commences, and one of the warders lets loose a blood-curdling shriek that sends K. out of the room and into the hall. He reassures the clerks who come to investigate the noise that it was merely a dog howling outside.

K. feels terrible about the warders. He would have been willing to increase the bribe, or to offer himself as their replacement—an option that the Whipper must surely have refused—if only one of the warders had not screamed, making it necessary for K. to leave the room and explain away the situation to the clerks. All the next day the warders weigh on K.'s mind. He stays late to catch up on work, but, when he walks past the lumber room he cannot help looking in. There are the warders and the Whipper, just as they were the previous evening. The warders begin again to call to him. K. slams the door shut, beats on it with his fist, and, near tears, rushes back to where the clerks are. He orders them to clear out the lumber room. They promise to do so the next day. He goes home with a blank mind.

11.5.6 Chapter 6

Joseph K.'s impetuous country-dwelling Uncle Karl comes to see him. The uncle has caught wind of the case and is very concerned, both for K. and for the family's sake. K. is taking the whole thing far too lightly for his uncle's satisfaction—the case calls for energetic action. Uncle Karl prevails upon K. to accompany him on a visit to an old lawyer friend.

Herr Huld, the lawyer, is on his sick bed when they call. He becomes much more animated when K. is introduced. K.'s uncle verbally abuses the man's nurse until she leaves at the lawyer's behest. It turns out the lawyer already knows of K.'s case from his movements in court circles. In fact, the Chief Clerk of the Court is in the room, waiting in the shadows. He has come to pay the lawyer a visit; K. and Uncle Karl have not noticed him. The Chief Clerk joins the three and begins to speak eloquently while pointedly ignoring K. K. wonders whether this man might have been in the crowd during his interrogation.

A loud sound of breaking cookery comes from the entrance hall. K. volunteers to see what has happened. It is Leni, the lawyer's nurse.

Apparently burning with desire for him, she caused the commotion to bring him out of the room. She leads him into the lawyer's study. In the study K. notices a large portrait of a man in a judge's robe depicted as if ready to spring from his throne-like seat. He asks Leni about this man. She knows him—he is only an Examining Magistrate. She also knows about K.'s case, and implores him to be less unyielding.

Leni gives K. a key and tells him he is welcome any time. He goes out into the street where his uncle lambasts him. According to Uncle Karl, K. has badly damaged his case by disappearing for hours. The Chief Clerk waited until K.'s absence became glaring and the conversation awkward, then left. Uncle Karl has been waiting for hours, by his own account.

11.5.7 Chapter 7

Joseph K. sits in his office on a wintry morning thinking about his case. He goes into a sixteen-page reverie in which he inwardly expresses his frustrations with his lawyer and recounts all the information his lawyer has conveyed to him about the tangled workings of the Court. K. has grown weary of his lawyer's endless talk and seemingly minimal action. The lawyer defends himself by saying that in these cases it is often better to do nothing overt, at least not at this stage. K. is intensely exhausted and recognizes in himself the symptoms of mental strain due to worrying about his case. He can no longer pretend to take the high road and ignore it.

K. is incapable of concentrating on his work. Several important people are kept waiting for excessive periods while he thinks about his case. At last he sees a client, an important manufacturer. K. again is unable to pay attention to the matter at hand. His chief rival, the Assistant Manager, comes in and takes over the case. K. returns to his thoughts. The manufacturer has a few words with K. on his way out. He has heard of K.'s case (it will soon be commonplace for K. to encounter people who know about his situation, but it is still a shock at this point) and has a friendly recommendation to make. The manufacturer knows a lowly

painter, called Titorelli, who paints portraits for the Court. This painter informed him of K.'s case. He suggests that K. visit this man, find out what he knows, and see if he might be of any service.

K. takes the advice. After an uncomfortable encounter with the businessmen waiting in the lobby to meet with him (which is resolved—though to K.'s distinct disadvantage—by the appearance of unctuous Assistant Manager), K. goes to call on the painter. The painter lives in a section of the city even poorer than the one K. visited for his interrogation. K. finds the building, climbs stairs, runs a gauntlet of nosy teenage girls, and meets the painter in the latter's tiny studio room. The girls remain outside the door, peeping and listening.

The painter is indeed an official Court painter—a position he inherited from his father. He provides K. with more information about the Court. He offers to use his connections to aid K.'s cause. He describes the three possible acquittals that may be hoped for: definite acquittal, ostensible acquittal, and indefinite postponement. The first is the stuff of legends, and has never occurred in the painter's experience. The second is a non-binding acquittal granted by the lower judges, which may be revoked at any time should another judge or a higher level of the Court demand action. This acquittal requires a fatiguing flurry of petitioning and lobbying, but little effort thereafter—that is until the case is revisited, at which point the efforts must begin anew. Thus the possibility of the case's resumption—of arrest at any moment and a return to square one—hovers perpetually over the accused. Indefinite postponement requires constant attention and contact with the Court but keeps the case in its initial stages. It avoids the perpetual anxiety of possible arrest, but requires constant activity. The advantage to be gained from both ostensible acquittal and indefinite postponement is that they prevent the case from coming to sentencing.

While the painter talks, K. finds the stuffy room more and more unbearable. He is hot and barely able to breathe. At last he takes his leave, without

instructing the painter which of the options he prefers. Before allowing him to leave, the painter induces the desperate K. to buy several identical landscapes. As the nosy girls are still outside the door, the painter lets K. out through another door in the tiny room. This leads to a hallway that looks identical to the lobby of the law offices K. visited in Chapter Three. The air is even worse in this hallway. K. is taken aback. The painter informs K. that there are Law Court Offices in nearly every attic. K. holds his handkerchief over his face as an usher escorts him out.

11.5.8 Chapter 8

Though it is not an easy decision, K. resolves to dispense with his lawyer's services. He goes to the lawyer's house one evening past ten o'clock. The door is opened by a somewhat pitiable figure—a wasted, bearded little man in his shirt-sleeves. K. catches sight of Leni rushing to another room in her nightgown. He demands to know of the little man whether he is Leni's lover. The man assures K. that he is not. He is merely Block, the tradesman, and a client of the lawyer. Block leads K. to the kitchen where Leni is preparing the lawyer's soup. K. is still mistrustful, but the other two manage to allay his suspicions. Block is simply too pathetic a creature.

Leni gives the lawyer his soup. K. takes a seat and questions Block about that man's case. Before telling K. his secrets, Block extracts from K. a promise to reciprocate. The lawyer is vindictive, and Block has not been entirely faithful. Block's case is more than five years old and has consumed the poor man's energy and resources. He has discreetly engaged five hack lawyers in addition to Herr Huld, and spends nearly every day in the lobby of the Law Court Offices. In fact, he was there the day K. first visited. There is a foolish superstition among accused men, says Block, which maintains that the outcome of a man's case can be read in the expression of his lips. The accused men waiting in the lobby declared that K.'s lips revealed a guilty verdict.

The man who lost his composure in K.'s presence did so because he thought he read a sign concerning his own fate when he looked at K.'s lips. But all this is nonsense, says Block.

Block also mentions the "great lawyers," about whom every accused man dreams, but who are entirely inaccessible and unknown. Leni returns; K. treats her with his usual curtness. She reveals that Block sleeps in the house, in a tiny maid's chamber, because the lawyer never consents to see Block unless he feels like it. Block must therefore always be at the ready, in case the lawyer should suddenly agree to a meeting. The lawyer apparently finds Block annoying.

As K. gets up to see the lawyer, Block reminds him of his promise to share a secret. K. obliges: he announces that he is going to dismiss the lawyer. Both Block and Leni try to prevent him from committing this rash act, but K. slips into the lawyer's chamber and locks the door behind him.

The lawyer informs K. of a peculiarity of Leni's character. She finds all accused men extraordinarily attractive. K. informs the lawyer of his decision. The lawyer asks K. to reconsider. He admits a fondness for K. K. explains his frustrations with the way the case is being handled, and asks what measures the lawyer would take if he were to continue. Herr Huld claims he would continue with his current activities. K. is not interested. He is puzzled, however, as to why a seemingly wealthy and invalid lawyer should care so much about keeping a client.

The lawyer makes one more attempt to convince K. He wants to demonstrate to K. how accused men are normally treated, so that K. might realize how well he has been treated (or to what degree he has been ignored by the Court) thus far. Huld sends Leni to fetch the tradesman. K. watches how the two humiliate the man, how he fearfully allows himself to be humiliated. The lawyer seems to have absolute power over Block.

The chapter was never completed.

Block is another willing informant on the doings of the Court, as well as another stranger who knows a fair amount about K.'s situation. He is five years into his case and seems a shell of a man. He's described physically as "dried up"; psychologically he has subjugated himself entirely to the lawyer. That he also clandestinely consults five hack lawyers behind the lawyer's back makes him that much more craven and pathetic. Is this the future life K. has to look forward to? Is this the sort of freedom the painter claims he can help K. win? K. likens Block's behavior (and his treatment at the hands of Huld and Leni) to that of a dog. Indeed, when Leni catches the genuflecting Block worrying away at the rug, she grabs him by the collar just as one might a misbehaving household pet. Block, once a respected tradesman, has been reduced to doghood. This observation repulses and horrifies Joseph K.; it is a particularly resonant one in light of his dying utterance in Chapter Ten.

11.5.9 Chapter 9

An influential Italian client is coming to town and K. has been charged with escorting the man to the city's cultural points of interest. K. has been assigned, or rather offered, many missions of late that take him away from his work. He wonders whether there might not be a plot afoot to keep him elsewhere and occupied while someone—the Assistant Manager, perhaps—goes through his papers or otherwise looks to damage his standing. He wants to concentrate on his work. It is the only way to solidify his standing at the bank, and he must be doubly on guard for the errors that have begun to creep into his efforts since his case began to tax his energy. Yet he accepts every special commission. Not to do so would be to refuse an honor and possibly to admit weakness or fear.

K. arrives at the office early and exhausted from having studied Italian grammar the night before. The Italian has also arrived early. The Manager, who speaks Italian, makes the introductions and helps K. to understand

the visitor's meaning. The Italian has business to attend to and cannot see all of the city's sites. He proposes that K. meet him at the cathedral at 10 o'clock.

K. devotes the intervening hours to studying the Italian verbs he will need in order to be able to say anything intelligent about the cathedral. As he is about to leave the office, Leni calls. He tells her what he is doing, and she replies, "They're goading you." This annoys him, but as he hangs up he can't help but agree with her.

He goes to the cathedral and waits. The Italian is late. K. gives him a half-hour, then more, but the man does not come. It is raining outside, so K. waits longer, walking around the cathedral and leafing through a picture album he has brought with him. A caretaker catches K.'s eye and motions for K. to follow him. K. does for awhile, but soon desists and returns to the nave to sit. He notices a small, unusual pulpit that looks as if it would be an uncomfortable place from which to preach. A preacher climbs up into the pulpit. It is an odd time for a sermon, and apart from K. and the caretaker, there is no audience. K. feels he should return to the office; realizing it would be difficult to leave once the sermon begins, he rises and walks toward the exit. A voice behind him calls out, "Joseph K.!" For a moment K. considers pretending not to hear or understand and continuing on his way. But he turns, and so must engage the priest.

The priest is in fact the prison chaplain, connected with the court. He has had K. summoned to this place. He tells K. that his case is going badly. It may never even get beyond the lower courts. K. believes the chaplain's intentions are good, and hopes that the chaplain might be able to give him some advice that will point a way "not toward some influential manipulation of the case, but toward a circumvention of it...a mode of living completely outside the jurisdiction of the Court." K. asks the chaplain to come down from the pulpit; the chaplain agrees.

The two walk together up and down the aisle. K. tells the chaplain that he trusts him more than anyone else connected with the Court and feels he can speak openly. The other replies that K. is deluded, and describes an allegory that is supposed to be illustrative of this delusion. This brief tale, drawn from the writings about the Law, tells of a man from the country who tries to gain admittance at an entrance to the Law, is always denied by the doorkeeper, and yet learns as he dies that this entrance was meant only for him. The chaplain and K. discuss several possible interpretations of this story—who is deluded, who is subservient to whom. At last the two pace in silence. K. says that he should probably go, but is disappointed when the chaplain simply dismisses him. K. asks why the chaplain was recently so friendly and helpful and now so indifferent. The chaplain reminds K. that he (the chaplain) is connected to the Court, and that “the Court wants nothing from you. It receives you when you come and dismisses you when you go.”

Kafka’s parable of the entrance to the Law is as luminous as it is opaque. It seems to contain some essence of truth about the relationship between the citizen and the Law, or perhaps the human condition in general, but what—other than tragedy of one man’s futile efforts—does it really relate? It is a Kafka story in miniature: a gnomic genesis of interminable commentary and speculation. The chaplain offers K. the outlines of several prominent interpretations, but clearly he is only scratching the surface.

Is the man from the country meant to represent K.? Is the Law truly unreachable? Does the doorkeeper speak the truth? Is the doorkeeper, by way of his connection to the Law, beyond reproach. K. remarks that to consider the doorkeeper unimpeachable is to accept everything he says as the truth despite the fact that at least one of his statements is untrue. Perhaps the chaplain’s most salient comment comes in his response: “...it is not necessary to accept everything as true, one must only accept it as necessary.” This seems to be the *modus operandi* of the Law, the dynamo within the great machine of the Court, the divine

principle before which the functionaries—and eventually the accused men—prostrate themselves. It is, as K. declares, a “melancholy thought” because it “turns lying into a universal principle.” That universal lie of necessity—the mother of detention—keeps the mechanism moving forward and squelches potential challenges to the system. When the Law takes necessity as its model, justice is doomed. The terrible fact of *The Trial*, and of the parable, is that the men seeking justice eventually accept this warped universal principle and its skewed criteria; they submit to the necessity of their own exclusion or death.

11.5.10 Chapter 10

On Joseph K.’s thirty-first birthday, two men in coats and top hats come for him. K. finds them to be ridiculous creatures, but goes with them. In the street, they take his arms in an unbreakable hold and the three of them move as one. At a deserted square, K. suddenly decides to resist, to force these warders to drag him. Then he sees Fraulein Burstner, or someone who looks reasonably like Fraulein Burstner, walk across the square. He realizes the futility of resistance, and instead strives to keep his mind clear and analytical until the end.

Once, on their journey, a policeman is on the verge of stopping them. They walk quickly past him, and K. himself leads the trio in running out of range from the officer. They walk out of town to a deserted quarry situated near an urban-looking house. There the two warders strip K. to the waist and awkwardly prop him against a bolder. One of the men removes a butcher’s knife from his coat. The warders pass the knife back and forth, and K. realizes that he is meant to grab the knife and kill himself. He does not. In the window of the house, in the distance, he sees a figure with outstretched arms at the window. He wonders feverishly who it could be, what it could represent. K. makes a final gesture, raising his hand and extending his fingers toward the figure in the window. One warder holds K. while the other stabs him in the heart. He sees them watching him, and

makes a dying exclamation: “‘Like a dog!’ he said; it was as if the shame of it must outlive him.”

11.6 SELF-ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS (SAQs)

1. Joseph K. works in a _____.
2. After he gives his speech at the first interrogation, K. notices that the members of the audience are wearing_____.
3. The young washer-woman offers herself to K. the second time they meet. But before any thing happens, she is carried off by_____.
4. Fraulein Montag teaches_____.
- e) _____ is punishing the two warders in the lumber room.

11.7 EXAMINATION ORIENTED QUESTIONS

- 1 How would you characterize the women of *The Trial*? Do they seem like real people?

- 2 Was there any way for K. to avoid ending up facing execution in the quarry?

- 3 Briefly comment if K’s inability to “think outside the box” the basis of his eventual guilt?

Ans. Kafka invites such questions, and lets them stand without answer. Could K. have survived if he had simply gone away? Could he have wanted

more to prevail? The question is open. “Logic is doubtless unshakable, but it cannot withstand a man who wants to go on living,” K. says to himself, moments before he is killed. And yet, whatever we determine to be the state of K.’s will, Kafka also shows us that will is not enough. Consider the opaque yet radiant parable of the man who asks admittance to the Law. Certainly that man does not lack will—he expends his life in his will to encounter the Law, though he is apparently free to abandon his quest and simply walk away. But abandonment of the Law, of Logic, is abandonment of justice, of dignity, of personhood. It may constitute thinking outside the box, but it is also a retreat (and to where?). Besides, nowhere is it stated that K. can merely abandon the Court, that the Court excuses those who fail to be drawn into its web of doubt, pandering, and self-recrimination. We do not know the Court’s jurisdiction. There is neither a clear way out nor an unequivocal indication of doom until doom is at hand. In this light, blaming K. for his own demise is analogous to blaming victims of the Nazi death machine for not perceiving in advance the full trajectory of depravity, or blaming Stalin’s victims—who never had the option of stepping beyond the purview of a perverse Law—for their fate.

4. What were the last words uttered by K. and Why ?

11.8 LET US SUM UP

The Trial follows the incredible ill fortune of one Josef K., who wakes up one morning to discover that he’s been arrested on unnamed charges. Throughout the novel, K. struggles futilely against a secretive and tyrannical court system, only to be abruptly executed at the end with a knife to the heart.

11.9 ANSWER KEY (SAQs)

1. bank
2. badges
3. the law student
4. French
5. The Whipper

11.10 SUGGESTED READING

- Kafka, Franz. The Trial. Translated by Willa and Edwin Muir; revised, and with additional material translated by E.M. Butler. New York: Schocken Books, 1995.

FRANZ KAFKA: *THE TRIAL*

STRUCTURE

- 12.1 Introduction**
- 12.2 Objectives**
- 12.3 Detailed Analysis**
 - 12.3.1 Plot Analysis**
 - 12.3.2 Thematic Analysis**
 - 12.3.3 Chapter-wise Analysis**
- 12.4 Self-Assessment Questions (SAQs)**
- 12.5 Short Answer Questions**
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- 12.7 Let Us Sum Up**
- 12.8 Answer Key (SAQs)**
- 12.9 Suggested Reading**

12.1 INTRODUCTION

The Trial written by Franz Kafka and published posthumously in 1925, is a seminal work of 20th-century literature that delves into themes of existential angst and bureaucratic absurdity. The novel centers on Josef K., a

senior bank clerk, who is inexplicably arrested by an unidentified authority for an unspecified crime. Throughout the story, Josef navigates an opaque and nightmarish legal system, facing increasingly surreal and bewildering circumstances. Kafka's narrative captures the disorientation and helplessness of the individual against a faceless and indifferent power.

12.2 OBJECTIVES

The objective of this lesson is to offer a detailed analysis of the text of Kafka's *The Trial* in order to help the learners of this course to have a better acquaintance with Kafka's work.

12.3 DETAILED ANALYSIS

12.3.1 Plot Analysis

The plot is spread over the protagonist, K.'s arrest and his attempts to extricate himself from an aging, totalitarian bureaucratic system. This is at the conscious surface level. Kafka is also the social chronicler very much like Dickens, commenting in monotonous detail on the Czech legal system - which is symbolic of any organization that is governmental even in democratic countries. The story is also crowded with Dickensonian characters, each with his own identity, but who fall into the system whether they like it or not. A hierarchy of characters, starting from the judge and leading to an isolated painter, is neatly arranged.

At a deeper level, the story deals with the Christian idea of the fallen man and his deep sense of guilt. The nature of the guilt is never told. There is never a trial held in accordance with the dispensation of justice. In the process, Huld, the invalid lawyer assumes the role of the gigantic figure of divinity. But he also has his weakness like "*Everyman*", a beautiful blending of myth and reality. Without knowing what his guilt is, K. responds as a guilty man. He refuses to submit to the divine will. His end is brought about by the break down of his resistance. The conclusion is open-ended. Does K. die because death is preferable to survival with a lack of faith? Does he die because he lacks the strength to resist? Or is his ending an

allegory? It invites wide reader appeal defying closure. K. is executed at a place, a quarry symbolizing the sacrificial altar. This is reminiscent of primitive tales. The sheen of the warder's sword glimmers in the beginning of the tale, foreboding the grim ending. The plot is filled with metaphor, superstitions, legends, allegory and parables. The time in the duration of a year is accurately marked from K.'s thirtieth to his thirty-first birthday. But there is no chronological recording of time in the story. It is the regular change of seasons or periods like afternoon, morning, night. The description is cinematic, with graphic details of spaces and rooms, of the painter's attic, the labyrinth of court rooms, the lawyer's house, Frau Grubach's rooms and of course the office and the chapel. Changes in light and shade give an artistic effect to the whole tale.

12.3.2 Thematic Analysis

The theme is based on the protagonist's inability to reach his own self. The court's summons is symbolic of a call of a higher spiritual existence. The protagonist resists submitting to this force. Instead he holds on to laws in conscious life. *The Trial* also deals with totalitarian politics and the illogical bureaucracy, which is evident in modern living. It is evident in professions, visa litigators and seemingly democratic organization. In keeping with the Judaic tradition the book is a commentary on the system. It is not a reflection of the Judiciary. It concerns Kafka's yearning for truth, to create something universal and the urge to live in a world, overpowered by destiny and human contradiction. There are these two opposing trends one of human and the other of fate. The theme skillfully avoids the everyday ordinary happenings and incidents of a regular novel. It concerns unusual guilt, where the guilt is not specified. The reader and the protagonist, K. are caught in the trial. There is almost an amnesia or forgetfulness to greet his cousin on her birthday. The trial seems to afford a lot of hope of freedom, but in reality there is none for the accused. He is sentenced to live an accused victim's life. This is the metaphysical aspect of Judaism, which the novel deliberates. The protagonist tries to free

himself from his guilt, though he does not know what the guilt is. There is no joy in the act of living. The theme is pessimistic.

The maze of courts with the characters abounding in it caricatures a bureaucratic setup. It is a satire on the modern state with its administration, agencies and services. It also concerns the poverty of the officials who resort to bribery. There are sexual themes in the affairs of the judges and of K. himself.

The parables, the usher, the painter and the lawyer are figures of a metaphysical religious imagination. In a strange way it also delineates the fallen man in Judeo Christian philosophy, who has the freedom to be a culprit. That would be Kafka's masterly stroke.

12.3.3 Chapter-wise Analysis

Joseph K. is ambitious, successful, demanding, curt—a man of business and no nonsense. He is arrogant, calculating, intolerant of his perceived inferiors, and yet (at least in the larger question of guilt, innocence, and civil liberty) wholly in the right. A typical Kafka protagonist, he achieves the difficult and separate balances of complexity and unreality, sympathy and aversion. But what is he guilty of? What would warrant his arrest and prosecution (not to mention persecution)? Ostensibly nothing. As the novel bears out, the Court that has claimed him is thoroughly vile. Yet no one is free of guilt. Tempted as he is to laugh the whole thing off, to call the warders' bluff and declare the whole event a practical joke, he cannot. In part this is because he calculates it to be unwise to show his hand, or to force that of his opponents', but also because there is a lingering question in his mind of whether somehow, in some way, he has been remiss. Is it his inherent apolitical nature? He has always taken law, order, and justice for granted. They have been a steady and invisible framework within which he has achieved his success, without ever having paused to consider them. He is not a man who contemplates the larger questions. Is this inability to “think outside the box,” his susceptibility

to the machinations of the machine into whose path he has been thrown, the basis of his eventual, inevitable guilt?

K.'s experience with the warders and the Inspector sets the tone for his various encounters with representatives of the Law. Most are friendly enough with him, if not always decorous. Almost all of them strike him with their small-mindedness. They are functionaries, robots, far down on the totem, following orders and fulfilling duty without understanding or attempting to understand underlying motive. The Court is unimpeachable; the Law is its own justification and the only one these underlings need.

All this leads one to think of the novel's title in terms of the connotations of the German original. "Prozess" is cognate with the English "process," and Kafka uses it interchangeably with "Verfahren" ("procedure"), which in turn has definite undertones of "entanglement." In other words, we are not necessarily dealing with a trial but perhaps a lifelong "process" of some kind. After all, everybody and everything belongs to the Court, as we are told time and again.

Certainly the timing of K.'s arrest, whatever its meaning, the morning of his thirtieth birthday, is well chosen: birthdays, especially one marking off a decade, tend to cause some soul-searching. Block, the tradesman, is also to be arrested shortly after the death of his wife — that is, at a moment when the routine of his life suffers a decisive break. At any rate, K. is caught by surprise and is in no way prepared to fend off the characters arresting him. If he were at the Bank, where he is thoroughly familiar with every detail, nothing of the kind would happen to him. He admits that much to Frau Grubach during the evening following his arrest: he regrets he did not have the presence of mind to ignore the unexpected events of that morning (for example, Anna did not bring his coffee) — in short, he did not act "reasonably." As in so many of his other pieces, Kafka shows his hero waking up and being unprepared. It is Kafka's way of saying that K.'s arrest is not a dream but inescapable reality.

The invisible Court jealously guards the “highest Law,” whose content remains as inaccessible as its top-level judges. How it operates on the low levels is beautifully shown in the arrest scene: two obnoxious warders, who do not even know their superiors, much less anything about K.’s case, are sent to arrest K. They are not even eager to apprehend him; they merely claim to do their job. But quite the contrary, by waiting for K. to ring the breakfast bell, they let him take the initiative. In other words, K., by ringing for his breakfast, is actually ringing for his arrest. This, by the way, is a major argument against the interpretation of the novel as essentially a political satire or even a symbolic account of the totalitarian mind: neither the Gestapo nor the Soviet K.G.B. have been known to leave the details of arrest up to their victims. Anyway, the warder lets K.’s question about his identity go unanswered, as if nothing unusual had happened, and casually asks whether K. has rung the bell.

The problem of whether K. could do anything to alter his fate will be dealt with elsewhere. If we accept the line of interpretation that he becomes guilty because he mishandles his trial, then we will have to look at this arrest scene more carefully because it is here that things already begin to take their fateful course.

K. commits his first, though on first glance perhaps negligible, mistake: rather than pushing for an immediate clarification of the strange occurrences surrounding his arrest, K. acknowledges the warder’s insolent question (“Did you ring?”) by referring to Anna and the breakfast she is supposed to bring. K. is trying to convince himself that he is merely gaining time to observe the intruder to detect his intentions. In reality, he has already accepted his appearance and assault. His insistence that the stranger introduce himself before any more questioning is only a desperate attempt on K.’s part to suppress the gravity of what has happened and cannot be reversed. Toward the end of this scene, the two warders reveal that they have been sent merely to “observe your reactions.” If K.’s guilt is predetermined for any reason, does it make sense that the invisible

Court tries to prod the “reactions” of someone already firmly in its grip? No wonder this sentence has been used to back up the interpretation of K.’s guilt, resulting solely from his wrong handling of his case.

All one has to do in order to show the built-in ambiguity of this central issue is to see the warders as part of K.’s own personality, as some sort of ever-watchful superego. Their observing mission assumes a very different meaning because the simplistic opposition “Court versus K.” is considerably modified. There are several lines about how close the warders feel toward K., and at the end the executioners also accompany K. to the quarry like a “unity.”

There are more instances of people watching K. or K. feeling watched: before he is even arrested, a woman is “peering at him with a curiosity unusual even for her,” and a bit later the same “inquisitiveness” is mentioned. During his arrest, several people are “enjoying the spectacle,” and the Titorelli scene in Chapter 7 is full of peeping girls. All these instances of observing, feeling observed, or actually being observed reflect Kafka’s own neurotic self-analysis and his deep-felt need to get at every aspect of everything in order to arrive at a bearable degree of certainty (for an example of his self-analysis, see the pros and cons about marriage in his diary, or read the stories “The Burrow” or “A Hunger Artist”).

K. will never be able to extricate himself from his acknowledgment of his arrest. It is precisely his strange arrest that causes him to feel attracted to the Court; the warders also admit that the Court feels attracted by guilt and that this is the reason they have been sent out. This mutual attraction prevails throughout the story, yet there is also the possibility that it, too, is a lie. Certainly it is remarkable that the Inspector himself says the warders may have told K. a lot of nonsense about the arrest and their role in it.

In an obvious parallel to Gregor Samsa’s futile attempt in “The Metamorphosis” to separate the extraordinariness of his insect personality

from his daily life, K. also seeks to separate his daily routine at the Bank from the events surrounding his arrest. His three colleagues from the Bank, whom the Inspector has brought along to facilitate K.'s unobtrusive return to his office, show that such a separation is impossible. In fact, K. refers to them as a "Court of Inquiry" during his re-enactment of his arrest later on in Fräulein Bürstner's room. This inseparability is exactly what his uncle means when he says, "to have a case like this means to have already lost it." It has to be this way, for if we accept any real guilt (beyond that purely tactical one of mishandling his trial) on K.'s part, it has been brought about exactly by the way he has lived as a carefree bachelor-businessman. At any rate, by desperately trying to keep the arrest away from his consciousness (conscience), he tries to keep the metaphysical sphere from interfering with his daily life. If something is to make sense to him, it must appear in the familiar form of his material world.

K. is guilty because he has completely buried his moral sensitivity under his job at the Bank. He cannot deal with things, including his case, in terms other than those he uses at the Bank: "The trial was nothing but a big business deal, the kind he has managed successfully many times for the Bank." He never begins to comprehend the fundamentally different nature of this case against him; he only comes to accept certain facts about it later on. He cannot even think of guilt unless it is put in clear-cut legal terms and definitions to him. Neither Samsa nor K. can imagine that their guilt consists precisely of their ignorance of the Law beyond its known bourgeois codification.

K.'s encounter with Fräulein Bürstner is important because she is the first of the three women he meets. They represent the three possibilities vis-a-vis the Court: to stand outside of it, like Fräulein Bürstner; to live in conflict with it, like the usher's wife; and to be its slave, like Leni. As a result of his inability to understand his own case, K. cannot establish any meaningful contact with Fräulein Bürstner beyond that of sexual desire and subsequent deprivation. (In some areas of Germany, "bürsten" is a

slang expression for sexual intercourse). The description of K. as “chasing over her face with his tongue like a thirsty animal, then kissing her violently on her neck, right on the throat, before resting his lips there” speaks for itself. (The scene between Frieda and K. in *The Castle* is similar even to details; it is patterned, in turn, after the seduction scene in “The Stoker” chapter of *Amerika*). It is important to see that in this assault scene, K. desperately tries to drown himself in sensuality in order to forget his situation. He craves something no woman can possibly supply — oblivion from his suppressed guilt feelings. And these he has from the outset, for in spite of his put-on defiance, he senses he has been summoned before this strange Court to justify his life. He is not even all that taken aback by his arrest, as he says to the Inspector. The assault scene conveys a pattern typical of Kafka, the conflict between pairs of opposites, the continuous ebb and flow between desire and tranquility, movement and standstill.

It is Fräulein Bürstner’s function to distract K. from his case simply by being around him. When she asks him how his arrest was, he replies, “terrible,” and the narrator continues that he “did not even think about it now that he was moved by her sight.” Her other function — and she is the only woman who does so — is to turn him away after their first encounter, thereby trying to direct his attention back to his own case. At the end, K. will think of this when her image appears again and will accept his fate because he realizes he has not taken her advice seriously. That the Inspector conducts his first questioning in her room is evidence for the role she plays in his case.

The interrogation scene is distinctly surreal, unfolding in a dreamlike fashion. The location itself is unreal: the top floor of a tenement, in a poor family’s back room. Add to this the murmuring masses, the applause, uproar, and stony silences, the beards and badges, the secret signs, groping hands, and most glaringly K.’s own intemperate and ill-advised outburst. Are they goading him? Is his aggression a useful tactic? Does his conduct even matter? This is an alternate world of anonymous tribunals

where K. does not know the rules of engagement. His initiation does not bode well. Yet he still feels it is best not to take the case too seriously.

Throughout the book, the Court is associated with darkness, dust, staleness, suffocation; K. repeatedly suffers from the lack of fresh air. Here we have the first hints of it. In the streets, in the hallways and stairwells of this poor neighborhood there is life and vitality. K. manages just fine. The moment he steps into the Court meeting hall, K. feels the air “too thick for him” and steps out again. Later K. tries to make out faces in the gallery through the “dimness, dust, and reek.” If K. is not physically sickened by the atmosphere (as he will be in succeeding chapters), his judgment and faculties do seem addled, which perhaps explains the dream quality of the scene.

The action and narrative direction of Chapter Four are never really taken up again in this unfinished novel. Fraulein Burstner reappears ephemerally in the final chapter, but the sub-plot of K.’s pursuit and her reluctance is never fleshed out. True, many characters in *The Trial* appear briefly and quickly disappear, like so many evaporating figures in a dreamed landscape. But one feels more attention might ultimately have been paid to her, especially considering the significant symbolic role she plays in K.’s final thoughts.

The Captain’s and Fraulein Montag’s suspicions do not seem related to K.’s case, nor does K. seem to link the two in any way to his legal difficulties. Neither of these characters has any bearing on the rest of the book.

This incident seems orchestrated precisely to facilitate an eventual mental breakdown, the signs of which many of the accused men seem to exhibit. It is one thing to have one’s own case to worry about, but it is another to be saddled with the guilt of being, however unintentionally, the source of these poor fools’ misery. Those who look to *The Trial* as a harbinger of totalitarian atrocity note that this chapter evokes the interrogation-torture

(and it is not always the interrogated who is tortured) and psychological oppression that have been the calling cards of a depressing number of twentieth-century regimes.

The Court apparently has access to every place—it can set up shop in a company’s closet, or in a tenement attic—yet it still conducts its business in dark, sealed, uncomfortable, makeshift or out-of-the-way places (such as the examples just given). This is surely not coincidental; rather it is an essential characteristic of an impenetrable and unaccountable bureaucracy.

Chapter Five maintains the relationship between K., the Court, and air. After witnessing the whipping, and realizing he cannot prevent it, K. steps over to a window and opens it, as if the fresh air will dispel the presence of the Court.

Leni is the third woman to want Joseph K. Who are the women of *The Trial*? Maids, secretaries, and poor housewives, all accustomed to playing, or eager to play, the role of mistress. Kafka’s biographer describes pre-World War I Prague as a place where young professionals—a banker such as K., a lawyer or bureaucrat such as Kafka—would marry women of their class but habitually go to poorer women of a lower social class for sex. Prostitution was, for some women, not so clearly defined as a profession—the lines between lover, mistress, free-lancer, and professional were not so strictly drawn. Certainly, this reflects the relative powerlessness—economically, socially, politically—of women low on the social scale. Young men did not complain, and perhaps the young women with whom they consorted got more out of the bargain than was otherwise available to them within the strictly prescribed boundaries of their social world. The mores of the time and place tacitly approved of the arrangement.

That said, Leni seems to adore K. beyond all reason or promise of potential benefit. K. himself has no idea why he has suddenly become so attractive, but he is conceited enough not to trouble himself too much about it. Still, for someone so ambitious and punctilious in his work, and

so determined not to give the Court any hold over him, K. acts at times quite recklessly. The first instance was his insolence during the interrogation. And now, he snubs the Chief Clerk of the Court. Such, apparently, are the charms of Leni. Or such is K.'s underdeveloped sense of gravity at this point in his case.

Chapter Seven dumps on K. (and the reader) a windfall of information, all of which comes to nothing. Or, rather, all of which leads to a few simple conclusions: the Court is inscrutable and irredeemably corrupt. Both the lawyer and the painter would have K. believe that the only thing that really matters is good relations with subordinate officials. Yet this is the case only because no one knows who the higher officials are. They are unreachable, so naturally all wheedling, supplication, and influence peddling goes through the lower courts. Yet, as the painter makes clear, the stakes are low. No one can really influence the outcome of the case—at most they can tinker with the trajectory, to drag out the proceedings indefinitely while the mantle of guilt hovers above the accused.

Justice delayed, of course, is justice denied. But justice clearly cannot be hoped for. Ultimately, the Court is corrupt not because of the pathetic influence peddling that occurs in its lower levels. It is corrupt because it is not accountable to the society it serves. Perhaps the Law is internally consistent, but those outside its ranks and to whom it applies will never know. Allegations are never disclosed; evidence is never disclosed; ultimate judicial power is invisible; the world of law is available only to those who stand in judgment of the accused. Who can defend himself when he does not know the accusation? Who can defend herself when she does not know the Law? Defense is distinctly frowned upon. The accused is generally considered to be guilty.

The Trial is generally thought to be, among other things, a condemnation of the intractable Austro-Hungarian bureaucracy—which Kafka,

ensconced as he in the State's insurance establishment, knew well. If the book offers a prescient portrait of the manipulative, unjust regimes that would begin to dominate Europe and Asia a decade after the author's death, it is not because the author offers a specific prophesy. Yet he does describe the seed: a society that accepts unaccountable governance in the name of necessity, which regards the law as divine Law because it declines to show itself.

Some novels seem to peter out in a trail of ellipses, most of their good ideas spent or their plots and sub-plots resolved. *The Trial* ends with a full stop. The emotional and symbolic charge builds up fast through the final pages, culminating in a veritable thunderclap. Yet, more than anywhere else in the book (excepting, perhaps, the end of Chapter Eight), one feels acutely that this is an unfinished novel. What has K. done since his meeting with the chaplain? We want desperately to know. Surely he has struggled, explored new avenues, considered leaving town. Was he already so resigned to this ridiculous fate in Chapter Nine? How is it he comes to expect some sort of official visitor on his birthday? On a different note, the appearance of Fraulein Burstner reminds us of how entirely unresolved that whole affair was left, way back in the first half of the book. *The Trial* was written during 1914-1915 and then abandoned—for whatever reason, Kafka moved on to other projects. It is not quite whole; yet, as in all of Kafka's best work, *The Trial* is marked by the contradiction of hermetic clarity, of utterance that has the ring of truth and internal consistency, even if we cannot quite make out the note.

12.4 SELF-ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS (SAQs)

- a) The law student is described as _____.
- b) Uncle Karl lives _____.
- c) Leni is the lawyer's _____.

- d) Titorelli's connection to the Court is that _____.
- e) When K. steps out of Titorelli's room, he finds himself in _____.
- f) _____ is K.'s first name .

12.5 SHORT ANSWER QUESTIONS

- 1 Kafka's *The Trial* is often cited as a political allegory. Comment.

- 2 Was K.'s execution inevitable? Other defendants such as Block seem to have such long, protracted trials; K.'s trial only lasts a year. Did K. do anything to accelerate his trial ?

- 3 Was there anything he could have done to prevent his execution?

12.6 EXAMINATION ORIENTED QUESTIONS

- 1 Why is Josef K. on trial? What is his crime?

2 Discuss the tragedy of K. in *The Trial*.

3 What are the levels at which *The Trial* operates ?

Ans. Certainly *The Trial* has many layers of meaning which not even the most “scientific” analysis can decode, be it psychoanalytically or, more recently, linguistically oriented. The probably inevitable result of the novel’s multi-level make-up is that certain components are stressed while others are not. Yet it seems that, in spite of this danger, our view of K. will pretty much determine our interpretation.

Both the philosophical-theological and the autobiographical interpretations shed light on two important layers. If we view the Court only as a description of a corrupt bureaucratic system, or as a projection of Kafka’s personal problems, K. winds up as the miserable victim whose story grants mankind absolutely no hope in a totally alienated world. The same is true if we take the parable, the novel’s artistic focal point, and view it as the tribunal where K., elevated to an absolute level, is forced to vindicate himself as a representative of mankind without really knowing why or how.

If we look at K. as guilty, as a man who is part and parcel of this faulty world and whose aberrations result in severe, though logically consistent occurrences, then we must acknowledge a higher Law toward whose absolute standards K. is stumbling. Looking at *The Trial* this way makes it appear not only as a portrayal of human desperation, but also as one of Kafka’s faith: not faith in the sense of salvation, or even orientation, to be sure, but faith in his eventual acceptance of his sinful life and its consequences.

In this interpretation, K. does not die as a result of his involved and absurd situation, but because he was already dead inwardly at his arrest.

From the very outset of the story he does not love anybody or anything, does not aim for anything beyond his immediate physical needs, is insensitive and egotistical. His assets are limited to purely economic concerns to a point which keeps him from comprehending the nature of his own new situation. But his self-assurance and defiance against the bizarre authorities, which seem to amount to justified protest in the eyes of the reader — at this point still sympathetic to him — gradually disappear. The longer the trial lasts, the more K. becomes aware that the strange Court with all its bizarre and corrupt officials may have the right to investigate against him after all. As the priest warns K. during their discussion about the meaning of the parable, “It may be that you don’t know the nature of the Court you are serving.” It makes sense, therefore, to see the many scenes of K.’s trial as sequences of his evolving consciousness (and conscience; the two words are cognates). In this case, the final scene with all its horror represents the last consequence of guilt in the form of a nightmare. If we accept this view, then the confusing and contradictory aspects of the Court are also a reflection of K.’s inner condition.

It is important to understand that there are many levels of the Court, most of them tangible, corrupt, and dealing with K. in a most haphazard way. The highest level is, above all, elusive. The levels at which K. fights mirror the shortcomings of this life (his included, as said above) and are therefore in no position to pass judgment. The representatives of these levels become bogged down in unresolved and unresolvable issues and utter “diverse viewpoints” at best. Their ranks “mount endlessly so that not even the initiated can survey the hierarchy as a whole,” and each level “actually knows less than the defense.” Even the “high judges” are “common” and, contrary to popular belief, sit only on “kitchen chairs.” These officials represent the sensual unhampered forces of life itself. Their power is such that nobody can escape them. At the same time, and this makes for their paradoxical nature, they are forever caught up in reflecting and registering in a rather abstract realm removed from life. “They were often utterly at a loss; they did not have any right understanding of human relations.”

Beyond these bungling levels of the Court, there is the highest seat of Law itself, absolute and inaccessible, yet weighing more and more heavily on K., who becomes increasingly aware of its existence and its relevance to his case. It marks that point of the endless legal pyramid where the notions of justice and inevitability come together, where the countless contradictions and errors of its organs are reconciled. It is the instance which K. becomes drawn to, of which he has an increasingly definite feeling that he has been summoned before it to justify his life. This is the Law he has to serve and which he has violated by being unaware of its existence.

The indifferent and corrupt authorities “are merely sent out by the highest Court.” They do not know their superiors. They stand clearly below this “highest Law.” This is why the doorkeeper of the parable stands before the Law rather than in it.

12.7 LET US SUM UP

The plot is spread over the protagonist, K.’s arrest and his attempts to extricate himself from an aging, totalitarian bureaucratic system. This is at the conscious surface level. Kafka is also the social chronicler, commenting in monotonous detail on the Czech legal system - which is symbolic of any organization that is governmental even in democratic countries. The story is also crowded with characters, each with his own identity, but who fall into the system whether they like it or not. A hierarchy of characters, starting from the judge and leading to an isolated painter, is neatly arranged.

12.8 ANSWER KEY (SAQs)

1. bow-legged
2. in the country
3. nurse
4. he paints officials’ portraits
5. Law Court Offices
6. Josef

12.9 SUGGESTED READING

- Pawel, Ernst. The Nightmare of Reason: A Life of Franz Kafka. New York: Farrar, Straus, Giroux, 1984.
- Wagenbach, Klaus. Franz Kafka: Pictures of a Life. Translated by Arthur S. Wensinger. New York: Pantheon Books, 1984.

FRANZ KAFKA : *THE TRIAL*

STRUCTURE

- 13.1 Introduction**
- 13.2 Objectives**
- 13.3 Character Analysis of K.**
- 13.4 The Theme of Existentialism**
- 13.5 Kafka: A Religious Writer**
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13.1 INTRODUCTION

The characters in *The Trial* are emblematic of Kafka's exploration of alienation and the dehumanizing effects of modernity. Josef K., the protagonist, is portrayed as a rational man caught in an irrational situation, embodying the Everyman struggling against an impenetrable system. Other characters, such as the elusive and enigmatic court officials, the priest who

tells the parable of the Law, and various intermediaries like the advocate Huld and the court painter Titorelli, contribute to the sense of confusion and futility that pervades the novel. Each character reflects aspects of the labyrinthine bureaucracy and the pervasive sense of injustice that defines Josef K.'s plight.

13.2 OBJECTIVES

This lesson aims at discussing certain aspects of the writer, Franz Kafka, and provides an overview of the themes of *The Trial* so that learners can have a better insight into this literary text.

13.3 CHARACTER ANALYSIS OF K.

The protagonist faces a crisis in his life when a mysterious court charges him with an offense. Neither he nor the reader is aware of any specific charge right till the end of the novel. But he senses unrest within himself, to clear his name and to seek justice. In the innermost recesses of his mind he understands this as the *divine challenge to man*. He listens to this inner voice and he runs all over the city of Prague, superficially to extricate himself from the trial seeking escape and withdrawal. He is torn between two realities - one of the well-ordered official post at the bank and the disorderly, chaotic world of the court of law. Though he seems to be completely in charge of his existence in the modern world, the power of the court is dependent on the spiritual urges within K. himself. His unknown guilt and "*bad conscience*" drive him repeatedly to the court.

The court is powerful in the sense that its law is inaccessible to K. in shaping his desired destiny. This is representative of the divine court demanding that he justify his right to existence in the real world. His bourgeois way of life is disturbed. This sets him free to rethink on the unconquered spiritual aspect of his life. This is a world dominated by injustice and tolerated by god. K. is the unbeliever, deeply conscious of his right. He regards the world as chaotic and his destiny as undefeatable. The incident "*law books*" have a superhuman life-power, but they do not endow man with any high responsibility. He resists and complains against the court.

The thought of the junior clerks with their allegorical portrayals and obscure standards by which they apply rules gives rise to nightmare images in K.'s soul. Their piled up documents are the past buried in man's unconscious soul, bottomless threatening to surface in conscious life. The clerks would like K.'s ego to become responsible for this buried past. K.'s defeat and failure finally is his refusal to accept the burden of the world or of his soul.

When K. focuses the court fails to establish his communication with the court. He does not confess his guilt and does not realize it could be connected with the supernatural. He tells the priest in the Cathedral arguing how can any man be considered guilty. He feels no man can judge another while the priest opines that all guilty men talk like that. He is the chosen one of god, his guilt is like that of the son in '*The Judgement*'. It is not a personal crime but connected with that of mankind, the fall of man in Judaic - Christian philosophy.

K. is also the victim of delusion in prejudging the court and complaining and opposing. His protest against the court is also a protest against the world. He refuses to take any personal responsibility for the modern world's confusion. But because he is the sole person to be arrested, he is the chosen one. He does not realize this because he does not listen to his inner consciousness. K. is like the accused in the legend "*Before the Law*".

K.'s arrest forces him to perceive the reality around him and also to think about his own mind and the validity of its existence. He is driven to the court more by his becoming aware of his invalid superficial principles. He runs away more and more from the court without understanding the meaning of the court's working till the prison chaplain enlightens him.

There is a double significance in K.'s reflections when he walks through the poor hamlets of the court. The court's officials spend money on their private past times leaving the clerks with little money for their existence. The clerks in their various grades play with legalities like a game and follow its excitement for the game's sake. In seeking justice K. is seeking more than abstract justice.

He wants inner peace. K. is mistaken in thinking the mighty magistrates in the portraits are powerful. This is his delusion - a mistaken reality. K.'s existence has a deeper significance in his bondage with the divine. Why should he be judged by these petty officials? But sadly, he forgets his place in the divine framework.

K. is deluded like the accused man begging even the flea in the doorkeepers fur cap. He tries to influence the court officials, the Advocate, the painter, but there is always an obstacle, K. represents the entire mass of humanity, which is deluded in history. K. accuses the doorkeeper in the legend as obstructing the moral or divine order of the world. But then like K. man has to live in the hope of the divine or else there is no hope for his survival. Though K. believes he can fight his case himself, the novel does not reflect his self-confidence. It is slowly getting eroded. When the priest says that law is necessary he is pointing to god as the final truth above human judgement.

When K. is arrested, there is a fear in his mind, shaking his worldly routine life. Fear is also an uncertain condition of the mind, which should draw him chosen to a higher spiritual law. It is his self-confidence and control over affairs in the world, which is shaken. He is seeking assurance from Frau Grubach by a definite opinion of his innocence.

So far he has not been particularly nice to women, not even to the cabaret dancer he visits on saturday evenings. But now he seeks Fräulein Bürstner's friendship. He is less self-assured, less egotistic that Bürstner is only a little typist. She is his immediate neighbor but is now distant in relationship.

When K. is summoned to the court he visits the court because he wants to be free of charges filed against him. In an allegorical manner he is also suddenly awakened by the call of god. When K. is warned that he has come to court it is a reminder of the new earnestness in the turn that life has taken. It is a reminder of the constant presence of god's eye. He is mistaken for a painter. It also shows that it is his inner being which matters and not the outer definition of his existence. But his dogmatism does not free him from his guilt and accusation.

Women play an important role in K.'s attempts to free himself from his arrest. He is trying to desperately reach out and maintain his contact with existence as also escape from his loneliness. His relationship with Fräulein Bürstner is casual. So his arrest takes place in her strange room. It opens new pathways in his soul. His conscious life so far has been very superficial. Though he tries to make love to Bürstner it is against his will; again casual. He is incapable of understanding the "*feminine soul*". He cannot physically possess her as he could with the barmaid, Elsa.

Similarly he fights over the court attendant's wife. He tries to assert his ego and "*manliness*". But it is seen that he seems to be a man who cannot control his own life and is again the accused. His relationship with the third woman, Leni is also shown. His affair with Leni is not fully satisfying but he is the accused, uncertain of his future.

In the scene with the Whipper, K. feels united with the warders because they broke some legal rule and denigrated their own legal status. He considers the seniors guilty and not they as being guilty on a spiritual and legal plane. K. is the cause of the others sufferings because he complained about his liver. His attitude does not commensurate on the man's dignity. His character in modern living has caused unbearable suffering to others. It is jarring as this suffering takes place in the calm clear atmosphere of the office. K. again falls spiritually when he tries to bribe the whipper to prevent the suffering. It is symbolic of new movements in the world in his attempt to improve things. But it is ineffective. K.'s sorrow is reflected in the warder's shrieks. Allegorically the rotten system of the law is reflected. The suffering seems to be perpetual. So he denies it as he cannot end it, and tells the bank servant that it is a dog yelling. He wants to take on the suffering of the world on himself but he runs away blaming the officials as being guilty. He still lacks courage but maintains that he is not guilty before the court.

K. is just a spectator to the existential presence of the ego as manifest in humanity in the minds of the advocates. K. is neither superior nor inferior to any

of them, but just an observer, though at the house of the advocate he thinks he can triumph spiritually. His encounter with the priest in the cathedral is the climax. The priest asks him to assess his own role and character amidst all the chaos and corruption raging around him. The priest sees him on the top of a great abyss from where no action is possible in the course of the trial. The fact that K. tries to justify and free himself is an acceptance of guilt. His guilt cannot be defined in human language. K. has prejudged himself as innocent. He is deluded and refuses to listen to the court or the divine word. He is interested in the unimportant as against the essential. Symbolically as the priest, a messenger of god delivers his sermon, K. has an album instead of a prayer book in his hand. He does not hear the prophecy nor the supernatural summons. Symbolically the lamp that the priest gives him to carry into the world outside goes out.

In the final chapter K.'s execution in a stone quarry is the disillusionment that lets in. His dying like a dog is the death of the canine consciousness, a dog whose physical senses are very alert. He does not see the spiritual light, which the priest offers and so he gives in. Also, he has lived a bachelor's existence, the figure which is like Fräulein Bürstner is unreachable. He had very little of "give and take" in his life, caring and sharing. The void in his life metaphorically symbolizes the blankness in modern living.

The court's call was that of a divine call. His trial shows that he was imprisoned, not able to bring out his own "self" or his spiritual identity. The freedom that he longs for is the deliverance of his self. He is fed up of his routine existence. Like so many of Kafka's portrayals K. ends up, negating life without any hope.

13.4 THE THEME OF EXISTENTIALISM

Kafka's stories suggest meanings which are accessible only after several readings. If their endings, or lack of endings, seem to make sense at all, they will do so immediately and not in unequivocal language. The reason for this is that the stories offer a wide variety of possible meanings without confirming

any particular one of them. This, in turn, is the result of Kafka's view which he shares with many twentieth-century writers — that his own self is a parcel of perennially interacting forces lacking a stable core; if he should attain an approximation of objectivity, this can come about only by describing the world in symbolic language and from a number of different vantage points. Thus a total view must inevitably remain inaccessible to him. Such a universe about which nothing can be said that cannot at the same time — and just as plausibly — be contradicted has certain ironic quality about it — ironic in the sense that each possible viewpoint becomes relativized. Yet the overriding response one has is one of tragedy rather than irony as one watches Kafka's heroes trying to piece together the debris of their universe.

Kafka's world is essentially chaotic, and that is why it is impossible to derive a specific philosophical or religious code from it — even one acknowledging chaos and paradox as does much existential thought. Only the events themselves can reveal the basic absurdity of things. To reduce Kafka's symbols to their "real" meanings and to pigeonhole his world-view as some "ism" or other is to obscure his writing with just the kind of meaningless experience from which he liberated himself through his art.

Expressionism is one of the literary movements frequently mentioned in connection with Kafka, possibly because its vogue in literature coincided with Kafka's mature writing, between 1912 and his death in 1924. Of course, Kafka does have certain characteristics in common with expressionists, such as his criticism of the blindly scientific-technological world-view, for instance. However, if we consider what he thought of some of the leading expressionists of his day, he certainly cannot be associated with the movement: he repeatedly confessed that the works of the expressionists made him sad; of a series of illustrations by Kokoschka, one of the most distinguished representatives of the movement, Kafka said: "I don't understand. To me, it merely proves the painter's inner chaos." What he rejected in expressionism is the overstatement of feeling and the seeming lack of craftsmanship. While Kafka was perhaps not the great craftsman in the sense that Flaubert was, he admired this faculty in others. In

terms of content, Kafka was highly skeptical and even inimical toward the expressionist demand for the “new man.” This moralistic-didactic sledgehammer method repulsed him.

Kafka’s relationship with existentialism is much more complex, mainly because the label “existentialist” by itself is rather meaningless. Dostoevsky, Nietzsche, and Kierkegaard all have a certain existentialist dimension in their writings, as do Camus, Sartre, Jaspers and Heidegger, with whose works the term existentialism has been more or less equated since World War II. These various people have rather little in common concerning their religious, philosophical, or political views, but they nevertheless share certain characteristic tenets present in Kafka.

Kafka certainly remained fascinated and overwhelmed by the major theme of all varieties of existentialist thinking, namely the difficulty of responsible commitment in the face of an absurd universe. Deprived of all metaphysical guidelines, man is nevertheless obligated to act morally in a world where death renders everything meaningless. He alone must determine what constitutes a moral action although he can never foresee the consequences of his actions. As a result, he comes to regard his total freedom of choice as a curse. The guilt of existentialist heroes, as of Kafka’s, lies in their failure to choose and to commit themselves in the face of too many possibilities — none of which appears more legitimate or worthwhile than any other one. Like Camus’ Sisyphus, who is doomed to hauling a rock uphill only to watch it roll down the other side, they find themselves faced with the fate of trying to wring a measure of dignity for themselves in an absurd world. Unlike Sisyphus, however, Kafka’s heroes remain drifters in the unlikely landscape. Ulrich in Musil’s *The Man Without Quality* and Mersault in Camus’ *The Stranger* — these men are really contemporaries of Kafka’s “heroes,” drifters in a world devoid of metaphysical anchoring and suffering from the demons of absurdity and alienation. And in this sense, they are all modern-day relatives of that great hesitator Hamlet, the victim of his exaggerated consciousness and overly rigorous conscience.

The absurdity which Kafka portrays in his nightmarish stories was, to him, the quintessence of the whole human condition. The utter incompatibility of the “divine law” and the human law, and Kafka’s inability to solve the discrepancy are the roots of the sense of estrangement from which his protagonists suffer. No matter how hard Kafka’s heroes strive to come to terms with the universe, they are hopelessly caught, not only in a mechanism of their own contriving, but also in a network of accidents and incidents, the least of which may lead to the gravest consequences. Absurdity results in estrangement, and to the extent that Kafka deals with this basic calamity, he deals with an eminently existentialist theme.

Kafka’s protagonists are lonely because they are caught midway between a notion of good and evil, whose scope they cannot determine and whose contradiction they cannot resolve. Deprived of any common reference and impaled upon their own limited vision of “the law,” they cease to be heard, much less understood, by the world around them. They are isolated to the point where meaningful communication fails them. When the typical Kafka hero, confronted with a question as to his identity, cannot give a clear-cut answer, Kafka does more than indicate difficulties of verbal expression: he says that his hero stands between two worlds — between a vanished one to which he once belonged and a present world to which he does not belong. This is consistent with Kafka’s world, which consists not of clearly delineated opposites, but of an endless series of possibilities. These are never more than temporary expressions, never quite conveying what they really ought to convey — hence the temporary, fragmentary quality of Kafka’s stories. In the sense that Kafka is aware of the limitations which language imposes upon him and tests the limits of literature, he is a “modern” writer. In the sense that he does not destroy the grammatical, syntactical, and semantic components of his texts, he remains traditional. Kafka has refrained from such destructive aspirations because he is interested in tracing the human reasoning process in great detail up to the point where it fails. He remains indebted to the empirical approach and is at his best when he depicts his protagonists desperately trying to comprehend the world by following the “normal” way.

Because they cannot make themselves heard, much less understood, Kafka's protagonists are involved in adventures which no one else knows about. The reader tends to have the feeling that he is privy to the protagonist's fate and, therefore, finds it rather easy to identify with him. Since there is usually nobody else within the story to whom the protagonist can communicate his fate, he tends to reflect on his own problems over and over again. This solipsistic quality Kafka shares with many an existential writer, although existentialist terminology has come to refer to it as "self-realization."

Kafka was thoroughly familiar with the writings of Kierkegaard and Dostoevsky, and it pays to ponder the similarities and differences between their respective views. The most obvious similarity between Kafka and Kierkegaard, their complex relationships with their respective fiancées and their failures to marry, also points up an essential difference between them. When Kafka talks of bachelorhood and a hermit's existence, he sees these as negative. Kierkegaard, on the other hand, was an enthusiastic bachelor who saw a divine commandment in his renunciation of women. For Kafka, bachelorhood was a symbol of alienation from communal happiness, and he thought of all individualism in this manner. This makes him a poor existentialist.

Unlike Kierkegaard, who mastered his anguish through a deliberate "leap into faith," leaving behind all intellectual speculation, Kafka and his heroes never succeed in conquering this basic anguish: Kafka remained bound by his powerful, probing intellect, trying to solve things rationally and empirically. Kafka does not conceive of the transcendental universe he seeks to describe in its paradoxical and noncommunicable terms; instead, he sets to describing it rationally and, therefore, inadequately. It is as if he were forced to explain something which he himself does not understand — nor is really supposed to understand. Kafka was not the type who could will the act of belief. Nor was he a man of flesh and bones who could venture the decisive step toward action and the "totality of experience," as did Camus, for instance, who fought in the French Underground against the Nazi terror. Kafka never really went beyond accepting this world in a way that remains outside of any specific religion. He

tended to oppose Kierkegaard's transcendental mysticism, although it might be too harsh to argue that he gave up all faith in the "indestructible nature" of the universe, as he called it. Perhaps this is what Kafka means when he says, "One cannot say that we are lacking faith. The simple fact in itself that we live is inexhaustible in its value of faith."

In the case of Dostoevsky, the parallels with Kafka include merciless consciousness and the rigorous conscience issuing from it. Just as characters in Dostoevsky's works live in rooms anonymous and unadorned, for example, so the walls of the hunger artist's cage, the animal's maze, and Gregor Samsa's bedroom are nothing but the narrow, inexorable, and perpetual prison walls of their respective consciences. The most tragic awakening in Kafka's stories is always that of consciousness and conscience. Kafka surpasses Dostoevsky in this respect because that which is represented as dramatic relation — between, say, Raskolnikov and Porfiry in *Crime and Punishment* — becomes the desperate monologue of a soul in Kafka's pieces.

Kafka's philosophical basis, then, is an open system: it is one of human experiences about the world and not so much the particular *Weltanschauung* of a thinker. Kafka's protagonists confront a secularized deity whose only visible aspects are mysterious and anonymous. Yet despite being continually faced with the essential absurdity of all their experiences, these men nevertheless do not cease trying to puzzle them out. To this end, Kafka uses his writing as a code of the transcendental, a language of the unknown. It is important to understand that this code is not an escape from reality, but the exact opposite — the instrument through which he seeks to comprehend the world in its totality — without ever being able to say to what extent he may have succeeded.

13.5 KAFKA: A RELIGIOUS WRITER

To know Kafka is to grapple with this problem: was Kafka primarily a "religious" writer? The answer seems to depend on the views one brings to the reading of his stories rather than on even the best analyses. Because so much of Kafka's world remains ultimately inaccessible to us, any such labeling will

reveal more about the reader than about Kafka or his works. He himself would most likely have refused to be forced into any such either/or proposition.

Perhaps one of the keys to this question is Kafka's confession that, to him, "writing is a form of prayer." Everything we know about him suggests that he probably could not have chosen any other form of expressing himself but writing. Considering the tremendous sacrifices he had made to his writing, it is only fair to say that he would have abandoned his art had he felt the need to get his ideas across in some philosophical or theological system. At the same time, one feels that what Kafka wanted to convey actually transcended literature and that, inside, art alone must have seemed shallow to him — or at least inadequate when measured against the gigantic task he set for himself — that is, inching his way toward at least approximations of the nature of truth. Each of Kafka's lines is charged with multiple meanings of allusions, daydreams, illusions, and reflections — all indicating a realm whose "realness" we are convinced of, but whose nature Kafka could not quite grasp with his art. He remained tragically aware of this discrepancy throughout his life.

This does not contradict the opinion that Kafka was a "philosopher groping for a form rather than a novelist groping for a theme." "Philosopher" refers here to a temperament, a cast of mind, rather than to a man's systematic, abstract school of thought. Whatever one may think of Kafka's success or failure in explaining his world, there is no doubt that he always deals with the profoundest themes of man's fate. The irrational and the horrible are never introduced for the sake of literary effect; on the contrary, they are introduced to express a depth of reality. And if there is one hallmark of Kafka's prose, it is the complete lack of any contrived language or artificial structure.

Essentially, Kafka desired to "extinguish his self" by writing, as he himself put it. In terms of craftsmanship, this means that much of his writing is too unorganized, open-ended, and obscure. Even allowing for the fact that he was concerned with a realm into which only symbols and parables can shed some light (rather than, say, metaphors and similes, which would have tied his stories

to the more concrete and definitive), it is doubtful whether Kafka can be called an “accomplished writer” in the sense that Thomas Mann, for instance, can.

Kafka was, then, a major writer, but not a good “craftsman.” And he was a major thinker and seer in the sense that he registered, reflected, and even warned against the sickness of a whole age when contemporaries with a less acute consciousness still felt secure.

The question of Kafka’s being a religious writer has been going on for decades, but has often been meaningless because of the failure of critics or readers to explain what they mean by “religious.” It is essential to differentiate between those who call Kafka and Kafka’s works religious in the wider sense of the term — that is, religious by temperament or mentality — and those who assert that his stories reflect Kafka as a believer in the traditional Judaic-Christian sense of the word. Of this latter group, his lifelong friend and editor Max Brod was the first and probably most influential. A considerable number of critics and readers have followed Brod’s “religious” interpretations — particularly, Edwin Muir, Kafka’s principal English translator. However, for some time now, Kafka criticism has not investigated the “religious” aspect. This is so partly because the psychoanalytical approach and the sociological approach have been more popular and fashionable (especially in the United States), and also because critics and biographers have proven beyond doubt that Brod committed certain errors while editing and commenting on Kafka. While the original attitude toward Brod was one of absolute reverence (after all, he saw Kafka daily for over twenty years, listened to his friend’s stories, and advised him on changes), the consensus of opinion has more recently been that, although we owe him a great deal as far as Kafka and his work are concerned, he was a poor researcher. He was simply too self-conscious about his close friendship with Kafka and therefore too subjective: he would never admit the obviously neurotic streak in Kafka’s personality. While we may trust Brod when he claims that Kafka’s aphorisms are much more optimistic and life-asserting than his fiction, it is difficult to consider Kafka primarily as a believer in the “in-destructible core of the universe” or more pronouncedly Jewish-Christian

tenets. His famous remark, striking the characteristic tone of self-pity, “Sometimes I feel I understand the Fall of Man better than anyone,” is more to the point. We have no reason to doubt Brod’s judgment about Kafka’s personally charming, calm, and even humorous ways. It is that in Kafka’s fiction, calmness is too often overshadowed by fear and anxiety, and the rare touches of humor are little more than convulsions of what in German is known as Galgenhumor (“gallows humor”) — that is, the frantic giggle before one’s execution.

In summary, one can argue in circles about Kafka’s work being “religious,” but one thing is clear: Kafka’s stories inevitably concern the desperate attempts of people to do right. And as noted elsewhere, Kafka and his protagonists are identical to an amazing extent. This means that the main characters who try to do right but are continuously baffled, thwarted, and confused as to what it really means to do right are also Kafka himself. Viewed in this way, Kafka becomes a religious writer par excellence: he and his protagonists are classical examples of the man in whose value system the sense of duty and of responsibility and the inevitability of moral commandments have survived the particular and traditional code of a religious system — hence Kafka’s yearning for a frame of reference which would impart meaning to his distinct sense of “shalt” and “shalt not.” If one takes this all-permeating desire for salvation as the main criterion for Kafka’s “religiousness” rather than the grace of faith which he never found, how could anyone not see Kafka as a major religious writer? “He was God-drunk,” a critic wrote, “but in his intoxication his subtle and powerful intellect did not stop working.”

13.6 JEWISH INFLUENCE

Prague was steeped in the atmosphere of Jewish learning and writing until the social and political turmoil of the collapsing Austrian Empire put an end to its traditional character. The first Jews had come to Prague in the tenth century, and the earliest written document about what the city looked like was by a Jewish traveler. According to him, Prague was a cultural crossroads even then. Pulsating with life, the city produced many a lingering myth during the subsequent centuries, and they, in turn, added to its cultural fertility. The myth of the golem is probably its most well known: golem (“clay” in Hebrew) was

the first chunk of inanimate matter that the famed Rabbi Loew, known for his learnedness as well as his alchemistic pursuits, supposedly awakened to actual life in the late sixteenth century. This myth fathered a whole genre of literature written in the haunting, semi mystical atmosphere of Prague's Jewish ghetto. It is this background, medieval originally, but with several layers of subsequent cultural impulses superimposed on it, that pervades the world of Franz Kafka, supplying it with a very "real" setting of what is generally and misleadingly known as "Kafkaesque unrealness."

One of the unresolved tensions that is characteristic of Kafka's work occurs between his early (and growing) awareness of his Jewish heritage and the realization that modern Central European Jewry had become almost wholly assimilated. This tension remained alive in him quite apart from his situation as a prominent member of the Jewish-German intelligentsia of Prague. The problem concerned him all the more directly because his family clung to Jewish traditions only in a superficial way. Although perhaps of a more orthodox background than her husband — and therefore not quite so eager to attain total assimilation into gentile society — even Kafka's mother made no great effort to cherish Jewish ways. On one level, then, Kafka's animosity toward his father and his entire family may be explained by his mounting interest in his Jewish heritage which they did not share.

Kafka felt drawn to Jews who had maintained their cultural identity, among them the leader of a Yiddish acting group from Poland. He attended their performances in 1911, organized evenings of reading Yiddish literature, and was drawn into fierce arguments about this subject with his father, who despised traveling actors, as did the Jewish establishment of Prague. It was at that time that Kafka began to study Hebrew. As late as 1921, however, he still complained about having no firm knowledge of Jewish history and religion.

What fascinated Kafka about the various members of this group was their firmness of faith and their resistance to being absorbed into the culture of their gentile environment. There are numerous letters and diary entries which point to Kafka's awareness of the essential difference between Western and

Eastern Jews concerning this matter. Kafka felt a great affinity with the chassidic tradition (chassidic means “pious” in Hebrew; it was an old conservative movement within Judaism which came to flower again in the eighteenth century in eastern Europe). Kafka admired very much their ardent, this-worldly faith, their veneration of ancestry, and their cherishing of native customs. He developed a powerful contempt for Jewish artists who, in his estimation, too willingly succumbed to assimilation and secularization.

Kafka was particularly interested in Zionism, the movement founded by Theodor Herzl (*The Jewish State*, 1890) to terminate the dissemination of Jews all over the world by promoting their settlement in Palestine. Zionism preached the ancient Jewish belief that the Messiah would arrive with the re-establishment of the Jewish state, and Kafka’s desire for such a Jewish state and his willingness to emigrate should be noted. Kafka published in a Zionist magazine, planned several trips to Palestine (which never materialized because of his deteriorating health), and was most enthusiastic about the solidarity, the sense of community, and the simplicity of the new kibbuzim.

While it is true that Kafka’s friend Max Brod influenced him in supporting the ideals of Zionism, it is incorrect to say that without Brod’s influence Kafka would never have developed an interest in the movement. His Hebrew teacher Thieberger, a friend and student of Martin Buber, was also a major influence on Kafka. Thieberger emphasized Jewish responsibility for the whole world and believed that everybody is witness to everybody else. Oddly enough, Kafka’s father’s steady exhortations to “lead an active life” may have added to his growing esteem for the Jewish pioneer ideal. Another source of Kafka’s growing interest in Jewish tradition was, of course, his sickness, the very sickness that kept him from carrying out his plans to emigrate to Palestine and live there as a simple artisan. The more Kafka became aware of his approaching end, the more he delved into the study of his identity. A year before his death, he started attending the Berlin Academy of Jewish Studies, and it was during that same year, 1923, that he met Dora Dymant, who was of chassidic background and further accented his search and love for his Jewish roots.

It is clear that Kafka's interest and love for the various aspects of Jewry are not merely an attempt on his part to make up for past omissions in this matter. They are, above all, the result of his religious concerns — "religious" in the wider sense of the word — that is, religious by temperament, religious in the sense of ceaselessly searching and longing for grace.

13.7 SELF-ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS (SAQs)

- a) _____ is supposed to meet K. at the cathedral.
- b) K. meets _____ instead of whom he is supposed to meet.
- c) The doorkeeper gives _____ to the man from the country who requests admittance to the Law.
- d) The doorkeeper is described as having the beard of a _____
- e) Block has a secret that _____ and this would anger the lawyer if the lawyer knew it.
- f) K. is recommended to Titorelli by _____.

13.8 EXAMINATION ORIENTED QUESTIONS

- 1 Why does K submit meekly to his executors?

- 2 Discuss 'alienation' as characteristic of modernistic fiction in the role of K.

- 3 Write a brief note on the connection between the Court and dark, poorly ventilated interiors.

Ans. There seems to be a strong connection between the Court and dark, poorly ventilated interiors. One may arrive at one's own conclusions of metaphor or symbol, but the relationship at least is fairly consistent. The meeting hall of the first interrogation is dim and hazy. The atmosphere of the law offices is suffocating and sends K. into collapse. The Whipper whips the warders in a wood closet. The Court's painter lives in an insufferably stuffy attic. K.'s consultations with the lawyer take place in the latter's darkened sickroom. Even the cathedral, where K. meets the chaplain, is virtually pitch black due to the storm brewing outside. All of this can have a profound effect on the reader, who may feel confined by the descriptions of these interiors just as by the stonewalling of the Court or K.'s obdurate inability to see the danger he's in.

13.9 LET US SUM UP

The novel is a tragedy. K. loses his urge to resist. The guards kill him. It could be said that the protagonist and the antagonist are both K. himself. Since the conflict is internalized, K.'s feelings are antagonistic. K.'s attempts to bribe the court officials and letting himself be maneuvered by the painter, Titorelli while making use of his services, could be considered his villainy. At the realistic level K. is the protagonist fighting the system and seeking justice. The antagonists are the court and its arm of justice, the corrupt magistrates and finally the guards who kill K.

13.10 ANSWER KEY (SAQs)

1. An Italian client
2. a prison chaplain
3. a stool
4. Tartar
5. he has hired other lawyers for his case
6. the manufacturer

13.11 SUGGESTED READING

- Hughes, Kenneth, ed. and trans. Franz Kafka: An Anthology of Marxist Criticism. Hanover, NH: University Press of New England, 1981.

FRANZ KAFKA : *THE TRIAL*

STRUCTURE

- 14.1 Introduction**
- 14.2 Objectives**
- 14.3 The Writing Of *The Trial***
- 14.4 Understanding Kafka**
- 14.5 The Neurotic Element**
- 14.6 Symbols and Metaphors**
- 14.7 Self-Assessment Questions (SAQs)**
- 14.8 Examination Oriented Questions**
- 14.9 Let Us Sum Up**
- 14.10 Answer Key (SAQs)**
- 14.11 Suggested Reading**

14.1 INTRODUCTION

Kafka's writing style in *The Trial* is characterized by its precision, clarity, and a haunting, almost clinical detachment. His prose often conveys a sense of stark realism, juxtaposed with elements of surrealism and dark absurdity. Kafka's use of detailed, meticulous descriptions creates a vivid and oppressive atmosphere, while his narrative technique—frequently employing a

third-person limited perspective—ensures that readers experience the protagonist’s confusion and despair firsthand. The tone is often bleak and introspective, with an undercurrent of irony that highlights the absurdity of the situations Josef K. encounters. Kafka’s distinctive style not only amplifies the novel’s themes but also immerses readers in the unsettling world he has crafted.

14.2 OBJECTIVES

The objective of this lesson is to discuss selected aspects of Kafka’s writing so that the learners of this course have a better impression of and insights into his work.

14.3 THE WRITING OF *THE TRIAL*

Franz Kafka began to write *The Trial* in the summer of 1914, a date which has unfortunately convinced many people that the novel is primarily a work foreshadowing political terror. Of course, he was painfully aware of the interconnections between World War I and his own problems, but never in the sense that the novel was supposed to be a deliberate effort to write about the political scene.

From all we know, it is much closer to the facts to view *The Trial* in connection with the enormous tension under which he lived during his two years with Felice Bauer. It can be shown that especially his first engagement to her in June 1914, and his subsequent separation from her six weeks later found their expression in the novel: the engagement is reflected in K.’s arrest and his separation in K.’s execution. Even certain details fit easily: the initials F.B. are both Felice’s and those Kafka used to abbreviate Fräulein Bürstner; K.’s arrest takes place in Fräulein Bürstner’s room, which he knows well, and Kafka’s engagement took place in Felice’s apartment, which he knew well; K. is asked to dress up for the occasion, strangers are watching, and the bank employees he knows are present; at Kafka’s engagement, both friends and strangers were present — an aspect which the reserved Kafka abhorred particularly. Most significantly perhaps for a demonstration of the parallel, K. is permitted to remain

at large after his arrest. In Kafka's diary we read that he "was tied like a criminal. If I had been put in chains and shoved in the corner with police guarding me . . . it would not have been worse. And that was my engagement." We can translate K.'s escort to his execution into Kafka's painful separation in Berlin: there Felice presided, their mutual friend Grete Bloch and Kafka's writer-friend Ernst Weiss defended him, but Kafka himself said nothing, only accepted the verdict.

At any rate, Kafka took great pains to record his emotional upheaval during these years, which largely coincides with his composition of *The Trial*. A selection of a few diary entries :

August 21, 1914: "Began with such high hopes, but was thrown back . . . today even more so."

August 29, 1914: "I must not rely on anything. I am alone."

October 10, 1914: "I've written little and poorly . . . that it would get this bad I had no way of knowing."

November 30, 1914: "I cannot go on. I have reached the final limit, in front of which I may well sit for years again — to start all over on a new story which would again remain unfinished. Their destiny haunts me."

January 18, 1915: "Started a new story because I am afraid to ruin the old ones. Now there are 4 or 5 stories standing up around me like horses before a circus director."

The main reasons Brod decided not to abide by his friend's request to burn certain fragments, preferably without reading them, are set forth in his Postscript to the First Edition of 1925, which includes Kafka's original request. Brod took the manuscript in 1920, separated the incomplete from the complete chapters after Kafka's death in 1924, arranged the order of chapters, and gave the piece the title it has, though Kafka himself used only the title to refer to the story without ever calling it *The Trial*. Brod admitted he had to use his own judgment arranging the chapters because they carried titles rather than numbers. Since Kafka had read most of the story to him, Brod was reasonably certain he

proceeded correctly, something which had been doubted for a long time and was finally revised. Brod also recorded that Kafka himself regarded the story as unfinished, that a few scenes were supposed to have been placed before the final chapter to describe the workings of the secretive trial. Since Kafka repeatedly argued, according to Brod, that K.'s trial should never go to the highest level, the novel was really unfinishable or, which is the same, extendable ad infinitum.

When Brod edited *The Trial* posthumously in 1925, it did not have any repercussions, and, as late as 1928, there was no publisher to be found. It was Schocken, then located in Berlin, that ventured a publication of the complete works in 1935 — but Germany was already under Hitler's authority, and Kafka was Jewish. The whole Schocken Company was shut down by Goebbels's Ministry of Propaganda, and so it is not surprising that Kafka became known outside the German-speaking world first. Schocken Books, Inc., now located in New York, published *The Trial* in 1946.

There have been many well-known writers to recognize and extol Kafka's genius and his impact. Thomas Mann was among the first:

He was a dreamer and his writings are often conceived and formed in the manner of dreams. Down to comical details they imitate the alogical and breath-taking absurdities of dreams, these wondrous shadow games of life.

Since the late forties, interpretations have swamped the "Kafka market". Generalizing a bit, one can say that they have all followed either the view of Kafka the artist, or Kafka the philosopher.

In 1947, André Gide and Jean-Louis Barrault came out with a well-received dramatization. The German version had its debut three years later. Gottfried von Einem composed an opera (libretto by Boris Blacher), which was first performed in Salzburg, Austria, in 1953. The most recent version is the film by Orson Welles (1962), with Anthony Perkins in the lead role. Though critics have held widely differing opinions on Welles' film — many charging it is more Welles than Kafka — its success seems justified because of all absence of symbolic or allegorical representation and its high-quality cinematic language.

14.4 UNDERSTANDING KAFKA

A major problem confronting readers of Kafka's short stories is to find a way through the increasingly dense thicket of interpretations. Among the many approaches one encounters is that of the autobiographical approach. This interpretation claims that Kafka's works are little more than reflections of his lifelong tension between bachelorhood and marriage or, on another level, between his skepticism and his religious nature. While it is probably true that few writers have ever been moved to exclaim, "My writing was about you [his father]. In it, I merely poured out the sorrow I could not sigh out at your breast" [Letter to His Father], it is nevertheless dangerous to regard the anxieties permeating his work solely in these terms. Kafka's disenchantment with and eventual hatred of his father were a stimulus to write, but they neither explain the fascination of his writing nor tell us why he wrote at all.

The psychological or psychoanalytical approach to Kafka largely ignores the content of his works and uses the "findings" of the diagnosis as the master key to puzzling out Kafka's world. We know Kafka was familiar with the teachings of Sigmund Freud (he says so explicitly in his diary, after he finished writing "The Judgment" in 1912) and that he tried to express his problems through symbols in the Freudian sense. One may therefore read Kafka with Freud's teachings in mind. As soon as this becomes more than one among many aids to understanding, however, one is likely to read not Kafka, but a text on applied psychoanalysis or Freudian symbology. Freud himself often pointed out that the analysis of artistic values is not within the scope of the analytical methods he taught.

There is the sociological interpretation, according to which Kafka's work is but a mirror of the historical-sociological situation in which he lived. For the critic arguing this way, the question is not what Kafka really says but the reasons why he supposedly said it. What the sociological and the psychological interpretations have in common is the false assumption that the discovery of the social or psychological sources of the artist's experience invalidate the meaning expressed by his art.

Within the sociological type of interpretation, one of the most popular methods of criticism judges Kafka's art by whether or not it has contributed anything toward the progress of society. Following the Marxist-Leninist dictum that art must function as a tool toward the realization of the classless society, this kind of interpretation is prevalent not merely in Communist countries, but also among the New Left critics this side of the Iron and Bamboo Curtains. Marxist criticism of Kafka has shifted back and forth between outright condemnation of Kafka's failing to draw the consequences of his own victimization by the bourgeoisie and between acclamations stressing the pro-proletarian fighting quality of his heroes. That Kafka was the propagator of the working class as the revolutionary class has been maintained not only by official Communist criticism, but also by Western "progressives." And it is true that Kafka did compose a pamphlet lamenting the plight of workers. Yet in a conversation with his friend Janouch, he spoke highly of the Russian Revolution, and he expressed his fear that its religious overtones might lead to a type of modern crusade with a terrifying toll of lives. Surely a writer of Kafka's caliber can describe the terror of a slowly emerging totalitarian regime (Nazi Germany) without being a precursor of communism, as Communist criticism has often claimed. One can also read *The Trial* as the story of K.'s victimization by the Nazis (three of Kafka's sisters died in a concentration camp); it is indeed one of the greatest tributes one can pay to Kafka today that he succeeded in painting the then still latent horror of Nazism so convincingly. But one must not neglect or ignore the fact that Kafka was, above all, a poet; and to be a poet means to give artistic expression to the many levels and nuances of our kaleidoscopic human condition. To see Kafka as a social or political revolutionary because his country doctor, for instance, or the land surveyor of *The Castle* seeks to change his fate through voluntary involvement rather than outside pressure is tantamount to distorting Kafka's universal quality in order to fit him into an ideological framework.

Closely connected with the quasi-religious quality of Marxist interpretations of Kafka's stories are the countless philosophical and religious attempts at deciphering the make-up of his world. They range from sophisticated

the ological argumentation all the way to pure speculation. Although Kafka's religious nature is a subject complex and controversial enough to warrant separate mention, the critics arguing along these lines are also incapable, as are their sociological and psychological colleagues, of considering Kafka simply as an artist. What they all have in common is the belief that Kafka's "real meaning" lies beyond his parables and symbols, and can therefore be better expressed in ways he himself avoided for one reason or another. The presumptuousness of this particular approach lies in the belief that the artist depends on the philosopher for a translation of his ambiguous modes of expression into logical, abstract terms. All this is not to dispute Kafka's philosophical-religious cast of mind and his preoccupation with the ultimate questions of human existence. It is just that he lived, thought, and wrote in images and not in "coded" conceptual structures. Kafka himself thought of his stories merely as points of crystallization of his problems: Bendemann, Samsa, Gracchus, the hunger artist, the country doctor, Josef K., and K. of *The Castle* — all these men are close intellectual and artistic relatives of Kafka, yet it will not do to reduce his deliberately open-ended images to a collection of data.

Interpretations are always a touchy matter and, in Kafka's case, perhaps more so than in others. The reason for this is that his works are 1) essentially outcries against the inexplicable laws that govern our lives; 2) portrayals of the human drama running its course on several loosely interwoven levels, thus imparting a universal quality to his work; and 3) very much imbued with his high degree of sensitivity, which responded differently to similar situations at different times. Particularly this last aspect suggests incohesion and paradox to the mind which insists on prodding Kafka's stories to their oftentimes irrational core. Kafka's pictures stand, as Max Brod never tired of pointing out, not merely for themselves but also for something beyond themselves.

These difficulties have prompted many a scholar to claim that Kafka rarely thought of anything specific in his stories. From this view, it is but a short step to the relativistic attitude that every interpretation of Kafka is as good as every other one. To this, one may reply that "to think of nothing specific" is by no means the same thing as "to think of many things at the same time." Kafka's

art is, most of all, capable of doing the latter to perfection. Paradoxical though it may seem at first, viewing Kafka's work from a number of vantage points is not an invitation to total relativism, but a certain guarantee that one will be aware of the many levels of his work.

Despite the many differences in approaching Kafka's writings, all of them must finally deal with a rather hermetically sealed-off world. Whatever Kafka expresses is a reflection of his own complex self amidst a concrete social and political constellation, but it is a reflection broken and distorted by the sharp edges of his analytical mind. Thus the people whom his heroes meet and whom we see through their eyes are not "real" in a psychological sense, not "true" in an empirical sense, and not "natural" in a biological sense. Their one distinctive mark is that of being something created. Kafka once remarked to his friend Janouch, "I did not draw men. I told a story. These are pictures, only pictures." That he succeeded in endowing them with enough plausibility to raise them to the level of living symbols and parables is the secret of his art.

Kafka's stories should not tempt us to analyze them along the lines of fantasy versus reality. An unchangeable and alienated world unfolds before us, a world governed by its own laws and developing its own logic. This world is our world and yet it is not. Its pictures and symbols are taken from our world of phenomena, but they also appear to belong somewhere else. We sense that we encounter people we know and situations we have lived through in our own everyday lives, and yet these people and situations appear somehow estranged. They are real and physical, and yet they are also grotesque and abstract. They use a sober language devoid of luster in order to assure meaningful communication among each other, and yet they fail, passing one another like boats in an impenetrable fog. Yet even this fog, the realm of the surreal (super-real), has something convincing about it. We therefore have the exciting feeling that Kafka's people say things of preeminent significance but that it is, at the same time, impossible for us to comprehend.

Finally, the reader seems to be left with two choices of how to "read" Kafka. One is to see Kafka's world as full of parables and symbols, magnified

and fantastically distorted (and therefore infinitely more real), a world confronting us with a dream vision of our own condition. The other choice is to forego any claim of even trying to understand his world and to expose oneself to its atmosphere of haunting anxiety, visionary bizarreness, and — occasionally — faint promises of hope.

14.5 THE NEUROTIC ELEMENT

In 1917, Kafka learned about his tubercular condition, which appeared in one night with heavy bleeding. When it happened it did not only scare him, but also relieved him of chronic insomnia. Surprising though this aspect of relief may be on first glance, it becomes understandable when we consider that he was well aware of the profound effect it had on his future: it forced him to dissolve his engagement with Felice Bauer and to give up all marriage plans, tentative though they may have been. The idea of marriage, however, meant more than the decision about his future with another human being in Kafka's life — it was, literally speaking, the one mode of life he extolled. To be married, to have a family, to be able to face life by escaping loneliness and by belonging — these were the ambitions which he never had the strength to realize.

The humiliation Kafka suffered at the hands of his father is a subject all by itself but has to be mentioned because one cannot see his disease or his understanding of it apart from it. Suffice it to say here that he felt humiliated, not only by his father's insensitivity and brutality (Letter to His Father), but also by his mere existence. To Kafka, he belonged to those wholesome, big, life-affirming characters whose very practicality instilled both envy and fear in him. This father could never be wrong. As far as his disease goes, this meant that Kafka agreed with his father's view that, as the only male descendant of the family, he had the duty to have a son. It is ironic that Kafka did have a son with Grete Bloch, Felice's friend, but that was out of wedlock and, besides, he never knew about him.

Yet Max Brod said in 1917 that Kafka presented his disease as psychological, as a sort of "life-saver from marriage." Kafka himself is quoted as saying to Brod, "My head is in cahoots with my lungs behind my back." To put it differently,

to write all the fantastic things he wrote, Kafka could not allow himself to sink his roots into the practical sphere of his father, if, indeed, he had been able to do so at all. Yet he had identified himself with the aspirations of his father. Out of this conflict a crisis was bound to arise: what he could not solve in his mind was solved, in a sense, by his body. In a letter written in 1922, he refers to himself as a “poor little man obsessed by all sorts of evil spirits” and adds that it is “undoubtedly the merit of medicine to have introduced the more consoling concept of neurasthenia in place of obsession.” Aware that a cure could only come through the exposure of the actual cause of a disease, he added that “this makes a cure more difficult.”

Parallel to his awareness that he could not possibly gain spiritual relief, and certainly not salvation, in this world, Kafka’s tuberculosis progressed. He spent more and more time taking rest cures, then the only therapy. “I am mentally ill, my lung condition is merely a flooding over the banks of a mental disease,” he wrote to his second fiancée, Milena Jesenská. This disease consisted of an undissolvable dissonance, a deeply ingrained opposition within him. He had two main opponents, one in the sum total of the characteristics he admired in his father but which he loathed at the same time; the other in his craving to write about that which he was experiencing himself with such intensity — his lack of protection, his nagging skepticism, his withdrawal and alienation. His uncompromising attempt to depict the world almost solely in terms of this dilemma has been called his neurosis. Yet we should at least be aware of the fact that he himself also called it a first step toward insight, in the sense that a mental disease, too, can be an essential window through which to view truth. It is in this light that we should interpret his professions that he has not found a way to live out of his own strength “unless tuberculosis is one of my strengths.”

The actual horror of his disease, as he saw it, was not his physical suffering. His father thought it was an infection, and Brod believed it resulted from his fragile constitution and his unsatisfactory work as a lawyer. Kafka saw beyond these at best superficial explanations and saw it as an expression of his metaphysical vulnerability. Viewed in this manner, it becomes a sort of sanctuary

that prevented him from falling victim to nihilism. As he put it himself, “All these alleged diseases, be they ever so sad, are facts of faith, man’s desperate attempts at anchoring in some protective soil. Thus psychoanalysis (with which he was familiar) does not find any other basis of religion but that which lies at the bottom of the individual’s disease.”

We have made the point elsewhere that in *The Trial* the Court and its paradoxes may be seen as the reflection of K.’s unresolvable problems. In connection with what we have said here, it is interesting to note that several attempts have been made to read K.’s story as that of a medical patient. The very title in German, *Der Prozess*, definitely also means a medical process. Also, it is possible to read entire passages without changing anything if we substitute physician for lawyer, disease for guilt, medical examination for interrogation, nurse for usher, patient for the accused, and cure for acquittal. We would not jeopardize the meaning of the story at all; whatever would remain as parabolic is also present in the original version. Certainly the argument that Kafka was not aware of his failing health when he was writing the novel is not a good counter-argument because, first, his deep spiritual dilemma existed of course long before its physical manifestation (that is, tuberculosis according to his own view) occurred; and second, because his hypersensitivity would certainly have enabled him to write from within the view of a consumptive. The point made here is not to prove that Kafka really had this in mind when he worked on K.’s case: on the contrary, the mere possibility of such meaningful interchangeability rather proves that K.’s fundamental situation is open to several readings which need not be at odds with each other.

All this is not supposed to demonstrate that Kafka simply equated faith and health or the absence of faith and disease. Certainly, however, there is a relationship between his uncompromising search for total truth and his vulnerability, his limitless self-exposure to the difficulties of life. It must take super-human strength to continuously snatch every bit of firm ground away from under one’s feet in an almost maniacal effort to doubt one’s own position. Kafka was notoriously incapable of living by the many little white lies the average person

adopts as a means of surviving, and he both marveled at and envied those who could. As Milena Jesenská wrote, “He is without the slightest asylum . . . That which has been written about Kafka’s abnormality is his great merit. I rather believe the whole world is sick and he the only healthy one, the only one to understand, feel correctly, the only pure human being. I know he does not fight life as such, only against this kind of life.” The confessions of a woman in love.

The ultimate question is whether it is not precisely this fixation on purity and perfection that are his spiritual disease, his neurosis, his sin. Every fiber of Kafka would have yearned to exclaim with Browning’s “Ah, but a man’s reach should exceed his grasp, Or what’s a heaven for?” It was his fate that reach and grasp, in his world, were doomed to remain synonyms simply because there was no possibility of heaven.

14.6 SYMBOLS AND METAPHORS

The Trial is an expansive view of the constant strife of the chief clerk and land surveyor, Joseph K. stretching over the orbit of an entire human life. There are constant parables, metaphors and the truck of ‘illusion’ interrupting the maze of descriptive passages. The meaning of the plot gets embedded in this maze. The parable approach validates and clarifies Kafka’s point of view. The expense of K.’s life at two levels - one at the conscious and the other at the spiritual are revealed despite the narrow constructions of the plot and this gives a certain universality. Both are “Everyman”. Their struggles are a longing for a general word order. This unique method is Kafka’s attempt to transform the world into “*the pure, the true, the unchangeable*”. Artistic and religious themes are used to create a universal truth. He tries to fight destiny and human weaknesses. The work presents a conflict between human efforts and fate, which contradicts all the rules made by man. In *The Trial* the characters do not interact with each other clearly as it happens in the real world. The events are hazy. There is unrest in the structure of thought processes and something seems to go wrong in the whole world endlessly. There is a never-ending depressive gloom presented in the role of the advocate and the painter until the priest offers some relief in the last chapters.

K.'s relationship with women is particularly significant. His egocentricity has made him move away from his mother whom he has not visited for years. Fräulein Bürstner does not attract his attention until after the arrest. He has failed to notice what is so close protecting, loving and feminine the other half of human nature. Kafka has presented the defect and inadequacy of man like K., in stark, clear-cut terms. But though Joseph K. is considered guilty nowhere is the guilt clearly sketched or formulated. Franz, the warder, defines his guilt indirectly, which he says that though K. says he does not know the Law, he insists that he is innocent.

There is also another view that there is a socialistic trend to the story. Anyone who gets caught in this system of judicial administration is considered "guilty" while the court never listens to their pleas of innocence. Defending himself seems to be beyond human power, for Joseph K. It is about to destroy his career and life itself. The whole trial depends on man's motivation, caught in a chaotic world, but one who wishes to pause for a moment. Joseph K. tries to push away the knowledge of good and evil, thinking that the trial is a passing phase. But the earthly court also is incapable of knowing good and evil and pass judgement. The court is a continuous place of changing opinions that people have of one another, including high judges. The story delineates the lives of these judges. They represent the power of authority they hold on life or the power of life itself. But they lead a sensuous life. They have no sense of human relations.

Kafka delineates the bureaucracy in the role of the doorkeeper and the old accused man who gets caught in the system. Though the officials want to break away from the system they are unable to do so. The Chaplain offers this parable and says that the private man is in comparison a free man. There is a message in the story like all parables. If man inquires into the determination of his own existence instead of staring at the superhuman world of courts he could be liberated on earth itself. If the private person, the accused had only asked for whom the entrance was intended before dying he would have received "the *redeeming message*". This is the intellectual and spiritual framework of *The Trial*.

The book also throws light on K.'s subconscious ideas and instincts and desires. His official career, his affairs with women and his problem of guilt. The lawyer in the story represents the entire spirit of the human spirit. Here consciousness is rendered powerless. Faith has to substitute knowledge and one has to submit knowledge and one has to submit to fate, but not rebel or become angry. This is what K. refuses to do. He does not follow his instincts. The lawyer's illness is symbolic of others' sufferings. Dog-like submission (like Blocks') is the only answer to religious hope. Kafka presents a frightening world where conscious life is going out of control.

Leni and Huld are inseparable. They cannot be questioned on political, social or ideological grounds. They promise to be responsible for K.'s future. Huld does not confirm to any religion. He writes in a language that clients do not understand. K. is caught between freedom and concrete existence where there is no resolution.

The painter Titorelli represents all that is colorful and that exists on earth. But Titorelli remains unemotional and uninvolved, surrounded by women, while K. gets caught up, trying to free himself. By the time K.'s meeting with the painter ends he is more detached. There is a transformation taking place. K. changes clothes symbolically; he is reborn. The novel ends on K.'s realization that he has to meekly submit to the execution. He develops a growing strength in the act of dying. It has allegories, satire, parables and commentary. There are references to nature as the background. Robing and disrobing, when K. is arrested and after he meets Titorelli and again when the executors fetch him are very significant. His material and spiritual existence are implied in the change of clothes. The dog is a recurring metaphor where it symbolizes submission to faith at the spiritual level. The exquisite description of the chapel is another mark of Kafka's style. Change of rooms and of furniture mark important phases in K.'s life. He is arrested in Fräulein Bürstner's room. The rooms return to their original state after the whipper and the wardens disappear. This is also allegory emphasizing K.'s guilt.

K. also symbolizes the reader's response. The voyeuristic reader is like the neighbors in the framed windows like an impressionist painting looking at K.'s room. Illusion is also used as an effective technique. K. prejudges the court and its officials. The whipping scene could also be an illusion. To return to the framed window, the framing metaphor leads to the "framing" of K. as the accused, who is in fact the author. K. walked the busy streets in his office through with the manufacturer, seeing life pass by. He sits by the chair near the window when he is arrested.

Curiously naming is a device used. Franz, the warder and K. both stand for Kafka's name. Franz awaiting his finance could be like Kafka's breakup with his fiancée. Dizziness and breathlessness are used to show his confusion in the courtroom and in the painter's place spatial metaphor is used in the maze of courtrooms showing that the trial is complicated. The court even rents out rooms making money.

Deceiving as a metaphor is seen when the doorkeeper in the parable is a slave and the private man a free person.

Huld symbolizes familial authority and divine which K.'s uncle believes in. But K.'s refusal to give in symbolizes the modern man. Superstition used effectively also when the audience guesses who is guilty by looking at the accused. The court looms large finally as a ubiquitous metaphor dominating the interests of K. and the reader as a theatre where action or non-action is played out.

K.'s observation reveals very clearly the injustice meted out at every stage of the trial. K. has deep sympathy for the officials and even empathizes with the officials caught in the judicial rut and muddle. K. is the narrator commenting on the judicial system as well as the character undergoing the painful experience. The lawyers are humane, jovial and amiable. But they could easily get upset with arrogant behavior. As the novel moves closer to the climax K. loses more and more confidence. Height is a metaphor when K. raises himself to match the manufacturer and the Assistant Manager in their heights. It gives him a sense of control. The Assistant Manager's appearance is like a scepter, again a metaphor

hiding his feelings. K. is likewise masking his appearance. He is civil and follows the formalities of courtesy without any genuine feeling. The bottom line is that K.'s career is affected. He is civil and follows the formalities of courtesy without any genuine feeling.

The story reveals the painter's deep legal expertise and acumen about the court. The fear of re-arrest, hanging over the accused head is described in spatial terms. It is a spatial swing between being condemned and being free oscillating between death and freedom living a full life as if he is at the point of orbit close to earth and swinging away from it, losing gravity.

K.'s attitude towards life is exemplified in the position he holds in the bank. His career, his business pursuits, his aims follow the set pattern of professional modern living and also of his whole being. This formality has now been disrupted by the trial. His relations with the Manager and the Assistant Manager are most revealing. The Assistant Manager is also the acting-Manager when K. pursues his case. He is K.'s competitor in the Bank. There is a hidden rivalry between the two. K. struggles to survive in his official post with his self-preservation instincts. The trial brings to the fore his struggle and weakens him in this rat race. The schism in existence, bringing about his down fall is completely and cruelly exposed. His fall is likened to the fall of man at the metaphorical level. He does not stop himself from bribing the painter or attempting short enroutes to escape the condemnation. *The Trial* here is also the consciousness of the empty shell and futility of everybody, selfish individual existence, scraping for any means to survive socially and economically.

While K. is rooted in ordinary existence he is fighting the courts against a timeless, immeasurable background. He does not want to acknowledge the new significance. On his thirtieth birthday, the threshold of middle age, his fundamental existence has validity. He is now faced with a deep disappointment, a sudden fear throwing his fragmented existence out of control. The "something" that threatens is the court. The individual's consciousness of reality is relaxed has lost its grip on appearance with the threatening description of the court. The world seems to be broken into fragments, the courts, individual lives; women

lead their own lives. There is no convergence of interests and attitudes. Bleak and dreary, out of these fragments, the new reality, which emerges, is unfamiliar and threatening intruding on the ego in new forms. K.'s ego seems to be driven against the wall, surrounded by something stronger than it is.

The novel does not dwell in consciousness of divinity, but from an unrest which is ever present. Death seems to be incomprehensible and life seems to be relentlessly set opposed to it, for K. is still in the process of fighting any accusation or condemnation against the court, which is the monolith. The court does not represent wholly God's claim on man. This is the meaning within it at the symbolic level. It is through K.'s behavior, his painful anxiety and his conflict, his fears and his frivolous existence that we come to know about it. In the person of the advocate it seems whether it is right to justify the self on an intellectual place while the levels of eventuality or Destiny guide the course of the trial.

It is difficult to conduct through the spirit as well. Through the advocate the human spirit seems to be ambiguous though it is a genuine guidance for living. The high office that he holds dictates a moralistic code of conducting business.

14.7 SELF-ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS (SAQs)

1. *The Trial* takes place in _____ city
2. Kafka spent most of his life in _____
3. Kafka wrote in _____
4. Joseph K. declares that he has been killed like a _____
5. Since we don't know her first name, we might say that Fraulein Burstner's initials are _____
6. Throughout the manuscript of the unfinished novel, Kafka referred to Fraulein Burstner simply as _____
7. _____ lived in a state governed by law, there was universal peace, all statutes were in force; who dared assault him in his own lodgings.

8. _____ said, “Judges on the lowest level, and those are the only ones I know, don’t have the power to grant a final acquittal, that power resides only in the highest court, which is totally inaccessible to you and me and everyone else.”
9. “Progress had always been made, but the nature of this progress could never be specified.” This expresses K’s dissatisfaction with _____.
10. _____ said, “Both methods have this in common: they prevent the accused from being convicted.”
11. _____ said, “What a pretty claw!”
12. _____ type of government is criticized in *The Trial*.
13. *The Trial* questions justice and the _____

14.8 EXAMINATION ORIENTED QUESTIONS

- 1 If, in the hermetic parable “The Doorkeeper,” the man from the country is free to go away, why does he remain at the entrance to the Law?

- 2 How would you characterize the women of *The Trial*? Do they seem like real women ?

14.9 LET US SUM UP

The Trial is the chronicle of K.’s case, his struggles and encounters with the invisible Law and the untouchable Court. It is an account, ultimately, of state-induced self-destruction. Yet, as in all of Kafka’s best writing, the “meaning” is far from clear.

14.10 ANSWER KEY (SAQs)

1. Unknown
2. Prague
3. German
4. Dog
5. F.B.
6. F.B.
7. Josef K
8. Titorelli
9. Huld
10. Josef K.
11. Leni
12. Totalitarian
13. Law

14.11 SUGGESTED READING

- Lowy, Michael. Franz Kafka: Subversive Dreamer. University of Michigan Press, 2016.

GUNTER GRASS : *THE TIN DRUM*

STRUCTURE

- 15.1 Introduction**
- 15.2 Objectives**
- 15.3 Gunter Grass' Biographical Sketch**
- 15.4 Gunter Grass and Unification of Germany**
- 15.5 A Brief Description of His Works**
- 15.6 Self-Assessment Questions (SAQs)**
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- 15.8 Let Us Sum Up**
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- 15.10 Answer Key (SAQs)**
- 16.11 Suggested Reading**

15.1 INTRODUCTION

Gunter Wilhelm Grass was a German novelist, poet, playwright, illustrator, graphic artist, sculptor, and recipient of the 1999 Nobel Prize in Literature. He has been a noticeable German author who became internationally famous with his very first novel, *The Tin Drum*. This novel immediately became a bestseller and had set the pace for his illustrious literary career. A highly skilled and

proficient writer, Gunter Grass through his writings broke the silences of the past for a generation of Germans.

15.2 OBJECTIVES

The aim of the lesson is to introduce the learners of this course to the author Gunter Grass and his works.

15.3 GUNTER GRASS' BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

One of the major figures of contemporary German literature, Gunter Grass easily achieved both critical acclaim and commercial success with his large body of humorous and satirical works. Gunter Grass was born in the Free City of Danzig on 16 October 1927. His family was a lower middle class one and his parents Wilhelm Grass and Helene were grocers. He had one younger sister. He was raised a Catholic and attended the Danzig Gymnasium Conradinum. He grew up to be a defiant teenager who wanted to evade the boring monotony of his family life. In fact, Gunter Grass was strongly influenced by the political climate of Germany in the era following the disasters of World War I. A Hitler “cub” at 10 and member of the “youth movement” at 14, the young Gunter was instilled with Nazi ideology. He joined the German Army as a tank gunner during the World War II, which was a way of adding some adventure to his life. So, at the age of 15, he served as an air force auxiliary; he was called to the front and was wounded in 1945. He was then confined to a hospital bed. Then he was drafted into the Waffen-SS. He was wounded following which he was captured by American forces and sent to a U.S. prisoner-of-war camp. Grass had been forced to view the liberated Dachau concentration camp. He left the army at the age of 18, angry about the loss of his childhood, about the fierce and ugly German nationalism which had robbed him of it, and about the almost total destruction of the city of his youth.

Once he had been set free by the American forces, he worked for a while in a chalk mine. Then, he began to study sculpture and graphics at the Kunstakademie Dusseldorf. Soon he became active in the German literary

scenario. He was working with a small publishing house when he published his first novel which became a best-seller and also received much critical acclaim. Established as a major author by his very first novel, he published several other brilliant literary works over the next few decades. He was honoured with the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1999 for his invaluable contribution to literature.

In contrast to a classroom education, Grass had wandered about, working as a farmhand, then miner, then stonemason's apprentice. In the process, he had become aware of class differences and antagonisms; he developed a dislike for idealists with abstract theories and ideologies and a preference for pluralist skeptics of the non-ideological Left. Ever after, for Grass, in art or in politics, experience was always more significant than theory.

In 1949 he began to study painting at the Dusseldorf Academy of Art, at nights supporting himself as the drummer in a jazz band. He also started to write, poems at first, beginning slowly, experimenting with forms, working out his relationship with the past. When he moved to the Academy of Art in Berlin in 1953, he later said, "I came as a writer."

Grass married a ballet student named Anna Schwarz, and (the story has it) it was she who sent some of his poems to a radio station competition; he won third prize, and was then published in the magazine of the "Gruppe 47," a group of writers working to develop a postwar renaissance of German literature. In 1958, Grass again turned to Gruppe 47, this time to read two chapters of his new novel. He won first prize. The novel was published a year later, and brought Grass immediate worldwide attention. It was *The Tin Drum*.

The Tin Drum's narrator, a complex and self-contradictory drummer named Oskar, a dwarf, leads readers through the events of the war and postwar years through a distorted and exaggerated perspective. The second novel in what came to be known as the Danzig Trilogy, *Cat and Mouse* (1961), features a hero deformed by his times, playing the cat to the world's mouse, rendered impotent by time's unalterable concern with the trivial. The basic

idea of the story is that no single perspective can do justice to a plural reality. The last of the trilogy, *Dog Years* (1963), deals with the ways in which the past (and its myths) help shape and determine the present. Like *The Tin Drum*, its structure is circular, ending as it begins, suggestive of Grass's sense of despair. In the Danzig Trilogy and in later novels, the characters are often mythic or folkloric or grotesque (very small and/or very different), in order to make the ordinary and the usual appear in a different perspective.

Grass' work as a poet and playwright would not have established his reputation as a significant contemporary writer. There are foreshadowings of images and themes that appear in later prose works. His poetry has been translated in *Selected Poems* (1966), *In the Egg and Other Poems* (1977) and *Novemberland: Selected Poems, 1956-93*. His most popular and controversial play *The Plebians Rehearse the Uprising: A German Tragedy* (1965, English translation, 1977) deals with the role of the committed artist in society, one of Grass's constant concerns and one that led in the mid-1960s to his direct involvement in politics as a supporter of Willy Brandt and the Social Democratic Party.

An ardent socialist, Grass campaigned actively in German politics and denounced the re-emergence of reactionary groups, and his contemporary political concerns formed the core of his later novels. *Local Anesthetic* (1969) is an attack on linguistic confusions. Grass saw in the slogans of the radical Left, and *From the Diary of a Snail* (1972), his fictionalized account of his involvement with Brandt's 1969 campaign, he supports gradualism. *The Flounder* (1977), perhaps Grass's funniest novel, deals with the history of women's emancipation and does not find, in the attitudes of radical feminists, a convincing alternative to the male-dominated past. In *Headbirths: or, The Germans are Dying Out* (1980), *The Meeting at Telgte* (1979), and *The Rat* (1986), Grass shows a world that is going to be worse because it is not getting better.

For a long time, Grass was considered the conscience of Germany's postwar generation, but that time has passed. In the 1990s, Grass still believed

in “the literature of engagement” and that “to be engaged is to act,” but his readers have changed. When his novel on German-Polish reconciliation *The Call of the Toad* came out in 1992, it was savagely reviewed in Germany as having nothing new to say. And on the subject of German re-unification, Grass had often said that the experience of Auschwitz was enough to prove that Germans should never again be allowed to live together in one nation; his 1995 novel based on that theme, *A Broad Field*, provoked harsh literary and political attacks. Nevertheless, at the end of the year more than 175,000 copies were in print and the book was at the top of Germany’s best-seller lists.

As a youngster he was blessed with a good imagination and creativity. He spent a lot of his time drawing, reading and writing. In fact, he had started writing a novel when he was just 12 though he never completed it.

Amongst Grass’ role models were German writer Alfred Döblin, Irish novelist James Joyce and other leading storytellers of the 20th century. Along with Siegfried Lenz, Heinrich Böll and Uwe Johnson, he was a decisive voice in German postwar literature and made a significant contribution to a literary engagement with the traumas of 20th century history.

Grass’ world reputation does not rest alone on his epic fiction works, above all his debut novel *The Tin Drum*. The fact that he continuously expressed his opinions on contemporary political issues, posed awkward questions and provided answers to them, invariably encountering strong criticism from sections of the media and politicians, was closely bound up with his artistic work.

With his critical perspective on society and history, the novelist attempted to break through the veil of forgetting and cover-up propagated by the postwar political establishment in Germany. It is testament to Grass’ steadfastness that his list of opponents ranged from leading figures in the Adenauer era (Konrad Adenauer was chancellor of West Germany from 1949 to 1963), when many old Nazis held high positions within the state and in business, to prominent politicians and media personalities in the present day.

As both a storyteller and critical moralist, Grass was always concerned with drawing attention to the unresolved problems of the past. In doing so, he utilised piercing and grotesque comedy in his works, which often left the laughter stuck in one's throat. Already in *The Tin Drum*, this artistic technique was clear, as was the frequently broken up narrative style.

15.4. GUNTER GRASS AND UNIFICATION OF GERMANY

Gunter Grass was the most prominent German critic of the unification of the two German states that took place on 3 October 1990. In a series of blistering speeches and articles throughout the year, he argued that by perpetrating the crimes against humanity for which Auschwitz has become a synecdoche, Germany had forfeited any right to existence as a unified nation state. He also predicted that unification would precipitate massive unemployment and economic and social displacement in the former German Democratic Republic (GDR, or East Germany), as well as a rise in racist and xenophobic violence. Other leading intellectuals joined Grass in criticising the precise legal or economic means of achieving unification, but only Grass prominently and insistently rejected the whole project.

Both in the run-up to and, even more so, in the wake of what Grass later called 'the election disaster' East German dissident intellectuals became silent or could no longer make themselves heard, and Grass, as Germany's most prominent literary intellectual, became the primary and most easily heard critic of unification, attempting to speak for both the East and West Germany. The fact that the leading critic of the disappearance of the GDR was a West German (albeit one originally from the eastern territories lost by Germany at the end of the Second World War) spoke volumes about the structural and ideological weakness of the GDR in the run-up to unification: it was not just German unification but also the criticism of it that was being organised primarily in the West. That the leading critic of German unification was also the nation's most famous writer likewise revealed much about the structural function of literature and literary intellectuals in both German states, and in the nascent

reunified state: literature, and the literary intellectual, could express prominent and public disagreement with the course of political affairs, even if such disagreement was destined to prove politically fruitless, at least in the short term. Finally, the fact that of all of Germany's literary intellectuals it was Grass who took up the cause of opposing German unification, for the most part after unification had essentially already become a foregone conclusion, reveals a great deal about Grass's vision of himself as a champion of lost causes.

In My Century (1999), Grass relates how he experienced the March 1990 East German parliamentary elections in Leipzig, the home of the GDR revolution of October 1989, together with various citizen activists and proponents of a 'third path' toward democratic socialism - i.e. a path that avoided both the Scylla of western capitalism and the Charybdis of authoritarian Eastern bloc communism. Grass writes about the photographs taken on that evening by Leonore Suhl, the wife of his friend Jakob Suhl, a Jewish emigre who had fled Hitler's Third Reich many decades earlier - Grass dedicated the book to Suhl, whose mother was murdered in the Holocaust. For Grass this was the moment of truth, the moment when East German intellectuals suddenly and painfully realise that their struggle for democratic socialism in the GDR has in fact led only to an expanded German capitalist state, and that their dreams for the people are not the dreams of the people. In a 1990 essay Grass recounted how, after the election debacle of 18 March 1990, he went to Leipzig's Nikolai church, the epicentre of the East German revolution, and found an imitation street sign proclaiming the square from which the revolution had started in the autumn of 1989 to be 'Suckers Square'. The prominence of the word 'Suckers', and of the anecdote in which it plays a role, in Grass' fictional and non-fictional criticisms of the unification process suggest that the author was motivated at least in part by a desire to make visible the 'October children', so quickly silenced in the months following the opening of the Berlin Wall on 9 November 1989. These 'October children' do not actually play a prominent role in Grass's fiction of the 1990s, either as heroes or as victims. However, Grass does render their absence from the public eye visible, as in the anecdote about 'Suckers

Square' in Leipzig. The author publicly proclaimed his sympathies with the idea of democratic socialism, and in December 1989 he urged his fellow Social Democrats to seize the opportunity to learn about peaceful democratic revolution from the GDR's dissidents.

The critique of German unification that is outlined in each of these works is closely connected to two literary and philosophical predecessors of Grass: Friedrich Nietzsche and Bertolt Brecht. From Nietzsche, Grass gets the notion of eternal recurrence that he embodies symbolically in the image of the paternoster where Fonty and Hoftaller have many of their conversations, and where both Fonty and the novel's readers encounter various leading figures from German history. The paternoster is a mode of transportation within buildings that constitutes an endless loop around and around and up and down (unlike an elevator, which moves in a straight line either up or down), and it is an appropriate symbol for eternal recurrence. For Grass, the 'will to power' (Nietzsche) is political and permeates everything from the second German Reich through the Weimar Republic, Hitler's Third Reich and the divided Germany from 1949-1990, to the reunified Germany of the 1990s. The building in which Grass's literary paternoster is located is itself a symbol of continuity in the midst of change, since it once housed Hermann Goring's Aviation Ministry and now (in much of the narrative present of *Too Far Afield*) houses the post-unification trustee agency responsible for privatising East German industry and, in the eyes of many Germans in the 'new Federal states' (Neue Lander), a symbol of West Germany's 'colonisation' of the former GDR after 1990.

Grass' fears about economic imperialism find further literary expression in *The Call of the Toad*, a novel that depicts the way that economic motivations ultimately displace originally idealistic desires for reconciliation between the Germans and the Poles, and in which the D-Mark rapidly makes its move beyond the former GDR and into the city of Grass' birth, Danzig - now the Polish Gdansk. Economic 'soft power' has replaced military 'hard power'. Alexander Reschke ultimately resigns from his position as chairman

of the board of the 'German-Polish Cemetery Society', an organisation which springs up in the wake of unification to facilitate the 'return' of deceased Germans to what is now western Poland to be reburied in the lands from which they were expelled in 1945, arguing that 'what was lost in the war is being retaken by economic power. True, it's being done peacefully. No tanks, no dive bombers.

15.5 A BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF HIS WORKS

The Tin Drum: In this masterwork of magic realism - and the first in his Danzig Trilogy - Grass weaves both allegory and contemporary themes to create what is widely considered a 20th-century classic. *The Tin Drum* is the "memoirs" of the often surreal life and universe of Oskar Matzerath, the indomitable drummer gifted with a shriek that can shatter glass. Identifying himself as a "clairaudient infant," Oskar's growth is stunted into that of a three-year-old body. However, this doesn't hold him back from the fantastical pilgrimage which directs the narrative of this impressive novel. Oskar's story already complicated by having what he sees as two fathers (one Polish and the other a German Nazi), Grass guides us through a world of vaudeville, humor, violence, and absurdity as we follow the triumphs and tribulations of Oskar the lover, dwarf entertainer, messianic gang leader, Nazi brute, jazz star and alleged murderer - and backed up by an outlandish supporting cast of characters. Tracing Europe's entry into World War II and recovery from it, *The Tin Drum* is a sometimes confounding, but always dazzling novel whose significance has never decreased with age.

Cat and Mouse: The second work in Grass' Danzig Trilogy, *Cat and Mouse* is again set in his native Danzig (now Gdansk in Poland) during World War II. The famous Oskar Matzerath only makes a fleeting appearance in *Cat and Mouse*, which instead tells the story of a character known as The Great Mahike. Typical of Grass' style, most of the story is set on an abandoned shipwreck - a Polish navy minesweeper - where a group of friends loiter and scavenge for anything worth selling. Grass employs the techniques of an

unreliable memoir, frequently - and often frustratingly - shifting the narrator's perspective (both time and place) and leading readers through a sometimes perplexing narrative.

Dog Years: Grass further paints in dense detail the inhabitants and the features of the city of Danzig in the last book of his trilogy. Once again, legends and historical facts become indistinguishable through dark magical realism. The work is divided in three sections integrating different narrative perspectives, inspired by the experimental syntax of the likes of Martin Heidegger and James Joyce. *Dog Years* starts in the early 1920s with the story of a friendship between two boys, Walter Matern and Eduard Amsel, a half-Jew who creates spectacular scarecrows. The book brutally depicts Nazism and goes beyond the war into the 1950s, where West Germany's new booming economy is terrifyingly filled with fraud and hypocrisy. According to some critics, the work is a little pompous at certain places, but it contains some scenes that are more powerful than those penned by any other novelist of the times.

Local Anaesthetic: Eberhard Starusch is a 40-year-old teacher of German and history who lives in West Berlin and acts as the tragicomic centre of the novel. In the background one of his students, Phillipp Scherbaum, is planning to set fire to his dog Max on the Kurfurstendamm as a protest against the US involvement in the Vietnam War. Starusch undergoes a long sequence of dental operations in 1967 in a surgery where television is used as a method of distracting patients from the operations and the pain that is involved in them, with the resultant televisual images merging and melding into his consciousness and reflections. Starusch recounts his own meditations upon the political past and the post-war situation in Adenauer's Germany and the inadequacy, from his perspective, of both Left and Right political ideologies and party alignments in that period (with tooth decay acting as a metaphor for wider spiritual and political decay). The book is largely an internal monologue from Starusch's perspective, punctuated only on limited occasions by questions and observations from his dentist.

The Flounder: Grass had a penchant for fairytale classics and *The Flounder* - his first novel not associated with World War II - is loosely based on the fairytale of “The Fisherman and His Wife”. During the 1970s, the author was intensely involved in domestic German politics and actively supported the Social Democratic Party and Chancellor Willy Brandt, who famously became the first German leader to kneel before the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising memorial. It was an era when Germany was dealing with its Nazi past, but also left-wing terrorism, a booming economy and women’s rights. *The Flounder* opens with a fisherman in the Stone Age who catches a talking fish. Both are immortal and the story traces their tale throughout the ages, focusing on the relationship between food, women and war. By bringing a variety of women into the story - composed in nine chapters as an ode to pregnancy - he hones in on numerous aspects of emancipation and the age-old war of the sexes.

Too Far Afield: The story is set mostly in and around Berlin shortly after the “fall,” in 1989, of the Wall dividing East from West Germany. Its principal characters are two elderly men. One is former war correspondent and public East German intellectual Theo Wuttke, now employed as a superannuated office boy by the Truehand, the agency entrusted with steering the former East Germany’s enterprises and properties into the “new” country’s economic mainstream. The other is Ludwig Hoftaller, a vaguely sinister (though perfectly affable) figure whose history as a spy and informer extends (in magical-realist fashion) back to the 19th century, when Bismarck’s “unification” of warring German states bred the self-glorifying energies that would erupt in world war. The consequent linking of Germany’s past and present (a recurring theme in Grass’s fiction) is underscored by Wuttke’s fascination with classic German writer Theodor Fontane (coworkers mockingly nickname Wuttke “Fonty”), whose famous 1895 novel, *Effi Briest*, supplies the complacent repeated phrase—urging one to sticking to one’s business and avoid trouble—that gives Grass’s novel its deeply ironic title. *Too Far Afield* is reflective and intermittently discursive, perhaps as much a meditation on aging and facing

death (and taking stock of how honorably one has lived) as it is a dramatization of the repetitive pomposity and folly of Germany then and now. Without some knowledge of recent German history, many readers may find much of it heavy going (though a helpful glossary does precede the text proper). Still, it's filled with vivid and provocative symbolic incident (such as Wuttke's efforts to "preserve" an antiquated elevator in the building that formerly housed the Nazi Air Ministry).

Crabwalk: Before turning to his memoirs, Grass wrote one more short novel on Germany's struggle with its collective guilt which would become his biggest international bestseller since the Danzig Trilogy. The story is centered on the sinking of a German cruise ship, "Wilhelm Gustloff," which was carrying German refugees fleeing from the invading Russians in 1945. "Crabwalk" was the first book in which Grass dealt with the touchy issue of German refugees from the eastern European regions of what is now Poland and Czech Republic. His previous works had mainly focus on German guilt rather than Germans in the victim role. "Wilhelm Gustloff" sank after being torpedoed by a Russian submarine, killing over 9,000 passengers. Grass interweaves an anti-chronological, multilayered structure, inspired by the crab's way of "scuttling backward to move forward." Here, too, fact and fiction are meshed. Though the sinking of the ship is based on real events, the journalist who narrates the story and his family are fictional.

Peeling the Onion: In *Peeling the Onion*, the Nobel Prize winning author works his way through the different layers of his memory and identity, digging deep into the past. Grass covers in the autobiographical book the period of his life before he wrote *The Tin Drum* and uses the work to reveal his biggest secret: As a 17-year-old in Nazi Germany, he had briefly been a member of the Waffen-SS, the armed wing of the Nazi party.

The revelation shocked the country. Grass had been vehemently anti-Fascist and one of the most influential voices in helping Germany work through its guilt and establish its post-war identity. Now Grass was also tainted by

guilt and embodied a paradox that many Germans from his generation could personally identify with.

15.6 SELF-ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS (SAQs)

1. *The Tin Drum* is a masterpiece of _____.
2. Gunter Grass had briefly been a member of the _____, the armed wing of the Nazi party.
3. The autobiographical book of Grass is called _____.
4. The famous Oskar Matzerath of *The Tin Drum* only makes a fleeting appearance in _____.
5. _____ is the first in his Danzig Trilogy.

15.7 SHORT ANSWER QUESTIONS

1. Is Oskar Matzerath a reliable narrator? Why or why not?
2. Write a short note on the use of magic realism in *The Tin Drum*.

Ans. The overall book is a realistic portrait of a young man growing up in pre- and postwar Poland and Germany, filled with authentic detail about real people and places. But within this otherwise realistic backdrop, there are lots of events that seem to defy logic: Oskar's ability to not only break, but delicately carve and cut glass with his voice; suicide by fish; Oskar's decision to will himself to grow or not to grow; his being born with an adult mind; conjuring up the Polish cavalry by drumming. Magical realism is different from fantasy because you only get something magical happening every now and then in an otherwise everyday world. Another example: the moment when Oskar stands in front of a statue of Baby Jesus. I was ready to run like ten devils down the steps with no thanks and away from Catholicism when a pleasant but imperious voice touched my shoulder: "Dost thou love me, Oskar?" (28.49) is weird. In other words, magic realism. In fact, many of the things in the book that

many readers see as surreal or odd were actually quite real, like the circus performers. When he was in the army, a musical circus of dwarf clowns performed for his unit at the front. The surreal images of the soldiers hanging from the trees were also something he witnessed. He even said that everyone knows that certain people can shatter glass by singing. He even admitted in his 2006 memoir that he once tried to get out of army drill by drinking hot oil from sardine cans and looking jaundiced. So there's a kernel of truth in many of his fantastical images, but his dreamy and poetic language makes these events and images seem almost supernatural and bizarre.

15.8 LET US SUM UP

Oskar Matzerath is narrating this entire book from inside an insane asylum. He claims from the get-go that he can only remember the earliest parts of his life by drumming on his tin drum. As he takes us back, he decides that it's best if he starts with the story of how his grandparents first conceived his mother. Oskar's telling us that he was born with a completely functioning intellect. Shortly after his birth, a few comments by his parents make him decide that he never wants to grow up. So on his third birthday, he decides to stop growing. Literally, Oskar grows up (psychologically, not physically) during the rise of the Third Reich and Nazism. Times are certainly tough for anyone labeled as "different," so Oskar drums his way through life and shatters glass as a way of coping with his nutty family and the political events going on around him.

15.9 EXAMINATION ORIENTED QUESTIONS

1. Gunter Grass presents a view of artists as grotesque, physically and spiritually stunted people who act immaturely, are immoral and avoid responsibility. Do you agree? Why or why not?

2 Discuss the use of first person narrator in *The Tin Drum*.

Ans. The funny thing about Oskar is that he is a first-person narrator who seems to think he is a third-person narrator. Throughout this book, Oskar makes some pretty outrageous claims about what he can remember and what he knows. For example, he claims that he remembers being born: “Let me say at once: I was one of those clairaudient infants whose mental development is complete at birth” (3.32). But claims like this are no doubt Oskar’s attempt to sound as though he has been in control of his life from day one. In other words, the guy has insecurities about being vulnerable, which makes sense for a guy of his size.

It’s because of Oskar’s deluded narcissism that we have to be very, very careful about what we believe and what we don’t. Obviously, the guy isn’t a third-person narrator. But Oskar does everything he can to make us think he’s all-knowing and all-seeing, which happens when he suddenly slips into the third person when he says something like “Not one of the sixteen artists noticed Oskar’s blue eyes” (37.12). Sometime we even get first- and third-person narration within the same sentence.

And of course, Oskar is the world’s most unreliable narrator. First, he may be delusional and hallucinating some of the events he describes. In the second paragraph of the novel, he admits he tells long tales. He has serious grandiosity issues. And he admits many times that his first version of the story isn’t the complete one. He conveniently forgets certain details in the first telling, like the fact that he told the German soldier that his Uncle Jan forced him to go the Polish Post Office. Or that he didn’t exactly jump into his father’s grave but fell in after his son threw a rock at him.

15.10 ANSWER KEY (SAQs)

1. Magic realism
2. Waffen-SS
3. *Peeling the Onion*

4. *Cat and Mouse*

5. *The Tin Drum*

15.11 SUGGESTED READING

- Cunliffe, W. Gordon. 1969. Gunter Grass. New York: Twane Publishing.
- Friedländer, Saul. 1992. Probing the Limits of Representation: Nazism and the 'Final Solution'. USA: Harvard University Press.

GUNTER GRASS : *THE TIN DRUM*

STRUCTURE

- 16.1 Introduction**
- 16.2. Objectives**
- 16.3 Plot Overview**
- 16.4 Characters at a Glance**
- 16.5 Objects and Places in the Novel**
- 16.6 Important Quotes from the Novel**
- 16.7 Self-Assessment Questions (SAQs)**
- 16.8 Let Us Sum Up**
- 16.9 Examination Oriented Questions**
- 16.10 Answer Key (SAQs)**
- 16.11 Suggested Reading**

16.1 INTRODUCTION

The Tin Drum authored by Gunter Grass, is a seminal work in post-war European literature, first published in 1959. This novel, the first in Grass's Danzig Trilogy, is renowned for its rich tapestry of magical realism, historical depth, and darkly comic tone. It tells the story of Oskar Matzerath, a boy who decides to stop growing at the age of three and expresses his dissent against the adult world's absurdities by beating his tin drum. Set against the backdrop

of 20th-century Germany, spanning from the rise of Nazism to the post-war period, the narrative offers a poignant and satirical critique of German society. The novel stands as a powerful exploration of memory, guilt, and the individual's role in history, cementing Grass's legacy as a master storyteller and a significant voice in contemporary literature.

16.2 OBJECTIVES

The aim of the lesson is to provide a peep into this masterpiece of Gunter Grass by touching upon different ingredients of the novel—the plot, characters, places and quotes. Through this lesson, the learners can have a glance at the novel before delving onto it in detail.

16.3 PLOT OVERVIEW

In Grass' first novel, the “drummer” of the title, Oskar Matzerath, in his thirties, is in a mental hospital where he writes down his life story, in the early 1950s. This story begins in 1899 with the alarmingly comical conceiving of what turns out to be Oskar's mother under the “four skirts” of Anna Bronski, a Kashubian (member of a West Slavic ethnic group), impregnated by the Polish freedom fighter and terrorist Josef Kolyaiczek, who is hiding from the police.

The episodes, Oskar's experiences and adventures, are recounted one after another. In the process, Oskar sometimes narrates from the author's point of view, speaking of himself in the third person, and at other times in the first person. Repeatedly, a comment or reference appears giving some historical perspective to the story, even though it has nothing to do with the immediate action. For example, the chapter “Under the Raft” takes place in 1899 when in South Africa, “Ohm Kruger was brushing his bushy anti-British eyebrows.”

The hero is born a “clairaudient infant”, his “mental development [was] completed at birth and after that merely needs a certain amount of filling in.”

Shortly after birth, Oskar watches a moth circling around a light bulb. He perceives the noise it makes as a drumming on the light bulb. His mother promises to give him a drum for his third birthday, a promise she keeps. Oskar becomes a

drummer. At the same time, he rejects further growth from his third birthday onward and distances himself from the “grown-ups.”

“Today Oskar says simply: The moth drummed. ... men beat on basins, tin pans, bass drums, and kettle drums. We speak of drum fire, drumhead courts; we drum up, drum out, drum into. There are drummer boys and drum majors ... but all this is nothing beside the orgy of drumming carried out by that moth in the hour of my birth.”

When he receives the drum he decides: “I would never under any circumstances be a politician, much less grocer, that I would stop right there, remain as I was—and so I did; for many years.” This was a clear rejection of Oskar’s petty bourgeois father and later Nazi Party member, Alfred Matzerath, who wanted him to inherit the shop, and an allusion to somebody who decided to become a politician (i.e. Adolf Hitler).

The young Oskar is highly subversive—for example, when he causes chaos at a Nazi Party rally by playing his drum under the speaker’s tribune and eventually getting everyone to dance. This scene is brilliantly portrayed in the film of the same name by Volker Schlöndorff (1979).

But Oskar can also raise his voice effectively to alter the course of events or people’s plans, e.g., when they want to take his drum away. He can produce frequencies with his voice sufficient to make glass break, a talent he uses not only as a weapon of self-defence, but also to entertain soldiers in the theatre at the front and earn his living. *The Tin Drum* is often described as a character study, a novel dealing with personal development, but in many respects it is quite the opposite, Oskar does not “develop” for over two decades, rather he is a sharp observer and seemingly childish and naive commentator on the life of adults, their petty bourgeois environment and the events into which they are drawn and become jointly responsible for, especially the crimes of National Socialism and the war—events they did not cause but did nothing to prevent.

For his part, Oskar continues to drum, but sees himself as partly responsible as well. For example, for the death of his uncle, or possible father,

Jan Bronski, who takes part in the defence of the Polish post office in Danzig against the Nazis and is subsequently shot. Here Grass, as he acknowledged, is working through his own experience. As a 13-year-old he felt guilty because he had not asked about the fate of his uncle, who was shot during this episode like the novel's character.

16.4 CHARACTERS AT A GLANCE

Oskar Matzerath (Bronski): The main character and narrator of the novel. Oskar willfully stunted his growth at three feet tall as a three-year-old, although later in the novel he grows to four feet one inch. For a majority of the novel, Oskar is never found without his red and white lacquered tin drum, which he plays constantly. He is also endowed for most of his life with the ability to shatter glass with a high pitched scream, though he eventually loses this ability.

Bruno Munsterberg: Oskar's keeper in the mental institution. He keeps an eye on Oskar through a peephole in his bedroom door, and spends his time making elaborate works of knotted art with old pieces of string.

Anna Bronski (Koljaiczek/Wranka): Oskar's maternal grandmother, wearer of four potato-colored skirts, who hides Oskar's grandfather Joseph Koljaiczek under her skirts to keep him from the law. They bear a daughter, Agnes, Oskar's mother.

Joseph Koljaiczek (Wranka) / Joe Colchic: Oskar's maternal grandfather, who hid from the police under Anna Bronski's four skirts; he was wanted for arson (burning down a paper plant). He fathers Agnes, Oskar's mother, the day that he meets Anna Bronski, (whether while hiding under Anna's skirts or later that night is a subject of debate), and marries her that night. He then takes on the persona of Joseph Wranka, a dead riverman, living and working for many years. Once he is found to be Joseph Koljaiczek, he attempts escape from the law again, only to drown under a raft in his flight. A family myth remains that he actually survived drowning and fled to America, where he became a millionaire lumber baron in Buffalo, N.Y. under the name Joe Colchic.

Agnes Koljaiczek (Matzerath): Oskar's mother and closest confidant. Although she marries Alfred Matzerath, a soldier she meets as a nurse. She has an ongoing affair throughout her life with Jan Bronski, her cousin. Oskar suspects that Jan, and not Alfred, is his actual father. After an incident watching an eel fisherman at the coast, she begins to eat fish obsessively and eventually dies.

Jan Bronski: Vincent Bronski's son and Oskar's mother (Agnes Matzerath)'s cousin and lifelong adulterous lover. Jan is also the man that Oskar presumes to be his biological father. Jan is a skinny, perpetually sickly man, who was turned down four times for the army. He works in the Polish post office in Danzig and is taken prisoner while unwillingly defending it against the Germans when they invaded Poland on September 1, 1939. He is later executed.

Klepp (Egon Munzer): Oskar's friend who comes to visit him in the mental institution. A jazz flautist, he played in a jazz band with Oskar and Scholle, a guitarist, at the Onion Cellar, a club in Dusseldorf after WWII.

Gottfried von Vittlar: A friend of Oskar, who comes to visit him in the institution. He first met Oskar in his mother's apple tree while Oskar was on a walk after WWII. Vittlar is the reason Oskar is in a mental institution. Oskar asked him to turn him in as the murderer of the nurse Sister Dorothea, even though he was innocent.

Alfred Matzerath: Oskar's assumed father (Oskar presumes Jan Bronski to be his actual father), whom Agnes Koljaiczek met while working as a nurse. Alfred had been shot through the thigh in WWI. He and Agnes were later married. He is a strong and vocal supporter of Hitler throughout WWII, and is killed by Russian soldiers when they take Danzig after the war.

Albrecht Greff: The greengrocer and boy scout leader. He is obsessed with order, and knows little about the vegetables he sells. He is rumored throughout the book to be 'rather too fond' of the young boys in his troupe (which is eventually taken away from him in lieu of the emergence of the Hitler Youth

Corps). Each morning in the winter, Greff goes out to the frozen sea, cuts a hole in the ice, and swims. He is preoccupied with inventing clever mechanical machines. When he is summoned to appear in court on a charge by the German authorities, Greff kills himself with an elaborate counterweighted machine that he invents in order to hang himself in his basement.

Lina Greff (Bartsch): Albrecht Greff's wife, a slovenly woman who rarely gets out of bed. She carries on an extended adulterous affair with Oskar, which Albrecht knows about but ignores. She provides Oskar with his first substantial sexual experience.

Bebra: Oskar's lifelong mentor and role model; he is, like Oskar, a man who refused to grow. He first meets Bebra at the circus. Bebra is a musical clown. Later, Oskar joins up with a performing troupe Bebra has put together. They perform for soldiers on the front lines during WWII. Later, when Oskar is signed to a record and performing contract, Bebra is in charge of the company. Through Bebra, Oskar meets Roswitha Raguna, the love of his life.

Roswitha Raguna: A beautiful Italian woman who, though a bit taller than Oskar, has nevertheless chosen not to grow. She is the most celebrated somnambulist in all of Italy. When Oskar joins Bebra's performing troupe, he and Roswitha have a long love affair that lasts until she is killed by mortar fire on the front lines of France in WWII.

Herbert Truczinski: Oskar's friend who, in order to get away from almost certain death working in a bar on the Danzig waterfront (he was stabbed repeatedly by sailors), takes a job guarding a figurehead from an old sailboat named 'Niobe.' The figurehead is supposedly cursed and is responsible for Herbert's death. He takes an axe to the figurehead but kills himself in the process.

Maria Truczinski (Matzerath): Oskar's first sexual partner and the mother of the boy he considers his biological son, Kurt. Maria marries Alfred Matzerath after Agnes dies, because Alfred thinks he has gotten Maria pregnant. Oskar flees to western Germany with her after WWII.

Kurt Matzerath (Bronski): Kurt is Maria's son and the reason that she marries Alfred Matzerath, for he believes himself to be Kurt's father. Oskar, however, knows better - he is convinced he fathered Kurt with Maria in her bed after pouring fizz powder in her navel. Kurt does not like Oskar and does not understand him. He is of normal size and does not understand how to drum.

P. Korneff: A tombstone artisan in Dusseldorf with whom Oskar gets a job chiseling inscriptions. Korneff has a constant skin infection - there are boils constantly erupting on the back of his neck.

Sister Dorothea (Kongetter): The nurse living across from Oskar in the Zeidler flat. He never lays eyes on her in the light, but is infatuated with her. He hides in her closet, then has a failed sexual episode with her in the flat's darkened bathroom. Her murder is wrongly pinned on Oskar, who comes into possession of her severed ring finger.

Minor Characters

Vincent Bronski: Anna Bronski's brother, and Oskar's great-uncle. He is a widower and lives on a farm in Kashubia. After a pilgrimage to Czestochowa (a place where the virgin Mary was sighted), he becomes obsessed with coronating the Virgin Mary as the Queen of Poland. His son is Jan Bronski, Agnes Bronski's lover.

Gregor Koljaiczek: Joseph Koljaiczek's elder brother, who marries Anna Bronski after his brother drowns. He is a drunk and works in a gunpowder factory. He dies in the flu epidemic of 1917.

Hedwig (Lemke) Bronski/Ehlers: Jan Bronski's wife, a Kashubian woman described as big and 'rawboned,' with an 'inscrutable bovine gaze.' She and Jan have two children, Stephan and Marga.

Gretchen Scheffler: Agnes Matzerath's friend, who takes it upon herself to educate Oskar after it is clear that he cannot go to school. Although she believes her attempts to be futile, it is from her that Oskar learns of Rasputin and Goethe, the two great intellectual forces in his life.

Alexander Scheffler: Gretchen Scheffler's husband, a baker, who travels constantly with his wife on the Third Reich's 'Strength Through Joy' ships.

Stephan & Marga Bronski/Ehlers: The children of Jan and Hedwig Bronski. Jan is as sickly as his father. They are either Oskar's cousins or half siblings, depending on whether Oscar's father is Jan Bronski or Alfred Matzerath.

Auntie Kauer: Oskar's kindergarten teacher, who would walk her students through town by harnessing them all together.

Meyn the trumpeter: A tenant in Oskar's family's apartment building, he is a gin-drinking drunk who is capable of playing beautiful music. Oskar often accompanies him on the drum. During WWII, he gives up drinking and joins the army. After he is discharged, he starts drinking again. Meyn owns four cats. One day he gets sick of them, beats them to death and puts them in a dumpster. Laubchaud the watchmaker reports him to animal control.

Dr. Hornstetter: Oskar's doctor in the mental institution, who comes by his room almost every day, just long enough to smoke a cigarette. She insists that Oskar suffers from childhood isolation.

Old Man Heilandt: An older tenant of Oskar's apartment building. He had a shed in the courtyard behind the apartment building, where he would spend his time straightening old nails that he pulled out of crates.

Nuchi Eyke, Axel Mischke, Harry Schlager, Kollin, and Susi Kater: The children of Oskar's age that live in his apartment complex. They never accept him, but make fun of him and make him drink a soup they make out of pulverized brick, spit, urine, and live frogs.

Sigismund Markus: The Jewish toy store owner where Agnes buys Oskar his drums. Sigismund is secretly in love with Agnes. He volunteers to watch Oskar every week when Agnes has her hotel liaisons with Jan Bronski. He is killed by the Nazis when they take over Danzig, after they destroy his store.

Löbsack: The Nazi district chief of training, also a hunchback. Oskar regards him at first as the Nazi emissary but then realizes he is mistaken.

Father Wiehnke: The priest at the Church of the Sacred Heart in Danzig, where Agnes Matzerath went every saturday to confess.

Dr. Hollatz: The doctor that gained notoriety by publishing a paper studying Oskar's glass-breaking voice.

Sister Inge: Dr. Hollatz's assistant and a nurse, the only person in the office that Oskar allows to perform experiments on him.

Leo Schugger: A man whose occupation is to turn up as a mourner to funerals and offer condolences. He attended seminary school and Oskar calls his vision of the world 'radiant and perfect.'

Mother Truczinski: A woman living in Oskar's apartment building, the mother of Herbert, Maria, Guste, and Fritz Truczinski. She gives Oskar company and offers him a place to sleep over the years after Maria and Alfred Matzerath are married.

Guste Truczinski (Koster): A quiet, unwed woman who is a waitress at a Danzig hotel. She then marries a soldier named Koster, whom she had only known for a few weeks, and moves to Dusseldorf. After the war, Maria, Oskar, and Kurt flee to the west and live with her.

Fritz Truczinski: Fritz keeps rabbits in the courtyard behind Oskar's Danzig apartment. He is in the army and is only known to Oskar through the postcards he sends home from the front lines in the west.

Laubschad the watchmaker: A man living in Oskar's apartment building who lives surrounded by clocks. He is a member of the local SPCA, and saves Meyn's cats from the garbage on the day of Herbert Truczinski's funeral.

Koybella: The janitor at the Polish Post Office in Danzig. He had one leg an inch shorter than the other, and was fabled to be able to fix toy drums. He is killed in the defense of the post office when it is attacked by the Nazis.

Victor Welhun: An extremely nearsighted man who loses his glasses at the post office battle. His job is delivering money orders. He is the only man who escapes German imprisonment and execution. Oskar refers to him only as ‘Poor Victor.’

Ehlers: Hedwig Bronski’s second husband, who causes Jan’s former family to change their last names.

Felix & Kitty: The two acrobats in Bebra’s troupe. Kitty is blonde and exotic; Felix is the tallest member of the group, measuring well over four feet.

Corporal Lankes: A tortured artist and soldier on the front line, Lankes becomes friends with Oskar, and takes a trip with him back to the Atlantic wall after the war is over. Lankes smokes incessantly but never buys his own cigarettes preferring to take them from whoever is near.

Ripper, Putty, Firestealer, Mister, Soup Chicken, Lionheart, Bluebeard, Totila, Teja, Belisarius, Narses, Stortebaker, Felix and Paul Rennwand: The major members of the Dusters, a group of young hoodlums that Oskar leads. They act as a guerrilla group against the government, breaking and entering. They are finally caught when they break into the church of the Sacred Heart and set apart the statue of the Virgin Mary with the infants Jesus and John the Baptist.

Moorkahne: The leader of the other faction of Dusters, Moorkahne is shy and soft-spoken, a very good student, and has a limp because one of his legs is shorter than the other.

Lucy Rennwand: Felix and Paul Rennwand’s sister, who takes the information on the Dusters to the police and is responsible for their getting caught.

Mr. Fajngold: A Polish refugee who comes to live with Oskar’s family in the wake of the war. Although she had been killed, he is convinced that his wife Luba and his children Lev, Jakub, Berek, Leon, Mendel, and Sonya are there with him, and consults them on every decision. Fajngold had been the disinfectant

at Treblinka Concentration Camp. Finally he proposes to Maria, who declines marriage and moves west with Kurt and Oskar.

Willem Slobber: The Dusseldorf version of Leo Schugger. According to Korneff, there is a whole fleet of Leo Schuggers, living under a different name in every city.

Sister Gertrude: A nurse that Oskar takes on a date. She leaves him at a dance hall because she is embarrassed to be with him.

Professor Kuchen: The first artist Oskar poses for. He does his work as do his students, in charcoal.

Professor Maruhn: A sculptor and friend of Kuchen's. Oskar spends a lot of time posing for him, though Maruhn is never satisfied and never finishes a sculpture of Oskar.

Ulla: Corporal Lankes' sometime fiancée whom he beats when he cannot find artistic inspiration. Ulla spends time posing with Oskar for the young art students.

Raskolnikov: A painting student who turns out the masterpiece of Ulla and Oskar posing together. He is so nicknamed because he never stops talking of Crime and Punishment, guilt and atonement.

Zeidler: Oskar's landlord in Dusseldorf, an undertaker who Oskar nicknames 'The Hedgehog.'

Mrs. Zeidler: Zeidler's wife who wears poorly tailored suits and is given to throwing her husband into glass-throwing rages.

Dr. Erich Werner: Sister Dorothea's admirer whom Oskar never sees but becomes jealous of through the letters he sends to Dorothea.

Mr. Stenzel: Maria's boss and second husband whom she marries in Dusseldorf. Oskar doesn't like him, and stays away from Maria after she marries.

Scholle: The long-sought guitarist and third man in Oskar's jazz band 'The Rhine River Three,' which plays in the Onion Cellar.

Ferdinand Schmuh: The owner of the Onion Cellar, where Oskar's jazz band plays. Schmuh spends his time in the Rhine meadows, shooting sparrows.

Dr. Dosch: A man who frequented the Onion Cellar. After Schmuh's death, he offers Oskar a contract to take his drumming act solo.

Sister Beata: A nurse and best friend of Sister Dorothea. Dr. Erich Werner was in love with Sister Dorothea, Sister Beata was in love with Dr. Werner, and Sister Dorothea was not in love at all. Nevertheless, Sister Beata became jealous of the doctor's misplaced affections. She killed Sister Dorothea - the 'real' killer in the case for which Oskar is in the mental institution.

16.5 OBJECTS AND PLACES IN THE NOVEL

Knotted string art: Bruno Munsterberg, Oskar's keeper in the mental institution, makes pieces of old string (which he finds after visiting hours in his patients' rooms) into elaborate pieces of knotted art. He dips the string in plaster to harden and places the sculptures on pedestals fashioned out of old knitting needles.

Kashubia: A rural region in the north of Poland, west of the city of Danzig (Gdansk). This is the region that Oskar's maternal grandmother, Anna Bronski, is from.

Four potato-colored skirts: The clothes that Anna Bronski, Oskar's maternal grandmother wears (simultaneously) each day, in accordance with a strict schedule: the skirt that was closest to her body one day is placed on the outermost layer the next, so that the skirts rotate in succession. She has a fifth skirt as well, just like the other four, which she rotates into the succession on washing days.

The tin drum: One of the centerpieces of the novel. Oskar is constantly in possession of a red and white lacquered toy tin drum, on which he constantly

plays, and needs to play, in order to proceed successfully in life and to remember the past. He goes through cycles of drumming and not drumming throughout the novel, and it is a source of constant tension. He is forever destroying and getting new drums on which to play.

Danzig: The setting for the majority of the novel, Danzig (now Gdansk) is a major northern port town in Poland. Danzig was a free and independent city until September 1, 1939, when it became the first region taken by Germany at the outset of WWII. After the war, Danzig became a part of Poland again.

skat: A three-handed card game that Jan Bronski, Agnes Matzerath, and Alfred Matzerath play continuously throughout the novel. From time to time, their friends play with them as well.

glass-breaking scream: Since age three (when he was given his first tin drum), Oskar was endowed with the ability to scream with such a high pitch that he could shatter any piece of glass. He could control it, as well - at one point he can break windows on the other side of the city, and he can etch writing into glass. Once he begins growing at the end of the novel, he loses this ability.

Nurses: Oskar has a lifelong fascination with nurses, starts when he is five. Every time he is in the hospital, he laments having to leave on account of the nurses. The woman he is wrongly accused of killing, sister Dorothea, is a nurse.

Sutterlin script: A style of handwriting referred to often in the novel; it was the standard German script taught in schools from 1915-1945.

Rasputin: A Siberian Peasant and faith healer who gained favor in the Court of czar Nicholas II of Russia before the Russian revolt of 1917 by allegedly healing Nicholas' hemophiliac son. He was renowned for his sexual exploits, and assassinated by a group of aristocrats in 1916.

Goethe: Known as one of the centers of both German and world literature. Goethe spearheaded the German Romantic movement in the late 18th century. His plays and poems are known for their understanding of the human

condition and human individuality. His greatest work is considered to be the dramatic poem *Faust*.

Rostrum: The impromptu stages that were set up by the Nazis to hold rallies. They were marked by their symmetrical rows of Nazi flags, uniformed SS men, and party comrades.

Baby Jesus sculpture: The sculpture, of the Virgin Mary seated with the baby Jesus and John the Baptist on her lap, is in the church of the Sacred Heart. It is a key image of focus for Oskar - he spends time trying to get this baby Jesus to drum, and as the leader of the Dusters, he sneaks into the church to cut the sculpture into pieces and steal it.

Saspe cemetery: A cemetery on the outskirts of Danzig; it is the place where Jan Bronski is executed and buried by the Nazis.

Severed horse's head: At the beach on Good Friday, Oskar, Jan, Agnes, and Alfred see an old man fishing for green eels with a black severed horse's head tied to a clothesline. The memory of this scene eventually kills Agnes.

Coffin: Oskar spends a lot of time admiring and describing coffins, saying that his mother's coffin was a proper one because it suited the human body so well. It was black and 'tapered at the foot end.'

Herbert Truczinski's Back: On the scars on Herbert's back, Oskar sees (like images in clouds) the same promise he finds in his drum. The reproductive organs of women he has known, the ring finger of the murdered Sister Dorothea, and his own umbilical cord are all visible to Oskar.

Niobe: The cursed figurehead that Herbert Truczinski was put in charge of guarding at the Maritime Museum in Danzig. The sculpture is responsible for his death.

Card house: Jan builds a house of cards during the battle for the post office, which is knocked down by the Germans. Oskar says card houses are 'the only dwellings worthy of humankind.' (Chapter 20 p.247)

Empty cartridge case: Leo Schugger gives Oskar the empty cartridge case used to execute Jan Bronski, then leads him to Saspe, the cemetery where Jan was shot and buried.

Fizz powder: Before the war, this was what the lower classes substituted for soda - flavored powder that fizzed when mixed with water. Oskar and Maria have a long history with fizz powder. Oskar would spit in Maria's hand which was full of powder, and she would drink it.

Lovebird: On the way to Matzerath's funeral, a soldier gives Maria a cage with a lovebird inside. Kurt tries to pull out its feathers, then throws rocks at it in the cemetery and hits it.

The Lion's Den: A dance hall in Dusseldorf that Oskar visits several times; it is a place for young people, built in a bombed out building.

The Onion Cellar: A nightclub in Dusseldorf where Oskar's jazz trio plays. In the club, the owner, Schmuh, serves raw onions, which make the guests cry.

Swarm of sparrows: Schmuh, the nightclub owner, liked to hunt sparrows, but as a rule he would only shoot twelve in a day, then give the remaining birds food. One day he killed thirteen; in the car on the way home, a swarm of sparrows attacked the car and forced an accident, killing Schmuh.

Lux: A rottweiler that Oskar rents to take walks with. Lux is the one that first finds Sister Dorothea's ring finger.

Ring finger: Lux, Oskar's rented dog, brings Oskar a ring finger that turns out to belong to Sister Dorothea. It is this finger that is responsible for Oskar's internment in the institution.

Streetcars: In every city in which Oskar finds himself, the streetcar is his chosen means of transportation. In Danzig, the streetcar would take him not only through the city, but past Saspe cemetery on the way to the shore.

16.6 IMPORTANT QUOTES FROM THE NOVEL

Quote 1: “This is the time for the people who want to save me, whom it amuses to love me, who try to esteem and respect themselves, to get to know themselves, through me. How blind, how nervous and ill-bred they are! They scratch the white enamel of my bedstead with their fingernail scissors, they scribble obscene little men on it with their ballpoint pens and blue pencils.” Chapter 1, p. 16

Quote 2: “If I didn’t have my drum, which, when handled adroitly and patiently, remembers all the incidentals that I need to get the essential down on paper, and if I didn’t have the permission of the management [of the mental institution] to drum on it three or four hours a day, I’d be a poor bastard with nothing to say for my grandparents.” Chapter 2, p. 25

Quote 3: “But he has to dive on account of the launches and he has to stay under on account of the launches, and the raft passes over him and it won’t stop, one raft engenders another: raft of thy raft, for all eternity: raft.” Chapter 2, p. 36

Quote 4: “[America is] the land where people find whatever they have lost, even missing grandfathers.” Chapter 3, p. 39

Quote 5: “[Skat] was their refuge, their haven, to which they always retreated when life threatened to beguile them into playing, in one combination or another, such silly two-handed games as backgammon or sixty-six.” Chapter 4, p. 57

Quote 6: “What, after all, is a clock? Without your grownup it is nothing. It is the grownup who winds it, who sets it back or ahead, who takes it... checked, cleaned, and when necessary repaired. Just as with the cuckoo that stops calling too soon, just as with upset saltcellars, spiders seen in the morning, black cats on the left, the oil portrait of Uncle that falls off the wall because the nail has come loose in the plaster, just as in a mirror, grownups see more in and behind a clock than any clock can justify.” Chapter 5, p. 67

Quote 7: “The rabble behind me had long ceased their barbaric howls. I was beginning to fancy that my drum was teaching, educating my fellow pupils, making them into *my* pupils, when la Spollenhauer [Oskar’s teacher] approached my desk. For a time she watched my hands and drumsticks, I wouldn’t even say that her manner was inept; she smiled self-forgetfully and tried to clap her hands to my beat. For a moment she became a not unpleasant old maid, who had forgotten her prescribed occupational caricature and become human, that is, childlike, curious, complex, and immoral.” Chapter 7, p. 80

Quote 8: “Even today I am occasionally sorry that I declined. I talked myself out of it, saying: ‘You know, Mr. Bebra, I prefer to regard myself as a member of the audience. I cultivate my little art in secret, far from all applause. But it gives me pleasure to applaud your accomplishments.’ Mr. Bebra raised a wrinkled forefinger and admonished me: ‘My dear Oskar, believe an experienced colleague. Our kind has no place in the audience. We must perform, we must run the show. If we don’t, it’s the others that run us. And they don’t do it with kid gloves.’” Chapter 9, p. 114

Quote 9: “brown rallies on a drum which though red and white was not Polish.” Chapter 10, p. 124

Quote 10: “I asked the Satan within me: ‘Did you get through it all right?’

Satan jumped up and down and whispered: ‘Did you see those church windows? All glass, all glass!’” Chapter 11, p. 137

Quote 11: “born of the folds of white fabrics” in which he saw the brooch “expand into heaven knows what: a sea of banners, the Alpine glow, a field of poppies, ready to revolt, against whom, Lord knows: against Indians, cherries, nosebleed, cocks’ crests, red corpuscles, until a red occupying my entire field of vision provided a background for a passion which then as now was self-evident but not to be named, because the little word “red” says nothing...” Chapter 12, p. 156

Quote 12: ““Your genius, my young friend, the divine, but also no doubt

the diabolical elements in your genius have rather confused my good Roswitha, and I too must own that you have in you a certain immoderation, a certain explosiveness, which to me is alien though not entirely incomprehensible.” Chapter 14, p. 172

Quote 13: “You’ve guessed it no doubt: Oskar’s aim is to get back to the umbilical cord; that is the sole purpose behind this whole vast verbal effort and my only reason for dwelling on Herbert Truczinski’s scars.” Chapter 14, p. 179

Quote 14: “Today I know that everything watches, that nothing goes unseen, and that even wallpaper has a better memory than ours. It isn’t God in His Heaven that sees all. A kitchen chair, a coat-hanger, a half-filled ash tray, or the wooden replica of a woman named Niobe, can perfectly well serve as an unforgetting witness to every one of our acts.” Chapter 15, p. 192-193

Quote 15: “Oskar carried on negotiations with his two gods Dionysus and Apollo. ...If Apollo strove for harmony and Dionysus for drunkenness and chaos, Oskar was a little demigod whose business it was to harmonize chaos and intoxicate reason. In addition to his mortality, he had one advantage over all the full divinities whose characters and careers had been established in the remote past: Oskar could read what he pleased, whereas the gods censored themselves.” Chapter 26, p. 323

Quote 16: Lankes’ calls his pillbox art: “Barbaric, Mystical, Bored.”

Bebra: “You have given our century its name.” Chapter 27, p. 337

Quote 17: ““We dwarfs and fools have no business dancing on concrete made for giants. If only we had stayed under the rostrums where no one suspected our presence!”” Chapter 27, p. 345

Quote 18: Oskar (of Jesus): “You bastard, I hate you, and all your hocus-pocus.”

Jesus: “Thou art Oskar, the rock, and on this rock I will build my Church. Follow thou me!” Chapter 28, p. 358

Quote 19: “was sick of dragging a father around with him all his life.”
Chapter 32, p. 404

Quote 20: ““Yes, Oskar, that’s how it is with the Kashubes. They always get hit on the head. You’ll be going away where things are better, only Grandma will be left. The Kashubes are no good at moving. Their business is to stay where they are and hold out their heads for everybody else to hit, because we’re not real Poles and we’re not real Germans, and if you’re a Kashube, you’re not good enough for the Germans or the Polacks. They want everything full measure.””
Chapter 33, p. 416

Quote 21: “But Mr. Matzerath himself is unable to keep his story running in a straight line. Take those four nuns in the freight car. First he refers to them as Franciscans and the next time he calls them Vincentians. But what throws his story out of kilter more than anything else is this young lady with her two names and her one supposedly foxlike face. To be really conscientious, I should have to write two or more separate versions of his journey from the East to the West. But that kind of thing is not in my line. I prefer to concentrate on the Social Democrat, who managed with one name and, my patient assures me, one story, which he repeated incessantly until shortly before Stolp, to the effect that up to 1937 he had been a kind of partisan, risking his health and sacrificing his free time pasting posters, for he had been one of the few Social Democrats to put up posters even when it was raining.” Chapter 34, p. 424

Quote 22: “Cemeteries have always had a lure for me. They are well kept, free from ambiguity, logical, virile, and alive. In cemeteries you can summon up courage and arrive at decisions, in cemeteries life takes on distinct contours - I am not referring to the borders of the graves - and if you will, a meaning.”
Chapter 35, p. 438

Quote 23: “...My beautiful hair is a glossy chestnut brown. They made me a scraggly-haired gypsy. Not a one of them ever noticed that Oskar has blue eyes.” Chapter 37, p. 463

Quote 24: “Oskar had nothing but his fists with which to fill the two concavities. They were inadequate. Too hard, too nervous, they were alien and unhappy in these bowls which in my ignorance of their contents I should gladly have lapped up with a teaspoon day after day; I might have experienced a little nausea now and then, for too much of any fare will unsettle the stomach, but after nausea sweetness, such sweetness as to make nausea desirable, the seal of true love.” Chapter 39, p. 491

Quote 25: “What more shall I say: born under light bulbs, deliberately stopped growing at age of three, given drum, sang glass to pieces, smelled vanilla, coughed in churches, observed ants, decided to grow, buried drum, emigrated to the West, lost the East, learned stonecutter’s trade, worked as model, started drumming again, visited concrete, made money, kept finger, gave finger away, fled laughing, rode up escalator, arrested, convicted, sent to mental hospital, soon to be acquitted, celebrating this day my thirtieth birthday and still afraid of the Black Witch.” Chapter 46, p. 587

16.7 SELF-ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS (SAQs)

1. The figure of the Black Cook tends to represent _____ in this novel.
2. Woodruff fizz powder _____ Maria Truczinski.
3. The food that Agnes Matzerath eat so much that she dies is _____.
4. By the end of the novel, the place that Oskar is reluctant to leave is _____.
5. Oskar wrongfully tends to portray his keeper Bruno as _____.
6. _____ tells Oskar that it’s a good idea to manipulate people before they manipulate you.

16.8 LET US SUM UP

Narrated by the insane dwarf Oskar, *The Tin Drum* incorporates elements of German folklore and the grotesque to explore the political, economic, and social complexities of German life from 1900 through World War II and the

beginning of the German postwar “Economic Miracle.” Set in Danzig and Dusseldorf, the story chronicles the fortunes of Oskar and his family during the rise and fall of Nazism.

16.9 EXAMINATION ORIENTED QUESTIONS

- 1 Write a note on the genre under which *The Tin Drum* can be classified. Elucidate with examples from the novel.

- 2 How does knowing about the author’s service in the SS affect your reading of the novel?

- 3 Do you believe Oskar killed Sister Dorothea in novel *The Tin Drum*? Why, or why not?

- 4 If Oskar didn’t kill Sister Dorothea, why does he worship the severed finger in the jar?

16.10 ANSWER KEY (SAQs)

1. death
2. gets her sexually aroused

3. fish
4. the asylum
5. dim-witted
6. Bebra

16.11 SUGGESTED READING

- Boyers, Robert. 1987. Atrocity and Amnesia: The Political Novel since 1945. Oxford: Oxford University Press
- Ernestine Schlant. 1999. The Language of Silence: West German Literature and the Holocaust. New York: Routledge.

GUNTER GRASS : *THE TIN DRUM*

STRUCTURE

- 17.1 Introduction**
- 17.2 Objectives**
- 17.3 Detailed Summary-Book 1**
- 17.4 Self-Assessment Questions (SAQs)**
- 17.5 Let Us Sum Up**
- 17.6 Examination Oriented Questions**
- 17.7 Answer Key (SAQs)**
- 17.8 Suggested Reading**

17.1 INTRODUCTION

The Tin Drum authored by Gunter Grass, is a seminal work in post-war European literature, first published in 1959. This novel, the first in Grass's Danzig Trilogy, is renowned for its rich tapestry of magical realism, historical depth, and darkly comic tone. It tells the story of Oskar Matzerath, a boy who decides to stop growing at the age of three and expresses his dissent against the adult world's absurdities by beating his tin drum. Set against the backdrop of 20th-century Germany, spanning from the rise of Nazism to the post-war period, the narrative offers a poignant and satirical critique of German society. The novel stands as a powerful exploration of memory, guilt, and the individual's role in history, cementing Grass's legacy as a master storyteller and a significant voice in contemporary literature.

17.2 OBJECTIVES

The aim of the lesson is to offer a detailed chapter-wise summary of the novel. The idea is to help learners of the course to grasp the text for further critical analysis.

17.3 DETAILED SUMMARY-BOOK 1

The novel opens with Oskar Matzerath writing from inside a mental institution. He is being watched through a peephole in his door by his keeper, Bruno Munsterberg, whom Oskar says is an artist. Bruno spends his time begging for bits of string in his patients' rooms, which he ties into elaborate works of knotted string art, he thinks of colouring his artwork, but Oskar advises against it, preferring the white enamel of his hospital bed. Oskar has convinced Bruno to buy him a ream of blank white paper (Oskar terms it "virgin" paper) so that he can write out his autobiography. Bruno gets him the paper he needs and Oskar begins to write.

Oskar begins with his grandmother, Anna Bronski. She is sitting, in the year 1899, at the edge of a potato field in Kashubia. She is wearing the four potato-colored skirts that she wears constantly throughout the novel. She rotates the skirts in succession each day, moving the skirt that was closest to her body on the current day to the outside layer the next day. The skirts are large and billowing, and Anna must constantly gather them around her body in defense against the strong wind.

Anna sees three men zigzagging and jumping their way down the road by the potato field. Two of them, described only as "Long and Thin" and wearing the uniforms of the rural constabulary, are chasing after a man described only as "Short and Wide." Desperate, Anna lets "Short and Wide" slip under her four billowing skirts to hide from the two uniformed policemen. The two uniformed men stop at the edge of the potato field and ask Anna the whereabouts of the third man; she points them down the road. The two men remain for half an hour, suspicious, overturning and poking their bayonets into Anna's baskets of potatoes. But they leave as the sun sets and it begins to rain. Once the men

are far away, Anna rises and lets “Short and Wide” out from under her skirt. His name is Joseph Koljaiczek; he buttons his pants quickly as Anna lets him out. Anna gives Koljaiczek four cooked potatoes and keeps one for herself. He follows Anna as she picks up her basket of raw potatoes and heads for Goldkrug in the black forest.

Then, the second chapter opens back in the mental institution. For the first time in the novel, Oskar mentions his tin drum, which he claims is responsible for his remembering of all essential past events. Oskar says that his drum tells him that it was that afternoon, under Anna’s four skirts, while the two constables searched, that his mother, Agnes Koljaiczek (Matzerath), was begotten by Anna and Joseph Koljaiczek. Oskar adds that his mother, throughout her life, denied that she had been begotten in a potato field.

Vincent Bronski is a widower living on a farm in Kashubia. Since he returned from a pilgrimage to Czestochowa (a place where the Virgin Mary was sighted) he has been obsessed with coronating the Virgin Mary as the Queen of Poland, finding proof for her claim to the throne in everything he reads. He has a son, Jan Bronski, whom Oskar describes as a sickly child always on the verge of tears. His job on the farm is to tend the geese. Jan collects little coloured pictures and stamps. He is four when Anna and Koljaiczek arrive.

Once married, Anna and Koljaiczek flee in Vincent’s horse-driven box-cart to the sea. In Danzig, the provincial capital, Koljaiczek remains in hiding for three weeks. He assumes the identity of a little-known raftsmen named Joseph Wranka, who had drowned. He changes his hair style, shaves his mustache, gives up his pipe for tobacco chewing, gets the necessary identification papers, and becomes a raftsmen himself. Oskar then explains his grandfather’s need to flee: he had gone to work in a sawmill and had gotten into a quarrel with his boss over a fence that Koljaiczek had painted white and red. The boss had ripped off two slats and hit Koljaiczek in the back, then broken the fence to pieces. Then Koljaiczek had set fire to the sawmill. This set off a rash of copycat acts of sawmill arson and fed growing Polish national sentiment - all acts were committed in the name of the Virgin Mary.

The disguise worked for Koljaiczek/Wranka until August 1913, when, like every other summer, he took on a job manning the “big” raft down the river. Later, it is told Koljaiczek’s body was never found. Oskar says that he has no doubt that his grandfather drowned there under the raft, although several alternate versions of the story exist, where he lives either to be taken on by Greek sailors or Swedish fishermen. Another version states that Koljaiczek was seen after WWI in Buffalo, New York, calling himself Joe Colchic, where he had become a millionaire and a major stockholder both in match factories and fire insurance companies.

Meanwhile, in the mental institution, Oskar reads Bruno a portion of what he has written concerning his grandfather. Bruno says it is “A beautiful death” and begins to recreate the story with his knotted string art. Oskar is visited by his two friends, Klepp (Egon Munzer) and Vittlar (Gottfried von Vittlar). Klepp brings Oskar a jazz recording, and Vittlar brings him a chocolate heart on a pink ribbon. Oskar tells them the story of his grandfather Koljaiczek. In response, Klepp makes swimming motions and shakes his head. Vittlar accuses Oskar of being the murderer, he says because Koljaiczek must have known that it would be wholly too burdensome to have a living grandfather.

Oskar returns to drumming out his family’s story. Once Joseph Koljaiczek drowned, his elder brother, Gregor Koljaiczek, stays on with the widow Anna Bronski. He had never known his younger brother very well, but after a year, she and Gregor were married, as Oskar says, because he was a Koljaiczek. But Gregor died of the flu in 1917.

Jan Bronski, Agnes’ cousin, later moved into the empty room with Anna and Agnes. He had finished high school and had taken on an apprentice job at the main post office in Danzig. He was twenty but still sickly, and thus couldn’t pass his army physical test, four times in all, into WWI. It was then that Agnes first fell in love with him - this was the beginning of a lifelong love affair between the two. Once married, Alfred and Agnes bought a failing grocery store and turned it around. The two were perfect professional partners - Agnes worked behind the counter, and Alfred dealt with wholesalers. In addition, Alfred

Matzerath was incredibly fond of all kitchen work - cooking, cleaning, etc. The couple moved into the flat adjoining the store. Oskar makes a point of asking his drum the wattage of the light bulbs in the bedroom of that apartment. Satisfied that the lights he first saw were two sixty-watt bulbs, he speaks of his birth. His mother gave birth at home. Oskar says that he was one of those infants whose mental development was completed at birth - it needed only "a certain amount of filling in." Wailing and acting like a normal baby, Oskar decided to reject Matzerath's (who assumed he was Oskar's father) plans, and go with his mother's plans. Oskar says it was only the promise of the drum that kept him from demanding a return to the womb.

Oskar says that he has a treasure, which he has guarded throughout his life: his family photograph album. One of the tortures of Hell, Oskar says, will be to shut up a naked soul in a room with the framed photographs of his day.

Oskar relates his days with Klepp, just before his internment in the institution. Oskar then talks of the photographs, beginning with Joseph Koljaiczek on the first page. Then Oskar is compelled to take up his drum and conjure up a photo of Agnes, Jan, and Alfred sitting together in the Bronski flat. The three are arranged in a triangle, Agnes seated, and Jan and Alfred standing. Oskar says he tried for a long time to deduce the photo's meaning geometrically. He took a ruler, a triangle, and a compass and drew triangles and arcs all over the photo, in order, he says, to get a point of view. All he has done, he says, is to dig a number of holes into the picture with his compass. In the end, he says, it is the most meaningful picture of the three major players in his early years because it makes "the ultimate solution so clearly discernible;" it shows a serenity not visible in their other snapshots, each of which carry some plainly evident emotion.

Oskar goes on to say that the first thing made plain to him was that grownups were incapable of understanding him. Once home from four weeks in the hospital, Oskar began to drum, keeping his drum with him at all times. At the same time, he developed a voice that was so high-pitched that he could break any piece of glass. He used this voice to keep the drum whenever a grownup tried to take it away. When the neighborhood children learned of this, they began

to make fun of him by singing jingles like the Pied Piper, Oskar would drum along with the song and the children would follow him.

Oskar drummed until he wore a hole in the drum's top surface; it became jagged and sharp, and little shreds of metal fell inside and began to jingle. Instead of giving Oskar a new drum, however, the grownups wanted to take the current one away from him; his mother tried to bribe him with silly things like chocolate, while Matzerath yanked the drum away. Oskar responded with his first glass-breaking scream. The glass face of the grandfather clock in the living room exploded, but the clock's mechanism was unharmed and kept ticking. The grownups were taken aback; Oskar says he believes that Jan Bronski began to pray, but that the Lord didn't say a thing.

By Oskar's fifth birthday, it was obvious to his family that he would not grow. He began weekly visits to the doctor. This is the beginning of Oskar's fascination with nurses. When at one point the doctor tried to take Oscar's drum away, he destroyed the doctor's collection of biological specimens in jars.

Oskar describes the school as a place where mothers were taking their children to offer them for sale. He says the granite water fountain troughs reminded him of his Uncle Vincent's piglets suckling at a sow. In Oskar's classroom, the mothers lined up along one wall and stayed for the first day of class. Both the children and the mothers laughed as Oskar came in with his drum - Oskar's mother Agnes felt ashamed of her son. Although completely calm, Oskar lamented only that he was not tall enough to see outside, for Greff was outside with his boy scouts. Oskar's teacher came in and asked the class to sing a song with her. Oskar, disgusted that the singing children are so undisciplined, pulls out his drumsticks and begins to drum.

She then complemented Oskar but tried to take away his drum. Oskar gave her a warning scratch on her glasses with his voice. She let go of the drum but called him wicked. She changed her glasses and announced that she would give the students their schedule of classes, and made them all repeat it after her. Oskar repeated the schedule by beating on his drum. The teacher found the

drumming repulsive; she tried to take the drum again. This time Oskar sung out the classroom's windows. The teacher took out a cane and slammed Oskar's desk; he refused to have his hand hit, so she hit his drum with a violent glint in her eye. Oskar shattered the lenses of her glasses. The mothers threatened to pounce on Oskar's mother, but Oskar came to her aid and they left, pausing only long enough for a photograph by the school photographer.

Oskar tells Bruno and Klepp in the background of that school picture the words "My first School day" on a blackboard in Sutterlin script. Oskar's parents had decided that their attempt to put Oskar in school had been sufficient; they no longer worried about his education. Oskar mentions Meyn the Trumpeter, a tenant of Oskar's apartment, complex who spent his time in the attic drinking gin and playing his trumpet and who recognized Oskar as his drum accompanist. Their duet drove Meyn's four cats out onto the roof. Oskar asked Meyn to teach him to read but Meyn knew only three things: gin, the trumpet, and sleep.

Oskar tried to get Greff the greengrocer to teach him. He went to the store without his drum, for Greff didn't appreciate it, choosing him because Greff had books everywhere, though they were mostly magazines featuring half-naked youths exercising with well-oiled muscles. Greff was having trouble at the time. He had been accused of fraud when the Bureau of Weights and Measures had inspected his store. Oskar entered the store and picked up three or four white pieces of cardboard and a red pencil, and tried to get Greff's attention by practicing his Sutterlin script. But Oskar was not the right type of little boy. It was clear that Greff didn't understand him.

Oskar tried Lina Greff as a teacher but she spent weeks on end in bed and smelled of decaying nightgown. As a test to guard against envying the schoolchildren who had learned to read, Oskar smelled the sponges that children used as blackboard erasers and hung off their school bags. He compared the smell to that of Satan's armpits. Finally, although she was far from perfect, Oskar turned to Gretchen Scheffler as teacher. She was childless and Oskar

blamed that fact on the sickening sweetness of her apartment decoration. Oskar never used his glass-breaking voice on her china, and pretended to love the teddy bears and crocheting in order to get Gretchen to teach him to read. His plan worked.

However, Oskar tried hard to balance his childish learning to read with the fact that he was already as intellectually complex as an adult. In the same vein, he wet his bed on purpose every morning, so as to seem to be a childish bed-wetter to the grownups. When Gretchen would try to make him read fairy tales, Oskar would cry out like a child for Rasputin. Gretchen was convinced that Oskar could not understand or learn. What Oskar did was to tear the pages out of the two books, crumple them, and hide them under his sweater. Then he would smooth them out at home and read them in peace. He would take the two sets of pages, shuffle them like cards, create a whole new book of Rasputin and Goethe together, and store it in the attic.

Oskar says he ate too much of Gretchen's cake in those days. He became very fat and would often vomit up the expensive cakes once he got home. He paid for his lessons by becoming a dressmaker's dummy, as Gretchen would spend her free time making clothes for the baby she never had.

In the institution, Oskar mentions Dr. Hornstetter, a nervous woman who comes into his room to smoke cigarettes and re-diagnose the fact that Oskar suffers from childhood isolation. Oskar says she is right - he hardly ever played with other children when he was young, preferring his Rasputin and Goethe medley to childish games.

There was a courtyard behind Oskar's building, a place where the housewives took all of their rugs to beat the dirt out of them, a ritual that Oskar hated. The courtyard was where the children in Oskar's building played. There was a shed in the courtyard that belonged to Old Man Heilandt. The shed was full of rusted machinery, and he would let Oskar in but none of the other children. The old man spent his time straightening old nails that he pulled out of wooden crates.

One day the children in the apartment building, Nuchi Eyke, Axel Mischke, Harry Schlager, Hanschen Kollin, and Susi Kater were playing by making a soup out of whatever they could find around the building. They asked Old Man Heilandt to spit into the pot three times, added pulverized brick, then two live frogs. Then all the children, including Susi Kater, the only girl, took turns peeing into the pot. Oskar ran away from the children. It was a wrong thing to do. He went to the attic and tried to drum, but the children followed him, carrying the soup, and formed a ring around him. Axel pinned Oskar down while Susi took a spoon and forced some of the soup into Oskar's mouth. The children left, and Oskar went to a corner and threw up the soup. He looked out over the town and sang with his glass-breaking voice - nothing broke, but Oskar was convinced of the possibility of long-distance singing and resolved to leave his home and escape soup-makers and tiny courts.

Oskar's mother took Oskar shopping every Thursday and every two weeks she took him to Sigismund Markus' toy store to buy a new drum. From age seven to ten Oskar went through a drum in two weeks. From ten to fourteen it was down to less than a week. Later, the timing became unpredictable. The time it took Oskar to demolish a drum based itself on Oskar's mental stability at the time.

Markus was in love with Agnes Matzerath, but he never acted on his impulses; rather he paid her complements and sold her silk stockings and Oskar's drums at incredible prices. Agnes would then ask if she could leave Oskar with Markus for a few hours to run some errands. All three of them, Oskar included, knew that she was in fact going to meet Jan Bronski in a hotel room, then go out with him for coffee. Oskar knew because he had accompanied his mother on several occasions, waiting for her in the hotel lobby.

One Thursday when Markus was not being too attentive to Oskar, Oskar took his drum and left the store, making his way to the Stockturm, a tower in Danzig about 150 feet tall. He had to wedge his drumsticks in between the iron door and the brick and use them as a lever to open the door. He climbed the spiraling staircase, lamenting the fact that there were pigeons everywhere on the

tower. Pigeons he says, or doves, are used as a sign of peace when they should not be; even hawks and vultures are less quarrelsome. At the top, Oskar looked out at the coffee mill shape of the Stadt-Theater, then began trying to sing out its windows. It was the first time Oskar used his voice for its own sake, when he was not threatened. He became, just as a great painter, an artist with a specific style. He tried several different pitches, then in the end succeeded with an almost noiseless scream. He then spotted Agnes and Jan returning from the café, and he rushed back to the toy store.

That Christmas Agnes bought four tickets to the theater - for herself, for Oskar, and for Stephan and Marga Bronski. Oskar laments the fact that there were too many children there for his taste - Marga spent her time playing at the balcony rail. Oskar identified with the play - it was *Tom Thumb*. It was marked by the fact that the audience never saw Tom Thumb. He was instead played by an invisible offstage voice. The play made Agnes cry. She called Oskar Tom Thumb until after Christmas.

They did not go to the theater again until the summer of 1933, when Agnes, Oskar, Alfred Matzerath, and Jan Bronski took a trip to the Opera-in-the-Woods. A morning in the park, then an afternoon at the beach - Agnes, who was already beginning to get fat, wore a straw-colored bathing suit. Oskar was supposed to go naked; he covered his private parts with his drum. Later they had coffee and cake; Agnes ate three helpings of five-story cake.

Jan was friend with the brothers who did the lighting for Opera-in-the-Woods, who told jokes and introduced them to one of the Opera's shareholders. This man offered Jan and his entourage his tickets for that evening's performance of *The Flying Dutchman*. Oskar fell asleep during the opera, but he awoke to the sound of a blond woman singing loudly on the stage, which Oskar interpreted as screaming in pain because there was a spotlight on her. He thought her screaming was a pleading to one of Jan's friends to turn the light off. When he did not oblige, Oskar let out a scream of his own and destroyed the light, plunging the theater into darkness, starting a fire, and creating a panic in which he lost his drum.

Because of this episode, Agnes decided to take Oskar to the circus. It was there that he first met the musical clown Bebra, a man who was to become Oskar's lifelong influence and role model. He, like Oskar, had refused to grow into an adult. As soon as he saw Oskar, he was so impressed that he decided to remain a three-year-old. Bebra announced that he directly descended from Prince Eugene, whose father was Louis XIV. He said that he had decided to stop growing on his tenth birthday: "Better late than never," he said. He announced he was fifty-three years old; Oskar said he was nine-and-a-half. Oskar, being impressed with Bebra's act, decided to show him his glass-breaking voice.

Oskar admired one of the party's members - a hunchbacked man named Lobsack, the Nazi's district chief of training. He thought Lobsack to be a man fighting on behalf of those like Bebra and himself, as he derived his intelligence and wit from his hump, but realizes he is wrong. The party heads spoke from a rostrum - a platform on which was set up symmetrical rows of flags and people for a rally. As per Bebra's orders, Oskar spent his time at the rallies on the rostrum.

One Sunday Oskar took another tack - he approached the rostrum from its "uncouth" and went underneath. Oskar began to beat out a waltz on his drum over the rectilinear march played by the band. Couples in the audience started dancing. Oskar switched to the Charleston, and after a moment of chaos, the crowd understood and everyone began to dance. For an hour, the SS and SA men tore holes in the rostrum looking for a culprit, but they never found Oskar, who slipped out as an unnoticed three-year-old.

Oskar says he made a habit of spending time with his drum under rostrums until November of 1938, breaking up rallies and transforming marches into waltzes. Oskar maintains, however, that he was not a resistance fighter - "resistance" is a much-overused word. He prefers the reader to see him only as an eccentric who rejected the uniforms and colors of the mainstream.

Oskar learned to play the tempter from his grandmother Anna Koljaiczek. She came in from the country to Danzig each Tuesday for market, selling eggs,

butter, and geese. Every hour a man who rented out hot bricks would push a brick under Anna's four skirts. Oskar envied those bricks, for he always wanted to be under his grandmother's skirts. Seldom did Anna allow Oskar under her skirts. Oskar sat next to her and learned her tricks. She would tie string to an old pocketbook and throw it on the sidewalk. When someone picked it up, she would yank the string to embarrass them, then ask them to buy her wares.

Oskar had his own version of temptation. Late at night he would slip out of the apartment and into town. He watched the people passing dark store windows, waiting for someone who seemed tempted by a certain object. Then he would sing out a section of the window with his voice, making a circular cut in the glass. He would watch as the person would slip the coveted object into their coat and move along. From November, 1936 to March 1937, Oskar instigated sixty-four attempted and twenty-eight successful burglaries. The people, however, were not thieves by trade - the police either recovered the stolen items or the people returned them. Although Agnes and Alfred questioned him about the robberies from time to time. Agnes blamed Bebra's influence on Oskar as the reason for the thefts. Back in the institution, Oskar says it was evil that compelled him though now he feels no compulsion toward temptation.

In January 1937, Oskar stood in a doorway across from a jewellery store in town. He saw Jan Bronski coming silent and alone down the street, and stop in front of the shop window, staring at a ruby necklace. Instead of drumming him away, Oskar sang a hole in the window for this man whom he presumed to be his father. Jan quickly picked up the necklace and put it in his pocket. Oskar drummed out "Father, father" on his drum and Jan came across the street and found Oskar in the doorway. Jan reached out to him and led him home. A few days later, Jan gave the necklace to Agnes. After WWII, Oskar traded the necklace for a leather briefcase and twelve cartons of Lucky Strike cigarettes on the black market. Oskar laments the fact that he lost his glass-breaking voice ability in the year before he was committed to the institution. When he saw his friend Vittlar, he was reduced to using the man's first name, Gottfried, because his voice was so lowly.

The incident with Jan and the necklace put a temporary end to Oskar's temptations. At that time, however, Agnes found religion. Oskar says she did so because she had fallen into a routine of sin with Jan Bronski. So she went and confessed to Father Wiehnke every Saturday at the Church of the Sacred Heart. Oskar remembers his baptism, which Father Wiehnke had performed. During the ceremony he had asked if Oskar would renounce Satan. Before Oskar could shake his head (even though he was an infant), Jan Bronski said he would. Oskar says he had no intention of renouncing Satan.

There were three coloured sculptures of Jesus in the church. The first was of a frowning Jesus whose robes were open, exposing a bleeding heart. In this sculpture, Oskar saw a striking resemblance to Jan Bronski, his presumptive father. The second sculpture showed Jesus with his eyes closed and muscles bulging from underneath his robes: Jesus the divine athlete. The third sculpture showed the Virgin Mary with two young boys seated on the right leg of her lap - Jesus and John the Baptist. Mary was looking at John, who was clothed, and didn't notice Jesus, who was naked. Oskar identified with the two little religious figures, going so far as to say that the Jesus was his "spit and image."

Oskar climbed the steps to the sculpture, then stroked and pressed the naked sculpture's uncircumcised penis. Oskar felt a strange and disturbing sensation within himself as he did so. He climbed the sculpture and hung his drum around the sculpture's neck. He stuck his drumsticks into the boy's hands. He waited for Jesus to drum; this test would determine who the real Jesus was - Oskar or Jesus himself. Jesus did not drum. Oskar did a drumming demonstration to teach Jesus but this only drew attention from Father Wiehnke, who cracked the sculpture in removing the drum. Oskar kicked and beat Father Wiehnke to get back his drum, then ran away, Satan jumping inside of him. Oskar tried to sing out some of the windows of the church, but he failed, lamenting the fact that it was almost Easter and Jesus would be in charge. Oskar was mad at Jesus for not drumming, but glad the drum was all his. He was angry that the windows did not break.

Exactly two weeks after Easter, Agnes began to eat fish obsessively. She would start in the morning with herring, then move on to any sort of fried, boiled, preserved, or smoked fish she could find. She began to vomit at intervals throughout the day, neglecting to answer either Jan's or Alfred's questions about why she was doing so. After drinking the oil from several cans of sardines, she was taken to the hospital. There, Agnes was found to be three months pregnant. Dr. Hollatz said she had jaundice and fish poisoning, but Oskar says it was the memory of the eels in the severed horse's head, and the fear of seeing it again, that did her in. For four days she retched, then finally died. Oskar says in his mother's death she and Jan Bronski had become Romeo and Juliet. She had died for him, held their love on a pedestal, and sacrificed herself.

At the funeral of Oskar's mother, Anna Koljaiczek fell on her daughter's coffin and cursed Alfred in Kashubian as a murderer. Oskar admired his mother's coffin. He laments that all human things are not, like a coffin, tapered at the foot end to suit us perfectly. Throughout the ceremony, Oskar wanted to sit on the foot end of that coffin and drum out the ceremony - just sit there and drum until his sticks rotted away. After the ceremony, Sigismund Markus showed up at the cemetery. After an altercation, he was shown the exit by Alexander Scheffler and Meyn the Trumpeter. Oskar slipped out and went to meet Markus, and led him through the cemetery's iron gate where they met Leo Schugger, a man who spent his time going from funeral to funeral offering condolences. Markus and Leo talked, then Markus left in a waiting taxi. After the funeral, the group retired to Vincent Bronski's farm and spent the evening playing skat. Oskar slipped under Anna's four skirts and fell asleep there, as close as he could be to his mother's beginnings.

After his mother's death, Oskar lost all his will. He stopped breaking up demonstrations with his drum and singing out the glass of shop windows. Oskar plunged himself into Gretchen Scheffler's books, and spent time taking walks alone. On one of these walks, Oskar ran into Bebra, who invited him to a cup of coffee at the Four Seasons hotel. With Bebra was a beautiful woman who, like Oskar and Bebra, had chosen not to grow. Her name was Roswitha Raguna.

Bebra asked about Oskar's dejection; he told of his mother's death. Roswitha immediately invites Oskar to travel around Europe with her and Bebra. In the same breath, however, as she gazed into Oskar, she trembled and withdrew from him. Oskar asked Bebra to explain why she shied away.

Oskar refused their offer to travel, which relieved Roswitha. Oskar asked for an empty water glass, and when it came he sang a heart-shaped hole in its side. He engraved an inscription underneath the hole with his voice: it said "Oskar for Roswitha". She took it happily. Outside, Oskar told Bebra of his drumming career under rostrums - Bebra whispered that he had failed as a teacher; politics is so filthy.

Oskar found himself with no one - Alfred was consumed with grief, Jan stopped visiting, and Anna at times blamed Oskar and his drumming for his mother's death. Oskar was reduced to stomping up and down the four flights of stairs of the apartment building with his drum. Sometimes he would play duets with Meyn the Trumpeter, who was always dead-drunk in the attic, until Meyn joined the Mounted SA and went sober. The children of the apartment had grown up and didn't make brick soup anymore; Oskar hardly knew them. When he needed company, he would go to the second floor and knock on the door of Mother Truczinski, who always let him in. She had four children, Herbert, Maria, Guste, and Fritz Truczinski.

Herbert became one of Oskar's great friends. Herbert worked in a bar for sailors on the waterfront, frequented mostly by Scandinavians. Once or twice a month, Herbert came home in an ambulance, having been stabbed in the back by a sailor after a fight. Once his back healed, Oskar would be allowed to inspect the scars on Herbert's massive back. In the institution, Oskar compares those scars to the "secret parts" of a few women he has known - "hard, sensitive, and disconcerting."

As Oskar pushed on each scar with his finger or drumstick, Herbert would tell him the story that went along with it - all were battles that took place over Herbert's pride. A few weeks later, Herbert would not have his scars pushed anymore - he had killed a Latvian sea captain in self-defense and

could not get over his guilt. He gave notice at the bar and quit, although his boss tried in vain to persuade him otherwise.

Herbert was reduced to mulling over his troubles; Oskar got him to go into a partnership with him. Oskar would sing out the windows of a store and Herbert would do the salvaging of the loot. They robbed two delis and a furrier. They were forced to give it up, however, because disposing of the goods involved revisiting the black market of the waterfront, which Herbert had no intention of doing. After another bout of mulling, Herbert got out his suit and went looking for a job - he became a guard at the Maritime Museum.

The pride of the museum's collection was a figurehead from a Florentine galleon, captured by Pirates from Danzig in 1473. The green figurehead was a carving of a naked woman; the carving was known as Niobe or "the green kitten". The model for the sculpture had been put on trial for witchcraft after its completion and the sculptor's hands were cut off as a result. Over the centuries, every one of the sculpture's owners befell some grand misfortune; Danzig's citizens blamed much of their misfortune on its presence. While no museum attendant would guard the sculpture, and visitors would not enter the room, Herbert Truczinski volunteered his services.

Reluctantly, he let Oskar accompany him to the museum. On the third day, on the pretext of cleaning, the two entered the sculpture's room and they studied her proportions; Herbert thought there was too much of her, preferring little dainty women. Oskar drummed on her breasts, and Herbert drove a nail into her knee; she didn't react. Oskar, at the time, was convinced of Niobe's indifference toward him and Herbert.

After two weeks the ticket seller at the museum refused to let Oskar in with Herbert because Oskar was irresponsible. In the end he was let in one last time, but both he and Herbert were disinclined toward games. Niobe caught the afternoon light in her amber eyes and seemed to be plotting. The next day Herbert guarded Niobe alone and Oskar sat outside the museum on a banister. Oskar drummed in protest, then ate lunch outside with Herbert, then watched him drink gin in a local bar.

Suddenly an ambulance showed up at the museum. Oskar slipped inside along with them and went to Niobe's room. Herbert was hanging from Niobe's front, his face covering hers. He was naked to the waist, showing off his scars. He had taken a safety axe and plunged it into the statue; in the process he had driven the other end into himself. His trousers were open and his penis was still erect. Oskar says that in order to draw upon this scene, he is obliged to bang on his drum with all of his might, not with his drumsticks but with his fists.

At Herbert's funeral, Leo Schugger again offered his condolences to the assembly at the cemetery. Meyn the trumpeter went back to drinking gin and played the trumpet beautifully over Herbert's grave. Leo Schugger neglected to give Meyn his sympathies, but rather cried in fear at seeing him. Once home, Meyn found his four cats, who he fed herring heads. The stench of the cats, however, became unbearable to him. He reached for the poker that sat by his stove and flailed out at the cats until they were dead. He put the cats into a potato sack and took them downstairs to dump them in the trash, but neglected to notice that the sack was not blood-proof - it began to drip as he went down the stairs. The garbage can was full and the lid would not stay on well. After Meyn dumped his cats, the lid began to move. The cats were not quite dead. In his house, Laubschad the watchmaker, a member of the local SPCA, saw the garbage lid moving. He went out, took out the cats, and took care of them until they died the following night. He complained to the SPCA and Meyn was fined and kicked out of the SA - even his observed bravery in setting fore to a local synagogue could not save him.

Across from the burning synagogue, which Alfred and Oskar had watched burn, Oskar slipped away to Sigismund Markus' toy store. The Nazis had painted "Jewish Sow" across the store window in Sutterlin script. They had kicked in the window, and several soldiers had defecated inside the store. The soldiers broke into Markus' office, where they found him with an empty water glass. Oskar worried for his drum - he left the store quickly, taking three drums with him. Outside several women were handing out religious tracts from between a banner that read "Faith... hope... love," from Corinthians, chapter 13. Oskar

says we are waiting for the Savior, but that the savior is really the gasman, offering special rates on the gas of the Holy Ghost, which lets you cook. The Saviour, the gasman, became Santa Claus—Oskar himself questions these imaginative answers, listing a number of things he doesn't understand.

17.4 SELF-ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS (SAQs)

1. What creature first provokes the sound of drumming in Oskar's mind?
2. The name of the crazy person who hangs out at funerals in Danzig is _____.
3. The current name of Danzig is _____.
4. The name of the Jewish toy dealer who commits suicide on the night of Kristallnacht is _____.
5. The object Oskar cannot live without is _____.

17.5 LET US SUM UP

In the aftermath of World War II, Oskar Matzerath—the diminutive protagonist of Gunter Grass' *The Tin Drum*—embarks on an intense programme of self-improvement. After the end of World War II, Oskar decides that it is time to grow up—but the way he does so is, again, filled with symbolic resonance. When he escapes as a refugee to West Germany, he puts on additional height and bulk, and transforms himself from a three-foot high dwarf to...a four-foot high hunchback. Instead of true maturity, Oskar has settled for a different kind of deformity. Around this same time, he discovers that he can make a good living performing on his tin drum—an instrument that evokes intense memories among his audience, and allows them to weep and shed the pent-up tears that they have kept inside so long.

17.6 EXAMINATION ORIENTED QUESTIONS

- 1 How does Oskar use his childish appearance to his advantage?

2 Why does Grass use a drum as Oskar's instrument instead of something else?

3 Why do you think Oskar is so obsessed with his tin drum?

4 Discuss *The Tin Drum* as a text that breaks away from its contemporary stereotypes.

Ans. Gunter Grass had been struggling as a poet and an artist for several years, getting virtually nowhere in either medium, when he decided to write a novel. Begun in 1956 and published in 1959, his first novel, *The Tin Drum*, became an instant success in Germany, and shortly thereafter made its author an international sensation. In all likelihood, Grass is the most widely read German-language author to publish after World War II, and *The Tin Drum* the most widely read postwar German novel.

In this work Grass broke away from the style of earlier German novels about the war. Whereas those books tended to be realistic and uncomplicated indictments of Nazi atrocities, Grass' novel is complex, richly symbolic, and highly ironic. It starts by posing the reader with a problem: whether to trust a narrator who admits in the first sentence that he is an inmate of a mental hospital. This information immediately notifies the reader that not everything said or described in the book should be taken at face value. The narrator, it turns out, is a self-

willed dwarf who has rejected the moral complexities of the adult world simply by refusing to grow. Grass fills his novel with equally fantastical events, but places them squarely in a realistic setting with identifiable historical occurrences. Similarly, the novel has long passages of strictly realistic prose, but also contains an entire chapter that mimics fairy stories and uses startling metaphoric language.

This mixture of styles has led critics to call the novel both modernist and postmodernist. It is also commonly considered absurdist—a style of writing that presents life as nonsensical, based on the notion that the human condition is ridiculously meaningless. The novel shows humans controlled by historical and natural forces, and it takes a wholly irreverent stance toward nearly every ideological system. Much of the story is satirical, making fun of grand ideas and empty posturing. Nevertheless, the strength of the novel comes from the fact that it is not purely satirical, not purely critical. Most of the characters are complex, and can show surprising moments of compassion and dignity. To add to its complexity, Grass has also made the novel historical, and it covers over a half century. The author adds many minute details about the life, ethnic sectors, and architecture of Danzig prior to World War II. Just as the novel’s narrator Oskar Matzerath says that banging on his drum is an exercise in memory, so is writing this novel an exercise in memory for Grass.

At the center of the novel is the remarkable Oskar, who, by his own admission, is a living set of contradictions, a figure both Satanic and Christ-like, logical and childish, selfish and compassionate. The novel is not just his autobiography, but also his confession, and this constitutes its primary thematic power. Through his confession, Oskar reveals his small role in the atrocities of Nazi Germany and in so doing takes the first step toward “growing,” both physically and morally. *The Tin Drum* became the first in Grass’s “Danzig” trilogy, which also includes *Cat and Mouse* (1961) and *Dog Years* (1963). A film version of *The Tin Drum* was released in 1979 and won the Academy Award for Best Foreign Language Film.

17.7 ANSWER KEY (SAQs)

1. Moth
2. Crazy Leo
3. Gdansk
4. Sigismund Markus
5. tin drum

17.8 SUGGESTED READING

- Keele, Alan Frank. 1983. The Apocalyptic Vision: A Thematic Exploration of Postwar German Literature. J. Porrua Turanzas
- McCarthy, John A. 2006. Remapping Reality: Chaos and Creativity in Science and Literature (Goethe, Nietzsche, Grass). Amsterdam: Rodopi
- Moore, Harry T. 1967. Twentieth-Century German Literature. Basic Books

GUNTER GRASS : *THE TIN DRUM*

STRUCTURE

- 18.1 Introduction**
- 18.2 Objectives**
- 18.3 Detailed Summary-Book 2**
- 18.4 Self-Assessment Questions (SAQs)**
- 18.5 Short Answer Questions**
- 18.6 Let Us Sum Up**
- 18.7 Examination Oriented Questions**
- 18.8 Answer Key (SAQs)**
- 18.8 Suggested Reading**

18.1 INTRODUCTION

The Tin Drum authored by Gunter Grass, is a seminal work in post-war European literature, first published in 1959. This novel, the first in Grass's Danzig Trilogy, is renowned for its rich tapestry of magical realism, historical depth, and darkly comic tone. It tells the story of Oskar Matzerath, a boy who decides to stop growing at the age of three and expresses his dissent against the adult world's absurdities by beating his tin drum. Set against the backdrop of 20th-century Germany, spanning from the rise of Nazism to the post-war period, the narrative offers a poignant and satirical critique of German society. "The novel stands as a

powerful exploration of memory, guilt, and the individual's role in history, cementing Grass's legacy as a master storyteller and a significant voice in contemporary literature.

18.2 OBJECTIVES

The aim of the lesson is to offer a detailed summary of the second section of the book so as to enable learners to comprehend the plot and other aspects of the novel.

18.3 DETAILED SUMMARY-BOOK 2

On visiting day in the institution, Maria brings Oskar a new drum. Oskar would not accept the receipt from the store — he even had Bruno wash the price tag off the drum with hot water before he would look at it. Maria takes the old, worn-out drum, along with all of Oskar's other used drums. When Oskar asks himself what it is that makes him collect his worn-out drums and his answer is fear of a drum prohibition sometime in the future. This complex started on November 9, 1938, the day he lost Sigismund Markus to the Nazis and with it, his supply of drums.

Oskar had salvaged three drums from the ruins of Markus' shop. He drummed carefully and seldom in order to save them. Oskar began to lose weight in his depression. Oskar felt the drum had no substitute. So he had to carry on his deceptions without his drum; he had to pretend he was three years old alone.

With Agnes gone, Jan and Alfred's friendship had gone wayward—mostly since they came from opposite political sides of the inevitable war —and their meeting was forbidden. Once or twice a month, Jan would stop by after midnight to play skat with Alfred and Alexander Scheffler. Alfred and Jan soon found skat partners closer to their own way of thinking. Jan found Koybella, the janitor at the Polish Post Office where he worked. Koybella, Oskar thought, could probably fix his tattered drum. Jan finally showed up, putting his hands over Oskar's eyes. Looking at the battered drum that Oskar showed him, Jan led him back to the post office, where he came to search for Koybella the repairman. On a normal day it would have been a pleasant trip, dropping off the drum for repair. But as

it was, the Polish Post Office workers had been undergoing military training for the past few months in preparation for the Nazis; they had turned the post office into a fortress. Jan had escaped from the post office, to get out of defending it against the oncoming Germans, but now Oskar had forced him to go back on account of his drum. Jan was secretly counting on the barricade of German SS men at the post office to turn him away; they did not, and Oskar and Jan were pulled inside the post office door, where the workers were putting up sandbags in defense. Oskar, unable to find Koybella, found a windowless room on the second floor filled with carts of unsent mail, and fell asleep.

Oskar slept dreamlessly on the letters. He was awakened by the sound of machine-gun fire — the Germans had attacked the post office. Oskar's first thought was of his drum's safety — he dug a hole in the basket of letters and placed his broken drum inside. Oskar went in search of Koybella and Jan. In the hall, he could hear shots being fired from inside the building by the postal workers. Thinking his glass-singing talents could be enlisted to help the Poles, he instead got tangled in the grownups' feet. He watched the first Polish wounded as they were carried into the building.

In a few minutes, the SS men blasted into the building, but reinforcements from the windowless room held them off. When the men came back, Oskar went to the third floor, to the apartment of the Chief Postal Secretary. On a shelf in the children's room in the apartment, high up amid other toys, sat a new tin drum just like those Oskar used. In the room he found Jan and Koybella behind a makeshift wall of sandbags. Koybella was busy shooting into the street at regular intervals with a rifle. Jan was huddled up and trembling in fear. Oskar gestured that he wanted Jan to reach for the drum, but Jan couldn't understand.

Oskar never took his eyes off of the drum. During a lull, Koybella began to reach for it for Oskar - then a burst of machine-gun fire pulled him back to his window.

Victor Welhun helped Jan and Oskar carry Koybella to the windowless room. On the way, they consoled themselves by thinking that the British and French would come to save them. Oskar knew better than to expect help. Jan,

scared to death, was admitted to the room along with Oskar and Koybella, in which all of the wounded had been placed, on top of the unsent mail. After dressing Koybella's wounds, Jan couldn't think of what to do. He pulled out his skat cards and he, Oskar and Koybella began to play. Oskar was troubled, for this was the first time he had let on that he was not a three-year-old in mind as he was in body; he let on that he could play skat. Jan began to confuse himself - he started calling Oskar Alfred or Matzerath and Koybella Agnes, then vice versa.

Oskar says he has misled the reader in the last chapter —the events were not so grand or blameless as he made them out to be. As soon as the guards came into the room, Oskar had begun making himself out to be the childish victim, and making Jan out to be the evil culprit who used Oskar as a shield for bullets. Jan didn't notice, and this fact comforts Oskar, for it relieves him of responsibility. Jan was lost in his world of cards.

Oskar says he has two great burdens of guilt in his life: it was he who sent both Agnes and Jan to their graves. While Oskar was placed in the hospital with a fever and given back to Alfred, the thirty prisoners were taken to the run-down cemetery in Saspe and executed. Oskar learned this from Leo Schugger, who knew about all the burials in Danzig, even unannounced ones.

In the hospital, the high bars on the beds in the children's ward kept Oskar happily separated from his family and their friends. Vincent and Anna wanted Oskar to confess the truth to the Germans: that he had convinced Jan to return to the post office, which he did not want to defend. Oskar did no such thing, but watched Poland fall to the Germans in eighteen days. Oskar left the hospital and was given back his drums. Once out, he took a walk and chanced upon Leo Schugger - Oskar was afraid of him. Leo played the Pied Piper, playing the casing, leading Oskar on. He led Oskar into Saspe cemetery, measured out paces in Latin, marked the spot with a piece of wood, then deposited the casing, which was tapered at the foot end, next to it. A fleet of military planes flew overhead, preparing to land. Suddenly Leo darted away, leaving Oskar alone, and dropped something as he left which Oskar thought he should pick up. It was a skat card - the seven of spades.

Oskar says that while the governments of Europe spent all of their time and money gobbling up the metal of Europe, Oskar was running out of drums. He did his best to destroy the drum he had found in the post office because it reminded him of his guilt over Jan's death, but it somehow survived his attack. Oskar was convinced he would get a new guiltless drum for Christmas, but he did not. He was sure the grownups had hidden it from him; when he was proven wrong, he used his glass-breaking voice for the first time in a long time, and shattered all the decorations on the Christmas tree. Alfred could not understand.

In July, 1940, after Maria's brother Fritz Truczinski had been drafted, Maria and Oskar went to the beach. They rode the streetcar to the beach, having to pass Saspe cemetery on the way. Oskar tried to convince himself not to look, but the car turned and he was greeted with an unwelcome view of the cemetery, which was still painfully whitewashed. He took a long whiff of Maria's vanilla scent and looked towards her necklace, a string of red wooden cherries.

Oskar was allowed into the women's changing area of the beach on account of his height, even though he was almost sixteen. In the private changing room with Maria, Oskar undressed first, facing the wall, though Maria turned him around to put on his woollen bathing suit. Then Maria began to undress quickly. Oskar drummed a little, then stopped. Maria whistled while undressing, more loudly as she finished. Oskar felt rage, shame, indignation, and disappointment as he felt himself become erect. He threw himself on Maria, burying his face in her pubic hair, and looked for the source of her vanilla scent. Maria laughed and tried to pull away. The vanilla scent brought tears to his eyes, then the scent switched to that of mushrooms or some acrid spice, reminding Oskar of Jan Bronski lying smouldering in the earth and he let go of her. Oskar slipped on the boards of the cabin and began to cry. Maria picked him up and called him a little rascal who didn't know what was what.

Oskar begins by talking about fizz powder, a soda substitute of flavored powder that fizzed like soda when mixed with water. Agnes would sell it in little bags of green, orange, raspberry, or lemon flavor.

Oskar and Maria spent the first summer of the war on the beach reserved for ladies. One day, looking for her harmonica, Maria produced a package of fizz powder from her beach bag. Oskar tasted the powder-covered finger. Maria held out an empty hand and Oskar filled it with powder. Oskar summoned up all of his saliva and spit into the hand full of powder. It fizzed, and Maria felt something she had never felt before. Maria licked her own palm. After a few minutes, she filled her hand again, then made it known that she wanted Oskar's saliva. But Oskar was little; his saliva could not replenish quickly. He had to walk across the burning sand to the water fountain in order to wash out his mouth and replenish his saliva. When he returned, Maria was on her belly and didn't move. Her hand was empty of fizz powder. Oskar never found what had happened to that handful of powder.

Although Maria would fall right asleep after these fizz powder sessions, Oskar found it difficult. He spent all day and all night consulting his drum, his Rasputin-Goethe medley, and his memories of Jan and Agnes for answers to his questions about loving Maria.

As Maria quivered and thrashed with the bubbling fizz powder, her nightgown would bunch up until it gathered just below her breasts. One night Oskar filled her navel with powder and spit in it; Maria's reaction was much more intense. Oskar put his tongue inside and tasted raspberries. Maria turned off the light and went to sleep, while Oskar continued. Oskar again felt himself become erect. He questioned the culprit of his actions.

In the mental institution, Oskar tried an experiment. He sent his keeper Bruno out to find him fizz powder, but the stores no longer sold it. In the end, the lab technician at the hospital synthesized some for Oskar out of sympathy. It was visiting day: both Klepp and Vittlar came to visit Oskar. Stalin had died that day, and Klepp, the purveyor of Communist propaganda, was in mourning. When Klepp left, Oskar whispered to Vittlar if he knew about fizz powder. Vittlar became incredulous, said he was an angel that could not be tempted, and left.

Maria came to visit Oskar. They talked of her son Kurt, then had Bruno bring in the makeshift fizz powder. He poured it in her left hand and spat into it.

She became indignant and angry, then went to the sink and washed her hand off. Oskar pleaded with her to remember, but she did not. She was taken with fear, tried to change the topic, then left weeping. Oskar says he could never forget that powder, for it had made him a father - he had made Maria pregnant that night with the raspberry fizz powder in her navel, as she slept. He is sure of this because it was not until ten days later that he had found Alfred on top of Maria on the sofa.

Oskar found them as he came downstairs from meditating in the attic. They were twisted into a grotesque position and Oskar disregarded Maria's screams to leave and leaped onto Alfred's back. He placed his drum there and beat it furiously, and Alfred and Maria fell apart. Oskar maintains bitterly that he is Kurt's father, and that he inherited from Jan Bronski, his true father, the trait of getting there ahead of Alfred Matzerath.

Oskar caused a fight between Maria and Alfred, for since he was on Alfred's back, Alfred could not shake Oskar off until it was too late; he thought he had gotten Maria pregnant. Alfred stormed out to go play skat, and Oskar was left alone with Maria. Alfred married Maria because she was pregnant. If Oskar had rightfully gotten to name Kurt, he says he would have named his son after the boy's great-grandfather, Vincent Bronski.

As Maria became more obviously pregnant, Oskar hated her bulging belly. He was angry that the child's name would be Matzerath and not Bronski. That being so, Oskar resolved to attempt abortion. When Maria was five months pregnant, he pushed her off a ladder; she turned an ankle but the baby was fine. Three weeks before her due date, Oskar tried again. He sat in the living room, drumming softly, as Maria napped on the couch. Suddenly he couldn't take it; he had to do away with her bulging belly. He picked up a pair of scissors and prepared to deflate her belly. Maria caught Oskar's hand just in time. Oskar was taken to stay upstairs with Mother Truczinski.

According to Oskar's calculations, Oskar's son Kurt was born two weeks early. He resolved to give the boy a drum when he turned three, just as Agnes

had done for him. When Kurt was baptized, Anna and Victor were invited as Oskar thought proper because Hedwig and her new Husband, Ehlers, who replaced Jan Bronski, had stopped by and gotten themselves invited. At the Protestant church, Oskar refused to enter. After the ceremony, while the rest of the guests ate, Oskar slipped away and went to see Kurt in his cradle. He could think of nothing to say to the infant short of promising him a drum at three.

In Paris, Oskar upgraded his performance - instead of exploding beer bottles with his voice, he would destroy priceless pieces of blown glass from the French castles. He went chronologically through history, starting with the reign of Louis XIV, then Louis XV, then Louis XVI, and finally that of Louis Philippe. Only seldom did someone in the crowd of soldiers recognize this historical acumen. The troupe spent the winter in Paris - they stayed in first class hotels and Oskar and Roswitha spent their time comparing the beds together.

In Berlin, Oskar parted from Bebra, who gave him five drums as a present and had Felix and Kitty accompany him home. He arrived in Danzig on June 11, 1944, one day before Kurt's third birthday. When Oskar returned home, nothing had changed. The only difference was in Alfred, who shed authentic, speechless tears when he saw Oskar. Oskar resolved at that moment to recognize Alfred as a potential father and call himself Matzerath in addition to Bronski. They took him in, but the questions began. They were angry that Oskar had simply disappeared, for they had had to swear to the police that they had not killed him. Now that he was back, a representative from the Ministry of Public Health came by to place Oskar in a mental institution, but Alfred refused because he had promised Agnes that he would not do so. Every two weeks there was a letter in the mail asking for Alfred's release to take Oskar away, but Alfred refused to sign.

For his third birthday the next day, Kurt received several toys that he dismantled or broke immediately. Oskar's son was already an inch taller than Oskar; it was time, he thought, to make the boy a drummer and put an end to the needless growth. Since Oskar had not taken over the store, Oskar presumed that Alfred planned to turn it over to Kurt - this, Oskar thought, had to be

prevented at all costs. He wanted to create Kurt in his own image. Oskar fantasized of the two of them drumming together, and sharing the same ideals of childhood, history, and family. At that time, Oskar thought that true family life was only possible under his grandmother Anna's skirts. Today, however, he can supersede the holy trinity with a snap of his fingers - the imitation of Christ has become an occupation. He has fantasies that Anna will invite Jan, Maria, Agnes, and the other Bronskis to a meeting under her skirts. He shudders at the possibilities, contenting himself with the thought of himself and Kurt alone under the skirts.

Oskar relates to the reader his giving three-year-old Kurt the drum. He dropped the sailboat he was destroying and took the drum. As Oskar was handing him the drumsticks, Kurt misinterpreted the action and knocked the sticks to the ground. Oskar bent to pick them up, and Kurt hauled off and struck him with the drum, then hit him repeatedly until Oskar collapsed. Then he took the drum and chipped off the lacquer on a chair, then began to beat it with his broken sailboat toy - no rhythm was discernible.

In the coming months, Stephan Bronski was killed on the eastern front lines. Next, Fritz Truczinski was killed on the western front. This caused Mother Truczinski to have a small stroke, from which she never fully recovered. As a result of her brother's death, Maria found religion. She started going to Protestant services, but they did not satisfy her. She became a Catholic, like Oskar's mother. She took Oskar one afternoon to the church of the Sacred Heart so she could be converted. Leaving her to prayer, Oskar went to inspect the statue of the Virgin Mary with the boys John the Baptist and Jesus. Nothing in the church, even the expressions on the boys' faces, had changes from years before. Once again, as he had done years before, he placed his drum around the boy Jesus' neck. But now he did not want a miracle, he just wanted to show Jesus up. Oskar laughed as he placed the drumstick in the statue's hands; he challenged Jesus to drum.

Oskar returned to the church of the Sacred Heart several times, trying to get the baby Jesus to repeat his drumming performance. Jesus never obliged. Cold and shivering in the church night after night, Oskar began to cough, a habit that remains with Oskar to this day when he enters a church. Oskar began to go

to church because nothing kept him at home - every time he saw his son Kurt, the boy would attack him.

The first thing Oskar did when he took over the Dusters was demand to be introduced to and ally with Moorkahne, the leader of the other faction of Dusters. Moorkahne also recognized Oskar as Jesus. The storeroom and treasury of the Dusters was Putty's basement—it was filled with stolen army surplus, including several guns. Oskar made them bury the guns in the backyard and give him the firing pins, for he didn't want to use that type of weapon. At the time, the Duster's assets amounted to two thousand, four hundred twenty Reichmarks. Later, when they were forced to confess, the police counted their assets at thirty-six thousand Reichmarks.

Oskar and the Dusters began to decorate Putty's basement with stolen items from different church. Oskar's aim was to erect a complete nativity set in the basement. Finally, the boys broke into the church of the Sacred Heart - actually, they were let in by Felix and Paul. The police then burst in with their flashlights, but Oskar stayed on the statue and the boys remained kneeling. Lucy Rennwand was among the police - she had ratted the boys out. Just as in the post office, Oskar reverted to acting like a three-year-old and played the victim in Father Wiehnke and Lucy's arms as the boys were led away. Oskar was put on trial with the boys, but was acquitted. Oskar calls the trial the second trial of Jesus.

Oskar begins with the image of a picturesque swimming pool, graced by many young, slender people. A young man climbs the ten-foot diving board and everyone watches, his friends goading him to dive. This, Oskar says, is the situation he and the Dusters were in at their trial. All of the boys drove from the board. That left Oskar alone, who stood up on the board and said he could see the whole world from up there. He celebrated the simultaneity of the world, weaving the fabric of history.

Over half the flats in the apartment building were empty, as the tenants had already fled. Matzerath, however, had been stockpiling food, unknown to

the authorities, in the cellar of the store; the remaining members of the building took to the cellar during the air raids.

Old Man Heilandt and Matzerath carried Mother Truczinski down during the early raids, then later they left her sitting at her window. After one big raid, Matzerath and Maria found her dead with her jaw open, squinting like she had a gnat in her eye. They were obliged to bury her in the park; the cemetery was closed to all but the military. Oskar slipped away and took a walk. From then on, Oskar's family lived in their basement, for the Russians were coming swiftly, burning and pillaging in their path. Oskar emerged only to retrieve his belongings from the attic —extra drums from Bebra, his Goethe-Rasputin book, and the fan that had belonged to Roswitha.

Six or seven Russians opened the hatch to the cellar; Oskar focused on a trail of ants on the cellar floor running from the potatoes to the sugar. He was reassured that the ants did not respond to all the sudden screaming. Three of the soldiers went instantly to Lina Greff, and raped her in turn. Maria was spared, for she had Kurt on her lap, and as Oskar had read in Rasputin, the Russians loved children. A soldier picked Oskar up and played the drum with his fingers, then handed him off when the first soldier went to take his turn with Lina Greff. There were lice on the soldier's collar, and Oskar wanted to catch one, but it meant dropping Matzerath's Party pin. He held it out to Matzerath, who unknowingly grasped it. Fear gripped Matzerath; he put the pin in his mouth. The soldiers saw the move and pointed their guns at Matzerath, who tried to swallow the pin. It stuck in his throat; Matzerath began to choke and flail. One of the soldiers emptied a whole magazine into Matzerath before he could die of suffocation. The ants had to build a new trail around Matzerath's body; the soldiers took artificial honey with them as they left.

Refugees from Poland began to arrive in Danzig. To Oskar's family, a man named Mr. Fajngold arrived, whose wife Luba and children Lev, Jakub, Berek, Leon, Mendel, and Sonya had been killed. Fajngold remained convinced, however, that his wife and family were alive—he showed the imaginary family around the store, and introduced them around to everyone. He and his imaginary

family were shown Matzerath's corpse - Fajngold helped to carry Matzerath upstairs; Maria and the imaginary Luba dressed the body. Lina Greff was of no help —she was busy in her house with a whole group of Russians. Fajngold convinced Old Man Heilandt to make another coffin for Matzerath. He used the door between the kitchen and the living room from Mother Truczinski's flat, but this time didn't bother to make the coffin tapered at the foot end. Heilandt wouldn't cart the coffin as far as the city cemetery; they went to Saspe instead.

On the way, looting soldiers helped to push the coffin along. One gave Maria a cage with a lovebird in it; Kurt tried to pull out its feathers. A guard let the group pass through to the cemetery, but assigned two boys of sixteen to guard the party with their machine guns. Oskar found meaning in the fact that Jan Bronski and Matzerath were to be buried in the same place. Kurt was throwing rocks at the lovebird. Maria started to cry as she dug Matzerath's grave. Oskar began a long debate with himself, asking "Should I or Shouldn't I?" to himself over and over again. He reasoned: he was now an orphan - his parents and presumptive parents were dead. He settled on "I should" as Kurt hit the bird with a stone. Oskar owned up to the fact that he had killed Matzerath deliberately; he had opened the pin in his hand before giving it to Matzerath. Standing over the grave, Oskar resolved: "It must be," then threw his drum into the grave, on top of the coffin. The sand struck the drum; suddenly, Oskar began to grow, the fist sign being a violent nosebleed. He could not walk, for his joints were already inflamed. Outside the cemetery, Leo Schugger sat on a tank and offered his condolences.

In the institution, Oskar says that he asks his keeper, Bruno, to measure his height each day after breakfast. Oskar, at present, measures four foot one, when for most of his life he was exactly three feet.

Oskar completes the story of Matzerath's funeral: after Oskar had thrown his drum into the grave, his son Kurt had heaved a stone and hit Oskar in the back of the head. Oskar leapt for his drum, but was pulled out by Old Man Heilandt without the drum. It was after this stone hit him that he began to grow, according to Maria and Fajngold, although he had been growing already.

When the group returned from Matzerath's funeral, they found new people living in the Truczinski flat, where they had been staying. Fajngold, Maria, Kurt, and Oskar moved downstairs to their original apartment. Maria and Fajngold thought Oskar was sick; finally they found an exhausted lady doctor from the army to examine Oskar; she smoked cigarettes and fell asleep. All she could say was that Oskar needed a hospital; the family should move away to the west. She gave Oskar pills for pain and left. Oskar's head swelled; he had a constant fever. He imagined in his fever that he was on a merry-go-round run by the Heavenly Father; God became Rasputin, the Goethe. Oskar's fever left him, then returned again, bringing Lysol baths with it.

Oskar says that to this day, the aches and pains of growth are with him still—he grinds his teeth to keep the sounds in his joints down. His fingers are swollen; he cannot hold his drumsticks to drum, or his fountain pen to write. He hence turns his story over to his keeper, Bruno, to relate the story of his train trip to the west with Maria and Kurt.

Bruno says that although he has other patients in the mental hospital, Oskar is the most harmless—Bruno never has to call other nurses to subdue him. Bruno says that he will take the story about to be related and transform it into a piece of his knotted string art, calling it "Refugee from the East". Oskar, Kurt, and Maria pulled out in the freight car on June 12, 1945.

Oskar tells Bruno that the constant jarring of the train both promoted his growth and saved him from the terrible shooting pains he experienced when the train stopped for the gangsters. Several of the young gangsters took an interest in Oskar's photo album; he showed them each one of the photos, but had to scratch out Matzerath's Party pin when one Polish partisan got offended. Bruno, however, becomes skeptical of Oskar, and doubts his credibility.

Oskar says he grew three and a half to four inches between Danzig and Stettin. In Luneburg, Oskar was taken to a hospital on account of a high fever. Kurt and Maria were forced to stay in a refugee camp on the city's outskirts. Maria got permission from the doctors to move Oskar to Dusseldorf, near Maria's

sister, Guste. From August 1945 to May 1946, Oskar lay in Dusseldorf City Hospital, where Oskar became enamoured with the nurses.

Taking up his own pen again, Oskar says that Bruno has just measured him, and he has grown an inch, to four foot two. He has left to run and tell a doctor of the growth.

In Dusseldorf, Oskar, Maria, and Kurt take up with Maria's sister Guste Truczinski. Guste had married a soldier named Koster, who was shipped to the Arctic front soon after they had met. He was reported to be a prisoner in Russia, and Guste forever clung to the hope that he would come back.

When Oskar was discharged from the hospital, he came to Guste's apartment and found Kurt and Maria dealing in the black market. Maria, just as Matzerath always had, dealt in synthetic honey. Oskar was put to work weighing and making up packages of honey in Guste's kitchen. Six-year-old Kurt was busy adding up figures - he'd been to six weeks of school and was already an entrepreneur. Guste drank coffee and stroked Oskar's newly grown hump - she thought it was good luck. She frowned on the black market dealings.

It had not been two years since Matzerath had died; already Oskar was tired of being a grownup. He longed for his drum and to be three feet tall. Oskar took to visiting the City Hospital; the nurses almost made him happy with their gossip. Oskar wished to make a "conquest" of one of the nurses, but without his drum he was unsure of his potency.

Oskar worked for Korneff for a hundred Reichmarks a month. He was too weak for the heavy chiselling work, but he excelled at the fine work - scalloping and finishing borders. Against Korneff's wishes, Oskar chiselled left-handed. Oskar was finally happy in his work. Before long, Oskar could outdo Korneff at the inscriptions and was put in charge of all ornamental work. Oskar was particularly fond of inscribing O's; they tended to be too large. Finally, the following October, Oskar was allowed to help Korneff put up a tombstone. Korneff had doubted Oskar's strength and had always enlisted outside help for the job. On the way, Oskar saw Sister Gertrude, a nurse he knew, and resolved to ask her out. When they reached the entrance to the cemetery, Oskar says that

Leo Schugger was standing there. Korneff said he didn't know a Leo Schugger; the man's name was Willem Slobber. Korneff says he knows a whole fleet of men just like Slobber and Schugger who live in different cemeteries.

Oskar says only wealthy people got tombstones, and "wealth" was relative. Five sacks of potatoes got a plain head-marker. A tomb for two brought Oskar and Korneff material to make new suits. An apprentice of the supplier made the suits for them. Oskar got a single-breasted dark blue pinstriped suit. It took five fittings for the apprentice to figure out how to deal with Oskar's hump. Korneff's suit was double-breasted. From another man, Korneff bartered nice shoes. He gave Maria money to buy him dress shirts, letting her keep the ample change.

A week later, Oskar went to the hospital to visit the nurses, dressed in his new suit. Although she was reluctant, Oskar found and convinced Sister Gertrude to meet him in town that night, promising her that he had saved up plenty of cake rationing stamps. They met, but Oskar was disappointed; Sister Gertrude had neglected to wear her nurse's uniform. Oskar took her to a pastry shop where they ate cake; Oskar invited her for dancing; she accepted enthusiastically, realizing too late that Oskar was too small to dance with. Soon, the pair was the object of attention. When they sat down to applause, Gertrude blushed, said she had to go to the lady's room, and never came back. The young couples consoled him from the dance floor; he was asked to dance by a woman who turned out, along with her friend, to work at the telephone exchange. Oskar spent the evening in the dance hall with the women. He never saw Sister Gertrude again except at a distance. He became a regular at The Lion's Den, however, and made friends, though he never touched the drums.

In the winter his tombstone job changed; he had to take care of the equipment and get ready for the spring thaw. Oskar practiced his relief sculpture and shovelled snow, then began setting up stones in March at a cemetery near a coal power plant called Fortuna North.

In May he proposed to Maria, who declined him marriage but wished him the best. Oskar says Yorick did not become a good citizen, but a fool like Hamlet himself.

Oskar says he would have been a good citizen had he married, owning a large stonecutting business. It was the currency reform, however, which though allowing for general prosperity, made Oskar fall victim to art. He left Korneff before he could be let go because of the currency reform. Oskar neglected his appearance, spending his time standing on street corners. He sat on park benches for hours on end. In the park he was approached by four young art students, who wanted to use Oskar as a model. Oskar accepted and was placed on a revolving pedestal in the studio of Professor Kuchen.

Oskar says these students saw only the Rasputin in him and neglected the Goethe. Nevertheless, Oskar posed for six hours a day. The drawings took on different shapes; some had backgrounds showing war scenes. Oskar was glad when the sculptors asked him to pose in the nude. He posed for Professor Maruhn, friend of Kuchen's and a lover of classical form. Oskar spent weeks with Maruhn, who found it impossible to find a suitable pose for Oskar. He could not bring himself to apply clay to the perfectly formed internal skeleton in a manner resembling Oskar. Maruhn had his students try to sculpt Oskar, but though they applied clay, the hump weighed too much and would always sag and break off. There were three groups of sculpture students - first, the homely, gifted women, who abstracted Oskar's penis, but reproduced the rest of his body perfectly; second, the pretty, scatterbrained women, who paid no attention to his body but reproduced his penis accurately; and third, the men, who abstracted Oskar completely. Next, the painting students wanted in on Oskar. They saw only his blue eyes and painted the whole canvas in blue tones.

At an artists' ball for Carnival, Oskar met two lesbians from China who successfully used his hump. He had dressed as a court jester - Yorick. Then he saw Corporal Lankes, who asked him right off, as usual, for a cigarette. Oskar and he reminisced; with Lankes was a beautiful woman, Ulla, who was very drunk. Oskar resolved to introduce her to the artists at the Academy, where she could model. Lankes loved the idea; back at his studio he had to slap Ulla to make her agree. She and Oskar began to pose nude together. It took brilliant students to capture the two of them together; a student called Raskolnikov turned

out the masterpiece of Oskar and Ulla posing together, calling it “Madonna 49.” The students called the student Raskolnikov because he was forever talking of *Crime and Punishment*, of guilt and atonement. Lankes now only beat Ulla when his disposition demanded it; Oskar wanted often to be violent with her, but took her to pastry shops instead. Raskolnikov, however, had an affair with her without even touching her. He would have her pose with her legs apart, then sit and whisper of guilt and atonement until he had an orgasm. Then he would leap up and paint brilliantly. Raskolnikov kept putting objects in Oskar’s hands to hold as he posed; finally when he brings Oskar a drum to hold, Oskar refuses, saying he has atoned, his drumming is done.

Maria saw a poster with Oskar on it, advertising an exhibition of the work done on him. Maria saw the exhibition and informed Oskar that he was a degenerate; she wanted no more help from him or his filthy money. Oskar resolved to move away.

Oskar and Ulla went house hunting. And then Oskar went back to Korneff, who was exactly the same, but had weathered the currency reform; not only was he selling tombstones, he was refinishing stone edifices on buildings with war damage, finding newfound prosperity. He hired Oskar back on a half-time basis. In three hours’ work, he earned a third of his monthly rent.

The first apartment Oskar looked at was rented out by an undertaker named Zeidler. When he opened the door, his face was covered in shaving cream. Oskar took a look at the room and didn’t like it; it was a converted bathroom with blue tile walls. Oskar asked if the bathtub could be removed, Zeidler said no, and Oskar said he would accept the room. Oskar asked about tenants; Zeidler said the room next door was occupied by a nurse, which intrigued Oskar. Before he left, Oskar asked to be shown the toilet.

Oskar moved in that afternoon. Mrs. Zeidler was there, seated in a gray suit. There were carpets everywhere in the flat, on the walls and superimposed on the floor. When Mrs. Zeidler whispered to him, Zeidler flew into an instant rage and hollered at her. He ran to the china case, picked up eight liquor glasses, and threw them at the cast iron stove, shattering glass all over the room. Then he

got a dustpan and brush, and swept the whole mess up. Then Oskar took his belongings, including the Drum Raskolnikov gave him, to his room.

From that day on, Oskar was infatuated with the unseen nurse across the hall. He says his nurse infatuation is a kind of disease, brought on by having been saved and brought to life every few years by legions of nurses. This time it was Sister Dorothea who held his attention. He would hear her footsteps, but never see her and become restless. Her silences were even more disconcerting. Oskar took to examining the mail each morning and looking at the return addresses of the letters to Sister Dorothea. Oskar learned she had a good friend named Beata. Oskar composed several letters to her, aimed at winning over Dorothea, but never sent them. He became jealous when letters from Dr. Erich Werner began to arrive, addressed to Dorothea. Oskar resolved at that moment to become a doctor himself - simply because he could expose Dr. Werner as a quack and win over the unseen Sister Dorothea.

18.4 SELF-ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS (SAQs)

1. _____ is the building in which Jan Bronski dies defending.
2. _____ words end Oskar's chant about the Black Cook.
3. _____ is the object that Oskar makes sure to keep with him on the train ride from Danzig to Dusseldorf.
4. The place where Oskar loved to be in his younger years is _____.
5. The name of the musician Oskar befriends in Dusseldorf is _____.
6. _____, _____, and _____ were the musicians who played in the attic of Oskar's building in Danzig.

18.5 SHORT ANSWER QUESTIONS

1. Oskar has a talent for drumming and a magical ability to shatter glass with his voice. How does he use these talents?
2. What are some of the crimes Oskar commits, or assists in committing?

18.6 LET US SUM UP

In this work Grass broke away from the style of earlier German novels about the war. Whereas those books tended to be realistic and uncomplicated indictments of Nazi atrocities, Grass' novel is complex, richly symbolic, and highly ironic. It starts by presenting the reader with a problem: whether to trust a narrator who admits in the first sentence that he is an inmate of a mental hospital. This information immediately notifies the reader that not everything said or described in the book should be taken at face value.

18.7 EXAMINATION ORIENTED QUESTIONS

- 1 Explain the significance of the title *The Tin Drum*.

- 2 Discuss how Gunter Grass's *The Tin Drum* negotiates the treacherous terrains that lie between positivism and nihilistic relativism by means of a truth-finding methodology.

18.8 ANSWER KEY (SAQs)

1. The Polish Post Office
2. Ha! Ha! Ha!
3. Photo album
4. under his grandmother's skirts
5. Klepp
6. Bach, Beethoven, and Brahms

18.9 SUGGESTED READING

- Paver, Chloe E. M. 1999. Narrative and Fantasy in the Post-War German Novel: A Study of Novels by Johnson, Frisch, Wolf, Becker, and Grass. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Schlant, Ernestine. 1999. The Language of Silence: West German Literature and the Holocaust. New York: Routledge.
- Halbwachs, Maurice. 1992. On Collective Memory. Translated by Lewis A. Coser. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Herf, Jeffrey. 1997. Divided Memory: The Nazi Past in the Two Germanys. USA: Harvard University Press.

GUNTER GRASS : *THE TIN DRUM*

STRUCTURE

- 19.1 Introduction**
- 19.2 Objectives**
- 19.3 Detailed Summary-Book 3**
- 19.4 The Plot as Voyage and Return**
- 19.5 *The Tin Drum* as Remembrance of Second World War**
- 19.6 Self-Assessment Questions (SAQs)**
- 19.7 Short Answer Questions**
- 19.8 Let Us Sum Up**
- 19.9 Examination Oriented Questions**
- 19.10 Answer Key (SAQs)**
- 19.11 Suggested Reading**

19.1 INTRODUCTION

The Tin Drum written by Gunter Grass, is a poignant commemoration of the tumultuous era surrounding World War II, encapsulating the chaos, brutality, and profound societal shifts of the time. Published in 1959, this novel narrates the life of Oskar Matzerath, a boy who wills himself to stop growing at the age of three as a protest against the world around him, using his tin drum as a symbol of resistance and memory. Through Oskar's extraordinary perspective,

Grass delves into the heart of 20th-century Europe, from the rise of Nazism to the war's devastating aftermath, providing a satirical yet deeply moving exploration of the human condition in times of conflict. As a commemoration novel, "The Tin Drum" serves not only as a reflection on the horrors and absurdities of war but also as a testament to the resilience of the human spirit amidst widespread devastation.

19.2 OBJECTIVES

The aim of the lesson is to provide the summary of the last section of the book and offer certain thematic analysis. This will help learners to have better insight into the novel and critically appreciate it.

19.3 DETAILED SUMMARY-BOOK 3

Aside from his infatuation with Sister Dorothea, Oskar spent his time inscribing tombstones and posing with the Muse Ulla at the art academy.

Then, Oskar had taken to checking Sister Dorothea's doorknob to see if it was locked. It always was, until one day, as Oskar began to despair, the door opened. He debated; finally it was the thought of Maria, who had taken a new lover, her boss, that made him go inside. The room was windowless and dark. The smell of vinegar was everywhere, although there was no bottle of vinegar to be found. From her comb, Oskar saw she had blond hair that had begun to fall out; this image roused feelings of love in Oskar. Oskar crossed the room to Sister Dorothea's bed and on the way found one of her bras.

Oskar thought Dorothea's bed miserable. He wished she had a white-enameled hospital bed. Oskar examined the clothes cupboard, which was well organized inside. In the hat compartment Sister Dorothea kept books, mostly crime novels. Oskar entered the cupboard and squatted on his heels; he tried to close the doors, but the catch was broken and light seeped in. In the cupboard he came upon a black patent leather belt; Oskar said in the dark it could easily have been one of the eels that caused the death of his mother Agnes after that Good Friday spent on the beach. Sister Dorothea wore that eel when she went

out without her nurse's uniform. Oskar did something in the cupboard he had not done for years—he drummed. Then he checked the room for neatness and left.

In the hallway, Oskar was satisfied that there was no sign of Dr. Werner in Sister Dorothea's room. He heard a cough from the end of the hall that Oskar says now was calculated to get his attention - Oskar ignored it. A few days later, in the morning before going to the Academy to be painted with Ulla as a Greek god, he went through the mail and found a letter from Dr. Werner to Sister Dorothea. He went to the kitchen and boiled water, then took the letter and steamed the envelope open so as not to damage it. The letter was not overtly tender, but through the coldness Oskar sensed that it was a love letter. Oskar resealed the letter and began to laugh as he replaced it under Dorothea's door. Then, at the end of the hall, Oskar heard a voice plaintively ask him to bring some water. This was Klepp's apartment—he was not sick, he simply used Oskar as an excuse to get water. Klepp's apartment smelled of a corpse that doesn't stop smoking cigarettes, sucking peppermints, and eating garlic—Oskar says Klepp smells this way even now. In the dirty room were several packages of spaghetti, olive oil, tomato paste, salt, and a case of lukewarm beer. Klepp urinated in the beer bottles lying down, for he seldom bothered to move. Klepp always used the same water to cook his spaghetti, which became increasingly viscous, and stayed in bed up to four days at a time.

Oskar and Klepp talked for a long while. Klepp said he stayed in bed so as to ascertain whether his health was good, middling, or poor. In a few weeks, he said, he hoped to learn that it was middling. On Klepp's wall was a picture of Queen Elizabeth of England. Klepp claimed to be a supporter of the British royal family. Oskar challenged him on this; Klepp asked for an explanation. In response, Oskar rushed to his room and got the drum Raskolnikov had given him. He sat in Klepp's apartment, and for the first time, succeeded in drumming the past. He told Klepp everything through his drum; after a while Klepp joined in on his flute, helping Oskar relate his life story. After several hours of playing, Klepp jumped up, ripped up the picture of Elizabeth, and denounced the royal family. Klepp even washed himself of

his own accord - he was purified, resurrected. That night, Klepp suggested they start a jazz band; Oskar made up his mind to stop stonecutting and play the drums full time.

Oskar says that today it is Klepp who is trying to get Oskar out of bed; he is trying to get even because Oskar had made him forsake his bed. In the wake of their first duet, Klepp became a dues-paying communist. The promise of the jazz band excited Oskar. He and Klepp talked about it incessantly, deciding they needed a third man, a guitarist who could also play banjo. It was during this time that Klepp and Oskar would cut up their passport photos over beer and blood sausage. They looked in all the Dusseldorf bars for a guitarist, and though they picked up with some bands, they found no one. Oskar had trouble playing; half his thoughts were with Sister Dorothea. But he gave himself up to Klepp.

One day, Zeidler asked Klepp and Oskar to help him install a new coconut fiber rug in the hallway, which they did. They were rewarded with a bottle of schnapps, which they drank as they worked. They sang the praises of the carpet, then when Mrs. Zeidler joined them, Zeidler flew into a rage, and broke glasses against the stove.

It was on this rug that Oskar met Sister Dorothea. Unable to sleep, Oskar got up and went to the toilet, wrapped in a cut-off remnant of the coconut fiber rug. Entering the bathroom in the dark, Oskar heard a feminine scream. Oskar made no motion to leave, though it was clear that the woman was sitting on the toilet. Oskar presumed it was Sister Dorothea; he tried to cover up the situation with conversation. The nurse tried to push him away, but aimed too high in the dark for Oskar's small stature. However, Oskar found himself unable to consummate the relationship; he was unable to become erect. He pleaded with Satan, but Satan did not oblige; Oskar was humiliated. He was forced to tell her that he was Oskar Matzerath, her neighbor and admirer. Sister Dorothea began to sob. She got up and started packing to move out, right then. She left that night; Oskar never got to see her face.

The Zeidlers came out; Zeidler was in a rage and Mrs. Zeidler giggled. Zeidler threatened to put Oskar out; just then, Klepp came in with their long-sought guitarist, Scholle. They picked him up without a question and took him to his room. They stayed up until daybreak, and then played together on the banks of the Rhine. They decided to call themselves “The Rhine River Three.”

The newly formed band practiced outside the city in the meadows. By chance, the nightclub owner Ferdinand Schmuh would go to those same meadows to shoot sparrows. He would make his wife drive to the country, then she would stay in the car while he hunted. In his left pocket he kept his ammunition, in his right he kept bird food. He would never shoot more than twelve sparrows in a day. One day, Schmuh addressed the trio, imploring them to not scare away the birds with their music. Klepp knew of Schmuh and said so; impressed, they began to talk. They played for him and Schmuh offered them a nightly gig playing at his club, The Onion Cellar.

The Onion Cellar was a new club that thought it was exclusive; there was a doorman who filtered out those who could not pay. Schmuh would greet each and every customer personally. The Onion Cellar was an actual cellar, though the ceiling had been removed. The decor of the place was aimed at making it look “authentic.” But there was neither a bar nor a menu in the Onion Cellar. There was only one thing served in the club. Schmuh would don a silk shawl, disappear, and reappear with a basket on his arm. He would hand out cutting boards, shaped like either pigs or fish, to the customers, then paring knives. Then, he would hand each person an ordinary onion. At the signal, the customers would peel, then cut into the onions. The onions would make their eyes begin to water.

The weeping customers would then pour their hearts out to each other; one Miss Pioch told of her lover Mr. Vollmer who only loved her when he could take care of her black and blue toenails, which he himself had stepped on. On Mondays the weeping was loudest; that was when the young students came. One couple, Gerhard and Gudrun, wept for each other’s facial hair - he, Gerhard,

had none and she, Gudrun, had to shave her beard in vain. Oskar saw them months later, and the Onion Cellar had cured them; he had a waving beard and she a slight fuzz over her lip.

Once the customers were done weeping, Oskar's band provided a transition back to normal life. Scholle was forever happy, Klepp laughed at the tears, and Oskar was one of the few in the world who could still cry without onions. Schmuh, for his part, never used his onions, but instead shot sparrows and gave his washroom attendant a tongue lashing once a week. Sometimes customers would take two onions in a row; on such occasions The Onion Cellar would degenerate into an orgy. Oskar and his band were responsible for playing music when this happened, in order to break it up. Once when Schmuh's wife came to the Onion Cellar, she began telling stories about her husband. Schmuh got angry and handed out a free round of onions and the room degenerated into a pitiful orgy. But Scholle and Klepp would not play; Oskar had to take up his drum, and becoming a three-year-old again, pounded on his drum. He led them out of the nightclub and around the city; he gave them permission to relieve themselves, and everyone in the procession wet themselves. Oskar turned them into a kindergarten class, then giggled and headed back to the Onion Cellar by himself.

Schmuh fired Oskar and the rest of "The Rhine River Three," for his drum solo that turned the patrons of the Onion Cellar into children without even using onions. Oskar thinks that Schmuh feared his competition. But the patrons complained; the band was brought back part time.

One day Schmuh took Oskar, Klepp, and Scholle with him sparrow hunting. Schmuh's wife drove. The three musicians stayed behind by the river while Schmuh hunted. He hunted quickly, shooting his maximum twelve sparrows before Klepp could finish a handful of raisins. As they were about to leave, a sparrow appeared, not far away. It was a perfect specimen, and Schmuh could not resist adding the thirteenth sparrow to his pile. Everyone piled in the car to leave except Oskar, who decided to walk home. As Oskar passed a gravel pit on his walk, he saw the car twenty feet below, upside down. Some workers had

removed three injured people. Scholle, Klepp, and Schmuh's wife were almost unhurt - a few broken ribs - but Schmuh had been killed. Oskar visited Klepp in the hospital and asked him the story. Klepp said a swarm of thousands of sparrows had swarmed the car and forced it over the edge of the pit. Oskar says he is skeptical of the story. In the cemetery during Schmuh's funeral, Oskar saw Korneff, who doffed his cap according to regulation and did not recognize Oskar.

At the funeral Oskar was approached by a man named Dr. Dosch, who said he had been present when Oskar had reduced The Onion Cellar patrons to blubbling pant-wetting children. He offered Oskar a contract to take his drum act on the road; Oskar said he'd need time - he wanted to take a trip to straighten out his head. Oskar did, however, accept an advance from the doctor. Although not his first choice, Oskar took his trip with Lankes. At the door to Lankes' apartment, Ulla announced that she and Lankes were engaged again. Oskar was going to invite her along, but Lankes boxed her on the ear and put an end to that. Oskar didn't defend her, he says, because she was a Muse, and it was better to keep Muses at arm's length. Oskar and Lankes went to Normandy, where they had first met.

Oskar and Lankes reminisced about the nuns they had seen on the day before the invasion. A few minutes later, a young nun strolled by. A voice from far off called to her - her name was Sister Agneta, the same young nun they had seen before. Lankes talked to her before she was whisked away. As they got smaller, Lankes said they weren't nuns anyway, they were black sailboats. Lankes said Agneta's steering mechanism had gone awry; she came back to the pillbox and Lankes showed her around underground. The other nuns came by, looking for Agneta; Oskar pointed them down the beach. Lankes came out again and began to eat his fish; the sister, he said, was inside mending a rip in her habit. Agneta came out, tried the fish, then ran off toward the water. Lankes imagined the artistic possibilities of nuns and water. When he got home he painted these possibilities, and it was Lankes' success that made Oskar take the deal with Dr. Dosch.

Oskar stopped playing music with Klepp, though they still spent their time together. He was sick of jazz and didn't deny that his style had changed and wasn't jazz any more. Klepp found another drummer for the band and got another gig. The drumming contract was Oskar's last resort. Even though he threw away Dosch's business card, he remembered the number; after a few days, he called and the doctor excitedly set up a meeting.

In the office there was an enormous oak desk. Behind the desk sat Bebra, who had been paralyzed and could only use his fingertips and his eyes. Behind Bebra was a painting, a life-size bust of Rosowitha, which brought Oskar to tears. Oskar admitted everything to Bebra, whom he called his judge - Bebra knew he had killed Agnes and Jan, but he confessed to Matzerath's killing as well. Bebra laughed. A contract was brought in, and Bebra was led off in his motorized chair.

Even though Oskar was making good money, he did not leave the Zeidler flat, for Klepp's sake. Oskar was billed as a little Messiah; he filled two thousand seats in a concert with the middle-aged and elderly. They loved to be reduced to blubbering three-year-olds; his biggest hits were drum numbers evoking his childhood. He got several old-time miners to scream out several windows with their voices.

Oskar's second visit with Bebra was easier. He was given his own electric wheelchair, and they chatted as they had years before at the Four Seasons café. Oskar's second tour was praised by the religious press; he turned old sinners into children with hymns. On the third tour, he turned old women into Indian maidens and old men into players of cops and robbers.

Oskar signed a deal with a record company; he had the sterile walls plastered with pictures of old people. The record sold like hotcakes and Oskar became rich. He gave Maria a proposition: if she would throw out Stenzel, her newest lover, he would buy her a brand new modern delicatessen. This she did, and together Oskar and Maria built the store. Now, Oskar says, business is booming; Maria has just opened up a branch store. After Oskar's seventh or

eighth tour, Bebra died. Oskar inherited a small fortune and the bust of Roswitha. Oskar became depressed; he refused to play his drum and canceled two tours. Klepp was getting married; he moved out and Oskar was left alone in the Zeidler flat. Oskar rented the room that Sister Dorothea had owned, just so no one else would live there.

Oskar tried a different tack with his depression. He went to a store specializing in the rental of dogs and rented Lux, a powerful rottweiler. The dog led Oskar down to the river, where Oskar let him off his leash in the fields. The dog stayed by Oskar, who kicked him to get him to roam a little. Oskar sat down and drummed up his childhood with two old sticks on a rusted iron drum. Suddenly Lux was back, wagging his tail - he had something in his mouth. Oskar tried to push him away, but the dog insisted. Oskar looked - it was a woman's ring finger, neatly severed. There was a ring on it set with aquamarine. While walking back with the finger in his pocket, Oskar was surprised by Vittlar, who was sitting up in the crook of an apple tree.

Vittlar questioned Oskar about what he had in his pocket; he had seen that it was a finger. He wanted to try on the ring set with aquamarine. Oskar says that he hadn't seen Vittlar in the tree because Vittlar has a knack for blending in and looking like his surroundings. In the mental hospital, Oskar says that he asked Vittlar to bring him a transcript of the statement he made to the police regarding the finger. Oskar relates that statement in full.

Vittlar says that Oskar took the ring off the finger at his request and gave it to him; it fit Vittlar well. The two heard plane engines about to land overhead. Although they were curious as to how the plane was going to land, they did not look up at it - they called this game Leo Schugger's asceticism. Vittlar and Oskar took a cab downtown, got rid of the dog Lux, and went to Korneff's stonecutting shop. Oskar had Korneff make a plaster cast of the ring finger. Korneff promised to make him some more when the cast had hardened. Oskar treated Vittlar to dinner; speaking of the ring finger, Vittlar said he should give it to a lost and found. Oskar said no; calling it a "drumstick," he said he had been promised such a finger on the day of his

birth, that Herbert Truczinski's back had foreseen the acquisition, that he had foreseen it in the cartridge case from Saspe cemetery.

Three days later Oskar and Vittlar got together again. Oskar surprised Vittlar by showing off his and Sister Dorothea's old rooms. In Dorothea's room, he had placed the ring finger in a preserving jar filled with alcohol. Oskar said he sometimes worshipped and prayed to the finger. Vittlar asked for a demonstration. Oskar agreed on the condition that Vittlar transcribe the prayer. In the prayer, Oskar described his relationship to and the physical traits of Sister Dorothea - he knew the finger had belonged to her, although he denied killing her and that he never actually saw her face. Vittlar believed him, citing Oskar's sheer devotion to the finger. Vittlar went on tour with Oskar to Western Germany, and Oskar paid Vittlar a salary to do so. Oskar declined offers to continue traveling abroad; he did not want, he says, to get caught up in the "international rat race."

Vittlar and Oskar would spend time downtown in Dusseldorf. One Friday night they stood together downtown, watching the last streetcars pull into the station. A few cars were left outside and not parked in a barn - Oskar and Vittlar nodded to each other, then climbed into a car. Vittlar took the driver's seat and as they pulled out, Oskar commended him on his driving. Oskar had them drive in the direction of The Lion's Den dance hall. Three men were sitting on the tracks, and Vittlar cried "All Aboard" as two of the men, wearing green hats with black arm bands, dragged the third man onto the streetcar. The two suited men slapped the man and made him whimper. Oskar inquired as to what the man had done. The third man turned out to be Victor Weluhn, the man who had lost his glasses in the battle for the Polish Post Office in Danzig, then fled to escape arrest. The two uniformed men had an execution order for Welhun, dated 1939. They had been on the man's trail nonstop for a decade.

Oskar told Vittlar that they had to save Victor, for he was nearsighted and would be looking in the wrong direction when the men shot him. The men stayed on until the last stop. The chosen execution sight was the same fence

along which Oskar had met Vittlar. The men tied Victor to the same apple tree from which Vittlar had first seen Oskar. Oskar gave Vittlar his briefcase containing his preserving jar, and took his drum out from under his shirt. When talking did not work to save Victor, Oskar began desperately to drum. He drummed out a rhythm containing "Poland is not yet lost; while we live, Poland cannot die" - part of the Polish national anthem. Suddenly a brigade of horsemen emerged from the ground, carrying the red and white banners of the Polish cavalry. They glided along over the field and swept up Victor and his executioners and disappeared off into the east.

Vittlar told Oskar his performance was a triumph. Oskar said he had too many triumphs, what he needed was a failure. Vittlar said he was being arrogant, that he would do anything to be famous like Oskar. Oskar laughed, rolling on the ground. He told Vittlar to take his briefcase containing the jar with the ring finger. He told him to take it to the police and turn him in as Sister Dorothea's killer; that would get his name in the papers.

Thus ended Vittlar's statement - Oskar told himself to sleep a little before the police got to him. He awoke in the field in broad daylight with a cow licking his face. Oskar told himself to flee.

In the mental institution, Oskar writes of his flight on his thirtieth birthday. Klepp gave him jazz records, and Vittlar gave him chocolate and said that when Jesus was thirty, he gathered disciples. Oskar doesn't like the idea. Oskar's lawyer came and told him that the ring finger case that put Oskar there was being reopened. He said that new evidence had been found pointing to one Sister Beata as the real killer. Oskar says he has been dreading this - that they would reopen the case and discharge him from the hospital, take away his white enamel bed, and force him to take up disciples.

Dr. Erich Werner, the man who had sent Sister Dorothea the coy love letters that Oskar had secretly read, was in love only with Sister Dorothea. Sister Dorothea's best friend Sister Beata, however, was in love with Dr. Werner. Even though Sister Dorothea was not in love with Dr. Werner, Sister Beata became

jealous of the doctor's affection for her friend and killed her. But Doctor Werner had been sick and Beata wanted to take care of him - she made sure that he did not get better, and he, too, died at Beata's hand. Oskar had found Dorothea's severed ring finger and had Vittlar turn him in for a crime he did not commit.

When Oskar fled, he was twenty-eight, and he fled in order to add validity to Vittlar's statement against him. Although his grandmother's four skirts were the destination of choice, they lay to the east behind the Iron Curtain. Oskar decided to make a run for America and the fable of his supposed paper baron grandfather Joseph Koljaiczek, who according to the legend, was living in Buffalo, New York under the name Joe Colchic. Oskar decided to go through Paris first. On the train, Oskar resolved that no flight was complete without a general, insidious fear. He had to talk himself into being afraid; he says the fear is still with him today.

Oskar says that the gear-her concocted took the form of the Black Witch from the childhood songs the children used to sing in Danzig. This witch takes on many forms herself - sometimes, for instance, she takes the form of Goethe. Oskar arrived in Paris and took the Metro, fearing capture by the International Police at any moment.

Oskar wonders at his story's ending, and is unsure that the escalator at the Metro stop is a symbolic enough ending; he offers his thirtieth birthday as an alternate ending. At thirty, he says, you've lost your right to cry. On the Metro escalator, Oskar began to laugh. He could see detectives waiting for him at the top of the escalator. Oskar was thrown into the past on the escalator, for as he says, an escalator ride is a good time to reconsider.

Oskar says that thirty brings a man possibilities, for there are so many things he should do: start a career, start a family, emigrate - Oskar might open a stonecutter's business, propose again to Maria, or go to America.

At the top of the escalator, two detectives stood in raincoats. The two brazen lovers and the old woman with Oskar on the escalator ride turned out to be detectives. The detectives at the top of the stairs called him Matzerath. Oskar

replied that he was Jesus, first in German, then in French, and finally in English. They arrested him as Oskar Matzerath. Oskar says that tomorrow he will drum up the Black Witch and consult her. She has always been there with him, through everything. She was in every action; her shadow has followed him always, and she is forever in front of him, coming closer.

19.4 THE PLOT AS VOYAGE AND RETURN

Anticipation Stage and ‘Fall’ Into the Other World: It’s not easy to categorize *The Tin Drum* according to Booker’s standard plots. The chronology jumps around, we often don’t know what’s really happening, and the narrator might be a madman. But we’ll give a look at the “Voyage and Return” motif and put out there that the voyage and return is Oskar’s journey into life and back.

In this case, Oskar’s “fall” into another world is actually his fall into life. He reluctantly leaves the womb and finds himself in a brightly lit, unpleasant place. But the moment he “falls” into life, Oskar feels like he must find something to focus his mind on if life is going to be bearable. His mother’s promise of a toy drum on his third birthday is the only thing making him willing to stay alive.

Initial Fascination or Dream Stage: Oskar gets his drum and plays it incessantly as a way of making it through the world. But rather than give in to the demands of life, he stops himself from growing up. He won’t go to any school and acts mentally challenged so his parents will stop trying to force him to do things. Now Oskar has the freedom to pursue what he wants, but not the body or strength to do it. He’s totally dependent on adults to get him new drums, and learns to manipulate people to get what he wants. What he wants is a steady supply of drums to keep up his appearance of being a child. During this stage, Oskar also falls in love with a young woman named Maria Truczinski, but Maria marries his father instead, breaking Oskar’s heart.

Frustration Stage: With Maria and Alfred married, Oskar decides that enough is enough and sets off to join the circus. More specifically, he becomes a performer in a travelling show for German troops with his mentor Bebra.

During this tour, he gets romantically involved with a woman his own size, a circus performer named Roswitha. But Roswitha is killed during an Allied attack in France and Oskar is forced to move back home, heartbroken again. The War is moving closer to home.

As Oskar's frustration increases, he begins to sense that some sort of dark shadow or "Black Cook" is following him around and killing off everyone he loves. The War has destroyed his hometown, and after his father Alfred is killed by invading Russian soldiers, Oskar moves to Dusseldorf hoping for a better life.

Nightmare Stage: Things don't get much better in Dusseldorf. After Alfred's death, Oskar finds that he no longer has the desire to play his drum. He decides to allow himself to grow, but once he starts growing, the bones don't grow straight. Oskar grows a huge hunchback and his body becomes twisted and grotesque. He becomes seriously ill. Life doesn't feel like it can get any worse.

Thrilling Escape and Return: Despite his physical setbacks, Oskar forges onward and becomes famous as a solo drummer (once again with the help of his friend Bebra). He enjoys financial success, but finds he's getting tired of adult life. He arranges to have himself accused of murdering a woman, and ultimately he's convicted and sentenced to confinement in a mental hospital. Now, this might not be your idea of "escape," but it's exactly where he wants to be. He can be a child again, taken care of by the nurses. It's the closest thing to a return to the womb that he's going to get.

19.5 THE TIN DRUM AS REMEMBRANCE OF SECOND WORLD WAR

The intergenerational dynamics in the history of the social consciousness and politics of memory in postwar Germany has been significant in literary works like *The Tin Drum*. Historian Gilad Margalit argues that the occupation with the moral responsibility for the crimes of Nazism and the formation of a consciousness of guilt in Germany took place already during the war itself. According to him, this occupation has been intensified since the Nazis "defeat and the diffusion of information about the events of the war, and it is an outcome

of processes which occurred within German society rather than of the “re- education” and denazification policies imposed on it by the Allies (although these definitely facilitated the dissemination of information about the war). Despite the fading of the occupation with guilt since the deterioration towards the Cold War at the end of the 1940s, the consciousness of guilt has been sustained and reshaped throughout the period of the Federal Republic and still persists in the 2000. The work of memory, therefore, is directly connected to the process of learning and maturing. In order to understand its situation and reflect over its condition, the society is offered the familiar model taken from the life cycle of the individual. Society can perform self-reflection, contain the evil and still remain a unity, and this can be done through remembrance and with the notion of immaturity in its mind.

Grass was a member of “Gruppe 47”, which had undertaken the task of encouraging the writing of critical literature that would address and confront the problems of that day. Because of its harsh criticism of the German society of the Nazi epoch, *The Tin Drum* encountered severe opposition when published. The protagonist of Grass’ novel, Oskar Matzerath, is also born in Danzig, but three years earlier than Grass, in 1924. He spends the war years there and emigrates to West Germany when the war is over. The story in this book, which abounds with autobiographical details, is narrated by Oskar himself, who writes his life story in 1954 when he is thirty years old and hospitalized in a psychiatric institute. In contrast to the story of the Enlightenment according to Kant, Oskar’s story is one of a boy who willfully decides to remain immature, stops growing at the age of three—that is, in 1927, when Grass was born—and remains there until the end of the war. Oskar can be seen as an artistic device designed to expose the society.

The contrast created through the childish perspective is a recurring motif. Joyful children who give Jan the Nazi salute and greet him with a cheerful “Heil Hitler” instead of the usual “Guten Morgen”; a child on his father’s shoulders who laughs in an awkward timing during Lobsack’s speech; the toy-like Nazi flag which passes along from the face of the newly-born Kurt, the son of Maria

and Alfred (or, possibly, Maria and Oskar), over to a geopolitical map which shows the expansion of the Reich's forces—in all of these pictures and in many others the contrast is clearly shown.

Perhaps above all, this contrast is expressed in the scene of the Nazi party's parade, in which Oskar peeps underneath the tribunes. The formality, the seriousness and the festivity of the parade's participants and audience are contrasted with Oskar's sneaking from the backstage—where a little girl urinates and some junk is scattered—while accidentally stepping on dog feces. Oskar's opposition to the manipulative, Nazi aesthetics is represented. Nevertheless, Oskar's success in interfering with the Nazi march and submitting it to his cheerful jazz-like drumbeat is cut off by a sudden rain: the elements are stronger than his drum, and, *deus-ex-machina*, echo his intervention.

Grass' harsh criticism, which represents the middle class as the central pillar of the fascist rule is evident. The decision not to continue growing echoes throughout the entire novel and it constitutes the main motif of the work. Through this motif, *The Tin Drum* criticizes the world of the adults and raises the issue of the occupation with responsibility and guilt. The criticism is largely Oskar's criticism, and, because of it, he decides not to take part in the world of adulthood. However, the criticism is also represented through the repulsiveness of Oskar's own behaviour, his infantility representing the infantility of the German war generation.

Oskar's egoism and indifference towards the suffering of others reflects the fascist spirit which spread all over the society. In the same manner, Oskar's avoidance of taking responsibility also mirrors the adults' conduct. The novel certainly offers social criticism and treats the theme of confrontation with the past.

19.6 SELF-ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS (SAQs)

1. The nightclub where Oskar and his jazz band play in Dusseldorf was called _____.

2. Oskar and his Dusseldorf bandmate required to find a _____ before they could play
3. Oskar eventually hits the big time as a solo drumming act due to the help of his old friend _____.
4. According to his story, Oskar “intentionally” makes himself stop growing by _____.
5. Who is Oskar’s inspiration as a little person?
6. After Alfred dies, Oskar grows by _____.
7. _____ gets embarrassed by Oskar while on a date with him
8. Oskar does _____ when people stare at him

19.7 SHORT ANSWER QUESTIONS

1. Why does Grass use a drum as Oskar’s instrument instead of something else?
2. How does the first line of this book affect your reading of Oskar’s story?
3. Why do you think Oskar’s mother kills herself?

19.8 LET US SUM UP

The thirty-year-old narrator, Oskar Matzerath, is telling the story of his life. He is writing from inside the mental institution in Germany. The reason for his being there is not told to the readers till the end of the novel. The complex story of the novel, with its many unusual characters, is set during the troubled times of World War I, Hitler’s rise to power, Nazi occupation of Poland and Germany’s efforts to rebuild in post-war era.

19.9 EXAMINATION ORIENTED QUESTIONS

1. How does Oskar use his childish appearance to his advantage?

2. What's the purpose of all the grotesque imagery in the novel?

3. Why does Oskar choose to stop growing?

Ans. One can think of several answers to the question why Oskar chooses to stop growing. From a psychological standpoint, for instance, one may underline Oskar's birth trauma, which he tries to overcome by replacing the sounds of his mother's heartbeats with the beating sounds of his drum. Oskar seeks maternal protection. He looks for it under the four skirts of his grandmother and, when he is deported out of this cozy shelter, he decides to remain a child and forces his mother, and everybody else, to continue protecting him. Still from a psychological standpoint, one can also understand Oskar's Oedipal complex as explaining his unwillingness to become part of the mature, sexual world, which entails taking on responsibility. An important point is the second scene in which Oskar appears, which is located directly after the birth scene: Oskar's third birthday party.

At first glance, Oskar seems to be a Peter Pan, who despises the adult world and, therefore, decides to remain out of it and innocent. The reader can interpret Oskar's resistance as an objection to the bourgeois materialism, and, perhaps, even to Nazism as its outcome; however, it quickly emerges that the same Oskar also resists, with no less determination, whoever tries to take his precious drum from him and is furious to find out about his mother's and Jan's love affair. Even when the Polish post office is bombed, Oskar remains solely interested in his drum while entirely ignoring the traumatic event everybody around him experiences. The opposition to the adult world as such becomes the main theme, while the ambivalence that the reader feels towards this opposition is what formulates its statement.

In the novel, the story is solely the story of Oskar, who tries to perform a memory work. The decision to stop the growing of Oskar the child is, in fact, the decision of Oskar, the thirty-year-old mental patient, who tries to relate his life story. Oskar is unable to remember unless he cuts off his growing into a morally responsible adult. The cutoff is thus made at the time when the memory work is being done. Grass clearly raises thereby the issue of dealing with the memory of the war. Grass criticizes the indifference, egoism and solipsism of the 1950s and implores his generation to confront its past.

19.10 ANSWER KEY (SAQs)

1. The Onion Cellar
2. Guitarist
3. Bebra
4. willing it
5. Bebra
6. More than a foot
7. Sister Gertrud
8. Nothing

19.11 SUGGESTED READING

- Confino, Alon and Peter Fritzsche (eds). 2002. The Work of Memory: New Directions in the Study of German Society and Culture. Illinois: University of Illinois Press.
- Connerton, Paul. 1989. How Societies Remember. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

**MIGUEL DE CERVANTES SAAVEDRA :
*DON QUIXOTE***

STRUCTURE

- 20.1 Introduction**
- 20.2 Objectives**
- 20.3 Cervantes : Life and Works**
- 20.4 Outline Summary of *Don Quixote***
- 20.5 Key Facts**
- 20.6 Self-Check Exercise**
- 20.7 Answer-Key To Self-Check Exercise**
- 20.8 Let Us Sum Up**
- 20.9 Suggested Reading**

20.1 INTRODUCTION

This lesson gives the learner a glimpse into the life and works of Cervantes. The lesson also throws light on the outline story of *Don Quixote*.

20.2 OBJECTIVES

The objectives of this lesson are to familiarize the learner with the life and works of Cervantes and to introduce the learner to the novel *Don Quixote*.

20.3 CERVANTES : LIFE AND WORKS

Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra was a Spanish author, poet and playwright of the 17th century. His *Don Quixote* is considered to be the first model novel of the modern literary style. His impact on the Spanish language and literature is so huge that Spanish language is sometimes known as ‘la lengua de Cervantes’ (the language of Cervantes). His novels, poetry and plays are full of intelligent satire and expressions that are easy for a regular reader to relate with. This is the reason why he was known to be ‘El Principe de los Ingenios’, which means ‘The Prince of Wits’. He was born in Madrid in a poor family, his father worked as a barber-doctor and wandered from city to city, looking for work. Cervantes studied architecture, literature and art in Rome for some time when he was young and then later on joined the Spanish navy. It was while serving in the navy that his left arm got brutally wounded and he could not use it thereafter. He considered it as a symbol of honour as he was fighting for his country. He led a poor life until his *Don Quixote* became famous. The novel did not bring him much money but established him as an important literary figure.

Miguel de Cervantes was born on the 29 September 1547, in a place near Madrid in the city of Alcala de Henares, Spain. He was born to a surgeon Don Rodrigo de Cervantes and dona Leonor de Cortinas. His father was of Galician descent and wandered from one place to another in search of work. He was the fourth child of Rodrigo and Leonor. His mother and father got married under difficult circumstances when his mother’s father had to sell her to Rodrigo, as he was a nobleman who had lost his fortune. Due to such an awkward nature of their marriage, Cervantes’s mother led a very unhappy married life as his father used to have affairs with other women. His mother died in 1593. Not much is known of Cervantes’ life as it is not documented anywhere properly except for the fact that he wandered around from place to place with his parents as his father had to struggle to get some work. He had a difficult childhood as the whole family constantly struggled with poverty. It is not properly known whether he studied during his early years or not, some researchers say that he studied at the University of Salamanca.

When Cervantes was only a young boy, he fell in love with a barmaid called Josefina Catalina de Parez. They both were planning to elope together but Cervantes' father got to know about their plan of running away and asked Josefina to stay away from his son because of their poor financial situation. In his younger days, Cervantes left his family and went away to Italy to study in Rome in all its majestically rich architecture, history and literature. He focused on the Renaissance poetry, art and architecture. In a number of his works later, Italy and its enriched beauty has been shown. It is not fully known why he left Spain and went to Italy, whether he was running away from a royal warrant of his arrest or any other mystery.

In 1570, Cervantes joined the Spanish Navy Marines called the 'Infanteria de Marina', which was posted in Naples at the time. He served in the army for a year. In 1571, he sailed with the galley fleet of the Holy League called Marquessa to take part in the Battle of Lepanto. Although he was suffering from fever at the time but he requested to be allowed to take part in the battle so that he can serve for the honour of his king and the God. He got wounded during the Battle of Lepanto, therefore for the next 6 months he remained in hospital. Until 1575, Cervantes served as a soldier for his country and was mostly stationed in Naples. His army life was full of great adventures like missions to Corfu and Navarino. He also witnessed the fall of Tunis and La Goulette.

In 1575, with the permission of Duke of Sessa, Cervantes sailed on the galley Sol from Naples to Barcelona but in the midway Sol was attacked by the army of Amaut Mami, an Albanian traitor. Many passengers were taken as captives to Algiers, including Cervantes. He was a slave there for five years and in between made at least 4 attempts to escape. His family paid money to get him free and he returned to Madrid to his family in 1580. In 1585, he released *La Galatea*, his first major literary work. It was a pastoral romance and failed to get much attention. Cervantes kept promising his audience that he will write sequel to it but he never did. He did not have a good source of income and therefore, he tried his hands at theatre as at the time it was considered as an important form of entertainment. But in reality, he did not get much money and recognition out of it.

During this time, he worked as a commissary for the Spanish Armada. The job required him to collect grain supplies from the rural communities. It was during the course of this job that Cervantes ended up in jail twice on the grounds of mismanagement. This is considered to be the time when he started writing some of his most memorable works. He remained extremely poor and struggled with money until he published *Don Quixote* in 1605. It was this literary work that he first perceived when he was in prison and his only aim behind writing it was to give his readers a realistic version of life and express his view point in clear language so that everyone can relate to it. *Don Quixote* did not bring him a lot of money but he got a considerable amount of attention with it.

Don Quixote is a novella that presents the story of an elderly man who seeks out for adventures because he is mesmerized by the age-old stories of the courageous knights. The novel did not earn Cervantes royalty because in those times authors did not receive any royalties for their books but *Don Quixote* became world's first bestseller. In 1613, he wrote a compilation of stories called *Exemplary Novels*. Next year he published *Viaje del Parnaso* and in 1615, *Eight Comedies and Eight Ne Interludes* were published. After the publication of these novels, Cervantes worked on his last novel called *Los Trabajos de Persiles y Sigismunda* until his death and it got published in 1617. The novel was on the subject of adventurous travels. In 1584, Cervantes married Catalina de Salazar y Palacios who was a daughter of Fernando de Salazar y Vozmediano and Catalina de Palacios. She was much younger to Cervantes and they remained married until his death. They did not have any children but Cervantes had a daughter from his earlier relationship with Isabel de Saavedra. She was named after her mother.

In 1616, Cervantes died in Madrid. According to his wish in his will, he was buried in a nearby convent to his house. The convent belonged to Trinitarian nuns. His daughter, Isabel de Saavedra, was also known to be a member of this convent. Later, the nuns moved to another convent and it is unknown whether they took Cervantes' remains with them or not. While Cervantes was serving in the army, he got brutally wounded in the chest and his left arm became useless. But this did not stop him from continuing to serve in the army.

His experience of getting kidnapped and being held captive for five years in Algiers gave him idea and material for his world famous *Don Quixote* and two other plays: *El Trato de Argel* and *Los Banos de Argel*. Both of these plays are set in Algiers. *Don Quixote* became such a famous novel of its time that an unknown writer, impersonating as *Alonso Fernandez de Avellaneda* published a sequel to the book. But Cervantes came out with his own continuation of *Don Quixote* in 1615, which was not as famous as *Don Quixote*. It is said that Cervantes died just a day before Shakespeare. Cervantes died on the 22 April 1616 and Shakespeare died on 23 April 1616. To honor both the writers UNESCO made 23 April as the International Day of the Book. *Don Quixote*'s story has been retold in the musical form called 'The Man of La Mancha' and through Pablo Picasso's art work.

Don Quixote is considered as the first classic modern romantic and satirical novel. It has been called one of the 'Great Books of the Western World' by Encyclopedia Britannica. It is said that Shakespeare was perhaps familiar with Cervantes through his great work *Don Quixote* but it is highly unlikely that Cervantes ever knew about Shakespeare.

WORKS

Miguel de Cervantes led a busy life. He lived in Spain and Italy, moving frequently, and was kept captive in Algiers for 5 years. He also fought in several battles, and in the Battle of Lepanto he lost the use of his left arm and was nicknamed "The Cripple of Lepanto". Cervantes also wrote during most of his adult life, and his greatest work is *El Quixote*, the adventure novel about the crazy Spanish knight. However, Cervantes also wrote many other stories, poems and even plays. As mentioned before, Cervantes was a very prolific writer, and he wrote for most of his adult life. Although his works are now considered some of the best Spanish books ever written, Cervantes never knew fame during his life, and his works were only appreciated, as it often happens with genius, after he was dead.

The prose of Cervantes

Miguel de Cervantes cultivated the prose of his time, but he adapted it to

reflect his own original style of writing. He renewed the readers' interest in the novella, which then meant a short story without much rhetoric and which normally addressed more transcendental issues.

Classics Spanish Books - *La Galatea*

La Galatea was the first of Cervantes' novels and it was published in 1585. It's a pastoral romance and the characters are shepherds who talk about their troubles in a very poetic and idyllic way. *La Galatea* shows Cervantes' early interest in poetry and, next to the *Novelas Ejemplares* and *El Quixote*, it's considered one of Miguel's finest works.

Don Quijote de la Mancha

El Ingenioso Hidalgo Don Quijote de la Mancha is his most important work, and considered one of the best books in the history of literature. The first part was published in 1605 and it was well appreciated at the time. Soon it began to be translated into different languages and currently it's one of the most translated books. The idea behind *El Quixote* was making fun of the popular knight novels by turning the character into a funny old crazy knight, but with time and work it became an accurate portrayal of the Spanish life of the moment.

***Novelas Ejemplares* - Exemplary Novels**

Classics Spanish Books -*El coloquio de los perros*

Between 1590 and 1612 Cervantes wrote some short novels that were unified and published in 1613 under the name *Novelas Ejemplares de Honestísimo Entretenimiento* (Exemplary Novels of very honest Entertainment). The stories show the social, political, and historical problems of Cervantes' Spain and show off his immersion in Spain's life and how aware he was of the prevailing problems. The stories included in the book are:

La Gitanilla (The Gypsy Girl)

El Amante Liberal (The Generous Lover)

Rinconete y Cortadillo (Rinconete & Cortadillo)

La Española Inglesa (The English Spanish Lady)
El Licenciado Vidriera (The Lawyer of Glass)
La Fuerza de la Sangre (The Power of Blood)
El Celoso Extremeño (The Jealous Man From Extremadura)
La Ilustre Fregona (The Illustrious Kitchen-Maid)
Novela de las Dos Doncellas (The Novel of the Two Damsels)
Novela de la Señora Cornelia (The Novel of Lady Cornelia)
Novela del Casamiento Engañoso (The Novel of the Deceitful Marriage)
El Coloquio de los Perros (The Dialogue of the Dogs)
Los trabajos de Persiles y Sigismunda

Classics Spanish Books - *Los trabajos de Persiles y Sigismunda*

This is the last of Cervantes' novels, and it belongs to the Byzantine novels genre. The dedication was written to Pedro Fernández de Castro y Andrade 6 days before the writer's death. The novel tells the story of a prince and a princess, Persiles and Segismunda, who change their names to Periandro and Auristela to pass as brother and sister. They travel from the North of Europe to Rome to be married. This novel is quite different from Cervantes' previous works and closer to fantasy, with a woman who is saved from plunging from a tower by her billowing skirts and characters who can predict the future.

The poems of Cervantes

Cervantes really wanted to write good poetry, but he doubted his capability. He claimed to have written many ballads and he especially liked one he mentions about jealousy, but many of his verses were lost or are unidentified, and only the ones he included in his other works remain. His better known poetic work is *Viaje del Parnaso* (1614), an allegory which consists largely of reviews of contemporary poets.

The plays of Cervantes

Theatre was the real vocation of Cervantes, due to his economic problems.

His works gained quite a fame, but the arrival of Lope de Vega's new style ruined any chances he might have had. Lope's style was more modern and more fun, and people preferred his plays. Cervantes' plays had a moral undertone and allegoric characters, and he kept to the three Aristotelian units of action, time and space, while Lope de Vega ignored them. Cervantes never took his failure well and he expresses his opinion of Lope's plays in the first part of *Don Quixote*.

Short plays (*entremés* in Spanish) were Cervantes' specialty, and together with Quiñones de Benavente and Quevedo, he's one of the best authors of *entremeses* in the world. He gave his characters life, deep moral beliefs, a great sense of humour and like to write about important topics that affected everyone. Cervantes' works are used around schools in Spain and around the world as an example of great writing, and most Spanish students read *El Quixote* or at least part of it during the last years of schools.

20.4 OUTLINE SUMMARY OF *DON QUIXOTE*

Don Quixote is a middle-aged gentleman from the region of La Mancha in central Spain. Obsessed with the chivalrous ideals touted in books he has read, he decides to take up his lance and sword to defend the helpless and destroy the wicked. After a first failed adventure, he sets out on a second one with a somewhat befuddled labourer named Sancho Panza, whom he has persuaded to accompany him as his faithful squire. In return for Sancho's services, Don Quixote promises to make Sancho the wealthy governor of an isle. On his horse, Rocinante, a barn nag well past his prime, Don Quixote rides the roads of Spain in search of glory and grand adventure. He gives up food, shelter, and comfort, all in the name of a peasant woman, Dulcinea del Toboso, whom he envisions as a princess.

On his second expedition, Don Quixote becomes more of a bandit than a saviour, stealing from and hurting baffled and justifiably angry citizens while acting out against what he perceives as threats to his knighthood or to the world. Don Quixote abandons a boy, leaving him in the hands of an evil farmer simply because the farmer swears an oath that he will not harm the boy. He steals a

barber's basin that he believes to be the mythic Mambrino's helmet, and he becomes convinced of the healing powers of the Balsam of Fierbras, an elixir that makes him so ill that, by comparison, he later feels healed. Sancho stands by Don Quixote, often bearing the brunt of the punishments that arise from Don Quixote's behaviour.

The story of Don Quixote's deeds includes the stories of those he meets on his journey. Don Quixote witnesses the funeral of a student who dies as a result of his love for a disdainful lady turned shepherdess. He frees a wicked and devious galley slave, Gines de Pasamonte, and unwittingly reunites two bereaved couples, Cardenio and Lucinda, and Ferdinand and Dorothea. Torn apart by Ferdinand's treachery, the four lovers finally come together at an inn where Don Quixote sleeps, dreaming that he is battling a giant.

Along the way, the simple Sancho plays the straight man to Don Quixote, trying his best to correct his master's outlandish fantasies. Two of Don Quixote's friends, the priest and the barber, come to drag him home. Believing that he is under the force of an enchantment, he accompanies them, thus ending his second expedition and the First Part of the novel.

The Second Part of the novel begins with a passionate invective against a phony sequel of *Don Quixote* that was published in the interim between Cervantes's two parts. Everywhere Don Quixote goes, his reputation—gleaned by others from both the real and the false versions of the story—precedes him. As the two embark on their journey, Sancho lies to Don Quixote, telling him that an evil enchanter has transformed Dulcinea into a peasant girl. Undoing this enchantment, in which even Sancho comes to believe, becomes Don Quixote's chief goal.

Don Quixote meets a Duke and Duchess who conspire to play tricks on him. They make a servant dress up as Merlin, for example, and tell Don Quixote that Dulcinea's enchantment—which they know to be a hoax—can be undone only if Sancho whips himself 3,300 times on his naked backside. Under the watch of the Duke and Duchess, Don Quixote and Sancho undertake several

adventures. They set out on a flying wooden horse, hoping to slay a giant who has turned a princess and her lover into metal figurines and bearded the princess's female servants.

During his stay with the Duke, Sancho becomes governor of a fictitious isle. He rules for ten days until he is wounded in an onslaught the Duke and Duchess sponsor for their entertainment. Sancho reasons that it is better to be a happy laborer than a miserable governor. A young maid at the Duchess's home falls in love with Don Quixote, but he remains a staunch worshipper of Dulcinea. Their never-consummated affair amuses the court to no end. Finally, Don Quixote sets out again on his journey, but his demise comes quickly. Shortly after his arrival in Barcelona, the Knight of the White Moon—actually an old friend in disguise—vanquishes him.

Cervantes relates the story of Don Quixote as a history, which he claims he has translated from a manuscript written by a Moor named Cide Hamete Benengeli. Cervantes becomes a party to his own fiction, even allowing Sancho and Don Quixote to modify their own histories and comment negatively upon the false history published in their names. In the end, the beaten and battered Don Quixote forswears all the chivalric truths he followed so fervently and dies from a fever. With his death, knights-errant become extinct. Benengeli returns at the end of the novel to tell us that illustrating the demise of chivalry was his main purpose in writing the history of Don Quixote.

20.5 KEY FACTS

Full title : *The Adventures of Don Quixote*

Author : Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra

Type of work : Novel

Genre : Parody; comedy; romance; morality novel

Language : Spanish

Time and place written : Spain; late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries

Date of first publication : The First Part, 1605; the Second Part, 1615

Narrator : Cervantes, who claims to be translating the earlier work of Cide Hamete Benengeli, a Moor who supposedly chronicled the true historical adventures of Don Quixote

Point of view : Cervantes narrates most of the novel's action in the third person, following Don Quixote's actions and only occasionally entering into the thoughts of his characters. He switches into the first person, however, whenever he discusses the novel itself or Benengeli's original manuscript.

Tone : Cervantes maintains an ironic distance from the characters and events in the novel, discussing them at times with mock seriousness.

Tense : Past, with some moments of present tense

Setting (time) : 1614

Setting (place) : Spain

Protagonist : Don Quixote

Major conflict : The First Part: Don Quixote sets out with Sancho Panza on a life of chivalric adventures in a world no longer governed by chivalric values; the priest attempts to bring Don Quixote home and cure his madness. The Second Part: Don Quixote continues his adventures with Sancho, and Sampson Carrasco and the priest conspire to bring Don Quixote home by vanquishing him.

Rising action : The First Part: Don Quixote wanders Spain and encounters many strange adventures before the priest finds him doing penance in the Sierra Morena. The Second Part: Don Quixote wanders Spain and has many adventures, especially under the watch of a haughty Duke and Duchess.

Climax : The First Part: Don Quixote and the priest meet in the Sierra Morena, and Dorothea begs for Don Quixote to help her avenge her stolen kingdom. The Second Part: Sampson, disguised as the Knight of the White Moon, defeats Don Quixote.

Falling action : The First Part: the priest and the barber take Don Quixote home in a cage, and Don Quixote resigns himself to the fact that he is enchanted. The Second Part: Don Quixote returns home after his defeat and resolves to give up knight-errantry.

Themes · Perspective and narration; incompatible systems of morality; the distinction between class and worth

Motifs · Honour; romance; literature

Symbols · Books and manuscripts; horses; inns

Foreshadowing · Cervantes's declaration at the end of the First Part that there will be a second part and that Don Quixote will die in it, coupled with the niece's and the housekeeper's fear that Don Quixote will run away again, hints at Don Quixote's fate in the Second Part.

20.6 SELF-CHECK EXERCISE

- Q.1. Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra was a _____ author, poet and playwright of the 17th century.
- Q.2. _____ is a novella that presents the story of an elderly man who seeks out for adventures because he is mesmerized by the age-old stories of the courageous knights:
- (a) Joseph Andrews
 - (b) Don Quixote
 - (c) La Gitanilla
 - (d) all of the above
- Q.3. What was the name of the barmaid with whom Cervantes fell in love ?
- Q.4. When did Cervantes die and where ?
- Q.5. Write the full title of the novel, *Don Quixote*.

20.7 ANSWER-KEY TO SELF-CHECK EXERCISE

Ans.1 Spanish

Ans.2. (b) Don Quixote

Ans.3. When Cervantes was only a young boy, he fell in love with a barmaid called Josefina Catalina de Parez.

Ans.4. In 1616, Cervantes died in Madrid.

Ans.5. *The Adventures of Don Quixote*

20.8 LET US SUM UP

In the first part, Don Quixote sets out with Sancho Panza on a life of chivalric adventures in a world no longer governed by chivalric values; the priest attempts to bring Don Quixote home and cure his madness. Don Quixote wanders in Spain and encounters many strange adventures before the priest finds him doing penance in the Sierra Morena. Don Quixote and the priest meet in the Sierra Morena, and Dorothea begs Don Quixote to help her avenge her stolen kingdom. The priest and the barber take Don Quixote home in a cage, and Don Quixote resigns himself to the fact that he is enchanted. In the second part, Don Quixote continues his adventures with Sancho, and Sampson Carrasco and the priest conspire to bring Don Quixote home by vanquishing him. Don Quixote wanders in Spain and has many adventures, especially under the watch of a haughty Duke and Duchess. Sampson, disguised as the Knight of the White Moon, defeats Don Quixote. Don Quixote returns home after his defeat and resolves to give up knight-errantry.

20.9 SUGGESTED READING

- Bell, Aubrey. Cervantes Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1947.
- Bloom, Harold, ed. Cervantes' Don Quixote (Modern Critical Interpretations). New York: Chelsea House Publishers, 2003.

MIGUEL DE CERVANTES SAAVEDRA :
DON QUIXOTE

STRUCTURE

21.1 Introduction

21.2 Objectives

21.3 Summary of the First Part of *Don Quixote*

The First Part, The Author's Dedication of the First Part –Chapter I- IV

The First Part, Chapters V–X

The First Part, Chapters XI–XV

The First Part, Chapters XVI–XX

The First Part, Chapters XXI–XXVI

The First Part, Chapters XXVII–XXXI

The First Part, Chapters XXXII–XXXVII

The First Part, Chapters XXXVIII–XLV

The First Part, Chapters XLVI–LII

21.4 Self-Check Exercise

21.5 Answer Key to Self-Check Exercise

21.6 Suggested Reading

21.1 INTRODUCTION

Don Quixote written by Miguel de Cervantes, is a seminal work of Western literature, first published in two parts in 1605 and 1615. The novel follows the adventures of the self-proclaimed knight-errant Don Quixote, a man driven mad by his obsession with chivalric romances. Accompanied by his loyal squire, Sancho Panza, Don Quixote sets out to revive chivalry and bring justice to the world, though his perception of reality is often distorted by his delusions. This picaresque novel blends comedy and tragedy, offering a satirical yet affectionate portrayal of its misguided hero.

21.2 OBJECTIVES

The objectives of this lesson are to introduce the novel to the learners in detail and to critically evaluate the novel, *Don Quixote*

21.3 SUMMARY OF THE FIRST PART OF *DON QUIXOTE*

The First Part, The Author's Dedication of the First Part—Chapter I-IV

The Author's Dedication of the First Part

Cervantes respectfully dedicates his novel to the Duke of Bejar and asks him to protect the novel from ignorant and unjust criticism.

Prologue

Cervantes belittles his novel and denies that Don Quixote is an invented character, claiming that he, Cervantes, is merely rewriting history. He reports a likely fictional account of a conversation with a friend who reassures Cervantes that his novel can stand without conventional embellishments, such as sonnets, ballads, references to famous authors, and Latin phrases. He humorously suggests that such adornments can be added to a book after its completion. Cervantes accepts this advice and urges us to enjoy the novel for its simplicity.

Chapter I

Cervantes mentions an eccentric gentleman from an unnamed village in La Mancha. The man has neglected his estate, squandered his fortune, and driven

himself mad by reading too many books about chivalry. Now gaunt at fifty, the gentleman decides to become a knight-errant and set off on a great adventure in pursuit of eternal glory. He polishes his old family armour and makes a new pasteboard visor for his helmet. He finds an old nag, which he renames Rocinante, and takes the new name Don Quixote de la Mancha. Deciding he needs a lady in whose name to perform great deeds, he renames a farm girl on whom he once had a crush, Dulcinea del Toboso.

Chapter II

Don Quixote sets off on his first adventure, the details of which Cervantes claims to have discovered in La Mancha's archives. After a daylong ride, Don Quixote stops at an inn for supper and repose. He mistakes the scheming innkeeper for the keeper of a castle and mistakes two prostitutes he meets outside for princesses. He recites poetry to the two prostitutes, who laugh at him but play along. They remove his armour and feed him dinner. He refuses to remove his helmet, which is stuck on his head, but he enjoys his meal because he believes he is in a great castle where princesses are entertaining him.

Chapter III

In the middle of dinner, Don Quixote realizes that he has not been properly knighted. He begs the innkeeper to do him the honor. The innkeeper notes Don Quixote's madness but agrees to his request for the sake of sport, addressing him in flowery language. He tries to cheat Don Quixote, but Don Quixote does not have any money. The innkeeper commands him always to carry some in the future.

Trouble arises when guests at the inn try to use the inn's well, where Don Quixote's armour now rests, to water their animals. Don Quixote, riled and invoking Dulcinea's name, knocks one guest unconscious and smashes the skull of another. Alarmed, the innkeeper quickly performs a bizarre knighting ceremony and sends Don Quixote on his way. Don Quixote begs the favour of the two prostitutes, thanks the innkeeper for knighting him, and leaves.

Chapter IV

On the way home to fetch money and fresh clothing, Don Quixote hears crying and finds a farmer whipping a young boy. The farmer explains that the boy has been failing in his duties; the boy complains that his master has not been paying him. Don Quixote, calling the farmer a knight, tells him to pay the boy. The boy tells Don Quixote that the farmer is not a knight, but Don Quixote ignores him. The farmer swears by his knighthood that he will pay the boy. As Don Quixote rides away, satisfied, the farmer flogs the boy even more severely.

Don Quixote then meets a group of merchants and orders them to proclaim the beauty of Dulcinea. The merchants inadvertently insult her, and Don Quixote attacks them. But Rocinante stumbles in mid-charge, and Don Quixote falls pitifully to the ground. One of the merchant's mule-driver beats Don Quixote and breaks his lance. The group departs, leaving Don Quixote face down near the road.

Analysis: Dedication–Chapter IV

Cervantes's declaration that Don Quixote is not his own invention layers the novel with self-deception. Claiming to be recounting a history he has uncovered, Cervantes himself becomes a character in the tale. He is a kind of scholar, leading us through the story and occasionally interrupting to clarify points. But Cervantes's claim to be historically accurate does not always ring true—he does not, for example, name Don Quixote's town. Instead, he draws attention to his decision not to name the town by saying he does “not wish to name” this “certain village” where Don Quixote lives. In this manner, Cervantes undermines his assertion that *Don Quixote* is historical. Ironically, every time he interrupts the novel's story to remind us that it is historical fact rather than fiction, he is reminding us that the story is indeed fiction. We thus become skeptical about Cervantes's claims and begin to read his interruptions as tongue-in-cheek. In this way, the content of the novel mirrors its form: both Don Quixote and Cervantes deceive themselves.

On its surface, *Don Quixote* is a parody of chivalric tales. Cervantes mocks his hero constantly: Don Quixote's first adventure brings failure, not the

rewards of a successful and heroic quest, such as treasure, glory, or a beautiful woman. But to Don Quixote, the adventure is not a complete disaster—the prostitutes receive honours, and he becomes a knight. His unwavering belief in his quest fills the tale with a romantic sense of adventure akin to that in other tales of chivalry. Thus, as much as Cervantes scorns the genre of romantic literature, he embraces it to some degree. Furthermore, though he claims in the prologue not to need sonnets, ballads, great authors, or Latin, he peppers the text with all of these conventions. In this way, the novel both parodies and emulates tales of chivalry.

Other characters' reactions to Don Quixote highlight his tragic role. Unlike readers, these characters do not see that Don Quixote is motivated by good intentions, and to them he appears bizarre and dangerous. The innkeeper, who throws Don Quixote out after he attacks the other guests, typifies many characters' fears. But some characters are genuinely charmed by Don Quixote's yearnings for the simplicity of a bygone era. The two prostitutes do not understand Don Quixote's poetry, but he wins them over with his adamant belief in their royal status. On the one hand, his attempts at chivalry open others' eyes to a world for which they inwardly pine. On the other hand, his clumsiness makes his entire project seem utterly foolish. From our perspective, he is not just absurd but tragic. Though he wishes for the best, he often brings about the worst, as in the case of the young boy whom he inadvertently harms because he cannot see that the boy's master is lying. In this way, Don Quixote's complex character at once endears him to us and repulses us, since we see that his fantasies and good intentions sometimes bring pain to others.

Chapter V

A labourer finds Don Quixote lying near the road and leads him home on his mule. Don Quixote showers the labourer with chivalric verse, comparing his troubles to those of the great knights about whom he has read. The labourer waits for night before entering the town with Don Quixote, in hopes of preserving the wounded man's dignity. But Don Quixote's friends, the barber and the priest

are at his house. They have just resolved to investigate his books when Don Quixote and the labourer arrive. The family receives Don Quixote, feeds him, and sends him to bed.

Chapter VI

The priest and the barber begin an inquisition into Don Quixote's library to burn the books of chivalry. Though the housekeeper wants merely to exorcise any spirits with holy water, Don Quixote's niece prefers to burn all the books. Over the niece's and the housekeeper's objections, the priest insists on reading each book's title before condemning it. He knows many of the stories and saves several of the books due to their rarity or style. He suggests that all the poetry be saved but decides against it because the niece fears that Don Quixote will then become a poet—a vocation even worse than knight-errant.

The priest soon discovers a book by Cervantes, who he claims is a friend of his. He says that Cervantes's work has clever ideas but that it never fulfills its potential. He decides to keep the novel, expecting that the sequel Cervantes has promised will eventually be published.

Chapter VII

Don Quixote wakes, still delusional, and interrupts the priest and the barber. Having walled up the entrance to the library, they decide to tell Don Quixote that an enchanter has carried off all his books and the library itself. That night, the housekeeper burns all the books. Two days later, when Don Quixote rises from bed and looks for his books, his niece tells him that an enchanter came on a cloud with a dragon, took the books due to a grudge he held against Don Quixote, and left the house full of smoke. Don Quixote believes her and explains that he recognizes this enchanter as his archrival, who knows that Don Quixote will defeat the enchanter's favourite knight.

Don Quixote's niece begs him to abandon his quest, but he refuses. He promises an illiterate labourer, Sancho Panza, that he will make him governor of an isle if Sancho leaves his wife, Teresa, and children to become Don

Quixote's squire. Sancho agrees, and after he acquires a donkey, they ride from the village, discussing the isle.

Chapter VIII

After a full day, Don Quixote and Sancho come to a field of windmills, which Don Quixote mistakes for giants. Don Quixote charges at one at full speed, and his lance gets caught in the windmill's sail, throwing him and Rocinante to the ground. Don Quixote assures Sancho that the same enemy enchanter who has stolen his library turned the giants into windmills at the last minute.

Sancho offers to care for Don Quixote's bleeding ear. Don Quixote tells him about the Balsam of Fierbras, which he says has the power to cure any wound and is easy to make. Sancho suggests that they could make money by producing the balsam, but Don Quixote dismisses the suggestion. Upon seeing the damage the attendant did to his helmet, he swears revenge, but Sancho reminds him that the attendant promised to present himself to Dulcinea in return. Don Quixote abandons his oath of revenge and swears to maintain a strict lifestyle until he gets a new helmet. Unable to secure other lodging, the two sleep out under the sky, which pleases Don Quixote's romantic sensibilities but displeases Sancho.

The two ride on, and Don Quixote explains to Sancho that knights-errant should never complain of injury or hunger. He tears a branch from a tree to replace the lance he broke in the windmill encounter. He and Sancho camp for the night, but Don Quixote does not sleep and instead stays up all night remembering his love, Dulcinea. The next day, Don Quixote and Sancho encounter two monks and a carriage carrying a lady and her attendants. Don Quixote thinks that the two monks are enchanters who have captured a princess and attacks them, ignoring Sancho's and the monks' protests. He knocks one monk off his mule. Sancho, believing he is rightly taking spoils from Don Quixote's battle, begins to rob the monk of his clothes. The monks' servants beat Sancho, and the two monks ride off.

Don Quixote tells the lady to return to Toboso and present herself to Dulcinea. He argues with one of her attendants and soon gets into a battle with him. Cervantes describes the battle in great detail but cuts off the narration just as Don Quixote is about to deliver the mortal blow. Cervantes explains that the historical account from which he has been working ends at precisely this point.

Chapter IX

Cervantes says he was quite irked by this break in the text, believing that such a knight deserves to have his tale told by a great sage. He says that he was at a fair in the Spanish city of Toledo when he discovered a boy selling Arabic parchments in the street. He hired a Moor to read him some of the stories. When the Moor began to translate one line about Dulcinea, which read that she was “the best hand at salting pork of any woman in all La Mancha,” Cervantes rushed the Moor to his home to have him translate the whole parchment.

According to Cervantes, the parchment contained the history of Don Quixote, written by Cide Hamete Benengeli. From this point on, Cervantes claims, his work is a translation of Benengeli’s story. This second portion of the manuscript begins with the conclusion of the preceding chapter’s battle. The attendant gives Don Quixote a mighty blow, splitting his ear. Don Quixote knocks the man down and threatens to kill him. He spares him when several ladies traveling with the man promise that the man will present himself to Dulcinea.

Chapter X

Afterward, Sancho begs Don Quixote to make him governor of the isle that he believes they have won in battle. Don Quixote assures him that he will fulfill his promise soon. Sancho then begins to worry that the authorities might come after them for beating the lady’s attendant. Don Quixote assures Sancho that knights never go to jail, since they are permitted to use violence in the pursuit of justice.

Analysis: Chapters V–X

In every way Don Quixote's opposite, Sancho Panza serves as a simple-minded foil to his master's complex madness. Cervantes contrasts these two men even on the most fundamental levels: Don Quixote is tall and gaunt and deprives himself in his pursuit of noble ideals, while Sancho is short and pudgy and finds happiness in the basic pleasures of food and wine. Sancho is a peace-loving labourer who leaves his family only after Don Quixote promises to make him a governor. Don Quixote's violent idealism befuddles Sancho, who consistently warns his master about the error of his ways. Sancho eats when he is hungry but accepts Don Quixote's fasting as a knightly duty. He complains when he is hurt and marvels at his master's capacity to withstand suffering. Sancho's perception of Don Quixote informs our own perception of him, and we identify and sympathize with the bumbling Sancho because he reacts to Don Quixote the way most people would. Through Sancho, we see Don Quixote as a human being with an oddly admirable yet challenging outlook on life.

At the same time, Sancho makes it difficult to sympathize with him since he participates in his master's fantasy world when it suits his own interests. In robbing the monk, for instance, Sancho pretends to believe that he is claiming the spoils of war. He takes advantage of Don Quixote's sincere belief in a fantasy world to indulge his greed, a trait that does not fit with our conception of Sancho as an innocent peasant.

Unlike many of the novel's battle scenes, which at times seem mechanical and plodding, the battle between Don Quixote and the attendant is genuinely suspenseful. As opposed to the fight scene with the guests at the inn or the charge at the windmills, this battle is graphic. Unlike Don Quixote's previous foes—inanimate objects, unsuspecting passersby, or disapproving brutes—the attendant attacks Don Quixote with genuine zeal, which, along with the attendant's skill, heightens the battle's suspense. The attendant accepts the myth Don Quixote presents him—that they are two great enemies battling for honor. The fight thus takes on epic proportions for Don Quixote, and its form

underscores these proportions, since the men verbally spar, choose their weapons, and engage. After several blows, the battle concludes when Don Quixote defeats his opponent and forces him to submit to the humiliation of presenting himself to Dulcinea.

Cervantes' sudden interruption of the narrative draws attention to the deficiencies of the work and, by implication, those of other heroic tales. Cervantes' claim that the tale is factual is undercut when he stops the story due to a gap in the alleged historical account. Cervantes seems to be showing his scholarship by cutting off the narrative to credit its source, but the source he then describes turns out to be incomplete. At best, *Don Quixote* now appears to be a translation—and not even Cervantes' own translation—which gives the novel a more mythical feel. Though myths are powerful for those who believe them, they are vulnerable to distortion with each storyteller's version. In forcing us to question the validity of the story during one of its most dramatic moments, Cervantes implicitly criticizes the authorship and authenticity of all heroic tales.

In his famous charge at the windmills, we see that Don Quixote persists in living in a fantasy world even when he is able to see reality for a moment. Don Quixote briefly connects with reality after Sancho points out that the giants are merely windmills, but Don Quixote immediately makes an excuse, claiming that the enchanter has deceived him. This enchanter is not entirely fictional—Don Quixote has so deceived himself with his books of chivalry that he seeks to make up excuses even in the face of reality. Throughout the novel, Cervantes analyzes the dangers inherent in the overzealous pursuit of ideals, as we see Don Quixote continually constructing stories to explain a belief system that is often at odds with reality.

Chapter XI

Don Quixote and Sancho join a group of goatherds for the night. They eat and drink together, and Sancho gets drunk on the goatherds' wine while Don Quixote tells the group about the "golden age" in which virgins roamed

the world freely and without fear. He says that knights were created to protect the purity of these virgins. A singing goatherd then arrives. At the request of the others and despite Sancho's protests, he sings a love ballad to the group. One of the goatherds dresses Don Quixote's wounded ear with a poultice that heals it.

Chapter XII

A goatherd named Peter arrives with news that the shepherd-student Chrysostom has died from his love for Marcela. As Peter tells the story of the lovesick Chrysostom, Don Quixote interrupts several times to correct Peter's poor speech. Peter explains that Marcela is a wealthy, beautiful orphan who has abandoned her wealth for a shepherdess' life. Modest and kind, Marcela charms everyone but refuses to marry, which has given her a reputation for cruelty in affairs of the heart. The goatherds invite Don Quixote to accompany them to Chrysostom's burial the next day, and he accepts. They all go to sleep except for Don Quixote, who stays up all night sighing for Dulcinea.

Chapter XIII

On the way to the funeral, a traveller named Vivaldo asks Don Quixote why he wears armour in such a peaceful country. Don Quixote explains the principles of knighthood. Vivaldo compares the severity of the knight's lifestyle to that of a monk's, and Don Quixote says that knights execute the will of God for which the monks pray.

Vivaldo and Don Quixote discuss knight-errantry, and Don Quixote explains that tradition dictates that knights-errant dedicate themselves to ladies rather than to God. He adds that all knights-errant are in love, even if they do not show it. He describes Dulcinea to the company in flowery and poetic terms. The group then arrives at the burial site, where six men carrying Chrysostom's body arrive. Chrysostom's friend Ambrosio makes a speech exalting the deceased, and Vivaldo asks him to save some of Chrysostom's poetry despite Chrysostom's request that it be burned. Vivaldo takes one poem, and Ambrosio asks him to read it aloud.

Chapter XIV

Vivaldo reads the poem aloud. It praises Marcela's beauty, laments her cruelty, and ends with Chrysostom's dying wish that famous Greek mythical characters receive him in the afterlife. Marcela herself then appears and claims never to have given Chrysostom or any of her other suitors any hope of winning her affection. She attributes all her beauty to heaven and says that she is not at fault for remaining chaste. Marcela leaves before Ambrosio can respond. Some of the men try to follow her, but Don Quixote says he will kill anyone who pursues her. He then follows Marcela to offer her his services.

Chapter XV

Don Quixote and Sancho stop to rest and eat lunch. Rocinante wanders off into a herd of mares owned by a group of Yanguesans and tries to mate with them. The Yanguesans beat Rocinante. Don Quixote then attacks the numerous Yanguesans, and he and Sancho lose the battle. While lying on the ground, Don Quixote and Sancho discuss the balsam that, Don Quixote claims, knights use to cure wounds. Don Quixote blames their defeat on the fact that he drew his sword against non-knights, a clear violation of the chivalric code. The two quarrel about the value that fighting has in the life of a knight-errant. On Don Quixote's orders, Sancho leads him to an inn on his donkey. They arrive at another inn, which Don Quixote mistakes for a castle.

Analysis: Chapters XI–XV

Peter portrays Marcela as unduly arrogant, and we suspect that her obsessions, like Don Quixote's, may cause others to suffer. But when we meet Marcela, we find that she is intelligent and defends herself articulately, reasoning that if men suffer for her beauty, it is their fault. Chrysostom, not Marcela, turns out to be the fool, falling so deeply in love with his romantic ideal that he kills himself. This outcome adds to Cervantes' ongoing critique of those who are obsessed with outdated notions of chivalry. Though Marcela may have abandoned certain customs of the day, she is not a fool. She is an example of someone who ignores outdated customs in an intelligent way.

The story of Marcela and Chrysostom, which has its own characters and moral lesson, marks a change in the structure of the novel, as Don Quixote is a mere observer rather than a participant. Here, Cervantes begins to focus on the social setting in which Don Quixote operates. The goatherds, for instance, represent a new class of characters, that of pastoral people living off the earth. Unlike those we meet earlier, such as the innkeeper, the prostitutes, and the farm boy and his master, the characters we meet in this section are important not merely for their reactions to Don Quixote, but as fully developed characters in their own right.

Peter's narration of the story about Marcela and Chrysostom is a subtle criticism of the tradition of oral storytelling. We hear about Marcela first from Peter and later from Ambrosio and from Chrysostom's poem. The difference between her character in the story and her character in reality highlights a problem Cervantes explores throughout the novel: not all stories are true, and in this particular case, the more a story is repeated and passed on, the more it diverges from the truth. This criticism, of course, can be applied to Cervantes's novel itself, as well as to the chivalric tales that have driven Don Quixote mad.

Chapter XVI

Rather than admit that Don Quixote received a vicious thrashing from a gang of Yanguesans, Sancho tells the innkeeper that his master fell and injured himself. The innkeeper's wife and beautiful daughter tend to Don Quixote's wounds. Don Quixote begins to believe that the daughter has fallen in love with him and that she has promised to lie with him that night. In actuality, Maritornes, the daughter's hunchbacked servant, creeps in that night to sleep with a carrier who is sharing a room with Don Quixote and Sancho. As an aside, Cervantes then tells us that Cide Hamete Benengeli specially mentions the carrier because Benengeli is related to him.

Nearly blind, Maritornes accidentally goes to Don Quixote's bed instead of the carrier's. Don Quixote mistakes her for the beautiful daughter and tries to woo her, and the carrier attacks him. Maritornes jumps into

Sancho's bed to hide. Awakened by the commotion, the innkeeper goes to the bedroom and he, the carrier, and Sancho have a terrific brawl. An officer staying at the inn hears the fighting and goes upstairs to break it up. The officer sees Don Quixote passed out on the bed and believes he is dead. He leaves to get a light to investigate the scene.

Chapter XVII

Don Quixote tells Sancho that the inn is enchanted and recounts his version of the evening's events. He says a princess came in to woo him and a giant beat him up. Just then, the officer returns, and Don Quixote insults him, provoking him to beat Don Quixote. Sancho, angry about his own injuries, rails against Don Quixote's story, but Don Quixote promises to make the balsam to cure Sancho. He tells Sancho not to get angry over enchantments, since they cannot be stopped.

Don Quixote mixes ingredients and drinks the potion. He vomits immediately and passes out. Upon waking, he feels much better and believes he has successfully concocted the mythical balsam. Sancho also takes the potion, and although it makes him tremendously ill, he does not vomit. Don Quixote explains that the balsam does not work on Sancho because he is a squire and not a knight.

As Don Quixote leaves the inn, the innkeeper demands that he pay for his stay. Surprised that he has stayed in an inn and not a castle, Don Quixote refuses to pay on the grounds that knights-errant never pay for lodging. He rides off, slinging insults at the innkeeper. Several rogues at the inn capture Sancho, who also refuses to pay, and toss him in a blanket. Don Quixote, too bruised to dismount from Rocinante, believes that the enchantment prevents him from helping Sancho. Sancho finally gets away and feels proud for not having paid. But it turns out that the innkeeper has stolen Sancho's saddlebags.

Chapter XVIII

As they ride away from the inn, Sancho complains bitterly to Don Quixote about the injuries their misadventures cause him. Suddenly Don

Quixote sees clouds of dust coming along the road and mistakes them for two great armies on the brink of battle. Sancho warns his master that the two clouds actually come from two herds of sheep. Unconvinced, Don Quixote describes in great detail the knights he thinks he sees in the dust. Cervantes eventually cuts off the account, remarking that Don Quixote is merely reeling off ideas he has encountered in his “lying books” about chivalry.

The First Part, Chapters XVI–XX

Don Quixote rushes into the battle and kills seven sheep before two shepherds throw stones at him and knock out several of his teeth. Sancho points out that the armies were really just sheep, prompting Don Quixote to explain that a sorcerer turned the armies into sheep in the midst of battle to thwart his efforts. Don Quixote takes more of the balsam, and as Sancho comes close to see how badly his master’s teeth have been injured, Don Quixote vomits on him. Nauseous, Sancho then vomits on Don Quixote. When Sancho tries to fetch something to clean them up, he discovers that his saddlebags have been stolen. Fed up, he vows to go home. Don Quixote says that he would rather sleep in an inn that night than in the field, and tells Sancho to lead them to an inn.

Chapter XIX

Sancho tells Don Quixote that their troubles stem from Don Quixote’s violation of his vow to keep a strict lifestyle until he finds a new helmet. Don Quixote agrees, noting that he had forgotten the vow, and blames Sancho for failing to remind him. As night falls, the two encounter a group of priests mourning as they escort the body of a dead man. When the priests refuse to identify themselves, Don Quixote knocks one of them off his horse, and the others scatter. Don Quixote tells the wounded priest that he has come to avenge injuries. The priest complains that Don Quixote has injured him without avenging anything.

Sancho steals goods from the priest’s mule. As the priest rides away, Sancho yells after him that this mischief was the work of Don Quixote, the Knight

of the Sad Countenance. Pleased with his new title, Don Quixote asks Sancho where he came up with it. Sancho replies that Don Quixote's face looks sad without its teeth. But Don Quixote asserts that Sancho so named him because a sage, who Don Quixote claims is dictating his life's story, made Sancho think of this title. The two ride into a valley and eat dinner. They then have a conversation that Cervantes promises to record in the next chapter.

Chapter XX

Don Quixote and Sancho hear a scary pounding. Sancho implores his master to wait until morning to investigate the sound, but Don Quixote swears to take on the unknown foe. Don Quixote tells Sancho to wait three days and then report his death to Dulcinea if he has not returned. Sancho secretly ties up Rocinante's legs, immobilizing him, and Don Quixote concedes that since Rocinante seems unable to move, he must wait until morning to investigate.

Sancho begins telling a story. He tells each detail twice, and Don Quixote interrupts and commands him to tell the story only once. But Sancho says that this is the way stories are told in his homeland, so Don Quixote allows him to proceed. Sancho then vividly describes a shepherdess. Don Quixote asks whether he knew the shepherdess. Sancho says that he did not but that when he first heard the story it seemed so real that he could swear he had seen her. Sancho tells how a shepherd in love with this shepherdess had to cross a river with a herd of goats, and Sancho instructs Don Quixote to keep count while he tells the story of how many goats the character takes across. Midway through, Don Quixote tells Sancho to proceed with the story as though all the goats were already across. Sancho asks his master whether he knows how many goats have already crossed, and Don Quixote admits that he does not. Sancho ends his story, and Don Quixote cannot persuade him to tell the rest of it.

In the morning, Sancho and Don Quixote set off. Cervantes says that Sancho's faithfulness convinces Don Quixote that Sancho is a good man. When the two arrive at a small bunch of houses by a river, they discover that the scary pounding comes from fulling-hammers, which are used to beat cloth.

Sancho laughs, and Don Quixote hits him with his lance. Don Quixote says that Sancho must speak less to him in the future. Sancho accepts the order after Don Quixote tells him that he has left Sancho money in his will.

Analysis: Chapters XVI–XX

The graphic accounts of Don Quixote's and Sancho's vomiting constitute Cervantes' basest humour. Cervantes later justifies the inclusion of such bawdy episodes, stating that a successful novel contains elements that appeal to all levels of society. This crude humour seems out of place, especially when compared to the delicate humor of Sancho's story in Chapter XX. Critics often focus on this disparity, but Cervantes may be using this contrast to draw our attention to the differences between romantic ideals and reality. He highlights reality by emphasizing its physical aspects, reminding us about the inconsistency between the way things play out in Don Quixote's dreams and the way they play out in the real world.

Don Quixote's explanation for why the Balsam of Fierbras does not work for Sancho underscores the characters' perception of class and privilege. Don Quixote seems to believe that bad things cannot happen to knights because they belong to a higher class, one that the mundane world cannot touch. The fact that he persistently attributes all of his misfortunes to an enchantment emphasizes his faith that mortal forces cannot touch him. This class distinction extends to gentlemen as well, who play by a different set of rules than members of the lower class. Cervantes' attitude toward such class distinctions appears mixed: even though Cervantes includes numerous classicist remarks, he pokes fun at Don Quixote's claim of being separate and superior. Ultimately, Cervantes undercuts the idea that one's class signifies one's worth. He criticizes people in all classes in an effort to humanize everyone.

Sancho's bizarre, aborted account of the shepherd and shepherdess highlights Cervantes' tendency to comment on the nature of storytelling and the way literature should be presented and read. Sancho's storytelling mimics

Cardenio's later refusal, in Chapter XXIII, to finish his story when Don Quixote interrupts him in the Sierra Morena. Here, Sancho asserts his right to tell the story as he sees fit and according to the tradition by which people in his homeland tell stories. This tradition mimics great epic poems, often tedious in their apparently useless repetition and lists of detail. Don Quixote views these conventions as empty formalities and asks Sancho to skip them, which irritates Sancho. But Sancho apparently believes that a story is not truly a story unless it has a certain formal structure. This interplay of structure and content is found throughout *Don Quixote*, since Cervantes frequently plays with the highly formal framework of chivalric tales. Here, through Sancho, Cervantes implies that a reader must play along with the author's structural effects to get to the meaning of the story. Sancho's story thus prompts us to pay attention to the game Cervantes plays throughout his novel.

Chapter XXI

Don Quixote and Sancho see a man on a mule with something glittering on his head. The man is a barber wearing a basin on his head to protect him from the rain. But Don Quixote mistakes the man for a great knight wearing the mythic Mambrino's helmet and vows to win the helmet from him. When the barber sees Don Quixote charging at him, the barber runs away, leaving behind his mule and basin. Sancho laughs at Don Quixote and tells him that the "helmet" is just a basin.

Don Quixote explains that the enchanted helmet must have fallen into the hands of someone who did not know its value and then melted it down, making it into a basin. He resolves to wear it in the meantime and have it made back into a helmet at the next village. When Sancho again begins to complain about the treatment he received at the inn while Don Quixote stood by idly. Don Quixote explains that Sancho's treatment was just a joke. He adds that had it been serious, he would have returned to avenge it. Don Quixote then explains how he will win the affections of a princess by fighting for her father, the king. He says he will then marry her and make Sancho rich.

Chapter XXII

The manuscript continues, Cervantes says, with the account of Don Quixote and Sancho's encounter with a chain gang of galley slaves. The prisoners are guarded by two armed men on foot and two armed horsemen. Sancho warns Don Quixote not to interfere with the chain gang, but Don Quixote approaches the group anyway and asks each prisoner to tell his story. Each slave makes up a story in which his criminal actions appear to be justified or even necessary. Upon seeing the men detained against their will, Don Quixote charges the officers. Anxious to be free, the prisoners join the charge. After the men gain freedom, Don Quixote commands them to present themselves to Dulcinea, which they refuse to do out of fear for their safety. Don Quixote insults them, and they attack him, running away with his and Sancho's possessions. Freeing the galley slaves distresses Sancho, who is concerned that the Holy Brotherhood, or police, will come after them. Sancho urges Don Quixote to flee into the mountains.

Chapter XXIII

Don Quixote and Sancho ride into the woods of the Sierra Morena. Unfortunately for them, one of the galley slaves, Gines de Pasamonte, is also hiding in these woods. Gines steals Sancho's donkey, whose name we now learn is Dapple. On the road through the mountains, Don Quixote and Sancho find a saddle and a bag containing a notebook, shirts, and money. Don Quixote gives Sancho the money, and Sancho decides that this payment makes up for all his previous troubles.

In the notebook, Don Quixote finds a poem and a love letter, which indicate that their author was spurned by his lover and driven to madness by her infidelity. Don Quixote then sees a nearly naked man hopping through the wilderness and resolves to follow him and learn his tale. Sancho opposes the idea because he wants to protect the money they have found and fears that the man might claim the money if they catch up with him. Don Quixote explains to Sancho, however, that they have no choice but to look for the naked man once they consider that the money might belong to him.

While searching for the man, Don Quixote and Sancho encounter an old goatherd who tells them the story of the naked man. A polite, rich gentleman, he appeared one day to ask the goatherds to help him locate the wildest part of the Sierra Morena. The goatherds pointed the man in a direction and he ran off. Later, he returned and assaulted one of the goatherds on the road, stealing his food. They pursued him and several days later found him in a ragged state, so they offered him food and care. The man treated them courteously at some times but rudely at others. Just as the old goatherd concludes the story, the man, whom Cervantes now calls the Ragged Knight of the Sorry Countenance, appears. Don Quixote gives him a long hug.

Chapter XXIV

The Ragged Knight of the Sorry Countenance asks Don Quixote for food and then says that he will tell his story as long as Don Quixote and the others promise not to interrupt him. His name is Cardenio, and he is a wealthy nobleman from the region of Andalusia in southern Spain. From childhood he has been madly in love with the beautiful Lucinda. The two were to be married, but Cardenio received a letter from a duke requesting Cardenio's service as a companion to the Duke's son Ferdinand.

Cardenio went to the Duke and met Ferdinand. Ferdinand immediately liked Cardenio and the two became friends. Ferdinand was in love with a young farmer's daughter, but he had wooed her secretly and did not want to tell his father. To avoid his father's wrath, Ferdinand decided that he needed to go away for a little while and forget about the farmer's daughter. He asked to go to Cardenio's parents' home, under the pretext of buying some horses. There, Ferdinand met Lucinda, whom he praised as one of the great beauties of the world.

Cardenio mentions that Lucinda was a fan of chivalric books. Cardenio and Don Quixote then spar over whether a queen in one of the books mentioned had an affair with her counsellor. The altercation ends Cardenio's

story and sends him into a fit of madness. He beats Sancho, the goatherd, and Don Quixote before running off into the wilderness.

Chapter XXV

As Sancho and Don Quixote ride away, Sancho becomes angry with his master for imposing a code of silence on him and for arguing inanely with Cardenio. Don Quixote retracts his order that Sancho remain silent but stands by his defense of the fictional queen. Don Quixote then tells Sancho that he will be staying alone in the Sierra Morena to do penance in order to win honour for himself. He says that he has been absent from Dulcinea for so long that he has concerns about her fidelity. Instead of returning to check up on her, he has decided that it would be more valorous to go mad imagining the slights his ladylove has committed against him.

Sancho derides his master's plan as folly, and Don Quixote is amazed that Sancho has not yet realized that everything knights-errant do is folly. Don Quixote writes a love letter for Sancho to convey to Dulcinea and then reveals Dulcinea's identity to him. Sancho is shocked, since he knows her to be a coarse peasant. But Don Quixote tells Sancho that many ladyloves were invented princesses whose only purpose was to inspire their knights-errant, and therefore Dulcinea is a princess if he says she is. Sancho promises to return as quickly as he can, and after watching Don Quixote take off his trousers and do a headstand to indicate his madness, he sets off on Rocinante.

Chapter XXVI

In his penance, Don Quixote decides to follow the example of the great knight Amadis, commending himself to God and praying in the name of Dulcinea. He wanders around the valley, writing verses on trees. Sancho, on his way home, encounters the priest and the barber at the inn where he was tossed in the blanket. The priest and the barber stop him and ask him what has become of Don Quixote. Sancho tells them about his master's penance and about the letter he must deliver to Dulcinea. He explains that Don Quixote has promised to give him a governorship and a beautiful wife when Don

Quixote himself becomes an emperor. The priest and the barber conclude that Sancho has gone mad and promise him in jest that Don Quixote will certainly become an emperor or at least an archbishop. This last point troubles Sancho because he fears that an archbishop would not provide him with adequate rewards. The priest and the barber then decide to go to Don Quixote, disguising themselves as a damsel in distress and her squire in order to trick Don Quixote into coming home again.

Analysis: Chapters XXI–XXVI

Cervantes examines the question of crime and punishment by contrasting Don Quixote's actions with the actions of the galley slaves. Like the slaves, Don Quixote believes that his criminal actions are justified. He steals the basin from the barber, but his theft seems excusable because he is a chivalrous, well-meaning madman. Though Cervantes portrays Don Quixote's crime as more excusable than the crimes of the galley slaves, we must nonetheless keep in mind that Don Quixote's actions are still crimes, regardless of the fact that he commits them in the name of chivalry. This issue arises again when a priest argues that Don Quixote is insane and not, therefore, liable for his behaviour. Here, when Gines de Pasamonte reappears and steals Dapple to Sancho's great distress, Cervantes looks at crime from the victim's perspective. Throughout the novel, the victim's perspective—in this case Sancho's—often gets lost amid the humorous narration of Don Quixote's exploits.

Storytelling is central to *Don Quixote*. Everyone in the novel has a story, and telling these stories is a major part of the characters' lives. The abundance of stories makes the novel's narration less fluid. It is difficult to focus on Don Quixote's adventures when other characters' stories and the third-person narrator constantly interrupt us. However, these interruptions give us additional perspectives on Don Quixote's story. Cardenio's story, like the tale of Marcela and Chrysostom, does not relate directly to Don Quixote's life, but it does inspire him to action. In particular, it inspires Don Quixote's acts of penance, and this subsequent, obvious madness makes us question the heroic nature of

Cardenio's story. Though Cardenio had a valid reason for grieving, he may have, in becoming a wild man, overreacted to Lucinda's rejection, in effect choosing his madness as much as Don Quixote chooses his.

At several points in these chapters, the translator of this particular edition, J.M. Cohen, analyzes several inconsistencies in the text. In Chapter XXII, for instance, Cohen points out that the text is inconsistent on the number of guns the guards possess. In the first description, Cervantes says there are two guns, but in the battle that follows, he accounts for only one gun. In Chapter XXIII, Cohen points out that the text is inconsistent concerning Gines's theft of Dapple. Here, Gines steals Dapple, but later, Sancho is riding him through the mountains. Later, he again laments the loss of Dapple. Because Cervantes places so much emphasis throughout *Don Quixote* on the narrative layers in the story, it may be tempting to read these inconsistencies as deliberate attempts by Cervantes to remove himself even further from the narrative. It seems more likely, however, that these inconsistencies are merely unintentional errors on Cervantes' part.

The First Part, Chapters XXVII–XXXI

Chapter XXVII

Equipped with their costumes, the priest and the barber set out with Sancho to find Don Quixote and lure him home again. Sancho relates to them the saga of his adventures as they journey. When they arrive, Sancho goes on ahead, planning to tell Don Quixote that he has seen Dulcinea, that he has given her his letter, and that she begs for Don Quixote to come home to her. If Don Quixote still refuses to come home, the priest and the barber will go ahead with their plan to pretend to be a damsel in distress who seeks his assistance.

While waiting for Sancho to return, the priest and the barber encounter Cardenio, who tells them his story, this time including the conclusion that he failed to recount to Don Quixote. Cardenio explains that Ferdinand, while visiting Cardenio's house, found a letter from Lucinda and was so taken with

her that he devised a plan to win her for himself. Ferdinand sent Cardenio back to the Duke's house and proposed to Lucinda. While at the Duke's house, Cardenio received a letter from Lucinda begging him to come home because Ferdinand had proposed, her greedy parents had accepted, and she felt that she would soon kill herself. Cardenio rushed home just in time to see the wedding take place. Despite her words, Lucinda did not kill herself but instead accepted Ferdinand as her husband. Cardenio rushed away from the wedding and went out into the wilderness, driven mad with grief and hatred. Cervantes interrupts to say that the end of Cardenio's story marks the end of the third part of the history by Cide Hamete Benengeli.

Chapter XXVIII

Before returning to the narration, Cervantes says that Don Quixote's era is lucky that Don Quixote has brought back knight-errantry. Back in the story, the priest, the barber, and Cardenio meet a young woman named Dorothea, whom they initially take for a man because she is wearing a man's clothes. Dorothea tells her tragic story. The incredibly beautiful daughter of a wealthy farmer, she happened to attract the attention of the son of her father's master. The son wooed her persistently, but she resisted until one day when he appeared in her bedroom by trickery and swore to marry her. She succumbed to him because she was afraid he would rape her if she did not. He left town and abandoned her. Dorothea chased him in hopes of enforcing his pledge to marry her but discovered that he had already married someone else in a nearby town. She then relates the circumstances of that marriage, revealing that the son who falsely proposed to her was Ferdinand, the Duke's son, and that his new bride in the nearby town was Lucinda. Dorothea tells them that she then ran off into the wilderness out of shame.

Chapter XXIX

Cardenio is thrilled to learn from Dorothea that when Lucinda fainted, Ferdinand found a letter on her that revealed her love for Cardenio. Cardenio vows to help Dorothea avenge the wrong Ferdinand has done to her. Dorothea

offers to play the distressed damsel in the plot to lure Don Quixote home. Sancho returns with news that Don Quixote refuses to return to Dulcinea until he has won honor through penance.

The priest tells Sancho that Dorothea is Princess Micomicona, who is seeking Don Quixote's help to redress a wrong a giant has done her. Sancho, the costumed Dorothea, and the barber, wearing a fake beard, find Don Quixote. In high poetic style, Dorothea beseeches Don Quixote to slay a giant who has taken over her kingdom. Don Quixote promises to follow her and not engage in any other adventures along the way. Sancho is pleased, believing he will now get his governorship. The priest and Cardenio overtake the party on the road. The priest greets Don Quixote, who recognizes neither the priest nor Cardenio. The priest tells Don Quixote that freed galley slaves have mugged him and the barber.

Chapter XXX

Dorothea weaves a story about the giant who has attacked her kingdom. She slips up several times during the story, even forgetting the name the priest has given her, and the priest has to interject to prevent her from revealing their ploy. Dorothea says she will marry Don Quixote after he vanquishes the giant, but Don Quixote refuses because he loves Dulcinea. His refusal upsets Sancho, who insults Dulcinea. Don Quixote beats Sancho. Just then, Gines de Pasamonte reappears with Sancho's donkey and flees on foot. Cardenio and Dorothea discuss Don Quixote's madness, and Cardenio remarks that Don Quixote is so crazy that he is sure no author could have invented him.

Chapter XXXI

Don Quixote pulls Sancho aside and begs him to tell about his visit to Dulcinea. Sancho makes up a story, saying that Dulcinea was at work and did not have the time or ability to read Don Quixote's letter. As they ride along, the young boy whom Don Quixote tried to save from his master in

Chapter IV appears, reviling Don Quixote for stupidly accepting his master's word and leaving him to a worse beating. Don Quixote swears that he will reap vengeance on the young shepherd's master, but the young shepherd tells Don Quixote not to interfere in the future, fearing that he would only make matters worse.

Analysis: XVII–XXXI

Don Quixote's madness begins to impose itself on other characters with the scheme the priest concocts to lure Don Quixote home. Though Don Quixote's madness is his own invention, his refusal to break out of it forces the others to participate in it if they wish to engage him. This madness and play-acting intensifies in these chapters, especially when everyone in the company is forced to adhere to Dorothea's story to prevent the trickery from being revealed. The group's constant playacting makes the fictional details of their stories into imitations of reality and makes reality an imitation of their stories. Dorothea's story about the giant, for instance, closely resembles her own plight: the real-life Ferdinand has run off with her virginity just as the fictional giant has supposedly run off with her kingdom. Dorothea is, in fact, quite similar to the princess-in-exile she pretends to be in the trick: like the character she plays, she cannot return home out of shame.

Amid this blurring between fiction and reality, Sancho's character stands out as the mediator between madness and sanity. Unlike the others, each of whom is either entirely mad or entirely sane, Sancho straddles the line between the real world and the fictional world. He sometimes sees the truth, but sometimes falls for trickery. Seemingly half-conscious of what is going on around him, Sancho can be deceived into believing that Dorothea is really a princess but can just as easily deceive Don Quixote into believing that he has gone to see Dulcinea. Sancho's perspective proves important in the novel because through him we can judge Don Quixote's madness more fairly. We recognize the complexity of Don Quixote's madness when we see Sancho get carried away by it even when he seems to recognize it for what it is.

Ironically, Dorothea makes mistakes in her fictional story in the same chapter in which Dapple reappears even though he is supposedly already present. Cohen and others conclude that this inconsistency concerning Dapple indicates nothing more than an oversight on the part of Cervantes, a failure to edit the text fully before sending it to publication. Cohen suggests that if the error was unintentional, it might indicate that Cervantes intended the story be told orally, and so such small details would be more likely to pass unnoticed. But one can argue that if the error was unintentional, Cervantes tried to make it seem intentional when he published the second half of the novel a decade later. At the beginning of the Second Part, the characters actually discuss the First Part and conclude that its inconsistencies concerning Dapple can be corrected in a second printing of novels. This discussion highlights the fictitious nature of the novel, fitting in with the idea that literature is unable to tell the whole truth.

The First Part, Chapters XXXII–XXXVII

Chapter XXXII

Don Quixote, Sancho, the priest, the barber, Dorothea, and Cardenio arrive at the same inn where Sancho was tossed in the blanket. The barber takes off his disguise. The innkeeper, his wife, their daughter, and Maritornes join the priest, the barber, Dorothea, and Cardenio to talk about Don Quixote's madness and the books that have caused it. The priest and the barber want to burn the inn's collection of chivalric literature, but the innkeeper defends these tales, claiming that the government would not allow them to be published if they were untrue. But he adds that he will never become a knight-errant, because he knows chivalry is out of style. He tells the company that an unnamed man left an old trunk filled with books and manuscripts at the inn. The priest, despite his skepticism about the books of chivalry, asks the innkeeper for permission to copy one of the manuscripts, which the priest reads to the crowd.

Chapter XXXIII

The manuscript that the priest reads tells the story of Anselmo and Lothario, two close friends who live in Florence, Italy. Anselmo marries Camilla,

a beautiful woman who has the purest intentions. One day Anselmo tells Lothario he wants to test Camilla's purity and chastity. He asks Lothario to woo Camilla to see whether she will be able to resist. Lothario, in a lengthy speech filled with sonnets and classical references, tells Anselmo that his plan is stupid, but Anselmo does not listen.

Lothario falsely tells Anselmo, on several occasions, that he has tried and failed to woo Camilla. Anselmo spies on the two of them and realizes that Lothario has been lying to him—he has not made any false advances toward Camilla. Anselmo makes Lothario swear that he will try to woo Camilla while Anselmo is away for a week on a business trip. Lothario does try to woo Camilla and inadvertently falls in love with her. Camilla sends a letter to Anselmo begging him to come home and rescue her from his deceitful friend Lothario.

Chapter XXXIV

Anselmo receives Camilla's letter, realizes that his plan is working, and refuses to come home early. Over time Camilla succumbs to Lothario's advances and they begin a love affair. When Anselmo returns, Lothario tells him that Camilla has resisted his seduction. Anselmo adds to the plan by asking Lothario to write love poetry for Camilla, which the lovestruck Lothario is now thrilled to do. Camilla's maid, Leonela, helps Lothario and Camilla carry on their affair and takes a lover of her own. Though worried that Leonela will bring her shame, Camilla does not interfere because she fears Leonela will tell Anselmo about her affair with Lothario.

One morning, Lothario sees Leonela's lover leaving the house and thinks Camilla has taken another lover. In a fit of jealous rage, he tells Anselmo that he has seduced Camilla but that she has not yet acted on her love for him. Lothario reveals Camilla's plan to meet him in a closet on a certain day and encourages Anselmo to observe his wife's infidelity. In the meantime, Camilla tells Lothario of her concerns about Leonela, prompting Lothario to realize his mistake. He tells her about his blunder, and she forms a plan to trick Anselmo so that she and Lothario can carry out their affair in the open. She meets Lothario in the closet

and, aware that Anselmo is watching, pretends to stab herself rather than give up her purity to Lothario. The deception works, enabling Camilla to carry on her affair with Lothario without Anselmo ever suspecting.

Chapter XXXV

While the priest is reading, Sancho rushes into the room to tell everyone that Don Quixote has slain the giant who captured Dorothea's kingdom. Rushing to see what has happened, they find that Don Quixote is battling the giant in his sleep and has destroyed several of the innkeeper's wineskins, which Sancho has mistaken for a giant's head. When Sancho cannot find the giant's head, he becomes crazed, fearing that he will not get his governorship.

The priest finishes reading the story contained in the manuscript. Anselmo discovers Leonela's affair. To prevent Anselmo from killing her, Leonela promises to tell him something very important the next morning. When Anselmo tells Camilla about his discovery, she runs away to Lothario afraid that Leonela will reveal their affair to Anselmo. Camilla and Lothario flee. When Anselmo wakes the next morning, Leonela has run away. Not finding Camilla either, Anselmo goes to Lothario for help and discovers that Lothario too has left. On the way to another friend's house, he learns of Lothario and Camilla's treachery from a traveller. Reaching his friend's house, Anselmo dies of grief at the loss of his honor. The priest announces that he likes the manuscript but finds it impossible to believe that a husband could be so stupid.

Chapter XXXVI

Ferdinand and Lucinda arrive at the inn in disguise. After a tearful scene, Ferdinand reunites with Dorothea, and Cardenio reunites with Lucinda. Ferdinand tells the company that he and his friends kidnapped Lucinda from the convent where she stayed after running away from the wedding. He now swears his love for Dorothea. Everyone weeps with joy except Sancho, who weeps for the loss of his kingdom now that he and Don Quixote know that Dorothea is not a princess.

Chapter XXXVII

In distress, Sancho wakes Don Quixote to tell him that Dorothea is not really a princess and that the giant he fought in his dreams was really just a wineskin. Don Quixote dismisses Sancho's news merely as further evidence of the inn's enchantment. He reassures Dorothea that he has sworn to be her protector and that it was unnecessary for her father to turn her into an ordinary maiden to protect her from the enchantment. He then tells her about his fight with the giant, but he stops mid-story, remarking that "time, which unveils all mysteries, will reveal this one when we least expect it."

Dorothea tells Don Quixote that she is still the Princess Micomicona and still needs his assistance. While Don Quixote berates Sancho for his apparent lie, a traveller dressed like a Moor—hereafter referred to as the captive—and his beautiful companion, Zoraida, arrive at the inn in search of a place to stay. The captive tells the company that Zoraida is a Moorish lady of rank who wants to be baptized. Over dinner, Don Quixote gives a speech about the relative merits of scholars and knights. He is so articulate that at that moment no one thinks he is crazy.

Analysis: XXXII–XXXVII

The section containing the reunification of the lovers provides the dramatic climax of the novel's First Part, and the fact that Don Quixote misses the action of this scene demonstrates how much his madness has alienated him from the rest of the characters. Coming as it does on the heels of the tragic ending of Anselmo's story, the reunification scene appears especially sweet, though unlikely. The capture and return of Don Quixote to the inn is almost inconsequential in comparison, since Don Quixote continues to live on in his fantasy life. Lost in his madness, he completely misses the reunion, which represents the climax of his madness and alienation and raises doubts about his position in the novel overall. Here, Don Quixote appears to exist almost outside of the events of the novel itself, as though he were nothing more than a guide. The circumstances related to his return bring the necessary parties

together, but the crux of the action in this section takes place with him outside the picture.

Just as every climax is followed by a falling action, Don Quixote's climax of madness dissipates as he gradually begins to see things for what they really are. In the incident with the wineskins, he wakes to the realization that others do not believe him. He refrains from telling Dorothea about slaying the giant out of an awareness that she will not believe him. He then shocks the crowd with the clarity and sanity of his speech, which lauds the virtues of knights over those of scholars. His understanding that others think he is crazy continues to grow throughout the novel, although at any given moment this awareness ebbs and flows. At this point in the novel, his awareness keeps his madness in check, since his madness has grown to such an extent that he is in danger of falling out of his own story.

The priest's reading of Anselmo's tale adds more layers to the narrative in *Don Quixote*. The manuscript, which is found in a trunk that an unknown man has left at the inn, is shrouded in so much mystery that we do not know who narrates the story. Furthermore, the story, written in a high style with long and improbable speeches, seems to be fictional rather than historical. Despite its alleged falsehood, however, the tale is more plausible than many of the stories in the novel that the characters insist are true. It is certainly more plausible than the scene in which the lovers reunite, a scene that Cervantes heralds as true to life. The priest's observation that Anselmo's story cannot be true because a husband would never be that stupid is ironic. Compared with the unlikely reunion of the four lovers in *Don Quixote*, the stupidity Anselmo displays in the story is plausible.

The First Part, Chapters XXXVIII–XLV

Chapter XXXVIII

Don Quixote continues his lecture on the superiority of knights over scholars. Everyone is impressed with his intelligence, but still no one believes that chivalry is more important than scholarship. The captive begins to tell the story of his imprisonment and rescue in Moorish lands.

Chapter XXXIX

The captive tells the group that he left home many years earlier after his father divided the family estate and ordered his three sons to leave home to become a soldier, a priest, and a sailor, respectively. He gives a lengthy account of the wars in which he has fought. The captive mentions that he fought alongside Don Pedro de Aguilar, Ferdinand's brother.

Chapter XL

The captive recounts his capture and imprisonment in Algiers. One day he was on the roof of the prison when Zoraida, who had fallen in love with him from afar, dropped some money to him from a window. Along with the money, she included a letter that said she had converted to Christianity and that offered him financial assistance to escape, free her, and bring her to Spain to be his wife. The captive used Zoraida's money to ransom himself and some of his fellow prisoners, buy a boat, and make arrangements to free Zoraida from her father's home.

Chapter XLI

The captive says that he snuck into Zoraida's father's garden to see her, told her of his plan to escape from Algiers, and finally kidnapped her. Zoraida's father awoke while the captive was kidnapping her, so they brought the father with them on the ship and dropped him off some miles away from the city. The captive and his companions rowed for several days until French pirates robbed them of all Zoraida's riches. Once they arrived in Spain, they determined to go to the captive's father, baptize Zoraida, and get married.

Chapter XLII

After the captive finishes his story, a judge named Licentiate Juan Perez de Viedma arrives at the inn with his beautiful daughter, Clara. The captive realizes that the judge is his brother. The priest, after successfully testing the judge to see whether he still loves his missing brother, reunites the

two. While everyone sleeps that night, a youth sings love ballads outside the inn. Cardenio creeps into the women's room to tell them to listen.

Chapter XLIII

Dorothea wakes Clara so she can hear the singing, saying it is the most beautiful singing she has ever heard. Clara reveals that the singing youth is actually a young lord who used to live with his father next door to her and the judge. Clara adds that he has followed her in disguise because he is in love with her. She and the young lord have never spoken, but she loves him and wishes to marry him. Dorothea promises to try to arrange for Clara to speak with him.

Meanwhile, Don Quixote stands guard outside the inn. The innkeeper's daughter and her maid, Maritornes, fool him into giving them his hand through a window. They tie his hand to a door and leave him standing in his stirrups on Rocinante's back for the night. Four horsemen arrive and mock Don Quixote as they try to enter the inn.

Chapter XLIV

Don Quixote makes such a racket that the innkeeper comes out to see what is going on. The horsemen are servants to the father of Don Louis, the young lord in love with Clara. The four horsemen find Don Louis and order him to come home with them, but he refuses. The judge takes Don Louis aside and asks him why he refuses to return home. Meanwhile, two guests attempt to leave the inn without paying, and the innkeeper fights them. Don Quixote refuses to assist the innkeeper because he has sworn not to engage in any new adventures until he has slain the giant who captured Dorothea's kingdom.

Cervantes returns to the conversation between Don Louis and the judge. Don Louis tells the judge of his love for Clara and begs for her hand in marriage. The judge says he will consider the proposal. Meanwhile, Don Quixote, through words alone, has successfully persuaded the two guests to quit beating the innkeeper. A barber—the same one from whom Don Quixote

earlier steals the basin that he believes is Mambrino's helmet—arrives at the inn. The barber accuses Don Quixote and Sancho of theft, but Sancho defends them by claiming that Don Quixote vanquished the barber and took the items as spoils of war.

Chapter XLV

The people at the inn play along with Don Quixote's insistence that the basin is actually Mambrino's helmet. A huge fight breaks out, but Don Quixote finally ends the brawl by asking the priest and the judge to calm everyone. The judge decides to bring Don Louis to Andalusia along with him and Clara, and he tells the servants about his plan. A member of the Holy Brotherhood, attracted to the scene by the outbreak of violence, realizes that he has a warrant for Don Quixote's arrest for freeing the galley slaves. Don Quixote laughs at the man and rails about the stupidity of trying to arrest a knight-errant.

Analysis: XXXVIII–XLV

The captive's tale and the story of Clara and Don Louis demonstrate that at least several of Don Quixote's contemporaries share one of his most insane features—unfailing romantic idealization of women they do not even know. With the exception of Dorothea, the women in the First Part of *Don Quixote* are weak-willed, subservient creatures who rely on their husbands as masters. In the novel, men revere women for their beauty and their chastity, but women remain mere objects over whom men fight or drive themselves insane. Even Dorothea ingratiates and humiliates herself in order to win back Ferdinand's affection, which seems to be little more than lust. In order to rebel, the women must dress as men and run away from home, but even then they remain frightened young maidens stranded in situations largely beyond their control. Zoraida stands out as the one seeming exception to this model, since she has the will to steal from her father in order to run away from home with the captive. As a Moor, she can step outside the bounds of the conventional roles governing the lives of Cervantes's women, just as the character Anna

Felix is able to do late in the Second Part. Nonetheless, we never hear Zoraida speak, and this muteness symbolizes her lack of power. Therefore, even though her ethnicity and religious passion make her unusual and suggest that she might serve as the model for a new kind of woman in the narrative, she remains an object and a marginalized figure.

With the story of the captive and Zoraida, Cervantes provides a largely autobiographical account of his life in captivity. Cervantes tried to escape captivity in Algiers three times before he was finally ransomed. The fanciful escape of the captive may, then, represent one of Cervantes's fantasies. The detailed account of the war in which the captive fought is merely a soldier's account of important historical events, nothing more. It bears no relation to the actual characters or events of the novel and therefore stands out as material related more to Cervantes's life than to the story in progress.

Class distinctions come into sharp focus at the inn. The captive and Zoraida, who are nobles motivated only by the loftiest intentions, succeed in their crazy scheme to get back to Spain. The lower-class characters, on the other hand, become embroiled in various skirmishes. The innkeeper is forced to squabble with two guests over payment for the night's lodgings, while Sancho and the travelling barber brawl over a harness. The wickedness of the innkeeper's daughter contrasts sharply with the goodness of Clara, the noble judge's daughter, highlighting the difference in their social station. Even Don Quixote preserves the standards of his day, upholding the virtues of the aristocrats and condemning the insolence of the poor. He finds Sancho's impertinence unbearable when it seems to impinge upon his sense of nobility.

The First Part, Chapters XLVI–LII

Chapter XLVI

The priest pacifies the members of the Holy Brotherhood by convincing them that Don Quixote is insane and should not be held accountable for his actions. Still under the impression that Dorothea is the Princess Micomicona,

Don Quixote tells her that the time has come to continue their journey to her kingdom so that he may slay the giant. Sancho objects, telling everyone that he has seen Dorothea kissing Ferdinand and that she cannot, therefore, be a princess.

Don Quixote is infuriated by Sancho's insolence, but Dorothea pacifies him by telling him that Sancho must have been subject to an enchantment that made him believe he saw her kissing Ferdinand. Don Quixote forgives Sancho, who says he believes that the inn must be enchanted because of all the bizarre things that have happened. Sancho adds, however, that he is still certain that the blanket-tossing he received there was an act committed by real people. Don Quixote assures Sancho that the blanket-tossing was an enchantment as well, which is why Don Quixote has not avenged it. Sancho does not believe him.

The barber and priest contrive a plan to get Don Quixote back to their village without the help of Dorothea and Ferdinand. They build a cage, capture Don Quixote, bind him, and place him in the cage on the back of an ox cart. The barber then pretends to be a sage and predicts Don Quixote's valorous return to his village and his reunion and marriage to Dulcinea.

Chapter XLVII

Don Quixote accepts the enchantment that he believes is afflicting him but wonders why he travels so slowly. He concludes that enchantments must have changed since the old days, when knights were whisked away on clouds and traveled at very high speeds. Sancho warns Don Quixote that he is not enchanted, but Don Quixote does not believe him. As the group leaves, the innkeeper gives the priest some papers from the trunk the unknown man left at the inn. The priest is anxious to read them.

On the road, the group meets another priest, a canon of Toledo, who rides with the group for a while to talk to the priest from Don Quixote's hometown. Sancho challenges the barber, saying that he knows that the barber and the priest have taken Don Quixote captive. The barber threatens to lock

Sancho in the cage too, and Sancho becomes indignant. The canon tells the priest that he considers books of chivalry to be ridiculous lies and harmful to the populace. He also berates the style of chivalric books, saying that they should all be banished. The priest says he agrees for the most part but that he is able to appreciate them.

Chapter XLVIII

The canon says he began writing a book of chivalry but stopped because he discovered that an author must write either good books that the crowds dislike or low-quality books that displease the critics. He then rails against the state of theater in Spain and suggests that there should be a government official to oversee decisions about which plays get produced and which do not. Sancho tells Don Quixote that the barber and the priest have been faking his enchantment out of jealousy of his great deeds. Sancho asks Don Quixote whether he needs to use the bathroom; Don Quixote replies that he does.

Chapter XLIX

Sancho tells Don Quixote that since enchanted people have no bodily needs, Don Quixote's need to use the bathroom proves that he is not enchanted. Don Quixote responds that there are new kinds of enchantment but promises nonetheless to try to free himself. When the party stops for lunch, the priest lets Don Quixote out of the cage, and he and the canon argue about chivalry. The canon marvels that Don Quixote mingles fact and fiction with no concern for the difference.

Chapter L

Don Quixote tells the story of the Knight of the Lake, a fantasy story of enchantment that, he claims, proves the delightful and fascinating nature of stories of knight-errantry. Don Quixote also tells the canon that since becoming a knight-errant he himself has been brave, courteous, and well-bred, enduring many adventures and enchantments.

A goatherd appears, chasing a goat that has wandered into the group's picnic. The group is amused that the goatherd speaks to the animal. The goatherd then tells the group that he is a peasant but that he knows how to converse with both men and beasts. The priest says that he is not surprised.

Chapter LI

The goatherd, whose name is Eugenio, tells the group that he and his friend Anselmo have been driven to the simple life of shepherds by Leandra, a beautiful, wealthy young woman from their town. Leandra ran away with an arrogant soldier who then robbed her and abandoned her in a cave in the woods. Eugenio tells the group that the woods in the area ring with sounds of the sobbing shepherds who are in love with Leandra. Leandra's father put her in a convent in hope that over time she would recover her honor.

Chapter LII

The goatherd insults Don Quixote and the two of them brawl as the others cheer on. Don Quixote then sees a group of penitents carrying an icon of the blessed Virgin Mary, on their way to pray for rain. Thinking that the penitents are rogues who have captured a lady, he attacks them and gets a beating from one of them. Sancho thinks Don Quixote has died and mourns his friend in a particularly eloquent elegy. Sancho's words stir Don Quixote, who agrees to go home until his luck changes. When Don Quixote and Sancho arrive home, Sancho's wife (now called Juana), asks him what he has brought her. He puts her off, promising that he will soon be made a governor and that he has tales that will surely amuse her for now. Don Quixote's niece and housekeeper welcome him home but worry about his madness. They fear he will disappear again, which, Cervantes tells us, he will.

Cervantes ends the narration by saying that he searched far and wide for more manuscripts about Don Quixote but that he was unable to find them until he met an aged doctor who found a leaden box in the remains of an ancient hermitage. The box contained several parchments with sonnets and epitaphs to Don Quixote, Sancho, and Dulcinea, which Cervantes reproduced.

Finally, he tells us that, at great cost to himself, he has found an account of the third expedition of Don Quixote and hopes to publish it.

Analysis: Chapters XLVI–LII

The priest proves to be a muddled character in this section, as we see his mixed opinion about stories of chivalry and his mixed reaction to Don Quixote's madness. When the priest takes the manuscripts from the innkeeper to read—just as when he reads aloud Anselmo's story and when he preserves several of the novels in Don Quixote's library—he shows his unwillingness to purge all tales of chivalry from the world. As much as he rails against the tales as harmful to the general public, it is plain that he enjoys them. In his conversation with the canon, the priest reveals an attachment to the author's craft that exceeds his apparent disdain for the tales' inaccuracy. The priest's attitude toward his friend Don Quixote is likewise inconsistent. On the one hand, he berates Don Quixote for Don Quixote's insanity and leads the attempt to bring him home and cure him. On the other hand, however, he apparently enjoys his prank, playing along by caging Don Quixote and telling him that he is under an enchantment. The priest's alternating attitudes reveal a human affection for books and imagination, even as he outwardly claims to reject both on intellectual grounds.

Cervantes has often been criticized for the insensitivity shown by the group that watches the fight between Don Quixote and the goatherd in Chapter LII. The cheering by the priest and the others—as though they are at a dogfight—suggests that, on a certain level, they consider Don Quixote to be no more than an animal. They first laugh at his madness and then condescend to him by playing along with the idea of the enchantment. Here, they view him as nothing more than a creature for their enjoyment, manipulating him to suit their purposes, sometimes at great physical cost to him. In this regard, the priest's and the barber's interest in bringing Don Quixote home safely and curing him is bizarre and inexplicable. One possibility is that the two men are acting out of concern for Don Quixote's niece and housekeeper, who genuinely seem to care for Don Quixote.

The unfriendly motivations of those who lead Don Quixote back to his home affect Don Quixote, causing him to lose sight of his goals and ideals. At the end of the First Part, Don Quixote nearly relinquishes his chivalric ideals without replacing them with anything of equal value or passion. He appears to be deceived about his enchantment to the end, eventually conceding to go home. He explains that he will rest at home until his foul luck has passed, but he makes no mention of his vow to Dorothea or his love for Dulcinea. This listless quality is not in keeping with his characteristic stubborn insistence on formalities and vows. The end of the First Part is therefore abrupt and somewhat unsatisfying to those who appreciate Don Quixote's spirit and passion. Nonetheless, his decline appears reasonable in light of the ill intentions and petty desires of those around him on his journey home. Sancho stands out from the others, however, as someone who continues to care about Don Quixote. Despite Sancho's self-serving intentions, he displays an honest interest in his friend.

21.4 SELF-CHECK EXERCISE

- Q.1. Cervantes respectfully dedicates his novel to _____ and asks him to protect the novel from ignorant and unjust criticism.
- Q.2. Don Quixote refuses to remove his_____, which is stuck on his head, but he enjoys his meal because he believes he is in a great castle where princesses are entertaining him:
- (a) cap
 - (b) shoes
 - (c) crown
 - (d) helmet
- Q.3. On its surface, *Don Quixote* is a parody of _____ tales.
- Q.4. Cervantes claims, his work is a translation of _____ story.
- Q.5. Who arrives with the news that the shepherd-student Chrysostom has died from his love for Marcela ?

- Q.6 What happens when Don Quixote mixes ingredients and drinks the potion ?
- Q.7 Give an account of Don Quixote and Sancho's encounter with a chain gang of galley slaves.

21.5 ANSWER-KEY TO SELF-CHECK EXERCISE

1. The Duke of Bejar.
2. helmet
- 3 Chivalric
- 4 Benengeli's
- 5 A goatherd named Peter

21.6 SUGGESTED READING

- Canavaggio, Jean. Cervantes. J. R. Jones, trans. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1990.
- El Saffar, Ruth, ed. Critical Essays on Cervantes. Boston: G.K. Hall, 1986.

**MIGUEL DE CERVANTES SAAVEDRA :
*DON QUIXOTE***

STRUCTURE

22.1 Introduction

22.2 Objectives

22.3 Detailed Chapterwise Summary of the Second Part of *Don Quixote* with Critical Analysis

**The Second Part, The Author's Dedication of the Second Part–
Chapter VII**

The Second Part, Chapters VIII–XV

The Second Part, Chapters XVI–XXI

The Second Part, Chapters XXII–XXVIII

The Second Part, Chapters XXIX–XXXV

The Second Part, Chapters XXXVI–XLI

The Second Part, Chapters XLII–XLVI

The Second Part, Chapters XLVII–LIII

The Second Part, Chapters LIV–LX

The Second Part, Chapters LXI–LXVI

The Second Part, Chapters LXVII–LXXIV

22.4 Self-Check Exercise

22.5 Answer-Key to Self-Check Exercise

22.6 Suggested Reading

22.1 INTRODUCTION

Don Quixote written by Miguel de Cervantes, is a seminal work of Western literature, first published in two parts in 1605 and 1615. The novel follows the adventures of the self-proclaimed knight-errant Don Quixote, a man driven mad by his obsession with chivalric romances. Accompanied by his loyal squire, Sancho Panza, Don Quixote sets out to revive chivalry and bring justice to the world, though his perception of reality is often distorted by his delusions. This picaresque novel blends comedy and tragedy, offering a satirical yet affectionate portrayal of its misguided hero.

22.2 OBJECTIVES

The objective of this lesson is to discuss the story of the novel in detail to enable the learner to analyse the text critically.

22.2 DETAILED CHAPTERWISE SUMMARY OF THE SECOND PART OF *DON QUIXOTE* WITH CRITICAL ANALYSIS

The Second Part, The Author's Dedication of the Second Part–Chapter VII

Cervantes offers his novel to the Count of Lemos, saying that he is sending Don Quixote back out into the world to “purge the disgust and nausea caused by another Don Quixote who has been running about the world masquerading as the Second Part.” Cervantes says he rejected an offer from the emperor of China to be the rector of a college of Castilian language in which *The History of Don Quixote* would be the primary textbook. Because the emperor did not send an advance, Cervantes sent his envoy away and decided to commend his work to the Count of Lemos.

Prologue

Cervantes introduces the Second Part, the account of the third expedition of Don Quixote, by railing against an author who has published a false sequel to

the First Part of *Don Quixote*. Cervantes suggests that if readers run into that author, they should tell him a story about a man who, using a hollow cane, inflated a dog to the astonishment of bystanders. The man's response to his audience's questioning was to ask them whether they think it is an easy thing to blow up a dog.

Cervantes also wants the reader to pass on an anecdote about a man who carried around a heavy slab that he drops on dogs in the street. One day, a dog owner beats the man, making him too afraid to drop slabs on any more dogs. Cervantes suggests that the author should be likewise afraid to publish any more bad books. Cervantes defends his honour against the personal slights the other author has made, saying that although he may be poor and a cripple, he has earned his wounds in battle and is proud of them.

Chapter I

Cervantes tells us that Cide Hamete Benengeli continues his account of Don Quixote's adventures by recounting the priest and the barber's visit to Don Quixote after a month of not seeing him. Don Quixote initially seems sane, but when the priest gets him started talking about chivalry, it becomes clear that Don Quixote has not given up his intention of being a knight-errant.

Chapter II

Sancho comes to visit Don Quixote to find out when they will again embark on their quest for adventure, but the niece and the housekeeper try to keep Sancho out of the house. Don Quixote orders them to let Sancho in and then asks Sancho about Don Quixote's reputation in the village. Sancho tells him that many consider him mad. He then tells Don Quixote about the publication of a book of their previous adventures. The book contains so many details that Sancho marvels that the writer could have learned about all of them. Don Quixote thinks that the writer is a sage enchanter, but Sancho says the writer is a Moor whose name is Cide Hamete Aubergine. Sancho goes to the village to find the student Sampson Carrasco, from whom he has heard about the book.

Chapter III

While Sancho fetches Sampson, Don Quixote muses that the Moorish enchanter who wrote the book must either want to tear him down or exalt him. He laments that the author is a Moor because he does not believe that Moors ever tell the truth. Sampson arrives and tells Don Quixote about the book and its author, Cide Hamete Benengeli. He also mentions that the book has been translated into Christian tongues. Sampson criticizes the novel for the anecdotal digressions in which Don Quixote plays no part but says that everyone enjoys reading the novel nonetheless. He also mentions several textual inconsistencies regarding the appearance and disappearance of Dapple. Sancho says he can explain those inconsistencies but runs off with a stomach ache.

Chapter IV

Sancho returns and explains that a thief stole Dapple from him when he was strung up. Sampson says that Sancho's explanation does not justify the inconsistencies in the book, and Sancho replies that perhaps the author or the printer made an error. He explains how he spent the hundred crowns he found in the saddlebags in the Sierra Morena, and Sampson promises to tell the author so that he can revise the book. Sampson says that the author promises to publish the Second Part when he finds the manuscript. Sampson then tells Don Quixote about a jousting festival in Saragossa and suggests that he seek fame there. Don Quixote begs Sampson to write a poem in which each line begins with a letter of Dulcinea's name.

Chapter V

Cervantes tells us that "the translator" doubts that this chapter is authentic because it seems impossible that Sancho would have spoken in such a high style. Cervantes does not identify this translator. Sancho goes home to Teresa—whose name at the end of the First Part is Juana—and tells her that he will soon be leaving with Don Quixote on another adventure. Teresa warns Sancho not to dream too much and to be content with his station. Sancho replies that he wants to marry off his daughter and make her a countess.

Teresa objects to this plan, saying that people are happier when they marry within their own class.

Chapter VI

The niece and housekeeper beg Don Quixote to stay at home. They say that if he must go he should join the king's court rather than go on more adventures. Don Quixote insists that he must do what he was born to do and pursue his life as a knight-errant. He discusses honour and pedigree, claiming that he knows of only two ways to increase fame and honour—through arms or letters—and that he has chosen arms.

Chapter VII

Distressed at Don Quixote's madness, the housekeeper begs Sampson to speak with him. Sancho visits Don Quixote, and they discuss Teresa's advice and her wish that Sancho receive wages from Don Quixote. Don Quixote refuses to fix Sancho's wages and tells him to stay home if he does not have the strength to be a squire. Sancho weeps and promises to come along. Sampson too visits Don Quixote, but instead of dissuading him from his journey, Sampson encourages him to embark at once. Cervantes alludes to a plan Sampson has developed with the priest and the barber and says that the plan will be detailed later in the history.

Analysis: Dedication–Chapter VII

Cervantes' mention of the imposter who publishes the false sequel of the story makes the novel more self-referential. In real life, an author by the name of Avellaneda wrote a false sequel to *Don Quixote* that appeared several years after the original publishing of the First Part of *Don Quixote*, in 1605. This false sequel not only inspired Cervantes to hurry along his own sequel, which he published in 1615, but it altered the context of that text. Cervantes chose to mention the false sequel in his fictional tale, further blurring the line between the novel's fictional and historical aspects.

On the one hand, we can argue that the story of Don Quixote remains fictional. In the First Part, the only person who speaks of Cide Hamete Benengeli

is Cervantes himself. It is logical for Cervantes to be the only one to do so, since if Cide Hamete Benengeli did indeed originate the tale, as Cervantes claims he did, then the characters in the tale would not be able to speak about him as their author. However, the world of the novel in the Second Part is not logical, and Sancho refers directly to Cide Hamete Benengeli. Therefore, if we still have any doubts about the tongue-in-cheek nature of Cervantes' initial claim that he is writing from the historical manuscript of Cide Hamete Benengeli, we can put those doubts to rest. One could argue that in the decade that passed between the publication of the First Part and the Second Part, the characters, if they were historical personages, would have been able, in real life, to find out about Benengeli, Avellaneda, and even Cervantes. But the Second Part picks up only one month—not years—after the end of the First Part. Nevertheless, Sancho later writes a letter to his wife and dates it 1615, the year the Second Part was published. Because of the deep correlation between the actual, historical publication of the novel and the story it contains, this letter should also date the first half of the novel as 1615, but we know that it was published in 1605. This discrepancy emphasizes the novel's fictional nature.

The concept of authorship, especially as it relates to Don Quixote's control of his own fate, plays a large role in the Second Part. The idea of vague authorship illuminates the conflict between the imaginary world and the real one, a conflict that Don Quixote himself embodies. Essentially, Cervantes allows the characters to influence their own story like authors. When Don Quixote expresses his concern over the accuracy of the First Part of the novel, he, the main character of the First Part, doubts the accuracy of his own story. Moreover, despite the fact that Cervantes states in the First Part that he is the translator of Cide Hamete Benengeli's work, he now refers to an unidentified translator without providing any clues about this translator's identity. We are thus left with an even blurrier picture of the truth.

The trickery of Don Quixote's friends in this opening section reveals their desire to see Don Quixote once again go out to pursue his fantasies. The priest, who spends so much time in the First Part trying to coax Don Quixote

home, delights in the fact that his friend is apparently still mad. The priest and Sampson mimic Sancho, who buys into Don Quixote's whims even though he knows that his master is insane. By encouraging Don Quixote's madness, these characters reveal their own desire for adventure. They express this desire vicariously through Don Quixote.

The Second Part, Chapters VIII–XV

Chapter VIII

Cervantes says that Cide Hamete Benengeli blesses Allah before recounting that Don Quixote and Sancho once again go on the road. He begs us to forget the past adventures and pay attention only to what is to come. Don Quixote and Sancho think it as good sign that Rocinante and Dapple bray and stamp as they set out. Sancho thinks it an especially good sign that Dapple whinnies louder than Rocinante does. Cervantes interjects to say that Benengeli's history does not indicate whether Sancho's belief is based on astrology.

Don Quixote decides to go to El Toboso to visit Dulcinea. On the road, he and Sancho discuss the importance of fame. Don Quixote says that people value fame even in its negative form. Sancho says he believes they should try to become saints rather than knights because saints go to heaven. Don Quixote argues that the world already has enough saints and that he was born to be a knight-errant.

Chapter IX

Don Quixote and Sancho decide to enter El Toboso at night. Sancho panics because he does not know which house is Dulcinea's, even though he supposedly visited her to give her Don Quixote's letter in the First Part. The two run into a ploughman who tells them he does not know of any princesses in the area. They go outside the town to sleep.

Chapter X

Cervantes says that the author, presumably Cide Hamete Benengeli, wanted to skip this chapter for fear that he would not be believed but decided

to write it anyhow. Don Quixote dispatches Sancho to fetch Dulcinea and bring her to him. Sancho panics because he has never seen Dulcinea and fears he will be attacked if people see him wandering around the town looking for women.

Sancho sits down for a while and has a lengthy dialogue with himself. He concludes that he can fool Don Quixote by abducting the first peasant girl he sees riding on the road and presenting her as Dulcinea. Sancho sees three young peasant girls riding. Cervantes says that the author does not clarify whether these girls are riding on horses or donkeys. Sancho rushes to Don Quixote and informs him that Dulcinea is approaching with two maids on horseback, but Don Quixote objects that he can see merely three peasants on donkeys.

As the girls ride by, Sancho grabs one of them and falls down on his knees before her, praising her as Dulcinea. Though appalled by her appearance—and especially by her smell—Don Quixote believes that she is Dulcinea. He says that a wicked enchanter who wants to deny him the pleasure of seeing Dulcinea's beauty has changed her into a peasant. Sancho describes Dulcinea to Don Quixote as he claims he saw her, including a mole with seven or eight nine-inch hairs coming out of it.

The Second Part, Chapters XI–XV

Chapter XI

On the road, Don Quixote and Sancho encounter a wagon filled with actors in costume. Don Quixote stops to speak to them, but one of the costumes frightens Rocinante and the horse throws Don Quixote to the ground. One of the actors imitates Don Quixote's antics by stealing Dapple and reenacting the scene. Don Quixote rides Rocinante up to the wagon to avenge the injury but stops short when he sees the whole company lined up in the road, armed with rocks. Sancho takes his master out of the group, pointing out that the actors are not knights and that they returned Dapple unharmed.

Chapter XII

While sleeping in a grove, Don Quixote and Sancho meet another knight who claims to be pining away for his mistress, Casildea de Vandalia, to whom he recites poetry. The narrator calls him the Knight of the Wood and calls his squire the Squire of the Wood. Sancho and the Squire of the Wood go off into the night to talk while Don Quixote and the Knight of the Wood stay.

Chapter XIII

Sancho and the Squire of the Wood eat and drink while discussing their shared expectation that their masters will make each of them a governor of an isle. They also tell each other about their children. Sancho laments Don Quixote's madness but says that he is honest and pure, unlike the Knight of the Wood, who, according to the Squire of the Wood, is quite a rogue. Sancho declares that he is a great taster of wines, and the two of them drink until they pass out, still holding the wine flask.

Chapter XIV

Meanwhile, Don Quixote and the Knight of the Wood discuss their knightly adventures. The Knight of the Wood tells Don Quixote that his lady has sent him into the world to make all knights proclaim her beauty. He says that his greatest conquest was his defeat of Don Quixote de la Mancha. Don Quixote tells the Knight that this cannot be possible and challenges him to a duel. The Knight of the Wood accepts but says that they must wait until morning. They rouse Sancho and the Squire of the Wood, who discuss whether they too should fight.

At dawn, Sancho sees the Squire of the Wood's nose and becomes so frightened by its size that he scurries up a tree before the duel. The Knight of the Wood dresses in such fine, shiny material that he is renamed the Knight of the Mirrors, but he refuses to show Don Quixote his face. Don Quixote pauses to help Sancho throwing off the timing of the duel. As a result, the Knight of the Mirrors cannot get his horse going again fast enough, enabling Don Quixote to knock him off his horse quite easily. Don Quixote removes the Knight of the

Mirrors's visor, revealing Sampson Carrasco. Don Quixote does not believe that Sampson stands before him; he thinks that he is still under an enchantment. The Squire of the Wood removes his pasteboard nose and reveals himself as Thomas Cecial, Sancho's neighbor. Sampson confesses Dulcinea's beauty, and Don Quixote spares him.

Chapter XV

Sampson reveals that he has been plotting with the priest and the barber to vanquish Don Quixote and to order him to go home for two years. Sampson's squire leaves him, but Sampson vows revenge on Don Quixote.

Analysis: Chapters XI–XV

Sancho's trickery in the incident with the peasant women and Sampson's deception about his identity emphasize the willingness of Don Quixote's peers to engage him in his world of deception and fantasy. Sancho is motivated by self-interest, whereas other characters play along due either to a desire to help Don Quixote or a need for a diversion. In all cases, Don Quixote's imagination shapes the novel's plot. Don Quixote's dreams direct the actions of other characters, just as they do when Dorothea pretends to be a princess in the First Part. This playfulness influences the characters' interactions with Don Quixote throughout of the novel.

The costumes worn by the actors on the wagon and by the Knight of the Mirrors show that the physical world has begun to imitate Don Quixote's fantasies. Previously, Don Quixote misperceives everything around him, seeing windmills as giants and prostitutes as princesses. Now, however, the physical world has become difficult for anyone to define clearly. Rocinante, mistaking the costumed actor for an apparition, is terrified. Moreover, the Knight of the Wood becomes known as the Knight of the Mirrors in the middle of the chapter due to his change in appearance. Cervantes now mixes reality with elements of deception, which validates Don Quixote's misperceptions and makes him seem more sane. Whereas earlier it is easy to perceive Don Quixote as insane, it now seems that the world around him is illogical. As a result, Don Quixote

becomes more of a driving force in the novel, almost as though his fantasies have begun to dictate the course of the physical world around him.

Cervantes brings up religion by mentioning Benengeli's praise of Allah and Sancho's suggestion that he and Don Quixote try to become saints. The novel repeatedly touches on the importance of being a Christian in Cervantes's Spain. Cervantes often brings up religion in reference to Sancho, who, Cervantes says, is an old Christian and whose wise aphorisms often stem from Christian sources. The captive's earlier tale about the Moor Zoraida's passionate longing to convert to Christianity and subsequent baptism makes Zoraida appear to be a good and beautiful woman. This depiction of the essential goodness within Zoraida despite her Moorish heritage contrasts with Cervantes' and his characters' dismissal of her Moorish countrymen as liars and cheats. Moreover, in the discussion on the way to Chrysostom's funeral, in Chapter XIII, Don Quixote compromises his extreme faith in chivalric traditions in order to allow knights-errant to praise God. Christianity, then, unlike most of the social customs of the times, receives a positive and somber treatment in the novel and stands alone as the one major subject Cervantes does not treat with a mordant, ironic tone. Here, at the beginning of the third expedition, Cervantes treats Christianity with more reverence than at any other point in the novel.

The Second Part, Chapters XVI–XXI

Chapter XVI

Sancho is confused about the identity of the Squire of the Wood and the Knight of the Mirrors. Don Quixote tries to convince him that the Squire of the Wood is not Sancho's neighbor but rather an enchantment, just as the Knight of the Wood is an enchantment that took the form of Sampson in an attempt to force Don Quixote's mercy. Sancho, who knows that the supposed enchantment of Dulcinea was a deception, does not know what to think now.

On the road, Don Quixote and Sancho meet Don Diego de Miranda, a gentleman dressed all in green. Don Quixote introduces himself to Don Diego

and tells him about the history that was written about his first adventures. Don Diego marvels that knights-errant still roam the land and is glad to hear about the book, which he thinks might correct all the nonsense written in books of chivalry. Don Diego describes his life. Sancho begins to think the man is a saint and kisses his foot. Don Diego tells Don Quixote about his son, who abandoned the sciences in favour of poetry. Don Quixote responds with an eloquent speech about the value of poetry, which he compares to a delicate maiden. As they talk, Sancho wanders over to some shepherds to beg for milk.

Chapter XVII

Don Quixote sees a cart coming toward him hung with the king's flags, and he senses another adventure. He summons Sancho, who puts the curds he just bought from the shepherds into Don Quixote's helmet. When Don Quixote puts on the helmet, the curds run down his face, and he thinks that his brain is melting. When he recognizes the curds in the helmet, he accuses Sancho of foul play, but Sancho replies that an enchanter must have put them there.

Don Quixote hails the cart. The mule driver tells him that the cart carries two lions for the king. Don Quixote challenges the lions, and despite everyone's protests, he insists on having the cage opened. Cervantes interjects that Cide Hamete Benengeli extols Don Quixote's bravery before continuing the narrative. The others run away and the lion tamer opens the cage. Don Quixote faces the lions with "childish bravado," but the lion just stretches and lies down again. Don Quixote decides not to provoke the lions. He calls the others back, and the lion tamer recounts the story of Don Quixote's valour. Don Quixote tells Sancho to give the mule driver and the lion tamer some money for their troubles and renames himself the Knight of the Lions. Don Quixote declares that he is not as insane as he may seem—that it is better for a knight to err on the side of courage than on the side of cowardice. Don Diego invites Don Quixote and Sancho to his home, and Don Quixote accepts.

Chapter XVIII

Don Quixote receives a warm welcome at Don Diego's home, where he meets Don Diego's son, Don Lorenzo, and asks him about his poetry. Don

Lorenzo answers him, all the while wondering to himself whether Don Quixote is mad. After discussing the merits of poetry, Don Lorenzo decides that Don Quixote is indeed a madman, but a brave one with a keen intelligence. Don Lorenzo recites some poetry for Don Quixote, who says it is the best that he has ever heard. Don Lorenzo is flattered despite his belief that Don Quixote is insane. Don Quixote stays with Don Diego for four days and then sets out in search of more adventures.

Chapter XIX

Don Quixote and Sancho meet some students and peasants on their way to the wedding of Quiteria the fair and Camacho the rich. The students tell Don Quixote about Quiteria and a man named Basilio who is in love with her. They say Quiteria is marrying Camacho only because of his wealth. In the course of the discussion, two of the students quarrel about the merits of studying swordplay and challenge each other to a duel in which Don Quixote acts as umpire. The more advanced student prevails, proving, according to the narrator, that skill always prevails over strength. The group arrives at the village in the middle of the night, but Don Quixote insists on sleeping outside the village in the fields.

Chapter XX

Don Quixote and Sancho arrive at the wedding, which the narrator describes in great detail. Sancho praises Quiteria for marrying for wealth rather than love, but Don Quixote does not.

Chapter XXI

Quiteria and Camacho arrive at the wedding. Basilio shows up and throws himself on his dagger. With his dying breath, he refuses to confess himself to God unless Quiteria will marry him. Quiteria agrees. Basilio reveals that it is a trick—he has not stabbed himself at all. A brawl ensues. Don Quixote halts it, announcing that no one has the right to fight over wrongs committed in the name of love. Basilio and Quiteria remain married, and Camacho takes satisfaction

in the idea that Quiteria would always have loved Basilio anyway. Don Quixote and Sancho leave the party to accompany the newlyweds.

Analysis: Chapters XVI–XXI

Don Quixote is a changed man in the Second Part of the novel. He is milder and wiser, less belligerent, less gullible, and more compassionate toward those he meets. The incident with the lions exemplifies this change in his nature, since he neither attacks the mule-driver for contradicting him nor insists on provoking the lion. The Don Quixote of the First Part would almost certainly do both. Don Quixote's discussion with Don Lorenzo about poetry reveals a deep intellect that rarely shows itself directly in the First Part. Much like his master, Sancho also matures into a wiser and fuller character. In this second part, we learn about Sancho's family, fears, vanities, and greedy and gluttonous nature but also see his fidelity to Don Quixote. Both Don Quixote and Sancho more frequently engage in conversations with other characters, fleshing out the deeper aspects of their personalities.

Whereas Don Quixote often appears alienated from the main plot in the First Part, in the Second Part he remains involved in the action even when the action imitates the style of the First Part. Even Camacho's wedding, one of the few events in the Second Part that strongly recalls the First Part, does not alienate Don Quixote. As in each of the subplots in the First Part, Cervantes presents the relevant characters, whose lives prove important because they influence the outcome of the novel and inform its major themes. Camacho's wedding raises questions about the supremacy of love—one of Don Quixote's obsessions—and about the wisdom of stepping outside class distinctions, an issue that figures prominently in Sancho's governorship later in the Second Part. Don Quixote's quelling of the brawl by nonviolent means involves him in the event and illustrates a change in him that is consistent with his maturation. Camacho's wedding bears directly on Don Quixote's character and plot advancement, unlike, for example, Anselmo's story or even the captive's tale in the First Part. The Second Part, on the whole, is more fluid than the First Part precisely because Don Quixote involves himself in the events.

In these chapters, we see that Cide Hamete Benengeli's perspective on Don Quixote's actions begins to differ from Cervantes'. Benengeli's praise of Don Quixote's bravery in the battle with the lions, for instance, contrasts with Cervantes's own reference to Don Quixote's "childish bravado." These competing authorial perspectives highlight the underlying need for us, as readers, to judge Don Quixote's fantasies by ourselves. In the Second Part, as characters start to modify their behaviour according to Don Quixote's ideas and as Don Quixote's antics impact the other characters less harshly, Cervantes emphasizes the positive sides of Don Quixote's faith against the backdrop of an outdated moral system. Whereas Don Quixote's personality is dangerously anachronistic earlier in the novel, it now appears endearing and quaint.

The Second Part, Chapters XXII–XXVIII

Chapter XXII

Don Quixote and Sancho leave for Montesinos' Cave with Basilio's cousin, an author who writes parodies of great classical works, as a guide. When the three arrive at Montesinos' Cave, Sancho and the guide lower Don Quixote into the cave by a rope. They wait for half an hour and then pull him up, only to find him asleep.

Chapter XXIII

Don Quixote tells Sancho and Basilio's cousin that when he went into the cave he found a small nook and fell asleep there. When he woke up he was in a beautiful field. An old man approached him, saying that he was Montesinos under a terrible enchantment. Montesinos confirmed that he cut out the heart of Durandarte, his cousin, when Durandarte died. He took the heart to Belerma, Durandarte's wife, at Durandarte's request. But, he says, Merlin has now put all of them under a spell so that they cannot leave the cave. Durandarte lies on the ground but occasionally sighs and speaks as if he were alive. According to Montesinos, Merlin prophesied Don Quixote's coming and foresaw that Don Quixote would lift their enchantments.

Don Quixote says he was in the cave for three days and three nights and saw Dulcinea in her enchanted form there. Sancho, who knows the truth about Dulcinea's enchantment, thinks Don Quixote is crazy. Don Quixote says he understands that Sancho only speaks out against him because he loves him. Don Quixote says that Sancho will soon realize that the story is true though it may appear fantastical to him now.

Chapter XXIV

Cervantes says that the translator found a note from Cide Hamete Benengeli in the margin of the manuscript, warning that he believed that Don Quixote's story was not true and that, in fact, Don Quixote himself renounced it as false on his deathbed. Basilio's cousin is thrilled by all the adventures in the cave and promises to use them in his books. Back on the road he, Don Quixote, and Sancho meet a man with a load of weapons who promises to tell them his story if they meet him at the inn where he is staying. They then meet a youth on his way to war, and Don Quixote commends the boy's bravery.

Chapter XXV

At the inn, Don Quixote meets the man with the weapons. The man tells him a story of two magistrates who lost a donkey on a mountain near his village. To recover the ass, the magistrates went around the mountain braying like asses themselves, and though they did not catch the donkey, they were very impressed with their own ability to imitate asses. Neighbouring villages heard about their frivolous antics, and now each time a member of the man's village passes a member of another village, the other villager brays at him. As a result, the two villages are going to war.

Master Peter, a great and well-renowned puppeteer, arrives at the inn with an ape that whispers people's fortunes into Master Peter's ear. Sancho tries to pay Master Peter to tell what his wife is doing now, but Master Peter falls to his knees, and the ape praises Don Quixote profusely. Don Quixote is flattered but believes Master Peter has made a pact with the devil. He asks the ape whether the incident in the cave was true or false, and the ape replies that some parts were true and some false.

Chapter XXVI

Master Peter puts on a puppet show for Don Quixote. The puppet show depicts the travails of a knight who goes to rescue his wife from foreign lands. Don Quixote becomes so convinced that the show is real that he attacks and destroys the entire set. He explains that his enchanters bear responsibility for his actions because they made him believe that the puppets were real. Don Quixote pays Master Peter for his troubles nonetheless. He also treats the guests to a meal and pays the innkeeper.

Chapter XXVII

Cervantes says that Cide Hamete Benengeli swears that Master Peter is actually Gines de Pasamonte, the galley slave whom Don Quixote frees earlier near the Sierra Morena. Benengeli then returns to the narration.

Don Quixote and Sancho meet up with the army from the village whose magistrates brayed like asses. Don Quixote tries to talk the men out of attacking the other village, saying that one man cannot possibly insult an entire village. He nearly persuades the villagers and then Sancho takes over. Sancho explains that braying is nothing to be ashamed of and begins to bray himself. Thinking that Sancho is mocking them, the villagers attack him and knock him unconscious. Don Quixote runs away. The other villagers never show up to battle, so the braying village goes home victorious and happy.

Chapter XXVIII

Don Quixote berates Sancho for stupidly braying to a group of villagers already sensitive to the subject of braying. He explains that he retreated because a knight should not act out of temerity. Sancho brings up the question of his wages again, and Don Quixote gets so angry that he tries to send Sancho away. Sancho, however, apologizes.

Analysis: Chapters XXII–XXVIII

The account of Montesinos' Cave marks the high point in Don Quixote's imaginative madness. Don Quixote recounts his dream to Sancho and to Basilio's

cousin with such detail and texture that, were it not for Sancho's objections, we might wonder whether the story is real. Don Quixote no longer speaks about things that other people can see and use to judge him as madman. In this instance, Don Quixote has the authority to transform a half hour in a dark cave into three days in a crystal palace. The story, in all its fantastic detail, reveals Cervantes' talent for storytelling and stands out from the rest of the novel as a unique display of imagination and descriptive force. The description is closely modelled on Trojan hero Aeneas' encounter with Dido in the underworld in Virgil's *Aeneid*. Only Sancho, assured by the knowledge that he previously deceived Don Quixote about Dulcinea's enchantment, keeps us from believing the description completely. Nonetheless, Don Quixote's gentle, caring statement—that he understands Sancho's bewilderment but that Sancho will soon realize the truth—suddenly seems more plausible than Sancho's rational argument.

The note in the margin that Cervantes mentions in Chapter XXIV deepens the puzzle of the novel's narration by raising the question of how many translators bear responsibility for the text. In the beginning of the Second Part, Sampson tells Don Quixote that the author intends to publish a second part as soon as he finds the manuscript, which the Moor has written in his own language and an unspecified "Christian" has written in his. If the Christian is Cervantes, it is hard to explain why Cervantes refers to him throughout as "the translator." If the Christian is not Cervantes, it is hard to imagine the role Cervantes plays in bringing the novel to us. This tension and further layering of authors, narrators, and voices draws attention to the circular form of the novel, and makes Don Quixote's sanity ambiguous. We are forced to question at all times what we are reading and wonder whose perspective is most accurate.

The reappearance of Gines de Pasamonte, disguised as Master Peter, exemplifies the way the second half of the novel mirrors the first. The reappearance of characters from the first half helps join the two parts into a single novel, despite the obvious differences between them. Cervantes clearly wants to establish his work as the authentic sequel to the first half, and tying the two parts together through his characters is one way he manages to do so.

The Second Part, Chapters XXIX–XXXV

Chapter XXIX

Don Quixote and Sancho come to the river Ebro, where they find a fishing boat. Don Quixote takes the empty boat as a sign that he must use it to aid some imperiled knight. Much to Sancho's dismay, they tether Rocinante and Dapple to a tree and set off in the boat. They do not go very far, but Don Quixote believes they have travelled two thousand miles. The boat reaches some mills, where Don Quixote and Sancho nearly perish. Some of the millers save them despite the curses of Don Quixote, who believes that the millers hold a trapped knight-errant in their mill, which he calls a castle. The fisherman who owns the boat arrives, and Don Quixote pays him off.

Chapter XXX

In the woods, Don Quixote and Sancho encounter a Duchess hunting with a Duke. Don Quixote sends Sancho to speak with the Duchess, and she receives him favorably, since she has read the First Part of the novel. She and the Duke resolve to treat Don Quixote according to the customs in books of chivalry. After initially falling off their respective mounts, Don Quixote and Sancho ride with the Duchess and the Duke to their castle.

Chapter XXXI

Don Quixote, seeing that the Duke and Duchess are treating him according to chivalric traditions, feels certain that he is a true knight-errant. Sancho is also thrilled at their reception, but when he asks one of the maidservants, Doña Rodriguez, to care for Dapple, she refuses and they get into an argument. At dinner, the Duke forces Don Quixote to sit at the head of the table. Don Quixote and Sancho amuse the Duke and Duchess with their frivolity. The Duchess takes a particular liking to Sancho, who repeatedly embarrasses his master with his simplicity.

Chapter XXXII

Don Quixote defends knight-errantry to a clergyman who condemns it as frivolity. The Duke promises Sancho that he will make him governor of some

isle, and the clergyman storms out in anger. The servants play a trick on Don Quixote by washing his head in a basin and pretending to run out of water in the middle so that he must sit at the table with a mound of suds on his head. The Duke forces them to wash his head in the same way to maintain the ruse.

The Duchess asks Don Quixote to describe Dulcinea. He says he cannot remember what Dulcinea looks like, since her memory was blotted from his mind when he saw her transformed into an ugly peasant by enchantment. The Duchess challenges Don Quixote on the fine points of his love for Dulcinea and asks how he can compare Dulcinea to other princesses when he cannot even prove that she comes from noble lineage. Don Quixote answers that Dulcinea's virtues raise her above her noble heritage. Meanwhile, Sancho goes off with the servants but comes running back in with several servants who want to clean him with dirty dishwater. Sancho implores the Duchess to intercede, which she does.

Chapter XXXIII

After dinner, the Duchess asks Sancho to accompany her to a cool place. Sancho agrees and, after making sure that the room contains no eavesdroppers, entertains her with stories of his adventures with Don Quixote. He tells her that he knows Don Quixote is crazy but he stays with him out of loyalty. Sancho tells her how he deceived Don Quixote into believing in Dulcinea's enchantment, but the Duchess convinces Sancho that he is the one who was actually deceived. She says that Dulcinea really was transformed into a peasant girl. Sancho tells the Duchess about his argument with her maidservant, Doña Rodriguez, and the Duchess vows to make sure that Dapple receives good care.

Chapter XXXIV

The Duke and Duchess go on a boar hunt with Sancho and Don Quixote. During the hunt, Sancho becomes afraid and attempts to climb a tree. The Duke tells Sancho that hunting helps to hone a governor's skill for warfare, but Sancho maintains his distaste for the sport. Suddenly the woods fill with the sound of drumbeats and Moorish battle cries. The devil appears to announce

the coming of Montesinos, who will give instructions to Don Quixote about how to disenchant Dulcinea. The noises continue and three wagons drive by. The wagons, which carry demons, are drawn by oxen with torches on their horns. Each of the wagons contains an enchanter who announces himself and then drives on.

Chapter XXXV

An enormous wagon arrives carrying penitents dressed in white linen and a beautiful maiden with a golden veil. Merlin, bearing the face of death's head, also rides on the wagon and addresses Don Quixote in verse, telling him that to disenchant Dulcinea, Sancho must whip himself 3,300 times on his bare buttocks and that he must do it willingly. This news distresses Sancho, who says that Dulcinea's enchantment is not his problem. The maiden on the wagon, who pretends to be Dulcinea, chastises Sancho for his reluctance to come to her aid, and the Duke threatens to take away Sancho's governorship if he does not comply. Sancho finally agrees but says that he will perform the whipping only when he feels like it. The scene pleases the Duke and the Duchess, who, it turns out, have arranged the whole trick in the first place.

Analysis: Chapters XXIX–XXXV

The Duke and the Duchess indulge Don Quixote's and Sancho's fantasies, validating both Don Quixote's belief that he is a grand knight-errant and Sancho's belief that he will gain a governorship by being a good squire. Through all of their trickery they exhibit their willingness to engage Don Quixote's madness. Don Quixote's imagination does not need to do much work to transform his stay at the Duke's castle into a magical one; it is the Duchess' imagination, not his, that drives most of his adventures there. Furthermore, the Duchess' indulgence of Sancho's high opinion of himself gives Sancho a chance to express his philosophy about life, which turns out to be quite wise and deeply rooted in Christian ideals of charity. By playing along with Don Quixote and Sancho rather than mocking them outright, the Duke and Duchess gain Don Quixote's and Sancho's trust. This trust gives them power over Don Quixote and Sancho, which they abuse to stage their elaborate ruse.

Cervantes uses the encounter at the castle to continue his critique of his era's conventional wisdom that social class corresponds to personal worth. Sancho is free to disagree with the lower-class Doña Rodriguez, but he is severely chastized by Don Quixote when he presumes to disagree with the Duke or the Duchess at dinner. According to the dictates of chivalry, Sancho, as a servant, may spar only with one of his own class. Likewise, Don Quixote treats the clergyman as roughly an equal, but he treats the Duke and the Duchess with the respect due to royalty. During their antics, the Duke and Duchess pretend that they are above everyone else, acting as puppeteers by stringing Don Quixote and Sancho along, tricking the men into believing each new fantasy simply for their own amusement. Though the Duchess does not appear overtly malicious, we see that she enjoys watching Sancho become more embroiled in Don Quixote's madness. The pleasure she takes is a symptom of her tendency to look upon the peasant squire with condescension, which compels us to disdain her. The Duchess begins to appear cruel, since she enjoys keeping Sancho in a confused and vulnerable position, most notably when she tells him to believe in the enchantment of Dulcinea despite the fact that it is clearly fake.

In highlighting the Duchess' awareness of the existence of the First Part of *Don Quixote*, Cervantes breaks down the wall between the work's factual and fictional components. The Duchess has knowledge of Don Quixote's past exploits, which shows that Cide Hamete Benengeli's so-called historical account has influenced the events and people Don Quixote encounters. Notably, Don Quixote himself has not read the novel, which accounts for his failure to understand the perhaps good-natured mockery of those who have read it. In essence, he fails to see himself the way other characters within the story see him. Cervantes implies that if only Don Quixote would pick up the book and begin reading his own story, he might respond differently to those around him. Because they have read the story, the Duchess and other characters later in the Second Part can share a joke with us. The result is dramatic irony, since we are aware of the joke while Don Quixote himself is not. This irony draws us deeper into the novel, further blurring the line between madness and sanity, truth and lies.

The Second Part, Chapters XXXVI–XLI

Chapter XXXVI

Sancho shows the Duchess a letter he wrote to his wife to tell her about his governorship. The Duchess shows the letter to the Duke over lunch. After lunch, to the sound of beating drums, a man appears, announces himself as Trifaldin of the White Beard, and requests that the Duke hear the plight of his maidservant. The Duke says he has heard about her misfortunes before and encourages her to come in.

Chapter XXXVII

Given his difficult history with the maidservants, Sancho fears that they will interfere with his governorship. Doña Rodríguez defends her profession and derides squires like Sancho. The Duke tells them to listen to Trifaldin's maidservant, who is hereafter referred to as the Countess.

Chapter XXXVIII

Cervantes says that Cide Hamete Benengeli briefly explains that the Countess Trifaldi's name—which means “the countess with the three skirts”—derives from her dress. Benengeli tells how she arrives accompanied by a dozen maids, all wearing black opaque veils. The Countess throws herself down before Don Quixote and begs his assistance, which he promises her. The Countess says she helped a knight at her king's court to gain access to the princess, whom she served as a maid. As a result, the princess got pregnant and had to marry the knight.

Chapter XXXIX

The Countess says that the princess's indiscretion so shocked her mother, the queen, that her mother died three days later. To punish the princess and the knight, the giant Malambruno turned the princess into a brass monkey and the knight into a metal crocodile on the queen's grave. Malambruno also posted a metal post between them with a note indicating that only Don Quixote can save them from their fate. Finally, in return for the Countess's treachery, Malambruno gave her and all the other maids beards that cannot be removed.

Chapter XL

Don Quixote swears to avenge the Countess and the princess. The Countess tells him that the giant will send a flying wooden horse named Clavileño the Swift and that Don Quixote must fly on this horse to journey to her country that night to fight the giant. Sancho dislikes the idea of flying anywhere on a wooden horse, but the Duchess convinces him that he must go with his master.

Chapter XLI

As the group waits in the garden, savages appear with a large wooden horse, which they deliver to Don Quixote with instructions that he blindfold himself and Sancho for the journey. Don Quixote pulls Sancho aside and asks him to whip himself a few hundred times to get started on the disenchantment of Dulcinea. Sancho, who dislikes the idea of riding on the back of a wooden saddle, refuses to whip himself.

The blindfolded Don Quixote and Sancho mount Clavileño the Swift and prepare to set off. At the last moment, Don Quixote, remembering the story of the Trojan horse, wants to check Clavileño's belly, but the Countess persuades him not to. Don Quixote turns a peg in Clavileño's forehead and they set off. The others blow wind in Don Quixote's and Sancho's blindfolded faces and bring fire near their heads to convince them that they are flying through the air and approaching the region of fire. The group then sets off firecrackers in Clavileño's belly, and the horse blows up, dumping Don Quixote and Sancho on the ground.

Upon waking, Don Quixote discovers that he and Sancho are still in the garden. Everyone else has fainted and lies on the ground nearby. They find a note on parchment paper saying that merely by attempting this feat, Don Quixote has accomplished it. The Countess has gone, and the Duchess and Duke tell them that she has embarked for home, happily beardless. Sancho tells the Duchess that he peeked as they flew and saw the earth no bigger than a mustard seed and that he played with the goats in heaven. Don Quixote says that since they could not have passed through the region

of fire without being burned up, Sancho must be either lying about the goats or dreaming. But afterward, Don Quixote whispers in Sancho's ear that he will believe his story about the goats of heaven if Sancho will believe his story about Montesinos's Cave.

Analysis: Chapters XXXVI–XLI

In these chapters, Sancho's appealing simplicity contrasts with the distasteful actions of the Duke and Duchess. The incident with the Countess centers on Sancho's desire to be taken seriously. Overwhelmed by the opinions operating against him, by the desire for a governorship, and by his loyalty to Don Quixote, Sancho decides to brave the heights of heaven on a wooden horse to free others from their enchantments. Despite his unwillingness to whip himself, his courage makes him one of the novel's most sympathetic characters. We cannot tell whether Sancho is lying or dreaming when he tells the story about the goats of heaven, but, regardless, his story indicates his simple desire to live within the fantasy and receive his governorship. It is his simplicity—not an evil greediness—that motivates Sancho, which later makes his resigned attitude after the failure of his governorship, touching.

Cervantes' sarcastic praise of Benengeli typifies his sarcastic praise of *Don Quixote*. Exalting over Benengeli's detail, Cervantes uses melodramatic phrases such as "O most renowned author!" which, in their sarcasm, imply a critical tone. Acting as both critic and author, Cervantes helps shape our experience of his work by interjecting editorial remarks and comments about the translation. He gives us two lenses through which to view his characters' actions—the lens of his characters' reactions and the lens of his own reactions. As such, he provides us with a double vision—not just of the novel's factual and fictional elements but also of the work's quality. Cervantes can exalt Benengeli's descriptive ability at the times that his own descriptive ability is at its best. Cervantes excuses his own flights of fancy—as with the account of Montesinos' Cave—by allowing Benengeli to say that the manuscript from

which he is working is dubious. This self-criticism contributes to the novel's ironic feel and self-referential tone.

Despite his occasional parodies of writers, in this section Cervantes completes his transition from a self-described historian into a masterful storyteller. We see his change in attitude in his choice of what to emphasize and what to downplay. In the First Part of the novel, Cervantes inserts chapter breaks whenever the characters sleep, and each chapter comprises a single encounter or a series of related encounters. Here, in shorter chapters, Cervantes inserts breaks according to the emotions in the scene. Whereas in the First Part he consistently ends each section with an explicit indication that some speech or incident will be finished in the next chapter, here he makes much less use of such guiding statements. Instead, he allows us to hear more frequently what the characters—both the main characters and the incidental ones—think about the events of the novel. In the Second Part, the main characters, especially Sancho clearly develop, but even inconsequential characters such as Doña Rodriguez have rich personalities. In essence, the Second Part reads like a traditional novel, rather than a parody of stilted chivalric tales.

The Second Part, Chapters XLII–XLVI

Chapter XLII

The Duke and Duchess, pleased with Don Quixote's and Sancho's reaction to the encounter with the Countess Trifaldi, send Sancho to his governorship right away. Sancho says he would rather have a piece of the sky than an isle, but the Duke says he can provide him only with an isle. The Duke and Duchess dress Sancho up and pack him off to a town, which he believes is an isle. Don Quixote gives Sancho advice on how to rule and reminds him never to be ashamed of his humble background. He also tells Sancho never to worry about injuring himself when confronting an enemy, to marry only a woman who will not take bribes, and to have pity and leniency on criminals.

Chapter XLIII

Don Quixote warns Sancho to refrain from eating garlic and onions, since only peasants eat such things; to walk slowly and speak deliberately; to eat little; not to drink too much; not to belch; and not to use so many proverbs. Don Quixote laments Sancho's illiteracy, but Sancho says he will prevent anyone from discovering this deficiency by pretending that his writing hand has been paralyzed. Sancho asks if Don Quixote thinks he will make a good governor, since he would rather just be Sancho than imperil his soul as a bad governor. Don Quixote assures him that he will be an excellent governor precisely because of this attitude.

Chapter XLIV

Cervantes interjects that "the real original history" claims that Cide Hamete Benengeli wrote this chapter in the form of a complaint addressed to himself for having written such a dry story and for not including as many digressions as he did in the First Part.

As he leaves for his governorship, Sancho mentions to Don Quixote that one of the stewards accompanying him looks and sounds exactly like the Countess Trifaldi, but Don Quixote dismisses Sancho's implication. After a sorrowful good-bye, Sancho sets out. Seeing that Don Quixote misses Sancho, the Duchess remarks that she has many maids who would gladly help cure Don Quixote's melancholy. Don Quixote refuses her offer and goes straight to bed after dinner, insisting on being alone to keep himself from temptation. Don Quixote hears two women under his window arguing about whether one of them, named Altisidora, should sing a ballad to the man she loves. Altisidora does sing the ballad, and Don Quixote concludes that she loves him. He laments his fate that no woman can see him and not fall in love. Meanwhile, Cervantes tells us that Sancho wishes to begin governing and awaits us.

Chapter XLV

The towns people receive Sancho and set him up on the governor's chair, where they have written a proclamation that Don Sancho Panza took

governorship on a certain date. Sancho has the proclamation read to him and then requests that no one call him “Don,” since he is not a Don. He judges a series of cases, each involving some form of trickery, that the towns people bring before him. Sancho resolves each case with wit and wisdom, impressing the town with his governing abilities.

Chapter XLVI

In the morning, Don Quixote passes Altisidora, who pretends to faint. He asks a servant to put a lute in his room that night so that he may disclose, in ballad form, his love for Dulcinea. Eager to play a trick on Don Quixote, Altisidora tells the Duke and Duchess about Don Quixote’s plan. They all listen to his ballad to Dulcinea that night. As Don Quixote sings, one of the servants lowers a rope with bells on it and a bag of cats with bells on their tails onto the balcony above Don Quixote’s window. The bells and the cats make a terrible noise, frightening Don Quixote and all those in the house. In the commotion, a couple of cats get into Don Quixote’s room, and one of them jumps onto his face, bites his nose, and claws him. The Duke, who has rushed up to the room to see what is the matter, removes the cat. Altisidora tries to woo Don Quixote as she bandages his face.

Analysis: Chapters XLII–XLVI

In this section, Don Quixote and Sancho become intelligent and sensitive individuals when they are removed from situations involving chivalry. Don Quixote shows remarkable sense and compassion in his practical advice to Sancho about how to run his government, and Sancho demonstrates similar sense in his handling of the problems the townspeople send him. Despite his illiteracy, Sancho shows his remarkable ability to see through the Duke’s tricks. Now distanced from Don Quixote for the first time since the end of the First Part, he does not attribute anything to enchantment or knight-errantry. Don Quixote does much the same: in contrast to his misinformed behavior toward Altisidora, his advice to Sancho concerning political matters is sensible and would serve a governor well.

Don Quixote's advice that Sancho not put on airs of good breeding—and Sancho's acceptance of this advice—stands in stark contrast to Don Quixote's need to play the role of the knight-errant. In effect, he tells Sancho to be himself—a message that, on its surface, conflicts with everything we know about Don Quixote. The fact that Don Quixote has not read the historical account of his adventures—the First Part of *Don Quixote*—indicates that he does not wish to observe his actions from anyone else's perspective. Instead, he chooses to live a life of self-deception. At the same time, however, he never deceives others: unlike the Duke and Duchess and all those who exploit Don Quixote's madness in a belittling and insulting way, Don Quixote simply presents himself sincerely. His intentions are so exaggeratedly noble that, when he fears (erroneously) that Altisidora has fallen in love with him, he tries to make it clear that he is devoted to another woman in order to prevent future heartbreak for her.

The incident with the cats is the first of several events in which the Duke's and Duchess's pursuit of self-amusement physically harms Don Quixote. What may appear at first to be a harmless prank becomes an insensitive and haughty act of cruelty. It is no longer possible to ignore the negative impact of the Duke and Duchess's lack of concern for others. Just as Don Quixote's inability to see the effect of his actions in the First Part nearly kills the farm boy, the Duke and Duchess here show no regard for Don Quixote's welfare. However, unlike Don Quixote, who would probably put an end to any plan he knew to be harmful, the Duke and Duchess compel Altisidora to woo Don Quixote even as she tends to his wounds. In this way, the two, who seem so kindly and courteous when we first meet them, slowly become the villains in this section.

The Second Part, Chapters XLVII–LIII

Chapter XLVII

Sancho goes to dinner hungry on the first day on his alleged isle, only to discover that a physician there will not let him eat anything for fear that it might

be bad for him. In a fury, Sancho threatens the physician and sends him out of the room. A courier then arrives with a letter from the Duke telling Sancho that he has learned about a plan to attack the isle and to kill Sancho. Sancho becomes convinced that the physician is one of the men threatening his life. A businessman arrives to ask Sancho for a letter of recommendation for his “bewitched” son (who likely suffers from autism) to marry the maimed, hunchbacked daughter of his neighbor. When the businessman also asks Sancho for six hundred ducats, Sancho flies into a rage and threatens to kill him.

Chapter XLVIII

In the middle of the night, Doña Rodriguez creeps into Don Quixote’s room to ask him a favor. She tells Don Quixote the story of her daughter, who was wooed by a farmer’s son who now refuses to marry her. The Duke refuses to force the farmer’s son to marry Doña Rodriguez’s daughter, since the farmer is wealthy and the Duke does not want to risk losing the money he collects from the farmer. Don Quixote agrees to help Doña Rodriguez. She tells him that the Duchess has such a nice complexion because a physician drains the evil humors out of her legs. Doña Rodriguez’s announcement shocks Don Quixote because he considers the Duchess an upright woman, but he admits that if Doña Rodriguez says it is true it must be so. At this point, someone rushes in and slaps and pinches both Doña Rodriguez and Don Quixote.

Chapter XLIX

Sancho encounters two criminal incidents on his rounds and then comes across a young girl dressed as a boy. The girl begins to cry, telling Sancho that her father, a widower, keeps her locked up day and night and never lets her see the world. She has switched clothes with her brother, she says, and snuck out to see the town because she is curious. As she tells her story, a guard catches her brother. Sancho takes them both home and tells them to be more careful next time.

Chapter L

The Duchess and Altisidora, Cervantes tells us, were listening outside Don Quixote's door to Doña Rodríguez's story about the Duchess's legs. It was the Duchess and Altisidora who ran in and pinched the two. The Duchess then sent a page to Teresa Panza to deliver Sancho's letter, along with a letter and a necklace of coral from the Duchess. Teresa receives the page and is thrilled by the news that her husband has been made a governor. She runs off to tell Sampson and the priest, who do not believe her until they speak with the page. Sampson offers to take dictation for Teresa's letter back to Sancho, but she does not trust him and goes to a friar to have him write it for her.

Chapter LI

The morning after his rounds, Sancho hears the petition of some judges who cannot decide whether to hang a man. The judges sit by a bridge whose owner demands that anyone wishing to cross must disclose his or her destination. If the person crossing tells the truth, he or she may pass, but if the person lies, he or she must be hanged on the gallows on the other side. A man has come to the bridge saying that he is going to be hanged on the gallows, which has confused the judges. If they set him free, then the man will be condemned by law to hang on the gallows, but if they hang him, then they must subsequently free him. Sancho sets the man free on the grounds that it is better to be too lenient than too strict.

Sancho receives a letter from Don Quixote that includes more advice about governing, along with the news that Don Quixote plans to do something that will anger the Duke and Duchess. Sancho replies with a long letter full of news, asking Don Quixote not to provoke the Duke and Duchess, since he does not want to lose his governorship. Sancho then makes the only laws he imposes during his governorship: a declaration that wine may be imported from anywhere as long as it clearly states its place of origin, along with a decree that he will lower the price of footwear, fix the wages of servants, and forbid the blind from singing about miracles unless the miracles are true. These laws

please the populace so much, Cervantes says, that they still remain in effect and people call them “The Constitutions of the great Governor Sancho Panza.”

Chapter LII

His wounds from his fight with the cats are now healed, and Don Quixote resolves to leave for the jousting tournament at Saragossa. Before he can ask the Duke’s permission to leave, however, Doña Rodriguez and her daughter enter the great hall and throw themselves at Don Quixote’s feet, begging him to avenge the wrong the farmer’s son has done to them. Don Quixote promises to do so, and the Duke agrees to facilitate a duel.

The page returns from Teresa Panza with a letter for the Duchess and one for Sancho. The group reads both the letters. The letter to the Duchess tells of Teresa’s desire to go to court in a coach in order to do honour to her husband’s name. Teresa also includes some acorns that she has harvested at the Duchess’s request. Teresa’s letter to Sancho rejoices in his success and tells some news about the village. The group applauds, laughs, and marvels at the letters.

Chapter LIII

In the middle of the night after his seventh day in office, Sancho hears cries of an attack on his isle. Playing a joke on him, his people urge him, against his will, to fight off the supposed enemies. They wrap him tightly between two shields and force him to begin marching, but he cannot march and falls to the ground, where they trample him. They then tell Sancho that they have prevailed against the enemy and praise him. But Sancho says that he must now abdicate his governorship, since he was never meant to lead. He says he will go tell the Duke of his decision, and he leaves on the back of his faithful Dapple.

Analysis: Chapter XLVII-LIII

The incident with Doña Rodriguez and the conspiracy against Sancho further highlight the snobbery of the Duke and Duchess and, by contrast, exalt Don Quixote and Sancho for their magnanimity in the face of difficulty. While the Duke refuses to help the despairing Doña Rodriguez, even though she is

his employee, Don Quixote gladly takes up her quest, making no distinction between her and the noble ladies he serves. The Duchess exhibits her nastiness by opening Sancho's mail with no concern for his privacy and not even delivering the letter to him until he leaves the castle for good, later in the Second Part. Sancho's mercy toward the man heading to the gallows contrasts with the Duke's contrived, pitiless assault on Sancho's "isle." The Duke and Duchess treat Don Quixote and Sancho as pawns—as characters in a play performed for their entertainment. The honourable and humble actions of Don Quixote and Sancho increase our distaste for those who treat them poorly.

The Panzas, for all their simplicity, turn out to be two of the wisest characters in the novel. Teresa warns Sancho not to wander too far from his God-given sphere. When the burden of office proves too much for him, Sancho gives it up without bitterness, longing to return to a better life as plain-old Sancho. Teresa also shows sense and intuition in her distrust of Sampson, who does show himself to be untrustworthy. Sancho's laws—though they largely reflect the simplistic concerns of a peasant—prove so effective that they remain, according to Cervantes, codified in the town as "constitutions." Indeed, despite the Panzas' denseness and inscrutability, their proverbs are often more intelligent than the lofty but insincere words of Don Quixote. More important, the Panzas' wisdom sharply contrasts with the conniving actions of the Duke and the Duchess. Though the Duke and Duchess continue to mistreat the Panzas, the commoners rise above the pettiness of the nobles in their acts of sacrifice, discipline, and humility.

The puzzling situations of the townspeople create a diversion in the narration, much as the captive's tale and Anselmo's story do in the First Part. Like the stories in the First Part of the novel, these situations, such as the girl who dresses up as a boy in order to see the city and the indecisive judges at the bridge, are independent from the main story. But unlike in the First Part, Sancho now takes an active role in the situations he confronts. The situation of the indecisive judges at the bridge, for example, requires Sancho to identify and enact a solution. Nonetheless, these episodes feel strangely disconnected

and fantastic, since they are very different from the issues a real governor would likely have to resolve. It is interesting to note that when faced with these more fantastical trials of governorship, Sancho performs very well and pleases his constituents. When faced with a more realistic trial, however, such as the attack on his governorship, Sancho is completely overwhelmed and unable to cope.

The Second Part, Chapters LIV–LX

Chapter LIV

The dishonourable lover of Doña Rodriguez's daughter, whom Don Quixote intends to fight, has fled the country. The Duke orders the lover's footman, Tosilos, to take his place in the duel against Don Quixote. Meanwhile, as Sancho and Dapple head toward the castle, they encounter a group of German pilgrims along with Sancho's old neighbour, Ricote the Moor, who left Spain when the king exiled the Moors. Ricote, who is on his way home to dig up some treasure he buried there, complains about his separation from his family during his exile. Sancho tells Ricote about his governorship, and Ricote asks what Sancho gained from his term in government. Sancho answers that he learned that he cannot govern anything but a herd of cattle.

Chapter LV

After leaving Ricote, Sancho and Dapple fall into a pit from which they cannot escape. Don Quixote finds them and gets others to help them out. Don Quixote and Sancho head back to the castle, where Sancho tells the Duke and Duchess about the end of his governorship. The Duke says he is grieved that Sancho has left his post as governor so soon but says that he will find Sancho a better position at the castle. The Duchess says she will have someone care for Sancho's badly bruised body.

Chapter LVI

On the day of the duel, the Duke removes the steel tips from the lances so neither of the combatants will be killed and takes several other measures to ensure a harmless fight. When Tosilos sees Doña Rodriguez's daughter, however,

he falls in love and refuses to charge Don Quixote. Instead, he proposes to the daughter. Thinking that he is the farmer's son, she accepts but soon discovers the trick. Don Quixote assures the Duke that this transformation is nothing but the work of an evil enchanter, but the Duke, knowing the truth, locks up Tosilos.

Chapter LVII

Don Quixote and Sancho bid the Duke and Duchess farewell and Sancho happily receives Teresa's letters from the Duchess. As the pair starts to leave, however, Altisidora, pretending to be crushed that Don Quixote does not love her, utters a curse, in sonnet form, against him. She berates his cruelty to her and accuses him of stealing three handkerchiefs and a garter. But when the Duke questions her, she admits that she has the garter.

Chapter LVIII

On the road, Don Quixote and Sancho encounter some workmen carrying icons of saints to a nearby church. Don Quixote greatly admires the icons. In a wood beside the road, Don Quixote becomes entangled in some bird snares, which he mistakes for an evil enchantment. The two shepherdesses who set the snares appear and invite Don Quixote and Sancho to the new pastoral paradise they and others from their village are trying to create. Don Quixote declines the invitation but is very impressed. He vows to stand in the middle of the highway for two days, forcing everyone who passes to admit that these two shepherdesses are the most beautiful maids in the world after Dulcinea. Shortly after Don Quixote takes up his position on the road, however, a herd of bulls comes down the road. The herdsmen warn Don Quixote to step aside, but Don Quixote, Sancho, Rocinante, and Dapple are crushed.

Chapter LIX

Don Quixote and Sancho stop at an inn, which Don Quixote, for once, does not mistake for a castle. Eating supper, they encounter two gentlemen who have read the counterfeit sequel to the First Part of *Don Quixote*. Don Quixote exposes the book as fake and the men criticize the book vehemently.

Don Quixote also refuses to read the book, not wanting to give its author cause to gloat that people are reading it. When the two men tell Don Quixote that the false Don Quixote also traveled to Saragossa for a jousting competition, Don Quixote determines that he will never set foot in that town but will go to Barcelona instead.

Chapter LX

Sick of waiting for Dulcinea's disenchantment, Don Quixote tells Sancho that he has decided to whip Sancho himself. The two argue. Sancho knocks Don Quixote down and, before letting him up again, makes Don Quixote swear he will not whip him. Don Quixote and Sancho then meet a band of thieves who robs them, although the thieves return the money at the command of their leader, Roque Guinart. Roque recognizes Don Quixote from the stories about him and says he never believed him to be real before now.

After a brief encounter with a distressed young woman who has killed her lover out of mistaken jealousy, Roque allows a group of wealthy individuals to keep most of their money, even giving some to two poor pilgrims traveling with them. Roque then kills one of his thieves for grumbling about his generosity. Roque sends a letter to a friend in Barcelona to alert him of Don Quixote's imminent arrival.

Analysis: Chapters LIV–LX

Don Quixote's encounter with the two men who have read the sequel to the First Part of the novel further blurs the line between fiction and reality. By this point, Don Quixote has begun to accept reality: he finally sees an inn as merely an inn and accepts that he must pay for his accommodations. Yet his return to reality comes just after the bulls crush him for standing his ground, an act that raises questions about his sanity. Still, he displays an ability to distinguish between the accurate First Part and the counterfeit sequel, refusing to read the sequel and disparaging its falsehood. Adding to the confusion is Don Quixote's refusal, in Chapter LIX, to go to Saragossa. At the end of the First Part, Cervantes tells us that the history indicates that Don Quixote goes

to Saragossa on his next expedition. Now, however, it seems that Cervantes was either wrong or lying, since Don Quixote disobeys the very text in which his exploits are recounted.

As the novel draws toward its close, the status of the knight-errant declines, replaced by the virtue and strength of the peasant. When Sancho overpowers Don Quixote, Don Quixote's defeat and Sancho's evolution are nearly complete. Sancho the squire, who at the beginning of the novel would never even consider challenging his master's word, now physically knocks Don Quixote down without even apologizing, and even forces Don Quixote to swear an oath to him. Sancho's power and importance in the novel eclipse Don Quixote's literally trampled stature. At the same time, the chivalric qualities to which Don Quixote adheres so fiercely for so long have begun to lose their hold on him as he becomes more practical and realistic—and compassionate and caring—human being.

The story of Tosilos, the lackey whom the Duke forces to fight Don Quixote for the Duke's amusement, is a glaring example of the Duke's and Duchess' cruelty. The two combatants fight exclusively for the entertainment of two wealthy people who in their boredom are amused by the travails of the Countess and her dishonored daughter. Though the Duke takes steps to ensure that neither Tosilos nor Don Quixote will get hurt during the battle, he does not tell them that he has done so, because he wants them to sweat and suffer as though they were in a real battle. Later, when we learn that Tosilos has been locked up for his refusal to fight and that Doña Rodriguez's daughter has been sent to a convent, the despicable nature of the Duke and Duchess becomes even clearer. Moreover, while the Duke and Duchess outwardly express grief for Sancho's troubled governorship, Cervantes writes about this grief with irony and doubts its sincerity. Though the Duke and Duchess claim to be upset at Sancho's "signs of having been badly bruised and worse treated," it is clear that Sancho does not merely have "signs" of bruises but that he is bruised. The Duke and Duchess meddle with their servants' lives merely for the sake of meddling, showing a clear enjoyment of power and a lack of compassion for others.

The Second Part, Chapters LXI–LXVI

Chapter LXI

Don Quixote and Sancho enter Barcelona with a great following as the guests of Roque Guinart's friends. A boy in town places burrs in Rocinante's and Dapple's tails, causing the two animals to throw their masters, much to the amusement of everyone except Don Quixote and Sancho.

Chapter LXII

Don Quixote and Sancho's host, Don Antonio Moreno, confides in Don Quixote that he owns an enchanted brass head that answers any questions asked of it. The next day, Don Quixote and Sancho parade around Barcelona with thousands of people following them. Don Antonio's men place a sign on Don Quixote's back that identifies him, and all the people of the town call to him. Don Quixote interprets their calls as proof of his fame. At a ball that evening, Don Quixote dances until he drops, and Sancho is embarrassed for him.

The next day, the brass head speaks to the guests via a hidden tube that allows a servant in the next room to hear and answer questions. Don Quixote asks the head whether the incident in Montesinos' Cave was real, and the head says that the incident was partly true and partly false. Don Quixote then asks whether Sancho will be whipped in order to disenchant Dulcinea, and the head answers that though Sancho's whipping will go slowly, Dulcinea's disenchantment will eventually be accomplished. Don Quixote then goes to a publishing house, where he discusses the art of translation with a translator and expresses his preference for histories that can be proved to be authentic.

Chapter LXIII

Don Quixote, Sancho, and Don Antonio visit the galleys. As a prank, the men hoist Sancho onto their shoulders and pass him around the ship. The ship amazes Sancho, who concludes that he must be either in hell or in

purgatory. The galley captain spies a pirate ship in the distance, which they approach and stop. A skirmish ensues, and two of the galley soldiers die. Upon questioning, the captain of the Moorish pirate ship turns out to be a Christian woman, Anna Felix, who is an exiled Moor returning to Spain for a treasure her father buried before he left. Sancho's friend Ricote, a tourist on the ship, recognizes Anna, his daughter, and they embrace. Together, they invent a plan to save Anna's lover, Don Gregorio, who remains stranded in Moorish lands.

Chapter LXIV

Riding around one morning, Don Quixote encounters the Knight of the White Moon, who challenges Don Quixote and makes him swear to go home and stay there for a year if he is defeated. Don Quixote agrees and the two fight. The Knight of the White Moon conquers Don Quixote but says that he will not defame Dulcinea's beauty. Don Quixote accepts the condition that he will return home for one year.

Chapter LXV

Don Antonio and others desperately want to know the true identity of the Knight of the White Moon, so they follow him to an inn and pester him until he admits that he is Sampson Carrasco. Don Antonio chides Sampson for trying to bring Don Quixote back to his senses when people are deriving so much pleasure from his madness. Meanwhile, Don Gregorio, rescued from Algiers, returns to Barcelona, where he is happily reunited with Anna Felix.

Chapter LXVI

A forlorn Don Quixote departs Barcelona with Sancho, who urges his master to cheer up, saying that a good man should be patient in all things. Sancho suggests that they hang Don Quixote's armour in a tree, but he refuses, so Sancho places the armour on Dapple's back and walks. On the road, they encounter a group caught up in an argument. The group seeks Don Quixote's advice about a problem, but Sancho settles the problem with what the group considers a very wise decision.

Don Quixote and Sancho then encounter Tosilos. Tosilos says that just after they left the Duke's castle, he was flogged for not fighting Don Quixote, the Duke sent Doña Rodriguez back to Castile, and Doña Rodriguez's daughter became a nun. The news astonishes Don Quixote, who still believes that Tosilos is the farmer's son under an enchantment.

Analysis: Chapters LXI–LXVI

Don Quixote's fall from grace is complete when the Knight of the White Moon vanquishes him. This loss of glory is mirrored by Don Quixote's physical decline. Later, when he dies, he has returned to sanity but has largely lost his chivalric strength, as though his defeat at the hands of the Knight of the White Moon sapped his will to live. Don Quixote's psychological fall, however, truly intensifies at the ball the night before his defeat. Sancho's embarrassment over Don Quixote's collapse after dancing too much attests to the reversal of their roles of master and servant. The ball marks the last time that Don Quixote holds the upper hand over Sancho and the first time that Sancho acts paternally toward Don Quixote. Indeed, Don Quixote follows Sancho's lead for the rest of the novel, as we see when Sancho steps forward to settle the group's quarrel on the road home. Though the novel ends before we see how Sancho proceeds in life and what he does with his newfound identity, Cervantes does show that Sancho returns to his own home well-respected despite his humble social position.

The story of Anna Felix and Don Gregorio tempers Cervantes' otherwise rampant racism. From the outset, Cervantes mocks the Moors as liars and thieves, portraying them as useless cheapskates who deserve their exile from Spain because they threaten the king's rule. Even Cide Hamete Benengeli, the supposed author of the story, is a target of Cervantes's racism, since Cervantes blames all textual inconsistencies on Benengeli's lying Moorish nature. Much like Zoraida in the First Part, the character of Anna Felix challenges this stereotype of Moors, but only to a limited extent. Unlike her Spanish counterparts, Anna Felix is less scrutinized by Cervantes, presumably because he prejudicially considers her less than a true woman. Though Spanish

society typically chastised women who dressed as men, Anna Felix, who is dressed as a young man, does not inspire such commentary from Cervantes. Despite the fact that Anna Felix is not the spitting image of what Cervantes' readership would have considered ideal, she comes off as a respectable and sympathetic character, mellowing Cervantes's scathing attack on members of her race.

In general, however, determining whether the novel is prejudiced against the Moors is difficult. It is likely that Cervantes represents Spanish culture fairly—with the same amount of antagonism toward the Moors as toward others. But Cervantes explicitly claims that he is translating a Moorish manuscript, and when this manuscript is racist toward the Moors, we question why a Moor would be racist toward his own race. The various levels of narration and authorship depicted in the novel make it difficult to determine authorial intent.

The Second Part, Chapters LXVII–LXXIV

Chapter LXVII

Don Quixote implores Sancho to whip himself for Dulcinea's sake, but Sancho says he does not believe that his whipping will help Dulcinea. Don Quixote then decides to be a shepherd during his retirement, and he and Sancho begin to fantasize about their simple, pastoral lives.

Chapter LXVIII

Don Quixote wakes Sancho in the middle of the night to ask him again to whip himself, but Sancho again refuses. Sancho discourses on the nature of sleep, and Don Quixote marvels at Sancho's eloquence. Don Quixote quotes one of Sancho's own proverbs back to him, much to Sancho's astonishment. Some hogs that are being driven to a fair trample Don Quixote, Sancho, and Rocinante, but Don Quixote refuses to do battle with the hogs, believing instead that this trampling is punishment for his defeat at the hands of the Knight of the White Moon. Near dawn, ten horsemen ride up, capture the pair, and drive them to the Duke's castle.

Chapter LXIX

When the horsemen drag Don Quixote and Sancho into the Duke's courtyard, Don Quixote recognizes Altisidora on a funeral bier, apparently dead. The courtyard has been set up as a court, with the Duke, the Duchess, and two old judges, Minos and Rhadamanthus, sitting above the rest. A musician sings a poem—which Don Quixote recognizes as an adaptation of another poet's work—telling that Altisidora died out of her unrequited love for Don Quixote. Rhadamanthus demands that Sancho suffer a beating to bring Altisidora back to life. Sancho protests that he is tired of being beaten for Don Quixote's lovers. He nevertheless receives the beating, and Altisidora revives.

Chapter LXX

Cervantes says that Cide Hamete Benengeli tells how the Duke and Duchess were able to locate Don Quixote: on his way to defeat Don Quixote in the guise of the Knight of the White Moon, Sampson stopped at the Duke's house. Sampson knew that Don Quixote and Sancho had been staying there because he had been told so by the Duke's page, who had visited Teresa Panza to deliver Sancho's letter. Hearing that Sampson intended to end Don Quixote's career, the Duke and Duchess determined to have one last bit of fun and put the funeral sequence into action. Cervantes says that at this point, Benengeli declares that he considers the Duke and Duchess almost more mad than Don Quixote and Sancho for poking so much fun at such fools.

Altisidora comes into Don Quixote's bedroom and tells him about her bizarre trip to the gates of hell. She says she saw devils playing tennis and using books—including the false sequel to *Don Quixote*—for balls. The devils said that this false sequel should be thrown into hell. The musician from the night before appears, and Don Quixote asks him why he used another poet's work to describe Altisidora's situation. The musician answers that people commonly steal one another's literature in this age, calling the practice "poetic license." As Don Quixote and Sancho take their leave of the Duke and Duchess, Don Quixote recommends that Altisidora perform more chores so that she will not spend her days pining away for knights who do not love her.

Chapter LXXI

Don Quixote yet again suggests that Sancho whip himself, and Sancho again refuses. Don Quixote offers to pay Sancho, so Sancho goes into the woods and whips the trees so that his master will think he is whipping himself. The two then stop at an inn for the night, where Don Quixote muses about the paintings on the walls, hoping one day to be the subject of such paintings.

Chapter LXXII

While at the inn, Don Quixote and Sancho encounter Don Alvaro Tarfe, whom Don Quixote recalls from the false sequel. Don Alvaro admits that the false Don Quixote was his best friend but that the Don Quixote he sees now is the real Don Quixote. Don Alvaro swears to this account before the mayor, who records it. They stay overnight in the woods, where Sancho completes his whipping, still only whipping the trees.

Chapter LXXIII

As Don Quixote and Sancho enter their village, they hear two boys quarrelling and a hare running from greyhounds. Don Quixote takes these sounds for bad omens, but Sancho disagrees. Sancho goes home to his family, while Don Quixote finds the priest, the barber, and Sampson. He tells them about his retirement and his plan to become a shepherd. They support his plan wholeheartedly. They also plan the jokes they will play on Don Quixote, despite the protests of the niece and the housekeeper, who want only to feed Don Quixote and put him to bed.

Chapter LXXIV

Don Quixote falls ill with a tremendous fever and lies in bed for six days, during which Sancho never leaves his side. When he wakes on the seventh day, Don Quixote has returned to sanity and recognizes that his real name is Alonso Quixano. He disavows all books of chivalry and repents his past actions. The priest, the barber, and Sampson come by and try to persuade him to pursue further adventures, especially the disenchantment of Dulcinea, but Don Quixote

wants only to make his will. He leaves everything to his niece, his housekeeper, and Sancho. In his will, Don Quixote also tells his friends to ask the author of the false sequel to forgive him for providing the author with the occasion to write such nonsense. Don Quixote then dies.

Cide Hamete Benengeli mourns Don Quixote's passing, saying that he and Don Quixote were born for each other—Don Quixote to act, Benengeli to write. He adds that his sole purpose in writing was to rouse contempt for the “fabulous and absurd stories of knight-errantry.”

Analysis: Chapters LXVII–LXXIV

Once Don Quixote renounces chivalry, he ceases to exist. After much digression on his way home, he unexpectedly has a bout of sanity and dies, as though the chivalric knight within him cannot live and breathe once he returns to a world whose values are different from his own. Don Quixote dreams for one night of being a shepherd and wakes a week later recanting everything that has come before—an act that may devalue many of the novel's adventures. Benengeli implies this devaluation when he writes about the dubious nature of the incident at Montesinos' Cave. Not even the apparently earnest attempts of Don Quixote's friends to make him rise and roam the countryside as a shepherd inspires him to live.

The meeting with Don Alvaro provides Don Quixote with one last chance to assert his identity. Already in a downward spiral, Don Quixote temporarily breaks out of his funk during this meeting. He asserts his dignity and former glory by repudiating the fake Don Quixote and by forcing the best friend of the fake Don Quixote to swear allegiance to him. Though this last-ditch effort to assert his honour may seem pathetic in light of his recent defeat by the Knight of the White Moon and his plans to retire, it displays Don Quixote's sincere nature.

The end of the novel is deeply concerned with authorship. The novel's conclusion abounds with insults against the counterfeit sequel to the history

of Don Quixote. These insults include the remarks about the musician who justifies plagiarism, the tale of the devils who throw the book into hell, and Don Alvaro's disavowal of the counterfeit Don Quixote. Cervantes allows Benengeli to have the last word, which supports the idea that Cervantes has merely been translating Benengeli's text all along. At the end of the novel, Cervantes clings to his legacy as the bearer of Don Quixote's tale just as Don Quixote tries to preserve his name through Don Alvaro.

Even as Benengeli attempts to tear apart traditional chivalric texts, he elevates Don Quixote to a heroic status. Benengeli says that Don Quixote needed him to survive throughout history but adds that he needed Don Quixote in order to write. Cervantes's purpose in writing *Don Quixote* is much greater than simple self-glorification, a fact Cervantes highlights by distancing himself from the final words of the text. Benengeli admits that his purpose in writing was to show that chivalric tales are ridiculous, because they deny reality and gloss over the tragedy of trying to live an ideal, romantic life in an imperfect world. Benengeli wants his historical account of Don Quixote to put to rest any remaining chivalric tales that fail to highlight the tragic elements of knight-errantry—tragic elements so evident in the character of Don Quixote. Though Don Quixote's chivalric spirit and physical body may die, the final paragraph of the novel heightens our sympathy for Don Quixote, ensuring that he will live on with us.

22.4 SELF-CHECK EXERCISE

- Q.1.** What happens when Don Quixote is sleeping in a grove ?
- Q.2.** Describe Don Quixote's encounter with the lions.
- Q.3.** What does Don Quixote, Sancho and Basilio's cousin do at Montesinos' Cave?
- Q.4.** Describe briefly what happens at the puppet show.
- Q.5.** Don Quixote dreams for one night of being a _____.

Q.6 While at the inn, Don Quixote and Sancho encounter_____.

- 1) Don Alvaro Tarfe
- 2) Casildea de Vandalia
- 3) Cide Hamete Benengeli
- 4) Basilio

22.5 ANSWER-KEY TO SELF-CHECK EXERCISE

Ans.1 While sleeping in a grove, Don Quixote and Sancho meet another knight who claims to be pining away for his mistress, Casildea de Vandalia, to whom he recites poetry. The narrator calls him the Knight of the Wood and calls his squire the Squire of the Wood. Sancho and the Squire of the Wood go off into the night to talk while Don Quixote and the Knight of the Wood stay where they are to talk.

Ans.2 Don Quixote sees a cart coming toward him hung with the king's flags, and he senses another adventure. He summons Sancho, who puts the curds he just bought from the shepherds into Don Quixote's helmet. When Don Quixote puts on the helmet, the curds run down his face, and he thinks that his brain is melting. When he recognizes the curds in the helmet, he accuses Sancho of foul play, but Sancho replies that an enchanter must have put them there.

Don Quixote hails the cart. The mule driver tells him that the cart carries two lions for the king. Don Quixote challenges the lions, and despite everyone's protests, he insists on having the cage opened. Cervantes interjects that Cide Hamete Benengeli extols Don Quixote's bravery before continuing the narrative. The others run away and the lion tamer opens the cage. Don Quixote faces the lions with "childish bravado," but the lion just stretches and lies down again. Don Quixote decides not to provoke the lions. He calls the others back, and the lion tamer recounts the story of Don Quixote's valour. Don Quixote tells Sancho to give the

mule driver and the lion tamer some money for their troubles and renames himself the Knight of the Lions. Don Quixote declares that he is not as insane as he may seem—that it is better for a knight to err on the side of courage than on the side of cowardice. Don Diego invites Don Quixote and Sancho to his home, and Don Quixote accepts.

Ans.3 Don Quixote and Sancho leave for Montesinos's Cave with Basilio's cousin, an author who writes parodies of great classical works, as a guide. When the three arrive at Montesinos's Cave, Sancho and the guide lower Don Quixote into the cave by a rope. They wait for half an hour and then pull him up, only to find him asleep.

Ans.4. Master Peter puts on a puppet show for Don Quixote. The puppet show depicts the travails of a knight who goes to rescue his wife from foreign lands. Don Quixote becomes so convinced that the show is real that he attacks and destroys the entire set. He explains that his enchanters bear responsibility for his actions because they made him believe that the puppets were real. Don Quixote pays Master Peter for his troubles nonetheless. He also treats the guests to a meal and pays the innkeeper.

Ans.5 Shepherd

Ans.6 (a) Don Alvaro Tarfe

22.6 SUGGESTED READING

- Presburg, Charles. Adventures in Paradox: Don Quixote and the Western Tradition. University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2001.

**MIGUEL DE CERVANTES SAAVEDRA :
*DON QUIXOTE***

STRUCTURE

- 23.1 Introduction**
- 23.2 Objectives**
- 23.3 Characters in the Novel : *Don Quixote***
- 23.4 Major Themes, Motifs & Symbols in the Novel : *Don Quixote***
- 23.5 Multiple Choice Questions (MCQs)**
- 23.6 Short-Answer Questions**
- 23.7 Answer Key (MCQs)**
- 23.8 Suggested Reading**

23.1 INTRODUCTION

The themes of *Don Quixote* are rich and varied, encompassing the conflict between reality and illusion, the nature of idealism, and the quest for personal honor. The main characters, Don Quixote and Sancho Panza, embody contrasting perspectives: Don Quixote represents the idealistic and often impractical pursuit of dreams, while Sancho offers a more grounded and pragmatic viewpoint. The novel also explores motifs such as the clash between the old world of medieval chivalry and the modern age, the transformative power of literature, and the concept of madness versus sanity. Through its intricate narrative and deep character studies, “Don Quixote” delves into the complexities of human nature and the enduring power of dreams and imagination.

23.2 OBJECTIVES

This lesson gives the learner an insight into the behaviour and mannerisms of all the characters of the novel and also makes the learner familiar with the characters to help him comprehend the text. This lesson discusses all the major and minor characters of the novel *Don Quixote*. Besides characters, major themes, motifs and symbols used in the novel have also been discussed in detail.

23.3 CHARACTERS IN THE NOVEL : *DON QUIXOTE*

Don Quixote - The novel's tragi-comic hero. Don Quixote's main quest in life is to revive knight-errantry in a world devoid of chivalric virtues and values. He believes only what he chooses to believe and sees the world very differently from most people. Honest, dignified, proud, and idealistic, he wants to save the world. As intelligent as he is mad, Don Quixote starts out as an absurd and isolated figure and ends up as a pitiable and lovable old man whose strength and wisdom have failed him.

Sancho Panza - The peasant-labourer, greedy but kind, faithful but cowardly, whom Don Quixote takes as his squire. A representation of the common man, Sancho is a foil to Don Quixote and virtually every other character in the novel. His proverb-ridden peasant's wisdom and self-sacrificing Christian behaviour proves to be the novel's most insightful and honourable worldview. He has an awestruck love for Don Quixote but grows self-confident and saucy, ending the novel by advising his master in matters of deep personal philosophy.

Rocinante - Don Quixote's barn horse. Rocinante is slow but faithful, and he is as worn out as Don Quixote is.

Dapple - Sancho's donkey. Dapple's disappearance and reappearance is the subject of much controversy both within the story and within the literary criticism concerning *Don Quixote*.

Cide Hamete Benengeli - The fictional writer of Moorish descent from whose manuscripts Cervantes supposedly translates the novel. Cervantes uses the figure of Benengeli to comment on the ideas of authorship and literature

explored in the novel and to critique historians. Benengeli's opinions, bound in his so-called historical text, show his contempt for those who write about chivalry falsely and with embellishment.

Dulcinea del Toboso - The unseen force driving all of Don Quixote's adventures. Dulcinea, a peasant woman whom Don Quixote envisions as his ladylove, has no knowledge of his chivalric dedication to her. Though constantly mentioned and centrally important to the novel, she never appears as a physical character.

Cervantes - The supposed translator of Benengeli's historical novel, who interjects his opinions into the novel at key times. Cervantes intentionally creates the impression that he did not invent the character of Don Quixote. Like Benengeli, Cervantes is not physically present but is a character nonetheless. In his prologues, dedications, and invention of Benengeli, Cervantes enhances the self-referential nature of the novel and forces us to think about literature's purpose and limitations.

The Duke and Duchess - The cruel and haughty contrivers of the adventures that occupy Don Quixote for the majority of the novel's Second Part. Bored and snobby, the Duke and Duchess feign interest in Don Quixote and Sancho but continually play pranks on them for their personal entertainment. The Duke and Duchess spend so much money and effort on their ploys that they seem as mad as Don Quixote.

Altisidora - The Duchess' bratty maid. Altisidora pretends to love Don Quixote, mocking his concept of romantic love.

Sampson Carrasco - A sarcastic student from Don Quixote's village. Sampson mocks Don Quixote at first but loses to him in combat and then dedicates himself to revenge. Self-important and stuffy, Sampson fails to grasp the often playful nature of Don Quixote's madness.

The priest - A friend of Don Quixote. The priest disapproves of fictional books that, in his opinion, negatively influence society. Nonetheless, he enjoys

tales of chivalry so much that he cannot throw them away. Moreover, despite his social conscience, he enjoys Don Quixote's madness at times.

The barber - Don Quixote's friend who recognizes Quixote's madness but intervenes only to help the priest carry out his plans. The barber strenuously disapproves of Don Quixote's chivalry.

Teresa Panza - Sancho's good-hearted wife. Teresa speaks in proverbs, exhibiting more wisdom than most other characters. Unambitious but a bit greedy, she endures Sancho's exploits and supports him with her prayers.

Cardenio - An honourable man who is driven mad by the infidelities of his wife, Lucinda, and the treachery of a duke, Ferdinand. Cardenio is the quintessential romantic lover.

Lucinda - Cardenio's wife. Silent and beautiful, Lucinda is a model of the courtly woman. Docile and innocent, she obliges her parents and her lover.

Ferdinand - An arrogant young duke who steals Lucinda from Cardenio with no remorse.

Dorothea - Ferdinand's faithful and persistent love. Dorothea flouts tradition to hunt down Ferdinand when he takes her chastity but refuses to marry her. Deceptive and cunning, smart and aggressive, Dorothea is not the typical female character of her time.

Countess Trifaldi - A fictitious maidservant in distress who is impersonated by the Duke's steward. The countess' sob story sends Don Quixote and Sancho off on their expedition on the wooden horse. She is more ridiculous and fantastic than anyone except Don Quixote.

Gines de Pasamonte - An ungrateful galley slave whom Don Quixote frees. Gines appears mostly for comic relief, but his justifications for his crimes force us to be more critical of Don Quixote's justifications for his crimes.

Roque Guinart - A chivalrous bandit. Inherently conflicted, Roque believes in justice and generosity but kills an underling who challenges him for being so generous to others.

ANALYSIS OF THE MAJOR CHARACTERS

Don Quixote de la Mancha

The main character of the novel, Don Quixote is a gaunt, middle-aged gentleman who, having gone mad from reading too many books about chivalrous knights, determines to set off on a great adventure to win honour and glory in the name of his invented ladylove, Dulcinea. Don Quixote longs for a sense of purpose and beauty—two things he believes the world lacks—and hopes to bring order to a tumultuous world by reinstating the chivalric code of the knights-errant. Initially, Don Quixote's good intentions do only harm to those he meets, since he is largely unable to see the world as it really is.

As the novel progresses, Don Quixote, with the help of his faithful squire Sancho, slowly distinguishes between reality and the pictures in his head. Nonetheless, until his final sanity-inducing illness, he remains true to his chivalric conception of right and wrong. Even though his vision clears enough to reveal to him that the inns he sees are just inns, not castles as he previously believed, he never gives up on his absolute conviction that Dulcinea can save him from all misfortune. Furthermore, even when Don Quixote must retire from knight-errantry, he does so in the spirit of knight-errantry, holding to his vows and accepting his retirement as part of the terms of his defeat at the hands of the Knight of the White Moon. Despite his delusions, however, Don Quixote is fiercely intelligent and, at times, seemingly sane. He cogently and concisely talks about literature, soldiering, and government, among other topics.

No single analysis of Don Quixote's character can adequately explain the split between his madness and his sanity. He remains a puzzle throughout the novel, a character with whom we may have difficulty identifying and sympathizing. We may see Don Quixote as coy and think that he really does know what is going on around him and that he merely chooses to ignore the world and the consequences of his disastrous actions. At several times in the novel, Cervantes validates this suspicion that Don Quixote may know more

than he admits. Therefore, when Don Quixote suddenly declares himself sane at the end of the novel, we wonder at his ability to shake off his madness so quickly and ask whether he has at least partly feigned this madness. On the other hand, we can read Don Quixote's character as a warning that even the most intelligent and otherwise practically minded person can fall victim to his own foolishness. Furthermore, we may see Don Quixote's adventures as a warning that chivalry—or any other outmoded set of values—can both produce positive and negative outcomes. Given the social turmoil of the period in which Cervantes wrote, this latter reading is particularly appealing. Nonetheless, all of these readings of Don Quixote's character operate in the novel.

Sancho Panza

The simple peasant who follows Don Quixote out of greed, curiosity, and loyalty, Sancho is the novel's only character to exist both inside and outside of Don Quixote's mad world. Other characters play along with and exploit Don Quixote's madness, but Sancho often lives in and adores it, sometimes getting caught up in the madness entirely. On the other hand, he often berates Don Quixote for his reliance on fantasy; in this sense, he is Don Quixote's foil. Whereas Don Quixote is too serious for his own good, Sancho has a quick sense of humour. Whereas Don Quixote pays lip service to a woman he has never even seen, Sancho truly loves his wife, Teresa. While Don Quixote deceives himself and others, Sancho lies only when it suits him.

Living in both Don Quixote's world and the world of his contemporaries, Sancho is able to create his own niche between them. He embodies the good and the bad aspects of both the current era and the bygone days of chivalry. He displays the faults that most of the sane characters in the novel exhibit but has an underlying honourable and compassionate streak that the others largely lack. Sancho does not share Don Quixote's maddening belief in chivalrous virtues, but he avoids swerving towards the other extreme that equates power with honour. Though Sancho begins the novel looking more like the contemporaries against whom Don Quixote rebels, he eventually relinquishes

his fascination with these conventions and comes to live honourably and happily in his simple position in life. He, therefore, comes across as the character with the most varied perspective and the most wisdom, learning from the world around him thanks to his constant curiosity. Though Sancho is an appealing character on many levels, it is this curiosity that is responsible for much of our connection with him. He observes and thinks about Don Quixote, enabling us to judge Don Quixote. Sancho humanizes the story, bringing dignity and poise, but also humour and compassion.

Through Sancho, Cervantes critiques the ill-conceived equation of class and worth. Though Sancho is ignorant, illiterate, cowardly, and foolish, he nonetheless proves himself a wise and just ruler, a better governor than the educated, wealthy, and aristocratic Duke. By the time Sancho returns home for the last time, he has gained confidence in himself and in his ability to solve problems, regardless of his lower-class status. Sancho frequently reminds his listeners that God knows what he means. With this saying, he shows that faith in God may be a humanizing force that distinguishes truly honourable men, even when they have lower-class origins.

Dulcinea del Toboso

The unseen, unknown inspiration for all of Don Quixote's exploits, Dulcinea, we are told, is a simple peasant woman who has no knowledge of the valorous deeds that Don Quixote commits in her name. We never meet Dulcinea in the novel, and on the two occasions when it seems she might appear, some trickery keeps her away from the action. In the first case, the priest intercepts Sancho, who is on his way to deliver a letter to Dulcinea from Don Quixote. In the second instance, Sancho says that Dulcinea has been enchanted and that he thus cannot locate her.

Despite her absence from the novel, Dulcinea is an important force because she epitomizes Don Quixote's chivalric conception of the perfect woman. In his mind, she is beautiful and virtuous, and she makes up for her lack of background and lineage with her good deeds. Don Quixote describes her chiefly

in poetic terms that do little to specify her qualities. She is, therefore, important not for who she is but for what her character represents and for what she indicates about Don Quixote's character.

23.4 MAJOR THEMES, MOTIFS & SYMBOLS IN THE NOVEL : *DON QUIXOTE*

THEMES

Themes are the fundamental and often universal ideas explored in a literary work.

Perspective and Narration

Don Quixote, which is composed of three different sections, is a rich exploration of the possibilities of narration. The first of these sections, comprising the chapter covering Don Quixote's first expedition, functions chiefly as a parody of contemporary romance tales. The second section, comprising the rest of the First Part, is written under the guise of a history, plodding along in historical fashion and breaking up chapters episodically, carefully documenting everyday's events. The third section, which covers the Second Part of the novel, is different since it is written as a more traditional novel, organized by emotional and thematic content and filled with character development. Cervantes alone reports the story in the first section, using a straightforward narrative style. In the second section, Cervantes informs us that he is translating the manuscript of Cide Hamete Benengeli and often interrupts the narration to mention Benengeli and the internal inconsistencies in Benengeli's manuscript. Here, Cervantes uses Benengeli primarily to reinforce his claim that the story is a true history.

In the third section, however, Cervantes enters the novel as a character - as a composite of Benengeli and Cervantes the author. The characters themselves, aware of the books that have been written about them, try to alter the content of subsequent editions. This complicated and self-referential narrative structure leaves us somewhat disoriented, unable to tell which plotlines

are internal to the story and which are factual. This disorientation engrosses us directly in the story and emphasizes the question of sanity that arises throughout the novel. If someone as mad as Don Quixote can write his own story, we wonder what would prevent us from doing the same. Cervantes gives us many reasons to doubt him in the second section. In the third section, however, when we are aware of another allegedly false version of the novel and a second Don Quixote, we lose all our footing and have no choice but to abandon ourselves to the story and trust Cervantes. However, having already given us reasons to distrust him, Cervantes forces us to question fundamental principles of narration, just as Quixote forces his contemporaries to question their lifestyles and principles. In this way, the form of the novel mirrors its function, creating a universe in which Cervantes entertains and instructs us, manipulating our preconceptions to force us to examine them more closely.

Incompatible Systems of Morality

Don Quixote tries to be a flesh-and-blood example of a knight-errant in an attempt to force his contemporaries to face their own failure to maintain the old system of morality, the chivalric code. This conflict between the old and the new reaches an absolute impasse: no one understands Don Quixote, and he understands no one. Only the simple-minded Sancho, with both self-motivated desires and a basic understanding of morality, can mediate between Don Quixote and the rest of the world. Sancho often subscribes to the morals of his day but then surprises us by demonstrating a belief in the anachronistic morals of chivalry as well.

In the First Part of the novel, we see the impasse between Don Quixote and those around him. Don Quixote cannot, for instance, identify with the priest's rational perspective and objectives, and Don Quixote's belief in enchantment appears ridiculous to the priest. Towards the end of the Second Part, however, Cervantes compromises between these two seemingly incompatible systems of morality, allowing Don Quixote's imaginary world and the commonplace world of the Duke and the Duchess to infiltrate each other. As the two worlds begin to mix, we start to see the advantages and

disadvantages of each. Sancho ultimately prevails, subscribing to his timeless aphorisms and ascetic discipline on the one hand and using his rational abilities to adapt to the present on the other.

The Distinction between Class and Worth

Distinguishing between a person's class and a person's worth was a fairly radical idea in Cervantes's time. In *Don Quixote*, Cervantes attacks the conventional notion that aristocrats are automatically respectable and noble. The contrast between the Duke and Duchess' thoughtless malice and Sancho's anxiety-ridden compassion highlights this problem of class. Despite his low social status, the peasant Sancho is wise and thoughtful. Likewise, the lowly goatherds and shepherds often appear as philosophers. In contrast, the cosmopolitan or aristocratic characters like the Duke and Duchess are often frivolous and unkind. Cervantes' emphasis on these disparities between class and worth is a primary reason that *Don Quixote* was such a revolutionary work in its time.

MOTIFS

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

Honour

Some characters in *Don Quixote* show a deep concern for their personal honour and some do not. Cervantes implies that either option can lead to good or disastrous results. Anselmo, for example, is so overly protective of his wife's honour that he distrusts her fidelity, which ultimately results in her adultery and his death. Likewise, Don Quixote's obsession with his honour leads him to do battle with parties who never mean him offense or harm. On the other hand, Dorothea's concern for her personal honour leads her to pursue Ferdinand, with happy results for both of them. In these examples, we see that characters who are primarily concerned with socially prescribed codes of honour, such as Anselmo and Don Quixote, meet with difficulty, while those

who set out merely to protect their own personal honor, such as Dorothea, meet with success.

Other characters, especially those who exploit Don Quixote's madness for their own entertainment, seem to care very little about their personal honor. The Duke and Duchess show that one's true personal honour has nothing to do with the honour typically associated with one's social position. Fascination with such public conceptions of honour can be taken to an extreme, dominating one's life and leading to ruin. Sancho initially exhibits such a fascination, confusing honour with social status, but he eventually comes to the realization that excessive ambition only creates trouble. In this sense, Cervantes implies that personal honour can be a powerful and positive motivating force while socially prescribed notions of honour, which are often hollow and false, can be destructive if adhered to obsessively.

Romance

Though many people in Don Quixote's world seem to have given up on romantic love, Don Quixote and a few other characters hold dear this ideal. Don Louis' love for Clara, Camacho's wedding, and the tale of the captive and Zoraida, for instance, are all situations in which romantic love rises above all else. Even in the case of Sancho and Teresa, romantic love prevails as a significant part of matrimonial commitment, which we see in Teresa's desire to honor her husband at court. Ironically, Don Quixote's own devotion to Dulcinea mocks romantic love, pushing it to the extreme as he idolizes a woman he has never even seen.

Literature

Don Quixote contains several discussions about the relative merits of different types of literature, including fiction and historical literature. Most of the characters, including the priest and the canon of Toledo, ultimately maintain that literature should tell the truth. Several even propose that the government should practice censorship to prevent the evil falsehoods of certain books from

corrupting innocent minds like Don Quixote's. However, we see that even the true histories in the novel end up disclosing falsehoods. Cervantes declares that *Don Quixote* itself is not fiction but a translation of a historical account. The fact that we know that this claim of Cervantes' is false—since the work is fictional—makes Cervantes' symbolism clear: no matter how truthful a writer's intentions may be, he or she can never tell the whole truth. Despite these inherent flaws, however, literature remains a powerful force in the novel, guiding the lives of many characters, especially Don Quixote. Notions of authorship and storytelling preoccupy the characters throughout the novel, since many of them consider the idea of writing their own histories as their own narrators.

SYMBOLS

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

Books and Manuscripts

The books and manuscripts that appear everywhere in *Don Quixote* symbolize the importance and influence of fiction and literature in everyday life. The books instruct and inform the ignorant and provide an imaginative outlet for characters with otherwise dull lives.

Horses

Horses symbolize movement and status in the novel and often denote a character's worth or class. The pilgrims outside Barcelona, for instance, walk to the city. The noblemen ride in carriages, and the robbers and Don Quixote ride on horseback. In Don Quixote's mind, at least, the appearance of horses on the horizon symbolizes the coming of a new adventure. Indeed, Rocinante and Dapple play an important role in the journeys of Don Quixote and Sancho; they are not only means of transport and symbols of status but also companions.

Inns

The inns that appear throughout the novel are meeting places for people of all classes. They are the only locations in the novel where ordinarily segregated

individuals speak and exchange stories. Inns symbolize rest and food but also corruption and greed, since many innkeepers in the novel are devious. Sancho often longs to stay at an inn rather than follow Don Quixote's chivalric desire to sleep under the stars. These opposing preferences show Sancho's connection with reality and society and his instinctive desire for comfort, in contrast to Don Quixote's alienation from society and its norms. Even when he does stay at inns, Don Quixote is noticeably alienated from the major events that take place there, such as the reunification of the four lovers in the First Part.

23.5 MULTIPLE CHOICE QUESTIONS (MCQs)

Q.1 Don Quixote's main quest in life is to revive:

- a) bravery
- b) knight-errantry
- c) power
- d) moral values

Q.2 Sancho Panza is an example of:

- a) modern man
- b) lazy man
- c) common man
- d) strong man

Q.3 Dapple is Sancho's:

- a) donkey
- b) friend
- c) enemy
- d) relative

Q.4 Dulcinea is a:

- a) lady
- b) princess
- c) doctor
- d) peasant-woman

- Q.5 The Duke and Duchess continuously play pranks on Don Quixote and Sancho for:
- a) personal entertainment
 - b) guidance
 - c) training
 - d) criticism
- Q.6. The barber recognizes Quixote's madness but intervenes only to help the _____ carry out his plans.
- a) Priest
 - b) King
 - c) Duke
 - d) Narrator
- Q.7 Sancho's good-hearted wife is:
- a) Altisidora
 - b) Teresa Panza
 - c) Cardenio
 - d) Lucinda
- Q.8 An arrogant young duke who steals Lucinda from Cardenio is:
- a) Dorothea
 - b) Roque Guinart
 - c) Ferdinand
 - d) Gines de Pasamonte
- Q.9 Countess Trifaldi is:
- a) a fictitious maidservant
 - b) a lady
 - c) princess
 - d) Cardenio's wife

- Q.10 The books and manuscripts that appear everywhere in *Don Quixote* symbolize the importance and influence of _____ and literature in everyday life.
- a) fiction
 - b) romance
 - c) tragedy
 - d) fun

23.6 SHORT ANSWER QUESTIONS

- Q.1 Who is Teresa Panza ?
- Q.2 Describe briefly the character-sketch of Don Quixote.
- Q.3 Which symbols have been used in the novel *Don Quixote* ?
- Q.4 Comment on the motifs used in *Don Quixote*.
- Q.5 Discuss the various themes in *Don Quixote*.

23.7 ANSWER KEY (MCQs)

- 1. b) knight-errantry
- 2. c) common man
- 3. a) donkey
- 4. d) peasant-woman
- 5. a) personal entertainment
- 6. a) priest
- 7. b) Teresa Panza
- 8. c) Ferdinand
- 9. a) a fictitious maidservant
- 10. a) fiction

23.8 SUGGESTED READING

- Johnson, Carroll. Cervantes and the Material World. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2000.
- Mancing, Howard. The Chivalric World of Don Quijote: Style, Structure, and Narrative Technique. Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1982.

**MIGUEL DE CERVANTES SAAVEDRA :
*DON QUIXOTE***

STRUCTURE

- 24.1 Introduction**
- 24.2 Objectives**
- 24.3 Explanation of the Important Quotations in the Novel : *Don Quixote***
- 24.4 Examination Oriented Questions**
- 24.5 Multiple Choice Questions (MCQs)**
- 24.6 Let Us Sum Up**
- 24.7 Answer Key (MCQs)**
- 24.8 Suggested Reading**

24.1 INTRODUCTION

Don Quixote written by Miguel de Cervantes, is a seminal work of Western literature, first published in two parts in 1605 and 1615. The novel follows the adventures of the self-proclaimed knight-errant Don Quixote, a man driven mad by his obsession with chivalric romances. Accompanied by his loyal squire, Sancho Panza, Don Quixote sets out to revive chivalry and bring justice to the world, though his perception of reality is often distorted by his delusions. This picaresque novel blends comedy and tragedy, offering a satirical yet affectionate portrayal of its misguided hero.

24.2 OBJECTIVES

The main objectives of this lesson are to help the learner prepare for the examination oriented questions and thus help the learner in performing well in the term end examination.

24.3 EXPLANATION OF THE IMPORTANT QUOTATIONS IN THE NOVEL : *DON QUIXOTE*

[F]or what I want of Dulcinea del Toboso she is as good as the greatest princess in the land. For not all those poets who praise ladies under names which they choose so freely, really have such mistresses. . . .I am quite satisfied. . . to imagine and believe that the good Aldonza Lorenzo is so lovely and virtuous. . . .

In this quotation from Chapter XXV of the First Part, Don Quixote explains to Sancho that the actual behaviour of the farmer's daughter, Aldonza Lorenzo, does not matter as long as he can imagine her perfectly as his princess, Dulcinea del Toboso. This idea of Dulcinea figures prominently in the novel, since we never actually meet Dulcinea, and she likely does not even know about Don Quixote's patronage. Don Quixote's imagination compensates for many loopholes in the novel's narration, providing explanations for inexplicable phenomena and turning apparently mundane events into great adventures. Dulcinea gets recognition through Don Quixote's praise, and regardless of whether she is even real, she exists in fame and in the imaginations of all the characters who read about her. In this way, Don Quixote's imaginations take on the force of reality and he becomes, effectively, the narrator of his own fate.

I shall never be fool enough to turn knight-errant. For I see quite well that it's not the fashion now to do as they did in the olden days when they say those famous knights roamed the world.

In this passage from Chapter XXXII of the First Part, the innkeeper responds to the priest, who has been trying to convince him that books of chivalry are not true. Though the innkeeper defends the books, he says that

he will never try to live like Don Quixote because he realizes that knight-errantry is outdated. The innkeeper's remark is important for several reasons. Firstly, it inspires Sancho, who overhears the remark, to resolve—as he does at so many points throughout the novel—to return to his wife and children because knight-errantry has fallen out of fashion. The fact that Sancho does not leave *Don Quixote* becomes even more poignant when juxtaposed with his temptations to leave.

Secondly, this quotation highlights the priest's hypocritical nature. The innkeeper appreciates knight-errantry from a distance, but the priest, who plays the role of inquisitor against Don Quixote through much of the novel, cannot escape his fascination with knight-errantry. The priest furtively encourages Don Quixote's madness so that he may live vicariously through him.

Now that I've to be sitting on a bare board, does your worship want me to flay my bum?

Sancho puts this question to Don Quixote in Chapter XLI of the Second Part, after Don Quixote suggests that Sancho whip himself to free Dulcinea from her alleged enchantment. With these words, which display his sarcastic wit, skepticism, and insubordinate nature, Sancho refuses to obey Don Quixote's order. The tale of Dulcinea's enchantment literally comes back to bite Sancho in the rear end—Sancho originally tells Don Quixote that Dulcinea is enchanted in an effort to hide the fact that he does not know where she lives and what she looks like. Sancho's lie nearly catches up with him a number of times until the Duchess finally snares him completely, telling him that Dulcinea actually has been enchanted. Sancho gullibly believes her story and later agrees to whip himself 3,300 times in order to revoke Dulcinea's enchantment. Nonetheless, Sancho is not happy with this course of action, and in the end he stands up to Don Quixote about it. This quotation not only fleshes out Sancho's character but also exemplifies the bawdy humour that pervades *Don Quixote*. Deeply ironic and complex, the novel is also very funny.

Great hearts, my dear master, should be patient in misfortune as well as joyful in prosperity. And this I judge from myself. For if I was merry when I was Governor now that I'm a squire on foot I'm not sad, for I've heard tell that Fortune, as they call her, is a drunken and capricious woman and, worse still, blind; and so she doesn't see what she's doing, and doesn't know whom she is casting down or raising up.

Sancho's final words of wisdom to Don Quixote, which appear in Chapter LXVI of the Second Part, caution Don Quixote to be patient even in his retirement. Sancho's statement marks the complete reversal of his and Don Quixote's roles as servant and master. Throughout the novel, Don Quixote determines Sancho's role as a squire while teaching Sancho the chivalric philosophy that drives him. Now, however, Sancho consoles Don Quixote with the simple wisdom he has gained from his own experiences. Interestingly, Sancho still calls Don Quixote "dear master," even though he is no longer in Don Quixote's service. Resigned to his humble station in life, he is not only simple and loyal but also wise and gentle.

For me alone Don Quixote was born and I for him. His was the power of action, mine of writing.

These parting words of Cide Hamete Benengeli, in Chapter LXXIV of the Second Part, reflect Cervantes's words at the novel's beginning. At the start, Cervantes declares that Don Quixote is only his stepson—in other words, that he is not fully responsible for creating the character of Don Quixote. Don Quixote's real father, according to Cervantes' account, is Benengeli, the Moor from whose manuscript Cervantes claims to translate *Don Quixote*. Such remarks give the text a mythical, unreal tone that leaves us unsure whom to trust or to whom to attribute the story of Don Quixote. Additionally, the powerful sentiment that Benengeli expresses here contributes to the novel's claim that Don Quixote was a real person. Benengeli de-emphasizes his role in bringing Don Quixote's story to light by casting himself as a mere recorder of a great man's life and deeds.

24.4 EXAMINATION ORIENTED QUESTIONS

Q.1. How does Don Quixote's perception of reality affect other characters' perceptions of the world? Does his disregard for social convention change the rules of conduct for the other characters?

Ans. In many ways, *Don Quixote* is a novel about how Don Quixote perceives the world and about how other characters perceive Don Quixote. His tendency to transform everyday people and objects into more dramatic, epic, and fantastic versions of themselves forces those around him to choose between adapting to his imaginary world or opposing it. Some, such as the barber and the priest, initially try to coax Don Quixote back into a more conventional view of the world and away from his unconventional life as a knight-errant. To get Don Quixote to communicate, however, they must play along with his world, pretending to believe in his wild fantasies. By the end of the novel, these characters achieve a more harmonious relationship with Don Quixote's fantasy world, recognizing its value even if they do not believe it is literally true.

Those who oppose Don Quixote - namely, Sampson Carrasco and the Duke and Duchess - find their lives disrupted by Don Quixote's perceptions of the world. Sampson temporarily becomes a knight to seek vengeance on Don Quixote, sacrificing his own perceptions of the world because he is obsessed with altering Don Quixote's world. The Duke and Duchess find that the people and events around them actually match Don Quixote's vision much more closely than they expected, as adventures such as Sancho's governorship and the adventure of Doña Rodriguez fit well into Don Quixote's world and not so well into their own.

Q.2. What attitude does the novel take toward social class? How is social class a factor in relationships between characters?

Ans. The differences between social classes operate on many levels throughout *Don Quixote*. The novel emphasizes Sancho's peasant status, the Duke and Duchess's aristocratic status, and Don Quixote's own genteel

upbringing. But the novel does not mock any one class more than the others: Sancho's peasant common sense makes noblemen appear foolish, but his ignorance and lack of education make him appear foolish just as often. Furthermore, Don Quixote almost invariably sees beyond the limiting boundaries of social class to the inner worth of the people he meets. His good nature typically leads him to imagine that people are of higher social classes than they actually are - prostitutes become ladies, innkeepers become lords, and country girls become princesses.

Social class in the novel often appears as an impediment to what a character truly wants. Most of the pairs of lovers in the novel, for instance, must overcome difficulties of class difference to achieve their love. Only through disguises, tricks, and acts of imagination can characters overcome their social circumstances and act according to their true values.

Q.3. Like Hamlet's madness, Don Quixote's insanity is the subject of much controversy among literary critics. Is Don Quixote really insane, or is his behaviour a conscious choice? What might account for the change in his behaviour over the course of the novel?

Ans. Early in the novel, Don Quixote seems completely insane, failing to recognize people and objects, wantonly attacking strangers, and waking up in hallucinatory fits. As the novel progresses, however, this madness begins to seem more a matter of Don Quixote's own choosing. He occasionally implies to his friends that he knows more than they think he does. Moreover, he often tries to fit his madness into the forms of behaviour prescribed by books of chivalry, as when he meticulously plans out his penance in the Sierra Morena. In the Second Part, whenever Don Quixote feels melancholy or dissatisfied with his life as a knight-errant, his behaviour becomes much more sane, and he fully controls his own actions. Near the end of the novel, he spends an entire chapter describing to Sancho what their shepherd life will be like—essentially planning out a new form of madness—and seems to be completely sane. When he finally dies, it is as his real self, Alonso Quixano.

There are several possible interpretations for what appears to be Don Quixote's gradual recovery of sanity over the course of the novel. The simplest explanation may be that Don Quixote is insane in the beginning and his condition slowly improves. Secondly, it could be that, in his first passionate burst of commitment to knight-errantry in the First Part, he acts more rashly than he needs to and eventually learns to regulate his eccentric behaviour. Alternatively, it could be that Don Quixote is consistently sane from the beginning and that Cervantes only slowly reveals this fact to us, thereby putting us in the same position as Don Quixote's friends, who become aware of his sanity only by degrees. Or it could be that Cervantes began his novel intending Don Quixote to be a simple, laughable madman but then decided to add depth to the story by slowly bringing him out of his madness in the Second Part. Finally, it must be remembered that Cervantes never gives us a verdict on Don Quixote's mental health: despite the evidence, the question is still open to interpretation.

- Q.4. Throughout *Don Quixote*, Cervantes claims that his novel is a true history about real people and based on documented evidence. Why does he make this claim? How do his games with history and authorship advance the themes of the novel?
- Q.5. Many characters in *Don Quixote* serve as foils, or opposites, of other characters. What role do these opposed pairs play in developing the novel's themes?
- Q.6. What is the role of parody in *Don Quixote*? How does the novel mock books of chivalry, and how does it defend them? Do the characters who mock and try to humiliate Don Quixote come across in a positive or in a negative light?
- Q.7. *Don Quixote* highly values genuine romantic love, yet many of the love stories embedded in *Don Quixote* are resolved only through trickery. What is Cervantes implying if true love in the novel can be realized only by deceit?

- Q.8. How would you characterize each of Don Quixote's three expeditions? What is the significance of having three expeditions rather than one long expedition? How do the two parts of the novel differ?

24.5 MULTIPLE CHOICE QUESTIONS (MCQs)

- Q.1 Cervantes claims that he is merely writing :
- a) history
 - b) geography
 - c) science
 - d) biography
- Q.2 Cervantes is a kind of _____ leading us through the story of the novel, *Don Quixote*.
- a) teacher
 - b) scholar
 - c) guide
 - d) director
- Q.3. Don Quixote promises an illiterate labourer, _____ that he will make him the governor of an isle.
- a) Marcela
 - b) Chrysostom
 - c) Thomas Cecial
 - d) Sancho Panza
- Q.4. A goatherd named Peter arrives with the news that the shepherd-student _____ has died from his love for Marcela.
- a) Chrysostom
 - b) Vivaldo
 - c) Sancho
 - d) Cardenio

- Q.5. _____ compares the severity of the knight's lifestyle to that of the monk.
- a) Sancho
 - b) Cardenio
 - c) Vivaldo
 - d) Cervantes
- Q.6. The Yanguesans beat:
- a) Rocinante
 - b) Cardenio
 - c) Vivaldo
 - d) Cervantes
- Q.7. Peter portrays Marcela as unduly:
- a) nice
 - b) wise
 - c) foolish
 - d) arrogant
- Q.8. The story of Marcela and Chrysostom marks a change in the _____ of the novel, *Don Quixote*.
- a) plot
 - b) theme
 - c) development
 - d) structure
- Q.9. _____ promises to make the balsam to cure Sancho.
- a) Don Quixote
 - b) Peter
 - c) Cardenio
 - d) Vivaldo

- Q.10. Don Quixote rushes into the battle and kills _____ sheep.
- a) seven
 - b) seventeen
 - c) nine
 - d) twelve
- Q.11. Cervantes examines the question of crime and punishment by contrasting Don Quixote's actions with the actions of the:
- a) criminals
 - b) galley slaves
 - c) Vivaldo
 - d) Sancho
- Q.12. Dorothea offers to play the distressed damsel in the plot to lure _____ home.
- a) Sancho
 - b) Cardenio
 - c) Don Quixote
 - d) the priest
- Q.13. Anselmo marries _____, a beautiful woman who has the purest intentions.
- a) Camilla
 - b) Dorothea
 - c) the Duchess
 - d) Lothario
- Q.14. Sancho wakes Don Quixote to tell him that _____ is not really a princess.
- a) Lucinda
 - b) Anselmo

- c) Dulcinea
- d) Dorothea

Q.15. Don Quixote and Sancho decide to enter El Toboso at _____.

- a) night
- b) day
- c) evening
- d) morning

24.6 LET US SUM UP

This lesson covers the extensive discussion of the examination oriented questions to help the learner prepare properly for his/her examinations. You are advised to read the text in detail to comprehend and appreciate the work.

24.7 ANSWER KEY (MCQs)

- 1. a) history
- 2. b) scholar
- 3. d) Sancho Panza
- 4. a) Chrysostom
- 5. c) Vivaldo
- 6. a) Rocinante
- 7. d) arrogant
- 8. d) structure
- 9. a) Don Quixote
- 10. a) seven
- 11. b) galley slaves
- 12. c) Don Quixote

- 13. a) Camilla
- 14 . d) Dorothea
- 15. a) night

24.8 SUGGESTED READING

- McCrory, Donald P. No Ordinary Man: The Life and Times of Miguel de Cervantes. Mineola, NY: Dover Publications, 2006.
- Percase de Ponseti, Helena. Cervantes the Writer and Painter of Don Quijote. Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1988.
