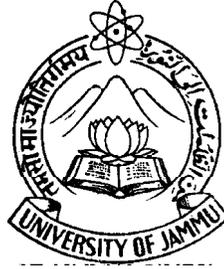


***Directorate of Distance Education***

**UNIVERSITY OF JAMMU  
JAMMU**



**SELF LEARNING MATERIAL  
M. A. ENGLISH**

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

**Course Code : ENG 313  
Unit : I - VI  
Lesson : 1 - 24**

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

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

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## M. A ENGLISH

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## **WELCOME MESSAGE**

Welcome to Semester - III

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!

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

## SYLLABUS SEMESTER III

**Course Code: ENG 313**

**Duration of Examination: 3 hrs**

**Title of the Course: European Literature**

**Total Marks: 100**

**Credits: 6**

**(a) Semester Examination-80**

**(b) Sessional Assessment- 20**

Detailed Syllabus for the examinations to be held in Dec. 2019, 2020 & 2021

**OBJECTIVE:** The objective of the course is to acquaint the students with the significant works of European Literature that have international influence and acknowledgement.

### UNIT-I

Virgil                      *Aeneid* Part I (Book I-VI)

### UNIT-II

Virgil                      *Aeneid* Part II (Book VII-XII)

### UNIT-III

Dostoevsky              *Notes from Underground*

### UNIT-IV

Franz Kafka              *The Trial*



## SUGGESTED READING

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**VIRGIL: THE *AENEID***

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- 1.3 The Background**
- 1.4 Plot Overview**
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## **1.1 INTRODUCTION**

Publius Vergilius Maro, popularly known as Virgil, was born on October 15, 70.B.C. near Mantua-a city in northern Italy. He was the son of a farmer. He went to study in Cremona, then in Milan and finally in Rome. He returned to Mantua to write his *Eclogues* around 41 B.C. The civil war forced him to flee south to Naples, where seven years later he completed *The Georgics* on farming. Virgil earned great reputation in public, wealth from his patron and favor from the emperor-Augustus Caesar. Virgil flourished in the golden age of Rome Empire, during the reign of Emperor Octavia-later known as Augustus. Before Augustus became emperor, Rome was plagued with internal strife. During Virgil's youth, The First Triumvirate-Julius Caesar, Pompey, and Crassus ruled the Roman Republic. Crassus was murdered around 53 B.C. and Caesar initiated civil war against Pompey. After defeating Pompey, Caesar reigned alone until the Ides of March in 44 B.C. Julius Caesar was assassinated and a Civil war erupted between the assassins and the Second Triumvirate-Octavian, Antony and Lepidus. By 36 B.C. only Octavian and Antony remained and they began warring against each other. At the battle of Actium in 31 B.C. Octavian defeated Antony and his ally Cleopatra of Egypt. He consolidated power in himself alone. He assumed the title of Augustus. Virgil witnessed all this turmoil. His life was disrupted by the political strife. Immediately after finishing the *Georgics*, Virgil began to write his *mangnum opus*, *Aeneid*, which in a way, justified and legitimized the reign of Augustus.

## 1.2 OBJECTIVES

It is worthwhile to study the great classics / epics to enlighten one. Virgil's *Aeneid* if studied between the lines, is a source of enlightenment. The objective of this lesson is to expose the learner to the first part of the glorious Augustan epic. The other objective is to acquaint him/her with the forces which acted in the background of the Golden Age of Rome.

## 1.3 THE BACKGROUND

The *Aeneid* tells the story of the Trojan hero, Aeneas's perilous flight from Troy to Italy following the Trojan War. In Italy, Aeneas's descendents were destined to lay the foundation of Rome. Virgil repeatedly foreshadows the coming of Augustus, though he usurped power through violence and treachery. When Rome was at its height, the easiest way to justify the socio-political violence was to claim that it was decreed by fate to usher in the reign of Augustus Caesar. The *Aeneid* is by no means an exclusive political work.

Virgil did not invent the story that Rome descended from Troy. He crafted the events narrated in The *Aeneid* from the then existing tradition surrounding Aeneas that extended from the ancient Greek poet Homer through the contemporary Roman historian Livy. In the *Iliad*, Aeneas faces off Achilles. Aeneas is no match for Achilles, who has been outfitted in armor forged by the divine smith Hephaestus. Poseidon rescues Aeneas and admires him for his piety. Poseidon prophesies that Aeneas would survive the Trojan War and assume leadership over the Trojan people.

Ancient accounts of Aeneas's post war wanderings vary. Greek art portrays Aeneas carrying his father, Anchises from out of burning Troy. The settlement of Aeneas and the Trojans in Italy and their connection with the foundation of Rome entered written literary tradition centuries after Homer in the 3<sup>rd</sup> century B.C. Varro had also referred to Dido and Aeneas but Virgil synthesized all the elements of Aeneas's story in the form of an epic.

Virgil took as many as eleven years to compose The *Aeneid* but did not consider it fit for publication. He even thought of burning the manuscript of it. He considered it unfinished. But Augustus intervened and The *Aeneid* was published against

Virgil's wishes.

Virgil's meticulously crafted poetry, through *The Aeneid*, presented the credentials of the greatest poet in the Latin language. Throughout the Middle Ages and into the Renaissance, his fame kept on growing. He inspired many poets across languages- Milton in English, and Dante in Italian. Virgil was viewed as a pagan prophet because a few lines of *The Aeneid* were interpreted as predictions of the coming of Christ. The writers of the Renaissance appreciated Virgil's poetry from the point of view of structural craft and the vivid portrayal of human passions. Virgil's poetry is often judged in relation to that of his Greek epics the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*. These Homeric epics portray the Trojan War and its aftermath. Most of the contemporary critics feel that Virgil's poetry pales in comparison to Homer's. Virgil emulated Homer and endeavored to surpass him. But Homer is Homer.

## **1.4 PLOT OVERVIEW**

### **1.4.1 Book I-VI**

On the Mediterranean Sea, Aeneas and his fellow Trojans had to abandon their home city of Troy which was sacked by the Greeks. They sailed for Italy where Aeneas was destined to found Rome. As they neared the destination, a fierce storm threw them off course and they had to land in Carthage. Dido, the queen of Carthage, welcomed them. Aeneas described the sack of Troy that ended the Trojan War after ten years' of Greek siege. Finally the Trojans were tricked when they let into the city walls a wooden horse which harbored several Greek soldiers in its hollow belly. He related how he escaped the burning city with his father Anchises and his son Ascanius. Assured by the gods that a glorious future awaited him in Italy, he set sail with a fleet containing the surviving citizens of Troy. Aeneas also described the hazardous journey. Twice had the Trojans attempted to build a new city only to be driven away by ill omens and plagues. Harpies- partly women and partly birds- cursed them but they also encountered friendly countrymen unexpectedly. After the death of Anchises and a terrible storm, they made their way to Carthage.

Impressed by Aeneas's exploits and sympathetic to his suffering, Dido, a Phoenician princess, who fled her home and founded Carthage after her brother murdered her husband, fell madly in love with Aeneas. They lived together as passionate

lovers for a period until the gods reminded Aeneas of his duty to found a new city. He determined to set sail again. Desperate, Dido committed suicide.

As the Trojans made for Italy, inclement weather thrust them to Sicily where they held funeral games for the dead Anchises. The women, tired of the voyage, began to burn the ships but a downpour put the fire out. Aeneas felt reinvigorated after his father visited him in a dream and progressed towards Italy. Aeneas descended into the underworld guided by the Sibyl of Cumae to visit his father. He saw a vision of the future history and heroes of Rome. He comprehended the significance of his destined mission. Aeneas returned from the underworld and the Trojans proceeded up the coast to the region of Latium.

#### **1.4.2 Book VII - XII**

The arrival of the Trojans in Italy began peacefully. King Latinus extended his hospitality to them, hoping that Aeneas would prove to be the foreigner whom, according to the prophecy, his daughter Lavinia was to marry. But queen Amata thought otherwise. She thought Turnus, a local suitor, would be best for Lavinia's hand. Queen Amata and Turnus harbored enmity towards the Trojans. Ascanius caused trouble by hunting a stag which was a pet of local herdsmen. Fighting ensued. Turnus took the lead against the Trojans. Aeneas, at the suggestion of the river god, Tiberinus, sailed north up the Tiber to seek military support from among the neighboring tribes. During the voyage his mother, Venus, descended to give him a new set of weapons wrought by Vulcan. While Aeneas was away, Turnus attacked the Trojans. Aeneas returned to find his men embroiled in the battle. Pallas, the son of Aeneas's new ally Evander, was killed by Turnus. Aeneas flew into a wild fury and slew several soldiers of Turnus. Having fought fiercely, both sides agreed to a truce so that they bury their dead properly. The Latins discussed whether to continue the battle. They decided to avoid any further unnecessary bloodshed and therefore proposed a hand- to- hand duel between Aeneas and Turnus. When they faced off, a fierce battle ensued again. Aeneas was wounded in the thigh. Eventually the Trojans threatened the enemy city. Aeneas wounded Turnus badly. Aeneas had nearly spared Turnus but as he recollected how Pallas had been slain, he slew Turnus.

## **1.5 THEMES**

### **1.5.1 Fate**

The direction and destination of Aeneas's course of action are preordained. His various sufferings and glories in battle and at sea seem to postpone his inevitable destiny. The power of fate stands far above the power of the gods in the hierarchy of supernatural forces in *The Aeneid*. Very often it is associated with the will of Jupiter, the most powerful of the Olympian gods. His will trumps the will of others; the interference in Aeneas's life by the lesser gods, who are motivated by their personal interests to influence the contours of Aeneas's larger destiny, is thwarted. The development of individual characters in *The Aeneid* is apparent in their readiness and the spirit of resistance with which they meet the directives of fate. Juno, Turnus, Aeneas, Dido etc., fight the overwhelming force of destiny till the very end of epic. The final resolution involves a transformation in each of them, as a result of which they resign themselves to fate, to the events to the destined end.

Dido desired Aeneas's company but fate denied her. Her desire consumed her. Aeneas was reasonable enough to subordinate his anxieties and desires to the demands of fate. Fate, according to Virgil, was a divine religious principle that determined the course of history and culminated in the establishment of the Roman Empire.

### **1.5.2 The Sufferings of the Wanderers**

In the first half of *The Aeneid*, Virgil narrated the story of the Trojans' wanderings as they travelled from Troy to Italy. Ancient culture was oriented towards familial loyalty and geographic origins, and stressed the notion that a homeland was a genuine source of one's identity. Virgil intensified the sufferings of the wandering Trojans by placing them at the mercy of the forces larger than themselves. On the sea, their fleet was buffeted by frequent storms. The Trojans had to decide again and again on a course of action in an uncertain and hostile world. The Roman audience knows what fate had in store for the Trojans.

### **1.5.3 The Glory of Rome**

Virgil wrote *The Aeneid* during the Golden Age of the Roman Empire under the patronage of Caesar Augustus. The purpose of the poet was to document a myth of Rome's origin that would highlight the grandeur and legitimize the success of an empire that had conquered most of the –then known world. The *Aeneid* underlines this cultural pinnacle. The *Aeneid* thus justifies the Trojans's, settlement in Latium, reflecting retrospectively on already realized ideal. Virgil was dexterous enough to connect the political and social situation of his day with the inherited tradition of the Greek gods and heroes. The condition of the Italians prior to the Trojans is characterized as primitive existence of war, chaos and emotional unreasonableness. By contrast, Virgil proves the Augustan empire as a world of peace, order and stability.

## **1.6 MOTIFS**

### **1.6.1 Prophecies and Predictions**

Prophecies and prediction take many forms including dreams, visitations from the dead, mysterious signs and omens, visits of the gods and their emissaries. These windows onto the future enable the characters to see the quirks of fate.

### **1.6.2 Founding a New City**

The mission to build a new city is an obsession to the Trojans. Dido, the Phoenician princess, had founded Carthage, a new city, years back. She came in contact with Aeneas. Virgil refers to several attempts by the Trojans to lay the foundations for a new city, all of which were aborted due to ill omens and fierce storms. Aeneas, however, kept on boosting the morale of his men when their spirits flagged. The walls, foundation, towers of a city stand for civilization, and order and a remedy for uncertainty, irrationality and confusion which result from wandering without a home.

### **1.6.3 Vengeance**

Avenging a wrong, especially the death of a loved one, is a significant element of heroic culture and a pervasive motif in *The Aeneid*. Aeneas, suddenly changes his mind when reminded of the slain of Pallas, whose belt Turnus

wore as a trophy. Aeneas thought it would be dishonorable and disloyal to let Pallas's death go unpunished. Dido's suicide is an act of revenge on Aeneas. The Harpies act out of vengeance when they curse Aeneas for having killed their live stock. The struggles of the gods against one another are likewise motivated by spite and revenge. The history of hurt vanity, left over from Paris's judgment of Venus as the fairest goddess, largely motivates Juno's aggressive behavior against the Trojans and Venus—their divine supporters.

## **1.7 SYMBOLS**

### **1.7.1 Flames**

Fire symbolizes both destruction and erotic desire. Vigil connects Paris's desire for Helen to the fires of the siege of Troy. When Dido confesses her love for Aeneas to her sister Anna, she says "I recognize/the signs of the old flame, of old desire." Dido recalls her previous marriage in the thought of the torch and the bridal bed. Torches limit the power of flames by controlling them but the new love ignited in Dido's heart is never formalized by the institution of marriage —"the bridal bed". The flame of love consumes Dido. Virgil describes the way she dies in the synonymous terms — "enflamed and driven mad."

### **1.7.2 The Golden Bough**

According to the Sibyl, the priestess of Apollo, the golden bough is the symbol Aeneas must carry in order to gain access to Dis/Hades. It is impossible for mortals to be allowed to visit the realm of the dead and then return to life. The golden bough is the sign of Aeneas's privilege.

### **1.7.3 The Gates of War**

The opening of the Gates of War indicates the declaration of war. The Gates of War symbolize the chaos of a world in which divine forces, often antagonistic and hostile to the well – being of mortals, overpower human will and desire. Penates or the hearth gods of Troy are referred to over and over again in the epic. They are symbols of locality and ancestry. They are tribal gods associated with the city of Troy. They reside, it is believed, in the household hearths.

Aeneas gathered them up along with his family when he departed from his devastated home. They symbolize the continuity of Troy as it was transplanted at a new physical/geographical location.

#### **1.7.4 Weather**

In the *Aeneid*, the gods use weather as a force to express their will. The storm that Juno sends in the beginning of the epic, expresses her wrath. Venus, on the other hand, shows her affection for the Trojans by bidding the sea god Neptune to protect them. Venus and Juno conspire to isolate Dido and Aeneas in a cave by sending a storm to disrupt their hunting trip. Roman mythology like Greek mythology has the tendency to make the omens, signs and symbols to connect the seen (the storm) with the unseen (divine will) causally and dramatically. *The Aeneid* is the greatest single book which incorporates the totality of the roman civilization.

### **1.8 MAJOR CHARACTERS**

#### **Aeneas**

As the son of the Trojan mortal Anchises and Venus, the goddess of beauty and erotic love, Aeneas enjoys a special divine protection. He is chosen to survive the siege of Troy and to lay the foundations in Italy for the glory of the Roman Empire. In *The Aeneid*, Aeneas's fate as Rome's founder drives all the action, and the narrative constantly points out that Aeneas's heroism owes as much to his legacy as to his own actions. Aeneas serves as the vehicle through which fate carries out its historical design.

As a Trojan leader, Aeneas respects prophecy and attempts to incorporate the idea of his own destiny into his actions, in spite of emotional impulses that conflict with his fated duties. His ability to accept his destined path despite his unhappiness in doing so makes him a graceful hero and a worthy recipient of the honor and favor the gods bestow upon him. His compassion for the sufferings of others, even in conjunction with a single-minded devotion to his duty, is another aspect of his heroism. Sympathetic to the weariness of others on the journey, he delivers speeches to his fleet to keep the men's spirits high.

Aeneas's personal investment in the future of Rome increases as the story

progresses. The events of Book V, in which the Trojans sail away from Carthage toward Italy, and Book VI, in which Aeneas visits his father in the realm of the dead, depict Aeneas's growth as a leader. In Book V, he shows his sympathy for the woes of others by allowing the crippled and unwilling to stay behind. He also grows in compassion in the underworld when he observes the lot of the unburied dead. He carries these lessons into the war that follows, taking care to ensure the proper burial of both ally and enemy.

When, in the underworld, Aeneas's father, Anchises, presents a tableau of the events that will lead to Rome's pinnacle, Aeneas comes to understand his historical role with greater clarity and immediacy. The scenes depicted later in the epic on the shield made by Vulcan further focus Aeneas's sentiments and actions toward his destined future. There are moments, of course, when Aeneas seems to lose track of his destiny—particularly during his dalliance with Dido in Carthage. Aeneas is recalled to his duty in this case not by a long historical vision, but by an appeal from Jupiter to his obligation to his son, Ascanius, to whom Aeneas is devoted.

Even prior to Virgil's treatment of the Trojan War, Aeneas held a place in the classical tradition as a figure of great piety, just as Ulysses was known for his cunning and Achilles for his rage in battle. The value Aeneas places on family is particularly evident in the scene in which he escorts his father and son out of Troy, bearing his elderly father on his back. He behaves no less honorably toward the gods, earnestly seeking to find out their wishes and conform to them as fully as possible. His words to Dido in Books IV and VI express his commitment to obey fate rather than indulge in his feelings of genuine romantic love. This subordination of personal desire to duty defines Aeneas's character and earns him the repeated moniker "pious Aeneas." His behavior contrasts with Juno's and Turnus's in this regard, as these characters fight fate at every step on the way.

## **Dido**

Before Aeneas's arrival, Dido is the confident and competent ruler of Carthage, a city she founded on the coast of North Africa. She is resolute, in her determination not to marry again and to preserve the memory of her dead husband, Sychaeus, whose murder at the hands of Pygmalion, her brother, caused her to flee

her native Tyre. Despite this turmoil, she maintains her focus on her political responsibilities.

Virgil depicts the suddenness of the change that love provokes in the queen with the image of Dido as the victim of Cupid's arrow, which strikes her almost like madness or a disease. Dido tells her sister that a flame has been reignited within her. While flames and fire are traditional, almost clichéd images associated with love, fire is also a natural force of destruction and uncontrollable chaos. Dido risks everything by falling for Aeneas, and when this love fails, she finds herself unable to reassume her dignified position. By taking Aeneas as a lover, she compromises her previously untainted loyalty to her dead husband's memory. She loses the support of Carthage's citizens, who have seen their queen indulge an amorous obsession at the expense of her civic responsibilities. Further, by dallying with another foreigner, Dido alienates the local African chieftains who had approached her as suitors and now pose a military threat. Her irrational obsession drives her to a frenzied suicide, out of the tragedy of her situation and the pain of lost love, but also out of a sense of diminished possibilities for the future.

Dido plays a role in the first four books of the epic similar to that which Turnus plays at the end. She is a figure of passion and volatility, qualities that contrast with Aeneas's order and control, and traits that Virgil associated with Rome itself in his own day. Dido also represents the sacrifice Aeneas makes to pursue his duty. If fate were to allow him to remain in Carthage, he would rule a city beside a queen he loves without enduring the further hardships of war. Aeneas encounters Dido's shade in the underworld just before the future legacy of Rome is revealed to him, and again he admits that his abandonment of the queen was not an act of his own will. This encounter with lost love, though poignant, is dwarfed by Anchises's subsequent revelation of the glory of Rome. Through Dido, Virgil affirms order, duty, and history at the expense of romantic love.

### **Turnus**

Turnus is a counterpart to Dido, another of Juno's protégés who must eventually perish in order for Aeneas to fulfill his destiny. Both Turnus and Dido represent forces of irrationality in contrast to Aeneas's pious sense of order. Dido is undone by her

romantic desire, Turnus by his unrelenting rage and pride. He is famous for courage and skill in battle, and he has all the elements of a hero.

What distinguishes Turnus from Aeneas, besides his unmitigated fury in battle, is his willfulness. He tries to carve out his own understanding of history with his prediction of his own success, based on the events of the Trojan past, as told in Homer's *Iliad*. Though Turnus may appear to us a Latin version of Achilles, the raging hero of the *Iliad*, Turnus's powers as a warrior are not enough to guarantee him victory. Jupiter has decreed another destiny for Turnus, an outcome Turnus refuses to accept. Turnus's interpretation of signs and omens is similarly stubborn. He interprets them to his own advantage rather than seeking their true meaning, as Aeneas does.

Turnus's character changes in the last few battle scenes, when we see him gradually lose confidence as he comes to understand and accept his tragic fate. He is angry earlier when Juno tries to protect him by luring him out of the battle and onto a ship. In this episode she humiliates him, making him look like a coward rather than the hero he so desperately wants to be. By the final scenes, however, his resistance to the aid of Juturna, his sister, is motivated no longer by a fiery determination to fight but by a quiet resolve to meet his fate and die honorably.

**Ascanius** - Aeneas's young son by his first wife, Creusa. Ascanius (also called Lulus) is most important as a symbol of Aeneas's destiny - his future founding of the Roman race. Though still a child Ascanius has several opportunities over the course of the epic to display his bravery and leadership. He leads a procession of boys on horseback during the games of Book V and he helps to defend the Trojan camp from Turnus's attack while his father is away.

**Anchises** - Aeneas's father and a symbol of Aeneas's Trojan heritage. Although Anchises dies during the journey from Troy to Italy, he continues in spirit to help his son fulfill fate's decrees, especially by guiding Aeneas through the underworld and showing him what fate has in store for his descendants.

**Creusa** - Aeneas's wife at Troy, and the mother of Ascanius. Creusa is lost and killed as per family attempts to flee the city, but tells Aeneas he will find a new wife at his new home.

**Sinon** - The Greek youth who pretends to have been left behind at the end of the Trojan War. Sinon persuades the Trojans to take in the wooden horse as an offering to Minerva, then lets out the warriors trapped inside the horse's belly.

**Latinus** - The king of the Latins, the people of what is now central Italy, around the Tiber River. Latinus allows Aeneas into his kingdom and encourages him to become a suitor of Lavinia, his daughter, causing resentment and eventually war among his subjects. He respects the gods and fate, but does not hold strict command over his people.

**Lavinia** - Latinus's daughter and a symbol of Latium in general. Lavinia's character is not developed in the poem; she is important only as the object of the Trojan-Latin struggle. The question of who will marry Lavinia - Turnus or Aeneas - becomes key to future relations between the Latins and the Trojans and therefore the *Aeneid's* entire historical scheme.

**Amata** - Queen of Laurentum (a region of Latium, in Italy) and wife of Latinus. Amata opposes the marriage of Lavinia her daughter, to Aeneas and remains loyal throughout to Turnus, Lavinia's original suitor. Amata kills herself once it is clear that Aeneas is destined to win.

**Evander** - King of Pallanteum (a region of Arcadia, in Italy) and father of Pallas. Evander is a sworn enemy of the Latins and Aeneas befriends him and secures his assistance in the battles against Turnus.

**Pallas** - Son of Evander, whom Evander entrusts to Aeneas's care and tutelage. Pallas eventually dies in battle at the hands of Turnus, causing Aeneas and Evander great grief. To avenge Pallas's death, Aeneas finally slays Turnus, dismissing an initial impulse to spare him.

**Drances** - A Latin leader who desires an end to the Trojan-Latin struggle. Drances questions the validity of Turnus's motives at the council of the Latins, infuriating Turnus.

**Camilla** - The leader of the Voiscians, a race of warrior maidens. Camilla is perhaps the only strong mortal female character in the epic.

**Juturna** - Turnus's sister. Juno provokes Juturna into inducing a full-scale

battle between the Latins and the Trojans by disguising herself as an officer and goading the Latins after a treaty has already been reached.

**Achates** - A Trojan and a personal friend of Aeneas.

### **Gods and Goddesses**

**Juno** - The queen of the gods, the wife and sister of Jupiter and the daughter of Saturn. Juno (Hera in Greek mythology) hates the Trojans because of the Trojan Paris's judgment against her in a beauty contest. She is also a patron of Carthage and knows that Aeneas's Roman descendants are destined to destroy Carthage. She takes out her anger on Aeneas throughout the epic, and in her wrath acts as his primary divine antagonist.

**Venus** - The goddess of love and the mother of Aeneas. Venus (Aphrodite in Greek mythology) is a benefactor of the Trojans. She helps her son whenever Juno tries to hurt him, causing conflict among the gods. She is also referred to as Cytherea, after Cythera, the island where she was born and where her shrine is located.

**Jupiter** - The king of the gods, and the son of Saturn. While the gods often struggle against one another in battles with Jupiter's will reigns supreme and becomes identified with the more impersonal force of fate. Therefore, Jupiter (also known as Jove, and called Zeus in Greek mythology) directs the general progress of Aeneas's destiny, ensuring that Aeneas is never permanently thrown off his course toward Italy. Jupiter's demeanor is controlled and levelheaded compared to the volatility of Juno and Venus.

**Neptune** - God of the sea, and generally an ally of Venus and Aeneas. Neptune (Poseidon in Greek mythology) calms the storm that opens the epic and conducts Aeneas safely on the last leg of his voyage.

**Mercury** - The messenger god. The other gods often send Mercury (Hermes in Greek mythology) on errands to Aeneas.

**Aeolus** - The god of the winds, enlisted to aid Juno in creating bad weather for the Trojans in Book I.

**Cupid** - A son of Venus and the god of erotic desire. In Book I, Cupid (Eros

in Greek mythology) disguises himself as Ascanius, Aeneas's son, and causes Dido to fall in love with Aeneas.

**Allecto** - One of the Furies, or deities who avenge sins, sent by Juno in Book VII to incite the Latin people to war against the Trojans.

**Vulcan** - God of fire and the forge and husband of Venus. Venus urges Vulcan (Hephaestus in Greek mythology) to craft a superior set of arms for Aeneas, and the gift serves Aeneas well in his battle with Turnus.

**Tiberinus** - The river god associated with the Tiber River, where Rome will eventually be built. At Tiberinus's suggestion, Aeneas travels upriver to make allies of the Arcadians.

**Saturn** - The father of the gods. Saturn (Chronos in Greek mythology) was king of Olympus until his son Jupiter overthrew him.

**Minerva** - The goddess who protects the Greeks during the Trojan War and helps them conquer Troy. Like Juno, Minerva (Pallas Athena in Greek mythology) is motivated against the Trojans by the Trojan Paris's judgment that Venus was the most beautiful among goddesses.

**Apollo** - A son of Jupiter and god of the sun. Apollo was born at Delos and helps the Trojans in their voyage when they stop there. Because he is often portrayed as an archer, many characters invoke his name before they fire a shaft in battle.

## 1.9 LET US SUM UP

Despite the polished and complex nature of the *Aeneid* (legend stating that Virgil wrote only three lines of the poem each day), the number of half-complete lines and the abrupt ending are generally seen as evidence that Virgil died before he could finish the work. Because this poem was composed and preserved in writing rather than orally, The *Aeneid* is more complete than most classical epics.

## 1.10 GLOSSARY

Augustan: Octavius consolidated political power and became emperor. He called himself 'Augustus'. The word 'Augustan' is its adjective.

Aftermath: Outcome after an event/episode/movement

Downpour:	rainfall
Carnage:	casualties and bloodshed
Themes:	the fundamental and often universal ideas expressed in a literary work.
Motifs:	recurring structures and patterns devised to evolve and inform the major themes of a work of art.
Symbols:	objects, characters, colours, signs etc. representing abstract concepts and ideas.
Penates:	the hearth gods. They are the tribal gods who live in the household hearths.
Triumvirate:	the supreme governing body in the Roman Republic. It consisted of three persons. The first triumvirate included Julius Caesar, Pompey and Crassus. The second triumvirate included Octavian, Antony and Lepidus.
Hades:	the underworld.

### 1.11 MULTIPLE CHOICE QUESTIONS

1. Which of the following is not a work by Virgil?
  - a. *The Georgics*
  - b. *Eclogues*
  - c. *The Aeneid*
  - d. *The Poetics*
  
2. What is not true?
  - a. Cleopatra was the queen of Egypt.
  - b. Octavian defeated Antony and Cleopatra.
  - c. Troy was sacked and burnt by the Greeks.
  - d. Turnus attacked the city of Troy.
  
3. What is not true?
  - a. Virgil influenced Dante.
  - b. Virgil influenced Milton

- c. Virgil influenced August Caesar
  - d. Virgil influenced Subhas Chandra Bose
4. Which of the following is not an epic?
- a. *The Aeneid*
  - b. *The Odyssey*
  - c. *The Bible*
  - d. *The Iliad*
5. Which is not the ancient city state?
- a. Sparta
  - b. Troy
  - c. Carthage
  - d. Moscow
6. The Harpies are:
- a. mermaids
  - b. sea-nymphs
  - c. partly birds partly women
  - d. Furies
7. Choose the correct option
- a. The Sibyl was the priestess of Apollo.
  - b. The Sibyl was the queen of Cumae.
  - c. The Sibyl did not guide Aeneas's visit to Hades/Dis.
  - d. The Sibyl prophesied that Aeneas would be killed by Turnus.

**Answer key :-** 1 (d), 2(a), 3(d), 4(c), 5(a), 6(c), 7(a)

## **1.12 EXAMINATION ORIENTED QUESTIONS**

1. When did Virgil flourish?
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2. Who was the hero of the Battle of Actium?

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3. Why did the Harpies curse Aeneas?

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4. Name any four Olympian gods.

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5. How did the gods express their will?

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6. Who are the hearth gods?

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7. The sight of which object forces Aeneas to kill Turnus?

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8. What episode triggered the Latin – Trojan War?

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9. Write critically an essay on Virgil as an epic poet

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10. Write a note on Dido. What made her commit suicide?

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11. What are the themes, motifs and symbols in the *Aeneid* ? (answer in 50 words)

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### 1.13 SUGGESTED READING

- Homer’s Iliad, Penguin Books trans. E.V.Rieu
- The Aeneid (Virgil), Penguin Books trans.W. R. Jackson Knight
- Makers of Rome (Plutarch) Penguin Books trans. Ian Scott-Kilvert
- Homer’s Odyssey. Penguin Books. trans. E.V. Rieu

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## VIRGIL: THE *AENEID*

### STRUCTURE

- 2.1 Introduction
- 2.2 Objectives
- 2.3 Narration - Book I-VI
- 2.4 Important Passages Explained
- 2.5 Critical Comments on the content of the Aeneid (Book I-VI)
- 2.6 Let Us Sum Up
- 2.7 Multiple Choice Questions
- 2.8 Examination Oriented Questions
- 2.9 Answer Key
- 2.10 Suggested Reading

### 2.1 INTRODUCTION

The *Aeneid* is a heroic – epic by Publius Vergilius Maro (known as Virgil). He flourished in 70-19 B.C. The epic deals with the period immediately following The Trojan War. Its locale is the Mediterranean region. Its principal characters are the following though it has hundreds of characters in it. Aeneas is the Trojan hero who is destined to lay the foundation of the Roman race. Dido —The Queen of Carthage — was in love with him. Anna was her sister. Anchises was the father of Aeneas and

Ascanius was his son.

Venus — The Goddess of love and beauty was his mother. Juno was the queen of the gods and enemy of the Trojans. Cumaean Sibyl, the Prophetess, led Aeneas to Hades. Latinus was the king of the Latins. He was defeated by Aeneas. Lavinia was his daughter. Turnus was a Latin hero who was ambitious for the Latin throne and anxious to marry Lavinia. Evander —the Arcadean king was an ally of Aeneas. Pallas was his son.

## **2.2 OBJECTIVES**

The objective of this lesson is to acquaint the learner with the content of the epic which celebrates the glory of Rome. It records the traditional story of the establishment of the Roman race and traces the lineage of the Romans back to Aeneas and Troy. It has stood the test of time and will go down in history as one of the greatest epics which constitute mankind's heritage. This lesson deals with the first half of the narrative of the epic. (Book I to Book VI)

## **2.3 NARRATION - BOOK I - VI**

Aeneas was driven by a strong storm to the shores of Libya and was welcomed warmly by the people of Carthage. Since the city of Carthage was the favorite place of Juno —the divine enemy of Aeneas, Venus had Cupid to assume the physical appearance of Ascanius —the son of Aeneas —so that the young god of love might warm the heart of proud Dido and Aeneas would come to no harm in her land. At the end of his welcoming feast by the Carthageans, he was asked to narrate his adventures.

He described the fall of Troy at the hands of the Greeks after a ten – year long siege. He described how the armed Greek soldiers entered the city by fraud in the belly of a wooden horse and how the Trojans had fled from the burning city. Among them were Aeneas, and his father Anchises and his son Ascanius. Shortly afterwards Anchises advised that they should set sail for distant lands. Blown by the fierce winds, tempests and storms, the Trojans reached Buthrotum. It had been foretold here that Aeneas would have to undertake a long and hazardous journey before he would reach Italy. They travelled and reached Sicily from Buthrotum. There, Anchises, who

had been his son's wise and judicious counselor, expired. He was buried there. Weather-beaten and blown by winds, Aeneas reached the coast of Libya. He ended his tale of adventures. Queen Dido who was influenced by Cupid disguised as Ascanius, felt deep pity and admiration for the Trojan, hero, Aeneas.

Queen Dido continued her entertainment for Aeneas. During a royal hunt a fierce storm happened to drive both Dido and Aeneas to the same cave for shelter. They fell passionately in love as they could not resist the erotic attraction of each other. Aeneas spent the entire winter in Carthage and entertained by Dido. But as the spring started, he felt an irresistible urge to continue his destined voyage. When he started his sea voyage further, Dido committed suicide. The flames of her funeral pyre were seen far out at sea.

Again on the shores of Sicily, Aeneas's companions refreshed themselves with food, drinks and games. The first event was a boat race in which Cloanthus was the victor. The second event was a race in which Euryalus distinguished himself. Entellus engaged Dares in a boxing match but it was stopped by Aeneas before the obviously superior Entellus achieved a knock out. The final contest was with bow and arrow (archery). Eurytion and Acestes made spectacular performances. Both of them were awarded handsome prizes. Following these contests, Ascanius and other young men rode the horses to engage themselves in war games. Meanwhile, the women missed Anchises who offered remarkable advice on such occasions. At the instigation of Juno, they set fire to the ships. Aeneas, sustained by the gods, asked his men to repair the damage. Once more the Trojans proceeded on the sea voyage.

Finally, they reached the shores of Italy at Cumae. The place was famous for the Sibyl. The Sibyl granted Aeneas the privilege of visiting his father Anchises in the underworld with a condition. The Sibyl told Aeneas that before entering the underworld he must find a golden branch in the nearby forest. The bough broke off the tree easily. If he did it, it was a sure sign that fate called Aeneas to the underworld. If he was unable to break the golden branch of the tree, he was not destined to travel the underworld.

Aeneas looked in dismay at the sprawling forest. After he said a prayer, pair of doves descended from the sky and guided him to the desired tree. He tore off the

tree the golden branch and returned to the priestess with the token. She led him to the gate of the underworld. Inside, the river Acheron flows and the ferryman Charon delivers the spirits of the dead across the river. Aeneas noticed that some souls were refused passage across the stream. They must remain stranded on the bank of it.

The Sibyl explained to him that those were the souls of those dead people whose corpses had not received proper burial. Aeneas was sad to notice Palinurus among the undelivered souls. Charon told Aeneas that no living person could be delivered across the river but the Sibyl showed him the golden branch. Charon was satisfied and ferried them across the stream. On the other side, Aeneas stood aghast hearing the wailing of thousands of suffering souls. The spirits of the dead erstwhile lined up before Minos for judgment.

Nearby were the fields of Mourning, where those who died for love, wandered. Aeneas noticed Dido there. Astonished and surprised, he spoke to her solemnly that he had not left her on his own accord. The shade of the demised queen turned away from him towards the shade of her husband Sychaeus. Aeneas pitied the queen and shed tears. Aeneas also noticed many casualties of the Trojan War. The spirits of the Greek warriors fled at the sight of him. The Sibyl urged further passage. They saw a large fortress. Inside the fortress, Radamanthus doled out judgments upon the sinners and terrible tortures were meted out to them.

Finally, Aeneas and Sibyl came to the Blessed Groves where the good souls wandered in peace and comfort. Aeneas happened to see his father Anchises who greeted him warmly and congratulated him on having undertaken the difficult journey. Anchises answered Aeneas's many questions regarding such issues as how the dead are dispersed in the underworld and how the good souls eventually reached the Fields of Happiness. Anchises was rather hard pressed for time. He asked Aeneas the purpose of his journey to the underworld—the explication of his lineage in Italy. Anchises described what would happen to the Trojan descendents—Romulus would lay the foundations of Rome; a Caesar would eventually come from the line of Ascanius and Roman civilization would acquire a Golden Age in the world. Aeneas grasped the profound significance of his long journey to Italy. Anchises accompanied Aeneas out of the underworld. Aeneas returned to his comrades on the beach. They pulled up

anchor and moved out along the coast.

## 2.4 IMPORTANT PASSAGES EXPLAINED

1. *I sing of warfare and a man at war:*

*From the sea-coast of Troy in early days*

*He came to Italy by destiny,*

*To our Lavinian western shore,*

*A fugitive, this captain, buffeted*

...

*Till he could found a city and bring home*

*His gods to Laetium, land of the Latin race,*

*The Alban lords, and the high walls of Rome.*

*Tell me the causes now, O Muse, how galled*

...

*From her old wound, the queen of gods compelled him—*

...

*To undergo so many perilous days*

*And enter on so many trials. Can anger*

*Black as this prey on the minds of heaven?*

(I.1–19)

With these opening lines of *The Aeneid*, Virgil enters the epic tradition in the shadow of Homer, author of the *Iliad*, an epic of the Trojan War, and the *Odyssey*, an epic of the Greek hero Ulysses' wanderings homeward from Troy. By naming his subjects as "warfare and a man," Virgil establishes himself as an heir to the themes of both Homeric epics. The man, Aeneas, spends the first half of the epic wandering in search of a new home and the second half at war fighting to establish this homeland. Lines 2 through 4 summarize Aeneas's first mission in the epic, to emigrate from Troy to Italy, as a fate already accomplished. We know from Virgil's use of the past tense that what he presents is history, that the end is certain, and that the epic will be an

exercise in poetic description of historical events. In the phrase “our Lavinian . . . shore,” Virgil connects his audience, his Roman contemporaries, to Aeneas, the hero of “early days.”

Even though we do not learn Aeneas’s name in these lines, we learn much about him. The fact that Aeneas’s name is withheld for so long—until line 131—emphasizes Aeneas’s lack of importance as an individual; his contribution to the future defines him. He is a “fugitive” and a “captain” and therefore a leader of men. That he bears responsibility to “bring home / His gods” introduces the concept of Aeneas’s piety through his duty to the hearth gods of Troy. Most important, we learn that Aeneas is “a man apart, devoted to his mission.” Aeneas’s detachment from temporal and emotional concerns and his focus on the mission of founding Rome, to which Virgil alludes in the image of walls in line 12, increase as the epic progresses.

In this opening passage, Virgil mentions the divine obstacle that will plague Aeneas throughout his quest: the “sleepless rage” of the “queen of gods,” Juno. Aeneas will suffer in the face of storms at sea and, later, a war on land and Virgil attributes both these impediments to Juno’s cruelty. In line 13, the poet asks the muse to explain the causes of Juno’s ire. The invocation of a muse is the traditional opening line to an epic in the classical tradition beginning with Homer. Virgil delays his invocation of the muse by a dozen lines, first summarizing what might be considered a matter of mortal history, and then inquiring the muse of the matter’s divine causes.

Virgil’s question, “Can anger / Black as this prey on the minds of heaven?” brings up the ancients’ relationship to the gods. Within their polytheistic religious system, the Greeks and Romans reckoned the will of the gods to be the cause of all events on Earth. Instead of attributing forces of good and evil to the gods, as later religions did, the Greeks and Romans believed the gods to be motivated by emotions recognizable to humans—jealousy, vanity, pride, generosity, and loyalty, for example. The primary conflict in *The Aeneid* is Juno’s vindictive anger against the forces of fate, which have ordained Aeneas’s mission to bring Troy to Italy, enabling the foundation of Rome.

2. *Did you suppose, my father,  
That I could tear myself away and leave you?*

*Unthinkable; how could a father say it?  
Now if it pleases the powers about that nothing  
Stand of this great city; if your heart  
Is set on adding your own death and ours  
To that of Troy, the door's wide open for it.  
(II.857–863)*

In this passage from Book II, which precedes Aeneas's flight from burning Troy with his father upon his back, Virgil distinguishes Aeneas for his piety. This sense of duty has two components. The first is a filial component: Aeneas is a dutiful son to Anchises, and he wants to escape with him to safety. Aeneas makes it plain that his strong sense of family loyalty will not allow him to abandon Anchises. The second is a social component: Anchises, Aeneas argues, cannot choose to stay and die at Troy without affecting many others. Anchises is a patriarch, and were he to resign himself to death; he would effectively choose death for them all. These words of Aeneas's lift Anchises out of the self-indulgence of despair and remind him of the leadership role that his seniority and status demand. In the ensuing episodes, even after his death, Anchises serves as a wise counselor to his son as Aeneas makes his way toward Italy.

3. *Roman, remember by your strength to rule  
Earth's peoples—for your arts are to be these:  
To pacify, to impose the rule of law,  
To spare the conquered, battle down the proud.  
(VI.1151–1154)*

This passage is part of the speech Anchises delivers to Aeneas in the underworld, in Book VI, as he unfolds for his son the destiny of Rome. Virgil places his own political ideals in the mouth of the wise father, warning that the Roman nation should be more merciful than violent, even in its conquests. Virgil here propounds the values for which he wants Rome to stand, and which he believes he has, in his own time, let guide him. Anchises's rhetoric here about the Roman Empire's justification for its conquering of other peoples expresses the same justification that Aeneas and the Trojans make for

settling in Rome. They defend their invasion by arguing that they bring justice, law, and warfare—with which they “pacify” and “battle down”—to the conquered. Especially in modern times, critics and readers have taken passages such as this one and labeled them propaganda for the Augustan regime. This criticism is valid, but when the values of a regime are expressed by a poet who shares those values, the line between art and propaganda becomes blurry.

## **2.5 CRITICAL COMMENTS ON THE CONTENTS OF THE AENEID (BOOK I-VI)**

Virgil adheres to the epic tradition which Homer established by invoking the Muse at the opening of the epic. The *Iliad* and The *Odyssey*, which are the models of Virgil, begin with the invocation to the Muse. Actually Virgil picks up the subject matter of the *Aeneid* from where Homer left off. The episodes described in the *Aeneid* form a sequel to The *Iliad* and are contemporaneous with the wanderings of Ulysses in The *Odyssey*. Virgil alludes to Homer’s epics and self-consciously emulates them. The differences between the two authors’ epics are the significant markers of literary tradition. Virgil invokes the Muse out of moral obligation rather than his genuine belief in divine inspiration.

The hero at sea, buffeted by the weather and impeded by unexpected encounters, is a recurring motif in epic poetry. According to the Roman world view, which was derived from the Greeks, human actions and fortunes were forced by fate and many events of men’s lives were dictated by a host of supernatural forces. Aeneas, sailing from Troy to Italy, was not in complete control of his journey. Fate had ordained that Aeneas and his people would found a new race that would become the Roman Empire. The rivalries and private loyalties of the interfering gods fuelled the conflict in the epic. Virgil’s audience was familiar with Juno’s hatred for the Trojans and her enduring antagonism. Homer had already detailed the background of Juno’s resentment against Troy in The *Iliad*. Eris had thrown the golden apple before the goddesses on Olympus saying it was a prize for the most beautiful among them. Juno, Venus and Minerva claimed it. They judged Paris of Troy as the most handsome among the mortals. In secret, each goddess had tried to bribe him. In the end, he gave the apple to Venus as she had offered the most attractive bride- Helen. Helen was already

married to Menelaus. It engendered further conflict. When Paris took her away to Troy, Menelaus assembled the Greek warriors including his brother Agamemnon. Ulysses and Achilles initiated the Trojan War. Troy was sieged for a decade. Juno and Minerva favored the Greeks, and Venus favored the Trojans. Aeneas was her son. The unbridled wrath of Juno cannot prevent the destiny of Aeneas. Jupiter sides with Venus. Juno attempted to defy fate to appease her wrath but she couldn't.

We learn the story of the Trojan War from the perspective of Ulysses and the Greeks in *The Iliad* and *The Odyssey*. Virgil attempts to minimize the humiliation of the Trojans and Aeneas. Aeneas emphasizes irrelevance of mortal concerns in the face of divine will. Venus impresses upon Aeneas to hold neither Helen nor Paris responsible for the downfall of Troy. It is the gods' will which enables some Trojans to escape: Aeneas is destined to survive.

Historically speaking, the Trojan War and the foundation of Carthage were separated by centuries. Aeneas's path across the Mediterranean did not lie straight: his fleet was thrown off course by the gods. He had to wait for auspicious weather for further passage. Virgil made the role of fate rather complex so that hero's success in each adventure did not seem to be a foregone conclusion. The Trojan destiny was flexible and alterable and there appeared no set time span for action. Virgil's message is that fate is inevitable and it demands obedience. The more one tried to delay/avoid fate, the more one suffered. Although Dido's relationship with Aeneas spans over a book of *The Aeneid*, she has become an icon for the tragic lover, like Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*. Though Aeneas loves her equally passionately, he is able to leave her in Carthage and go about his business of bringing the survivors of Troy to Italy and founding Rome. Dido not only loves Aeneas but sincerely hopes that his warriors would strengthen Carthage. For Aeneas amorous romance is a holiday of his genuine duties and responsibilities. His indulgence in love is temporary. When Jupiter, reminds Aeneas through Mercury, he resumes his mission. He has no maudlin sentimentality. From Virgil's point of view, Aeneas is not heartless but his duty has upper hand over his passion.

Virgil treats love as external force acting upon the mortals, not a function of the individual's free will. Cupid's arrow, shot to promote love between Aeneas and

Dido, ultimately causes death and destruction. For Aeneas it has been a distraction from his responsibility.

Neptune harbors no explicit wrath against the Trojans and has no interest in delaying their destiny. He does require the death of Palinurus as a price for safe passage.

The games on the shores of Eryx serve as a diversion for Aeneas and his crew. After four books of inclement weather, suffering and suicide, sport provides a light hearted interlude. Generally Virgil maintains a solemn tone. Virgil excels at representing universal passions but here he portrays the passion for sport and physical competition. He depicts the frustration of the losers, the triumphant gloating of the winners and fervent display of masculinity and the enthusiasm of the spectators. The sports matter little to the plot of epic as a whole but they show a light hearted aspect of Virgil's art: they constitute a welcome event after Dido's suicide.

Juno and Venus continue their quarrel interfering further in the journey of weary Trojans. But the stoic persistence is one of the messages from *The Aeneid*. With his strength renewed, Aeneas visits Anchises's spirit.

The narration of Aeneas's journey to the underworld raises Virgil to the status of a Christian prophet in the Middle Ages. In the fourteenth century, the Italian poet Dante based his journey through hell in *The Inferno* even though Virgil's version of the after life was not a Christian one. Like Virgil, Dante designed hell with many segments. He exercised his formidable imagination in inventing penalties for sinners. Virgil's Dis is pre- Christian.

Virgil portrays an after life in which the people are judged according to the virtues of their earthly lives. The presence of Orpheus in the Blessed Groves confirms it.

Rhadamanthus's practice of listening to the sinners and then sentencing them is similar to the Christian conception of Judgment after death. Virgil has no equivalent of Christian heaven. All souls migrate to Dis and occupy their places according to the virtue of their earthly lives. Virgil had an impact on Christian theologians and poets. Virgil glorified the Caesars. He rendered Augustus Caesar-his patron- the epitome of the Roman Empire. He presided over the Golden Age. Augustus Caesar emerges

as the natural counterpart to Aeneas, bringing to perfection to the city whose history the Trojan hero initiated.

## **2.6 LET US SUM UP**

Aeneas's trip to the underworld is Virgil's opportunity to indulge in an extensive account of Rome's future glory, particularly in his glorification of the Caesars. Virgil renders Augustus—his own ruler and benefactor—the epitome of the Roman Empire, the promised ruler who presides over the Golden Age. Virgil had good reason to think he was living at the high point of history—after all, Rome ruled most of the known world and seemed invincible. In this context, Augustus emerges as the natural counterpart to Aeneas, bringing to perfect fruition the city whose history the Trojan hero initiated.

## **2.7 MULTIPLE CHOICE QUESTIONS**

1. Who is the staunch enemy of Aeneas and the Trojans?
  - (a) Jupiter
  - (b) Venus
  - (c) Neptune
  - (d) Juno
  
2. Who is the queen of Carthage- the city state ?
  - (a) Venus
  - (b) Lavinia
  - (c) Cassandra
  - (d) Helen
  - (e) Dido
  
3. What was hidden inside the belly of the horse left outside the Trojan gates?
  - (a) A bomb
  - (b) A Trojan woman
  - (c) A big treasure

(d) Greek warriors

4. Who doesn't die in the sack of Troy?

(a) King Priam

(b) King Priam's son, Polites

(c) Aeneas's wife, Creusa

(d) Ascanius

Answer Key : 1. (d) , 2.(e), 3.(d), 4.(d)

## 2.8 EXAMINATION ORIENTED QUESTIONS

1. How negatively does Aeneas's abandonment of Dido reflect on his character?

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2. Write a short note on Troy.

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3. What do you know about Carthage?

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4. Introduce queen Dido. (100 words)

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5. What do you know about the Sibyl? Describe her association with Aeneas. (50 words)

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## 2.9 ANSWER KEY

**Ans1.** Though Aeneas cannot resist the will of the gods or fate, which demands that he leave Carthage, the manner in which he leaves Dido is not beyond contempt. We know from other passages that Aeneas is not a character without compassion, yet if Aeneas feels genuine sympathy for the lover he is about to abandon, he fails to express it well. He speaks formally and tersely to Dido, offers her little comfort, and denies that an official marriage bound them to each other. He refers to Troy and the new home he plans to found in Italy and talks of his son's future. We can find fault in Aeneas because, while Virgil allows us a view of Aeneas's emotions of sadness, regret, and reluctance as he leaves Carthage, Aeneas expresses little of these emotions to Dido. If we consider one's self to reside in one's will and emotions, Aeneas betrays himself by leaving Dido, and he admits as much, claiming that her words set them "both afire".

Both Aeneas and Dido face a conflict between civic responsibility and individual desire. Aeneas sides with his obligations, while Dido submits to her desires, and so their love is tragically impossible. In terms of his patriotic duty, Aeneas acts impeccably, though he may be faulted for staying with Dido in Carthage as long as he does. His abandonment of Dido is necessary for his service to Troy, his allies, his son, his father, and fate. From this point of view, Aeneas acts correctly in subjecting his desires to the benefit of the Trojan people.

Dido fails her city by ignoring her civic duty from the point when she falls in love with Aeneas to her suicide. Virgil suggests that Dido's suicide mythically anticipates Rome's defeat of Carthage, hundreds of years later. How negatively we judge Aeneas for his abandonment of Dido depends not on

whether we sympathize with or blame Dido, but on whether we believe that Aeneas's manner of leaving her—and not his departure itself—is what causes her suicide.

**Ans2.** Troy was a city state.

Helen, the queen of Sparta eloped with Prince Paris. She was a great beauty of her time. Prince Paris lived with her in Troy. A long siege lasted long as the Trojans fought for many years to restore Helen. Finally some soldiers sought clandestine entry into the city in a wooden horse. Troy was burnt and the warriors fled.

**Ans3.** Carthage was a city –state on the Mediterranean Sea coast. Queen Dido ruled Carthage. She was a widow.

**Ans4.** Queen Dido ruled Carthage. When Aeneas came to Carthage from Troy after the end of war, she fell passionately in love with him. She entertained him. But Aeneas would not stay for good. He set sail and moved on. Aggrieved Queen Dido committed suicide. The rising flames of her funeral pyre were seen far and wide in the Mediterranean. When Aeneas visited the underworld, he happened to see the shade of Queen Dido. Saddened and surprised, he spoke to her solemnly that he had not left her on his own accord. The shade of the Queen turned away from him towards the shade of her husband Sychacus. Aeneas shed the tears of pity and moved on.

**Ans5.** The Sibyl was a famous prophetess at Cumae. The Sibyl granted Aeneas the privilege of visiting his father in the underworld. Before he undertook the journey into Hades, she told him to find out the golden branch on a tree. She added that it was fragile and would break off easily from the tree. He should fetch it to her as a sure sign that Fate summoned Aeneas to the underworld. Aeneas did as he was told by the Sibyl. Aeneas looked dismayed at the sprawling large forest. He said a prayer feelingly. Then a pair of doves descended from the sky and guided him to the desired tree. He noticed the golden branch, broke it off from the tree and brought it to the Sibyl. Both the Sibyl and Aeneas descended into Hades.

## 2.10 SUGGESTED READING

- Camps, W.A.: An Introduction to Virgil. New York. O.U.P. 1968
- Ross, David O.: Virgil's Aeneid : A Reader's Guide Malden. MA and Oxford, UK Blackwell Publishing, 2007
- Slavitt, David R.: Virgil. New Haven Yale University Press 1991

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## VIRGIL: THE *AENEID*

### STRUCTURE

- 3.1 Introduction
- 3.2 Objectives
- 3.3 Narrative Content - Book VII - VIII
- 3.4 Critical Comments on the Content of the Aeneid (Book VII-VIII)
- 3.5 Important Passage Explained
- 3.6 Let Us Sum Up
- 3.7 Multiple Choice Questions
- 3.8 Examination Oriented Questions
- 3.9 Suggested Reading

### 3.1 INTRODUCTION

Virgil's epic the *Aeneid* is remarkable for hundreds of heroic adventures and episodes. It is as episodic as Valmiki's *Ramayana*, Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey* and Vyas's *Mahabharata*. The episodes of the latter half of The *Aeneid* are narrated briefly and systematically in this lesson. The *Aeneid* is divided into twelve books. Out of these, the content of the first six books has been summed up in the first lesson. This lesson deals with the rest of books (seventh to eighth).

## 3.2 OBJECTIVES

The purpose of this lesson is to acquaint the learner with the latter half of the narrative of *The Aeneid* (Book VII to Book VIII). Having read the first lesson his/her interest must have been sufficiently aroused. Therefore it is worthwhile to enlighten him/her on the rest of the episodic narrative.

## 3.3 NARRATIVE CONTENT - BOOK VII - VIII

Sailing up the coast of Italy, the Trojans reached the mouth of the Tiber River, near the kingdom of Latium. Virgil invokes the muse once again to inspire the second half of the epic narrative.

In the kingdom of Latium, King Latinus ruled. He had a daughter named Lavinia. Many suitors came to see her. Among them was the great warrior Turnus. He was the lord of a nearby kingdom. He was most suitable for her hand. Worried by a prophet's prediction that a foreign army will conquer his kingdom, King Latinus consulted the Oracle of Faunus. A strange voice from the oracle instructed the king that his daughter should marry a foreigner, not a Latin.

Meanwhile, Aeneas and his captains were eating on the beach with fruit spread out on flat and hard loaves of bread. They finished the fruit but they were still feeling hungry. So they consumed the bread. Ascanius was amused to see that they had eaten their tables. It was due to the Harpies' curse. Aeneas recognized that they had arrived at their promised land. The very next day, he sent emissaries to King Latinus, requesting a tract of land to share, for the foundation of a new city. Latinus heartily agreed as he had the words of the oracle in his mind. He even proposed Lavinia's hand to Aeneas in matrimony. Aeneas recognized his destiny; it meant that the Trojans would one day rule his kingdom. He made up his mind not to resist what the opportunity offered.

Juno had not yet exhausted her anger against the Trojans. Unable to keep them away from Italian shores, she vowed to delay the foundation of their city to cause them suffering. She dispatched Allecto —one of the Furies —to Latium to arouse wrath of the natives against the Trojans. First of all, Allecto causes anger in queen Amata. She is opposed to Lavinia's marriage with Aeneas. Virgil describes Allecto's rousing of Amata's anger with the metaphor of a snake twisting itself in

Amata's body. Then Allecto approaches Turnus and inflames him with indignation at the idea of losing Lavinia and submitting to a Trojan king.

Turnus mobilizes his army and prepares to drive the Trojans out of Italy. Shepherds are the first lot to bear arms against the Trojans. As a result of Juno's meddling, Ascanius sets off to hunt in the woods and injures a stag that happens to be a favorite of Latinus's herdsman. The animal staggered back to the master before it died. The herdsman summoned other shepherds to track down the hunter and the Trojans, sensing trouble, came to Ascanius's aid. Many Latins lost their lives in a quarrel. Each side retreated for a short while. The shepherds approached King Latinus, carrying the dead animal and pleaded with him to launch an all-out assault on the Trojans. Latinus did not wish to involve himself in the battle but all his courtiers and queen Amata clamoured for the battle. King Latinus retired to his chamber—feeling apparently agitated but incapable of checking what the gods had set in motion. Turnus assembled a great army captained by the brave warriors of Italy and proceeded to fight.

When Turnus mobilized his forces, Aeneas readied the Trojan troops and solicited support from nearby cities also. He was not sure at his prospects in the battle. That night, the river god Tiberinus spoke to him and told him to approach and form an alliance with the Arcadians, who were already at war with the Latins. Aeneas took two galleys and rowed up the Tiber to the forest of Arcadians. There, the Trojans addressed the Arcadian king, Evander, who gladly offered aid to their common enemy and invited Aeneas to a feast.

After the feast, holy rites were performed in honor of Hercules, the patron of the Arcadians, who killed the monster Cacus (near where Arcadia stands today). Evander also disclosed that Saturn had descended on Italy long ago and formed a nation from the wild savages who inhabited the land, calling it Latium. (The Arcadians still live in relative simplicity.) Evander offered everything at the disposal of Aeneas by way of hospitality.

Meanwhile, Venus felt agitated over Aeneas's upcoming war. She spoke to her husband, Vulcan, the god of fire and forging. She persuaded him to make new weapons for Aeneas and the armor to safeguard his person. Vulcan commanded his workers—Cyclopes inside the great volcano Etna—to begin forging the weapons.

The next morning, back to Arcadia, King Evander assigned the troops he could spare to be commanded by Aeneas. Not only this, he also urged the neighboring kingdoms to aid Aeneas. As told, several thousand soldiers were rallied to accompany the Trojans back to the front but due to their overwhelming numbers, they must march rather than row the boats. It caused unnecessary delay.

Finally, Evander dispatched Pallas, his own son, and requested him that Aeneas should teach him the strategies of war and send him back. The troops marched all day. At the camp that night, Venus suddenly appeared to Aeneas and presented to him with the arms that Vulcan had got forged. He received a new helmet, corselet, sword, spear and shield; they were artistically shaped and forged very strongly. The face of the shield was particularly notable as Vulcan had depicted the story of the Roman glory which awaited Italy. Aeneas saw Romulus being nursed by a she wolf, the defeat of the Gauls, Caesar Augustus who defeated Antony and Cleopatra at the battle of Actium etc.

### **3.4 CRITICAL COMMENTS ON THE CONTENT OF THE AENEID (BOOK VII-VIII)**

The Trojans' landing in Latium begins the latter half of the narration of the *Aeneid*. The *Aeneid* demands comparison to Homer's epics. The first half of Virgil's epic is a chronicle of the wanderings of Aeneas and his companions. The first half of the *Aeneid* is closer to *The Odyssey* while the second half is closer to *The Iliad*. Virgil incorporates the elements of Roman love. Historically, whenever the Romans marched into battle against the enemy, they would open the Gates of War-enormous gates of brass and iron-constructed as a tribute to Mars. They believed it released the Furies motivating the soldiers. In *The Aeneid*, King Latinus, who is opposed to the war, does not open the gates; Juno does. At this moment, Turnus whom the Fury Allecto has already infected marches to confront the Trojans.

Aeneas is being tormented at the hands of Juno and rescued by Venus and her allies. He receives help from Tiberinus, Venus and Vulcan. King Evander goes out of the way to help Aeneas and becomes his ally. This gesture is based on genuine trust and loyalty. Evander adheres to the highest values of heroic culture. The Trojans easily obtain reinforcements. They are offered hospitality.

The rich description of Aeneas's shield parallels Homer's description in *The Iliad* of shield forged by Vulcan/ Hephaestus for Achilles.

Virgil's appreciation of the mural on the shield of Aeneas glorifies the civilization of Rome. He deliberately justifies the culmination of the Golden Age of the Roman Empire and the reign of Augustus Caesar, who was his patron.

### **3.5 IMPORTANT PASSAGE EXPLAINED**

*Amata tossed and turned with womanly*

*Anxiety and anger. Now [Allecto]*

*Plucked one of the snakes, her gloomy tresses,*

*And tossed it at the woman, sent it down*

*Her bosom to her midriff and her heart,*

...

*Slipping between her gown and her smooth breasts*

...

*While the infection first, like dew of poison*

*Fallen on her, pervaded all her senses,*

*Netting her bones in fire.*

*(VII. 474–490)*

This vivid and disturbing description of the means by which the furious Allecto incites Amata's rage against Aeneas occurs in Book VII. Virgil plays on our senses, using images of fire, disease, poison, and sex to describe the passionate anger Amata feels at seeing her daughter's proposed marriage thwarted and at hearing that a Trojan in exile is to become part of her household. Virgil expresses the idea of being hot with anger by employing the images of things that, literally or figuratively, can heat a human's blood. The invisible snake deployed by Allecto acts to enhance emotions already latent within Amata, since Amata already feels "womanly / Anxiety and anger" of her own. Even though Amata has perfectly good reason to despise Aeneas and the Trojans, Virgil explains her hatred by placing it physically in her body, suggesting that she incites war in the way she does because there is something wrong inside her. The

snake unleashed by Juno essentially has a sexual encounter with Amata—it is as though Juno has impregnated Amata with madness.

### 3.6 LET US SUM UP

Even though Juno openly admits for the first time that she cannot win, she persists in her defiance of the fate. She cannot prevent the Trojans from founding a new city, yet she remains fixed in her determination to inflict suffering on them. She says:

*It will not be permitted me—so be it—  
To keep the man from rule in Italy;  
By changeless fate Lavinia waits, his bride.  
And yet to drag it out, to pile delay  
Upon delay in these great matters—that  
I can do: to destroy both countries' people,  
That I can do. (VII.427–433)*

At this point in the narrative, Virgil has imparted Juno with base emotions that, in their extremity, seem beyond human capacity. Her obsession with revenge drives her to hurt Aeneas, though she acknowledges the futility of the violence she incites phrases such as “[i]t will not be permitted me” and “changeless fate.” For Juno, thwarting the Trojans is no longer a matter of control but rather of pride, as her resolute assertion, “That I can do,” makes clear. Virgil’s Juno, a fearsome, self-important, and vengeful character from the start, reaches the height of her anger in this passage and appears pathetic in her willful obstruction of fated events.

### 3.7 MULTIPLE CHOICE QUESTIONS

1. Who does not oppose the marriage of Lavinia to Aeneas ?
  - a) Turmus
  - b) Latinus
  - c) Amata
  - d) Juno

2. What symbolizes the beginning of battle for the Latins ?
  - a) A sacrifice to Mars
  - b) The donning of armor
  - c) A procession in honor of ancient war heroes
  - d) The opening of the Gates of War.
3. How does Evander know Aeneas's father, Anchises?
  - a) Anchises visited Arcadia when Evander was young.
  - b) Evander grew up in Troy
  - c) They met in Carthage when they were guests of Dido.
  - d) Anchises grew up in Arcadia.
4. Who makes the strong and beautiful new armor Aeneas wears in the battle?
  - a) Jupiter
  - b) Hercules
  - c) Vulcan
  - d) Cupid
5. Who breaks off the love affair between Aeneas and Dido ?
  - a) Aeneas
  - b) Dido
  - c) Sychaeus
  - d) Anchises
  - e) The gods
6. Where does Anchises die ?
  - a) Near Troy
  - b) Crete
  - c) Italy
  - d) In Sicily

7. Where does Aeneas last see Dido ?
- a) In Troy
  - b) In Carthage
  - c) In Rome
  - d) In Hades
8. Who sets fire to the Trojan fleet in Sicily the first time the ships burn?
- a) Jupiter
  - b) Juno
  - c) Aeneas
  - d) The women of Troy

**Answer key 1 (b) 2 (d) 3 (a) 4 (c) 5 (c) 6 (d) 7 (d) 8(a)**

### **3.8 EXAMINATION ORIENTED QUESTIONS**

1. Into how many books, is *The Aeneid* divided?

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2. What do you know about the state of Latium when Aeneas and his men reached Italy?

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3. What was predicted by the Oracle of Faunus to King Latinus? How did it influence the king's action?

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4. What was the role of Juno and Venus in the battle of Latium?

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5. Who rose against the Trojans first of all and why?

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6. Who were the Arcadians? Which side did they take in the ensuing battle?

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7. How did Vulcan help Aeneas?

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8. Who were the following characters? Answer briefly.

a) Lavinia\_\_\_\_\_

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b) Latinus\_\_\_\_\_

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c) Turnus\_\_\_\_\_

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d) Ascanius\_\_\_\_\_

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e) Allecto\_\_\_\_\_

f) Vulcan \_\_\_\_\_

g) Juno \_\_\_\_\_

h) Venus \_\_\_\_\_

i) Tiberinus \_\_\_\_\_

j) Evander \_\_\_\_\_

k) Hercules \_\_\_\_\_

l) Cacus \_\_\_\_\_

9. In what context has Mount Etna been referred to in the story?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

### 3.9 SUGGESTED READING

- Virgil's Aeneid. Penguin edition
- A History of Greek Literature by Moses Hades
- The Greeks by H.D.F.Kitto
- The Epic by Paul Merchant

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### **VIRGIL: *THE AENEID***

#### **STRUCTURE**

- 4.1 Introduction**
- 4.2 Objectives**
- 4.3 Narrative Information (Book-IX -XII)**
- 4.4 Important Passage Explained**
- 4.5 Critical Comments on the Content of the Aeneid (Book IX-XII)**
- 4.6 Let Us Sum Up**
- 4.7 Multiple Choice Questions**
- 4.8 Examination Oriented Questions**
- 4.9 Suggested Reading**

#### **4.1 INTRODUCTION**

The Trojans who were constrained to leave Troy as homeless refugees were destined to lay the foundations of a new and great city in Italy. In course of time, Rome was built when Aeneas on his excursions formed an alliance with the Arcadians. To Italian natives, this powerful geographical connection would go a long way to make the understanding of *The Aeneid* more concrete and logical.

#### **4.2 OBJECTIVES**

- (a) The first objective of this lesson, is to introduce the learner with the final story

of *The Aeneid*.

- (b) The second objective is to distinguish between the human and divine characters as it is customary in all epics to include the characters that are not human but divine.

### **4.3 NARRATIVE INFORMATION (BOOK-IX -XII)**

Not to miss an opportunity, Juno sent her messenger Iris, from Olympus to inform Turnus that Aeneas was away from his camp. With their leader gone, the Trojans were particularly vulnerable to an attack. So Turnus immediately led his army towards the enemy camp. The Trojans spotted the army coming and made themselves safe inside the newly constructed fortress. They did not wish to begin an open battle while Aeneas was away. Turnus studied the military strategy of the Trojans and decided to circumnavigate the camp setting fire to the defenceless ships anchored on the shore. The destruction of the fleet was inevitable but it did not happen. Cybele- mother of the gods and sister of Saturn-requested her son Jupiter to render the vessels unconquerable because they were made of wood from the trees of her sacred forest. As Turnus and his troops watched the ships burn, the vessels pulled loose from their anchors. They were submerged into the sea but reappeared as sea nymphs. This sign vexed the Latins but Turnus remained confident and determined to complete the annihilation of the Trojans.

As night fell, the Latins made camp around the Trojan fortress. The Trojans knew that they must report the Latins' troop movements to Aeneas. Nisus and Euryalus-the two friends eager for glory and adventure volunteered to sneak out in the darkness of the night. The Trojan captains applauded the bravery of both Nisus and Euryalus. They left the fortress quietly under cover of the night darkness. They discovered that the Latin troops were sound asleep. They pulled their swords and began slaughtering them. When the day dawned, they made their way through the woods but not before Euryalus took the high helmet of a Latin captain as a prize. As they approached the forest, a group of enemy horse men saw the helmet flash in the distance. They rode on horseback towards the two Trojans. Nisus managed to escape into the forest but the horse men captured Euryalus. Nisus rushed back to save his friend but in the fierce fighting both of them were killed. The Latins put the

heads of the two Trojans on stakes and paraded them before the Trojan fortress, to the dismay of the enemy.

The Latins proceeded to attack the Trojans. Having crossed the trenches surrounding the fortress, they tried to spot a weak point in the walls of it. They upheld their shields to block the volley of spears which might hurl down from above the battlements. There was a high town just outside the main portal. Turnus set fire to it. Turnus and his men made the tower fall, killing many Trojans. The Trojans felt panicky but Ascanius renewed their hope as he fired an arrow through the head of Romulus—one of the Latin captains. The Trojans opened the portals of the fortress and surprised the Latins by rushing out in attack, inflicting many Latin casualties. Unfortunately for the Trojans, Turnus joined the fray, suppressed the surging Trojans and compelled them to retreat to the fortress. The Trojan-Pandarus—observing the turning tide of the battle, quickly shut the portals; he let in the fortress as many comrades as he could. The arch enemy, Turnus happened to enter the fortress. Inside the enemy camp, the Latin leader killed Trojans easily. Turnus was soon outnumbered but he narrowly escaped by jumping into the Tiber River and swam back to his comrades.

From the heights of Olympus, Jupiter noticed the carnage in Italy. He had expected that the Trojans would settle peacefully. He summoned a council of the gods to discuss the matter. There Venus blamed Juno for perpetuating the suffering of Aeneas and the Trojans. Juno angrily responded that she had not forced Aeneas to go to Italy. Annoyed at their bickering, Jupiter decreed that henceforth he would not help either side so that the merits and efforts of men could determine the further consequences.

Meanwhile, the Latins continued their siege of the Trojan fortress. Aeneas kept on resisting the enemy and King Tarchon of Tuscany provided him with a fleet of ships, along with many warriors to strengthen his forces. Guided and sped up by the sea nymphs born of the transformation of the Trojan fleet, the new fleet reached the beach near the battlefield shortly after dawn. Turnus spotted the ships approaching and led his troops to confront them. As soon as the Trojans disembarked, a fierce battle ensued afresh.

Aeneas struck the first blows killing many of Turnus's soldiers. The rest of the

soldiers on either side fell into the fray. Pallas led the Arcadians, fighting fiercely tilting the balance in favour of the Trojans. Turnus swaggered forth and challenged Pallas. They tossed their spears. Pallas's spear penetrated Turnus's shield and armour and wounded him. Turnus's lance, on the other hand, tore through Pallas's corselet and lodged deep in his chest. Pallas was killed. Extremely arrogant, Turnus ripped off Pallas's belt as a prize. Word of Pallas's death reached Aeneas, who burst into temper. He hacked a bloody path through the Latin lines looking for Turnus, bent on revenge. Aeneas slaughtered many Latin soldiers though they begged on their knees to be spared. There was an apparent chaos in the troops of Turnus.

Juno saw from the heights of Mt. Olympus that the battle was lost and asked Jupiter to let her spare Aeneas and send a vision within sight of Turnus. He chased the phantom up to one of the ships anchored nearby but no sooner did he embark the ship, than Juno severed the moorings and the ship floated away far into the sea, powerless to return to the battlefield. Turnus drifted until the wind carried him ashore far down the coast. In Turnus's absence, the great Latin warrior Mezentius led the troops. He killed many Trojans but he was disheartened when his son Lausus confronted Aeneas. He could not penetrate Aeneas's shield as it was forged by Vulcan. Finally Aeneas killed Mezentius spelling defeat for the Latin troops.

The day after the battle, Aeneas saw the corpse of young Pallas and wept bitterly. The prince's corpse was taken to King Evander. King Evander was shocked at his son's death. But because Pallas had died honorably he forgave Aeneas. He wished for the death of Turnus. Back in the battlefield, messengers arrived from the Latins who requested a twelve day truce so that both sides could bury their dead. Aeneas agreed for the ceasefire. The messengers were impressed by Aeneas's piety. They thought that Turnus should settle the quarrel over Lavinia in a duel to avoid further bloodshed.

At a council summoned by King Latinus, others echoed the messengers' sentiments. The Latins also came to know that the Greek warrior Diomedes, who had fought at Troy reigned a nearby kingdom, rejected their plea for aid thinking that they could not win. He proposed some territory of his kingdom to the Trojans in exchange for peace. A man called Drances accused Turnus and his arrogance for the war. He

alleged that the Latins have lost the will to fight. The council turned against Turnus, who, from the foray of his ship responded angrily. He challenged the manhood and courage of Drances and Latinus and insulted them. He made a plea to continue. He was even prepared to fight Aeneas all alone.

At this moment, a messenger arrived to warn the Latins that the Trojans were marching towards their city. The Latins rushed in panic to defend themselves. They were joined by Camilla, the famous leader of the Volscians-a race of warrior maidens. Turnus heard from a spy that Aeneas had divided his army: the light horses to gallop towards the city, and Aeneas with the heavily armored captains would tread through the hilly terrain. Turnus rushed off to lay a trap for Aeneas on a particular spot on the mountain path, leaving the defense of the city to Camilla.

Soon the Trojans reached the field in front of the city and the battle ensued. Camilla fought fiercely and injured several Trojan soldiers with her deadly spears and arrows. Unfortunately a Tuscan named Arruns pierced her with his javelin. The goddess Diana held Camilla in high favour and dispatched her attendant Opis down from Olympus to kill Arruns out of revenge. Having lost Camilla, the Latin troops rushed back to the city. Many were killed while retreating. Meanwhile, Camilla's companion Acca informed Turnus that Camilla's army was leaderless. Turnus was forced to return to the city. Aeneas by passed the place of ambush. Both Aeneas and Turnus returned to their respective camps as night fell.

Turnus was determined to fight Aeneas alone for Lavinia's hand and the kingdom as well. King Latinus and Queen Amata protested urging him to surrender and save his life. Turnus ignored their pleas, considering honour as the highest value. Latinus drew up the appropriate treaty, with Aeneas's consent. The next day, the armies assembled as spectators on either side of a field in front of the city.

Juno was worried about Turnus because she suspected that Aeneas outmatched him. She called Juturna-Turnus's sister-and instructed her to watch out for her brother's safety. Latinus and Aeneas came out on the battlement and vowed to uphold the pact jointly. But Juturna did not wish her brother to risk the duel with Aeneas. She appeared before the Latin army disguised as a noble officer named Camers and instigated the Latins to break the treaty and fight as the Trojans were off their guard. Turnus's

troops agreed and one of the soldiers hurled a spear at the Trojans ranks, killing a soldier. This unprovoked shot ignited both the Latins and the Trojans. The battle ensued fiercely with swords and lances on either side. Aeneas appealed to his men to stop fighting, he cried hoarse but a stray arrow wounded him in the leg. He was forced to retreat. Watching Aeneas retreating, Turnus saw a new hope. He jumped into fray and killed many Trojans. Meanwhile, Aeneas was helped back to camp but the physician was unable to pull out the arrow from his leg. Venus pitied her suffering son and procured a healing balm. The physician used it, dislodged the arrow and dressed the wound.

Aeneas took up his arms again and resumed fighting. The Latin troops were scattered in terror. Suddenly Aeneas realized that the city of King Latinus had been left unguarded. He gathered a group of soldiers and attacked the city, causing panic to its dwellers. Queen Amata, seeing the Trojans within the city walls, lost all hope and hanged herself. Turnus heard the screams from the city. He appealed to the Trojans for the siege. He, however, wished to fight a duel with Aeneas. Aeneas met him in the main courtyard of the city for the purpose.

The duel started. Aeneas and Turnus tossed their spears. Warmed up, they exchanged fierce blows with their swords. Turnus's sword broke off suddenly at the hilt because in haste, he had grabbed a soldier's weaker sword. Turnus fled, demanding his real sword. Juturna furnished it for him. Juno observed the action from above. Jupiter told her why to bother when the struggle had come to its inevitable end. Juno finally gave in, and consented her grudge against Aeneas. She wanted the victorious Trojans to take on the name and the language of the Latins. Jupiter also agreed.

Jupiter sent down one of the Furies in the form of a bird flapping its wings in front of Turnus. Seeing Turnus wavering, Aeneas struck Turnus's leg. Turnus fell to the ground. As Aeneas advanced, Turnus pleaded for mercy. Aeneas was moved; he spared Turnus's life. He noticed the belt of Pallas tied around Turnus's shoulder. As Aeneas remembered the slain youngman Pallas, he was angered. In the name of Pallas, Aeneas pierced Turnus and killed him.

#### 4.4 IMPORTANT PASSAGE EXPLAINED

*When two bulls lower heads and horns and charge  
In deadly combat . . .*

. . .

*[They g]ore one another, bathing necks and humps  
In sheets of blood, and the whole woodland bellows.  
Just so Trojan Aeneas and the hero  
Son of Daunus, battering shield on shield,  
Fought with a din that filled the air of heaven.  
(XII.972–982)*

This passage from Book XII, in which Virgil describes Aeneas and Turnus locked together in the heat of battle, exemplifies a literary device Virgil employs throughout the poem: the epic simile. Virgil's similes are extended comparisons of an element of action or a character to an abstract or external image or concept. These similes are often drawn from rural landscapes and farm life, and they often use the phrase "just so" as a connector. They give Virgil's writing a descriptive richness by lingering at great length on some detail that might not otherwise have been illuminated. Often, Virgil uses the similes to give an interior depth to his characters, showing us by means of an analogy what it feels like to be that character in a given moment. This particular epic simile describes the intense battle between Aeneas and Turnus. By comparing these two warriors to bulls, Virgil conveys the potent, animalistic nature of their struggle.

#### 4.5 CRITICAL COMMENTS ON THE CONTENT OF THE AENEID (BOOK IX-XII)

Throughout the epic, the intervention of the gods in human affairs is rather spontaneous. When the Trojan fleet is burnt, it becomes immune to fire. There is an invisible divine hand in this. The transformation of the Trojan ships into sea nymphs is fantastic. It is a sign that the battle was to be fought on the Italian soil.

Jupiter's declaration that rest of the battle would be waged entirely without divine interference springs a surprise: so far the mortals hadn't had control over events.

However the divine hand works before the end of the battle when Juno persuades to let her save the life of Turnus. Jupiter grants Juno's request as Venus has been protecting Aeneas. The role of valor cannot be underestimated to appreciate the outcome of the battle. Certainly, Jupiter's suspension of divine influence does not set the combatants free from their fates. Turnus's killing of Pallas is the battle's turning point as the events begin to tilt in favor of the Trojans. Virgil foreshadows the decadence of the Latins when Turnus takes the belt of Pallas and spells his doom. Pallas's death awakens in Aeneas ruthless anger and hell-bent vengeance. Juno protects Turnus's person but not his honor.

The difference between the Greeks in Troy and the Trojans in Italy lies in the Trojans' intention to settle in Italy and establish an empire, when the Greeks sacked Troy, they did so to reclaim and restore a woman. With Helen retrieved, they set sail for home. Aeneas, on the other hand, needed a new home. He and the Trojans justified their invasion of Italy by proclaiming the superiority of the race and culture.

With the gods refraining from the intervention in Aeneas's movements, his words and actions reveal his integrity. His mourning at Pallas's funeral shows how genuinely he appreciates the youth's valor. Aeneas agrees to a truce so that the dead on both the sides could be properly buried. Because of his descent into the underworld, he is aware of the terrible fate of those who are not properly buried on the earth. They are constrained to wander homelessly and restlessly along the banks of the Acheron. Aeneas is not, however, a paragon of mercy and piety: he has some inconsistencies. He could be brutally unforgiving in war and lovingly compassionate with Dido. Even Dido failed to comprehend the totality of Aeneas's personality. Aeneas's primary motivations lie in fate and piety but he doesn't adhere to them absolutely.

Turnus's character is consistent. It is rather one dimensional. He is as stubborn and temperamental as ever. Originally Turnus claims to be fighting for Lavinia's hand but in the council, his hubris overweighs his desire for her. He cannot lay down the arms at any cost. He is hell bent on destruction of the enemy. Virgil, for reasons known to him best, seems to delay the confrontation between Turnus and Aeneas.

## 4.6 LET US SUM UP

The poem ends with a somber description of Turnus's death: "And with a groan for that indignity [of death] / [Turnus's] spirit fled into the gloom below" (XII.1297–1298). Virgil does not narrate the epic's true resolution, the supposedly happy marriage between Aeneas and Lavinia and the initiation of the project of building Rome. Two elements of the classical tradition influence this ending. First, Virgil is again imitating Homer, whose *Iliad* concludes with the death of Hector, the great Trojan enemy of the Greek hero Achilles. Second, Virgil wants his Roman audience to feel that they themselves, not Aeneas's exploits, are the glorious conclusion to this epic story.

## 4.7 MULTIPLE CHOICE QUESTIONS

1. Who kills Pallas?
  - (a) Aeneas
  - (b) Turnus
  - (c) Dido
  - (d) Pygmalion
2. Who is the Sibyl ?
  - (a) A fury
  - (b) A Cumaen prophetess
  - (c) A sea nymph
3. What counteracts Aeneas's impulse to spare Turnus's life ?
  - (a) He knows that Turnus will be ashamed of receiving his mercy
  - (b) He notices the belt that Turnus took from the dead Pallas.
  - (c) He remembers his father's warning.
  - (d) He wants to avenge Dido's death.
4. What does the Harpy predict?
  - (a) That the Trojans will never make it to Italy.
  - (b) That the Trojans will eat their tables of bread.

- (c) That Dido would commit suicide.
  - (d) That Virgil will become the greatest Roman poet.
5. What token must Aeneas carry to be admitted alive into the underworld?
- (a) An epistle from his father
  - (b) A lock of Dido's hair
  - (c) A fig leaf
  - (d) A golden bough.
6. When Aeneas lands in Latium, how does he know that he has come to the right place?
- (a) The ghost of his father appears
  - (b) An emissary comes to see him.
  - (c) He has a vision for the future of the glory of Rome.
  - (d) The Trojans fulfill the Harpy's prediction by eating their 'tables' of bread.
7. How do the young Trojan boys participate in the contests in Sicily ?
- (a) They play an ancient Mediterranean form of lacrosse.
  - (b) They have a wheelbarrow race.
  - (c) They exhibit their horsemanship in a mock battle.
  - (d) They are offered as prizes.
8. Who begs to be executed in place of this friend Euryalus ?
- (a) Turnus
  - (b) Nisus
  - (c) Pallas
  - (d) Ascanius
9. How long is the burial truce to which the two armies agree ?
- (a) 12 days
  - (b) 24 days

- (c) 12 hours
  - (d) 24 hours
10. How does Juno get Turnus away from and on to a ship?
- (i) She leaves a trail of the crumbs of bread.
  - (ii) She dispatches Iris to tell him that ship is burning.
  - (iii) She disguises herself as Aeneas and runs on the ship.
11. Which woman slays many Trojans in the battle?
- (i) Lavinia
  - (ii) Amata
  - (iii) Camilla
  - (iv) Elissa
12. Who, besides Dido, commits suicide?
- (i) Turnus
  - (ii) Hector
  - (iii) Juno
  - (iv) Amata
13. What request does Juno make as she finally gives in to Aeneas's fated victory?
- (i) That he must not have any descendents.
  - (ii) That Turnus be spared.
  - (iii) That Rome and Carthage be enemies forever.
  - (iv) That Italy should inherit the Latin's name and language.

**Answers key :- 1 (b), 2 (b) 3 (b) 4 (b) 5 (d) 6 (c) 7 (c) 8 (b) 9 (a) 10 (iv) 11 (i) 12 (iv) 13 (iv)**

#### **4.8 EXAMINATION ORIENTED QUESTIONS**

1. Who are the following characters?

1. Juturna\_\_\_\_\_

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2. Cybele\_\_\_\_\_

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3. Nisus and Euryalus\_\_\_\_\_

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4. Pandarus\_\_\_\_\_

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5. Pallas\_\_\_\_\_

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6. Mezentius\_\_\_\_\_

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7. Diomedes\_\_\_\_\_

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8. Camilla\_\_\_\_\_

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2. Depict the following as war heroes.

(a) Aeneas

(b) Turnus

3. Write a note on King Latinus and Queen Amata. (50 words)

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4. **To what extent is the *Aeneid* a political poem? Is it propaganda?**

Ans. The *Aeneid*'s main purpose is to create a myth of origins that consolidates Rome's historical and cultural identity. This search for origins of a race or culture is a political endeavor, in that it seeks to justify the Roman Empire's existence and to glorify the empire through the poem's greatness. Yet

The *Aeneid* is also an artistic endeavor, and therefore to dismiss the poem as mere propaganda is to ignore its obvious artistic merit.

In many of the passages referring explicitly to the emperor Augustus—in Anchises’s presentation of the future of Rome, for example—Virgil’s language suggests an honest and heartfelt appreciation of Augustus’s greatness. It is worth noting, however, that in addition to being the emperor, Augustus was also Virgil’s patron. It would thus have been impossible for Virgil to criticize him outright in his work. One can argue that Virgil may not have truly believed in Augustus’s greatness and that the impossibility of explicit criticism forced him to resort to subtle irony in order to air any grievances regarding Augustus’s policies or ideology.

**5. What is the relationship in *The Aeneid* between an individual’s merit and the degree to which his or her personality is interesting? How might our estimation differ from Virgil’s?**

Ans. In some ways, Juno, Dido, and Turnus are more developed, well-defined characters than Aeneas is. They act on their desires and emotions and assert their wills, and Virgil puts much of his best poetry into the words and descriptions of these three. Yet throughout *The Aeneid*, there is a straightforward appreciation of the order, duty, and piety embodied by Aeneas. He follows the will of the gods and respects the deceased and the unborn at the expense of his own happiness. Again and again, we are told that Aeneas suffers inwardly, despite his outward appearance. These qualities, though admirable, still do not make Aeneas the most vivid or captivating of heroes. They are important because they are the vaunted qualities Aeneas shares with Rome under the peaceful rule of Augustus.

6. How do Aeneas’s piety and sense of duty change as the narration unfolds?

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7. What does the behavior of the gods reflect in the story of *The Aeneid*?

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8. Write short notes on: (50 words each)

- a. Latins
- b. Arcadians
- c. Volscians

9. Make a comparative assessment of Turnus and Aeneas as war heroes. (50 words )

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#### 4.9 SUGGESTED READING

- A History of Greek Literature by Moses Hades
- The Greeks by H.D.F. Kitto
- The Epic by Paul Merchant
- Cairns, Francis. Virgil's Augustan Epic New York. Cambridge University Press. 1989
- Commager, Steele ed. Virgil: A Collection of Critical Essays. Englewood Cliffs. New Jersey. Prentice Hall. 1966
- Putnam, Michael. Virgil's Aeneid : Interpretation & Influence. Chapel Hill, NC University North Carolina University Press. 1995.
- Queen, Kenneth. Virgil's Aeneid : A Critical Description. London. Routledge and Kegan Paul. 1968.

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**FYDOR DOSTOEVSKY: *NOTES FROM UNDERGROUND***

**DOSTOEVSKY'S LIFE AND THE NOVEL**

**STRUCTURE**

- 5.1 Introduction**
- 5.2 Objectives**
- 5.3 A Biographical Sketch of Dostoevsky**
- 5.4 Dostoevsky's Realism**
- 5.5 The Underground Man**
- 5.6 Plot Overview**
- 5.7 Apropos of the Wet Snow**
- 5.8 Analysis of Major Characters**
- 5.9 Let Us Sum Up**
- 5.10 Glossary**
- 5.11 Multiple Choice Questions**
- 5.12 Examination Oriented Questions**
- 5.13 Suggested Reading**

**5.1 INTRODUCTION**

Fyodor Dostoevsky is renowned as one of the greatest novelists and literary

psychologists. His novels are the best specimens of Russian fiction. His works –*Notes from Underground*, *Crime and Punishment* and *The Brothers Karamzov* have thrilled millions of readers. George Bernard Shaw began to learn the Russian language in his seventies to study the works of Dostoevsky and Anton Chekhov in the original. Prof. Karl Shapiro (British) learnt Russian to peruse the fiction of the writers mentioned above. To study Dostoevsky is to discover a new brilliant star in the universe of literature.

## **5.2 OBJECTIVES**

The objective of this lesson is to acquaint the learner with portrayal of human nature by Dostoevsky. He has explored how the human mind functions under certain circumstances. He specifically points out how the criminals are intelligent enough to commit crimes. The very purpose is to sharpen and enhance the learner's sensibility to explore the psyche of the criminals. Dostoevsky ranks with the great Realist writers- Honore de Balzac (France), Charles Dickens (England), Nikolai Gogol (Russia), Anton Chekhov (Russia), Munshi Premchand (India).

## **5.3 A BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH OF DOSTOEVSKY**

Fyodor Dostoevsky was born in Moscow in 1821. He was the son of a doctor. He was educated first at home and then at a boarding school. As a young boy, his father sent him to St. Petersburg Academy of Military Engineering from which he graduated in 1843. Dostoevsky had long been interested in imaginative writing. He resigned from his minor military post to devote his life to his literary craft. His first novel *Poor Folk* (1846) became immediately popular with critics.

His early view of the world was shaped by his experience with social injustice. At the age of twenty six Dostoevsky became active in socialist circles, particularly because of his opposition to the unjust institution of serfdom. His political opinions were influenced by his personal experiences- his father was assassinated by his own serfs while Dostoevsky was away at school. Another experience was as a prisoner. In April 1849, he was arrested for his involvement with a group which illegally printed and distributed socialist propaganda. He was in prison for eight months. Dostoevsky was sentenced to death and was led along with the members of the group, to be shot dead. But the execution turned out to be a show only, meant to punish the prisoners

psychologically. After his brush with death, Dostoevsky spent as many as four years at a Siberian labor camp, and then served in the military for another four years. During the period of his imprisonment he rejected his extreme socialist views in favor of traditional conservative Russian values. This ideological change is perceptible throughout his later works. Dostoevsky spent most of the eighteen-sixties in Western Europe, immersing himself in European culture which, he thought, was encroaching upon Russia. He explores this issue in *Notes from Underworld*. These years in Europe were a tough time for him, as he happened to struggle with his abject poverty, epilepsy and addiction to gambling. The publication of *Crime and Punishment* (1866), however, proved to be lucrative and rescued him from his financial disaster. It made him a popular writer in Russia. His novel *The Brothers Karamzov* (1880) firmly established him as an icon of Russian fiction.

#### **5.4 DOSTOEVSKY'S REALISM**

Credit is given to Dostoevsky for having pioneered realism in the modern novel. *Underground* (1864) along with other novels belongs to this genre. Honoré de Balzac in France, Charles Dickens in England, Nikolai Gogol and Dostoevsky in Russia gave a new focus to the novel. Realism highlighted real people such as city dwellers, prostitutes, impoverished students, petty craftsmen etc. Prior to realism, the life of the underdog was considered substandard for the content of literature. Dostoevsky's novels mark the culmination of realism.

#### **5.5 THE UNDERGROUND MAN**

*Notes from Underground* has played a significant role in realist fiction. The novel probes the mind of an individual on the margins of modern society and examines how modern life interacts with that man's personality. The protagonist of the novel is a low-ranking civil servant in the eighteen sixties St. Petersburg. He gradually goes mad over a lifetime of inability to cope with the society around him. The Underground Man is an anti-hero – a sort of down trodden and indecisive victim of society that Dostoevsky continues to explore in his fiction. He was perhaps prompted to write *Notes from Underground* in response to a revolutionary novel called *What is to be Done* (1863) written by N.G. Chernyshevsky whose rational egoism meant that life could be perfected solely through the application of reason and enlightened self-interest.

Along with many other radical social thinkers of the eighteen-sixties, the rational egoists put great emphasis on the power of reason and natural law-the principles ostensibly derived from the inherent properties of the world. The rational egoists' theories grew out of social liberalism of the eighteen-forties in which Dostoevsky was deeply interested. While he was in prison in Siberia, he learned that the peasants and uneducated workers of Russia associated progressive thinkers with upper classes that oppressed them and checked their freedom. Dostoevsky observed that the theorists of the eighteen – sixties were too absorbed in European culture, and too far removed from genuine Russian values. Dostoevsky thought that the way to create harmony among all Russian people was through a retreat to traditional Russian values, such as personal responsibility, religion, fraternal love and family ties. He entertained the notion that the theories which sought universal social laws to explain and govern human behavior ignored the fundamental individuality of the human soul, the complexity of human personality and the power of free will. The Underground Man in *Notes from Underground* is a mouthpiece for Dostoevsky's ideas and an illustration of the kind of problems the modern Russian society inevitably created. Like Dostoevsky the Underground Man is critical of rational egoism and other dangerously totalitarian visions of Utopia. He doesn't approve of any kind of dogmatism. He is himself a victim of the modern Russian urban experience. Deprived of positive social interactions, the Underground Man tries to relate to the world the example he finds in European literature. He feels more and more bitter and isolated, driving himself –deeper underground.

## **5.6 PLOT OVERVIEW**

The anonymous narrator of *Notes from Underground* is rather a bitter misanthropic man living alone in St. Petersburg, Russia in the eighteen-sixties. He is a knowledgeable person regarding the Russian civil service. He has inherited some money and has retired. The novel consists of his 'notes' which he happens to write in confused state of mind. The notes are a set of memoirs or confessions describing and explaining his alienation from modern society. *Notes from Underground* is divided into two parts. The first one is 'Underground.' It is shorter than the second part and is set in the eighteen-sixties. The Underground Man is forty years old. The first part introduces

the character of the Underground Man explaining his theories about antagonistic attitude to society. We hear from the Underground Man that he is “a sick man.....a wicked man ...an unattractive man” whose spite has crippled and corrupted him. He is a well-read and highly intelligent person. He believes that this fact is largely responsible for his troubles. The Underground Man entertains the notion that conscious and educated man should be as miserable as he is. He has become disillusioned with all philosophy. He appreciates what is sublime, the romantic idea of “the beautiful and lofty” but he is aware of its absurdity in the context of his mundane and humdrum existence. He has bitter contempt for the nineteenth century utilitarianism—a school of thought which attempted to use mathematical formulas and logical proofs to align man’s desires with his best interests. The Underground Man complains that man’s basic desire is to exercise his free will, whether it is in his best interests or not. In the face of utilitarianism, man will do nasty and unproductive things simply to prove that his free will is unpredictable and therefore, completely free. The Underground Man takes pleasure in his toothaches or liver pains: Such pleasure in pain is a way of showing contempt for comfortable predictability of life in modern society, which accepts without question the value of consulting the doctor. The Underground Man is not proud of all his useless behavior. He has bitter contempt for himself as a human being. He is aware of his laziness, passivity and indolence that he cannot be a scoundrel or insignificant enough to be an insect or lazy enough to be a true lazybones.

## **5.7 APROPOS OF THE WET SNOW**

The second part of the novel bears the title “Apropos of the Wet Snow”. It describes certain events in the Underground Man’s life in the eighteen forties, when he was only twenty four years old. This part of the novel is a practical illustration of abstract ideas the Underground Man sets forth in the first part. It reveals the narrator’s progression from his youthful perspective, influenced by Romanticism and ideals of “the beautiful and lofty” to his mature perspective in eighteen-sixty. The latter perspective is purely cynical about beauty, loftiness and literariness. “Apropos of the Wet Snow” describes the interactions between the Underground Man and the other people such as soldiers, school mates, and prostitutes. The Underground Man is so alienated from these people that he is incapable of normal interaction with them. He

treats them with disgust and fear. It results into his own effacement or humiliation. It causes remorse and self-hatred in his heart. The Underground Man's alienation manifests itself in all kinds of relationships. While walking in the park, he is obsessed with the idea whether he should yield the way to a soldier whom he does not know. Then in an attempt to interact socially the Underground Man deliberately follows some school acquaintances to a dinner where he is not wanted. He insults them openly though desiring their attention and friendship. Later that very evening the Underground Man attempts to rescue an attractive young prostitute named Liza by delivering impassioned sentimental speeches about the terrible fate that awaits her if she continues to sell her body. Several days later, Liza comes to visit the Underground Man in his shoddy apartment; he reacts with shame and anger when he realizes she has reasons to pity or hate him. He continues to insult her throughout the visit. Hurt and confused, she leaves him alone in his apartment.

Here the Underground Man makes up his mind to end his notes. In a footnote at the end of the novel, Dostoevsky reveals that the Underground Man fails to take the simple decision to stop writing. The Underground Man goes on writing the notes several pages beyond the point at which he should have wound up the manuscript.

## **5.8 ANALYSIS OF MAJOR CHARACTERS**

### **The Underground Man**

Dostoevsky says that the Underground Man, though a fictional character, is representative of certain people who “not only may but must exist in our society, taking under consideration the circumstances under which our society has generally been formed.” The Underground Man is extremely alienated from the society in which he lives. He feels himself to be much more intelligent and “conscious” than any of the people he meets. However, he is aware that his consciousness often manifests itself as a skepticism that prevents him from having confidence in any of his actions. This skepticism cripples him and keeps him from participating in “life” as other people do. The Underground Man constantly analyzes and second-guesses every thought and feeling he has. He is therefore incapable of making decisions about anything.

Feeling himself to be inferior to more active but less intelligent people, the Underground Man goes through life full of shame and self-loathing. This feeling of

inadequacy before others is enhanced by the fact that, as an orphan, he has never had normal, loving relationships with other people. Having no real life experiences upon which to base his hopes and expectations, he often relies on the conventions of novels and drama. The contrast between his expectations for life—which are based on literature—and the realities of the world he lives in is often great, and this divide alienates the Underground Man from society still further. The only emotional interactions he can have with others involve anger, bitterness, revenge, and humiliation. He can conceive of love only as the total domination of one person over another. In order to feel that he has participated in life in some way, he often instigates conflict with others and subjects himself to profound humiliation. This humiliation actually gives the Underground Man a sense of satisfaction and power, as he has brought about the humiliation himself. As long as he can exercise his will, he does not care if the outcome is positive or negative.

We meet the Underground Man when he is forty years old, having retired from his civil service job and secluded himself in a shabby apartment. By this point, he is a complete nihilist: he has no desire to interact with others, and he has total contempt for society and everyone who is part of it. In the second part of the novel, however, the Underground Man describes himself as he was sixteen years earlier, at the age of twenty-four. As a young man, the Underground Man is already misanthropic, proud, self-effacing, and bitter, but he also still clings to certain ideals. He is passionate about literature, craves human attention, and wants others to respect and admire him for his intelligence and passion. He is also occasionally subject to fits of idealism. In the course of the second part of the novel, however, we see how the Underground Man's inability to interact with other people causes his attempts to form relationships and participate in life to end in disaster, and drives him deeper underground.

### **Liza**

When Liza first appears in *Notes from Underground*, her function seems clear: she is the object of the Underground Man's latest literary fantasy and power trip. He has absorbed the literary archetype of the redeemed prostitute and has cast himself as the hero who will rescue Liza. Later in the novel, however, her character becomes more complex. When we first meet her, she matches the

stereotype of a young prostitute: bored, jaded, and somewhat naïve. When Liza is genuinely moved by the Underground Man's speech, however, we realize that she may be even more innocent than expected. A young girl driven into prostitution by an uncaring family, she still idealizes romantic love and longs for respect and affection. She treasures the one declaration of love she has received, a note from a young medical student who does not know she is a prostitute. The Underground Man is touched by the fact that Liza so clearly treasures this letter, but his attitude toward her emotion is somewhat dismissive. We sense that Liza's sentiment could come from a less-educated version of the Underground Man's Romanticism and that her response to the Underground Man's speeches is shallow. Liza wants to participate in the artificial world the Underground Man creates with his "sentimental" speeches, because she likes the idea of being a romantic heroine instead of an ordinary prostitute.

When Liza responds tenderly and understandingly to the abusive speeches the Underground Man makes at his apartment, however, we see that she is closer to a real heroine than we may have expected. She is perceptive enough to see through the Underground Man's façade of cruelty and apathy, and she is good-hearted enough to try to give him comfort and love. When she finally realizes that the Underground Man is incapable of returning her love with anything but mockery and humiliation, she leaves with quiet strength and dignity. She throws away the wad of bills that the Underground Man gives her as "payment" for her visit, thwarting his attempt to treat her like a prostitute after she has come to him with help and love.

### **Zverkov**

Zverkov is a prime example of the kind of man the Underground Man hates most. Zverkov is an active and decisive man, preferring to pursue concrete goals rather than contemplate the value of those goals in modern society. He has been very successful, having advanced far in his career, seduced numerous women, and gained the admiration of his friends and acquaintances. In school, the Underground Man hated Zverkov for his stupidity and boastfulness, and resented him for his wealth, good looks, and popularity. The Underground Man explains that Zverkov was popular because he was "favored with the gifts of nature"—his social success was rather

Darwinian. By the 1840s, Zverkov is much the same as he was in school, except a little fatter, probably because of his hearty enjoyment of food along with wine and women. The Underground Man feels that Zverkov treats him with condescension. The Underground Man is right, but Zverkov at least attempts to treat him politely. We see Zverkov, as we see all of the other characters in the novel, only through the eyes of the Underground Man. It is difficult, therefore, to get an objective view of Zverkov's real personality. The Underground Man describes Zverkov as a coarse, mincing, piggish idiot, but we can also see that Zverkov is amiable and generous with his friends. His rudeness to the Underground Man can be explained at least partially by the Underground Man's aggressive behavior.

## 5.9 LET US SUM UP

The word 'Underground' refers to the 'dark cellar' from which the Underground Man writes his notes. The dark cellar symbolizes his total isolation from society. He feels rejected and alienated from the people he is supposed to belong to. Sitting inside the dark underground cellar, he imagines that he is viewing the outside world through cracks in the floorboards. The Underground Man prefers the underground to the open world above. He values the space - the underground offers him to exert and express his individuality- one of the few things he possesses as his own.

## 5.10 GLOSSARY

**Lazybones:** A word in common parlance in Russia for a man who is successful with women.

**Serfs:** The slaves who worked in the houses and on the farms of the bourgeois.

**Underground:** dark cellars

**Underdog:** the masses/the down trodden and marginalized people in society

**Sublime:** lofty

## 5.11 MULTIPLE CHOICE QUESTIONS

1. Which of the following is not a novel by Dostoevsky?
  - (a) *Notes from Underground*

- (b) *Crime and Punishment*
  - (c) *War and Peace*
  - (d) *The Brother Karamzov*
2. Who among these is not a Russian writer?
- (a) Charles Dickens
  - (b) Nikolai Gogol
  - (c) Fyodor Dostoevsky
  - (d) Anton Chekhov
3. The Underground Man lived in
- (a) St. Petersburg
  - (b) Moscow
  - (c) Kremlin
  - (d) Berlin
4. Fyodor Dostoevsky was
- (a) a utilitarian thinker
  - (b) a totalitarian in outlook
  - (c) a transcendentalist
  - (d) associated with socialists
5. The Underground Man is
- (a) an idiot
  - (b) an eccentric
  - (c) a seasoned criminal
  - (d) a lazybones

**Answer Key:** 1.(c), 2.(a), 3.(a), 4.(d), 5.(d)

## **5.12 EXAMINATION ORIENTED QUESTIONS**

1. Name a few great writers of realist fiction.
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2. Which are the other novels by Fyodor Dostoevsky?

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3. Why was Dostoevsky jailed?

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4. In how many parts has *Notes from Underground* been written?

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5. What is the mentality of the Underground Man?

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6. What is the Underground Man's philosophy?

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7. What is the difference in the contents between the two parts of *Notes from Underground* ?

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### 5.13 SUGGESTED READING

- Carr, Edward Hallett, Dostoevsky (1821-1881). A New Biography. (Allen & Unknown, 1931)
- Jackson Rober L., The Art of Dostoevsky. Princeton University Press.(1831)
- Minihan, Michael., Dostoevsky: His Life and Work. Princeton University Press (1967)
- Reeve, F.D. The Russian Novel Mc Graw Hill. (1966)

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**FYDOR DOSTOEVSKY: *NOTES FROM UNDERWORLD***

***NOTES FROM UNDERGROUND: PART I***

**STRUCTURE**

- 6.1 Introduction**
- 6.2 Objectives**
- 6.3 Narration of Part I of the Novel**
- 6.4 The Underground Man and Consciousness**
- 6.5 The Underground Man and his Characteristic Inertia**
- 6.6 The Underground Man on Free Will**
- 6.7 Attempt to 'live a little' by the Underground Man**
- 6.8 Against Rational Theorists**
- 6.9 Let Us Sum Up**
- 6.10 Glossary**
- 6.11 Examination Oriented Questions**
- 6.12 Suggested Reading**

**6.1 INTRODUCTION**

The narrator introduces himself as a sick, wicked and unattractive person. He has a problem with his liver. He does not want to get it cured out of spite, although he understands that keeping his physical problems away from doctors does the doctors

no harm. The Underground Man explains that, during his tenure in civil service, he was wicked, but he considers this wickedness a kind of compensation for the fact that he never accepted bribes. He immediately revises this claim, admitting that he never achieved genuine wickedness towards his customers. He was, however, rude and intimidating towards them. It was a sort of game.

## **6.2 OBJECTIVES**

The objective of this lesson is to elaborate the contents of the first part of the novel-*Notes from Underground* and acquaint the learner with complex socio-political situation of eighteen-forties to eighteen-sixties in Russia. It was a phase of transition from rural and bucolic Russia to urbanized modern Russia.

## **6.3 NARRATION OF PART I OF THE NOVEL**

The Underground Man has retired rather early from civil service job after inheriting a modest sum of money. It was a lowly assignment to subsist only. The petty job was not a source of satisfaction to him. He was filled with conflicting impulses – wickedness, sentimentality, self-contempt, contempt for others. His conflicting impulses had paralyzed his consciousness. He had shrunk into his miserable corner of the world. Actually he was neither capable of any wicked action nor of charitable action. On the one hand he congratulated himself on his intelligence and sensitivity and on the other hand, he had contempt for himself as for others. The weather in St. Petersburg did not suit him but he stayed out of spite. The Underground Man is a figment of Dostoevsky's imagination but the people in society would not dislike the existence of such a man.

The Underground Man continues to describe himself. He is “overly conscious,” a “developed man” who possesses far more consciousness than is necessary for survival in the nineteenth century. Narrow-minded, active people, in contrast, have the perfect amount of consciousness of reality to go about their daily lives. The Underground Man explains that he does not mean to deride these active figures by suggesting that they are not as conscious as he is, but then he immediately admits that he takes pride in his “sickness” of consciousness. He describes how his consciousness, which makes him aware of “everything beautiful and lofty,” somehow inevitably drags him into corruption and “blight,” a blight in which he has gradually learned to take a sick pleasure.

The end result of this consciousness is always inertia. The Underground Man believes that degradation is inherent in his nature and therefore impossible to change, which affords him a degree of satisfaction. Another kind of strangled satisfaction comes from the fact that the Underground Man, even though he despises himself, considers himself more intelligent than everyone around him, and therefore feels responsible for everything that happens to him. This sense of responsibility, of course, also increases his misery, and makes his pride in his own intelligence a source of shame.

The Underground Man further explains his inability to act in any directed fashion, whether magnanimously or vengefully. Once again, the problem is rooted in his self-consciousness. Normal men act immediately and blindly upon their instincts. In contrast to this kind of man, whom the Underground Man considers stupid but manly, the highly conscious Underground Man is nothing more than a mouse. While the normal man can perceive an act of revenge as an act of justice, the Underground Man, when wronged, is too conscious of the complexities of revenge to retaliate with genuine faith and confidence. Therefore, he ends up slinking back into his underground hole to dwell on whatever wrong has been done to him until it has almost consumed him.

The Underground Man continues to illustrate the aesthetics of misery, demonstrating how the educated, conscious man of the nineteenth century can find pleasure even in a toothache. This pleasure comes from the unnecessary, almost artistically embellished moans and groans that the man uses to signal to his family and friends that he has a toothache, as well as from his awareness that his family is disgusted and irritated with his displays of agony. After making this argument, the Underground Man responds to the laughter that he imagines he has elicited from his audience, and explains that his jokes are in bad tone because he does not respect himself: “[H]ow can a man of consciousness have the slightest respect for himself?”

The Underground Man describes his occasional bouts of repentance, tenderheartedness, and sentimentality. He feels these emotions frequently, and imagines that he is feeling them sincerely. However, he always ends up convincing himself that these moments are nothing but affectations and delusions. He explains that all of the emotional torment he has undergone in his life has been the result of boredom. In an

attempt to make his life into something he could “live, at least somehow, a little,” he convinces himself that someone has offended him, or forces himself to fall in love. These ineffectual gestures toward living are the Underground Man’s compensation for the inertia his consciousness imposes upon him.

The Underground Man repeats his earlier point that only narrow-minded people can be truly active, because their lack of consciousness allows them the comforting belief that there are absolute principles upon which they can base their actions. The Underground Man, in contrast, has nothing solid to support his actions, not even pure wickedness. He analyzes his actions until the idea of cause and effect dissolves. Moreover, the Underground Man also overanalyzes his rebellions against this inertia—his blind attempts at love or anger—until he hates himself for forcing false emotions, and therefore feels paralyzed and becomes more inert than ever. He feels he is an intelligent man only because he has never been able to start or finish anything. In this regard, his inertia is a mark of his consciousness.

The Underground Man describes the difference between inertia and laziness. He defines laziness as a positive quality: a lazy person can be identified positively as a “lazybones,” whereas the Underground Man is identifiable only by qualities that he lacks. The Underground Man imagines himself as a “lazybones”: he would spend all his time drinking to the health of everything “beautiful and lofty,” and would convince himself that everything, even the ugliest things in the world, were “beautiful and lofty” so that he could drink even more. He would demand respect for his opinions and die in peace, extremely fat and “positive” from all of his drinking and eating, a “positive” in a “negative age.”

The Underground Man attempts to debunk the mid-nineteenth-century progressive idea that man, if he were to understand his own true interests clearly, would never do anything bad because it is most advantageous to him to behave rationally. The Underground Man, in contrast, believes that man consciously acts to his own disadvantage, simply to be obstinate. He questions the meaning of the word “advantage,” claiming that utilitarian theorists derived their list of advantages—prosperity, wealth, freedom, peace—from statistical figures and politico-economic formulas. The Underground Man suggests that there is one “strange advantage,” which

he will explain later, that evades these classifications. This “strange advantage” explains why an enlightened man may suddenly and perversely act against what appears to be his own advantage.

The Underground Man goes on to claim that the rules of logic can never predict human behavior. He mentions the English historian Henry Thomas Buckle’s theory that civilization gradually softens men, making them incapable of waging war. This theory, while logically sound, is disproved by the fact that more blood has been shed in the ostensibly civilized nineteenth century than in more barbaric times.

The Underground Man predicts that man would grow bored in a society based on scientifically derived formulas for moral behavior. In the end, “ungrateful” men would welcome the chance to overturn logic and live according to their own irrational free will. The Underground Man thinks that man, under any circumstance, prefers to think he is acting as he *wants* to act, not as reason dictates. The “strange advantage” mentioned earlier is complete free will—even the choice to do something self-destructive. The most important thing to man is that his freedom of choice not be constrained by anything—even reason.

The Underground Man responds to his imagined audience’s claim that free will is something that can be explained scientifically, just as every other human urge can be. He argues that science, regardless of what it might discover about the human will, cannot change the fact that man refuses to accept that his free will is subject to rules. Man, he contends, will do anything to demonstrate this independence of will. The only constraints in man’s behavior are that he is ungrateful and refuses to be sensible. Man may even intentionally go insane, simply to prove that his free will is not subject to reason and that he may behave irrationally if he so desires.

The Underground Man suddenly implies that everything he has said in the last few chapters has all been a bitter joke. Nonetheless, he continues to wonder if it is in man’s best interest to act for his own profit. He admits that man feels a compulsion to create, but that he feels an equally strong urge to destroy. Animals delight in the creations they have made, as ants delight in an anthill they have built. Man, on the other hand, takes pleasure only in the creative process, never in its end result. Man senses that after he fully achieves all of his goals, there will be nothing left to do, and

so he fears that achievement. To man, then, the full illumination that logic offers is alarming.

Then the Underground Man wonders whether suffering is not just as valuable to mankind as the well-being achieved through the use of reason. He states that suffering is the cause of consciousness. Though he has complained about consciousness before, he thinks that consciousness surpasses reason. Reason may solve all the world's problems, but then man is left with nothing to do. Consciousness renders man immobile, but allows him to "occasionally whip" himself, which at least "livens things up a bit."

The Underground Man mocks the utopian fascination with the idea of the crystal palace, an indestructible edifice that epitomizes rationality. He fears the crystal palace because he is unable to stick his tongue out at it. He then mentions that if the palace were a chicken coop, he would use it for shelter, but never call it a palace. If he desired a crystal palace, he would refuse to accept anything less—such as the mundane accommodations of city life—than that palace. If no one pays attention to his desires, he always has the underground.

Suddenly, the Underground Man wants us to forget that he rejected the crystal palace. He wonders if he was only upset because he has nothing at which to stick out his tongue. He wonders why he desires things like crystal palaces when he should be content with apartments, thinking his desire might be some cruel hoax. He then remarks that those who live underground like him never stop talking once they start, even though they have been silent for years.

The last chapter of the "Underground" section of the novel begins with the Underground Man's resolution that the "conscious inertia" of the underground surpasses the life of the normal man. Nonetheless, he continues to envy the normal man bitterly. In the next moment, he declares that he is lying, and that in fact he believes nothing of what he has written so far, even if at the time he thought that he believed it. This statement is followed by a long speech by the Underground Man's imagined, outraged audience, who chastises him for his inconsistency, his lack of integrity, his cowardice in refusing to stand by any of his statements, and his general depravity.

The Underground Man responds that he has made up the audience's entire speech. He wonders if the audience is "indeed so gullible" as to think that he will

publish his notes and allow them to be read. Then he wonders why he addresses the audience at all when he does not plan to let them read the notes. He explains that the notes are his attempt to confront those memories and thoughts that he has trouble revealing even to himself. Addressing an audience is merely a formal construction to help him to write. He decides that perhaps he uses this imaginary audience because he is a coward, or else in order to “behave more decently” while writing.

#### **6.4 THE UNDERGROUND MAN AND CONSCIOUSNESS**

The Underground Man is a self-conscious person to live in the nineteenth century. He does not mean to deride those active people who are quite aware of reality to go about their lives. He is ‘overly conscious’ but there is sickness in his consciousness. His consciousness, which makes him aware of what is sublime, also drags him into the arena of sick pleasures and corruption. The net result of this awareness is inertia, passivity and indolence. He believes that degradation is inherent in his nature and therefore any change in it is impossible. This awareness gives them some satisfaction. The Underground Man, though he despises himself, regards himself more intelligent than every person around him. He feels himself answerable for everything that happens to him. This sense of responsibility increases his misery and makes his intelligence a source of shame. The Underground Man dwells on his inability to act directly-magnanimously or revengefully. The problem is rooted in his self-consciousness. Normally the people act impulsively and immediately. Such people are considered stupid by the Underground Man. He is himself a mouse in the dark cellar. A normal person perceives an act of revenge as an act of justice, but the Underground Man, when wronged, is too conscious of the complicacies of revenge to retaliate with genuine faith and confidence. Therefore, he ends up receding back into his underground hole to endure whatever wrong has been done to him until it consumes him. A man of action follows his desire to act until he is faced with definite impossibility. At this point, he realizes that further action is useless. The Underground Man claims that conscious men refuse to be reconciled with the laws of nature, science and mathematics that other men take for granted. Though the Underground Man is conscious of the reality of these three laws, he refuses to agree with it as he does not like them.

The Underground Man continues to illustrate his self styled aesthetics of misery, demonstrating how the educated, conscious man of the nineteenth century can find pleasure even in his toothache. This pleasure comes from the unnecessary rhythmic moans and groans that the man uses to signal to his friends and family that he has a toothache. His pleasure comes from his awareness that his family is disgusted and irritated with his show of agony. After making this argument, the Underground Man responds to the laughter, he thinks, he has elicited from his audience, and his jokes are in bad taste. He does not respect himself- “How can a man of consciousness have the slightest respect for himself?”

## **6.5 THE UNDERGROUND MAN & HIS CHARACTERISTIC INERTIA**

The Underground Man describes his occasional moods of repentance, tender heartedness and sentimentality. He regards them sincere expressions of his consciousness. But he ends by convincing himself that all these moments are nothing but delusions and affectations. He explains that all his emotional turmoil and torment he has undergone in his life has been the result of his boredom. To make his life into something he could attempt “to live a little”. His life is such that someone has either offended him or forced him to fall in love. These ineffectual gestures towards living are the Underground Man’s compensation for the inertia his consciousness has imposed upon him. He reiterates that the narrow- minded people can be active because their lack of consciousness makes them believe that there are absolute principles upon which their actions could be based. The Underground Man, on the contrary, does not have anything solid to support his actions, not even the acts of wickedness. He analyses his rebellions against his inertia-his love or anger- until he hates himself for forcing false emotions. He feels paralyzed and inert. He feels he is an intelligent man only because he has never been able to start or finish anything. His inertia is a mark of his consciousness.

The Underground Man differentiates between inertia and laziness. He defines laziness as a positive quality: a lazy person can be identified positively as a lazybones whereas the Underground Man is identifiable only by the qualities he lacks. He imagines himself as a “lazybones” and convinces himself that everything, even the ugliest things

in the world, were “beautiful and lofty” so that he could drink even more.

## **6.6 THE UNDERGROUND MAN ON FREE WILL**

The Underground Man attempts to debunk the mid-nineteenth century progressive idea that man, with an understanding of his true interests, would never do anything immoral because it is advantageous to him to behave rationally. The Underground Man, on the contrary, believes that man consciously acts to his own disadvantage, to be obstinate. He questions the word “advantage” claiming that utilitarian theorists derived their list of advantages prosperity, wealth, freedom, peace etc. He suggests that there is one “strange advantage” which evades the above mentioned classification. This “strange advantage” explains why an enlightened man may suddenly and perversely act against his own advantage. The Underground Man claims that logic can never predict human behavior. He refers to the English historian Henry Thomas Buckle’s theory that civilization gradually softens men, making them incapable of waging war. This theory, though logically sound is disproved by the fact that more blood has been shed in the ostensibly civilized nineteenth century than the barbaric times of the past.

The Underground Man predicts that man would grow bored in a society based on scientifically derived formulas for moral conduct. Ungrateful men would welcome the chance to overturn logic and live in accordance with their own free will. The Underground Man thinks that man under any circumstances prefer to act as he wants, not under the dictates of reason. Thus, ‘the strange advantage’ as referred to above means complete free will. One may even make a self-destructive choice such as suicide. What the Underground Man emphasizes is that man’s freedom of choice is not to be constrained even by reason. Free will can be explained scientifically like any other human urge. Man can do anything to show the independence of his will. One of the constants of human behavior is that man is ungrateful and obstinate: he refuses to be sensible. Man may even intentionally go insane and may behave irrationally to defy reason.

## **6.7 ATTEMPT TO ‘LIVE A LITTLE’ BY THE UNDERGROUND MAN**

The narrator addresses the tension between the sentimental and idealistic eighteen forties when the Underground Man was a young man and the utilitarian and

scientific eighteen- sixties when he is writing *Notes from Underground*. He shows both contempt and longing for the ideal of genuine love. He has thus, conflicting attitude towards the sublime literature of Enlightenment and Romantic periods, while everyone from Immanuel Kant to Victor Hugo celebrated “the beautiful and lofty”. The Underground Man is a knowledgeable person about the major writers of these periods. He makes frequent references to the works of the French novelists Victor Hugo and George Sand, the English poet Lord Byron and the Russian Romantics Aleksandr Pushkin and Mikhail Lermontov. The Underground Man’s attempts to ‘live a little’ are the attempts to experience the powerful emotions the Romantic writers valued. Though the Underground Man prides himself in his ability to recognize the ‘beautiful and lofty’, his disgust with himself and with society has shaken his faith he may have had in Romantic ideals. He experiences disgust with himself whenever he feels strong emotions and he ridicules the idea of the sublime: he imagines himself as an alcoholic and aesthete –lazybones.

## **6.8 AGAINST RATIONAL THEORISTS**

The eighteen-sixties in Europe were marked by an increased interest in social life based on scientific principles. Utopian thinkers believed that life could be perfected through the application of reason and enlightened self-interest. Many problems remained unsolved in the world only because the scientific methods to remedy them had not been discovered. One of the most prominent Russian proponents of these ideas was N.G. Chernyshevsky who evolved a theory of “rational egoism” and he wrote a revolutionary novel *What is to Be Done?* in 1863. Dostoevsky, who was contemptuous of Chernyshevsky’s theories, frequently attacked and parodied his ideas in *Notes from Underground*. Dostoevsky found Chernyshevsky’s theory of “rational egoism” particularly offensive. A character in *What Is to Be Done?* asserts that by following his own desires, he would make others happy. “Do you hear that you in your underground hole?” Dostoevsky’s *Notes from Underground* is the response from that underground hole- an elaborate protest against the idea that a man must be happy merely because others want him to be. The Underground Man resists the idea of ‘rational egoism’ considering himself to be an inherently irrational creature. Man will always try to exercise and assert his free will even if this goes against reason and

self-interest. The Underground Man believes so because he can think of no other explanation for the way others have treated him in his life. If human nature were inherently good, nobody could ever act the way most people act towards him. The Underground Man would prefer to have a sick liver than yield to a doctor's authority. He is obsessed with free will and projects his obsession onto others. The Underground Man continues to use his intelligence as an excuse for his inactivity and his inactivity as a proof of his intelligence. He considers active men universally "dull and narrow minded"-the traits which enable them to act. The Underground Man's supreme intelligence does not allow him to resolve any doubts about action. Every question he begins to resolve presents him with new unanswerable questions. He says that intelligence necessarily results in inactivity. It implies that inactivity itself is an indication of intelligence. The Underground Man considers himself intelligent because he has "never been able to start or finish anything." He sees action as an expression of low intelligence. When he imagines himself as a 'positive' man whose life has some kind of goal, the image that he creates is absurd. The goal he imagines for himself is the glorification of everything sublime and the image he creates is of a man with indiscriminate but strongly held opinions. It is ridiculous. It happens when we attach too much value on an opinion for opinion's sake. The Underground Man's comments about his intelligence can be read as a comment on decisiveness in general. His main criticism of the rational theorists is that they have chosen a system and decided to adhere to it. They regard their theories infallible and absolute. He regards the rational theorists stupid. Superficially the observations of the Underground Man sound like a bitter joke. He continues to wonder if it is in the best interest of man to act. He feels that there are two simultaneous postulations to create and to destroy. The urge to create and the urge to destroy are equally potent. Animals delight in the creations they make: Ants delight in an anthill they build. Man, on the other hand, takes pleasure only in the creative process but not in his creation. Man has fear that if he realizes all his goals nothing will be left to do. The Underground Man wonders whether suffering is not just as valuable to mankind as the well-being achieved through reason. He says that suffering is the cause of consciousness. He thinks that consciousness surpasses reason. If reason may solve all the problems of the world, nothing will be left to be done for Man. Consciousness renders man inactive.

## 6.9 LET US SUM UP

The Underground Man ridicules the utopian fascination with the idea of the crystal palace- an indestructible edifice which epitomizes rationality. If the palace were a chicken coop, he would use it for shelter; he would never call it a palace. If he desired a crystal palace he would not accept anything less than it- such as the ordinary accommodation of city life. If one doesn't pay attention to his desires he always has the underground. He rejects the crystal palace. He wonders why he should ask for the crystal palace when he should be content with his apartment. He regards his desire to be a cruel hoax. The Underground Man thinks that the "conscious inertia" of the underground surpasses the life of the normal man. He continues to envy the normal man. But he takes the U-turn denying what he has been saying so far. He delivers a long speech to his imagined apparently outraged audience. It chastises him for his inconsistency, lack of integrity and depravity. He wonders if the audience are so gullible as to think that he will get his notes published to be read. He wonders why he addresses the people if he has no plans to let them read his notes. He explains that his notes are an attempt to confront his miserable memories. Addressing an audience is a formal construction to enable him to write. He speaks to his imaginary audience because he is a coward.

## 6.10 GLOSSARY

To live a little: to full blooded life with emotional and intellectual satisfaction.

Beautiful and lofty: sublime

Inertia: a mood of doing nothing

Strange advantage: free will

Rational egoism: reason applied to one's self-interest.

## 6.11 EXAMINATION ORIENTED QUESTIONS

Q.1 Write short notes on the following:

(a) Who is the Underground Man? Describe. (50 words)

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(b) What are his observations on human consciousness? (50 words)

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(c) How does the Underground Man attempt to 'live a little'? (50 words)

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(d) Discuss his notions of inaction/inertia? (50 words)

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(e) What does he comment on Free will and Reason? (50 words)

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(f) Write a note on the Underground Man's rejection of "Rational Egoism". (50 words)

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Q.2. Choose the correct options:

- (a) (i) *Notes from Underground* is divided into two parts.
- (a) (ii) The novel is a streamlined cohesive discourse.
- (b) (i) Most of the arguments by the Underground Man are fallacious and contradictory.

- (ii) The Underground Man argues convincingly and never contradicts himself.
- (c) (i) He regards himself too intelligent to act in life.
- (ii) Only broadminded and enthusiastic people act in life.
- (d) (i) He considers himself 'positive' in the 'negative age.'
- (ii) He likes to live in the Crystal Palace.

Q.3. Name the famous Russian and French writers the Underground Man refers to in his notes.

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Q.4. In what context does the Underground Man discuss N.G. Chernyshevsky's novel *What is to be Done* ?

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**6.12 SUGGESTED READING**

- Frank, Joseph: Dostoevsky: The Stir of Liberation (1860-1865) Princeton, New Jersey Princeton University Press. 1987
- Girard, Rene: Resurrection from the Underground: Fyodor Dostoevsky. New York. Cross Road publishing. 1997.

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**DOSTOEVSKY: *NOTES FROM UNDERGROUND***

***NOTES FROM UNDERGROUND: PART II***

**STRUCTURE**

- 7.1 Introduction**
- 7.2 Objectives**
- 7.3 The Underground Man and his Co-workers**
- 7.4 The Underground Man's Visit to Simonov**
- 7.5 Dinner in Honor of Zverkov**
- 7.6 The Underground Man at the Brothel**
- 7.7 Liza and The Underground Man**
- 7.8 Apollon and The Underground Man**
- 7.9 Let Us Sum Up**
- 7.10 Multiple Choice Questions**
- 7.11 Examination Oriented Questions**
- 7.12 Suggested Reading**

**7.1 INTRODUCTION**

The Underground Man begins his narration of events that occurred when he was twenty four years old. Even at this age, he is depressed and anti social. At work, he never looks anyone in the eye: he has a notion that they look at him with disgust.

He despises all his acquaintances as they are dull-witted and he feels rather inferior to them. He feels alienated from them.

## **7.2 OBJECTIVES**

The objective of this lesson is to acquaint the learner with the second part of Fyodor Dostoevsky's novel *Notes from Underground*. The purpose is to discuss the nature of Russian Romanticism which is not 'translunary' like German or French or Indian brands of Romanticism. It has the inevitable element of sublimity, preoccupied as it is with the "beautiful and lofty"

## **7.3 THE UNDERGROUND MAN AND HIS CO-WORKERS**

Occasionally, the Underground Man grows indifferent to his problems, becomes chummy with his coworkers. He needs external stimulation to stifle his inner turmoil. Reading suits him. Sometimes he feels the need for contradictions and contrasts. He engages himself in timid, shameful debaucheries. Afraid of being noted by others, he frequents shadowy and disreputable places. One night he notices someone being thrown out of a tavern window in a fight he wishes to fight himself. His attempt is thwarted. An officer casually shoves him aside rather than fight with him. He does not challenge the officer for fear of being manhandled. He sees the officer walking in the park but he does not notice the Underground Man who has been planning to confront him. He has managed to borrow money to buy a hat, gloves, a shirt and a fur collar to look like the officer's social equal. Even dressed in fine clothes, he does not have a brush with the officer. One day he bumps into the officer but the fellow does not take notice of the Underground Man's mischief. He exults that he has placed himself on equal footing with the officer. Three days later he regrets his mischievous act. After the initial sense of victory wears off, he feels rather nauseated and repentant. To escape the unpleasant feelings, he retreats into rapturous dreams in which he becomes a hero. This state of mind is evanescent. Sometimes, the flashes of the sublime come upon him in the middle of his foul acts. He says that the contrast between these flashes of loftiness and degradation of his undisciplined acts creates a pleasant suffering. In his dreams, he feels love which is absent in his real life. His dreams end with artistic moments stolen from poetry and fiction. He describes the scenes of his dreams: they combine elements from the life of Napoleon and from Lord Byron's *Manfred*-a poem

about a proud and gloomy hero. After three months of dreaming, the ecstasy of dreams makes the Underground Man embrace mankind. He feels the need to interact with society. His only social outlet is the chief of his department- Setochkin. On Tuesdays, the Underground Man has tea at his house in the company of his two daughters and other guests. At tea, the Underground Man invariably becomes paralyzed- incapable of participating in conversation. When he goes home, he feels he has been cured of his need for social interaction for a while.

#### **7.4 THE UNDERGROUND MAN'S VISIT TO SIMONOV**

One Thursday, the Underground Man becomes too lonely waiting until the following Tuesday and decides to visit his former classmate, Simonov. The Underground Man had no happy time at school and regarded it as “penal servitude”. He had cut off relations with most of his classmates. But he believes that Simonov is less narrow- minded and more honest than others. He, therefore, maintains a relationship with him. He thinks he disgusts him. He goes to Simonov’s apartment and finds him in the company of two school mates. They are discussing plans for a farewell dinner for Zverkov- another former school mate who was an officer in the army. The Underground Man remembers Zverkov as one of his least favorite classmates. He was handsome, confident, wealthy and popular. The Underground Man regarded Zverkov vulgar and hated him. Zverkov was successful in the army and with women ever since he left school. He no longer greets the Underground Man on the street. Simonov’s guests are admirers of Zverkov; Ferichkin-an enemy of the Underground Man from school – often borrows money from Zverkov; Trudolyubov is the man the Underground Man considers honest but too focused on success. Though all three men ignore the Underground Man from the moment he enters the room, he insists on being included in the farewell dinner, feeling that an offer to contribute money for the meal will make the other men respect him. Simonov hesitates as he is irritated with the Underground Man, but ultimately allows him to join the dinner. When the other men leave, the Underground Man also leaves awkwardly. He regrets what he has done. He knows that his presence is not welcome at dinner, he hates Zverkov. He does not have enough money to pay for the meal. But he would attend the dinner: the more inappropriate it is for him to go, the more likely is that he would go. He remembers his time at school.

Since he was an orphan, distant relatives sent him to a school where the students derided him because he was different from them. He hated the other children who were narrow-minded, worshipped only success and mocked at everything that was just. Their faces grew more stupid with every year spent at school. Hoping to avoid their mockery, the Underground Man became one of the best students at school. He impressed the others with his knowledge of books and the respect he received from his teachers. He had a friend from among his classmates but he treated him rather rudely and ultimately pushed him away. After he left school, the Underground Man severed all ties with his school days.

### **7.5 DINNER IN HONOR OF ZVERKOV**

He spent the next day dreading and preparing for dinner. It might be, he imagined, a turning point in his life. He opened his shabby wardrobe and noticed a spot on his trousers. If he wore it, it would make him look undignified in the eyes of his dinner companions. He passed the day apparently in nervous agony until his wretched wall clock hissed five. Then, he spent his last fifty kopecks on a coach to take him to dinner. The Underground Man arrived at the hotel de Paris twenty five minutes after the dinner was supposed to begin but he was first to arrive. Discovering that Simonov had ordered dinner for 6 o'clock instead of 5 o'clock he waited awkwardly in the restaurant. He imagined himself disgraced in the eyes of the waiters. When Zverkov arrived with other dinner guests, he treated him condescendingly. He was appalled to feel that Zverkov might consider himself superior to him. The other guests treated the Underground Man with awkward politeness although they made derisive comments about his income and appearance. He exploded at them, insisting that he was not embarrassed and he would pay for his dinner. The others were annoyed. Trudolyubov said that the Underground Man was an unwanted guest. Feeling "crushed and annihilated", the Underground Man sat down and drank sherry silently as the others laughed and talked. Displeased, he planned to leave and delivered an offensive and pointless speech to Zverkov. Ferfichkin threatened him and the Underground Man challenged him to a duel. The others only laughed to see him drink. He became silent, looking quite indifferent and disinterested. Secretly, he wished he could make peace with the others.

The Underground Man watched the others drinking and making funny conversation. He moved back and forth in the dining room for three hours but the dinner guests ignored him. He considered how much he had humiliated himself and realized that the others did not understand his developed sensitiveness. When they commented upon him, he guffawed disdainfully.

At eleven o'clock the other men made a move to leave. The Underground Man begged Ferfichkin's forgiveness. The dinner guests left the hotel together showing contempt for him. They were planning to visit brothel. The Underground Man insisted that Simonov should lend him six roubles so that he could accompany them. Simonov responded scornfully and flung the money at him and left. The Underground Man decided if he could not beg for his friendship, he would slap Zverkov.

The Underground Man hired a coach man to take him to the brothel where the others had gone. In the coach, he imagined the events at the brothel: he would slap Zverkov and everyone would retaliate by manhandling him- even Olympia- the prostitute who had once ridiculed him. He apprehended a duel with Zverkov. He urged the coachman to go faster.

If Zverkov refused to fight a duel with him, he would bite him and allow himself to be sent to Siberia in disgrace. Years later, when he would return from Siberia, he would nobly forgive Zverkov. The Underground Man realized that he had stolen this fantasy from popular Romantic stories. He even thought of turning back but he was desperate enough to meet his fate. He hit the coach man in the neck with impatience. The carriage moved on and on through the falling snow. The Underground Man felt that slapping Zverkov had become inevitable.

## **7.6 THE UNDERGROUND MAN AT THE BROTHEL**

When the Underground Man arrived at the brothel, there was nobody in the drawing room. He realized that the others had already gone off with various women. He paced up and down the room until a young prostitute appeared there. She appealed to him and he decided to sleep with her. He noticed his shabby appearance in a mirror. He did not care if she would consider him repulsive.

## **7.7 LIZA AND THE UNDERGROUND MAN**

The Underground Man woke up after having slept with the young prostitute.

He remembered the incidents of the previous day as if they had happened long ago. He began to feel anguished. The prostitute also opened her eyes and looked at him with indifferent curiosity. The Underground Man realized that he had never spoken to her. He felt disgusted with the idea of sex without love. Both of them stared at each other. The Underground Man was rather uncomfortable. To break the silence, the Underground Man asked the prostitute her name. She said "Liza". He continued to ask her about her background but she was rather reluctant to elaborate. Suddenly he began to tell her the story of a prostitute who had died in a basement and whose former clients drank to her memory in a tavern. He delivered a moralizing speech about the shamelessness of prostitution as a profession. The lecture had a deep impact on Liza. The Underground Man was fascinated to note that he was able to elicit emotion in her. He felt sentimental about the value of family. Liza thought her own family might have sold her into prostitution. Then the Underground Man spoke about the value of marriage and filial happiness. The Underground Man told Liza how he loved little children, painting a glowing picture of a young mother and father with a plump rosy baby. Liza responded saying that his speech sounded bookish. He felt offended. He convinced himself that Liza's mockery was a mode of self-defense. The Underground Man also defended himself against Liza's statement. He said that his speech was not bookish, it came straight from his heart in response to the baseness of her situation. If she lived a purer life in a better place he might fall in love with her. She would be then comparatively respectable. He tried to impress upon her that she had been living a sordid and sinful life- spoiling her youth, her virtue and her health and that she would definitely die of tuberculosis, deprived of friends. She would die with little respect. Nobody would mourn her death. The Underground Man was carried away in the train of thoughts as it took him a while to realize that Liza was in total despair, sobbing convulsively into her pillow. He felt he must leave her. Liza got up with a "half-crazed smile". He gave her his address telling her to come to him. She promised to visit him and he left saying good bye to her.

A little before he stepped out, Liza showed him a letter blushing. It was a love letter she had received from a medical student whom she happened to meet at a dance. The student, ignorant of her being a prostitute, professed his love with genuine emotion and respect. The Underground Man realized that the letter was Liza's great

treasure: she wanted to show to the Underground Man that she had known honest love and that she was not simply a degraded harlot. The Underground Man walked home exhausted and perplexed. The 'nasty truth' was beginning to become clear to him.

The Underground Man's speeches provide examples of the Underground Man's inability to communicate or to conceive any emotion without literary references. Liza was quite right that his speech sounded bookish. When the casual conversation failed, the Underground Man resorted to a popular nineteenth century convention—the idea of the redeemed prostitute.

The Underground Man was horrified by his sentimental behavior with Liza. Now his immediate concern was how to redeem himself in the eyes of Zverkov and Simonov. He borrowed money from Anton Antonych to pay his debt to Simonov. He scribbled a letter of apology to Simonov in a gentlemanly and good natured tone. He boastfully exulted in his ability to use his education and intelligence to get out of an awkward situation. He took a walk in the crowded streets feeling more and more perplexed and guilty. He thought Liza would be unimpressed by his shabby apartment if she happened to visit him. He remembered his behavior with her as dishonorable but had actually wanted to inspire noble thoughts in her. He spent a few days dreading and anticipating Liza's arrival. The Underground Man cursed her "pure heart" and "rotten sentimental soul." He indulged in elaborate fantasies in which he saved her from prostitution, educated her and compelled her to fall in love with him. In his fantasies he was rather too unselfish and refined to accept her love. He addressed her in fantasies "...full mistress of the place, come bold and free into my house". His fantasies, predictably, ended in self-disgust.

## **7.8 APOLLON AND THE UNDERGROUND MAN**

The Underground Man is distracted from his frustrations by the rudeness of his servant Apollon. He hated Apollon for he was vain and pedantic. He was paid by him seven roubles a month for doing nothing. The Underground Man, however could not get rid of him. He intentionally withheld his wages for two weeks thinking that he would humble down and ask for his wages. But this trick did not click. As the Underground Man attempted this trick, Apollon sighed and stared at him so helplessly

that his heart melted, and he paid his wages. Once it so happened that the Underground Man burst into temper and refused to pay Apollon's wages but the fellow threatened to go to the police instead of demanding his wages with humility. As the Underground Man was about to manhandle Apollon Liza entered unannounced. The Underground Man was ashamed when he saw her. He fled to his bedroom until Apollon came to tell him that 'someone' had come to see him.

## **7.9 LET US SUM UP**

When Liza got up to leave thinking that she disturbed the Underground Man, he suddenly exploded in a long haphazard speech. He told her that he never intended to save her from prostitution. He had spoken "pathetic words" so that he could humiliate her as Zverkov and the others had humiliated him at dinner. The Underground Man told Liza that in a moment of weakness, he had given her his address. He added that his greatest anxiety in the last few days had been that she might see him in his shabby gown and that she might learn that he was not a hero as she might have believed him to be. He would not forgive her for seeing him in his shabby apartment nor would he forgive her for listening to his hysterical speech. By the end of the tirade, Liza understood that the Underground Man was unhappy and she was filled with agonizing sympathy for him. She threw her arms around him and cried. The Underground Man responded by throwing himself face down on the sofa and sobbed for fifteen minutes. Soon he began to feel ashamed, realizing that the roles had been reversed: in the brothel it was Liza who lay face down and sobbed when he had delivered his harangue to her, but now Liza was the heroine and he was the wretched "humiliated creature." When got up from the sofa, he wished to dominate Liza again. She had misread his hatred and desire for revenge as genuine passion and embraced him.

In the last chapter of the novel, the Underground Man is seen running frantically around his room and looking at Liza through a crack between the screens in the wall. Liza had realized that his desire for her was not born out of love but from his intention to humiliate her, he hated and envied her.

## 7.10 MULTIPLE CHOICE QUESTIONS

1. Choose the Correct Options :
  - (a) Setochkin is the Underground Man's boss and chief of his department.
  - (b) The Underground Man never visited him at his residence.
  - (c) Setockin was childless.
  - (d) The Underground Man regarded his office work as penal servitude.
2. Choose the Correct Options :
  - (a) The Underground Man had very cordial relations with his classmates at school.
  - (b) Zverkov was his favorite classmate.
  - (c) He did not want to attend the dinner in honor of Zverkov.
  - (d) He was an unwanted guest at the dinner.
3. Who was not his classmate among the following?
  - (a) Zverkov
  - (b) Ferfichkin
  - (c) Trudolyubov
  - (d) Lord Byron
4. Choose the correct options :
  - (a) The Underground Man was not interested in the dinner arranged in honor of Zverkov.
  - (b) He wished to attend the dinner as a well-dressed guest.
  - (c) He went to attend the dinner on foot.
  - (d) Apillon accompanied him to the dinner.
5. Choose the correct options :
  - (a) The Underground Man quarreled with the dinner guests and misbehaved.
  - (b) Simonov borrowed some money from him.

- (c) The Underground Man was a teetotaler. He did not drink Sherry.
  - (d) At last the Underground Man slapped Zverkov in the face.
6. Where did the Underground Man meet Liza ?
- (a) The Underground Man visited the brothel and met Liza.
  - (b) Liza was a waitress in a hotel.
  - (c) She did not attract him.
  - (d) He delivered an immoral and vulgar speech to her.
7. What did Liza tell the Underground man ?
- (a) Liza told him that the Underground Man's speech sounded bookish.
  - (b) The Underground Man told Liza that she would die a dignified and respectable death.
  - (c) Liza did not show him the love letter from a medical student.
  - (d) Apollon was a very obedient servant of the Underground Man.

**Answer Key:** 1 (a), 2 (d), 3 (a), 4 (b), 5 (a), 6 (a), 7 (a)

### 7.11 EXAMINATION ORIENTED QUESTIONS

1. What is the Underground Man's attitude towards his co-workers?
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
2. How did the Underground Man behave with his classmates at school ?
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
3. Describe the dinner hosted in honor of Zverkov. How did the Underground Man behave as a dinner guest? (100 words)
- \_\_\_\_\_

- 
- 
4. Write a note on the role of the Underground Man at the brothel?
- 
- 
5. Depict the tragic tension between the relationship of Liza and the Underground Man.
- 
- 
6. What is the end of the novel *Notes from Underground*?
- 
- 
7. **Select the correct statements:**
1. At times the Underground Man felt the need for social interaction.
  2. The Underground Man was hyper sensitive with sick imagination.
  3. He was pleased with Apollon, who was his obedient servant.
  4. On Tuesdays the Underground Man had tea at the residence of his boss Setochkin.
  5. Zverkov, Simonov, Trudolyubov and Ferfichkin were classmates of the Underground Man's school days.
  6. The Underground Man thought of slapping Zverkov in the face.
  7. Liza visited the shabby apartment of the Underground Man.
  8. Liza treasured a love letter she had received from a medical student.

8. Why would the Underground Man be pleased if people called him a “lazybones”?
- a) People would think he was rich and did not have to work for a living.
  - b) It would be something by which to define himself.
  - c) “Lazybones” is a Russian slang term for someone who is successful with women.
  - d) He thinks he gets too much credit for the work he does in his department.
9. What does the Underground Man think of the theory that, as civilization progresses, mankind becomes less likely to wage war?
- (a) He agrees, because he thinks that developed men of the nineteenth century are too indecisive to take any action at all, least of all starting or fighting a war.
  - (b) He disagrees, because he thinks that war gives the individual a chance to show his valor and ingenuity and achieve glory and heroism.
  - (c) He agrees, because he thinks that civilization's emphasis on reason will cause all disputes to be resolved by contests of intellect rather than force.
  - (d) He disagrees, because the amount of war and bloodshed in the nineteenth century surpasses the amount of war and bloodshed in previous, less civilized eras.
10. When the Underground Man was in school, how did he earn some respect from his fellow students?
- (a) He seduced the headmaster's daughter.
  - (b) He wrote beautiful stories that moved them to tears.
  - (c) He had great academic success.
  - (d) He beat Zverkov in a duel.
11. For what does the Underground Man say he will make Liza "pay dearly"?

- (a) For seeing him in an embarrassing situation.
  - (b) For sleeping with Zverkov.
  - (c) For stealing money from him.
  - (d) For rejecting his advances
12. Why does the Underground Man call the second half of his memoir “Apropos of the Wet Snow”?
- a) He is quoting a Pushkin poem of the same title.
  - b) He is implying that the snow is wet with his tears.
  - c) Because the falling snow reminds him of another day when snow was falling.
  - d) Because winter is his favorite season.
13. How does the Underground Man make amends for his behavior at Zverkov’s farewell dinner ?
- a) He invites the men out for drinks at his expense.
  - b) He writes an apology to Simonov and pays him back the money he owes.
  - c) He writes an article in praise of Zverkov in the paper.
  - d) He pays for the men to visit prostitutes.
14. Why did the Underground Man’s one close friendship fall apart ?
- a) He borrowed his friend’s money and could not repay.
  - b) The friend wore lemon-colored gloves, which the Underground Man thought were in poor taste.
  - c) He demanded that his friend totally submit to his will, and then hated the friend once he had submitted.
  - c) The friend grew exasperated with the Underground Man’s belligerence and threw him out a window.
15. Why does the Underground Man think that active men stop pursuing their goals

once they hit a wall ?

- a) They are too stupid to think of a way around the wall.
  - b) They have confidence in facts, and it is fact that one cannot go through a wall.
  - c) Something near the wall distracts them.
  - d) They run into the wall and end up in the hospital.
16. Why does the Underground Man sleep with Liza at this apartment ?
- a) He wants to prove that he loves her.
  - b) He wants to make Apollon jealous.
  - c) He wants to reassert his power over her.
  - d) He overpaid her earlier and is entitled to a free session.
17. Why was the Underground Man's job so low-ranking ?
- a) He had a bad attitude and never got promoted.
  - b) He quit a more prestigious job because it reminded him too much of his negative experience at school.
  - c) His health problems prevented him from doing any strenuous work.
  - d) He was not particularly talented in any area.
18. Why does the Underground Man insist on going to dinner with Simonov and his friends?
- a) He wants to gain their respect.
  - b) He wants to poison their champagne.
  - c) He is hoping he will get to spend time with Olympia at the brothel.
  - d) He wants a free dinner because he is low on money.
19. Why does the Underground Man refuse to go to a doctor about his liver problem?
- a) He cannot afford to pay a doctor.
  - b) He believes it is his fate to die from liver disease.

- c) He knows the problem is not very serious.
  - d) He resents the fact that the doctor is the only person who can help him, and refuses to go out of spite.
20. Why did the Underground Man spend a lot of his time reading when he was a young man?
- a) His job required that he be familiar with literature.
  - b) He was bored out of his mind.
  - c) He needed distraction from his inner torment, and reading was the only external stimuli he could bear.
  - d) He wanted to learn how to improve society.
21. Why does the Underground Man claim his audience in his *Notes from Underground* ?
- a) He thinks they will enjoy the story more if he shows that he is interested in their opinions.
  - b) He needs to pretend to himself that he has a reason for organizing the notes and improving the writing style.
  - c) He is hoping they will give him money.
  - d) He wants to publicly humiliate them by refuting their arguments with perfect logic and wit.

### **7.11 SUGGESTED READING**

- Peace, Richard. Dostoevsky: An Examination of the Major Novels. Cambridge University Press.1971
- Rostel, R.W.(tr.). Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics.University Michigan Press.1973
- Bowers, Fredson (ed.). Lectures on Russian Literature. Harcourt Brace Javanovich.1981.

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***NOTES FROM UNDERGROUND: CRITICAL  
PERSPECTIVES***

**STRUCTURE**

- 8.1 Introduction
- 8.2 Objectives
- 8.3 The Underground Man and his Self-Consciousness
- 8.4 Unreliable Narrator
- 8.5 The Underground Man and His Language
- 8.6 *Notes from Underground* as an Existentialist Novel
- 8.7 Social Interaction and the Underground Man
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- 8.12 Multiple Choice Questions
- 8.13 Examination Oriented Questions
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## **8.1 INTRODUCTION**

The first chapter of *Notes from Underworld* presents a precise character sketch of the Underground Man. Contradictions and indecisions are fundamental to his character. He says that he has liver problem but then immediately says that he is not sure of it. He is not keeping well but he would not consult a doctor out of spite. Many conflicts swarm inside him. His inability to act stems from his nihilism which means that he believes that traditional social values have no foundation in nature and that human existence is essentially useless. The Underground Man despises the society in which he lives. It is not only that the weather in St. Petersburg is inclement; the very culture of the city is based on bureaucracy and hypocrisy. Accepting bribes is common and widely tolerated. Though the Underground Man harbors bitterness against all aspects of society, he is powerless to act: he cannot even manage to be a wicked civil servant. His aggressiveness recoils on himself: he refused to see a doctor and remains in an unhealthy climate out of spite. It is a mode of his masochism to endure physical pain and humiliation.

## **8.2 OBJECTIVES**

Since Dostoevsky's novel *Notes from Underground* is one of the major books of Russian fiction, it is worthwhile to acquaint the learner with the critical contours of it. This lesson is designed to specify the remarkable critical features of *Notes from Underground*.

## **8.3 THE UNDERGROUND MAN AND HIS SELF-CONSCIOUSNESS**

The Underground Man has intense self-consciousness. He is very analytical and observes everything minutely. He is often irrational. His hyper-consciousness acutely examines every idea, urge, and feeling that crosses his mind. His heightened consciousness makes him aware of the opposite elements of everything. Therefore, he can neither act decisively nor confidently on any of his desires. He is highly conscious of what others think of him. He is aware of the fact that others are judging him. He regards them like a panel of hostile judges looking down upon his underground life from their comfortable position above ground – the vantage point of social world he has fled.

#### **8.4 UNRELIABLE NARRATOR**

He is an unreliable narrator because whatever he says is filtered through his own nihilistic and anguished psychological perspective. He cannot see the objective truth about anything. Though *Notes from Underground* is written in the first person, one can easily imagine that Dostoevsky and the Underground Man share the same perspective but it is the hallmark of Dostoevsky's characterization that he distances himself from his characters. In *Notes from Underground*, the Underground Man as narrator is not Dostoevsky's mouthpiece. Dostoevsky might have shared some of his opinions with the Underground Man but not his absurdities of behavior.

#### **8.5 THE UNDERGROUND MAN AND HIS LANGUAGE**

The fact that Underground Man is a civil servant is a significant element. Many of Dostoevsky's characters are low-ranking civil servants who are lost in the society of nineteenth century St. Petersburg. The Underground Man is neither a philosopher nor a professional writer. He does not make use of any philosophical terms while discussing his ideas. As a young man he was a great admirer of literary language but by the time he took to writing his notes from Underground, he abandoned literary language. He used it, ironically. The Underground Man used the common man's language with deliberate awkwardness. When the Underground Man thinks that his intelligence and heightened consciousness prevent him from being active, he says the active people are 'disingenuous'.

#### **8.6 NOTES FROM UNDERGROUND AS AN EXISTENTIALIST NOVEL**

He rationalizes his inability to act. He deludes himself about the source of his alienation. It does not imply that Dostoevsky wants to glorify the man of action. The novel criticizes equally those people who spend too much time contemplating the "beautiful and lofty" and those people act decisively. The Underground Man divides the world into two groups. The first group consists of those people who are "disingenuous" and "active". They are not necessarily stupid but they are not half as "conscious" as the Underground Man. They are unable to analyze their decisions, they make these decisions painlessly. They do not analyze obstacles or motives. When they come across obstacles, they stop. The second group includes educated and

conscious people like him. They spend all their time contemplating their degradation. This classification by the Underground Man foreshadows the existentialist philosophy of writers like Jean-Paul Sartre who calls *Notes from Underground* the first existentialist novel. Sartre believed that every human being was totally free and completely responsible for every choice he happened to make. In Sartre's works, the characters that become aware of the terrible responsibility that accompanied every choice they made were unable to do anything. Like the narrow minded men in the Underground Man's two groups, were the only people who acted with full confidence in Sartre's works: they are not conscious of their freedom and responsibility.

It looks rather odd that the Underground Man associates the laws of science and mathematics with less intelligent men. One usually thinks of these disciplines in the context of education and intelligence. For the Underground Man a conscious man was someone who questioned and analyzed everything—even the validity of natural laws. Someone who had blind faith in everything—even in logic and reason—fitted into his definition of an unconscious man. This definition allowed the Underground Man to include some of the most prominent intellectuals of the era in his criticism and this paved the way of his critique of the rational theorists.

The Underground Man considered his consciousness a curse. This masochistic idea became literal when he talked of the pleasure that a cultured man could find in a toothache. Though the Underground Man is ashamed of this pleasure as he is ashamed of anything, he finds it enjoyable or worthy of pride. He believes it is the only kind of pleasure available to the truly cultured man in the nineteenth century. At the very outset the toothache sounds absurd when intelligence and sensitivity lead to inaction on the part of the sufferer.

“Apropos of the Wet Snow” reveals a good deal about the Underground Man's experience with and attitude towards literature— particularly Romantic literature up to the eighteen-forties. One finds that the Underground Man has been an avid reader all his life. Reading is one of the pursuits in which he feels comfortable. He wished as a young man to live in a society where literary language figured in daily interactions. His relationship with literature is ambiguous. He is ashamed of that romanticism which leads him to be chummy with his co-worker. Though he

seems to admire the Russian brand of Romanticism, he describes it as somewhat hypocritical and absurd. Dostoevsky himself disapproved of the degree to which his western contemporary Russian intellectuals adopted European culture and values. The Underground Man describes that French and German modes of Romanticism do not tally with the Russian version of Romanticism. The Underground Man knows well enough that the people would laugh at his literary use of language but he attributes this to their lack of intelligence and sensitivity. Dostoevsky believed that European culture had been artificially imposed upon Russian culture. But the Underground Man believes that he should live by European cultural rules: he applies them to life in Russia. Though European culture is alien to Russia, it has replaced Russian culture in the cities like St. Petersburg: The city is an artificial place with no natural culture of its own supporting an artificial, untranslatable culture which can only alienate its inhabitants.

## **8.7 SOCIAL INTERACTION AND THE UNDERGROUND MAN**

The Underground Man's interaction with the soldier has its roots in Romantic European ideas of justice and revenge. He wants to walk with the officer as an equal. He craves for social interaction. Since he is starved for social interaction, he morbidly desires to throw the officer out of the window. He is so alienated that he craves for any form of interaction, regardless whether it is cordial or hostile, negative or positive. The Underground Man fails to establish a satisfying rapport or interaction. He wants to act but resists the urge. He is obsessed for a long time before exacting a limited, anti climactic and pathetic revenge.

## **8.8 THE DREAMS OF THE UNDERGROUND MAN**

The Underground Man's dreams are an evidence of his absorption in the European literary and cultural models that Dostoevsky believed were artificially imposed upon Russia. The figures with which the Underground Man identifies his "heroic" self come from French and English history and literature. The imagery of his dreams is derived from the life of Napoleon. Some images are related to the fictional Manfred from Lord Byron's poem. These dreams speak volumes of the Underground Man's capability of feeling strong emotion and pleasure: he describes his dreams as

“sweet” and refuses to dismiss them. Instead of sharing with others, the expression of these pleasant feelings is misdirected. He expresses them in imaginary situations using the imagery of an alien culture Western Europe. His fantasies have no roots in the world in which he lives. The Underground Man’s dreams function as an allegory for the irrelevancy of western culture imposed on Russian lives. The dreams of the Underground Man indicate that his real life is starved of satisfying human interaction. He makes it up through his dreams. He has urges to interact socially with others after long period of “dreaming” and immersing himself in the imaginary world of literature. His ego drives him to share his wonderful thoughts and feelings with the rest of the world. This irresistible urge to socialize reveals that the twenty four year old Underground Man is not yet entirely entrenched in the Underground. He can visit his boss Setochkin on Tuesday and schedule his desires for social interaction. His impulse towards companionship is, thus, regulated, programmed and bureaucratized. It smacks of artificiality.

According to the Underground Man’s description, Zverkov is an active but stupid man. He has no respect for Zverkov as the latter is arrogant and dull-witted. The Underground Man is, however, aware that Zverkov’s confidence has won him many accomplishments, friends and admirers. The Underground Man fantasizes that Zverkov would definitely admire his brilliance and sensitivity and offer his hand in friendship. It reveals his desire to be liked and accepted by the man he disdains most. His account of his school days explains his bitterness. The Underground Man, as an orphan school boy, was always too sensitive and anti-social to win affection from his classmates and teachers. He never understood love or faith; he knew only domination and submission. He wanted to exercise power but he had to live with impotent rage. He gave up his job in civil service simply out of spite just as he wouldn’t go to the doctor out of spite. He decided to attend the dinner for Zvekov though he was not wanted there. He often plunged himself into uncomfortable situations. He was engrossed with anger, hate and discomfort. He was generally obsessed with external appearances: he frowned on himself because of his shabby apartment, his stained trousers etc. This concern was not wholly unfounded because his slovenly appearance was laughable.

## **8.9 DINNER AND THE UNDERGROUND MAN**

The Underground Man's description of his waiting at the restaurant shows his restlessness. The wall-clock hissing five o'clock at his apartment had already sounded hostile to him. He imagined that the waiters performing their tasks were full of contempt for him. He felt ashamed. Every casual occurrence- from the late arrival of the dinner companions to the waiters setting the table suggested negativity to him. He had an extraordinary tendency to exaggerate or misinterpret events through the lens of his bitterness or insecurity. He makes a judgment about a person or a place with his skewed perspective. The other characters have no understanding of the Underground Man's motives. His behaviour appears bizarre to them. Their response to his behavior is negative. They are baffled by his rudeness.

His narration illustrates his indecisiveness and masochism. He remains at the dinner, pacing hopelessly in front of the other dinner guests refusing to speak to them. It gives him a strange pleasure out of the feeling that he has hit rock bottom. He cultivates his own humiliation. He is incapable of making any decisive choice because he is too conscious of every possibility. He is plagued by doubts. He submits himself to his romantic fantasies, his nihilistic realism and his masochistic impulses. He imagines the scene slapping Zverkov in the face and also imagines noble reconciliation with him. His fantasy of being manhandled by everyone in the brothel is masochistic. His reconciliation with Zverkov is a Romantic one. He believes that slapping Zverkov will be a confrontation with real life. The Underground Man equates life with emotionally satisfying contact with other people but the emotions which come to him are resentment, anger and conflict. He feels he can escape his alienation through his forced participation in life. In this light, his pursuit of Zverkov is the pursuit of freedom and dignity.

## **8.10 LIZA AND THE UNDERGROUND MAN**

The Underground Man exercises his power on Apollon- the domestic servant, the coachman and Liza – the prostitute. He feels far superior to them as they belong to the lower strata of society. He comes to physical violence with the coach man and hits him out of frustration. The Underground Man is somewhat intimidated by Liza wondering what impression she would form about his shabby and ungroomed appearance.

The epigraph to “Apropos of the Wet Snow” is a selection from the Russian liberal poet Nikolai Nekrasov. It is written from the perspective of a man who has rescued a prostitute’s “fallen soul” from “error’s darkness.” In the poem, the prostitute becomes the man’s wife. The Underground Man-Liza affair draws much of its language and imagery in *Notes from Underground* from Nikolai Nekrasov. It is a parody of a similar scene in Chernyshevsky’s novel *What is to Be Done?* The Underground Man does not recognize the literary tradition behind his mission. He exerts his so called moral force to manipulate Liza who is impressed by his “bookish” discourse. When the Underground Man tells that Liza will die a solitary and sordid death and nobody would mourn her, he seems to talk about himself. His initial description of the prostitute’s death involves a coffin being removed from a basement. While interacting with Liza, he feels far superior to her morally and intellectually. He occasionally becomes sentimental but he cannot cope with genuine emotion as he has little experience with “real life.” His confrontation with it sends him back to the underground for safety. After delivering his long and impassioned speech, he is delighted that his words have influenced Liza. The Underground Man is horrified by her passionate sobbing. He has neither been loved nor is he lovable.

His cheerfulness in the morning after he writes the letter to Simonov indicates how he deludes himself about the realities of life. Convinced of his ability as a writer of letters, he believes he has set everything right with his friend. This complacency not only demonstrates his egotism but a way to cope with frequent humiliation. The Underground Man has an extraordinarily delicate ego, alternately exulting in his own intelligence and then plunging into shame. He alternates between looking forward to Liza’s visit and dreading that she will notice the shabbiness of his apartment. The Underground Man has never had a mutually respectful and pleasant relationship with anyone. When he considers his relationship with Liza, he feels that either he or she will have to be humiliated. At the brothel, he feels confident about his dominant role as the prostitute-redeemer, but in his own apartment, he feels vulnerable to judgment and derision. The Underground Man’s bitter hatred for Apollon stems from a similar desire for domination. He has a feeling that he can dominate Apollon completely for he is his paid servant. His attempts to make Apollon submit to his will are no more successful than his attempts to bump into the officer in the park.

The Underground Man becomes a victimizer rather than a victim as he lets loose his aggressive tirade against Liza. But she responds to it with sympathy and affection; she proves herself a truly sensitive, perceptive and loving person. She is intuitive enough to see that his bitter words stem from his suffering, insecurity, loneliness and pride. She is, of course, grateful to him for opening her eyes to the futility of her situation as a harlot. Liza is a heroine worthy of a Romantic novel- gentle and simple with human kindness. She fits in the Underground Man's notion of the world as portrayed in Romantic literature. She comforts the Underground Man who has passed a lifetime of indifference and abuse. He has lost his power over Liza: she dominates him. Their roles are just reversed: Liza becomes the only hope for the Underground Man's redemption. She is perceptive enough to see through his hostile façade his mental anguish. When Liza leaves his apartment, the Underground Man immediately begins to rationalize her departure, although he was unable to handle the responsibility of a relationship with her when she was present there. The Underground Man's distrust of his own emotional responses comes from his skepticism.

### **8.11 LET US SUM UP**

The Underground Man, when all is said and done, is unable to recall the moment of Liza's departure with indifference. The Underground Man's memoir in his notes is very significant. This episode is going to alienate and isolate the Underground Man from his "underground".

Dostoevsky's Underground Man shows us how the modern life alienates us from ourselves and from the others. *Notes from Underground* is a psychological study of a casualty of societal problems. The Underground Man's theories and behavior resonate in modern literature from Dostoevsky's later novels to those of Jean-Paul Sartre, Albert Camus and others. The Western world has absorbed *Notes from Underground* into its cultural heritage.

### **8.12 MULTIPLE CHOICE QUESTIONS**

Select correct options:

1. When does the Underground Man visit Aton Antonych at home?
  - (a) When he wants to get his tooth pulled out.

- (b) When he wants to borrow money.
  - (c) Every Thursday morning.
  - (d) When he has the urge to socialize.
2. How does the Underground Man prepare for his confrontation with the officer in the park?
- (a) He takes boxing lessons.
  - (b) He buys a pair of gloves and a beaver collar.
  - (c) He bribes a part attendant to trap the officer.
  - (d) He compiles a list of witty retorts to use in case the officer insults him.
3. When do the other guests arrive at Zverkov's dinner?
- (a) At the same time when the Underground Man arrives.
  - (b) Before the Underground Man arrives.
  - (c) After the Underground Man arrives.
  - (d) They do not turn up at all.
4. What does Liza show to the Underground Man before he leaves the brothel?
- (a) A picture of herself as a little girl.
  - (b) A list of St. Petersburg's luminaries she has slept with.
  - (c) A love letter from a medical student.
  - (d) A bracelet that her mother gave her before she died.
5. Why does the Underground Man decide not to give Apollon his wages?
- (a) He wants to show that he has the ability to exert power over him.
  - (b) Apollon did not shine the Underground Man's shoes.
  - (c) He has no money left to pay Apollon.
  - (d) Apollon is the boss of the Underground Man.
6. How long has the Underground Man been living "underground" ?
- a) Not sure, but his gopher hole is month-to-month.

- b) Two months
  - c) Two years
  - d) Ten years
  - e) Twenty years
7. What does the Underground Man choose to represent the laws of reason?
- a) "I think, therefore I am"
  - b) "2 + 2 = 4"
  - c) "No two snowflakes are alike"
  - d) If you want to be happy for the rest of your life, never make a pretty woman your wife"
8. What does the Underground Man find enjoyable ?
- a) Hunting
  - b) Going clubbing with baby seals. Only the really hip ones though
  - c) Suffering
  - d) Ignorance
9. According to the Underground Man, why would man cause destruction and chaos ?
- a) Because man is basically evil
  - b) To prove that he has free will
  - c) Because his religion urges him to do so
  - d) Because he can't hold his liquor
10. What socialist does the Underground Man reject ?
- a) Crystal Palace
  - b) Diamond Castle
  - c) Ruber Tower
  - d) Cubic Zirconia Outhouse
11. What distinguishes the Underground Man from the rest of the world ?

- a) Hyper-consciousness
  - b) Inner beauty
  - c) Outer beauty
  - d) Mathematical brilliance
  - e) Serendipity
12. The Underground Man has retreated from reality to a world of \_\_\_\_.
- a) Apps
  - b) Books
  - c) Zynga
  - d) Playdom
  - e) World of Warcraft
13. What has nothing to do with divine will ?
- a) Free will
  - b) Religion
  - c) Success
  - d) Fate
  - e) Happiness
14. *Notes from the Underground* is generally seen as forerunner to \_\_\_\_.
- a) Nihilism
  - b) Communism
  - c) Capitalism
  - d) Existentialism
  - e) Stimulus
15. The Underground Man argues that \_\_\_\_ is enjoyable
- a) Suffering
  - b) Football
  - c) Writing

- d) Rugby
  - e) Boxing
16. What becomes a symbol of modernity and technology ?
- a) Madison Square Garden
  - b) Eiffel Tower
  - c) Twin Towers
  - d) Crystal Palace
  - e) Water Tower Place
17. What equation is important ?
- a)  $3x = 6$
  - b)  $2x + 4y = 8$
  - c)  $2 + 2 = 4$
  - d)  $1 + 1 = 2$
  - e)  $3 + 7 = 10$
18. The laws of nature are like a
- a) Glass table
  - b) Granite countertop
  - c) Wood floor
  - d) Brick wall
  - e) Stone wall
19. A man of action might say
- a) "It's not a wall"
  - b) "Let's smash the wall"
  - c) "It's a wall"
  - d) "Bang my head against the wall"
  - e) "Tear down that wall"

20. Underground means.
- a) Happy
  - b) Isolated
  - c) Stimulated
  - d) Miraculous
  - e) Meticulous

### 8.13 EXAMINATION ORIENTED QUESTIONS

1. Write a note on the self-consciousness of the Underground Man. (50 words)

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2. Discuss the Underground Man's attitude to Apollon?

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3. Is the Underground Man an authentic mouthpiece of Fyodor Dostoevsky? Argue in detail.(50 words)

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4. Describe *Notes from Underground* as an existentialist novel.

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5. What is the significance of the Underground Man's dreams and fantasies?

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6. Make your observation on the Underground Man's urge for social interaction.
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- 
7. Do you justify the Underground Man's behavior at the dinner hosted in honor of Zvekov?
- 
- 
8. Analyze elaborately the relationship between Liza and the Underground Man. Who redeems whom in the end?

#### **8.14 SUGGESTED READING**

- Miller, Robyn Feur. ed. Critical Essays on Dostoevsky. Boston G. K. Hall. (1986)
- Peace, Richard Arthur. Dostoevsky's Notes from Underground. Bristol. UK. Bristol Classics Press. 1993
- Cox, Gary. Tyrant and Victim in Dostoevsky. Bloomington. Indiana. Slavica Publishers. 1984.

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***NOTES FROM UNDERGROUND: A BROAD SPECTRUM  
CRITIQUE***

**STRUCTURE**

- 9.1 Introduction**
- 9.2 Objectives**
- 9.3 The Fallacies of Rationalism and Utopianism**
- 9.4 The Artificiality of Russian Culture**
- 9.5 Paralysis of the Conscious Man in Modern Society**
- 9.6 The Wet Snow**
- 9.7 The Man of Nature and Truth**
- 9.8 The Redeemed Prostitute**
- 9.9 The Underground**
- 9.10 St. Petersburg**
- 9.11 The Crystal Palace**
- 9.12 Money**
- 9.13 Important Passages Explained**
- 9.14 Let Us Sum Up**
- 9.15 Short Answer Questions (SAQ)**
- 9.16 Multiple Choice Questions**

### **9.17 Examination Oriented Questions**

### **9.18 Suggested Reading**

## **9.1 INTRODUCTION**

The anonymous narrator of *Notes from Underground* is the protagonist in the novel. The Underground Man is a bitter, reclusive forty-year-old civil servant speaking from his St. Petersburg apartment in the eighteen-sixties. He speaks in the first person describing his thoughts and feelings and impresses upon his audience what happened to him about sixteen years earlier in his life. It is rather difficult to take his depictions of characters and incidents at their face value. The whole novel is narrated through the Underground Man's irrational and skewed perspective. It is dubious why his perspective is the same as Fyodor Dostoevsky's. The Underground Man rejects many values and assumptions of the society in which he lives. He makes various attempts to interact with society- his plan to fight a duel, his attempt to spoil the dinner with his school mates, his attempt to redeem a prostitute from immoral, sinful life etc. His inexperience with love and kindness fails him in establishing a rapport with Liza. The novel is concerned with the fallacies of rationalism and utopianism, the artificiality of Russian culture and the inertia of the conscious man in modern society.

## **9.2 OBJECTIVES**

The purpose of this lesson is to introduce the learner with the finer technicalities and critical points of Fyodor Dostoevsky's *Notes from Underground*. The novel is a gold mine of the Russian fiction of the nineteenth century. To appreciate this novel is to grasp existentialism. The objective, in this lesson, is to underline the trends which have influenced the writers, psychologists and existentialists all over the world. When all is said and done, the objective is to indicate that *Notes from Underground* is a key to modern literature and it is an integral part of Russian cultural heritage.

## **9.3 THE FALLACIES OF RATIONALISM & UTOPIANISM**

Throughout the novel, the Underground Man makes a convincing case against the rational egoists and Utopian socialists of his era. They had asserted the claim that the application of reason alone could make the world perfect. These theorists thought

that if everyone in the world understood what was really in their best interests they would never do anything irrational or destructive: Destructive behavior actually resulted from a misguided sense of profit. If the natural laws which governed the human behavior could be comprehended, through reason, Utopia could be attained and realized in the world.

The Underground Man opposes such a view because it underestimates the human desire for free will. Human will is valuable even if it runs contrary to Reason. The Underground Man's masochistic tendencies illustrate this theory. He prefers to suffer from his ailments rather than consult the doctors. Thus his attitude of self-torture is the expression of his free will. It sounds quite absurd at the very outset but the Underground Man has a point to make. Needless to say, Dostoevsky himself was highly suspicious of Utopian socialists, worrying that their desire to codify rational human behavior ignored the complexities of human psyche. The kind of freedom the Utopian socialists preached was likely to lead to regimentation and totalitarianism.

#### **9.4 THE ARTIFICIALITY OF RUSSIAN CULTURE**

By the middle of the nineteenth century, the Russian social and intellectual elite had been imitating western European culture for decades. A nineteenth-century Russian gentleman was regarded sophisticated, well-educated and well-informed if he was familiar with the literary and philosophical traditions of western European countries- Germany, France and England. The Underground Man, with his intelligence, consciousness and the sense of the "beautiful and lofty" considered himself a progressive and 'developed' man of the nineteenth century. The Underground Man's notion of the 'beautiful and lofty' was associated with Edmund Burke and Immanuel Kant and not the sense of sublimity of Longinus. In his youthful days, he tried to live earnestly by the ideals he had discovered in European literature and philosophy. Though Dostoevsky may have shared the Underground Man's fascination with European culture in his own youth, by the time he wrote *Notes from Underground* he thought that such influence on Russia was destructive. Fascinated by the west, Russian intellectuals had lost touch with the genuine Russian way of life. To national unity and harmony, Dostoevsky called for a "return to the soil", emphasizing Russian values of family, religion, personal responsibility, and brotherly love over European "enlightenment",

scientific progressivism and Utopianism. The Underground Man's European influences are largely responsible for driving him "Underground" as his attempts to live by a foreign set of values have led him to failure and frustration.

## **9.5 PARALYSIS OF THE CONSCIOUS MAN IN MODERN SOCIETY**

Throughout the novel, one finds that the Underground Man is unable to make decisions or take action with confidence. He explains that this inability is due to his highly developed consciousness. The Underground Man is able to imagine various consequences that every action could lead him to. He is aware of the possible arguments against every statement. He is conscious of the multiplicity of different motives that inform every decision. He makes every choice complex. This complexity makes his decisions dubious. Action becomes impossible because he cannot determine a course of action.

In the modern era the religious and moral imperatives of the past have ceased to be absolutes. The only people who can act with confidence, according to the Underground Man are those who are "narrow-minded"-too stupid to be skeptic. The one remaining absolute is Reason. But even the educated men pursue the laws of science and reason without questioning them. They take things for granted. According to the Underground Man, such mindless adherence to the laws of Reason is misguided. The total inaction or inertia is the best strategy for conscious people.

## **9.6 THE WET SNOW**

It always snows in St. Petersburg-the city in which the Underground Man lives. The falling snow marks the monotony of the weather, and the dreariness of the snow corresponds to that of the Underground Man's boredom of alienated life. The snowfall of the eighteen-forties is little different from that of the eighteen-sixties.

## **9.7 THE MAN OF NATURE AND TRUTH**

The Underground Man is preoccupied with the idea of "*l'homme de la nature et de la verite*"- "The man of nature and truth." The French phrase is a variation-rather distortion- of a sentence in *Confessions* by the eighteenth century philosopher Jean-Jacques Rousseau. *Confessions* is a kind of autobiography meant to present a

portrait of its author “exactly from nature and in all its truth.” In Dostoevsky’s *Notes from Underground*, this “man of nature and truth” becomes the “unconscious man”- the man of action whom the Underground Man opposes vehemently. This active man is healthy and single-minded, ‘narrow-minded’ according to the Underground Man, and acts in accordance with the laws of nature and reason. The Underground Man disdains such a man for his blind faith, yet he feels inferior to such a man, considering himself a ‘mouse’ or ‘insect’ in his comparison. In *Notes from Underground* both Zverkov and the unnamed officer share the characteristics of *l’homme de la nature et de la verite*.

## **9.8 THE REDEEMED PROSTITUTE**

The motif of the redeemed prostitute was popular in progressive novels, plays and poems of the mid –nineteenth century. These works frequently involved variations on the standard plot- an altruistic hero rescuing a young prostitute from a lifetime of degradation using rhetorical language to awaken the noble emotions which have been buried in her soul. The hero, thus, appeals to the prostitute’s sense of the “beautiful and lofty”. The Underground Man- as a self-styled hero – grasps this literary convention and attempts to rescue Liza. It is symptomatically ironic as the Underground Man desires to “live out” literature in the real world. He is hardly an appropriate person to rescue anyone as his own life is miserable.

## **9.9 THE UNDERGROUND**

The “Underground”-The “dark cellar” from which the Underground Man claims to be writing his notes has its symbolic significance. It is a symbol for his total isolation and alienation from society. The Underground Man feels dejected and shut out from the society he belongs to. He imagines he is viewing the world through cracks and recesses of the floor-panels. He prefers the underground to the real world above. He treasures the space the underground gives him to exert his individuality. The alternative title of this novel could be ‘Memoirs for the Dark Cellar’.

## **9.10 ST. PETERSBURG**

The city of St. Petersburg serves as the backdrop for *Notes from Underground*- the ‘*sthalpurana*’ by Dostoevsky. It serves as locale for his other works also. The Underground Man frequently refers to its bad climate, culture and

cost of living. His main complaint is that the city is artificial: he describes it as an “abstract and intentional city” - he means it is not natural or real. It is rigidly systematized, bureaucratized and alienating. Historically, St. Petersburg was built- starting from the scratch- in 1703 by decree of Tsar Peter the Great, who hoped that the new city would become a “window” on to Europe. In 1713, St. Petersburg became the capital of Russia. Peter the Great’s desire to let more European culture into Russia stimulated western cultural influence, which Dostoevsky so bitterly criticized. St. Petersburg is, thus, doubly artificial: not only was it built to order, but it also symbolized the artificiality of the Russian acceptance of European culture.

### **9.11 THE CRYSTAL PALACE**

The real crystal palace, a vast exhibition hall of glass and iron, was built in London for the Great Exhibition of 1851. The structure used the most advanced technology and materials available at the time. For progressive thinkers of the era, the idea of a crystal palace represented the ideal living space for a utopian society based on reason and natural laws. The Underground Man despises the idea of the crystal palace as he cannot stick out his tongue at it. He means that the blind and obstinate faith in reason that the crystal palace represents ignores the importance of individuality and personal freedom. He describes it as a “chicken coop”. According to him a real crystal palace must celebrate truth and harmony of human nature. He prefers ‘the underground’ to the crystal palace.

### **9.12 MONEY**

Money symbolizes power for the Underground Man. It is his poverty that keeps him from feeling socially or morally equal to others. He is deeply ashamed when he has to borrow money. By giving or withholding money, he attempts to exert power in certain situations. He tries to break Apollo’s pride by withholding his wages and he thrusts money into Liza’s hands as she leaves his apartment in a deliberate attempt to assert that she is nothing but a prostitute.

### **9.13 IMPORTANT PASSAGES EXPLAINED**

1. *“Ha, ha, ha! Next you’ll be finding pleasure in a toothache!” you will exclaim, laughing.*

*“And why not? There is also pleasure in a toothache,” I will answer.*

This passage, which begins Chapter IV of the “Underground” section, illustrates the extent of the Underground Man’s masochism. In the previous chapter, he has described in great detail the ways in which he takes pleasure in his own humiliation, enjoying the extremity of his indecision and powerlessness. The “you” in the quotation is the Underground Man’s imagined audience, to which the entire novel is addressed. This audience represents the perspective of the rational man, who would certainly scoff at the perverse idea that someone could enjoy something that brings him pain. The statement that the Underground Man will next be finding pleasure in a toothache is sarcastic, a dismissal of the absurdity of the situation. No one in their right mind could take pleasure in a toothache.

Always ready to take an idea to its extreme, and eager to disprove any unshakable assumptions his audience might have about reason and nature, the Underground Man brings the perversity of his idea to the next level: there is indeed pleasure in a toothache. He goes on to describe the aesthetic value of the moans of someone suffering from a toothache. His moans are “conscious” moans, the moans of a “developed” man who has been exposed to European civilization and understands that true art has no purpose besides itself. The developed man will construct elaborate, symphonic moans and groans that will give him the satisfaction of irritating his friends and family.

The reference to European civilization relates the idea of the toothache to the question of the value of European culture’s influence on Russia. Indeed, the Underground Man’s pleasure in his toothache is an indication not only of his masochism and his desire to perplex his audience, but of the artificiality of his existence. His enjoyment of the toothache becomes a parody of his enjoyment of other “developed” pleasures, encouraged by European literature and philosophy. Dostoevsky was extremely critical of the way in which this Europeanized, “developed” way of thinking alienated Russian intellectuals from the real culture and people of Russia, who worked with the soil as members of a community. The refinements that the Underground Man exaggerates in this passage are both a result of and a contributing factor to his isolation from society.

2. *Oh, gentlemen, perhaps I really regard myself as an intelligent man only because throughout my entire life I've never been able to start or finish anything.*

The Underground Man makes this statement in Chapter V of “Underground,” after having described the causes and conditions of his inertia. Just prior to this point in the novel, he has asserted that his intelligence is the cause of his inertia; now he suggests that his inertia is evidence of his intelligence. This reversal demonstrates the Underground Man’s belief that intelligence, or consciousness, must cause inertia and indecision in the modern era. According to the Underground Man, a man must be completely confident that he is doing the right thing before he can take action. He needs a “primary” cause, something solid by which he can justify what he does. A stupid man can imagine that he has found a primary cause, but an intelligent man knows that this primary cause is really a secondary cause, which is related to all kinds of different concepts and problems that would take an eternity to sort out. A narrow-minded man thinks that the reason he wants revenge on someone else is for the sake of justice; an intelligent man is aware that he is not motivated by justice at all. The intelligent man fails to find a satisfactory reason for the action he wants to perform, and, in fact, is impossible to find one. For the intelligent man, even the laws of nature and reason are suspect. Therefore, no intelligent man should ever be able to make up his mind to start or finish anything—no matter how simple. The intelligent man will constantly be aware that he has no concrete reason to take action, or will at least be aware that he has no understanding of the reason to take action.

3. *Who wants to want according to a little table?*

The Underground Man asks this question of his imagined audience in Chapter VIII of “Underground,” after his audience has explained to him that his argument about the primacy of the human will is flawed. His audience has brought up the idea that scientific rules and formulas can explain the origins of and reasons for human desires. By this argument, if there is a scientific formula for human happiness, that same formula would also explain man’s desire to exercise free will, and would explain the reason for the existence of free will in the first place. Therefore, it is absurd to assert that a scientific formula for human happiness limits the rights of man to exercise free will. The Underground Man’s response to this argument is paradoxical. If science

can explain why human beings desire anything, it can certainly explain why human beings would or would not desire “to want according to a little table.” The Underground Man’s assertion, however, is incontestable. No matter how much science manages to explain about the nature of human desires, it cannot change the fact that those desires exist. Furthermore, no matter how strong the evidence- that human beings do “want according to a little table”—that is, according to a set of rational, predictable formulas—most humans treasure the idea that their desires are independent and unique. Hence, they would not appreciate the idea that their desires are completely predictable. The contrast between the image of a tiny, well-regulated, boring little multiplication table and the great urgency and power of the word “want” is very effective in proving the Underground Man’s point. No matter how the numbers add up, describing human desires in terms of a “little table” seems like the worst kind of oversimplification, and makes even the most sensible people want to rebel against reason and go running headlong into a stone wall.

4. *Here it is, here it is at last, the encounter with reality. . . . All is lost now!*

The Underground Man says these words to himself at the beginning of Chapter V of “Apropos of the Wet Snow,” as he is running down the stairs in pursuit of his former schoolmates. The others have left Zverkov’s farewell dinner—at which the Underground Man has utterly humiliated himself and alienated them—to go to a brothel together. The Underground Man has resolved to follow them, either to receive an apology or to extract his revenge. He is elated for a number of reasons. For one, he feels that his strange brand of masochism has finally brought him to the lowest possible position, and being in this position has made some kind of confrontation inevitable. For someone as indecisive as the Underground Man, the thought of inevitability is reassuring. He is certain that the situation will resolve itself in some way, ending in either triumph or defeat. Either end will involve an “encounter with reality”: the Underground Man will finally be forced to participate in “life,” to interact with other human beings in a meaningful way. The Underground Man craves this kind of interaction, and every time he is faced with “some external event, no matter how small,” he thinks it is going to break the monotonous, lonely pattern of his life. This event promises to be monumental: a duel, or a fistfight, or

the adoring and apologetic friendship of a former enemy. It is telling that the Underground Man should think of this “encounter with reality” in terms of violence. Anger, revenge, and bitterness seem to be the only realistic ways in which he can conceive of interacting with others. Consequently, he imagines duels and arguments as the only way he can participate in the social world. The Underground Man’s association of reality with violence and anger, pride and humiliation, foreshadows the failure of his relationship with Liza. He has no tools for friendship that do not involve aggression.

5. *I sensed vaguely that she was going to pay dearly for it all. . . .*

In this quotation, from Chapter IX of “Apropos of the Wet Snow,” the Underground Man remembers his reaction to Liza’s arrival at his apartment. He has been shrieking with rage at his servant, Apollon, and is dressed in a ragged bathrobe. When Liza enters the apartment, the Underground Man “die[s] of shame” and runs into his room in a panic. When he returns, he tries to appear dignified, but continues to feel extreme embarrassment. He is infuriated by Liza’s patient, expectant stare, as he feels pressure to do something impressive to equal his speech in the brothel. The Underground Man’s humiliation is increased by the fact that in the brothel, when he was convincing Liza of the error of her ways, he felt enormous power over her. He felt he could manipulate her emotions, influence her choices about her own life, and control how she felt about herself and about him. He imagined that she admired and respected him. These feelings were particularly valuable to the Underground Man after his humiliation at Zverkov’s farewell dinner. Now he has lost his temper in front of Apollon, the one person over whom he feels he should have some control. The Underground Man therefore feels particularly powerless, imagining he has lost all respect and dignity in Liza’s eyes. He holds her responsible for the fact that she has seen him in this miserable situation. Her presence has made him aware of the shabbiness of his bathroom, his apartment, his behavior with Apollon—the shabbiness of his entire existence. In this way, the Underground Man transfers the responsibility for all of his unhappiness to Liza’s shoulders. Just as he can turn his hatred of others toward himself, he can turn his hatred of himself toward others, especially when they are weaker, poorer, and less respectable than he.

## 9.14 LET US SUM UP

Liza happens to be the object of The Underground Man's latest literary fantasy. He has absorbed the literary archetype of the redeemed prostitute and cast himself as the hero to rescue Liza. Though a prostitute, she idealizes romantic love and longs for respect and affection. She treasures a love letter from a young medical student. Liza wants to participate in the artificial world that the Underground Man creates with his "sentimental" speeches because she likes the idea of being a romantic heroine. When Liza responds tenderly and understandingly to the abusive speeches of the Underground Man, she is a real heroine. She is perceptive enough to see through the Underground Man's façade of masochism and apathy and realizes that he is incapable of reciprocating her love except with mockery and humiliation.

Zverkov is an active and decisive man pursuing his goal of ambitious, successful modern society. He has been very successful as a lazybones and has won admiration from friends and acquaintances. He has wealth, good looks and popularity. He is "favored with the gifts of nature." Zverkov is seen through the eyes of the Underground Man. So one doesn't get the objective views of Zverkov's amiable and generous personality.

The Underground Man-misanthropic, aggressive, and indecisive- is the protagonist of the novel *Notes from Underground*. Though more intelligent and perceptive than others in society he feels himself humiliated and inferior to others. His consciousness manifests itself through his skepticism. It cripples him 'to live' genuinely. There is a hiatus between his expectations of life- based on literature and the reality of the world. The conflicting divide alienates the Underground Man from society. His emotional interactions are through contempt, anger, humiliation and revenge. As long as he can exercise his will, he does not bother whether the outcome is negative or positive.

## 9.15 SHORT ANSWER QUESTIONS (SAQ)

1. Discuss the theme of Literature and Writing in *Notes from Underground*.

Ans. In *Notes from Underground*, the Underground Man has retreated from reality

to a world of books. He lives in literary fantasies – duels, chivalry, impractical love affairs, redemption – and then (not surprisingly) has difficulty reconciling these dreams with real life. He goes so far as to conclude that we all live in books, that in fact we all need books to tell us how to live. *Notes* itself is steeped in literary references and clichés, and reflects Dostoevsky’s disdain for the Western European ideals seeing into his country. Nowhere is this clearer than in the Underground Man’s discussion of romanticism. He argues that French and German romantics are silly and idealistic, while Russian romantics are able to appreciate “the sublime and beautiful” while remaining grounded in the real world.

**2. Discuss the theme of Life, Consciousness and Existence in *Notes from Underground*.**

**Ans.** In *Notes from Underground*, hyper-consciousness distinguishes the Underground Man from the rest of the world. Cursed with acute awareness, he can’t act because consciousness causes him to believe that no action is truly justified. If a conscious man can’t act, the argument goes, and then he can’t ever become anything. This notion of “the conscious man” is tied with “the intelligent man” and also “the decent man,” so the concept carries both moral and intellectual implications. Although consciousness arises from suffering, allows for suffering, and necessitates suffering, it also makes possible free will and individuality. With consciousness, man must suffer, but without it, man will never be free.

**3. Discuss the theme of Fate and Free Will in *Notes from Underground*.**

**Ans.** *Notes from Underground* presents a fascinating twist on the classic fate vs. free will argument. Fate in this case has nothing to do with divine will. If man is “fated” in any way, it is only because he is beholden to the laws of nature, like science or mathematics.  $2+2=4$ , and this holds true whether we like it or not. How can there be free will if the world has such laws? The Underground Man argues that the only way to preserve free will is to beat one’s head against the stone wall that is mathematical certainty. You may not be able to make  $2+2=5$ , but you have to try if you want to be free. Additionally, he offers

terrifying vision of what might happen if we were to figure out all the laws of nature. If man always acts according to reason and the laws of nature, then we could predict everything man would ever think or do. The Underground Man argues that man will act *against* reason in order to prove his free will. He is willing to suffer, destroy, and abandon reason all for the sake of his own freedom.

**Q4. Discuss the concept of suffering in *Notes from Underground*.**

**Ans.** In *Notes from Underground*, the Underground man argues that suffering is enjoyable – even a toothache. The pleasure, he says, comes when you are intensely conscious of your pain, adding that it’s enjoyable to make other suffer with you. Suffering is necessary, he continues, because it leads to consciousness. The two notions suffering and consciousness – have a complicated relationship in the text, each necessitating the other and making the other possible. For this reason, man will never give up suffering, since man needs to be conscious and have his free will. He will even purposely cause himself pain to prove that he’s free to do so.

**Q5. Analyse the theme of Isolation in *Notes from Underground*.**

**Ans.** *Notes from Underground* features a lonely, self-isolated, self-hating hermit who has spent the last twenty years of his life underground. However, this Underground Man has been alone, “always alone”, for all of his life. His isolation seems to stem from an acute and paralyzing self-awareness. He expects the world to operate the way it does in literature, and after each inevitable disappointment he can do nothing but retreat back into his lonely world of books. Nursing a fragile ego, the Underground Man will often hate in return for being hated, which is not the quickest to make friends.

## **9.16 MULTIPLE CHOICE QUESTIONS**

Choose the correct option:

1. (a) When the Underground Man was at school he earned a lot of respect from his classmates.
- (b) He alienated himself from his fellow students

- (c) He did not hate Zverkov then.
  - (d) He wrote romantic poem saturated with deep emotion.
2. (a) The second half memoir 'Apropos of the Wet Snow' in the novel bears the title from Pushkin's poem.
- (b) He is sure that the snow is wet due to his tears.
  - (c) Winter is the Underground Man's favorite season.
  - (d) Generally there was no snowfall in St. Petersburg.
3. (a) The Crystal Palace represents the tyranny of the bourgeois over the proletarian class.
- (b) Using crystal for architecture was a waste of money.
  - (c) The Underground Man would not be able to stick out his tongue at it.
  - (d) There was no underground to live in the Crystal Palace
4. Before Liza leaves his apartment, the Underground Man puts in her hand:
- (a) Money
  - (b) a love letter
  - (c) a book
  - (d) a golden ring
5. At Zverkov's farewell dinner, the Underground Man:
- (a) invites all the dinner guests for drinks at his expense.
  - (b) He writes an apology to Simonov and pays him back the money he owes.
  - (c) He pays for the man to visit the brothel.
  - (d) He writes an article in praise of Zverkov in the paper.
6. The Underground Man retired from his job in civil service because
- (a) He got a better position in the army.
  - (b) He wrote a bestselling novel.

- (c) He inherited a modest sum of money.
  - (d) He wanted to become a full time lazybones.
7. The Underground Man follows the dinner guests to the brothel:
- (a) because he feels he must encounter reality.
  - (b) He wants to repay the money he borrowed from Simonov.
  - (c) He had already paid the coachman to visit the brothel.
  - (d) He wanted to spend some time with Olympia.
8. The Underground Man ran into the street soon after Liza had left his apartment.
- (a) She had left behind her hand bag.
  - (b) He wanted to have the last word with her.
  - (c) He wanted to make sure that she got home safely.
  - (d) He was moved by her dignity and wanted to ask for her forgiveness.

**Answer Key:** 1.(b), 2.(a), 3.(c), 4.(a), 5.(a), 6.(c), 7.(a), 8.(d)

### 9.17 EXAMINATION ORIENTED QUESTIONS

Q1. How does The Underground Man react against Rationalism and Utopianism? Discuss.

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Q2. What is the symbolic significance of St. Petersburg, the Underground and the Crystal Palace in the novel? Describe.

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Q3. Depict Liza as a potential romantic heroine of the novel *Notes from Underground*.

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Q4. Portray the Underground Man as a nihilist and misanthrope.

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Q5. Write a note on Zverkov as a successful Russian.

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### 9.18 SUGGESTED READING

- Cockrell, Rogers (ed.) The Voice of a Giant: Essays on Seven Russian Prose Classics. University of Exeter Press. Exeter UK. 1985.
- Dostoevsky: Selected Letters ed. Joseph Frank. Rutgers University Press. 1987. New Jersey.
- Wasiolek, Edward. Dostoevsky: The Major Fiction. Cambridge. Massachusetts. MIT Press. 1964.

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## **FRANZ KAFKA**

### **STRUCTURE**

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

### **10.1 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.

### **10.2 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.

### **10.3 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 20<sup>th</sup> 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

- a) Franz Kafka was born into a middle-class, German-speaking \_\_\_\_\_ family.
- b) Kafka’s writing has inspired the term \_\_\_\_\_.
- c) \_\_\_\_\_ is a short story about Gregor Samsa, a man who devotes his life to his family and work, for nothing in return.
- d) In \_\_\_\_\_, one of Kafka’s last works, the setting is a village dominated by a castle.
- e) Franz Kafka is regarded as a leading and one of the most influential \_\_\_\_\_ century writer.
- f) How is K executed by being \_\_\_\_\_?
- g) *The Trial* was published in \_\_\_\_\_.
- h) K. was shocked when he learned he could reach the court offices (located in the attic) by \_\_\_\_\_.

- i) Kafka wanted all his manuscripts \_\_\_\_\_ after he died.
- j) *Amerika* was published in \_\_\_\_\_.

## 10.7 EXAMINATION ORIENTED QUESTIONS

### 1 Draw a biographical sketch of Franz Kafka

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### 2 What does the term “Kafkaesque” mean?

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## 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

- a) Jewish
- b) Kafkaesque
- c) The Metamorphosis
- d) The Castle
- e) twentieth
- f) Stabbed in the heart

g) 1925

h) stepping over Titorelli's bed and opening the door

i) Burned

j) 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.

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**FRANZ KAFKA : *THE TRIAL***

**STRUCTURE**

- 11.1 Objectives**
- 11.2 Plot Overview**
- 11.3 List of Characters**
- 11.4 Summary**
  - 11.4.1 Chapter 1**
  - 11.4.2 Chapter 2**
  - 11.4.3 Chapter 3**
  - 11.4.4 Chapter 4**
  - 11.4.5 Chapter 5**
  - 11.4.6 Chapter 6**
  - 11.4.7 Chapter 7**
  - 11.4.8 Chapter 8**
  - 11.4.9 Chapter 9**
  - 11.4.10 Chapter 10**
- 11.5 Self-Assessment Questions**
- 11.6 Examination Oriented Questions**
- 11.7 Let Us Sum Up**
- 11.8 Answer Key**
- 11.9 Suggested Reading**

## 11.1 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.

## 11.2 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.

### 11.3 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.

## 11.4 SUMMARY

### 11.4.1 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 stewes. 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).

### 11.4.2 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.

### **11.4.3 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.

#### **11.4.4 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.

#### **11.4.5 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.

#### **11.4.6 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.

#### **11.4.7 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.

#### **11.4.8 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.

### 11.4.9 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.

#### **11.4.10 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.”

### 11.5 SELF-ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

- a) Joseph K. works in a \_\_\_\_\_.
- b) After he gives his speech at the first interrogation, K. notices that the members of the audience are wearing\_\_\_\_\_.
- c) The young washer-woman offers herself to K. the second time they meet. But before any thing happens, she is carried off by\_\_\_\_\_.
- d) Fraulein Montag teaches\_\_\_\_\_.
- e) \_\_\_\_\_ is punishing the two warders in the lumber room.

### 11.6 EXAMINATION ORIENTED QUESTIONS

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

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

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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 ?

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## 11.7 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.

## 11.8 ANSWER KEY

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|--------------------|-----------|
| a) bank            | b) badges |
| c) the law student | d) French |
| e) The Whipper     |           |

## 11.9 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.

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**FRANZ KAFKA: *THE TRIAL***

**STRUCTURE**

- 12.1 Objectives**
- 12.2 Detailed Analysis**
  - 12.2.1 Plot Analysis**
  - 12.2.2 Thematic Analysis**
  - 12.2.3 Chapter-wise Analysis**
- 12.3 Self-Assessment Questions**
- 12.4 Short Answer Questions**
- 12.5 Examination Oriented Questions**
- 12.6 Let Us Sum Up**
- 12.7 Answer Key**
- 12.8 Suggested Reading**

**12.1. 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.

## 12.2 DETAILED ANALYSIS

### 12.2.1 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.

### 12.2.2 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.

### 12.2.3 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.

### 12.3 SELF-ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

- 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 .

### 12.4 SHORT ANSWER QUESTIONS

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

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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 ?

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

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### 12.5 EXAMINATION ORIENTED QUESTIONS

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

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

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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.

## **12.6 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.

## **12.7 ANSWER KEY**

- |                      |                                   |
|----------------------|-----------------------------------|
| a) bow-legged        | b) in the country                 |
| c) nurse             | d) he paints officials’ portraits |
| e) Law Court Offices | f) Josef                          |

## **12.8 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.

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**FRANZ KAFKA : *THE TRIAL***

**STRUCTURE**

- 13.1 Objectives
- 13.2 Character Analysis of K.
- 13.3 The Theme of Existentialism
- 13.4 Kafka: A Religious Writer
- 13.5 Jewish Influence
- 13.6 Self-Assessment Questions
- 13.7 Examination Oriented Questions
- 13.8 Let Us Sum Up
- 13.9 Answer Key
- 13.10 Suggested Reading

**13.1 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.

**13.2 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 than 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.

### **13.3 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.

#### **13.4 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.”

### **13.5 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.

### **13.6 SELF-ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS**

- 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 \_\_\_\_\_.

### 13.7 EXAMINATION ORIENTED QUESTIONS

1 Why does K submit meekly to his executors?

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2 Discuss 'alienation' as characteristic of modernistic fiction in the role of K.

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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.

### 13.8 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.

### **13.9 ANSWER KEY**

- |  |                      |
|--|----------------------|
| a) An Italian client                       | b) a prison chaplain |
| c) a stool                                 | d) Tartar            |
| e) he has hired other lawyers for his case | f) the manufacturer  |

### **13.10 SUGGESTED READING**

- Hughes, Kenneth, ed. and trans. Franz Kafka: An Anthology of Marxist Criticism. Hanover, NH: University Press of New England, 1981.

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**FRANZ KAFKA : *THE TRIAL***

**STRUCTURE**

- 14.1 Objectives
- 14.2 The Writing Of *The Trial*
- 14.3 Understanding Kafka
- 14.4 The Neurotic Element
- 14.5 Symbols and Metaphors
- 14.6 Self-Assessment Questions
- 14.7 Examination Oriented Questions
- 14.8 Let Us Sum Up
- 14.9 Answer Key
- 14.10 Suggested Reading

**14.1 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.

**14.2 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.

### **14.3 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 theological 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.

#### **14.4 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.

#### **14.5 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. Robbing 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. prejudices 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.

#### 14.6 SELF-ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

- a) *The Trial* takes place in \_\_\_\_\_ city
- b) Kafka spent most of his life in \_\_\_\_\_
- c) Kafka wrote in \_\_\_\_\_
- d) Joseph K. declares that he has been killed like a \_\_\_\_\_
- e) Since we don't know her first name, we might say that Fraulein Burstner's initials are \_\_\_\_\_
- f) Throughout the manuscript of the unfinished novel, Kafka referred to Fraulein Burstner simply as \_\_\_\_\_
- g) \_\_\_\_\_ lived in a state governed by law, there was universal peace, all statutes were in force; who dared assault him in his own lodgings.
- h) \_\_\_\_\_ 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."
- i) "Progress had always been made, but the nature of this progress could never be specified." This expresses K's dissatisfaction with \_\_\_\_\_.
- j) \_\_\_\_\_ said, "Both methods have this in common: they prevent the accused from being convicted."
- k) \_\_\_\_\_ said, "What a pretty claw!"
- l) \_\_\_\_\_ type of government is criticized in *The Trial*.
- m) *The Trial* questions justice and the \_\_\_\_\_

#### 14.7 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?

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- 2 How would you characterize the women of *The Trial*? Do they seem like real women ?
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### 14.8 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.

### 14.9 ANSWER KEY

- |             |              |                 |
|-------------|--------------|-----------------|
| a) unknown  | b) Prague    | c) German       |
| d) dog      | e) F.B.      | f) F.B.         |
| g) Josef K  | h) Titorelli | i) Huld         |
| j) Josef K. | k) Leni      | l) Totalitarian |
| m) Law      |              |                 |

### 14.10 SUGGESTED READING

- Lowy, Michael. Franz Kafka: Subversive Dreamer. University of Michigan Press, 2016.

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## **GUNTER GRASS : *THE TIN DRUM***

### **STRUCTURE**

- 15.1 Objectives**
- 15.2 Introduction**
- 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**
- 15.7 Short Answer Questions**
- 15.8 Let Us Sum Up**
- 15.9 Examination Oriented Questions**
- 15.10 Answer Key**
- 16.11 Suggested Reading**

### **15.1 OBJECTIVES**

The aim of the lesson is to introduce the learners of this course to the author Gunter Grass and his works.

### **15.2 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.

### **15.3 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, Phillip 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**

- a) *The Tin Drum* is a masterpiece of \_\_\_\_\_.

- b) Gunter Grass had briefly been a member of the \_\_\_\_\_, the armed wing of the Nazi party.
- c) The autobiographical book of Grass is called \_\_\_\_\_.
- d) The famous Oskar Matzerath of *The Tin Drum* only makes a fleeting appearance in \_\_\_\_\_.
- e) \_\_\_\_\_ 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?

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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**

- a) magic realism
- b) Waffen-SS
- c) *Peeling the Onion*
- d) *Cat and Mouse*
- e) *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.

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**GUNTER GRASS : *THE TIN DRUM***

**STRUCTURE**

- 16.1 Objectives**
- 16.2 Plot Overview**
- 16.3 Characters at a Glance**
- 16.4 Objects and Places in the Novel**
- 16.5 Important Quotes from the Novel**
- 16.6 Self-Assessment Questions**
- 16.7 Let Us Sum Up**
- 16.8 Examination Oriented Questions**
- 16.9 Answer Key**
- 16.10 Suggested Reading**

**16.1 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.

**16.2 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.

### 16.3 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 disinfector 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 Schmuhs:** The owner of the Onion Cellar, where Oskar's jazz band plays. Schmuhs spends his time in the Rhine meadows, shooting sparrows.

**Dr. Dosch:** A man who frequented the Onion Cellar. After Schmuhs'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.

#### **16.4 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.

## 16.5 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

## 16.6 SELF-ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

- a) The figure of the Black Cook tends to represent \_\_\_\_\_ in this novel.
- b) Woodruff fizz powder \_\_\_\_\_ Maria Truczinski.
- c) The food that Agnes Matzerath eat so much that she dies is \_\_\_\_\_.
- d) By the end of the novel, the place that Oskar is reluctant to leave is \_\_\_\_\_.
- e) Oskar wrongfully tends to portray his keeper Bruno as \_\_\_\_\_.
- f) \_\_\_\_\_ tells Oskar that it’s a good idea to manipulate people before they manipulate you.

## 16.7 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.

## 16.8 EXAMINATION ORIENTED QUESTIONS

- 1 Write a note on the genre under which *The Tin Drum* can be classified. Elucidate with examples from the novel.

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2 How does knowing about the author's service in the SS affect your reading of the novel?

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3 Do you believe Oskar killed Sister Dorothea in novel *The Tin Drum*? Why, or why not?

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4 If Oskar didn't kill Sister Dorothea, why does he worship the severed finger in the jar?

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### 16.9 ANSWER KEY

- a) death
- b) gets her sexually aroused
- c) fish
- d) the asylum
- e) dim-witted
- f) Bebra

### 16.10 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.

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**GUNTER GRASS : *THE TIN DRUM***

**STRUCTURE**

- 17.1 Objectives**
- 17.2 Detailed Summary-Book 1**
- 17.3 Self-Assessment Questions**
- 17.4 Let Us Sum Up**
- 17.5 Examination Oriented Questions**
- 17.6 Answer Key**
- 17.7 Suggested Reading**

**17.1 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.

**17.2 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 raftsman 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 raftsman 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 complimented 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.

### **17.3 SELF-ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS**

- a) What creature first provokes the sound of drumming in Oskar's mind?
- b) The name of the crazy person who hangs out at funerals in Danzig is \_\_\_\_\_.
- c) The current name of Danzig is \_\_\_\_\_.
- d) The name of the Jewish toy dealer who commits suicide on the night of Kristallnacht is \_\_\_\_\_.
- e) The object Oskar cannot live without is \_\_\_\_\_.

### **17.4 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.

### 17.5 EXAMINATION ORIENTED QUESTIONS

1 How does Oskar use his childish appearance to his advantage?

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2 Why does Grass use a drum as Oskar's instrument instead of something else?

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3 Why do you think Oskar is so obsessed with his tin drum?

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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,



**GUNTER GRASS : *THE TIN DRUM***

**STRUCTURE**

- 18.1 Objectives**
- 18.2 Detailed Summary-Book 2**
- 18.3 Self-Assessment Questions**
- 18.4 Short Answer Questions**
- 18.5 Let Us Sum Up**
- 18.6 Examination Oriented Questions**
- 18.7 Answer Key**
- 18.8 Suggested Reading**

**18.1 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.

**18.2 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 Kurchen'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.

### **18.3 SELF-ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS**

- a) \_\_\_\_\_ is the building in which Jan Bronski dies defending.
- b) \_\_\_\_\_ words end Oskar's chant about the Black Cook.
- c) \_\_\_\_\_ is the object that Oskar makes sure to keep with him on the train ride from Danzig to Dusseldorf.
- d) The place where Oskar loved to be in his younger years is \_\_\_\_\_.
- e) The name of the musician Oskar befriends in Dusseldorf is \_\_\_\_\_.
- f) \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_ were the musicians who played in the attic of Oskar's building in Danzig.

### **18.4 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?

### **18.5 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.

## 18.6 EXAMINATION ORIENTED QUESTIONS

1 Explain the significance of the title *The Tin Drum*.

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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.

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## 18.7 ANSWER KEY

- |                           |                                   |
|---------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| a) The Polish Post Office | b) Ha! Ha! Ha!                    |
| c) Photo album            | d) under his grandmother's skirts |
| e) Klepp                  | f) Bach, Beethoven, and Brahms    |

## 18.8 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.

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**GUNTER GRASS : *THE TIN DRUM***

**STRUCTURE**

- 19.1 Objectives**
- 19.2 Detailed Summary-Book 3**
- 19.3 The Plot as Voyage and Return**
- 19.4 *The Tin Drum* as Remembrance of Second World War**
- 19.5 Self-Assessment Questions**
- 19.6 Short Answer Questions**
- 19.7 Let Us Sum Up**
- 19.8 Examination Oriented Questions**
- 19.9 Answer Key**
- 19.10 Suggested Reading**

**19.1 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.

**19.2 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 Schmuu 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 Schmuu's wife were almost unhurt - a few broken ribs - but Schmuu 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 Schmuu'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 blubbering 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 blubbing 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 Rosowitha. 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.

### **19.3 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.

#### **19.4 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.

### **19.5 SELF-ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS**

- a) The nightclub where Oskar and his jazz band play in Dusseldorf was called \_\_\_\_\_.
- b) Oskar and his Dusseldorf bandmate required to find a \_\_\_\_\_ before they could play
- c) Oskar eventually hits the big time as a solo drumming act due to the help of his old friend \_\_\_\_\_.
- d) According to his story, Oskar "intentionally" makes himself stop growing by \_\_\_\_\_.
- e) Who is Oskar's inspiration as a little person?
- f) After Alfred dies, Oskar grows by \_\_\_\_\_.
- g) \_\_\_\_\_ gets embarrassed by Oskar while on a date with him
- h) Oskar does \_\_\_\_\_ when people stare at him

### **19.6 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?

### **19.7 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.

## 19.8 EXAMINATION ORIENTED QUESTIONS

1. How does Oskar use his childish appearance to his advantage?

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2. What's the purpose of all the grotesque imagery in the novel?

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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.

### **19.9 ANSWER KEY**

- |                     |              |                     |
|---------------------|--------------|---------------------|
| a) The Onion Cellar | b) Guitarist | c) Bebra            |
| d) willing it       | e) Bebra     | f) More than a foot |
| g) Sister Gertrud   | h) Nothing   |                     |

### **19.10 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.

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## MIGUEL DE CERVANTES SAAVEDRA : *DON QUIXOTE*

### STRUCTURE

- 20.1 Objectives
- 20.2 Introduction
- 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 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*.

### 20.2 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*.

### 20.3 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 *Marquesa* 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 Sigismunda, 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.

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**MIGUEL DE CERVANTES SAAVEDRA : *DON QUIXOTE***

**STRUCTURE**

**22.1 Objectives**

**21.2 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**

**21.3 Self-Check Exercise**

**21.4 Answer Key to Self-Check Exercise**

**21.5 Suggested Reading**

## **21.1 OBJECTIVES**

The objectives of this lesson are to introduce the novel to the learners in detail and to critically evaluate the novel, *Don Quixote*

## **21.2 SUMMARY OF THE FIRST PART OF *DON QUXOTE***

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 in vain 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 she 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.

### **21.3 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.

#### **21.4 ANSWER-KEY TO SELF-CHECK EXERCISE**

- Ans.1 The Duke of Bejar.
- Ans.2 (d) helmet
- Ans.3 Chivalric
- Ans.4 Benengeli's
- Ans.5 A goatherd named Peter

#### **21.5 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.

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**MIGUEL DE CERVANTES SAAVEDRA : *DON QUIXOTE***

**STRUCTURE**

**22.1 Objectives**

**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**

**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**

**22.3 Self-Check Exercise**

**22.4 Answer-Key to Self-Check Exercise**

**22.5 Suggested Reading**

## 22.1 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 Rodriguez 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 Rodriguez'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 Rodríguez'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.



## 22.4 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

## **22.5 SUGGESTED READING**

- Presburg, Charles. Adventures in Paradox: Don Quixote and the Western Tradition. University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2001.

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**MIGUEL DE CERVANTES SAAVEDRA : *DON QUIXOTE***

**STRUCTURE**

- 23.1 Objectives
- 23.2 Characters in the Novel : *Don Quixote*
- 23.3 Major Themes, Motifs & Symbols in the Novel : *Don Quixote*
- 23.4 Multiple Choice Questions
- 23.5 Short-Answer Questions
- 23.6 Answer-Key To Multiple Choice Questions
- 23.7 Suggested Reading

**23.1 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.

**23.2 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 plays 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.

### **23.3 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.

## **23.4 MULTIPLE CHOICE QUESTIONS**

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.



**MIGUEL DE CERVANTES SAAVEDRA : *DON QUIXOTE***

**STRUCTURE**

- 24.1 Objectives
- 24.2 Explanation of the Important Quotations in the Novel : *Don Quixote*
- 24.3 Examination Oriented Questions
- 24.4 Multiple Choice Questions
- 24.5 Let Us Sum Up
- 24.6 Answer-Key to Multiple Choice Questions
- 24.7 Suggested Reading

**24.1 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.

**24.2 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.

### **24.3 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?

#### **24.4 MULTIPLE CHOICE QUESTIONS**

- 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

## **24.5 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.

## **24.6 ANSWER-KEY TO MULTIPLE CHOICE QUESTIONS**

Ans.1 (a) history

Ans.2 (b) scholar

Ans.3 (d) Sancho Panza

Ans.4 (a) Chrysostom

Ans.5 (c) Vivaldo

Ans.6 (a) Rocinante

Ans.7 (d) arrogant

Ans.8 (d) structure

Ans.9 (a) Don Quixote

Ans.10 (a) seven

Ans.11 (b) galley slaves

Ans.12 (c) Don Quixote

Ans.13 (a) Camilla

Ans.14 (d) Dorothea

Ans.15 (a) night

## **24.7 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.

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