



COURSE CODE: MAEGD 303

COURSE NAME: MODERN FICTION

**CENTRE FOR DISTANCE AND  
ONLINE EDUCATION  
TEZPUR UNIVERSITY**

**MASTER OF ARTS**

**ENGLISH  
BLOCK I**



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## MAEGD 303:MODERN FICTION

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# BLOCK I

MODULE I: JOSEPH CONRAD: *HEART OF DARKNESS*    UNIT 1: MODERN FICTION

UNIT 2: READING *HEART OF DARKNESS*

UNIT 3: CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF THE VARIOUS ASPECTS OF TEXT

MODULE II: JAMES JOYCE: *PORTRAIT OF THE ARTIST AS A YOUNG MAN*    UNIT 4: READING *PORTRAIT OF THE ARTIST AS A YOUNG MAN*

UNIT 5: CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF THE VARIOUS ASPECTS OF THE TEXT

MODULE III: D H LAWRENCE: *SONS AND LOVERS*    UNIT 6: READING *SONS AND LOVERS*

UNIT 7: CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF THE VARIOUS ASPECTS OF THE TEXT

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## COURSE INTRODUCTION

This is the concluding part of the two courses designed to introduce the learners to British fiction. This course deals with the seminal texts of representative novelists from the Modern Age to Contemporary. The learner is expected to articulate the major literary themes and concepts that appear in the prescribed texts as these relate to their wider social and cultural contexts.

For the convenience of the learners this course is divided into **Two Blocks**.

### INTRODUCTION: BLOCK I

**Block I** is consisted of Module I, II and III.

**MODULE I: Joseph Conrad: *Heart of Darkness*** has three units in it. ***Unit 1: Modern Fiction*** will give you an overview of the literary writings produced in the first half of the twentieth century. There will be discussion on the modernity and modernism. The primary focus of this unit will on the fictional writings of the modern age. ***Unit 2: Reading Heart of Darkness*** will introduce you with Joseph Conrad and his writing. The discussion will be on *Heart of Darkness* as a critical and significant text of the twentieth century and its place in the annals of English Literature. This unit will chiefly focus on the detail reading of the text. ***Unit 3: Critical analysis of the text*** addresses important issues of Conrad's time reflected in the text. Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* endeavours to explore different aspects of colonialism that came to surface at the end of the nineteenth century when European Imperialism fought with many questions and resistance. The darker side of imperialism found importance in the writings Conrad and E.M. Foster.

**MODULE II: James Joyce: *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*** discusses the novel in two units. ***Unit 4: Reading Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*** will introduce you to James Joyce's one of trend setting novels that drew the attention of its time for many aspects. In this unit a detail summery of the novel will be given to you which will enable you to learn the critical aspects of the novel in the next unit. ***Unit 5: Critical analysis of the text*** will enable you to know how James Joyce's major literary technique is to probe deep into psychological

insight and write in the manner in which thoughts and memory actually work in our minds. This unit will see *A Portrait* as one of the most discussed novels of modern times because of its non-linear narrative techniques.

**MODULE III: D H Lawrence: *Sons and Lovers*** will introduce you to D.H Lawrence whom Henry James, in one of his remarkable essays written in 1914, hailed Lawrence as one of the most promising young novelists. *Sons and Lovers* is undoubtedly one of his most significant contributions to the contemporary English fiction. ***Unit 6: Reading Sons and Lovers*** will give you a comprehensive idea about the story and characters of the novel along with the major works of Lawrence which will prepare you to learn more critical aspects to be discussed in the next unit. ***Unit 7: Critical analysis of the text*** will introduce you the complex relational pattern in the novel which places *Sons and Lovers* as one of the most modern novels of our time. The richness and complexity of the novel allow for a variety of approaches such as autobiographical, sociological, psychological and feminist. In this section there will be an attempt to deal with these aspects.

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## MODULE I: JOSEPH CONRAD: *HEART OF DARKNESS*

## ***UNIT I: MODERN FICTION***

### 1.0 Introduction

#### 1.1. Learning Objectives

#### 1.2.The Modern Period

##### 1.2.1. Modernism

##### 1.2.2. Modernist Movement

#### 1.3 Modern Writing

##### 1.3.1. Literature of the Modern Age

##### 1.3.2. The Novelists

##### 1.3.3. Modern novel and the Modern reader

#### 1.4 Narrative and Style

##### 1.4.1. Streams of Consciousness technique

#### 1.5 Summing Up

#### 1.6 Assessment Questions

#### 1.7 References and Recommended Readings

## ***1.0 INTRODUCTION***

Although the modern period starts with Queen Victoria's death in 1901 the preparations for alteration already began towards the end of nineteenth century. The final decades of the nineteenth century witnessed many movements which brought tremendous change into the society as well as its literature. The revolutions in science, political economy and psychology, educational reforms, women's changing position and nationalist movements had contributed immensely to the changing scenario which got expressed in the literature of the twentieth century. The Boer War in South Africa between 1899 and 1902 marked a crucial point of European Imperialism which also was a beginning of reactions

against the Empire. The technological advancements contributed in turning it into an era of change. World War I, also called the Great War had great impact on the society which got reflected in the art and literature of the age. It also brought uncertainty with the earlier faith of men shaken.

### LET US STOP AND THINK



defeated.

The Boers were the descendants of Dutch speaking settlers in Southern African during the eighteen century. The first Boer war was fought between the United Kingdom and South African Republic in 1880 where the British were

#### ***1.1. LEARNING OBJECTIVES***

In this unit you shall read about the literary writings produced in the first half of the twentieth century. There will be discussion on modernity and modernism. The unit will focus on the fictional writings of the modern age. The aim of this unit is to introduce you to twentieth century literature. After going through this unit you will:


- know about the modern age and the socio-political factors that influenced the literature of that age;
- be familiar with the important literary figures of that time and their significant contribution to literature;
- know the types and features that marked the literature of the twentieth century.

#### ***1.2.THE MODERN PERIOD***

##### **1.2.1.Modernism**

The term ‘modernism’ refers to the early decades of the twentieth century. It can be termed as a deliberate break away from the traditional bases of western art, culture and literature. The term ‘modern’, meaning the contemporary, varies

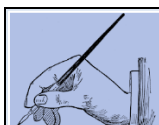
with time; the adjective ‘modernist’ is usually used to refer to the literature and other arts of the early twentieth century. Although the beginning of a modernist challenge started in the last decades of the nineteenth century ‘high modernism’ came after the First World War. A rapid and unprecedented change was witnessed in all fields which shook every aspect of the western civilization. However, the challenge was deliberate and radical as modernist thinkers questioned the certainties found in traditional values. Traditional values, religion, morality, etc. were questioned by the precursors of modernism. The catastrophe of the War brought a change in the attitude of the people. It was indeed an era of new outlook. New theories of human existence let stress and anxiety come which were reflected in the works of many modern writers. The complexities of modern condition were well expressed in the literature of that age. With the changing modes in culture and technology people’s attitude also changed. The modern experience no longer conformed to the accepted values and the writers came up with new but deliberate attempts at experimentations.

<b>CHECK YOUR PROGRESS</b>	
	<p>1. What is Modernism? Mention few features of Modernism.</p> <p>-----</p> <p>-----</p> <p>-----</p> <p>-----</p> <p>-----</p> <p>-----</p> <p>-----</p> <p>-----</p> <p>-----</p>

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### 1.2.2. Modernist Movements

Several movements in art and literature emerged in the last decades of the nineteenth century. The most prominent of them were Impressionism, Aestheticism, Decadence, Naturalism and Symbolism. All these movements were propagated by avant-garde literary figures. In fact, in the modern period the avant-garde came to prominence which overthrew the traditional ways. Literary innovations were widespread and the writers engaged themselves in such experimental writings. The Irish poet W. B. Yeats developed ideas on symbolism. It is symbolism rather than picturesque description that was believed to be needed for the sake of any subject that literature presents. It was indeed a new personification of idea that that left impression on the human mind. Modern poetry was introduced as a reaction against the romanticism of the early nineteenth century. T. S. Eliot's revolutionary ideas were accepted by modern poets like Yeats. The American poet Ezra Pound along with Hilda Doolittle and Richard Aldington started the movement called Imagism. According to Pound, an Image 'presents an intellectual and emotional complex in an instant of time'. The movement, as carried forward by Amy Lowell, focused on poetry that abandoned conventional limits and concentrated on the freedom to choose any subject and create a clear and hard image. Imagism, although restrictive, conferred a distinctive feature to modernist poetry and most of the twentieth century poets were influenced by it.



#### CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

1. What is Modernist Movement in Literature?

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### LET US STOP AND THINK



#### **The avant-garde:**

A small group of artists and authors attempted new methods. By violating the accepted conventions and properties not only of art but of social discourse, they set up to create ever-new artistic forms and styles to introduce hitherto neglected and sometimes forbidden subject matter. Frequently, avant-garde artists represent themselves as “alienated” from the established order, against which they assert their own autonomy; a prominent aim is to shock the sensibilities of the conventional reader and to challenge the norms and pieties of the dominant bourgeois culture.



### 1.3.MODERN WRITINGS

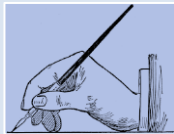
#### 1.3.1. Literature of the modern age

The modern period is marked by multiplicity of movements in art and literature. Innovations and experiments in subject matter, form and style were defining features of the literature of the age. The last decade of the nineteenth century produced the works of many writers whom we associate with modernism. Joseph Conrad and the Irish poet W. B. Yeats were the most prominent among those. The decade produced another Irish writer, the dramatist George Bernard Shaw who is now regarded as one of the most important playwrights of the twentieth century. The 1890s can be called a flourishing time for most genres of literature: poetry, drama, novels etc. short fiction and poetry continued to be the prominent literary genres. Katherine Mansfield's short stories earned the author an important place in the modernist experimental fiction. In poetry, both Yeats and T. S. Eliot were prominent figures. Yeats' Byzantium poems have much significance in modernist poetry. Eliot's *The Waste Land* (1922) is in many ways regarded as the anthem of the postwar generation. In the field of Literary Criticism too Eliot became an important figure of that time.

The novels of experiments too emerged as a popular genre. Some experimental works produced in this period are James Joyce's *Ulysses* (1922), and Virginia Woolf's *Jacob's Room* (1922) and *Mrs. Dalloway* (1925). The harsh realities of postwar world get reflected in the literary works. The chaos and futility of the contemporary life had immense impact on literature. The conventional narrative mode was subverted as the writers adopted different innovative modes of narration. The tone and method of literary works were such as to fit into the new world of crisis. Individuality and subjective narration became important features of modern literature.

Some important writers of this age are as follows:

- i. Poets: W. B. Yeats, Wilfred Owen, T. S. Eliot, Ezra Pound, W. H. Auden, Dylan Thomas, Seamus Heaney etc.
- ii. Novelists: Joseph Conrad, James Joyce, D. H. Lawrence, Dorothy Richardson, Virginia Woolf, E. M. Forster, Aldus Huxley, Graham Greene, Dorris Lessing, Nadine Gordimer etc.
- iii. Playwrights: George Bernard Shaw, Sean O'Casey, Samuel Beckett, Harold Pinter Tom Stoppard etc.
- iv. Critics: T. S. Eliot, I. A. Richards, Virginia Woolf, F. R. Leavis, William Empson etc.



### CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

1. What is 'novels of experiment'?

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2. How will you define Modernist Movement?

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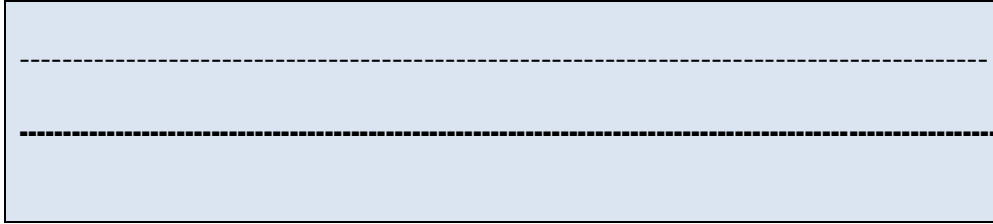
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### 1.3.2.The Novelists

The modern condition of the twentieth century saw a propensity to create new forms along with new modes of expression. The writers adopted new methods which were suited to the new condition marked by the anxiety and crisis brought by the War. Modern novelists not only denounced the certainties of the old beliefs but introduced new methods to explore the ethos of the postwar world. In order to realize new personal realities novelists of this period showed a personal and textual inwardness. An exploration of its character's interior life was attempted in the modernist novels. Joseph Conrad's 1901 novella, *Heart of Darkness*, James Joyce's *Ulysses* (1922), Virginia Woolf's *Jacob's Room* (1922) are pertinent examples of the inner strife of the characters. In fact, the modern movement in English fiction came with Joseph Conrad's writings. A revision of the conventional narrative modes is the writer's contribution to modern fiction. In his narratives Conrad offered the readers a participatory role. This tendency is farther carried on by Joyce and Woolf. Joyce's *Ulysses* is very frequently regarded as the most important novel of the modern period which in fact affirmed many characteristics of modernist novel. An exploration of the inner workings of the ordinary mind and then the mind's response to the then contemporary moment came to be considered two very important characteristics of modernist novel. Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway* (1925) and *To the Light House* (1927) are important to note in this regard. The complexities of modern experience and the responses of individuals' minds are well expressed in the novels. Similarly, E. M. Forster's *A Passage to India* (1924) and Elizabeth Bowen's *The Last September* (1929) present descriptions of the inner conflicts of different individuals. E. M. Forster

and Virginia Woolf were associated with an intellectual group called the Bloomsbury. Writers like D. H. Lawrence reworked on new structures. His *Sons and Lovers* (1913), *Women in Love* (1920) and *Lady Chatterley's Lover* (1928) clearly stand for his response to conventional ways. All these modern novelists showed an inclination towards doubt and skepticism. Partial, unsteady representation of things, and fragmentation became a key feature of the twentieth century literature.

	<b>CHECK YOUR PROGRESS</b>
1. What are the characteristics of modern novelists?	
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### 1.3.3.The modern novel and the modern reader

With the publication of Joyce's *Ulysses* the form of modern novel changed tremendously. It became a matter of much critical interest as it created a distinction between 'plain' and 'modern' reader. In her *The Modern Novel: Some*



## 1.5. NARRATIVE AND STYLE

### 1.5.1.Streams of Consciousness technique

The phrase ‘stream of consciousness’ was first used by the American philosopher and psychologist William James in his book *Principles of Psychology* (1890). James used this phrase to describe uninterrupted flow of perception, memories, thoughts and feelings inside the waking mind of an individual. In literature, it is adopted to describe a narrative technique in modern fiction. The technique was first used by the French writer Edouard Dujardin in *Les Lauriers sont coupés* in 1888. Later, Marcel Proust also used this narrative method in his serial novel known collectively as *A la recherche du temps perdu* (1913-27). Both the original French and its English translation retitled *Remembrance of Things Past* had tremendous impact on Britain.

Sometimes, ‘stream of consciousness’ is also called ‘interior monologue’ which denotes the flow of consciousness occurring inside the mind of a character. It’s a mode of narration that presents the flow of a character’s mental process. It involves the conscious and half-conscious thoughts, introspection, memories, feelings, expectations, etc. In the twentieth century many novelists adopted this mode of narration in their writings. Henry James uses this narrative mode in *A Portrait of a Lady*. Later on, James Joyce developed this narrative technique and his *Ulysses* is often regarded as the most pertinent example of this. Virginia Woolf adopts this method in many of her novels including *Mrs. Dalloway* and *To the Light House*. These novels attempted to represent the flux of thought and feelings inside a character’s mind and in doing so, they denounced the conventional descriptive method and adopted instead a unique narrative mode.



## 1.6. SUMMING UP

conventional structure. It was a time for change in perception and reception as well.



### 1.7 ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

2. How is the Modern novel different from the Victorian novel?
3. Discuss the important characteristics of twentieth century literature.
4. Write a note on the various Modernist movements.
5. Who were the precursors of modernism in English literature? Write a note on their contribution towards giving a new shape to the literature of that age.
6. Write on the narrative technique of Virginia Woolf and James Joyce.



### 1.8 REFERENCES AND RECOMMENDED READINGS

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## UNIT 2: READING *HEART OF DARKNESS*

### 2.0 Introduction

### 2.1 Learning Objectives

### 2.2 Joseph Conrad: Life and works

### 2.3 Reading *Heart of Darkness*

#### 2.3.1. The novella

### 2.4 Critical Understanding of the Chapters

#### 2.4.1 Chapter I

#### 2.4.2 Chapter II

#### 2.4.3 Chapter III

### 2.5 Summing up

### 2.6 Assessment Questions

### 2.7 Recommended Readings

## 2.0 INTRODUCTION

This unit will introduce you to Joseph Conrad and his writing. The focus will be on *Heart of Darkness* as a critical and significant text of the twentieth century and its place in the annals of English Literature. We shall have a critical study of each chapter. This will help you explore important aspects of the novella.

## 2.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

In this unit we will be reading the novella *Heart of Darkness* (1899) by Joseph Conrad. After having a brief note on the author and his writings we shall discuss the novella and some of its important aspects and themes. The aim of this unit is to familiarize you with Conrad and his writing so as to enable you to

have a critical understanding of the text. After going through this unit you will be able to:

- know about the life and works of an important writer of the twentieth century;
- know the significance of the novella, *Heart of Darkness* and its place in the English literary canon;
- explore the different facets of a text and make meanings out of that;
- have idea of the critical nature of any ambiguous piece of work;
- know about the use of techniques in the narrative and its importance in dealing with a subject.

## **2.2 JOSEPH CONRAD: LIFE AND WORKS**

One of the most significant and influential writers of the twentieth century, Joseph Conrad was born Józef Teodor Konrad Korzeniowski on 3 December, 1857 in Berdichev in the Ukraine to Polish parents. His father, Apollo Korzeniowski, besides being a poet, dramatist, translator, and political activist, was a true patriot. He was arrested and imprisoned in Warsaw for anti-Russian activity when Conrad was only four years old. In 1862, the family was exiled to Vologda, Northern Russia and the very next year Conrad's mother Ewelina Korzeniowski died of tuberculosis. In 1868, both father and son moved to Lwow and the following year Conrad's father faced the same fate as his wife and died of tuberculosis. Since then Conrad had been taken care of by his maternal uncle, Tadeusz Bobrowski. Because of ill health Conrad had been privately tutored and then had attended school for a few years although occasionally.

In 1873, Conrad visits some European countries such as Austria, Germany, Switzerland and Northern Italy with his tutor Adam Pulman. This may be regarded a marking point in Conrad's life as in the year that follows, he leaves for Marseilles to become a trainee seaman in the French Merchant Service. However, his first voyage, on the *Mont-Blanc* to Martinique, was as a passenger and then on

her next voyage he sailed as an apprentice. In July 1876, he again sailed to the Caribbean, as a steward on the *Saint-Antoine*. By this time, Conrad accumulated a heavy burden of gambling debt and in 1878 he tried to commit suicide by shooting himself in the chest, although unsuccessfully. The next two years saw Conrad working as an ordinary seaman and then working for the British Merchant Service. In 1880, Conrad passed the examination for the Second mate and between the years 1881-84 he was a Second mate in a few ships – Palestine, Riversdale and Narcissus. Conrad passed the examination for the First mate in 1884 and two years later he obtained his master's certificate. In the same year, Conrad became a British subject too. He served as Second mate and First mate in a few ships before becoming the master of the Otago in 1888. He also became the temporary captain of a river steamer called Roi des Belges in 1890. From the next year onwards Conrad's life took a slight turn as his literary career was about to start. He met writer John Galsworthy among the passengers in Torrens where he was a First mate. The year 1894 can be called a remarkable one in Conrad's life as in that very year three important events of his life took place: his first book was accepted for publication; his sea career ended; and in the same year, Conrad met Jessie George, a typist, whom he married two years later.

Conrad's literary career started in 1895 with the publication of *Almayer's Folly* under the pen name by which we know him today. His second novel *An Outcast of the Islands* appeared the very next year. It was also the year of his marriage. Both these early works got favourable critical responses which made the path smoother for Conrad to become a writer. In fact, after *Almayer's Folly*, almost every year Conrad published at least one of his works. During this time Conrad came to be in terms with many writers. He got acquainted with H. G. Wells and Henry James; became friends with writer and political figure R B Cunninghame Graham and Stephen Crane. Although by this time his sea life ended it was always on his mind as many of his works have plots based on the journey to the sea. Along with *Heart of Darkness* (1899), *The Nigger of*

'*Narcissus*' (1897) and *Lord Jim* (1900) fall into this category. Besides, they explore the ambiguity of morality and of human identity. All these three works have been acclaimed highly by readers and critics till date.

In 1898, his short story collection *Tales of Unrest* appeared, followed by *The Inheritors* (a collaborative piece of work) in 1901, *Youth: a Narrative; and Two Other Stories* in 1902, *Typhoon, and Other Stories* and *Romance* (collaborative work) in 1903. *Nostromo* was published in 1904. Beginning with his first novel, Conrad produced his works in rapid succession. In 1910, he suffered from a nervous breakdown. The works published during this time were, *The Mirror of the Sea* (1906), *The Secret Agent* (1907), *A Set of Six* (1908), *Under Western Eyes* (1911), *Some Reminiscences* (1912) and *'Twixt Land and Sea* (1912). In 1914, *Chance* was published which earned him great success both critically and financially. In fact, *Chance* can be called Conrad's first financial success. Conrad wrote till the last days of his death. His other works published before his death include *Within the Tides* (1915), *Victory* (1915), *The Shadow-Lines* (1917), *The Arrow of God*, (1919), *The Rescue* (1920), *Notes on Life and Letters* (1921), *The Rover* (1923) and *The Nature of a Crime* (1924). The last one was a collaborative work. In 1924, Conrad was offered Knighthood which he declined and in the same year he died of heart attack. Conrad's posthumously published works are, *Tales of Hearsay* (1925), *Suspense* (1925), *Last Essays* (1926), edited by Richard Curle and *The Sisters* (1928) which was published in fragments.

Conrad is regarded as one of the greatest writers of English literature. His influence on the later novelists is immense. It is the richness of the prose coupled with masterful innovative techniques that his readers admire their creator. Conrad used his personal experiences in his writings; particularly, those of his seafaring years became the backdrop for several of his works. Many of his characters were actual persons he had come across in his real life. Conrad's deep pessimistic view

of life is well reflected in his works and that endows them with a personal vision. He writes of man in extreme situations, their reaction, wickedness of mind, and the inner battle between the two opposing forces namely, the good and the evil.

List of Joseph Conrad's Works in chronological order:

- *Almayer's Folly* (1895)
- *An Outcast of the Islands* (1896)
- *The Nigger of 'Narcissus'* (1897)
- *Tales of Unrest* (1898)
- *Heart of Darkness* (1899)
- *Lord Jim* (1900)
- *The Inheritors* (in collaboration, 1901)
- *Youth: a Narrative; and Two Other Stories* (1902)
- *Typhoon, and Other Stories* (1903)
- *Romance* (in collaboration, 1903)
- *Nostromo* (1904)
- *The Mirror of the Sea* (1906)
- *The Secret Agent* (1907)
- *A Set of Six* (1908)
- *Under Western Eyes* (1911)
- *Some Reminiscences* (1912)
- *'Twixt Land and Sea* (1912)
- *Chance* (1914)
- *Within the Tides* (1915)
- *Victory* (1915)
- *The Shadow-Lines* (1917)
- *The Arrow of God*, (1919)
- *The Rescue* (1920)

- *Notes on Life and Letters* (1921)
- *The Rover* (1923)
- *The Nature of a Crime* (in collaboration, 1924)
- *Tales of Hearsay* (1925)
- *Suspense* (1925), *Last Essays* (Edited, 1926)
- *The Sisters* (in fragments, 1928)

## 2.3 READING HEART OF DARKNESS

### 2.3.1 The novella

Many of Conrad's novels are remarkable for the author's audacity and experimental technique and *Heart of Darkness* is one of them. Not only that it is a complex text but one having many layers and levels of reading and rereading. First published in *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* in 1899 as a series the novella got much critical acclaim in the following decades. It has been one of the most remarkable as well as influencing texts of the twentieth century. Nevertheless, it is indeed the most cogent and at the same time paradoxical text in the English literary canon. The novella tells us the story of Charlie Marlow's journey to the Congo and lays its stretches on the European expedition of imperial mission. With an enlightening view of the imperialist project *Heart of Darkness* unfurls many aspects of the heyday of Colonialism which aptly regard it as a political satire. Set in Leopold II's Congo Free State, the novella is based on Conrad's own journey into the Congo in 1890. It can be called an expression of Conrad's indignation that resulted out of his experience of the hypocrisy of European Colonialism. It has often been said that by 1914 the great European empires had control and sway over eighty-five percent of the rest of the world, which means that majority of the people of the non-European world had the experience of being ruled by a foreign power. At one point of time, the culture of

Europe that was energized by the high ideals of bringing the benefits of civilization, of science, technology, medicine, and education to the impoverished and “uncivilized barbarians” of the so-called third world, was also distinguished by its role in colonizing the people of the non-European world.

The plot of the novel is based on Conrad’s own voyage to the Congo in 1890. In his portrayal of Marlow one can find its creator as he too had been through similar experience during his journey up the river Congo. Conrad’s own encounters with several men who showed brutality get reflected in Marlow’s narrative. The most interesting aspect of the novella is the way that it accounts the horror story, the way Conrad dramatizes the whole story in order to show the dark truth. The grandeur associated with the civilizing mission has been debunked. Marlow, like many other Europeans and his creator had a passion for adventure but once he arrives in Congo he sees the brutality and barbaric nature of the European traders and agents and understands the dark side of imperialism as well as of the human mind. The whole of the Congo region was under Belgian control till the later part of the twentieth century. *Heart of Darkness* is set at the backdrop of King Leopold II’s iron rule and the explorations in Africa as well as the exploitations of African natives during his reign. Conrad’s novella indeed offers glimpses into the atrocities of the agents and the exploitation of the natives by them.

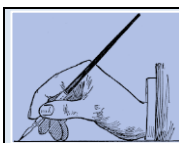
## ***2.4 CRITICAL UNDERSTANDING OF THE CHAPTERS***

### **2.4.1 Chapter I**

The book is divided into three parts describing three phases of Marlow’s journey. It begins on the deck of the ship, *Nellie* on the river Thames. We have an anonymous first person narrator with a group of British seamen. The narrator introduces the readers to Marlow, the Skipper of a river steamboat as well as the

narrator of the main story. As his story goes on the setting too shifts from the Thames to the Congo. The first part deals with Marlow's attempt to get engaged with the European Ivory Trading Company and his subsequent journey from the Outer Station to the Central Station. It is in the Central Station that for the first time he comes across the name of Kurtz, the chief of the station as well as the best of the Company's agents. The ambiguity is felt from the very beginning as Conrad alerts his readers of the terrible power of the African jungle before even Marlow sets foot on the region.

When Marlow visits the Company's office he describes the city (probably, Brussels) as the 'whited sepulcher' (p. 12) which is a biblical reference to something that is evil behind a mask. This apparently hints at the hypocrisy of the Company's enterprise there in the colonial domain perpetrated in the name of enlightenment and civilization. Marlow senses an ominous feeling in the air and feels that the people in the office were but guards of the door to darkness. The two women knitting black wool, the medical officer who enquired if Marlow ever had madness in his family become so intriguing underpinning the ominous air. In the Central Station Marlow comes across many of the Company's agents whose affairs he observes with a critical view. He finds the air conspiratorial and the attitude of people like the General Manager and the Brickmaker braces to this feeling. He saw people engaged in backbiting and indulging in a competition by plotting against each other. Everyone talks about Kurtz and his tremendous success in collecting huge amounts of ivory for the Company. Both the Manager and the Brickmaker feel that people like Kurtz are forestalling their progress. In their view Marlow was on the same track as Kurtz, endowed with all virtues.



### **CHECK YOUR PROGRESS**

1. Mention the significant happenings of Chapter I

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[illegible]

## 2.4.2 Chapter II

In the second part of the book, the setting is the Central Station where Marlow eventually comes to see the reality about the whole affair of the agents and of the enterprise at large. Marlow's introspection and philosophical observation fill this section. In fact, he is forced to critically observe and interpret his surrounding and the people around. The conversation between the Manager and the Brickmaker that Marlow comes to overhear makes it even clearer for him to understand the attitude and the intention of the people over there. They were both jealous and intimidated by Kurtz's success. They have the impression that like Kurtz, Marlow too has influence in Europe and hence will get promoted very soon. It reveals to Marlow how greed and jealousy were acting as driving force in shaping the wicked mind and nature of the Company agents. He saw that the people were in want of civilized virtues. Marlow becomes more vividly aware of the fragility of civilization and the moral and physical weakness of European men.

However, his portrayal of the natives is important as it gives contrasting views of them as well as of the imperialists. That the difference between the natives and the Europeans is a mere superficial idea is discernable from Marlow's portrayal of both. However, he is not altogether saying that the natives were as like as the Europeans although he disapproves the latter's treatment of the former. He sees humanity in the natives but at the same time he also feels that they are still in their primeval stage.

Kurtz's presence is very much felt in this part although he does not appear in person. Marlow as well as the readers gets fascinated towards Kurtz. There came news about Kurtz's falling sick and along with other agents Marlow journeys towards the Inner Station in search of Kurtz and deeper into the interiors of the jungle.

	<b>CHECK YOUR PROGRESS</b>
1. Find out few important happenings of Chapter II.	
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### **2.4.3 Chapter III**

The final part is the revelation of many intriguing affairs. In both part I and part II, Kurtz's shadowy figure is present; it is in the final part that his image becomes clear to Marlow and to the readers as well. At the inner Station the journey ends, as at the edge of it stands Kurtz, representing the diabolic nature of imperialism. The Russian harlequin that Marlow meets at the station tells him how great a man Kurtz is: "you don't talk with the man – you listen to him" (p. 62). Marlow himself sees Kurtz's stature amongst the natives who almost worshipped him. It is revealed that they attacked Marlow's steamboat because they did not want them to take Kurtz away. It is quite interesting again that the natives worship the man who has been brutal to them. Kurtz tells Marlow the method: to act like superhuman before the natives so that they feel the fascination.

The meeting of Kurtz and Marlow marks the climax of the story. Marlow not only comes across Kurtz in the end but sees his own reflection in the latter. He sees the darkness of human heart and the human's struggle in the darkness of his own mind. Throughout his journey Marlow sees the brutality, the exploitation of the natives and the irony lying in the mission of enlightenment project which make him realize not only the hypocrisy of imperialism but the darkness of truth as well. Nevertheless, his realization of the ambiguity of both colonial enterprise and of human mind helps in averting a fate like Kurtz for himself. Kurtz's burial is in a way a burial of Marlow too. What Marlow says regarding this is remarkable in this context: "And then they very nearly buried me" (p. 81). It was presumed that whoever went to the 'dark continent' was not expected to come back alive. The 'sepulcher' city too signifies that. In the Company's office, probably Marlow too was not expected as somebody who would show up at the place again. In the Central Station also the manager tells Marlow that whoever comes to the place should not have any entrails. In Marlow's case, however, this proves to be true as

we see the death of the self which was to come in future. His coming to face the dark reality and ugly truth augmented to the happening of this and it is Marlow who gets enlightened about many things regarding humanity and the human mind.



## CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

1. What important developments take place in Chapter III?

[illegible]

## 2.5 SUMMING UP

*Heart of Darkness* can be called the journey of its narrator's self. It explores the interior lives of its characters which apparently puts it into the category of a modernist novel. A critique of European imperialism, *Heart of Darkness* depicts the dark side of colonialism. The hypocrisy inherent in the Empire is highlighted. The uncertainties and vagueness problematizes the aspects

addressed in the novel. With its unique narrative style, the novel invites the readers to take part in the adventure of its central character.

Conrad addresses not only some important questions and issues of his time but presents them in such a way to make his novel one of the most significant fictional works of the early modern period. And think of the complex issues and questions stemming from the novel:

How is the culture of the natives affected by the culture of the colonizer?

How are the natives exploited, and what reparations are in order?

How open and broad-minded and enlightened are the people in power to the experience of the natives?

How difficult is it to think of oneself as a solid, stable and single entity when the colonizers would be consistently describing the 'other' as sub-human, subservient, irrational and uncivilized creatures?

Is it possible to argue for a common form of reasoning, of rationality and understanding when there are vast cultural differences between two groups of people, like the Africans and the English, the English and the Indians?

In which way the canon of "great literatures in English" have a bearing on the native non-British writers writing in English about experiences which are very different from the experiences of the English writers?

And just ponder over what Franz Fanon wrote in *The Wretched of the Earth*:

Europe is literally the creation of the Third World. The wealth which smothers is that which was stolen from the under-developed peoples. The ports of Holland, the docks of Bordeaux, and Liverpool were specialized in the Negro slave trade, and owe their renown to millions of deported slaves. (80)



## 2.6 ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

1. Discuss Joseph Conrad as a precursor of Modern Literature.
2. Discuss *Heart of Darkness* as a significant modernist novel.
3. What impression of British Colonialism do you get from your reading of the novel?
4. How does Marlow analyze the hypocrisy of British Imperialism?
5. Can *Heart of Darkness* be read as a critique of Imperialism?



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## **UNIT 3: CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF THE VARIOUS ASPECTS OF HEART OF DARKNESS**

### **UNIT STRUCTURE**

- 3.0 Introduction
- 3.1 Learning Objectives
- 3.2 Important Aspects in the novella
  - 3.2.1 “Darkness”
  - 3.2.2 Imperialism
  - 3.2.3 The narrative technique
- 3.4 Critical reception of *Heart of Darkness*
- 3.5 Summing Up
- 3.6 Assessment Questions
- 3.7 References and Recommended Readings

### **3.0 INTRODUCTION**

*Heart of Darkness* addresses important issues of Conrad’s time. As you have read in unit I, the end of the nineteenth century brought a twist to European Imperialism. The Empire faced questions and resistance. Questions were also raised by writers which could be seen in the works of Joseph Conrad and E. M. Forster. Conrad’s *Heart of Darkness* endeavours to explore different aspects of colonialism. Through his novella, Conrad throws light on the dark side of British colonialism with his emphasis on the evil nature of the colonialist’s mind. In unit II, you read about the hypocrisy of colonialists and also about their exploitative covert goals in the name of enlightenment. This unit will discuss these aspects in detail.

### **3.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES**

In this unit you shall read about the different aspects of the novella. The previous unit helped you to have critical understanding of the novella. This unit will discuss some of the important aspects like the themes, the narrative and the reception of the novella. After going through this unit, you shall be able to:

- critically analyze the important aspects of the text;
- understand the significant themes in the novella;
- understand the style and mode of the narrative;
- know the critical reception of the book.

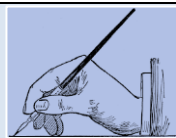
### **3.2 IMPORTANT ASPECTS IN THE NOVELLA**

#### **3.2.1 “Darkness” in *Heart of Darkness***

The title of the novella bears much significance as it denotes the ambiguity of the novel. Important to note that the book was first titled “The Heart of Darkness” and later on it was called “Heart of Darkness” thereby making the phrase much loaded and complex. It suggests a journey into the heart of the continent, i. e., ‘darkest Africa’ but at the same time it also peeps into the darkness of people’s mind. It unveils the darkness of Kurtz and of course of the Empire along with its mission of imperialism. The people that Marlow comes across throughout his journey till the end are viewed as the keepers of the gates to that darkness. In a way, this darkness is synonymous with evil and an ominous feeling is always associated with that and Marlow senses that at different phases of his journey. In fact, it is Marlow’s critical perception and sensitivity towards things that help the readers to sense that feeling. His calling the city of the Company office the ‘sepulcher city’ and then perceiving, first, the two women knitting black wool and then the Manager of the Central Station as the guards of ‘the door of Darkness’ (p. 13) invariably gives the feeling hinting at the ambiguity.



The very first utterance of Marlow is a significant one in this context. We are told by the unknown narrator, “And this also, said Marlow suddenly, has been one of the dark places of the earth.” (p. 7) Marlow’s calling the heart of the Thames as one of the dark places on earth is subversive of the familiar contrast between the Thames and the Congo, between Europe and Africa and between civilization and savagery. But perhaps there is this possibility that empires are “just robbery with violence, aggravated by murder on a grand scale.” It can also be suggesting about the darkness of the evil which dwells in human mind which Conrad endeavours to delve out in his novella. This diabolic nature of the same is well revealed in the final utterance of Kurtz, “The horror! The horror!” (p. 81)



### CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

1. What difference do you find between the first title of the novel ‘The Heart of Darkness’ and its later change to ‘Heart of Darkness’

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### **3.3.2. Imperialism in *Heart of Darkness***

The novella can be called a critique of European imperialism. It is an exploration of the different layers of colonialism with critical observation of the same. In the beginning itself Marlow clears his position regarding colonialism and the whole affair as he calls it ‘not a pretty thing’ (p. 9). His denial of the superiority of one race over another is sensed when he calls it just an idea. In the support of this standpoint the Roman invasion of Britain is recalled. What the British were doing in the name of enlightenment was just what was done by the Romans centuries back. In this way, the people belonging to one race who are considering others inferior was once also enlightened by another group of people belonging to a different and more superior race. The Thames too was dark and with the arrival of the Knights came the light.

It is indeed a strong position that Marlow takes before he goes on to other aspects of the whole affair and his own bit by bit, and experiences make him realize this fact about colonialism. Marlow observes the hollow nature of imperialism under the veneer of light and the wicked offspring of the project. He sees how imperialism gave birth to diseases like greed, jealousy, destructive competition, hypocrisy and conspiracy in the people as he sensed ‘an air of plotting’ (p. 29) about the Central Station. The General Manager and the long waiting Brickmaker show a good deal of rancor against Kurtz and also against Marlow as the successor of the former. In this way, imperialism brought the darkness out of the people’s mind and thereby stretched its own dark elements. At the same time, it is also conducive in the making of people like Kurtz. Marlow’s remark that “All Europe contributed to the making of Kurtz” (p. 58) is in fact a condemnation of this very nature of imperialism.

Kurtz was an apt emissary of imperialism who happened to be the best agent and was tremendously successful in collecting ivory but then he himself

comes under the clutches of darkness. He can be called not only standing for imperialism but himself turning to be a form of the project and claiming everything as belonging to himself. He struggles in the darkness of his own heart but realizes the horror of it. This is the reason why despite all his wickedness Marlow considers Kurtz a remarkable man. Conrad presents a subversive image of imperialism. Kurtz tells Marlow that a European “must necessarily appear to them (savages) in the nature of supernatural beings... with the might of a deity” (58). The portrait he drew about a woman bearing a torch too shows the irony inherent in the whole enterprise as the final words of his manuscript, ‘exterminate all the brutes’ (p. 59) speak the truth. In fact, Kurtz himself can be called a microcosm of the whole enterprise he was representing. Marlow heard Kurtz claiming everything as his own. It was quite astounding to Marlow to see how the great power of darkness engulfed the mind of such a remarkable man who had been the best agent of the Company.

Conrad not only reveals the hypocrisy of imperialism but the contrary nature of it as well. The base for this conquest of earth, i. e., colonialism, is debunked. While the European emissaries of light were engaged in “backbiting and intriguing against each other in a foolish kind of way” (29), the inhabitants of the dark region are seen to be otherwise. Marlow finds them ‘fine fellows’ who are ‘men one could work with’ (41). Although Conrad has been criticized for his portrayal of the black people yet it is well understood that his is a picture which depicts the contrary image of the natives. The hearts of the emissaries of light are dark whereas the literally dark people are doing well in their place. Marlow accentuates that they are not inhuman or cannibals who eat each other as colonialism projects them to be. In fact, they are people as human as any other European man although it was ‘ugly’ to have that thought and then to accept for imperialists like Marlow himself. His story overturns the enlightenment project of colonialism and in the end we see it is Marlow who gets enlightened about the

1. What features of Imperialism is do you see in *Heart of Darkness*?


[illegible]

### **3.3.3. The Narrative Technique of *Heart of Darkness***

The narrative of the novella is of much importance so far as its motive and ambiguous nature are concerned. We have an anonymous first person narrator and within his narrative we have another narrator, Marlow, who gives us an account of firsthand experience. It is a narrative within a narrative. Conrad's use of this frame story makes the narrative more interesting and the readers may wonder at his using this technique. Conrad could have made the anonymous narrator tell the whole story or could have just begun with Marlow telling his story straightaway but he did not. Instead, he creates a well-planned setting where he brings a group of British gentlemen whose ideas about imperialism were based on the superficial grandeur that the civilizing mission had offered and the anonymous narrator being one of them. Then Conrad brings Marlow to the scene who tells his story revealing to the others that their idea of imperialism was based on many lies.

Marlow himself had similar views like his shipmates before starting his journey to the interiors of the continent and he learns the dark truth about the people and their affairs. He encounters the reality and that overthrows his whole concept of civilization, of human nature and even of himself. By the end of the story we see the impact of Marlow's story as it brings significant changes into the attitude of the unknown narrator towards both European imperialism and the people who were standing for it. This is indeed a kind of demonstration that Conrad gives to make his readers realize the things that Marlow does. This ostensibly makes the role of Marlow instrumental in delivering Conrad's own note. He endeavors to show the difference or similarity between the victory and defeat, between Kurtz and the sham picture of imperialism through the voice of a character who has encountered the different facets of the great project of enlightening the dark region and who has a critical perception of both the bleaker and the brighter aspect of life.

Marlow's telling of the story can rather be called a monologue where the teller of the story is almost unaware of the expectation or interest of his listeners. While narrating his tale, he travels, observes, explores and critically reviews things that he comes across. However, there are breaks that remind the readers of the presence of the anonymous narrator and that Marlow is only another teller of a story within another story. According to Edward Said, Marlow himself has been dramatized. This implies Conrad's self-consciousness while dealing with the issue of imperialism: the self-effacement of the Polish expatriate who was an employee in the British imperial system. The narrative not only tells the story of British imperialism but also gives comments and creates viewpoints through a narrator who is other than any ordinary seaman. Marlow's philosophical nature not only discerns him from his fellow seamen but helps the author in offering critical observations of different happenings. Moreover, the timely shift in the narratorial voice helps the author in his dramatization of Marlow as the narrator and at the same time provides the readers a break to think and analyze the issues.


	<b>CHECK YOUR PROGRESS</b>
1. How many narrators are there in <i>Heart of Darkness</i> ? What purpose do they serve in the novel's narrative?	
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[illegible]

### 3.4 CRITICAL RECEPTION OF HEART OF DARKNESS

From the time of its publication Conrad's novella has got much critical response mainly for its pervasive cultural influence and political radicalism. As a twentieth century modernist text based on colonial expansion of the West *Heart of Darkness* has faced astute criticism by both postcolonial and feminist critics. The most notable among them is the Nigerian novelist and critic Chinua Achebe. In his lecture, "An Image of Africa", Achebe declares Conrad as a staunch supporter of racism and imperialism per se. He criticizes Conrad not only for not giving voice to Africa but for creating an image of the same as "the other world" which is but "an antithesis of Europe and therefore of civilization" (Achebe, 3). Achebe points out the narrator's wondering in discovering humanity in the natives who according to Marlow/Conrad are "rudimentary souls". He shows his wonders that such a racist text has been the most commonly prescribed novel in English literature courses worldwide.

Feminist critics like Nina Straus and Johanna Smith have declared *Heart of Darkness* as a sexist text. In the beginning of the narrative we see this attitude of Marlow towards the other sex. He could not believe himself for taking help of a woman to get a job. This becomes more apparent when he exclaims at the ignorance of his aunt and then generalizes this with a statement about woman's unawareness of truth. In fact, Marlow believes that the women live in a beautiful world created or rather imagined by themselves which is completely cut off from the real outside world. Interestingly, Marlow does not want to break this ignorance, rather he feels that the women should be kept out of the real world which is why he decides not to tell the truth to Kurtz's Intended. He says that truth about Kurtz 'would have been too dark' (p. 90) for the woman to hear. By lying to her Marlow actually decides a place of falsehood for all women. According to Smith, the narrative intends to "colonize" and "pacify" both savage darkness and women.

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS	
	<p>1. What is Chinua Achebe's criticism of Conrad regarding <i>Heart of Darkness</i>?</p> <p>-----</p> <p>-----</p> <p>-----</p> <p>-----</p> <p>-----</p> <p>-----</p> <p>-----</p> <p>-----</p> <p>-----</p>
<p>2. Why did Feminist critics find the novel a sexist text?</p>	




### 3.5 SUMMING UP

*Heart of Darkness* is indeed a very important and one of the greatest works of the twentieth century not only because of the themes the novella deals with but also because of its profundity. It has been offering critics and readers issues to think and study closely. It is not a simple journey into the sea but into the deeper recesses of the human mind. The book reveals the evils of people's mind and their affairs. In this way, *Heart of Darkness* is the exploration of the different layers of human mind and hence can be called a philosophical novel. The book has been interesting to readers with its astuteness and ambiguous nature and it is not inappropriate to say that the *Heart of Darkness* will always be a battleground of ideas and issues for its readers and critics.



### 3.6 ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

1. Comment on the ambiguous nature of the text.
1. What is the significance of the title of the novella?
2. How do Conrad's personal experiences get reflected in the plot of the novella?

3. Do you agree that *Heart of Darkness* is an indictment of European colonialism?
4. What image of Africa and its people do you get in Conrad's book?
5. What are the interesting aspects of the narrative technique used by Conrad? Critically comment on Marlow as a narrator and Conrad's use of the frame narrative.
6. What impression does the novella give you of racism and imperialism? Comment on the position of Marlow/Conrad regarding this.
7. Do you agree that *Heart of Darkness* can rather be called a philosophical novel? Justify your viewpoint.
8. Can *Heart of Darkness* be called a book ahead of its time?



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## **MODULE II: JAMES JOYCE'S A PORTRAIT OF THE ARTIST AS A YOUNG MAN**

## UNIT 4: READING A *PORTRAIT OF THE ARTIST AS A YOUNG MAN*

### UNIT STRUCTURE

- 4.0 Introduction
- 4.1 Learning Objectives
- 4.2 James Joyce: Life and Works
- 4.3 Brief summary of the Novel
- 4.4 Major Characters in the Novel
- 4.5 Summing Up
- 4.6 Assessment Question
- 4.7 References and Recommended Readings

### 4.0 INTRODUCTION

A *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* first appeared in serial form in a magazine named *The Egoist*. In a sense it can be said that it was this magazine which made Joyce a renowned novelist by publishing *A Portrait*, which, otherwise, would have faced rejection for its many explicit dealings with sexuality. Under the terms of the 1857 Obscene Publications Act, publishers and printers could be held legally responsible for the dissemination of ‘indecent’. Though *The Egoist* too faced problems due to this Act, *A Portrait* was published after considerable deletion of controversial portions and scenes.

In this unit you will be able to learn about this novel that was a trend setter in many aspects. Apart from giving you a briefing on the life and works of James Joyce, a detailed summary of the novel’s story will be presented here to help you later with a critical study of the novel in the next unit.

#### ***4.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES***

The unit is designed to provide you with some necessary details about the renowned modern English novelist, James Joyce and one of his distinguished works. After reading this unit you will be able to know about

- the life and works of James Joyce.
- a detailed summary of the text
- the major characters of the novel.

#### ***4.2 JAMES JOYCE: LIFE AND WORKS***

James Augustine Aloysius Joyce was born on February 2, 1882, in Dublin. He was the eldest of the ten children of the couple John Stanislaus Joyce and Mary Jane Murray. His was a middle class family. The father's family of Joyce originally hailed from Fermoy in Cork and they had small business of lime and salt. His father besides being involved in various livelihoods was once appointed as the tax collector by Dublin Corporation. Though his father could not do much progress in his work, he was conscious of his responsibility towards his son and tried his best to make arrangement for Joyce to get a good education.

James Joyce began his academic career at a Jesuit boarding school, Clongowes Wood College. Being a brilliant student with a sharp memory, musical aptitude and athletic potentiality he soon drew the attention of the faculty of the Clongowes. Simultaneously he had also some sort of health issues. When he was a child, he was once attacked by a dog which instilled in him a lifelong cynophobia. However, after studying there for some years, he had to abandon his studies at that school due to his father's inability to pay the fees. But in 1893 his father again managed to get him enrolled in an equally prestigious school called Belvedere College. In the new school also he continued to be quite an impressive student. His higher education was completed in the University College Dublin

where he basically pursued interest in myth and drama along with learning English, French and Italian.

Religious and political discussions seemed to be the part of their daily routine in Joyce's family. And this is the cause that his awareness regarding the political scenario of Ireland grew right from his childhood. Especially, Charles Steward Parnell, the leader of the Irish Nationalist party had a great influence on his family. Parnell's downfall as a result of his clash with the Catholic Church and his subsequent death enraged his father. In 1891 Joyce wrote a poem as a tribute to Parnell.

After leaving university, Joyce went to Paris to start a medical career and also to continue his writing. Though he thought of staying in Paris for a prolonged period, in 1903 he received a telegram from his father regarding his mother's serious illness. He had to return to Dublin. His mother was diagnosed with cancer and after a few months of his arrival she died.

In the very beginning of the year following the death of his mother, he completed the composition of a long autobiographical and satirical piece of writing entitled "A Portrait of the Artist" for the new literary journal, Dana. But this piece of writing was rejected by the editors of Dana because of its overt sexuality. However, Joyce had another plan in his mind that resulted in his development of the manuscript into the novel, Stephen Hero.

### LET US STOP AND THINK



So far as the autobiographical material is concerned A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man is mainly based on Joyce's earlier piece of creation, Stephen Hero. Joyce many times did the revision of the novel and each time came up with disappointment. He also gave the revised chapters to his brother Stanislaus to read. Later he also started to send the chapters to Ezra Pound. However, the novel was finally published posthumously in

1944. At the time he wrote the novel he was simultaneously writing verses that later were published as the anthology called Chamber Music.

Another important happening that occurred in his life during that point of time is of course his meeting with Nora Barnacle. Within a very short period of time he fell in love with her and she later became his wife. After the marriage, he and Nora left Ireland and went to Pula where he got a job in the Berlitz School. The couple was blessed with two children, Georgio and Lucia. Simultaneously, he continued to write and in 1914 his first book was published. The name of it was *Dubliners*, an anthology of fifteen short stories. It was followed by the publication of his novel, *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, in 1916.

During the time of his writing for *Dubliners*, he had also started to write his masterpiece, *Ulysses*. The plot of this highly acclaimed novel covers the events of only one day and this particular day is June 16, 1904. Most interestingly it was the day when he met Nora Barnacle for the first time. However, June 16 is named as Bloomsday after the central character Leopold Bloom in *Ulysses* and is celebrated in Dublin and around the world.

### **About Ulysses**

The story is about one single day in Dublin. And the story revolves around the experiences of the characters like Stephen Dedalus, Leopold Bloom, Molly Bloom and some others in their one day city life. But at the same time it is the playful recreation of Homer's *Odyssey*. Stephen is being compared with Telemachus in Homer's *Odyssey*, the son of Ulysses, the King of Ithaca. Leopold Bloom here replaces Ulysses. As in *Odyssey*, Ulysses after long time finally comes back to his virtuous and compassionate wife, Penelope, in the novel we see that Molly Bloom, who represents here Penelope, has that very afternoon an adulterous affair with her lover, Blazes Boylan.

The novel consists of eighteen chapters and has multiple-points-of view to describe the vision of day to day affairs, personal attitudes, political and cultural concerns and the like. Joyce here uses multiple literary styles with frequent use of symbols, allusions, archetypes, and pastiche. To the end of the novel, Joyce omits punctuation completely to give the sense of the real “stream” of thoughts of the characters. Numerous sentences and phrases are also used from various languages like Latin, German, French, Russian, Spanish, Italian etc. Ulysses in short is a highly experimental novel in the modernist tradition and indeed a complex reading.

While after a long struggle Ulysses finally got published, Joyce and his family were then living in Paris. During that time Joyce was having some serious health issues. The condition of his eyes was constantly deteriorating and he went through various surgeries. However, even in this most problematic condition, he never stopped his writing habit. In 1939, his another distinguished novel, Finnegans Wake was published. The book was an immediate success, though it was a much more difficult work than the previous one.

After the publication of Finnegans Wake Joyce’s family again had to move to the south of France ahead of Nazi invasion. He along with his family took asylum in Zurich where he finally died at the age of fifty eight after undergoing surgery for a perforated ulcer. He was buried in Fluntern Cemetery, the city’s most famous literary resident. A statue of the writer is placed at the top of the grave.

#### ***4.3 BRIEF SUMMARY OF THE NOVEL***

The novel comprises of five chapters which shows the five different phases of the protagonist’s life. When the story begins the protagonist, Stephan Dedalus is still a toddler. Right from the beginning we can see the masterly handling of the stream of consciousness technique. The novel opens with “once upon a time” which is supposed to be the beginning of children’s stories. However, as the narrative moves on, the protagonist is also growing. When he becomes a young



boy, he is admitted into a boarding school of Clongowes. He is clearly nervous in the new atmosphere of the school. Away from home and family, he feels somewhat alienated. The next important thing regarding the protagonist's personality at this phase is that he is a devout catholic who does his regular prayer out of sheer fear for the God. He interprets everything in terms of the catholic faith in which he has been brought up. When one of his seniors pushes him into a ditch and he falls ill because of the filthy water, he imagines how the boy will be sorry for his misdeeds when he dies.

On the Christmas holidays he comes home and eats with everybody in the dining table. They are having happy moments until his father and Charles Casey get into a heated debate with Dante on Charles Parnell. Parnell the Irish nationalist was condemned by the Catholic Church for his promiscuity. Being an ardent supporter of the church, Dante approves the church's decision while Casey and Simon get enraged. The debate is gradually becoming warmer as everybody takes it personally and finally ends with Dante leaving the place in great fury. On the other hand, Stephen, who has been present there throughout the whole debate, is left baffled. He is thus made conscious of the political and religious issues of Ireland though the consciousness is somewhat vague.

Another important incident that happens in the first chapter is that one day when the Latin class is going on, Father Dolan suddenly enters the classroom. Stephen is not writing anything since his glasses are broken. But Dolan has interpreted it as an excuse for not studying and flogs him in front of the whole class. Humiliated, Stephen decides to inform the rector of the incident. Though he hesitates at first but finally goes to the rector and explains everything in details. Hearing him the rector gives him assurance that he will talk to Dolan over it and also asks him to stay away from study until his new glasses come. When Stephen comes out of the rector's room, he is given a heroic welcome by his friends waiting outside the room. The incident though apparently a simple one instils confidence

in Stephen. He has learnt that he has to assert his right if needed. With this significant realisation by the protagonist ends the first chapter.

When we move to the second chapter, we see that Stephen has already entered his teenage. He gradually starts forgetting some childhood memories. He is entering a completely new world and he is quite conscious of it. As it happens with every teenager, he becomes more sensitive to things. His outlook is changing and his fantasies are now taking different courses. His imaginative faculty is also growing and results in his success as an essayist and actor. He is no longer a nervous youth as he used to be earlier. He is developing his own opinions regarding the world. The power of judgement is another side of his intellectual development. There is an episode where he argues with his friends regarding the superiority of Byron as poet. His friends regard Byron as a heretic and also bully him for not accepting their point. But Stephen till the end of the argument does not accept what he does not consider right.

The shift from childhood to adolescence is also emphasized by a physical shift from Clongowes to Belvedere. While travelling to Cork he realizes that his childhood is fading away and becoming distant from him. His new self is rising up from the memories of the childhood. Equally he also feels the growing pressure of the carnal desires. The concept of romance is no longer a mere romanticising of spiritual love for him. He comes to realise that body and mind cannot be separated; they go together. His urge for a sexual experience culminates in his sleeping with the prostitute at the end of the chapter.

In the beginning of the third chapter we find Stephen in an utterly confused state of mind. Going against the so called codes of morality he at first fails to adjust with the situation. With his sexual gratification comes a pricking of conscience. He is not yet altogether free from the catholic beliefs that have been once imposed on him. Meanwhile, the St. Francis Xavier's feast day approaches. During the days of retreat, he hears the terrifying sermons on the torments that the breakers of rules have to face in hell. The sermons exhilarate the innate fear in

him to such an extent that he finally confesses everything in a church. After the confession he is determined to start a new life of piety.

As we have seen in the third chapter, Stephen has come back to the church for salvation. His movements become restricted. In a way, he has almost become a slave to the rigorous catholic principles. Impressed by his religious fervour and dedication to studies, the Director of the school asks him to accept priesthood. The proposal was at first quite appealing to him. But later as he ponders over it deeply a sense of repulsion grows. As he goes on thinking more on it, some new realisations strike his mind. Real living does not lie in the catholic doctrine but in the sensual world. As a human being he is destined to make certain mistakes. The world of real living consists of many ups and downs, punishment and reward. If having physical relation is called 'sin', Stephen is now ready to sin again. He is bound "To live, to err, to fall, to triumph, to recreate life out of life" (pg.160). The image of the girl wading in the ocean is perhaps the symbol of his acceptance of the physical world. Equally, the proposal of his priesthood seems to be a trap for him. To assert his individuality he must escape from this trap.

As we reach the fifth chapter we see that Stephen becomes conscious of the trap Ireland is trying to set for him. His free spirit cannot flourish in this place. He is gradually becoming more confident about himself. One of the most important points in this last chapter is the development of his own aesthetic theory. His growing intellectual faculty unfolds before him new ideas regarding the concept of beauty. His sophisticated theory is drawn from Aristotle and Aquinas. This chapter in short shows the mental growth of an artist. Here we get some really intellectual ideas about static art and kinetic art. Through Stephen, we come to know about Joyce's definitions of the lyrical, the epical and the dramatic.

At the same time we notice his growing concern for the Irish identity. But he does not see any solution in political involvement. One thing has at least become clear to him that political victory cannot provide the nation with its real identity. A nation cannot live unless its conscience is alive. Therefore, it is his moral

obligation to kindle the conscience of his nation and he can do so only if he becomes an artist. At the same time he is aware of the fact that the atmosphere of Ireland does not suit the growth of an artistic mind. He therefore is bound to leave Ireland for the good of Ireland itself. And he does finally leave Ireland as it is symbolised by the flight of the birds that on the library steps Stephen so keenly observes above his head.



### CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

1. At the beginning of the novel, what does Stephen remember?

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2. What is Stephen's impression of Clongowes Wood College?

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2. What is the extent of Stephen's knowledge of Parnell?

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4 What offer did the Director of the school give to Stephen? What was Stephen's reaction to that?

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5. What is Stephen's understanding of his national identity as Irish?

#### **4.5 MAJOR CHARACTERS IN THE NOVEL**

##### **Stephen Dedalus**

Stephen is said to be the fictional projection of Joyce himself. He is the protagonist here and all the major happenings in the novel revolve around him. Extremely sensitive in his childhood he later grows to be a confident as well as independent young man. He is born into a catholic family. Though the family goes through financial crisis his concerned parents somehow manage to send him to prestigious schools and college.

His character is highly dynamic as throughout the novel he undergoes different transitions. First, when he has to suddenly come to the boarding school leaving the comfortable atmosphere of home, he feels alienated. At the boarding school he is introduced to a complex life of isolation, dominance and injustice. He is a little bit nervous and finds difficult to adjust himself with the unfamiliar atmosphere. At certain points he is indeed utterly confused. For instance, he cannot make it out whether he should confess or conceal the fact that his mother always kisses him before going to bed at night.

The Christmas morning argument at his home, on the other hand, exposes before him the tyranny of religious extremity and the futility of political activism. He has learnt from the heated argument between father and Dante that the adult

world is not at all flawless. At the same time the experience makes him realize that home is not a happy heaven. However, as he gradually grows up he comes to experience a more troublesome adolescent world. Along with other perplexities, he persistently feels the demand of the sexual urges. The feel of such urgency culminates in his sleeping with a Dublin prostitute.

The experience of sexuality makes him more restless. His mind has not yet been completely free from the grip of the Catholic doctrine. Moreover, Father Arnall's sermons on the Judgement Day make his fear and sense of guilt more intense. He first vows to live a life of piety and he soon realises that he is not made to be a saint. His decision to abandon the religious vocation immediately makes him feel free. From that moment onwards he vows to persuade all the pleasures of the natural world. Instead of religion, art has become his new devotion.

Thus, the transformation of Stephen continues throughout the novel and culminates in his refusal of the rigorous religious order. His belief in religion is replaced by the new devotion to the aesthetic beauty. At the end of the novel, setting himself free from the dominating grip of nation, religion and family he begins a new journey to the continent leaving Ireland in search of his soul of an artist.

### **Simon Dedalus**

Simon Dedalus whom you meet as the father of the protagonist is a sentimental Irish nationalist. Modelled after Joyce's own father, Simon is also during his lifetime involved in various livelihoods but has become a failure in everything he has tried. He is the stereotype of a failed father who keeps on giving certain cliché advice to his son. But at the same time we cannot deny it that he is a good man and a loving father. He is often nostalgic of his best days in past life and loves to live with these reminiscences. He does support the Irish Home Rule but is dissatisfied with the current political situation in Ireland.

Mary Dedalus

As you have already come to know she is the mother of Stephen. She has nothing to do with the political discussions that are often held at their house under the approval of her husband. Her life is dedicated to the service of her family. She seems to be overburdened with her household responsibilities and frequent childbirths. But she is very religious and equally forces Stephen to attend the religious duties. Besides she is also a peacemaker in her family.

### **Uncle Charles**

Charles is the uncle of Simon. During the summer Stephen has spent pleasant time as he takes long walks with him listening to him describing the history of both Ireland and the Dedalus family. He resides with the Dedalus family till his death.

### **Dante**

This governess of the Dedalus children is a devout Catholic. She values and teaches the children to value God and religion before everything. During the Christmas dinner, she goes into an argument with Simon and Charles regarding Charles Stewart Parnell. She denounces Parnell and finally asserts the superiority of the church.

### **Emma Clery**

Stephen has long been attracted to her over so many years. He feels too embarrassed to talk to her directly, but whenever he sees her he feels thrilled. She can be said to be the love of his life for whom he writes his first piece of poetry. To Stephen Emma serves as the perfect foil to the prostitutes that he visits. Emma is pure, distant and equally unapproachable while he holds the prostitute as impure, sensual and easily available. Emma is Stephen's inspiration and almost a muse.

### **Cranly**

He is a good friend of Stephen at the university to whom he can confide the turbulence of his mind. Cranly as a humanitarian fellow, however, is disturbed by Stephen's decision to embrace isolation in order to become an artist. He, therefore,

requests him to think twice before he leaves Ireland. He also encourages Stephen to go in the direction that his family has already chosen for him.

#### **4.6 SUMMING UP**

This unit tries to present a basic idea of the novel *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* discussed along with a biographical sketch of its author James Joyce and his other prominent writings. A knowledge of the other novels of Joyce will enable you to understand the style and technique of this modernist novelist. Critics see this novel as a story of Joyce himself, an autobiographical novel in that sense, Stephen Dedalus being a representation of the author himself. Another important aspect of the novel is the use of stream of consciousness as the narrative technique. After knowing the detailed plot and the characters we expect that you have prepared yourself well for the next unit where we shall critically see the themes, style, narrative technique etc. in relation to this novel.



#### **4.7 ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS**

1. Identify the three major happenings in chapter I that have special emotional impact on Stephen? How these incidents have brought changes in him?
2. Critically analyse the phases of the evolution of Stephen's non-conformist attitudes with reference to the particular episodes in the novel.
3. Enumerate the mental journey of Stephen Dedalus in the novel.
4. How does religion plays an important role in Stephen's intellectual formation? What was his ultimate understanding of religion?



#### **4.8 REFERENCES AND RECOMMENDED READINGS**

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e-book of *A Portrait* at <https://www.planetebook.com/free-ebooks/a-portrait-of-the-artist-as-a-young-man.pdf>

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## MODULE III: D.H LAWRENCE: SONS AND LOVERS

## **UNIT 5: CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF THE TEXT**

### **UNIT STRUCTURE**

- 5.0 Introduction
- 5.1 Learning Objective
- 5.2 Narrative Technique in the Novel
  - 5.2.1 Stream of Consciousness
  - 5.2.1 Epiphany
- 5.3 Themes of the Novel
- 5.4 Symbols and Imagery in the Novel
- 5.5 *A Portrait* as a Bildungsroman
- 5.6 Summing Up
- 5.7 Assessment Question
- 5.8 References and Recommended Readings

### **5.0 INTRODUCTION**

Writers of the early decades of the twentieth century stressed in exploring the inner lives of human psyche. Impressions and mental activities were transformed to meanings and thus, our private, inner lives are unfolded. James Joyce's major literary technique is to probe deep into psychological insight and write in the manner in which thoughts and memory actually work in our minds. More than actions, senses play pivotal in the characters' lives. In this unit we are going to discuss the critical aspects of this novel. As you are told already that *A Portrait* is one of the most discussed novels of modern times because of its non-linear narrative techniques.

But before touching upon the novel a brief note on the predicament of Ireland, its people and their tortuous history is called for to understand the novel through and through.

In 1155, Pope Adrian IV issued the papal bull *Laudabiliter* to give King Henry II the Pope's permission to intervene in Ireland to assist in the reform of the Irish Church and the Irish system of governance, to invade Ireland "for the correction of morals and the introduction of virtues,. The Pope believed that the Irish people were drifting away from their faith, and in fact, for the Irish, it was the first betrayal by the Christian Church.

It was not until 1166, when King Henry sent over Anglo-Norman soldiers in answer to Dermot MacMurrough, King of Leinster's request for help retaking his kingdom and soldiers invaded Ireland. It was the invasions of Henry the VIII and Elizabeth I that led to the end of the old Gaelic order in Ireland.

For the next seven hundred years the English ruled and ravaged the country : the Irish people were repressed ; their profitable wine trade with Spain was destroyed by greedy Englishmen who wished only the profits of transport and import of wine; and the rich forests of Ireland were ravaged by the English sovereigns . Henry VIII and Queen Elizabeth imposed on the Catholic peasants the land tithes to a Protestant Church they abhorred; they also gave away massive tracts of land to soldiers and courtiers who did not care to live in their acquired holdings. Later still, the Irish law was superceded by English common law; the absentee land lord, living in England began to extort the wealth of Ireland, and destroyed the land and the people; and the Gaelic language was systematically supplanted by English. Cromwell and other sovereigns later, in order to reward their loyal servants, transported the native Irish to Connaught, a stony region in the West of Ireland, and away from the fertile lands of the East and the North, by bringing trumped up charges of disloyalty. Under the penal laws of the eighteenth century, no priest could be trained or ordained in Ireland, no Catholic child could be educated unless he or she adjured the faith; no judge could be Catholic, and no Catholic could hold office. A man with children might be effectively stripped off his ownership to land if his eldest son is converted to the Protestant faith or

become a member of the Church of Ireland, established in communion with the Church of England; and by 1700s, the Catholics in Ireland had control over only 5% of the land of Ireland. The one established University of Ireland was barred to Catholics. Thus, disenfranchised and barred from education and all the necessary amenities of life because of English rule, the people were still faithful to the Catholic Church.

The Joyce family had links with the famous O'Connell family of Ireland having connections with the famous Irish nationalist Daniel O'Connell, "Liberator". The Joyce country in Ireland refers to the west of Ireland near Galway. When he was alive, John Joyce took pride in the family's noble descent, and a Joyce coat of arms had also been registered with the family motto, "Mors aut honorabilis vita" ("An honourable life or death".) But like all Catholics, the Joyces also could not escape the legal and cultural exclusion. Ireland had suffered under the Vikings and the Normans earlier in medieval times through invasions, and beginning with the Elizabethan times, successive waves of invasions, unrests and settlement by the British resulted in the emergence of an "Anglo-Irish" aristocracy that took control of much of land, business and religious affairs in Ireland and the gradual fall and marginalisation because of the "penal laws" introduced in the eighteenth century to restrict their social advancement, and cultural visibility. Even the Irish language spoken by the Joyce family was not encouraged by the British, and in spite of what little the Irish gained by the Emancipation Act of 1829, they believed and pinned their hopes on one final struggle for the establishment of a free and independent Irish nation.

When Joyce's father moved from Cork to Dublin he was considerably well-off, but gradually he lost his property and finally lost his job as a tax collector. John Joyce was a poor father who fathered eleven children of whom only six survived into adulthood, and James Joyce, born in 1882, was the eldest of the surviving children.

In 1888 he was sent to a boarding school at Clongowes Wood College, run by the influential Jesuit order, and unlike the experiences of his protagonist Stephen Daedalus, he had very warm and pleasant remembrances of his school. Even though he was too very young, during the two and half years he stayed in Clongowes Wood College political affairs of his country touched him immensely, as these filtered through the conversations of his parents with others. Charles Stewart Parnell, a Protestant landholder became a British MP representing Ireland in 1875, and along with Michael Davitt, a Fenian, and an Irish revolutionary founded the Catholic Land League to redistribute farmland, and headed a political group to fight for the causes of the people of Ireland in the British parliament. He became the leader of the Irish Home Rule movement to fight for a measure of self-government in Ireland, and was also very close to Prime Minister Gladstone to press for home rule for Ireland in the British parliament. All these were in the backdrop of the novel to agitate and trouble the mind of the young Stephen Daedalus who very much wanted a grip over his past and himself for steering him through the troubled times of his country.

### ***5.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES***

After reading this unit you will be able to learn

- the major narrative techniques of Joyce such as stream of consciousness and epiphany
- images and symbols that play significant role in the novel
- various themes that the reading of the novel unfolds

### ***5.2 NARRATIVE TECHNIQUE IN THE NOVEL***

#### **5.2.1 Stream of Consciousness**

Joyce is an experimentalist modernist writer who consciously breaks away with the traditional ways of writing. As it is seen as a popular trend among the

modernist writers, they are mainly interested in capturing the inner voice of the chief characters. In this novel too we can see that the narrative is entirely from the point of view of the protagonist Stephen Dedalus. Joyce here uses the stream of consciousness that befittingly supports in revealing Stephen's consciousness. We have already discussed about Stream of Consciousness in MEG-303 in relation to William Faulkner's *The Sound and the Fury*. We suggest you to refer to that for details.

### LET US STOP AND THINK



Stream of Consciousness: In simple words Stream of Consciousness can be defined as a mode of narrative that describes the happenings in the stream or flow of thoughts going on in the minds of the characters. This style involves the use of language in unconventional ways, imitating the complex pathways that human thoughts actually take while moving through the mind. Therefore, stream of consciousness is often non-linear as it makes use of unusual syntax and grammar as well as plot structure. Developed by a group of modernist writers at the beginning of the 20th century, this writing technique, in short, aims at giving the readers the impression of being inside the minds of the characters. James Joyce and Virginia Woolf are the two main practitioners of this technique in their novels.

In *A Portrait of an Artist as a Young Man*, the storyline basically revolves around the growing up of Stephen and his subsequent transformation into an artist. In this way the novel can be divided into three parts, Stephen's Childhood, Adolescence and Manhood

Joyce uses this most artistic and remarkable technique to follow Stephen's life from childhood through adolescence to the threshold of manhood. While

maturing through a conflicting family life and periods of education at Jesuit schools, he displays his resistance to family, religion, and his country. To overcome all these and to establish himself as an individual and an artist, he seeks a self-imposed exile in Paris. The readers are given direct access to the experiences of Stephen. We can see what Stephen sees and feel at any particular phase of his life. The author here does not take the pain to interpret these experiences for us.

The following passage of Stephen's contemplation of death would show us the remarkable use of the stream of consciousness technique. Stephen, who gets a fever and becomes unwell, fantasizes about the reactions of his kindred on his death

He wondered if he would die. You could die just the same on a sunny day. He might die before his mother came. Then he would have a dead mass in the chapel like the way the fellows had told him it was when Little had died. All the fellows would be at the mass, dressed in black, all with sad faces. Wells too would be in a cope of black and gold and there would be tall yellow candles on the altar ....and he would be buried in the little graveyard of the community off the main avenue of limes. And Wells would be sorry then. And the bell would toll slowly. (Portrait, p.22)

Joyce uses the stream of consciousness technique fully in the early stages of Stephen's life. This intensifies his silent attitude, and the nature of keeping his thoughts to himself when he disagrees something in all his interactions with the others. Stephen is portrayed as a kind of outsider, very much vulnerable and susceptible to ridicule by the bullies because of his frail size and social awkwardness. He is an extremely sensitive child and was very much of a nervous and fearful disposition. So, the stream of consciousness technique serves its purpose very effectively to unfold Stephen's mind.

Though Joyce uses the third person point of view, it remarkably differs from the traditional one. Events are not given in a chronological order. Another interesting thing is that the use of language has a close relation with Stephen's age. For instance, at the beginning of the novel, when Stephen happens to be a



toddler, the language used is also that of a toddler. But following passage written in a period when Stephen moves towards adolescence reflects his psychic maturity , and accordingly the language also changes :

“as he walks through Dublin, stray thoughts flicker through his mind like fishes, thoughts suggested by whatever business he is about, by things that catch his eye in the streets , by smells that assail his nostrils; and all the time , coming sometimes to consciousness through association with these sense-impressions”. (Ibid, p. 49)

In his essay, Gifford states that Stephen, as an adolescent, “is full of thoughts and feelings that he cannot articulate to others”. On the other hand, whether under the influence of William James, Henri Bergson or other psychological thinkers of the time, Joyce developed an idea that " the very essence of life and personality was to be found in these activities of the mind." (Walter, p. 344)

An omniscient narrator’s voice is present throughout the whole novel. We never get to peep inside other characters’ minds. Their voices are instead filtered through the voice of the protagonist. However, to the end of the novel we see major shifts in the narrative. In the concluding section of the book that is composed of Stephen’s diary entries, is narrated in the first person narrative. The shift has also importance in the thematic structure of the novel. For this is that section where Stephen comes out to be a complete individual taking control of his own life.

In a critical essay in *The Nineteenth Century Novel*, Northrop Frye states that “one of the most important things that had made this novel a very remarkable one is the revelation of character and incident through the searching use of the stream of consciousness technique. The author jumps into Stephen's mind to follow his stream of consciousness, and out again to describe it externally” (p.35). If it is so, we can say that Joyce travels freely in Stephen's mind in an attempt to find suitable answer for his contemplations on independence, freedom and

aesthetics. “The artist, like the God of creation, remains within or behind or beyond or above his handiwork, invisible, refined out of existence, indifferent, paring his finger-nails. (Ibid, p. 215) and this completes Stephens maturity of thought or the journey of the mind.



## CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

1. Jot down the salient features of the Stream of Consciousness Technique

[illegible]

### 5.2.2 Epiphany

Epiphany originally is used in a religious sense to celebrate the recognition of Divinity in the Christ Child which is known as the ‘Feast of Epiphany’. In other words, it sees the presence of God or spirituality in all objects of this world, even in the most ordinary one. M. H Abrams says:

Epiphany means ‘a manifestation’ or ‘showing forth’ and by Christian thinkers was used to signify a manifestation of God’s presence within the created

world.... James Joyce adopted the term to secular experience, to signify the experience of a sudden radiance and revelation that occurs in the act of perceiving a commonplace object...Epiphany has become the standard term for the description, recurrent in modern poetry and prose fiction, of the sudden flare into revelation of an ordinary object or scene. (Abrams, 85)

Earlier authors like Shelly, Wordsworth and many more called it the “moment”. Wordsworth, for example, in *Prelude* says that the ‘moment’ was for him that when he passed over the ‘threshold’ of London and the trivial looking streets, pavements and houses suddenly took a profound and significant dimension.

In *A Portrait* it is said that

“By an epiphany [Stephen] meant a sudden spiritual manifestation. Its soul, its wantness, leaps to us from the vestment of its appearance. The soul of the commonest object ... seems to us radiant. The object achieves its epiphany”.

Joyce amply uses this technique to bring the spiritual growth to his protagonist Stephen Dedalus. It becomes a unifying device that provides internal consistency to Stephen Dedalus’s character and the novel’s structure. Stephen’s spiritual manifestation and his aesthetic satisfaction are presented through the epiphanies which is a sudden revelation of the inner truth by paralleling a visual moment. The physical as well as mental journey of Stephen from childhood till maturity of becoming an artist is a process that needs more than external manifestations. The inflow of Stephen’s consciousness and its changing patterns are skilfully depicted through a balanced combination of stream of consciousness and epiphany.

The epiphany is found in Chapter I when Stephen was sixteen years old and was in the boarding school. He went to the priest to confess his personal guilt and the priest’s kindness gave him a sudden turn in his life. The moment inspires Stephen to be a priest.

Stephen's conflicting status of to be or not to be in his process of becoming a priest takes another turn when one day he sees boys and girls in the beach enjoying and living full life. The conflict of Stephen to live in this world and becoming an artist by knowing and living it, is marked by this sudden beach 'moment' or epiphany. Most complex of this use is found in the last chapter when Stephen comes upon the Christian Brothers who are marching across. Joyce accompanies this physical crossing with a spiritual birth, as Stephen hears his soul call him, expressed as well with the metaphor of phoenix-like rebirth as he sees his soul arise from the grave. Thus, there are many other epiphanies which contribute to a certainty in developing Stephen and his journey to an artist. Such as 'tower of ivory', 'house of gold', 'fetus' etc. are a few more examples.

The effectiveness of the epiphanies is enhanced by their often unexpected placement or the stimulus for them. For example, Stephen's sexual initiation with a prostitute does not spark a radical change in self-knowledge. But his discovery of the carved word "Foetus" carved in a desk does prompt a revelation about his commonality with other boys. But this can fairly be said that epiphany serves the purpose of experiencing both the world of Stephen and Joyce as an artist simultaneously.

### ***5.3 THEMES OF THE NOVEL***

#### **Spirituality and Sensuality**

The rigorous religious teaching that were imposed on Stephen right from his early childhood made him feel a huge gap between the soul and the body. Superiority of the soul over body is so deep- rooted in the mind of adolescent Stephen that he has no courage to think about bodily pleasure. But at the same time, he is well aware of his growing physical need. He became torn between the elevation of the soul and the gratification of his carnal desire. Sex before marriage

is considered a sin. Therefore, after having physical relation with the prostitute, he suffers a serious bout of conscience.

But as he has grown up he rethinks over the mind-body spilt. The realisation has occurred to him that mind and body are not two opposite poles. Rather they are inseparable from each other. The mind and the body, in other words go together. He remains no longer hesitant of expressing his bodily desires. Equally his spiritual development also takes place that in turn kindles his artistic ambitions. The reunion of soul and body restores his self-confidence and makes him a complete human being. His artistic self is the result of a fine blend of mind and soul.

### **Growth of Individuality**

Using the stream of consciousness technique, Joyce in this novel allow the readers to have direct access to the thoughts and sentiments that are going on in the minds of the characters. His characters are talking for themselves while the author places the role of a detached observer. The technique is most exploited by Joyce to mainly show the development of Stephen's mind. When the novel begins, Stephen is still a very young child and he is capable of delivering his thoughts in simple words as reflected by the use of child's language. But when he becomes a teenager and is obsessed with religious thinking, he can now think in clear and comparatively matured manner. We can feel the change in the use of language as well. Thoughts have become more logically arranged than they were in the opening section of the book. The mind of the protagonist is gradually becoming matured and he becomes conscious of the surroundings. However, he is still not altogether free from the clutch of the church. His strong sense of guilt and religious ecstasy still dominate his rational thinking. Only to the end of the novel that we get a portrait of the mind of the protagonist that has achieved intellectual and artistic maturity. Thus, we can see that the growth of individual consciousness does not happen in a single day. Rather it involves a long process.

## **Religion**

Religion plays a major role in the development of the story of the novel. In this novel we can see how the constraints imposed by religion can hamper the intellectual growth of the human mind. The young Stephen was a devout catholic. His outlook is given shape by the religious teachings in which he has been brought up and educated. He cannot act freely as the religious system is no less than surveillance for him. His movements are restricted. He felt a kind of confinement. As he grows older, he starts feeling that he cannot live his life to the fullest as long as he is trapped by and in a religious confinement. Thus, we finally see that he discards the religious teaching and decides to be an artist who will live a freer life.

Nationalism: Though we don't see any serious political upheaval in terms of nationalism, we are conscious of its undercurrent in the novel. Stephen does want to involve himself in any kind of active politics. But at the back of his mind there is always the question of the identity of Ireland in the world. From his conversation with the dean of studies the thing becomes clear that he is deeply disturbed by the fact that Ireland ultimately allows the outsiders to rule her. He feels that even the English language that the Irish people use correctly belong to the English. Stephen decides to set himself free from the so called Irish heritage because only then he will be able to create something new with which he can claim the autonomy of Ireland. Thus, in this novel we do not see any sentimentality in terms of extreme nationalism. Rather by nationalism the novel suggests the rise of the collective conscience of the people.

## **The Role of the Artist**

The final decision of the protagonist in this novel is to leave his family and his native land and to go into an exile to become an artist. This self-imposed exile sets the artist as an isolated being. He is different from the people that surround him. While taking the decision to go away leaving everything behind him, he technically breaks the ties that he shares with his family, community, nation and religion. But at the same time we should not forget that he leaves

everything not out of hatred but out of some responsibility. His ultimate goal is to bring something valuable back to the same nation that he is now leaving behind. He never discards the fact that his own identity is shaped out of the identity of his own community. His writings do not convey only his ideas but the collective ideas of his community as well. Thus, he sees writing as a noble service to his community though he rejects the traditional form of membership in a community



### CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

1. How does Stephen attain maturity of his understanding of body and mind?

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2. What important role does religion play in Stephen's life?

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2. What was the reason of Stephen's self-imposed exile? Does the decision help him in meeting his goal?

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#### **5.4 SYMBOLS AND IMAGERY IN THE NOVEL**

Use of rich imagery is of course a major stylistic feature of this novel. As the novel opens, we notice the obvious use of some dichotomous images like hot/cold, wet/dry, light/dark etc. which in turn give us an idea about the forces that are going to have impact on his future life. For instance, the wet/dry imagery can be interpreted as symbolic of Stephen's natural response/learned response to the outside world. When he is a child, he learns that any expression of the natural instinct is considered bad just as the wet bed clothes are replaced by "oil-sheet". Later, we see a reversal of this learning. When he crosses the bridge over Tolka River, he leaves behind him the "withered" heart along with the relics of his Catholicism. He has the vision of a young girl whom he describes as a young bird and who is looking at him from the sea. The vision encourages Stephen to take the final decision of becoming an artist.

Hot/cold imagery is another important imagery used in this novel. For Stephen hot stands for physical comfort and pleasure while cold is symbolic of discipline, and chastity. He finds pleasure in his mother's warm lap. Equally, he is given a heated embrace by the Dublin prostitute. In contrast to all these, the "cold" water of the ditch to which he is pushed initiates him to the cruelty of the real world.

Similarly, in the light/dark dichotomy, light is a symbol of knowledge and dark symbolises ignorance. Stephen's broken glasses are an illustrious example of this imagery. Without the glasses, he is literally blind. He cannot learn. And he is unjustly punished for his inability to learn. At the same time the incident shows him the dark cruelty of the clergy. Later, when he visits the brothel, it is in the dark streets of the district. You can also see the darkness lies within his heart when he wilfully chooses the path of sin. Another example of this imagery is symbolised by his philosophical discussion about the lamp with the Dean of Studies. The



discussion reveals the intellectual blindness of the cleric and illumination of Stephen's aesthetic thoughts.

Apart from the use of imageries, the novel is also replete with the use of various symbols which are interwoven with the thematic structure of the novel. Some of these are discussed below:

### **Music**

Music symbolises here the intuitive loveliness of certain experiences of the protagonist. Stephen is sensitive to every sound, be it from the gas pipes at Clongowes or the wheels of the train or still the words in the poems. Music at the same time is the symbol of the transition as well as discovery. A piece of melody makes Stephen realise that his life is not meant to be dedicated to religion. It reminds him of his artistic ambitions which prevent him from accepting priesthood.

### **Emma**

Emma in the novel is a character and a symbol at the same time. Stephen never gets to know her personally. She is rather in his mind most of the time. She is drawn as the symbol of Stephen's spiritual love that he can never really achieve. When he is in his devoutly religious phase, he considers Emma as a muse whom he worships. He even thinks of his reunion with Emma in heaven as a reward of his piety. But when he was in the university, we see him having a real conversation with Emma. By then he has overcome the controlling grip of religion in his life. He has developed his own view regarding the world. Emma is no longer a goddess for him. She is an ordinary girl of flesh and blood who is friendly and quite real.

### **Colours**

Use of colour plays indeed an important role in the novel. Colours indicate the political and religious forces that have impact on Stephen's life. For instance, Dante has two brushes: one is green and the other is maroon. She associates them with Parnell and Michael Davitt respectively and later, cuts the green colour off telling Stephen that Parnell is not good. The two colours thus become a symbol of

conflict for Stephen. Later, when Fleming colours a world map with green and maroon, it creates confusion for Stephen. He wonders what is wrong and what is right or which colour he should choose. Another important reference to colour is definitely Stephen's wish to have a "green rose" in place of a white or red one which is surely indicative of Stephen's creative and artistic nature.

### **Birds and flight**

The association of flight with Stephen's experience is drawn from his affiliation with his namesake Daedalus. Daedalus was well known for his skill of creating wings of feather and wax. Stephen foresees his flying on metaphorical wings of his own construction. Just like Daedalus, he too must fly to escape from the trap laid by Ireland and Catholicism. The mention of the bird flight at the end of the chapter ensures his freedom from the bondage of religion and Ireland.

## **5.5 A PORTRAIT AS A BILDUNGSROMAN**

You may probably know that a bildungsroman is the novel that deals with the protagonist's formative years. In other words, you can say that this sort of novel captures the protagonist's journey from innocence to experience. This particular novel also begins when the protagonist is just a toddler. You feel like hearing to a child when the novel opens. And as you go on reading further you can realise bit by bit the transition from one phase to another phase of the protagonist's life. The language used in the novel reflects the intellectual growth and transition of a nervous child Stephen to a confident young adult. The younger Stephen when he is still a student of the Jesuit school is very meek and a devout catholic. As the story moves on we see his confusions regarding the relevance of the rigorous catholic teaching in actual living and finally his rebellion against the constraints set by the religion. To the end of the novel we thus meet a complete individual who is on the verge of being an artist. This three rough divisions of childhood, adolescence and manhood of Stephen and the psychic development in each of the stages is very significantly depicted by the use of language which,

grows from fantasy to intense feelings on a mortal plane. The growth of the person inside is revealed through a significant growth of language and style in the novel. Specially, the language and the intensive use of the stream of consciousness, all are developed gradually to reflect the increasing impacts of the protagonist reactions, memories, reflections and ideas throughout the three main phases of his growth. The tone is considerably changed in order to focus more exclusively on the perspective of Stephen. Joyce changes his style by intensifying dialogue - scenes which reflect Stephen's growth as well as his alienation from society.

### **5.6 SUMMING UP**

From the above discussion you have built an in-depth idea about the novel as well as about the nature of Joyce's writing style. All the details mentioned in the unit have definitely helped you to know why and how James Joyce stands unique among the other modern novelists. You should now try to make a more extended reading of the novel in the light of various theoretical studies. A reading of the complete text will enable you to go to the depth of these issues.



### **5.7 ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS**

1. Critically examine Stephen relationship with both real and imagined women in his life? What psychology of Stephen does this reflect?
2. Critically assess the place of the women characters in the novel? Are they given the same space like their male counterparts or they are marginalised?
3. Discuss the influence of his friends in Stephen's life. Substantiate your answers with specific references to the text.
4. Do you think Stephen, as an artist is different from the people that surround him? If yes, how do you differentiate him? Explain.
5. How is sexuality portrayed in the novel?

6. Why does James Joyce use the technique of epiphany in *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*?

7. Is *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* a stream of consciousness novel? Discuss Joyce's use of stream of consciousness technique in the novel.



### 5.8 REFERENCES AND RECOMMENDED READINGS

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## **UNIT 6: READING SONS AND LOVERS**

### **UNIT STRUCTURE**

- 6.0 Introduction
- 6.1 Learning Objectives
- 6.2 D.H. Lawrence: Life and Works
- 6.3 Reading the novel *Sons and Lovers*
- 6.4 Major Characters
- 6.5 Summing Up
- 6.6 Assessment Questions
- 6.7 References and Recommended Readings

### **6.0 INTRODUCTION**

The publication of *Sons and Lovers* in 1913 marks the beginning of Lawrence's highly successful career as a novelist. Though not his finest work – *Women in Love* – is accorded that honour – *Sons and Lovers* is undoubtedly one of his most significant contributions to contemporary English fiction. That is why Henry James, in one of his remarkable essays reading the novel written in 1914, hailed Lawrence as one of the most promising young novelists.

### **6.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES**

This unit deals with D.H. Lawrence's famous early novel *Sons and Lovers*, a novel of great autobiographical significance. After going through the unit you will learn about

- Lawrence's life and works
- a detailed chapter-wise summary of the novel
- the various characters and their complex relationships

## 6.2 D.H. LAWRENCE: LIFE AND WORKS

David Herbert Lawrence was born on September 11, 1885 in a small town called Eastwood near Nottingham. Fourth son of a working class father John Arthur Lawrence, a coal miner, and Lydia Beardsall, his mother who was from a respectable lower middle class family, Lawrence was brought up in the coal mining part of industrial England. His mother wanted him not to follow his father's profession as a miner but pursue education to get out of the degrading environment of working class life. Frail in health, he possessed a sharp intellect and at thirteen he won a scholarship to enter Nottingham High School from where he went on to work as a pupil-teacher at the British School of Eastwood and then joined Nottingham University College. In his early life he met a girl named Jessie Chambers who lived at Haggs Farm near Eastwood. His friendship and emotional bond with Jessie clashed with his mother's excessive love for him, as a result of which he rejected Jessie and devoted himself to attending to his ailing mother. In 1912 Lawrence met Frieda, wife of Professor Ernest Weekly, and instantly fell in love with her and married her in 1914. From this point onwards the Lawrences embraced a life of wanderings. Having led the life of a rootless wanderer, he died in France on 22 May, 1930.

Lawrence was a prolific writer having produced forty volumes of novels, short stories, poetry, drama and essays, treatises and travel-writing. His first novel, *The White Peacock* (1911) was written when he was just sixteen. It was quickly followed by *The Trespasser* (1911) and *Sons and Lovers* (1913). The latter at once placed him in the rank of the promising young novelists of the first decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. *The Rainbow* was published in 1915, a novel that raised much controversy in the highly conservative England. *Women in Love* was published in 1920 and it is acclaimed as his greatest novel written as a sequel to *The Rainbow*. His second travel book *Sea and Sardinia* was published in the same year. The

semi-autobiographical novel with English and Italian background was *Aaron's Rod* (1922), followed by *Kangaroo* (1923), a novel resulting from his experiences of the World War I and his subsequent visit to Australia. It comes closest to the "Discussion-novel", Lawrence's most controversial novel and according to the critics his weakest, *Lady Chatterley's Lover* was published in 1929 in Florence but was banned in England on the grounds of obscenity. Lawrence's lost masterpiece was *The Man Who Died* (1930).

Primarily known for his novels, Lawrence's prolific literary career includes significant contribution to modern English poetry and to the genre of essay, memoir and travelogue. *Phoenix: The Posthumous Papers of D.H. Lawrence* (1936) contains essays, reviews, introductions, sketches and articles that had remained unpublished since Lawrence's death. *Phoenix II* (1968) is a collection of unpublished stories and essays.

### 6.3 READING THE NOVEL SONS AND LOVERS

#### PART ONE

#### Chapter 1 – The Early Married Life of the Morels

In the very beginning of the first chapter of the novel, Lawrence gives a description of the coal mines and how coal mining had changed from the time of Charles II to the coming of the Carston, Waite and Co when mining was done in an organised manner. Hell Row, the settlement of the miners was replaced by The Bottoms, where people spent most of their time in the kitchens that overlooked the ash pits. Mrs. Morel occupied one of the end houses in The Bottoms, paying extra rent and keeping herself aloof from the other women. She was thirty one years old and expecting her third baby. There was a fair and the two children were excited. William, the elder child demanded early dinner so that he could visit the fair. Mrs. Morel goes to the fair and William feels proud to have his mother with him. Mrs. Morel belonged to a respectable burgher family. She met Morel when



she was twenty three at a Christmas party. Morel was twenty-seven and was opposite to Mrs. Morel in every respect. His profession as a miner made him noble in her eyes and they were happily married for six months. However, the seventh month of their marriage revealed the duplicity of her husband and Mrs. Morel's heart hardened towards her husband. She was very sick when her first child was born but he was her pride and joy. One afternoon Mr Morel cut the curls of baby William and a quarrel ensued. Morel began to drink more and his wages fell. One night when Morel came home after a drinking spree and Mrs. Morel accused him of "drunkenness" and of being a "lair", he shut her out of the house. In the first chapter the strain in the relationship of Mr and Mrs. Morel is depicted. The readers are also told about the background of Mrs. Morel and the difference in the background is one of major conflict issues. The section where Mrs. Morel spends the night in the garden inhaling the fragrance of the flowers in the moonlight is replete with symbolic significance and offers us an insight into her character.

## **Chapter 2: The Birth of Paul, and another Battle**

After the confrontation between Mr and Mrs. Morel, Morel was somehow diminished in stature and meals became unpleasant. He tried to help his wife but failed to impress her. The neighbours helped Mrs. Morel by taking care of the children and the household when she gave birth to her third child Paul. Mr Heaton, the clergyman provided companionship to Mrs Morel and they discussed religion. Morel did not approve of their friendship. Mrs Morel was full of remorse regarding her attitude towards her new born son. She felt a strange bond with the baby. Morel hit Mrs Morel with a drawer and she cuts her brow. This chapter shows a special bond being developed between Paul and Mrs Morel. The marital relationship of the Morels further deteriorates.

## **Chapter 3: The Casting off of Morel-The Taking on of William**

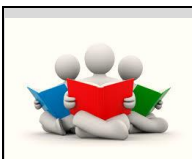
Morel suffers from inflammation of the brain and Mrs Morel nurses him back to health. Another child is born to Mrs Morel, Arthur who loved his father. Paul was a melancholic child and Mrs Morel treated him differently. Mrs Morel

joined the Women's Guild and William got a job at the office of the Cooperative when he was thirteen. William fraternised with respectable people in society, learnt shorthand and by sixteen he was the best shorthand clerk. He loved dancing and was popular with the girls. Annie was training to be a teacher. William got a job in London and left home. This chapter focuses on how the children were growing up and there is strife between the parents regarding William's choice of a profession.

#### **Chapter 4: The Young Life of Paul**

Paul resembled his mother in stature and was a serious child. Annie was his constant companion. All the children were against their father. One evening Paul came home to find his mother with a black eye and his father and William at loggerheads. Meanwhile the family moved to a new house at Scargill Street, which had an old ash tree in the front. The children hated the father and the only occasion when they could relate to him was when he was engaged in some household work. Paul suffered from bronchitis and was nursed back to health by his mother. He was entrusted with the task of collecting the wages of his father on a weekly basis but he disliked the job. Mrs. Morel went to market every Friday while Paul did the baking. William came home for Christmas, the whole family came together to welcome him. This chapter shows the special bond between Paul and Mrs. Morel. Mr Morel is shown in a more humane manner sharing the joy of work with his children.

#### **LET US STOP AND THINK**



**Manuscript of *Sons and Lovers*:** D.H Lawrence began to write *Sons and Lovers* in October 1910. His engagement to Jessie Chambers ended in November 1910. His mother died on 10 December. And he resumed writing the novel in 1911 and it was completed in May 1912. In January 1912 he was ill and returned to Nottingham and

met Frieda Weekly, the German wife of a professor at Nottingham University College. Initially the novel was named *Paul Morel* which was changed to *Sons and Lovers*. The 1913 English version of the text was very different from Lawrence's original manuscript of the novel. Edward Garnett had eliminated 85 passages which he considered offensive. The eliminated passages were later restored in later editions of the novel.

## **Chapter 5: Paul Launches into Life**

In the beginning of this chapter Mr Morel has an accident at the coal mines, his leg is badly injured and he is admitted to the hospital. Mrs Morel visits him in the hospital and the family receives financial aid from Disability Fund. Paul was fourteen years of age and was looking for a job. His ambitions were not high and he wanted to earn enough to spend a comfortable life with his mother. William had settled well in London and could not spare any money for his mother. Paul was called for an interview at Thomas Jordan, Manufacturer of Surgical Appliances, Nottingham. Mother and son went to Nottingham for the interview and Mrs Morel felt "...gay, like a sweetheart". Paul got the job of a junior spiral clerk at eight shillings a week. William wrote home about his sweetheart "Gipsy" or Louisa Lily Denys Western. Mrs Morel was not very impressed with the picture of Gipsy that William had sent. Paul started work at Jordan's and began to like it. Every night Paul would sit with his mother and tell about the events of the day. In this chapter the Morel children are seen to be moving out from the comfortable circle of family life and fending for themselves. Mrs Morel was proud of the fact that two of her sons had gone out to the world.

## **Chapter 6: Death in the Family**

The third son of the Morels, Arthur, was more like his father but as he grew up he began to detest his father. Morel too revelled in disgusting his family and in order to avoid the growing strife between father and son Arthur was sent to

a Grammar School in Nottingham on a scholarship. Annie was a junior teacher and Paul continued to paint. Meanwhile William got engaged and brought home his lady love at Christmas. Miss Western, William's fiancée, appeared to be a shallow, impractical and careless girl. She treated Annie as her personal maid and acted as a grand lady. Mrs Morel was not impressed. William came home alone at Easter. William and his mother could not come to any conclusion regarding his fiancée. Paul's wages were increased but his health began to deteriorate because of long working hours. One day when Paul had a half holiday Mrs Morel proposed to go to visit Mrs Leviers, her friend who had a new farm. Mrs Morel and Paul were light hearted at the prospect of an outing and they enjoyed the walk to the farm. When they reached Wiley Farm they met Mrs Leviers, her daughter Miriam and the boys Edgar, Geoffrey and Maurice. Miriam was a romantic at heart and loved to read Walter Scott. She was shy and it is interesting that she places her trust in Paul and hesitantly tries out new things. William comes home at Whitsuntide along with Lily and he talks about his relationship with Lily and expresses his inability to give up Lily in spite of her shortcomings. Mrs Morel bade them goodbye with the reassurance that William would never have enough money to marry. William suffered from an inflammation at the junction of chin and throat. Mrs Morel received a telegram from London informing her of William's illness. She left for London and William died of pneumonia. Mr Morel was heartbroken at the death of his firstborn but Paul failed to empathise with his father. William was brought home. Mrs Morel lost interest in life and Paul falls ill at Christmas, takes leave from his job and Mrs Morel realises that she should take care of the "living, not the dead".

## **PART TWO**

### **Chapter 7: Lad and Girl love**

Miriam found her father and her brothers very ordinary and common and Paul, who could paint and knew French and Algebra appeared to be quite refined. She was afraid that she would be considered as the swine girl and Paul would not

appreciate her qualities. She was extremely religious and she had an immense capacity for loving. Her mother and Miriam wanted to swathe Paul with love and care. There is a description of an incident in which the potatoes for dinner are burnt. The Mother and the other members of the Levers family make a hue and cry over it. Every task was exalted and treated as a religious duty in the Levers household. Miriam was anthropomorphic and she felt cut off from the rest of the world and the world was either a nunnery or a paradise. The ride on the swing is full of sexual connotations and shows the growing trust between Paul and Miriam. Paul offers to teach Algebra to Miriam and she shares with him the beauty of a wild rose bush in the forest. Mrs Morel is disturbed by the growing intimacy between Paul and Miriam and she gets upset whenever Paul comes home late. Paul considers Miriam to be his friend not lover and Miriam prays fervently not to fall in love with Paul. Paul along with Miriam and a few other friends go for walks to Hemlock Stone and Wingfield Manor. Miriam's visit to the Morel household was not very successful. Paul takes his mother, father, Annie and her friends, one friend of Paul and one of William and Miriam for a holiday.

## **Chapter 8: Strife in Love**

Arthur gets into a scrape as he enlists for the army but he does want to continue. Mrs Morel was weary of her youngest son Arthur. Paul won two first prizes for his painting at the autumn exhibition in the Castle. Mrs Morel is proud and often goes to look at the paintings. Miriam also visits the exhibition along with Clara Dawes. Miriam befriends Clara as her husband worked at Jordan's and she hoped to gain some information about Paul's position in the factory. Paul accuses Miriam of being too spiritual. He invites her for tea and Mrs Morel expresses her inability to like Miriam. On Friday night when Miriam comes for tea, Mrs Morel goes to the market. Beatrice, a friend of the Morels came to visit them. The bread that Mrs Morel entrusted to Paul gets burned. Paul teaches French to Miriam. Paul gets into a quarrel with his father and there is an unpleasant scene. Mrs Morel feels that Miriam exults in taking away Paul from her. Mrs Morel gets

back from the market and she faints. Paul consoles his mother and feels bitter towards Miriam and promises always to come back home to his mother.

## **Chapter 9: Defeat of Miriam**

Paul was dissatisfied with his love and Miriam realised that life with Paul would not be always happy. During the Easter holidays Paul visits Willey Farm, ignores Miriam and informs her that they would better break off. He declared that he was capable only of friendship and could not offer physical love. Mrs Morel felt that Paul was meant for better things and she would fight for Paul. Paul is in two minds about his rejection of Miriam and then offers to get engaged to her but Miriam rejects him. Paul develops his friendship with Edgar and also to continue the French Lessons with Miriam. Miriam brings Clara and Paul together. Clara and Paul engage in a verbal spat. Paul takes his mother to Lincoln and expresses regret that his mother was no longer young. He talks to her about Clara and Mrs Morel comes to the conclusion that she was straight and not deep like Miriam. Annie gets married to Leonard and Arthur comes back from the army. Paul gets restless while the other Morel children were getting on with their life. Paul began to meet Clara. On Miriam's twenty first birthday Paul writes a letter to her and calls her "a nun". Paul was twenty three and was thinking of sex and Clara Dawes.

### **LET US STOP AND THINK**



**Oedipal Complex:** This term was first used by Freud in *The Interpretation of Dreams* (1899). Oedipus was a character in the Greek drama *Oedipus Rex* by Sophocles. This drama was based on the Greek myth of the Theban Hero who kills his father and marries his mother. Freud believes that the male child views the father as the rival for the mother's affection. It generally develops in the phallic stage between the ages of three and five. It is an important stage in the development of a child's

sexual identity. Girls face an analogous desire known as **Electra complex** in which girls are jealous of their mothers and desire their fathers.

## **Chapter 10: Clara**

When he was twenty three Paul got a first prize at the winter exhibition at Nottingham Castle. Mrs Morel wanted Paul to climb into the middle class. Paul was in a dilemma regarding his relationship with Miriam. Mrs Morel encouraged Paul to be happy and met a girl who would be his equal. Paul went to Clara's home and asks her to come back to Jordan. Clara joins Jordan and the other girls do not treat her very well. The girls in the factory celebrate Paul's birthday. Clara and Paul discuss their lives with Baxter Dawes and Miriam respectively. Paul wanted to know why Clara broke off with Baxter and why she did marry him. Sex became complicated for Paul and was torn between Clara and Miriam. Clara claims that Miriam wanted only Paul but that Paul never tried to give their relationship a chance.

## **Chapter 11: The Test on Miriam**

Paul did not want to marry Miriam but he could not ignore her. However Paul was not the only one who shied away from commitment but it was a general tendency among the young men of the age. The brutal treatment of their mothers made the son wary of pursuing relationships with other women for fear of hurting them. Mrs Morel did not approve of Paul's visit to Wiley Farm but now he was more mature and his mother could not persuade him not to visit Miriam. Paul and Miriam spend some time together. Miriam went to Woodlinton to take care of her grandmother. Her grandmother went to visit her daughter when she recovered and Paul and Miriam had the cottage to themselves. They spend their time as man and wife and Miriam surrenders herself to Paul. They spend the whole week together and Paul was worried that Miriam was uneasy regarding their physical union. Paul

decided to break off with Miriam and began to spend more time with Clara and his men friends. Mrs Morel approves of his decision and Miriam is left all alone.

## **Chapter 12: Passion**

Paul carves a niche for himself as an artist. He takes his mother for a holiday at the Isle of Wight. After breaking off with Miriam he came closer to Clara. They spend a day at Clifton Grove and Paul invites her for tea at home. He met Miriam and told her about Clara's proposed visit to his home. Miriam expresses her desire to meet Clara and wished to drop in. The meeting between Clara and Mrs Morel was a huge success and the two women are united in their dislike of Miriam. Mrs Morel did not feel threatened by Clara but she knew that Paul would not be interested in Clara for too long. Paul and Clara visit the theatre and Paul misses his train. He stays the night at Clara's and develops a good rapport with her mother.

## **Chapter 13: Baxter Dawes**

There is a brawl between Paul and Baxter Dawes at a bar called Punch Bowl where Baxter Dawes makes some unsavoury remarks regarding Paul's night out with Clara. Paul did not let his mother know about the fight and he began to hide things from his mother and a distance develops between them. Clara was worried that Baxter Dawes would cause him harm and failed to understand why Paul refused to fight Dawes. Dawes threatens Paul at Jordan's and when Mr Jordan orders Dawes to leave the office premises there is a scuffle and Mr Jordan is injured. Dawes is dismissed from his job and was summoned for assault. Paul was asked to give evidence and Mr Jordan loses the case. Paul tells Mrs Morel about the trial of Baxter Dawes and Mrs Morel express concern about the future of Paul's love life. Paul expresses his inability to love his women and tells his mother that he will not find the right woman as long as Mrs Morel lives. Clara felt that Paul was offended with her and his future plans included his mother and himself only. Paul felt uncomfortable with the little tokens of affection that Clara



expected from him. One night Paul is beaten up by Baxter Dawes and he tried to convince everyone that he met with an accident. Paul was tired of his lady friends Miriam and Clara on Whitsuntide and went on a holiday with his friend Newton for four days. Mrs Morel went to live with Annie. When Paul came back to Sheffield he found Mrs Morel very ill. She had a tumour and was in a lot of pain. Doctors diagnosed a tumour in the membrane. Walter Morel came to visit his wife. Mrs Morel stayed in Sheffield for two months and then she was driven back to Nottingham and she was glad to be home.

### LET US STOP AND THINK



**Freud and Lawrence:** In a letter to Edward Garnett Lawrence wrote that his novel described the ‘tragedy of thousands of young men in England’. Freud argued that in order to have a normal attitude in love one should be able to unite the sensual and the affectionate. However, the male child’s affectionate attachment to his mother acquires erotic elements as the child’s sensual interests develop. The division between the affectionate and the sensual is enforced by prohibition on incest. Normal development of the male child depends on the suppression of unacceptable feelings. A male child as he grows up faces psychical impotence. When he compares his lover with his mother, he is caught between conflicting emotions of desire and prohibition. He further argues that the failure to integrate the affectionate and the sensual feelings is the dominant trend among young men. Paul Morel’s situation is similar to the one described by Freud as the universally prevalent one. Freud’s influence on Lawrence is not very certain. However, by 1920 Lawrence opposed Freud’s concept of the unconscious. Lawrence believed that the unconscious was

spontaneous whereas Freud believed that the unconscious contains repressive feeling which was essential for living in the society.

## **Chapter 14: The Release**

The doctor who was treating Mrs Morel informed Paul that Baxter Dawes was undergoing treatment at the fever hospital and there was no one to take care of him. Paul went to visit Dawes who was not very friendly initially. Paul told Clara about Dawes' illness and Clara went to visit him. Mrs Morel was getting worse and Paul was distressed to see her condition. Both of them tried to keep things light and not to dwell on death too much. Dawes shifted to Nottingham. In the beginning of November Paul went to the seaside for the weekend and Paul said that he was afraid his mother would not give up on life so easily. Paul wished that Mrs Morel would die soon. Meanwhile Paul and Dawes became friends. By December Paul was losing patience and Annie and Paul decide to give Mrs Morel an overdose of morphine to make her death easier. Mrs Morel died after Paul administers the overdose of morphine. Mrs Morel was buried in a furious storm. Paul goes to meet Dawes and Clara also visits her husband. Clara found her husband more dignified than Paul and she hated him. Paul felt very lonely without his mother, he felt ashamed of his relationship with Clara which seemed to him very shallow and based only on physical pleasure. Clara and Dawes decide to live as man and wife and give their marriage a second chance.

## **Chapter 15: Derelict**

After the death of Mrs Morel Paul was like a man without any purpose or direction. Life seemed to be meaningless. Clara went back to her husband, Walter Morel went to live with a family in Bestwood and Paul took up lodgings at Nottingham. He could not paint and found solace only in the darkness of the night. He felt he should keep his mother alive in him either through painting or by having children with Miriam but he could not come to a definite decision. He met Miriam

when she came to the Unitarian Church and he invited her for dinner. She expected Paul to ask her to marry him but was reluctant to take up the responsibility of marriage. After bidding farewell to Miriam Paul felt that the last bond which was tying him down was broken. Mrs Morel was the only reality for him and after her death he was at a loss but he refused to give in and was determined to follow life and not darkness and walked towards the bustling town where there was life.

#### **6.4 MAJOR CHARACTERS**

##### **Paul Morel**

Paul Morel is the central character of the novel and the entire novel is narrated from his point of view. In fact, the novel was originally named 'Paul Morel' which was changed to 'Sons and Lovers'. Paul was a quiet and sickly child and was the mother's shadow. He became the pivot of Mrs Morel's life after the death of William. He takes up a job at Jordans as a clerk and is also a painter. When he initiates a relationship with Miriam Mrs Morel feels threatened and she is instrumental in breaking up the relationship. His relationship with Clara was perceived to be less threatening as Mrs Morel realised that the relationship was more of a sexual nature rather than emotional. Paul is unable to sustain any relationship with other women because of his mother's influence. In rejecting Miriam Paul believed that he was doing it for his mother but the reality is that Miriam was very much like Mrs Morel and in rejecting her he was in fact rejecting the influence of his mother. Paul is left stranded after the death of his mother and is plagued by doubts regarding his existence and his position in the universe. Feminist critics have read Paul's character as abusive that uses all the women in his life. He never had a strong male figure in his life and many of his problems stemmed from that factor. Mr Morel was not a strong presence in his life and his mother exerted a strong influence in his life. Although Paul Morel is believed to be modelled on Lawrence himself and he initially named the novel as 'Paul Morel'

Lawrence claimed that the novel was based on the problems faced by thousands of young men in contemporary England.

### **Mrs Morel**

Gertrude Morel was married to Mr Morel when she was twenty three. Walter Morel was very different from her middle class staid existence and that is what attracted her towards him and they got married. However, all her dreams are shattered when her illusions are shattered and the reality of Mr Morel was exposed. It is Mrs Morel whose viewpoint dominates the relationship between Mr and Mrs Morel. Her disillusionment with her husband leads her to depend more and more on her sons. Her sons become the means to fulfil her aspirations. The marriage of Mr and Mrs Morel fails and unravels the enormous conflicts in the novel. Mrs Morel uses the bourgeois language to criticise her husband's lack of responsibilities and obligations. Mrs Morel dictated the course of her son's lives by deciding that they would not go down the pits but would pursue more middle class respectable jobs. William left her hopes stranded by his untimely demise and she shifted her energies to Paul. Paul takes up a job at Jordan's but is unable to flourish in his personal life because the shadow of his mother looms large over his relationships with his women. Mrs Morel has been depicted as a strong woman who made the best of what life unfairly dished up to her.

### **Miriam**

The character of Miriam is believed to be modelled on Jessie Chambers, Lawrence's one time sweetheart. She has been shown as possessive, frigid and someone who sucks life out of things. However, critics like Louis Martz shows that the character of Miriam is not just filled with negative shades. She is shy, sensitive but is not afraid of new experiences and trying out new things. She puts her trust in Paul and allows him to teach her how to feed the hen and to ride the swing. Miriam is very much like Paul and their similarity of temperament dooms their relationship. She is like a reflection of Paul's emotional and sexual life. Both seem to suffer from the same lacks and ailments. Miriam and her insecurities are

typically Lawrentian, fear of sexual release and putting one in the hands of another. Miriam suffers from a feeling of inadequacy in a household of dominating males and a weak mother. She creates an imaginative world of her own and Paul seems to her a means of escape from her dreary world. Paul accuses Miriam of incapable of being loved. Paul accuses her of not wanting to love. Miriam understand Paul better than anyone else in the novel, she understands his loneliness and his emotional dependence on his mother. Although the character is based on Jessie Chambers, the inner conflict depicted in her character is similar to that of Lawrence. The character of Clara brings out the deficiencies in Paul's treatment and understanding of Clara. Paul bullies Miriam and takes out his frustrations on her holding her responsible for all that went wrong in his life. Miriam's fear of sexuality is not fuelled by the opinion of others but by her fear that she would be inadequate for Paul. Miriam's fragile emotional state infuriates Paul and leads to aggressive behaviour on Paul's part. Miriam however is not fragile but is rather afraid to let go Paul while at the same time fears being dominated by him. Even at the end of the novel Miriam and Paul try for a reconciliation which fails because of their characteristic reserve.

### **Clara**

Clara Dawes is a strong-willed woman who is separated from her husband. She is a supporter of women's suffragette movement and lives alone with her mother. Her confident nature and her independence attract Paul who finds her a pleasant contrast from Miriam. Clara's inaccessibility made her very desirable and Paul meets her for the first time at the Leviers farm. Clara's character is closer to that of Mrs Morel and that is what makes her less threatening to Paul's mother. Mrs Morel felt Miriam to be a threat who would take her son away from her. Paul helps Clara to get a job at Jordans and becomes physically intimate with her. However, sex with Clara was not so threatening to Paul because she is impersonal and according to Paul is different from Miriam and therefore, he can indulge in his sexual exploits without fear of hurting her. Paul prefers to keep his personal

and professional life separate and expects Clara to follow his lead. Clara however resents Paul's depersonalisation of her character and stubbornly resists his attempts to depersonalize her. She becomes the object of Paul's fantasies, yet she also maintains her individuality who withstands his attempts to objectify her.

### **William**

William is the repository of his mother's hopes and her pride and joy. He grows up as arrival to his father and although he bears some resemblance to his father, the two were very often involved in conflicts. William is a good dancer. He is very popular among the girls and Mrs Morel fears that he would turn out like his father. Mrs Morel turns the girls away but her dread is fulfilled and he brings home Gypsy from London. Gypsy was not at all Mrs Morel's choice of a daughter-in-law. William dies after suffering from pneumonia and Mrs Morel is shattered.

### **Mr Morel**

Mr Morel was an attractive man who was a fine dancer and it was his vitality which attracted Mrs Morel towards him. However, his carefree nature offends the sensibility of his more staid and serious wife and there is a split in their marriage. The separation between the husband and wife is further enhanced by the birth of the sons. The mother shifts her attention to the sons and the husband is neglected. Walter Morel is cut off from the family

And he takes to drinking in the pub. The only occasion on which he feels close to his family is when he is engaged in some domestic chores along with his children. He had an explosive temper and it is this temper which makes him lock out his pregnant wife out of the house. Morel's violent attack on his wife was a matter of concern for all the children especially Paul and it estranges him from his father. Even when he conveys the news of William's death he fails to sympathise with his father. Although we are offered descriptions of Mr Morel's drunken stupor we are not given the reasons behind it. Lawrence has presented Morel as a

failure and the narrator's views become consistent with that of Mrs. Morel and the children.

### **Baxter Dawes**

Baxter Dawes is Clara's estranged husband who appears to be antagonistic toward Paul but they develop a strange camaraderie. Paul visits Dawes when he is taken ill and they develop a kinship. Clara after being disillusioned with Paul goes back to her husband and there is reconciliation between the two with Paul's direct help.

## **6.5 SUMMING UP**

After reading this unit you must have learnt the storyline of *Sons and Lovers* in details. An elaborate information of the life and works of D.H Lawrence will help you to understand the kind of work he did and what other fictions he had written. Apart from the storyline, a detailed analysis of the characters is made in this unit. This will help you to know different roles played by these characters in the overall structure of the novel. In the succeeding unit we shall be discussing many critical issues related to *Sons and Lovers*.

We always suggest the learners to read the text proper for better understanding of the plot structure and style of writing of a particular text.



## **6.6 ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS**

1. Give a character sketch of Miriam. What real life similarity with Lawrence do you find in this character?
2. How does Clara stand as a contrast to Miriam in the eyes of Paul?
3. Give a critical analysis of the significant development of the plot in various chapters in the novel.



## 6.7 REFERENCES AND RECOMMENDED READINGS

Lawrence D. H. *Sons and Lovers* UK: Duckworth Books.1913

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Andrews, W.T Ed. *Critics on D.H Lawrence*. George Allen and Unwin Ltd. 1976.

D.H Lawrence: *An Anthology of Recent Criticism*. Ed Aruna Sitiesh. Pencraft International. 2005

D.H Lawrence's *Sons and Lovers*: A Casebook. Eds. John Worthen and Andrew Harrison. OUP.2005.

New Casebooks: *Sons and Lovers*. Ed. Rick Rylance. Palgrave Macmillan.1996.

Spilka, Mark Ed. *D.H Lawrence; A Collection of Critical Essays*. Prentice-Hall.1963

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## **UNIT 7: CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF THE VARIOUS ASPECTS OF THE TEXT**

### **UNIT STRUCTURE**

- 7.0 Introduction
- 7.1 Learning Objectives
- 7.2 Major Themes of *Sons and Lovers*
  - 7.2.1 Society in *Sons and Lovers*
  - 7.2.2 Feminism
- 7.3 Autobiographical Elements
- 7.4 Oedipus Complex/ Psychoanalysis
- 7.5 Symbolism in *Sons and Lovers*
- 7.6 Critics on *Sons and Lovers*
- 7.7 Summing Up
- 7.8 Assessment Question
- 7.9 References and Recommended Readings

### **7.0 INTRODUCTION**

In a letter to Edward Garnett, his editor, Lawrence gave a brief summary of what he was going to do in the novel, and said – “how a woman of character and refinement goes into the lower class... She has had passion for her husband, so the children are born of passion, and have heaps of vitality. But as her sons grow up she selects them as lovers – first the eldest, then the second.” Consequently, we witness a complex relational pattern in the novel which places *Sons and Lovers* as one of the most modern novels of our time.

There is a strong autobiographical element in this novel as the events in the novel closely parallel some of the events in Lawrence’s own life. The richness and complexity of the novel allows for a variety of approaches such as

autobiographical, sociological, psychological and feminist. In this section there will be an attempt to deal with these aspects.

## **7.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES**

After reading this unit you will be able to learn

- the leading themes of *Sons and Lovers* centred around society, feminism, autobiographical elements, Oedipus Complex, and symbolism
- critics' view on *Sons and Lovers*

## **7.2 MAJOR THEMES**

### **7.2.1 Society in *Sons and Lovers***

The conflict between Mrs Morel and Mr Morel is based on a difference in ideology and is a social conflict rather than a personal conflict. Mrs Morel belonged to a bourgeois class and Mr Morel belonged to the labour class. Accordingly their ambitions, aspirations and their outlook vary. Their marriage itself has been called a “major cultural dislocation”. Mrs Morel’s father was an engineer, well-educated and cultured. Mr Morel left school at the age of ten to work in the mines. He did not understand Mrs Morel’s need for religion and her ambition to transcend the class barrier. Mrs Morel aspired for a better life for her sons and wanted to regain her lost status. Mrs Morel’s participation in the Women’s Guild and her talks with the Vicar fulfils her need for intellectual succour. Scott Sanders in “Society and Ideology in *Sons and Lovers*” remarks that: training, economic It is far more significant that he does not share her education, religion, social aspiration, aesthetic motivations, manners, language, moral views or political interests. Their marriage is wrecked by differences that are primarily social rather than personal. (Rylance 156).

These differences in their outlook are translated into moral and psychological differences between Mr and Mrs Morel. The wife is depicted as religious, staid and patient whereas the husband is sensuous, irresponsible and uncouth. The children also ignore the father as he is not able to speak their language. Paul is not interested in sharing his success with his father as he feels that his father won't be able to understand him. There are two instances when the social conflict between the husband and wife becomes more pronounced, the first is the choice of career and Mrs Morel wants her son to climb up the social ladder and to remain out of the pit. The second is the clipping of William's hair. Mrs Morel wanted William to look different from a miner's son with his curls and his hat and Mr Morel in clipping the child's lock of hair shatters her illusions and makes the child a replica of every other miner's child. A significant aspect of the novel is the absence of any substantial figure pertaining to the bourgeois class. Graham Holderness in "Individuality and Society in *Sons and Lovers*" remarks that: "The suppression of the bourgeoisie makes possible a particular critique and exposure of ideology, which could not be accomplished without that deliberate exclusion, that significant and constitutive absence in the text" (Rylance143). The ideology in question is that of social mobility through education and moral education and this was the ambition of Mrs Morel for her sons. Mrs Morel's dislike of the mining life can be read as a critique of the industrial and economic system which has made Morel incapable of enjoying the finer things of life. Mrs Morel not only helps her sons transcend the class barrier but also saves them from the drudgery of mining work. The working conditions of the miners and their society as depicted in the novel is not an overt criticism of the industrial society. Manual labour has been contrasted with intellectual labour and this opposition is taken up by Lawrence in later novels. *Sons and Lovers* cannot be read as a social document; rather the focus is on the individual. Lawrence in the essay "The State of Funk" said: "I feel it is the change inside the individual which is my real

concern. The great social change interests me and troubles me, but it is not field".  
(Rylance 162)

### **7.2.3 Feminism**

In the essay "Sexual Politics in *Sons and Lovers*" Kate Millet remarks that Paul is "... the perfection of self-sustaining ego. The women in the book exist in Paul's orbit and to cater to his needs: Clara to awaken him sexually, Miriam to worship his talent in the role of disciple and Mrs Morel to provide always that enormous and expansive support, that dynamic motivation which can inspire the son of a coal miner to rise above the circumstances of his birth and become a great artist"(Millet 75). Millet's opinion about the portrayal of the women in the novel as the exploited and the under privileged dominated the feminist critical reading of the novel for a very long time. However, critics like Hilary Simpson, in "Lawrence and Feminism in *Sons and Lovers*", have a different opinion about Lawrence's women characters. Lawrence wrote the novel when women were making their presence felt in public life and he himself was well acquainted with many women who were involved in the women's Suffragette movement during 1910-1930s. A number of historical facts associated with feminism are mentioned in the novel. Clara is a suffragette and she attends a meeting addressed by Margaret Bonford who is actually based on the character of Margaret Bonfield, president of the Adult Suffrage League. Paul also mentions the W.S.P.U which stands for The Women's Social and Political Union which was found by Emmeline Pankhurst in 1903. However, Paul's attitude towards the emancipation of women and women's rights is questionable. The figure of Clara is an interesting study. She is supposed to be a strong woman with a mind of her own and attends public meetings to demand rights for women and leaves her husband because she believes that he ill-treats her. She however does not object when Paul uses her as a 'sexual therapy' and finds her a nuisance when his need is fulfilled. He uses Miriam in a similar manner and even his mother to some extent. However, we cannot say that Lawrence portrayed the women in a negative light. He shows the

drudgery of household work in the portrayal of his mother who did not have a right over her own body. Mrs Morel was not ready for another child and we remember how she resented the birth of Paul. Miriam is not understood and not appreciated by her family and is shamelessly used by Paul. Mrs Morel and Clara show the exploitation of women at a material level and Clara's feminist beliefs serve only to attract Paul and is conveniently brushed aside when she becomes involved with Paul.

### LET US STOP AND THINK



**Feminism:** Political movement for equality of the sexes and against discrimination against the female sex. Philosophy, Marxism, Psychoanalysis, linguistics is major influences. In literature it involved rereading of literary texts to expose patriarchal ideology. Mary Wollstonecraft, Virginia Woolf, Simone de Beauvoir are some of the major thinkers who dealt with issues like education, marriage, economics and sexuality.



### CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

1. What is your understanding of the position of women in *Sons and Lovers* from the comment of Kate Millett?

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2. What historical facts do you find associated with some of the characters of the novel?

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### 7.3 AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL ELEMENTS

*Sons and Lovers* is very often read as an autobiographical novel based on the real life experiences of D.H Lawrence. The novel portrays many aspects related to the life of the author. The description of Paul Morel's childhood in the coal mining area of Bestwood, the death of Mrs Morel from abdominal cancer and the death of William, Paul's elder brother - all bear a very strong resemblance to the life of Lawrence. He was brought up in a coal mining area; his mother had died in December 1910 of abdominal cancer and his elder brother Ernest had also died at a very young age. The character of Miriam is based on Jessie Chambers and Clara might be a recreation of Alice Dax, a suffragette with whom Lawrence was involved for a brief period. He had asked Jessie Chambers to write down her memories of the early days spent with Lawrence which he could incorporate in his book. Dorothy Van Ghent in an essay "On *Sons and Lovers*" wrote: "*Sons and Lovers* appears to have the most conventional chronological organisation; it is the

kind of organisation that a naive autobiographical novelist would tend to use, with only the thinnest pretence at distinguishing the personally retrospective nature of the material” (Spilka 16). In fact, much of the early criticism on *Sons and Lovers* is dominated by the autobiographical reading of the text. Gamini Saldago who edited the first volume of the casebook series emphasised that *Sons and Lovers* should be read as a novel and not as an autobiography. Other critics such as Leavis read the novel as an autobiographical novel but different from the convention. However, the personal is no longer individual and is now read as part of the historical process. The novel was written at an important juncture and literary forms were undergoing a radical change. Tony Pinkney in “Englishness and Ideology in *Sons and Lovers*” claims that the novel is a *Kunsterroman* portraying the growth of an artist and the problems discussed by Lawrence is the relationship between the mother and the son are, as portrayed in the novel, “a part of history”. Infact, Lawrence himself wrote to his editor Edward Garnett that his novel dealt with “the tragedy of thousands of young men in England. Lawrence also changed the title of the novel from *Paul Morel* to *Sons and Lovers*. In “Auto biographical Sketches” he again generalises the relationship between the mother and the son as portrayed in the novel: “the woman freed herself at least mentally and spiritually from the husband’s domination, and then she became that great institution, the character-forming power, the mother of my generation. I am sure the character of nine-tenths of the men of my generation was formed by the mother: the characters of the daughters too”(Rylance3).It would be very misleading to read *Sons and Lovers* as an autobiographical novel as the novel discusses issues that go beyond the personal and had plagued the young generation of an entire nation at a certain period in history.

#### **7.4 OEDIPUS COMPLEX/ PSYCHOANALYSIS**

Barbara Ann Scharipo in “A Modern Psychoanalytical Approach” remarks that “*Sons and Lovers* is indeed the quintessential Oedipal novel;it demonstrates

exactly how the Oedipal fantasy becomes bloated and inflamed by the mother's wounded narcissism or impaired subjectivity. The early scenes in the novel consistently spotlight Mrs Morel's subjective experiences of loss, exclusion and betrayal."(Harrison 97). If *Sons and Lovers* is read as an autobiographical novel, it is interesting that the strained/strange relationship of Paul, his mother and his father bears shades of Lawrence's relationship with his father. In a letter addressed to a friend dated 3 December 1910 Lawrence writes:

Their marriage life has been one carnal, bloody fight. I was born hating my father: as early as ever I can remember, I shivered with horror when he touched me. He was very bad before I was born. This has been a kind of bond between me and my mother. We have loved each other, almost with a husband and wife love, as well as filial and maternal. We knew each other by instinct. (Harrison 5)

The novel provides us with glimpses of the oedipal condition. For instance, Mrs Morel claims she never really had a husband and kisses her son passionately. The father walks in and is annoyed at the incident Paul and his father are almost at loggerheads. In another incident, when Paul and his mother went to Nottingham, he addresses his mother as his sweetheart and is frustrated and angry at the thought that his mother is becoming old. Till 1980s *Sons and Lovers* was read alongside Freud's paper "On the Universal Tendency to Debasement in the Sphere of Love"(1912). This paper focussed on the ability of male psyche to differentiate between sexual and spiritual love. Paul's relationship with Miriam and Clara also shows a similar tendency as described in Freud's paper. With Miriam the emphasis is on intellectual compatibility rather than sexual fulfilment. Clara and Paul's relationship is more a sexual one and Paul prefers to keep Clara emotionally and intellectually detached. However, recent criticisms on *Sons and Lovers* focuses on "pre-Oedipal narcissist deficits"(Harrison 21). This mode of criticism analyses Paul's as well as Lawrence's psychological makeup as a result

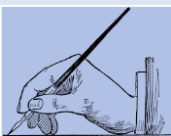


of his failed relationships with his parents in his early life. Paul has an extraordinary relationship with his mother and he fails to develop a normal relationship with his father. Throughout his life Paul chafes at the power his mother has over him and he yearns for a powerful male figure in his life. The bond with Baxter Dawes replicates this yearning. Paul's dependence on his mother is due to the fact that he realises that she is dependent on him to fulfil her thwarted dreams and desires.

### 7.5 SYMBOLISM IN *SONS AND LOVERS*

Images and symbols are very important in *Sons and Lovers*. Dorothy Ghent in the essay "On *Sons and Lovers*" reads his symbols as "the most concrete realities"(Spilka17).She says: "Lawrence's great gift for the symbolic was a function of his sensitivity to and passion for the meaning of real things-for the individual expression that real forms have. In other words, his gift for the image arose directly from his vision of life as infinitely creative of individual identities, each whole and separate and to be revered as such"(Spilka17).One of the most symbolically charged episodes in the novel is seen in the first chapter when Mrs Morel is locked out of the home by her husband and she spends the night in the garden. Mrs Morel with the child in her womb is a "vessel of life" and the moonlight engulfing her and the world around her fills her with fear and dread. She is inflamed and trembles with passion. Her face smeared with pollen from the lilies is also symbolic, in terms of both human and nature, signifying new life. .MacDonald Daly in the essay "Relationship and Class in *Sons and Lovers*" remarks: "The tall white lilies reeling and stretching in the moonlight suggest a passionate (indeed phallic) self-assertion that both mirrors and balances the powerful assertiveness of the white moon. Beneath the exterior whiteness of the lilies, associated like the moon with coldness and chastity, is an interior of yellow pollen and perfumed scent, connoting a "dusky" sensuality (and echoing the sensuous "dusky, golden softness" of Mr Morel,quoted earlier). Mrs Morel's

reaching in to touch and then deeply inhaling the scent represent an attempt to access a hidden, repressed sensuality or bodily vitality”. Another episode which is replete with symbolism is that in which Miriam feeds the hen along with Paul. The scene shows the phallic power at work and the scene has sexual overtones and Paul seems to coax Miriam to try out a new experience and to place her trust in him. A similar scene filled with sexual overtones is the swing episode in which Paul again asks Miriam to trust him. He gives a thrust to the swing that takes Miriam higher and higher and she sheds all her inhibitions. There is symbolism in the scene where Clara splatters red carnations over the ground where she and Paul first made love. The character of Mr Morel is associated with the image of the pits. He descends and ascends from the pits day and night and this rhythm reflects the rhythm of life and death or the sexual rhythm. Paul also associates the pits with life and the machines become alive as they are handled by men. Darkness is another major symbol in the novel and Van Ghent remarks: “It is this understanding of the symbolism of darkness in Lawrence that gives tragic dignity to such a scene as that of the bringing home of William’s coffin through the darkness of the night”(Spilka 27).

	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>CHECK YOUR PROGRESS</b></p> <p>1. What, most of the symbols in the novel, hints at? Give examples to justify.</p> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
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## 7.6 CRITICS ON *SONS AND LOVERS*

Graham Holderness in “Language and Social Context in *Sons and Lovers*” remarks that “*Sons and Lovers* (1913) is known familiarly as an autobiographical or a biographical novel. The description has different implications:(1) that the novel is Lawrence’s autobiography, a narrative based on the events of his life and designed to interpret life;(2) that the novel is primarily a work of fiction, which takes its form from the conventions of biography; a novel composed around the life of an individual character, rather than the series or group of characters which had been the norm of Victorian novels. Both these implications are true, but need to be clearly separated. It is too easy to think of *Sons and Lovers* as a direct transcription of Lawrence’s life, which has no purpose other than to make sense of that life. Lawrence himself thought of the book in this way: “One sheds one’s sicknesses in books-repeats and presents again one’s emotions, to be master of them”. Considered in this light, the novel is a kind of ‘confessional autobiography in the third person’; and the extensive biographical writing on Lawrence tends to treat *Sons and Lovers* in this theoretically naive and reductive way. It is true that

the events of the novel are very close to the circumstances of Lawrence's childhood and adolescence, but the novel still has to be considered as a work of fiction which has some of the 'impersonality' and deliberate, calculated construction of art"(Rylance133)

Holderness further states: "In *Sons and Lovers* a single life grows and gradually individuates out of a particular family, the life of which is carefully detailed and set in a wider social context of the whole community. As the novel progresses the single life becomes more single, more individual, more isolated. Paul's relationships with other people – apart from his mother and father – are intensely individualistic, intensely close, yet the figures always remain separate, detached, isolated from each other. Miriam, Clara, Baxter Dawes-each figures as a stage in Paul's development towards greater separation, isolation, individuality. At the end of the novel Mrs Morel's death leaves him totally isolated and single; the perfunctory interviews with the three friends in the last two chapters only reinforce the sense of complete individual separateness. This process of individuation arises out of the character of that particular family context, and out of the character of the wider community itself." (Rylance 138)

Scott Sanders in "Society and Ideology in *Sons and Lovers*" remarks: "Lawrence's exaggerated sense of individual autonomy led him to distort his representation of reality-especially in *Sons and Lovers*, but to a varying degree in all his novels – by isolating personal existence. Although *Sons and Lovers* abounds in references to social conditions and historical movements, these are not used to account for the quality, the changes and crises of individual lives. That is to say, Lawrence explains the problems of his characters psychologically rather than historically, in terms of a personal rather than a collective past. When in a later essay he wrote that 'I feel it is the change inside the individual which is my real concern. The great social change interests me and troubles me, but it is not my field'. He posited a dichotomy between individual psychology and social existence which would have seemed alien to George Eliot, Dickens or Austen, and

to all of the great Continental realists such as Stendhal, Balzac or Tolstoy. Of course he was entitled to occupy himself primarily with subjectivity, and did so, but when he set himself the task of explaining subjectivity, or of passing judgement on individuals, he often failed, as in the case of Morel, to take the social dimension into account.

Morel's failure should be grounds for criticising the industrial and economic system which maimed him, rather than for criticising the man. Mrs Morel's bitter repudiation of her married state expresses more than class prejudice. Her outrage and Morel's ruin were to be translated by Lawrence into a basic critique of the social order which had produced this humanly degraded way of life. This woman is determined not only to help her children escape the financial straits in which she finds herself, but also to liberate them from the brutal working conditions and from the domestic squalor which the industrial order has imposed upon generations of Morels." (Rylance 161-162)

Michael Bell in "A Restrained Somewhat Impersonal Novel" says: "We can see the mature Lawrentian method forming itself in *Sons and Lovers*. In order to dramatize a long-term and deep-lying emotional process, he exploits its moments of intensity or crisis, which are often locally reactive, and therefore misleading if taken in isolation. The significance of such moments is to be found in their transience and subjectivity rather than through some average or generalised meaning. He has to embody the emotional material dramatically while avoiding a fixed point of view. Hence his method of third-person omniscience at the service of the character's emotional subjectivity. In the work for which he is important, Lawrence's need to relativize the point of view has equal priority with his doctrinal and prophetic absoluteness. For his relativity is not just between characters but between moments and impulses within the same character. With hindsight we can appreciate how the highly 'subjective' local use of Paul's perception in *Sons and Lovers* was to provide the method for an impersonal dramatization of long-term emotional processes in his later fiction. But the novel

itself does not consistently generate that secondary understanding of its immediate action. The novel records, often in a penetrating and impressive way, the emotional process as experienced by Paul but do not quite communicate the process itself.” (Harrison 37-38)

Margaret Storch in “Images of Women in *Sons and Lovers*” says: “The case of *Sons and Lovers* is especially interesting. In this autobiographical novel, Lawrence is apparently writing an account of a young man’s Oedipal struggle, in which the father’s authority is entirely despised and the mother wins emotional ascendancy over her female rival, a young woman of her son’s generation, in order to establish absolute emotional control over her son. A close study of the novel reveals, however, that this surface pattern, in fact, conceals a fundamental antagonism towards the mother.

D. H. Lawrence’s *Sons and Lovers*, one of the first artistic works produced with an awareness of psychoanalysis, appears to be a classic Freudian text. While writing the final draft of the novel, Lawrence was led by Frieda’s insights into his earlier experience and also by her knowledge – through Otto Gross and others – of theory not yet widely known, to write of his emotional life with some objectivity. In so doing, he achieves a delicate balance between self-analysis and the evocation of sensuous immediacy. The triadic Oedipal pattern emerges sharply from the action of the novel: in the development of the relationship between the parents; in the conflict of the two sons, first William and then Paul, with the father; and in the emotional aridity of Paul’s relationships with young women.

Yet does art reveal its fundamental impetus so readily? Is not the Oedipal pattern so deliberate and so close to the surface in *Sons and Lovers* that we are led to suspect that it must, in fact, conceal something else?

Beneath the more apparent triadic oedipal structure lie the dynamics of the early mother–infant dyad. The novel appears to be written out of loyalty to the mother, Gertrude Morel, on the part of the son, Paul Morel, whether against the aggressive father or the possessive sensual woman of the son’s own generation;

yet its true emotional core is a sense of hatred for the suffocating mother, leading to a series of fantasies in which the son destroys her, and culminating in her actual death at his hands. These key events are: the sacrifice of Annie's doll, Arabella, in Paul's childhood; the burning and symbolic entombment of the loaves of bread in the "Strife in Love" chapter; and the death of Gertrude Morel as an immediate result of an overdose of morphia administered by Paul. In each of them, we find a destructive anger..." (Harrison 141-142)

Jack Stewart in "Forms of Expression in *Sons and Lovers*" writes about symbolism: "In *Sons and Lovers*, Lawrence seeks to express psychological and spiritual meanings that lie beneath vividly realized material surfaces. Examples of such symbolism are the Madonna lily scene, the sun baptism, the swing, Miriam's stroking the daffodils, Paul's feeling the blood-heat of eggs in a nest, his scattering cowslips on Clara's hair, the cherry-picking, the red carnations, the "baptism of fire," and the pit-head image.

He applies the Exodus symbol of God's guidance to his father's work and his own experience of being-in-the-world. The convergence of concrete reality and mythic symbol yields intimations of the unconscious, uniting fatherhood and godhead. Such symbol formation shows a religious imagination at work, forging links between matter and spirit, finite and infinite. The same psychomythic process appears in a scene of children fighting around a lamppost at night, in which the boy's experience of hatred, terror, guilt, and revenge is illuminated by an apocalyptic symbol from the Book of Revelation: "Paul . . . [saw] a big red moon lift itself up, slowly, between the waste road over the hill-top; steadily, like a great bird. And he thought of the Bible that the moon should be turned to blood" (101).

Realistic and symbolic images depend alike upon concrete verisimilitude and sensory power. Van Gogh believed that "all reality is symbolic," objective forms evoking subjective responses, while Rudolf Arnheim maintains that

“genuine culture [involves] the constant awareness of the symbolic meaning expressed in a concrete happening, the sensing of the universal in the particular.”

As Lawrence seeks meaning among things and patterns in events, his imagination forges symbols from reality. Concentration on things produces images whose meaning, embedded in the object yet associated with a character, must be grasped in context rather than extrapolated. Images of lilies, roses, carnations, trucks, or pithead are saturated with a significance that flows through things from human lives. This homophobic function accounts for the density of texture in symbolic scenes that are just as “full of sensation and presentation” as scenes of “hard, violent” realism.

“[The] categories of ‘being’ and ‘meaning’ coincide,” as consciousness actively transforms objects of perception. Interactions between characters and places generate phenomenal images that function as symbols.” (Harrison 174-175)



### CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

1. Mention few important criticisms in relation to Sons and Lovers that may be called as trend setters for the novel.

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## 7.7 SUMMING UP

*Sons and Lovers* tells the story of a family in a mining area with middle class aspirations, of the “sentimental education” of a young man and the Oedipal relationship of a mother and her two sons. The characters appear to be individuals rather than types but most of them are fashioned by the then contemporary social condition. The psychology of the characters can be understood in the context of the social and historical realities of the times. Scott Sanders in an Essay “Society and Ideology in *Sons and Lovers*” remarks that: “Whether we examine Mrs Morel’s frustrated bourgeois aspirations, Morel’s brutalisation, Mrs Leivers’s bitterness, Miriam’s compensating religiosity, Clara’s feminism, Dawes’ demoralisation, or the middle class values and emotional lameness of Paul, we find evidence of crucial trends in the then contemporary society; the deprivations of working class life; the increasing mechanisation of society which was to result in the horrors of the 1914-1918 War; the conflict between bourgeois and proletarian ideologies which would lead to revolutions after the war”(Rylance 168).



## 7.8 ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

- 1) Is it correct that the disillusionment of Mrs Morel with her husband leads her to the possession of her sons in *Sons and Lovers*?
- 2) Symbolism has been significantly used in *Sons and Lovers* without being obtrusive. Discuss.
- 3) How is *Sons and Lovers* a psychoanalytical novel?

- 4) “His characters are simply jets of the great dark stream of energy; carriers of energy and the cosmic will”. Examine with reference to Lawrence’s women characters in *Sons and Lovers*.
- 5) “Walter Morel has been depicted as a pathetic figure who fails to command the respect of his wife and children”. How far is the statement true with regard to Walter’s character in *Son’s and Lovers*?
- 6) Critically comment on Paul’s relationship with the two women- Miriam and Clara. Why both these relationships failed to consummate?
- 7) Is Lawrence successful in giving a picture of the mining community in *Sons and Lovers*?



## 7.9 REFERENCES AND RECOMMENDED READINGS

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### JOT DOWN IMPORTANT POINTS

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