NETAJI SUBHAS OPEN UNIVERSITY

STUDY MATERIAL

PG : ENGLISH

PAPER - VIII

MODULE - 3

POST GRADUATE
ENGLISH

PREFACE

In the curricular structure introduced by this University for students of Post-Graduate degree programme, the opportunity to pursue Post-Graduate course in Subjects introduced by this University is equally available to all learners. Instead of being guided by any presumption about ability level, it would perhaps stand to reason if receptivity of a learner is judged in the course of the learning process. That would be entirely in keeping with the objectives of open education which does not believe in artificial differentiation.

Keeping this in view, study materials of the Post Graduate level in different subjects are being prepared on the basis of a well laid-out syllabus. The course structure combines the best elements in the approved syllabi of Central and State Universities in respective subjects. It has been so designed as to be upgradable with the addition of new information as well as results of fresh thinking and analysis.

The accepted methodology of distance education has been followed in the preparation of these study materials. Cooperation in every form of experienced scholars is indispensable for a work of this kind. We, therefore, owe an enormous debt of gratitude to everyone whose tireless efforts went into the writing, editing and devising of a proper lay-out of the materials. Practically speaking, their role amounts to an involvement in 'invisible teaching'. For, whoever makes use of these study materials would virtually derive the benefit of learning under their collective care without each being seen by the other.

The more a learner would seriously pursue these study materials the easier it will be for him or her to reach out to larger horizons of a subject. Care has also been taken to make the language lucid and presentation attractive so that they may be rated as quality self-learning materials. If anything remains still obscure or difficult to follow, arrangements are there to come to terms with them through the counselling sessions regularly available at the network of study centres set up by the University.

Needless to add, a great deal of these efforts is still experimental—in fact, pioneering in certain areas. Naturally, there is every possibility of some lapse or deficiency here and there. However, these do admit of rectification and further improvement in due course. On the whole, therefore, these study materials are expected to evoke wider appreciation the more they receive serious attention of all concerned.

Professor (Dr.) Subha Sankar Sarkar
Vice-Chancellor

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	Course Writing	Editing
Unit 1	Damayanti Chakraborty	Professor Shanta Mahalanabis
Unit 2	Sudeshna Chakravary	-do-
Unit 3&4	Niladri Ranjan Chatterjee	-do-

NETAJI SUBHAS OPEN UNIVERSITY

Post-Graduate Course in English
PG : English – VIII

Module 3

Unit 1 ◻ Crime and Punishment: Fyodor Dostoevsky

Structure

1.0 Introduction

Most western critics of Dostoevsky, when not discussing the religious motifs, approach his works from a psychological or biographical point of view. The overwhelming impression made by Dostoevsky's works on first reading is that of a passionate exploration of disturbed states of divided consciousness: and it is natural to presume that such skilful portrayal of internal psychological conflicts could only come from direct experience. Thus Dostoevsky's biography has been constantly explored and analysed with the hope of uncovering the traumatic key to his creations. However, after the Bolshevik Revolution, Russian critics have followed a different route. They have tried to interpret Dostoevsky in socio-historical terms by defining most of his central characters as "dispossessed and rootless petty-bourgeois intelligentsia" and have shown his novels to be by-products of the cultural history of his times.

Keeping the latter point of view in mind, recent criticisms have often claimed Dostoevsky to be one of the greatest ideological novelists of the nineteenth century. It is said that psychology in Dostoevsky's novels, vivid and unforgettable though it may be, is invariably only an instrument used for a thematic purpose. The works are mostly moral ethical and ideological in import- ideological in the sense that all moral values are connected in Dostoevsky's sensibility with the future destiny of Russian life and culture. More particularly he saw all moral and ethical issues in the light of the inner psychological problems posed for the Russian intelligentsia by the necessity

of assimilating alien Western ideas. Many of his best-known works are prophetic precursors of modern-day thoughts. He is sometimes considered to be a founder of existentialism, most frequently for *Notes from Underground*, which has been described by Walter Kaufmann as "the best overture for existentialism ever written."

1.1 Dostoevsky's life and works

Fyodor Mikhailovich Dostoevsky (1821-1881) was the second of seven children born to Mikhail and Maria Dostoevsky. Shortly after his mother died of tuberculosis in 1837, he and his brother Mikhail were sent to the Military Engineering Academy at St. Petersburg. In 1839 they lost their father, a retired military surgeon and a violent alcoholic, who served as a doctor at the Mariinsky Hospital for the Poor in Moscow. While not known for certain, it is believed that Mikhail Dostoevsky was murdered by his own serfs, who reportedly became enraged during one of Mikhail's drunken fits of violence. Another story was that Mikhail died of natural causes, and a neighbouring landowner invented this story of a peasant rebellion so he could buy the estate inexpensively.

In the St. Petersburg Academy of Military Engineering, Dostoevsky was taught much about mathematics, a subject he despised. He was more fascinated by literature-mostly Shakespeare, Pascal, Hugo and Hoffmann. It is quite impressive that even though focusing on different areas than the one he was taught, he did well in the exams and received a commission in 1841. An interesting fact about that year is that he is known to have written two romantic plays, influenced by the German Romantic poet/playwright Friedrich Schiller. He was made a lieutenant in 1842 and left the Engineering Academy the following year. A translation into Russian of Balzac's novel *Eugenie Grandet* in 1843 brought little or no attention and Dostoevsky, who was determined to be famous, started to write his own fiction in late 1844 after leaving the army. In 1845, his first work, the epistolary short novel, *Poor Folk* was published in the periodical *The Contemporary* and was met with great acclaim by the editor of the magazine, the poet Nikolai Nekrasov. Nekrasov, upon walking into the office of the influential liberal critic Vissarion Belinsky had exclaimed, "A new Gogol has arisen!" After the novel was fully published in book form at the beginning of the next year, Dostoevsky was a literary celebrity at the age of 24.

In 1846, with the mostly negative reaction by Belinsky and many others to probably his strongest early work, the short novel, *The Double*, a psychological study of a bureaucrat whose alter ego overtakes his life, Dostoevsky's fame began to cool. Much of his work after *Poor Folk* was met with few positive reviews and his popularity dwindled.

Dostoevsky was arrested and imprisoned on 23 April, 1849 for engaging in revolutionary activity against Czar Nikolai I. On 16 November that year he was sentenced to death for anti-government activities linked to a liberal intellectual group, the Petrashevsky Circle. After a mock execution in which he and other members of the group stood outside in freezing weather waiting to be shot by a firing squad, Dostoevsky's sentence was commuted to four years of exile performing hard labour at a prison camp in Omsk, Siberia. His first recorded epileptic seizure happened in 1850 at the prison camp. It is said that he suffered from a rare form of temporal lobe epilepsy, sometimes referred to as "ecstatic epilepsy." It is also said that upon learning of his father's death the younger Dostoevsky experienced his first seizure. Seizures then recurred sporadically throughout his life, and Dostoevsky's experiences are thought to form the basis for his description of Prince Myshkin's epilepsy in the *The Idiot*. He was released from prison in 1854, and was required to serve in the Siberian Regiment. Dostoevsky spent the following five years as a private (and later lieutenant) in the Regiment's Seventh Line Battalion stationed at the fortress of Semipalatinsk, now in Kazakhstan. While there, he began a relationship with Maria Dmitrievna Isaeva, the wife of an acquaintance in Siberia; they married in February 1857, after her husband's death.

Dostoevsky's experience in prison and the army resulted in major changes in his political and religious convictions. He became disillusioned with 'Western' ideas, and began to pay greater tribute to traditional Russian values. Perhaps most significantly, he had what his biographer Joseph Frank describes as a conversion experience in prison, which greatly strengthened his Christian, and specifically Orthodox faith. In line with his new beliefs, Dostoevsky became a sharp critic of the Nihilist and Socialist movements of his day, and he dedicated his book *The Possessed* and his *The Diary of a Writer* to espousing conservatism and criticizing socialist ideas.

In December 1859, he returned to St. Petersburg, where he ran a series of unsuccessful literary journals, Vremya (Time) and *Epokli* (Epoch) with his older brother Mikhail. The latter had to be shut down with its coverage of the Polish Uprising in 1863. That year Dostoevsky travelled to Europe and frequented the gambling casinos. There he met Apollinaria Suslova, a young university student and the model for Dostoesvky's "proud women", such as Katerina Ivanovna in both *Crime and Punishment* and *The Brothers Karamazov*. Dostoevsky was devastated by his wife's death in 1864, followed shortly thereafter by his brother's death. He was financially crippled by business debts and the need to provide for his wife's son from her earlier marriage and his brother's widow and children. Dostoevsky sank into a deep depression, frequenting gambling parlors and accumulating massive losses at the tables.

Dostoevsky suffered from an acute gambling compulsion as well from its

consequences. By one account *Crime and Punishment,* possibly his best known novel, was completed in a mad hurry because Dostoevsky was in urgent need of an advance from his publisher. He had been left practically penniless after a gambling spree. Dostoevsky wrote *The Gambler* simultaneously in order to satisfy an agreement with his publisher Stellovsky who, if he did not receive a new work, would have claimed the copyrights to all of Dostoevsky's writing.

Dostoevsky travelled to Western Europe motivated by the dual wish to escape his creditors at home and to visit the casinos abroad. There, he attempted to rekindle a love affair with Apollinaria Suslova, with whom he had an affair several years prior, but she refused his marriage proposal. Dostoevsky was heartbroken, but soon met Anna Grigorevna, a twenty-year-old stenographer to whom he dictated *The Gambler* in 1867. He married her later the same year. This period resulted in the writing of his greatest books. From 1873 to 1881 he redeemed his earlier journalistic failures by publishing a monthly journal full of short stories, sketches, and articles on current events—*The Writer's Diary.* The journal was an enormous success. In 1877 Dostoevsky gave the keynote eulogy at the funeral of his friend, the poet Nekrasov, creating a lot of controversy. In 1880, shortly before he died, he gave his famous Pushkin speech at the unveiling of the Pushkin monument in Moscow. From that event on, Dostoevsky was acclaimed all over Russia as one of her greatest writers and hailed as a prophet, almost a mystic.

In his later years, Fyodor Dostoevsky lived for a long time at the resort of Staraya Russa which was closer to St. Petersburg and less expensive than German resorts. He died on 28 January, 1881 of a lung haemorrhage associated with emphysema and an epileptic seizure and was interred in Tikhvin Cemetery at the Alexander Nevsky Monastery in St. Petersburg. Forty thousand mourning Russians attended his funeral. His tombstone reads "Verily, Verily, I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit." from John 12:24, which is also the epigraph of his final novel, *The Brothers Karamazov.*

1.2 Plot Structure of the Text

Rodion Romanovich Raskolnikov, a former student, lives in a tiny garret on the top floor of a run-down apartment building in St. Petersburg. He is sickly, dressed in rags, short on money, and talks to himself, but he is also handsome, proud, and intelligent. He is contemplating committing an awful crime, but the nature of the crime is not yet clear. He goes to the apartment of an old pawnbroker, Alyona Ivanovna, to get money against his watch and to plan the crime. Afterward, he stops for a drink at a tavern, where he meets a man named Marmaledov, who, in a fit of drunkenness, has abandoned his job and proceeded on a five-day drinking binge,

afraid to return home to his family. Marmaledov tells Raskolnikov about his sickly wife, Katerina Ivanovna and his daughter, Sonya, who has been forced into prostitution to support the family. Raskolnikov walks with Marmaledov to the latter's apartment, where he meets Katerina and sees firsthand the squalid conditions in which they live.

The next day, Raskolnikov receives a letter from his mother, Pulcheria Alexandrovna, informing him that his sister, Dunya, is engaged to be married to a government official named Luzhin and that they are all moving to St. Petersburg. He goes to another tavern, where he overhears a student talking about how society would be better off if the old pawnbroker Alyona Ivanovna were dead. Later, in the streets, Raskolnikov hears that the pawnbroker will be alone in her apartment the next evening. He sleeps fitfully and wakes up the next day, finds an axe and fashions a fake item to pawn to distract the pawnbroker. That night, he goes to her apartment and kills her. While he is rummaging through her bedroom, looking for money, her sister, Lizaveta, walks in, and Raskolnikov kills her as well. He barely escapes from the apartment without being seen, then returns to his apartment and collapses on the sofa.

Waking up the next day, Raskolnikov frantically searches his clothing for traces of blood. He receives a summons from the police, but it seems to be unrelated to the murders. At the police station, he learns that his landlady is trying to collect money that he owes her. During a conversation about the murders, Raskolnikov faints, and the police begin to suspect him. Raskolnikov returns to his room, collects the goods that he stole from the pawnbroker, and buries them under a rock in an out-of-the-way courtyard. He visits his friend Razumikhin and refuses his offer of work. Returning to his apartment, Raskolnikov falls into a fitful, nightmare-ridden sleep. After four days of fever and delirium, he wakes up to find out that his housekeeper, Nastasya, and Razumikhin have been taking care of him. He learns that Zosimov, a doctor, and Zametov, a young police detective, have also been visiting him. They have all noticed that Raskolnikov becomes extremely uncomfortable whenever the murders of the pawnbroker and her sister are mentioned. Luzhin, Dunya's fiance, also makes a visit. After a confrontation with Luzhin, Raskolnikov goes to a cafe, where he almost confesses to Zametov that he is the murderer. Afterward, he impulsively goes to the apartment of the pawnbroker. On his way back home, he discovers that Marmeladov has been run over by a carriage. Raskolnikov helps to carry him back to his apartment, where Marmeladov dies. At the apartment, he meets Sonya and gives the family twenty roubles that he received from his mother. Returning with Razumikhin to his own apartment, Raskolnikov faints when he discovers that his sister and mother are there waiting for him.

Raskolnikov becomes annoyed with Pulcheria Alexandrovna and Dunya and orders them out of the room. He also commands Dunya to break her engagement with

Luzhin. Razumikhin, meanwhile, falls in love with Dunya. The next morning, Razumikhin tries to explain Raskolnikov's character to Dunya and Pulcheria Alexandrovna, and then the three return to Raskolnikov's apartment. There, Zosimov greets them and tells them that Raskolnikov's condition is much improved. Raskolnikov apologizes for his behaviour the night before and confesses to giving all his money to the Marmeladovs. But he soon grows angry and irritable again and demands that Dunya not marry Luzhin. Dunya tells him that she is meeting with Luzhin that evening, and that although Luzhin has requested specifically that Raskolnikov not be there, she would like him to come nevertheless. Raskolnikov agrees. At that moment, Sonya enters the room, greatly embarrassed to be in the presence of Raskolnikov's family. She invites Raskolnikov to her father's funeral, and he accepts. On her way back to her apartment, Sonya is followed by a strange man, who we later learn is Svidrigaylov—Dunya's lecherous former employer who is obsessively attracted to her.

Under the pretense of trying to recover a watch he pawned, Raskolnikov visits the magistrate in charge of the murder investigation, Porfiry Petrovich, a relative of Razumikhin's. Zametov is at Porfiry's house when Raskolnikov arrives. Raskolnikov and Porfiry have a tense conversation about the murders. Raskolnikov starts to believe that Porfiry suspects him and is trying to lead him into a trap. Afterward, Raskolnikov and Razumikhin discuss the conversation, trying to figure out if Porfiry suspects him. When Raskolnikov returns to his apartment, he learns that a man had come there looking for him. When he catches up with the man in the street, the man calls him a murderer. That night Raskolnikov dreams about the pawnbroker's murder. When he wakes up, there is a stranger in the room.

The stranger is Svidrigaylov. He explains that he would like Dunya to break her engagement with Luzhin, whom he esteems unworthy of her. He offers to give Dunya the enormous sum of ten thousand roubles. He also tells Raskolnikov that his late wife, Marfa Petrovna, left Dunya three thousand rubles in her will. Raskolnikov rejects Svidrigaylov's offer of money and, after hearing him talk about seeing the ghost of Marfa, suspects that he is insane. After Svidrigaylov leaves, Raskolnikov and Razumikhin walk to a restaurant to meet Dunya, Pulcheria Alexandrovna, and Luzhin. Razumikhin tells Raskolnikov that he is certain that the police suspect Raskolnikov. Luzhin is insulted to find that Raskolnikov, contrary to his wishes, is in attendance at the meal. They discuss Svidrigaylov's arrival in the city and the money that has been offered to Dunya. Luzhin and Raskolnikov get into an argument, during the course of which Luzhin offends everyone in the room, including his fiancé and prospective mother-in-law. Dunya breaks the engagement and forces him to leave. Everyone is overjoyed at his departure. Razumikhin starts to talk about plans

to go into the publishing business as a family, but Raskolnikov ruins the mood by telling them that he does not want to see them anymore. When Raskolnikov leaves the room, Razumikhin chases him down the stairs. They stop, face-to-face, and Razumikhin realizes, without a word being spoken, that Raskolnikov is guilty of the murders. He rushes back to Dunya and Pulcheria Alexandrovna to reassure them that he will help them through whatever difficulties they encounter.

Raskolnikov goes to the apartment of Sonya Marmeladov. During their conversation, he learns that Sonya was a friend of one of his victims, Lizaveta. He forces Sonya to read to him the biblical story of Lazarus, who was resurrected by Jesus. Meanwhile, Svidrigaylov eavesdrops from the apartment next door.

The following morning, Raskolnikov visits Porfiry Petrovich at the police department, supposedly in order to turn in a formal request for his pawned watch. As they talk, Raskolnikov starts to feel again that Porfiry is trying to lead him into a trap. Eventually, he breaks under the pressure and accuses Porfiry of playing psychological games with him. At the height of tension between them, Nikolai, a workman who is being held under suspicion for the murders, bursts into the room and confesses to the murders. On the way to Katerina Ivanovna's memorial dinner for Marmeladov, Raskolnikov meets the mysterious man who called him a murderer and learns that the man actually knows very little about the case.

The scene shifts to the apartment of Luzhin and his roommate Lebezyatnikov, where Luzhin is nursing his hatred for Raskolnikov, whom he blames for the breaking of his engagement to Dunya. Although Luzhin has been invited to Marmeladov's memorial dinner, he refuses to go. He invites Sonya to his room and gives her a ten-ruble note. Katerina's memorial dinner goes poorly. The widow is extremely fussy and proud, but few guests have shown up, and, except for Raskolnikov, those that have are drunk and crude. Luzhin then enters the room and accuses Sonya of stealing a one-hundred-ruble note. Sonya denies his claim, but the note is discovered in one of her pockets. Just as everyone is about to label Sonya a thief, however, Lebezyatnikov enters and tells the room that he saw Luzhin slip the note into Sonya's pocket as she was leaving his room. Raskolnikov explains that Luzhin was probably trying to embarrass him by discrediting Sonya, Luzhin leaves, and a fight breaks out between Katerina and her landlady.

After the dinner, Raskolnikov goes to Sonya's room and confesses the murders to her. They have a long conversation about his confused motives. Sonya tries to convince him to confess to the authorities. Lebezyatnikov then enters and informs them that Katerina Ivanovna seems to have gone mad—she is parading the children in the streets, begging for money. Sonya rushes out to find them while Raskolnikov goes back to his room and talks to Dunya. He soon returns to the street and sees Katerina

dancing and singing wildly. She collapses after a confrontation with a policeman and, soon after being brought back to her room, dies. Svidrigaylov appears and offers to pay for the funeral and the care of the children. He reveals to Raskolnikov that he knows Raskolnikov is the murderer.

Raskolnikov wanders around in a haze after his confession to Sonya and the death of Katerina. Razumikhin confronts him in his room, asking him whether he has gone mad and telling him of the pain that he has caused his mother and sister. After their conversation, Porfiry Petrovich appears and apologizes for his treatment of Raskolnikov in the police station. Nonetheless, he does not believe Nikolai's confession. He accuses Raskolnikov of the murders but admits that he does not have enough evidence to arrest, him. Finally, he urges him to confess, telling him that he will receive a lighter sentence if he does so. Raskolnikov goes looking for Svidrigaylov, eventually finding him in a cafe. Svidrigaylov tells him that though he is still attracted to Dunya, he has got engaged to a sixteen-year- old girl. Svidrigaylov parts from Raskolnikov and manages to bring Dunya to his room, where he threatens to rape her after she refuses to marry him. She fires several shots at him with a revolver and misses, but when he sees how strongly she dislikes him, he allows her to leave. He takes her revolver and wanders aimlessly around St. Petersburg. He gives three thousand rubles to Dunya, fifteen thousand rubles to the family of his financée, and then books a room in a hotel. He sleeps fitfully and dreams of a flood and a seductive five- year-old girl. In the morning, he kills himself.

Raskolnikov visits his mother and tells her that he will always love her and then returns to his room, where he tells Dunya that he is planning to confess. After she leaves, he goes to visit Sonya, who gives him a cross to wear. On the way to the police station, he stops in a marketplace and kisses the ground. He almost pulls back from confessing when he reaches the police station and learns of Svidrigaylov's suicide. The sight of Sonya, however, convinces him to go through with it, and he confesses to one of the police officials, Ilya Petrovich.

A year and a half later. Raskolnikov is in prison in Siberia, where he has been for nine months. Sonya has moved to the town outside the prison, and she visits Raskolnikov regularly and tries to ease his burden. Because of his confession, his mental confusion surrounding the murders, and testimony about his past good deeds, he has received, instead of a death sentence, a reduced sentence of eight years of hard labour in Siberia. After Raskolnikov's arrest, his mother became delirious and died. Razumikhin and Dunya were married. For a short while, Raskolnikov remains as proud and alienated from humanity as he was before his confession, but he eventually realizes that he truly loves Sonya and expresses remorse for his crime.

1.3 Brief Note on the Main Characters

Raskolnikov

Rodion Romanovich Raskolnikov is the protagonist of the novel, and the story is told almost exclusively from his point of view. His name derives from the Russian word 'raskolnik' meaning "divided," which is appropriate since his most fundamental character trait is his alienation from human society. His pride and intellectualism lead him to disdain the rest of humanity as fit merely to perpetuate the species. In contrast, he believes that he is part of an elite "superman" echelon and can consequently transgress accepted moral standards for higher purposes such as utilitarian good. However, the guilt that torments him after he murders Alyona Ivanovna and her sister Lizaveta and his recurrent fainting at the mention of the murders serve as proof to him that he is not made of the same stuff as a true "superman" such as Napoleon. Though he grapples with the decision to confess for most of the novel and though he seems gradually to accept the reality of his mediocrity, he remains convinced that the murder of the pawnbroker was justified. His ultimate realization that he loves Sonya is the only force strong enough to transcend his ingrained contempt of humanity. Raskolnikov's relationships with the other characters in the novel do much to illuminate his personality and understanding of himself. Although he cares about Razumikhin, Pulcheria Alexandrovna, and Dunya, he is so caught up in his skeptical outlook that he is often unappreciative of their attempts to help him. He turns to Sonya as a fellow transgressor of social norms, but he fails to recognize that her sin is much different from his: while she truly sacrifices herself for the sake of others, he essentially commits his crime for his own sake alone. Finally, his relationship with Svidrigaylov is enigmatic. Though he despises the man for his depravity, he also seems to need something from him—perhaps validation of his own crime from a more hardened malcontent.

Svidrigaylov

Arkady Ivanovich Svidrigaylov is one of the most enigmatic characters in *Crime and Punishment*. Dostoevsky leaves little doubt as to Svidrigaylov's status as a villain. But all of Svidrigaylov's crimes, except for his attempted rape of Dunya, are behind him. We witness Svidrigaylov perform goods deeds, such as giving money to the family of his financée, to Katerina Ivanovna and her children, and to Dunya as well. Although he is a violent and devious individual, Svidrigaylov possesses the ability to accept that he cannot force reality to conform to his deepest desires. In this regard, he functions as a foil to Raskolnikov, who can accept only partially the breakdown of his presumed "superman" identity. Further, whereas Raskolnikov believes unflinchingly in the utilitarian rationale for Alyona Ivanovna's murder, Svidrigaylov doesn't try to contest the death of his romantic vision when Dunya rejects him.

Although the painful realization that he will never have the love of someone as honest, kind, intelligent, and beautiful as she is, compels him to commit suicide, he is one of the few characters in the novel to die with dignity.

Sonya

Sofya Semyonovna Marmeladov ("Sonya" or "Sonechka") is Raskolnikov's love and Marmeladov's daughter. Sonya is forced to prostitute herself to support herself and the rest of her family. She is meek and easily embarrassed, but she maintains a strong religious faith.

She is the only person with whom Raskolnikov shares a meaningful relationship and is the catalyst in bringing redemption to him through her strong ideological and moral stand.

Dunya

Avdotya Romanovna Raskolnikov ("Dunya" or "Dunechka") is Raskolnikov's sister. Dunya is as intelligent, proud, and as good-looking as her brother, but she is also moral and compassionate. She is decisive in ending her engagement with Luzhin when he insults her family and shows her courage in fending off Svidrigaylov with gunfire.

Razumikhin

Dmitri Prokofych Razumikhin is Raskolnikov's friend. A poor ex-student, he comes to grips with his poverty not by taking from others but by working even harder. Razumikhin is Raskolnikov's foil, illustrating through his kindness and amicability the extent to which Raskolnikov has alienated himself from society. To some extent, he even serves as Raskolnikov's replacement, stepping in to advise and protect Pulcheria Alexandrovna and Dunya. His name comes from the Russian word razum, which means "reason" or "intelligence."

Porfiry Petrovich

Porfiry Petrovich is the magistrate in charge of investigating the murders. Porfiry Petrovich has a shrewd understanding of criminal psychology and is extremely aware of Raskolnikov's mental state at every step along the way from the crime to the confession. He is Raskolnikov's primary antagonist, and though he appears only occasionally in the novel, his presence is constantly felt.

1.4 Major Themes in the Novel

Alienation from Society

Alienation is one of the primary themes of *Crime and Punishment*. At first, Raskolnikov's pride separates him from society. He sees himself as superior to all

other people and so cannot relate to anyone. Within his personal philosophy, he sees other people as tools and uses them for his own ends. After committing the murders, his isolation grows because of his intense guilt which often results in a half-delirium. Over and over again, Raskolnikov pushes away the people who are trying to help him, including Sonya, Dunya, Pulcheria Alexandrovna, Razumikhin, and even Porfiry Petrovich, and then suffers the consequences. In the end, he finds the total alienation that he has brought upon himself intolerable. Only in the Epilogue, when he finally realizes that he loves Sonya, does Raskolnikov break through the wall of pride and self-centeredness that has separated him from society.

The Psychology of Crime and Punishment

The manner in which the novel addresses crime and punishment is not exactly what one would expect. The crime is committed in Part 1 and the punishment comes much later, in the Epilogue. The real focus of the novel is not on those two endpoints but on what lies between them—an in-depth exploration of the psychology of a criminal. Dostoevsky concerns himself not with the actual repercussions of the murder but with the way the murder forces Raskolnikov to deal with tormenting guilt. Indeed, by focusing so little on Raskolnikov's imprisonment, Dostoevsky seems to suggest that actual punishment is much less terrible than the stress and anxiety of trying to avoid punishment. Porfiry Petrovich emphasizes the psychological angle of the novel, as he shrewdly realizes that Raskolnikov is the killer and makes several speeches in which he details the workings of Raskolnikov's mind after the killing. Because he understands that a guilt-ridden criminal must necessarily experience mental torture, he is certain that Raskolnikov will eventually confess or go mad. The expert mind games that he plays with Raskolnikov strengthen the sense that the novel's outcome is inevitable because of the nature of human psyche.

The Idea of the Superman

At the beginning of the novel, Raskolnikov sees himself as a "superman," a person who is extraordinary and thus above the moral rules that govern the rest of humanity. His vaunted estimation of himself compels him to separate himself from society. His murder of the pawnbroker is, in part, a consequence of his belief that he is above the law and an attempt to establish the truth of his superiority. Raskolnikov's inability to quell his subsequent feelings of guilt, however, proves to him that he is not a "superman." Although he realizes his failure to live up to what he has envisioned for himself, he is nevertheless unwilling to accept the total deconstruction of this identity. He continues to resist the idea that he is as mediocre as the rest of humanity by maintaining to himself that the murder was justified. It is only in his final surrender to his love for Sonya, and his realization of the joys in sue surrender, that he can

ultimately escape his conception of himself as a superman and the terrible isolation such a belief brought upon him.

Nihilism

Nihilism was a philosophical position developed in Russia in the 1850s and 1860s. It rejected family and societal bonds and emotional and aesthetic concerns in favour of a strict materialism, or the idea that there is no "mind" or "soul" outside of the physical world. Linked to nihilism is utilitarianism, or the idea that moral decisions should be based on the rule of the greatest happiness for the largest number of people. Raskolnikov originally justifies the murder of Alyona on utilitarian grounds, claiming that a "louse" has been removed from society. Whether or not the murder is actually a utilitarian act, Raskolnikov is certainly a nihilist; completely unsentimental for most of the novel, he cares nothing about the emotions of others. Similarly, he utterly disregards social conventions that run counter to the austere interactions that he desires with the world. However, at the end of the novel, as Raskolnikov discovers love, he throws off his nihilism. Through this action, the novel challenges the ideology of nihilism.

Salvation through suffering

The novel illustrates the theme of attaining salvation through suffering, a common feature in Dostoevsky's work. This is the (mainly Christian) notion that the act of suffering has a purifying effect on the human spirit allowing for salvation in God. A character who embodies this theme is Sonia, who maintains enough faith to guide and support Raskolnikov despite her own immense suffering. Dostoevsky holds to the idea that salvation is a possible option for all people, even those who have sinned grievously. It is the realization of this fact that leads to Raskolnikov's confession. Sonia loves Raskolnikov and exemplifies the trait of ideal Christian forgiveness, allowing Raskolnikov to confront his crime and accept his punishment.

1.5 Symbols used in the Novel

The Dreams

Raskolnikov's dreams according to psychologists always have a symbolic meaning. In the dream about the horse, the mare has to sacrifice itself for the men who are too much in a rush to wait. This could be symbolic of women sacrificing themselves for men, just like Raskolnikov's belief that Dunya is sacrificing herself for him by marrying Luzhin. Some critics have suggested this dream illustrates the nihilistic destruction of an innocent creature and Raskolnikov's suppressed sympathy for it. The dream is also mentioned when Raskolnikov talks to Marmeladov and the latter states that his daughter, Sonya, has to sell her body to earn a living for their family. The dream is also a blatant

warning for the impending murder. The second dream, where the murdered victim is shown to laugh at the murderer is clearly a product of the guilt-ridden mind in delirium. In the final pages, Raskolnikov, who at this point is in the prison infirmary, has a feverish dream about a plague of nihilism, that enters Russia and Europe from the east and which spreads senseless dissent and fanatic dedication to "new ideas": it finally engulfs all of mankind. Though we don't learn anything about the content of these ideas they clearly disrupt society forever and are seen as exclusively critical assaults on ordinary thinking: it is clear that Dostoevsky was envisaging the new, politically and culturally nihilist ideas which were entering Russian literature and society in this watershed decade, and with which Dostoevsky would be in conflict for the rest of his life. Just like the novel demonstrates and argues Dostoevsky's conviction that "if God doesn't exist (or is not recognized) then anything is permissible" the dream sums up his fear that if men won't check their thinking against the realities of life and nature, and if they are unwilling to listen to reason or authority, then no ideas or cultural institutions will last and only brute barbarism can be the result. Janko Lavrin called this final dream "prophetic in its symbolism".

The Cross

The cross that Sonya gives to Raskolnikov before he goes to the police station to confess is an important symbol of redemption for him. Throughout Christendom, of course, the cross symbolizes Jesus' self-sacrifice for the sins of humanity. That Sonya is the one who gives him the cross has special significance. She gives of herself to bring him back to humanity, and her love and concern for him, like that of Jesus, according to Christianity, will ultimately save and renew him. Raskolnikov takes his pain upon him by carrying the cross through town, like Jesus; in an allusion to the account of the Crucifixion, he falls to his knees in the town square on the way to his confession. Sonya carries the cross up until then, which indicates that, as literally mentioned in the book, she suffers for him, in a semi-Christ-like manner. Sonya and Lizaveta had exchanged crosses and become spiritual sisters, originally the cross was Lizaveta's-so Raskolnikov carries Lizaveta's cross, the cross of his innocent victim, whom he didn't intend to kill. Also, Raskolnikov sees that the cross is made of cypress, which is a cross that symbolizes the ordinary and plain population, and by taking that particular cross he then admits that he's a plain human being, not a 'superman'.

The City

The city of St. Petersburg as represented in Dostoevsky's novel is dirty and crowded. Drunks are sprawled on the street in broad daylight, consumptive women beat their children and beg for money, and everyone is crowded into tiny, noisy apartments. The

clutter and chaos of St. Petersburg is a twofold symbol. It represents the state of society, with all of its inequalities, prejudices, and deficits. But it also represents Raskolnikov's delirious, agitated state as he spirals through the novel toward the point of his confession and redemption. He can escape neither the city nor his warped mind. From the very beginning, the narrator describes the heat and "the odor" coming off the city, the crowds, and the disorder, and says they "all contributed to irritate the young man's already excited nerves." Indeed, it is only when Raskolnikov is forcefully removed from the city to a prison in a small town in Siberia that he is able to regain compassion and balance.

1.6 Stylistic Features of the Novel

In Dostoevsky's works previous to *Crime and Punishment* the central ideology of his art had been expressed largely through the medium of the central figure of the story. His treatment was restrictive and intensive rather than expansive. He was never to have the large epic sweep of Tolstoy, nor did he ever pretend to exhibit "realism" or "slice of life" that Turgenev portrayed. With *Crime and Punishment,* he broadens his canvas and his focus becomes the relationship of man to the world. Henceforth in his fiction as well as his journalistic articles, he wrestles with various phases of the problem. In *Crime and Punishment* the hero undoubtedly holds the central stage in most of the ethical and moral speculation. However Dostoevsky by no means neglects the secondary characters, one or two of which are actually at par with Raskolnikov in artistic finesse.

Minor characters

Perhaps the most striking and memorable of these characters is Sonya Marmeladova. She is an archetypal representative of Dostoevsky's Meek characters and one of the most noteworthy of all his female creations. Dostoevsky places in Sonya's mouth his own doctrine of earning one's own happiness by suffering, the lesson that Raskolnikov is forced to learn at the end of the novel. At first the hero calls her a "religious maniac." Indeed Sonya is convinced that the acts of her life depend upon some mysterious, all powerful force, and in this dependence is expressed her complete incapacity.

The relationship between Sonya and Raskolnikov is of the utmost importance, as their ultimate fate rests upon it. His intellectual pride forces him to hate everything she represents. In his categories of humanity, Sonya would occupy the lowest place among those despised "ordinary people" who are born to be submissive. On the other hand, Sonya also appeals to all the finer instincts of his nature. The submissive aspects of his dual personality lead him to see in this prostitute an embodiment of Christian love and the very image of chastity. Their love for each other, however, is strangely evasive in all its external manifestations. For artistic reasons Dostoevsky

deliberately mutes every outward reason of love between Sonya and Raskolnikov. In the hero's case a confession of love would have amounted to an act of submission foreign to the dominant pride of his nature. With Sonya, certainly, any active expression of love would have been contrary to the characteristic emotional features of her type. All the passive and submissive traits of the Meek characters are most clearly evinced in their relations with the opposite sex. As a prostitute, however, Sonya's selflessness in love surpasses that of the other Meek characters, such as Darya Shatova in *The Possessed* and Sofiya Andreevna in *A Raw Youth*. Despite Raskolnikov's crime, she feels herself immeasurably beneath him in every respect, and her love is one of utter self- abnegation. Sonya reminds one at times of an allegorical personification of some abstract virtue in a medieval morality play. It is a tribute to Dostoevsky's genius that he was able to breathe the breath of real life into this exceptional figure.

Nothing can be more effective as a piece of characterization than Marmeladov's own revelation of his nature to Raskolnikov in the tavern. Beneath the verbiage, pomposity, and unintentional humour of this confession is revealed the soul of a man who has experienced every feeling of degradation in an unequal hopeless struggle to preserve his human dignity. Nowhere else in his fiction is Dostoevsky's intense sympathy for the poor and downtrodden more feelingly expressed than in his treatment of Marmeladov and his family The frequent quarrels, the dying of Marmeladov, and the funeral feast provide an unexampled picture of human misery.

Narrative devices

Critics have censured the melodramatic element, but the unusual fact, in this novel of crime is that the melodrama is rarely overdone. The murder of the old pawnbroker and Lizaveta is one of the best pieces of expository narrative in literature. The cold logic of events is never sacrificed to extra-dramatic effects. On the other hand, coincidences have occurred at frequent intervals in the novel- an ever-present trap for weary novelists. Svidrigaylov is allowed to pass Sonya precisely at the moment when she asks Raskolnikov an important question and he hears the reply which affects the action. Lebezyatnikov bumps into Raskolnikov on the crowded city streets just when he is looking for him. Luzhin lives in the same house as the Marmeladovs and Svidrigaylov hires quarters in the house where Sonya lives. Apart from this minor fault *Crime and Punishment* stands out as a literary work of art.

1.7 Conclusion

The problem of Evil and suffering of the innocents haunt the majority of Dostoevsky's novels; most of his characters fall into a few distinct categories: humble and self-effacing Christians (Prince Myshkin, Sonya Marmeladova, Alyosha

Karamazov), self-destructive nihilists (Svidrigaylov, Smerdyakov, Stavrogin), cynical debauches (Fyodor Karamazov), and rebellious intellectuals (Raskolnikov, Ivan Karamazov); also, his characters are driven by ideas rather than by ordinary biological or social imperatives. In comparison with Tolstoy, whose characters are realistic, the characters of Dostoevsky are usually more symbolic of the ideas they represent. Thus Dostoevsky is often cited as one of the forerunners of Literary Symbolism.

Dostoevsky's novels are compressed in time (many cover only a few days) his characters primarily embody spiritual values, and these are, by definition, timeless. Some obsessive themes include suicide, wounded pride and collapsed family values, spiritual regeneration through suffering, rejection of the West and affirmation of Russian Orthodoxy. Literary scholars such as Mikhail Bakhtin have characterized his work as 'polyphonic' for unlike other novelists, Dostoevsky does not appear to aim at a 'single vision', He describes situations from various angles. Also, in his novels of ideas conflicting views and characters are left to develop unevenly into a crescendo.

Dostoevsky's influence cannot be overemphasized. From Herman Hesse to Marcel Proust, William Faulkner, Albert Camus, Franz Kafka, Friedrich Nietzsche, Henry Miller, Yukio Mishima, Gabriel Garcia Marquez and Joseph Heller, virtually no great twentieth century writer escaped his long shadow. American novelist Ernest Hemingway, also cited Dostoevsky as a major influence on his work. Because of his immense influence upon the movements in twentieth century philosophy and psychology, Dostoevsky is often recognized as, (he died in 1881), a novelist who belongs to the twentieth century.

1.8 Questions

Questions and Topics :

1. a) Compare and contrast Svidrigaylov with Raskolnikov.
   b) Why does Svidrigaylov commit suicide? How do you feel about his character?
2. Consider the different dreams throughout the novel and determine their functional role.
3. What role does suffering in the novel? How does each character suffer and feel about suffering? Who suffers the greatest in *Crime and Punishment?*
4. The crime in *Crime and Punishment* occurs very early in the novel leaving the rest of the novel to deal with the theories of punishment. Discuss the different forms of punishment and the concepts of law present in the novel.
5. Trace the psychological progress of Raskolnikov's mind from the planning stages of the murder through the final realization of love.

6. Discuss the theory of the "Superior man" and evaluate Raskolnikov's character in the light of this theory.
7. Explain the religious and Biblical themes in the novel, with special emphasis on the story of Lazarus that Sonia reads to Raskolnikov.
8. Analyse *Crime and Punishment* as an existentialist novel.

1.16 Recommended Reading

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Unit 2 ❑ Madame Bovary : Flaubert

Structure

2.0 Introduction

Flaubert was a rebel rather than a revolutionary and wanted to criticize, rather than change, existing society. The political novel *L'Education Sentimentale* seems to hold a "plague o both your houses" type of attitude. While the ruling classes are portrayed in an extremely negative manner, the revolutionary masses are made to appear a mindless, destructive mob. He despised the bourgeoisie more for their philistine nature than for their exploitative role.

2.1 Flaubert-Life and Background

Gustave Flaubert was born in 1821 on 12th December in Rouen, the capital of Normandy, a province in Northern France. The same year witressed the birth of Baudelaire, the great French Poet and Dostoevsky, the famous Russian novelist. Normandy, incidentally, has produced a number of literary geniuses, from Corneille, the great seventeenth century dramatist to Maupassant, a great fiction writer and a disciple of Flaubert himself.

Gustave was born into a well-established, middle class family of professionals. His father, Achille-Cleophas Flaubert was a noted surgeon. He was the director of the Hotel-Dieu hospital, where Gustave spent his childhood. The elder brother of Gustave, Achille, named after their father, followed his father's footsteps as a surgeon. The mother of Gustave, Justine-Caroline Flaubert, likewise came from a family of doctors. Small wonder that Flaubert did not lack prototypes for the medical profession in his fiction. Moreover, as we shall see, his respectable family background stood him in good stead, during the "Madame Bovary" trial. Gustave studied in the Royal College

of Rouen. From his boyhood onward, he was passionately interested in literature. While in his teens, he ran a journal "Art and Progress" and wrote numerous youthful pieces, including "Passion and Virtue" which seems a rough, early sketch of what later become the famous novel, Madame Bovary.

The emotional experiences of the young Gustave are also worth noting. At the age of fifteen while spending his summer vacation at Trouville, he fell in love with Elisa Schlesinger, a married woman much older than himself. Thus passion, which fits in the Romantic pattern, led to a mental crisis and an almost, lifelong tortured, hopeless emotion. Some critics and biographers of Flaubert have attributed such a relationship to a psychological immaturity on the part of Flaubert, while others have commended the depths of his emotions. Either way, the affair helped shape the literary life of Flaubert. At the age of nineteen, he had a brief love affair with another married woman, Eulalie Foucaud de Langlade, in Marseille. Some critics have observed a shadow of this lady in the creation of Emma Bovary.

After passing the baccalaureate examination, the equivalent of graduation, young Flaubert, after a tour of the Pyrenees and Corsica, enrolled in the faculty of Law in Paris. He passed in the first year examination but failed in the second year. Literature remained his main pre-occupation. He formed a friendship with the noted journalist. Maxime du Camp, which though it later turned to bitterness, did much to help his literary career. Certain changes also took place in his family life. The father of Gustave died and was succeeded in his post by his eldest son. Caroline, the sister of Gustave died in childbirth, leaving behind a baby daughter, Desiree Caroline. Gustave Flaubert settled down at the family house of Croisset, a village or small town near Rouen, with his widowed mother and infant niece. Here he spent the greater part of his subsequent life, devoting himself to writing, leading a quiet and secluded existence.

In 1846, Flaubert became intimate with Louise Colet, a woman writer. Their relationship lasted, on and off, for eight years. Louise was, perhaps, the most steady feminine influence in the life of Flaubert. In 1848, Flaubert was in Paris, where he witnessed the Revolution. Later this was to figure in his novel, L' *Education Sentimentale (The Sentimental* Education). In 1849, he completed a historical fantasy based novel, *La Tentation de saint Antoine* in the first version. The central figure is Saint Anthony a mystic and hermit of the early Christian era, who is constantly tempted in his holy seclusion by demons and other imaginary creatures. This story was referred to during the Madame Bovary trial.

In November 1849, Flaubert and Du Camp started on a mini world tour. They visited Egypt, where Flaubert visited the courtesan, Kutchiuk-Hunem. They travelled through the Middle East, Beirut, Jerusalem, Nazareth, Damuscus, Baalbeck, Tripoli,

Rhodes, Smyrna. Much of this territory was then part of the Ottoman Empire. They arrived at Constantinople (Istanbul), the capital of that Empire, then went on to Greece and Italy. The so-called exotic Orient fascinated Flaubert and later inspired him to write the novel *Salammbo* and a short story about John the Baptist. He returned to Croisset in June, 1851. He was in Paris on 2nd December that year, when Napoleon 111 seized power through a coup d' etat and laid the foundations of the Second Empire. This incident, too. appears in *L'Education Sentiment ale.*

In September, Flaubert had already started his work on Madame Bovary. It was finished in April 1857. Du Camp bought it for the journal. Revue de Paris, in return for a payment of 2000 francs. It appeared in six instalments. Later the book was bought by the publisher, Michel Levy for 800 francs, besides a bonus of 500 francs. In 1857, January, February, the novel became the subject of a judicial case. Flaubert was accused of obscenity and immorality but finally acquitted.

In 1858, Flaubert went to North Africa, in order to visit the ruins of Carthage and obtain local colour for *Salammbo.* The novel was published by Michel Levy in November 1862. Flaubert replied to the criticism by Sainte Beuve. *L'Education Sentimentale* appeared seven years later. Meanwhile Flaubert had become something of a celebrity of the Second Empire. He was invited to the palace of the Emperor in Campiegne in 1864. Two years later, he was made a chevalier of the Legion of Honour-the highest award in France. He became a favourite of Princess Mathilde.

France was convulsed in the years 1870-71 by great historical and political events. The Franco-Prussian war broke out, followed by the swift collapse of France and occupation of the country by the Prussian army. Flaubert acted as a male nurse in Rouen, perhaps following, after a fashion, the profession of the father and brother. Later he was a lieutenant of the National Guard. In March, 1871, he went to Brussels with the younger Dumas, to prove his fidelity to his former patroness and friend, Princess Mathilde. The defeat had led to the abdication of Napoleon III and the fall of the Second Empire. The Prussian soldiers had occupied Croisset, Flaubert's own home town. In March 1871, the Paris Commune, which has been described as the world's first workers' state, was created. After two months or so, it was destroyed and an unprecedented massacre of the Communards took place. Flaubert visited Paris in June 1871, after the fall of the Commune.

The last decade of Flaubert's life was spent under the Third Republic. It was a time of triumph and tragedy, success and setbacks alike. His personal life, particularly the relationship with women, was complex. For Elisa Schlesinger he continued to feel a hopeless and exalted attachment. The financial ruin of her husband forced the family to move to Baden, in Germany. Flaubert occasionally visited her there. The

character and situation of Mme. Arnoux in *L'Education Sentimentaie* have been inspired, in part, by Elisa. Louise Colet died in 1876. Though Flaubert had broken off relations with her more than two decades ago, her death probably meant something to him. In the mid 1850s, he had become intimate with an actress. Beatrix Person, while in 1871, he was attracted by a young widow, Leonie Brienne.

Flaubert was troubled by family affairs, during the last years of his life. The bankruptcy of his nephew, Commanville, forced Flaubert to give up his apartment in Paris and to sell his farm at Deauville. The mother of Gustave had died three years earlier. Perhaps in order to improve his financial situation, he sought the post of conservator in the Mazarin Library of Paris. He failed in this but obtained a subordinate post. In September 1879, he returned to Croisset, which he would never leave again. His literary labours, however, continued without interruption. *Trois Contes* (Three Tales) was published in 1877. The collection included three stories : The legend of Saint Julien the Hospitalier, Herodias and A Simple Heart. The first two stories are historical, like Salammbo and The Temptation of Saint Anthony. Their religious and biblical aspects link them particularly with the latter. Flaubert also worked on his last novel, Bouvard et Pecuchet, (Bouvard and Pecuchet) which was published after his death. Earlier, he had tried his hand at drama writing, chiefly through adaptation and collaboration. In 1874, he wrote a satirical comedy, Candidat (The Candidate). However, the play was not a success and had to be withdrawn from the stage after four days of presentation.

Flaubert, meanwhile, had become, the doyen of a group of young writers, such as Zola, Maupassant, who regarded him as the master. Flaubert, for example, praised the first published story of Maupassant and defended him against critics.

On 8th May, 1880, Flaubert was attached by a cerebral haemorrhage and died within a few hours. The funeral took place in Rouen.

The life of Flaubert spanned a turbulent period. The Bourbon monarchy was restored by the Allies, after the battle of Waterloo in 1815 and finally overthrown in 1830. This period is known as the Restoration period in French history. The period from 1830-48 was the period of the July monarchy or Orleanist monarchy. The reign of Louis Philippe was overthrown by the revolution of 1848 and the short-lived Second Republic inaugurated. The Second Empire of Napoleon III spanned 1851 to 1870. Then the Third Republic began. Thus Flaubert was born in the Restoration period and died in the Third Republic. He lived through the July Monarchy, the Second Empire, the double Revolution of 1848, the Prussian occupation and the Paris Commune. He himself was, as we have seen, the eye witness to many of these events.

A socialist movement, or, one might say, several movements, developed in the

lifetime of Flaubert. True, the actual number of industrial workers was relatively small. France was somewhat backward as regards industrialization, compared to Britain. In 1870, only about 30 per cent of industrial units employed more than 20 workers. Still, small producers, independent artisans and the like provided material for various leftist movements and organizations. The silk workers of Lyons, in the early 1830s, rose in rebellion with the memorable slogan, "We shall live working or die fighting". That is, rebellion was the alternative to unemployment. The July revolution of 1830 had a strong workers' component, though, ironically it led to the consolidation of bourgeois rule. There were many small, secret societies, the Society of Public Safety, the Society of the Rights of Man. Victor Hugo portrays such a one in *Les Miserables*. The revolution of 1848 was really made up of two revolutions. The February revolution overthrew the July monarchy and created the Second Republic. But the bourgeois republican leaders dissolved the work houses or ateliers, which were to give some relief to unemployed workers. The workers rose in protest in June. Their defeat was followed by a bloody massacre, leading to a split on the democratic side and the rise of Napoleon III. As mentioned earlier, Flaubert was a witness to the revolution of 1848, which appears as a central point in *L'Education Sentimentale* and also plays a role in Bouvard et Pecuchet. Finally, there was the great upsurge of the Paris commune. There were many leaders of the working people and many strands of leftist thought: Felicite de Lamenais and left Catholicism, Blanqui, who combined insurrectionism with the dictatorship of the proletariat (he was said to have coined the term), Bakunin, the father of Anarchism and so on.

Where did Flaubert stand in all this? He was certainly no flaming radical. As we have seen, he won official prestige and recognition under the Second Empire and was a particular friend of Princess Mathide. At the same time, he carried on a correspondence with "Progressive" writers, such as George Sand or Hugo, who had gone into semi-voluntary exile, under the Second Empire. Sartre blamed Flaubert for not protesting against the massacre of the Communards. Indeed, Flaubert was hardly the man to make such an appeal.

2.2 The Origins and Sources of Madame Bovary

Madame Bovary is undoubtedly one of the most famous novels in the world. Moreover the heroine of the novel has assumed an almost mythical character, like Don Juan, Don Quixote, Robinson Crusoe. "Bovarysme" has become a term to denote a certain mindset.

What were the origin and sources of this remarkable work of fiction? Flaubert began writing the book on 19th September, 1851 and took about five years to complete

it. It appeared, as we have seen, in six instalments in Revue de Paris, 1856 and was later published by Michel Levy. Flaubert was an extremely hard working and conscientious writer. We know the story, perhaps exaggerated, of his going through forty adjectives and finally choosing one, in order to describe a cabbage. From his letters, particularly those addressed to Louise Colet, we get a glimpse of his writing of Madame Bovary. He would start his work at the beginning of the afternoon and continue till late at night, sometimes up to dawn. The lamp in his room served as a beacon for sailors on the Seine, in front of his house. Sometimes he walked in the garden, reading in an audible voice pages which he had just written. He wrote with a goose quill pen, dipping it in a bronze ink pot, shaped like a toad. He was often exasperated by the slowness of progress, yet made no compromise with the ideal of perfection. "It is not easy to be simple", he remarked.

Nevertheless he was sometimes open to suggestion. His friend, Maxine du Camp, co-editor of Revue de Paris, persuaded Flaubert to shorten certain pages and, above all, to change the episode of Leon and Emma in a carriage. As we shall see, this change played an important part when the book faced a charge of obscenity and a trial.

What made Flaubert choose this particular theme? Some believe that, as a reaction to his just concluded, exotic, Oriental tour, he wished to paint a familiar, plain picture of his own province. Perhaps, also, he was influenced by Balzac, whose Human Comedy Series included novels set in a provincial background.

The story of Madame Bovary is briefly as follows. Charles Bovary, a good-hearted, rather mediocre boy grew up to be a doctor. He practices in a small town in Normandy. His first wife, who is much older than himself, dies and he marries Emma, the pretty young daughter of a well-off farmer. Emma, who has been educated in a convent and read many romantic novels, dreams of an impossible happiness. She soon becomes tired of her good, devoted but common place husband and drab background. An aristocratic ball to which she and her husband are invited, increases her discontent all the more, by force of contrast. Bovary moves to another town, in the hope that a change would cheer up his wife but this does not happen. They have a child, a girl whom Emma names Berthe, but maternity, like marriage, brings her little joy.

A young law clerk, Leon, falls in love with Emma and she, too, is attracted by him, to some degree. However, timidity and inexperience, if not virtue, keep them apart, Leon goes to Paris, to study law. Emma, left alone, regrets not having had an affair with him. Rodolphe, a wealthy landowner who has bought a property nearly, comes to the town. Aged thirty-four, he is quite experienced in matters of love and seduces Emma with little effort. Her passion gradually becomes all absorbing and she cannot bear to confine her affair with Rodolphe to stolen meetings. She wants to

elope with him, taking her daughter with her. and the three would start a new life, perhaps in some foreign land. But Rodolphe, shallow-hearted, egoistical, is the last person to make sacrifices and change his whole life, for the sake of love. He breaks off his relationship with Emma and leaves the town, sending Emma a highly moral, hypocritical letter, as an excuse for his conduct.

Emma falls extremely ill, out of grief, and almost dies. After her recovery, she turns to repentance and religion. But Leon returns and they renew their earlier, unspoken love. Emma's passion leads her into all kinds of extravagance. She falls into the clutches of an unscrupulous money-lender, and even involves her husband in the bankruptcy. Facing financial ruin and exposure, she turns to her lovers, but neither is willing to help her. Driven to despair, she commits suicide. Charles discovers her secret and himself dies soon after, probably because of the great shock. Their little daughter, left an orphan, ends up as a mill hand.

Emma is trapped in the mediocrity around her. She can neither escape from it, nor accept it. The small town society is represented by the pharmacy owner, Homains, the priest Boumisien, the money-lender Heureux, the solicitor Guilleunin and the like. Disappointed in marriage, she turns to adultery. But her loves are very far from the heroes of her favourite romances. Rodolphe and Leon, beneath their superficial glamour, turn out to be as mediocre as Charles Bovary, without his goodness and genuine devotion to Emma. Emma can find release only in death. Earlier, Flaubert had attributed her suicide to emotional disappointment and hysteria, but in the final version he stresses her financial difficulties. Emma Bovary has been compared to the great, unhappy women of myth, history and classical literature, who have lost their lives through unlawful love: Phedre, Francesca du Rimini. However, in the modern bourgeois world, it is money that plays the role of fate.

Did Emma Bovary have any real life models? The Delamare case has been cited most frequently. Maxime du Camp wrote to Flaubert asking, "Is it the story of Madame de Lamoure which is so beautiful?" Eugene Delamare was a student of Gustave Flaubert's own father. He passed the medical examination and became a health officer. His first wife, who was older than him, died and the widower married a young girl of the region, Adéle-Delphine Couturier. The marriage turned out to be disastrous. The young woman had love affairs, ran into debts and died on 6th March, 1848, at the age of twenty seven, leaving behind a little daughter. Her death was considered the result of suicide, though this has not been absolutely proved. Only a year later, her husband too died. Local legend and anecdotes embellished the late woman who has been considered the prototype of Madame Bovary. Strange passions gathered around the name and in 1896, long after the death of Flaubert, an unknown

person removed her tombstone. It should be noted, however, that the author himself never mentions the name of Adéle Delamare in his notes or documents.

Other models or prototypes might also have been available. Elisa Schlesinger and Louise Colet, the two women who, in different ways, had played the greatest role in the life of Flaubert were seldom free from financial troubles. Another woman with whom he was acquainted was Louis Pradier, the wife of a scelpteur, Pradier, and thus called the "wife of Phidias", (Phidias was a famous Sculpteur of ancient Greece) Louise Pradier was notorious for her love affairs and financial problems, which led to an open scandal. A similar figure was Louise Capelle. Most interesting of all, a certain Esther de Bovery was involved in a trial at Rouen in 1845. In short, Flaubert did not lack feminine figures who might serve as models for his heroine. He commented about Louise Pradier : "This woman seems to me the feminine type with all her instincts an orchestra of female sentiments..."

Prototypes for other personages can similarly be traced. Charles as student of medicine and Leon as a student of law, recall the author's student days in Paris. Leon, in his period of hopeless love, resembles Flaubert vis-á-vis Elisa Schlesinger, while the brief happiness of Leon and Emma recalls the relationship between the author and Louise Colet. The devise of love offered by Emma to Rodolphe had been given to Flaubert as a present by Louise Colet. The ball at Vaubyssard, which has such a psychological influence on Emma, was the transposition of a fete organized by the Marquis de Pomera, in the Chateau of Heron. Flaubert had been present there.

Though no qualified doctor, Flaubert seemed to have inherited some of the medical talent of his family. In 1850, in Damascus, Syria, in the course of his Oriental tour, he mended the fractured leg of a sailor. A similar incident occurs twice in Madame Bovary. Roualt, the father of Emma, breaks a leg and Charles Bovary goes to attend him. It is thus that he becomes acquainted with his future second wife. A few years later, Homais persuades Charles to try a new remedy on Hippolyte, the lame stable boy at the inn. The result is disastrous and the leg has to be amputated. Not only does this lower the professional prestige of Bovary but it also destroys the last vestige of Emma's respect for her husband. The agonizing end of Emma is said to parallel the terrible and premature end of Caroline, the sister of Flaubert.

It is needless to pursue this line of enquiry further. It is enough to know that Flaubert, like countless writers before and since, has taken material for his fiction from contemporary life and society, while transforming it with his own creative magic.

2.3 The trial of Madame Bovary

We have already seen that Flaubert had to face a court case for the alleged obscenity and irreligion in *Madame Bovary* and also finally acquitted. It is worth examining this episode in some detail, since it throws light not only on the contemporary reception of the novel but on some aspects of the novel itself.

The Imperial Advocate (in other words, the Attorney General) built up a powerful case. He accused the writer of immorality and irreligion. True, the story had an eminently moral ending. The adulteress met an extreme and terrible punishment. The wages of sin mean death. But, insisted the Prosecutor Pinard, this is not enough. In the name of what, by what standard could Emma Bovary be condemned? She had been portrayed as superior to everyone else in the novel, for all her faults and follies. Pinard seemed to imply that Flaubert should have created a positive character to counterbalance Emma and her foibles. He was also outraged by the reference to "the pollution of marriage and disillusionment of adultery." It should have been the other way round. Disappointment and disillusionment were possible in marriage. Though matrimony was considered a sacrament by the Catholic Church and deemed by the ruling classes the basis of the social fabric, Pinard was willing to concede that it was not always a bed or roses. However, how could marriage be polluting?

As regards Madame Bovary being an irreligious or anti-religious novel, the prosecutor stressed the Homais-Bournisiea conflict or controversy, which occupies a considerable part in the story. The priest and the pharmacier represent the two poles of French society, as far as beliefs are concerned. Homais is rationalist, anti-clerical. He is no atheist but not an orthodox Christian either. His faith is close to Deism, though this term is not mentioned in the novel, Deism was the religion most favoured by European, particularly French, educated classes in the age of Enlightenment. Deists believed that there was only one God for all denominations and creeds alike. God made the laws of nature and for him to work miracles would mean going against his own laws. Homais speaks scornfully about the supernatural tales of the Bible-the resurrection of Christ or Jonah in the belly of the whale. Homais declares himself a disciple of Socrates, Voltaire, Rousseau. The Prosecutor found all this offensive.

Curiously enough, Pinard gave another reason for accusing the book of irreligion. Religion, in this case Catholic Christianity, is given an erotic element. When Emma turns to God, she regards him in the same way as she does her lovers. The Temptation of Saint Anthony is also seen as a denigration of Christianity. As we have seen, the first version of this book was completed in 1849. However, the friends of Flaubert considered it inadequate. The novel was published only as the final version in 1873, almost quarter of a century later. However, a fragment appeared earlier in a journal and it is probably to this that the Prosecutor referred.

The charge of implicit political subversion appears even stranger. At the ball, Emma meets an old duke, allegedly once a lover of Marie Antoinette. The sight gives her (Emma) a particular thrill. How wonderful to catch a glimpse of a great noble, who might have lain in the royal bed! This kind of sexual innuendo was not uncommon in Flaubert. In *L'Education Sentimentale,* the revolutionary masses who occupy the royal palace, destroy the great beds. They would have liked to ravish the noble ladies who slept there and this is a sort of substitution. However, the Second Empire of a Bonaparte could not stand the slur on a Bourbon Queen. Perhaps Marie Antoinette was connected with Empress Eugenie!

Flaubert, for his part, was not quite friendless or unprotected. A moderately wealthy proprietaie, the son and brother of well-known physicians, he could claim some connections to be used against the legal onslaught. Senard, a prominent lawyer and a man who carried some weight under the Second Empire, had been a friend of Gustave's father. He now undertook the defence of the son. The defence was certainly spirited and skilful, Where, asked Senard, was the immorality? Even the Prosecutor had conceded that adultery had been sternly punished. Nor was there any overt display of eroticism. All we are told of the double seduction of Emma is "She gave herself' (Elle S'abandonna). French and English classical novels, such as Clarissa Harlow or Lettres Persanes, (Persian Letters) had gone much further in this direction. Yet no one blamed Richardson or Montesquiue. If it was a crime to describe the nature of temptation, then Bossuet was also deserving of blame. Here Senard quoted a long extract from the seventeenth century ecclesiastical author. And if a certain erotic element inseparable from Christian mysticism was to be condemned, why not start with the great Saint Theresa and her like? (Interestingly Flaubert later compared another of his heroines, Salammbo with Saint Theresa). In the original version of the novel, Emma gave herself to Leon for the first time in a carriage, Leon justified this outrageous behaviour simply by saying, "It happens in Paris". Even here, argued Senard, Flaubert had not gone beyond an earlier novel: La Double Meprise (The Double Misunderstanding) by Merimee. However, in the final version, the episode had been considerably toned down, Leon and Emma get into a carriage together but the rest, so to speak, is left to the imagination of the reader. Senard emphasizes this aspect.

Senard denied any insult to the "martyred" Queen, Marie Antoinette and also any disrespect towards religion. Bournisien, though not very intelligent or effective, has been portrayed as a good, conscientious parish priest. He is superior to the sceptic Homais. To find really evil priests in fiction, Senard advises the reader to turn to a novel by Balzac or Notre Dame de Paris (translated in English as The Hunchback of Notre Dame) by Victor Hugo. Boumisian appears a saint in comparison.

Nor did Senard find anything objectionable in the phrase, "Pollution of marriage, disillusionment of adultery" Women who are unhappy in marriage often do find the condition polluting, from a psychological, if not social or moral view point. Senard, as we have seen, often quotes from French or English classics or near contemporary writers (Merimee, for instance) in order to prove his point. In this context, he might have given the example of "Les Femmes" (Women), an essay by Diderot, one of the great philosophers of the Enlightenment. Diderot states here that many women who do not love or respect their husbands feel polluted by the conjugal touch, as though they had been ravished.

Senard declared that the story of the novel reflected a state of affairs common enough in the French society of the day. Many women, like Emma, are educated beyond their station and can find no proper outlet for their desires and ambition. This leads to aberrations, sometimes even tragedy. Senard stressed the respectable antecedents and family background of Flaubert and the fact that he had worked for almost five years, steadily, writing Madame Bovary. This proved that the author was interested in creating a serious book, not a scandalous best-seller.

The judge found fault with certain portions of Madame Bovary. However, judging the book as a whole and the intention of the author, he gave a verdict which amounted to "not guilty". It should be noted that similar charges were brought against a number of books, including Les Fleurs du Mai by Baudelaire, under the Second Empire. There is little doubt that the ruling classes objected to Madame Bovary not because of its alleged immorality or irreligion but became it painted a rather unattractive picture of contemporary French society, as reflected in a small town bourgeoisie.

2.4 What was the nature of the realism of Flaubert?

Flaubert has been hailed as the father of modern, realistic fiction. He was followed by a new School of young fiction writers, Zola, Manpassant, Daudet, Bourget. Yet his realism is mingled with Romantic elements, if of a bitter and obverse kind. Symbolism, too, runs like a thread through the novel. Flaubert was almost like Baudelaire, who saw life through a forest of symbols. A critic has commented. "Flaubert's relation to the Romantic Movement was a curious and interesting one. Its impress is apparent on almost every page he wrote, but though it accounts for some of his most" serious weaknesses, it also enabled him to make some of his most important discoveries (1). While we cannot quite agree with the negative aspects of this remark, it contains some cogent points.

For instance, there is a long passage in which Emma dreams of being somewhere else, a Swiss Mountain chateau or some Scottish cottage. She imagines a mate

wearing the dress of these regions, instead of her husband Charles Bovary, with his ridiculous hat. A longing for the distant and unknown is, of course, a part of the Romantic movement. Had Emma really been born in Scotland or Switzerland, she would probably have longed for life in a French village! She read cheap, romantic novels, from her days as a convent student to her married life. Certainly they filled her with false ideas of life and impossible dreams. These books were, presumably, the nineteenth century equivalents of Mills and Boon type romances or cheap Bollywood films! The elder Mme Bovary, Emma's mother- in-law, is right in blaming such books for the unbalanced mind of the young woman, though her attempts to cut off Emma's access to the lending library is perhaps not the ideal solution. When Emma gives herself to Rodolphe, she thinks of her "sisters"-heroines of romances who committed adultery and who now seem to possess her brain and lead her down an enchanted path.

However, it is not only trashy novels that give Emma a false version of Romanticism. Sir Walter Scott was extremely popular in France at this time and Emma had read his novels, probably in translation. A proper reading of Scott's works certainly would not have led to the Bovary type of illusions. Scott was what might be called a Romantic realist. But Emma, like many readers, saw the novels of Scott through a hazy colouring and found an idealized would which they sought. Later, Emma visited an opera, "Lucie-de Lammermoor". based on one of Scott's novels "The Bride of Lammemoor". It is a tale of love and death that greatly moved her. Ironically, Emma's own death was to be painfully sordid, devoid of all romance. Her lovers, instead of sharing her fate, lived on happily and Leon got married.

Another ironical twist is the reversal of a conventional situation, the heart-broken lover bidding his beloved farewell. Rodolphe writes a letter to Emma, breaking off their relationship. Though his motives are entirely selfish, he tries to persuade her, as well as himself, of his noble motives. He places a few drops of water on the letter, to represent tears and make Emma believe in his non-existent grief.

The realism of Madame Bovary can thus be set against the romantic fiction it refers to. Such contrasts and counter points, almost parodies, were not uncommon in Flaubert Bouvard et Pecuchet, for instance, is, in part, a parody of the Bildungs roman (educational novel) such as Telemaque by Fenelon and Emile by Rousseau. Bouvard and Pecuchet try to bring up a young boy and girl, in the manner of Rousseau's Emile and Sophie, but the result is a comic failure.

The setting in which Emma and Rodolphe first come close together is an example of this realism. They exchange vows not in a romantic background, a moon-silvered, rose- scented garden or a boudoir lit with a dim lamp, or a Venetian gondola-the sort

of scene imagined by Emma. Instead, it is an agricultural fair. The lovers are surrounded by farm animals, cows, pigs, and the like. Critics have commented on the remarkable structure of this episode. There appear three tiers: the farm people and their animals below, the politicians delivering banal lectures on a raised platform and above all, Rodolphe and Emma. This architecture, as it were, seems a fitting undermining of the romantic illusions of the heroine.

The importance of the financial question has already been mentioned. Emma has been compared to the great and tragic "amouréuses" women in love, in myth and history. But we do not see Phedre checking her bank accounts, Francesca du Rimni counting pennies. Her lovers are wholly cold and negative when she turns to them in her extreme need. Leon is shocked when she suggests that he should commit a crime for her sake. Rodolphe comments cynically to himself, "So that is why she came", i.e. to ask for money, not to renew their past love. The role of money, too, is part of the realistic fiction of the modern, bourgeois world.

However, there is the other side of the coin it has been said that Don Quixote contains something of the chivalric romances that it mocks. So the Realism of Madame Bovary could perhaps have been created only by a writer who had been steeped in the Romantic movement. Emma is closer to Salammbo, the very essence of historical Romanticism, than might be realized at first sight. The small town, petty bourgeois housewife of mid nineteenth century France is perhaps a "Sister under the skin", to quote Kipling, to the Carthaginian princes of more than two thousand years ago.

2.5 The Social and Economic background

As we have seen, Madame Bovary was written in 1851-56, the first five years of the Second Empire. The setting is most likely, the last years of the July of Orleanist Monarchy, the reign of Louis Philippe, which lasted from 1830 to 1848. The "beloved king" referred to in the novel seems probably Louis Philippe. Also, the probable real life model, or one of the models of the heroine, Mme Delamarge, died, most likely through suicide, in March 1848. This was just a month after the July monarchy was overthrown by the February Revolution.

Indeed, the three novels of Flaubert set in contemporary France are located, for the most part, in the July monarchy. The climax of L'Education Sentimentale and Bouvard and Pecuchet is the double revolution of 1848, even though the story continues for some time thereafter. Flaubert planned to write a novel about the Second Empire but never got down to it. The task was left to his disciples, such as Zola and Maupassant. Nor did Flaubert set any literary work in the background of the Third Republic, which witnessed the last decade of his life, except, perhaps, the unsuccessful play, Candidat.

What were some of the salient socio-economic features of France under the Orleanist monarchy and how far are they reflected in Madame Bovary? The reign of Louis Philippe has been considered by historians as the period when bourgeois rule in France was consolidated, Louis Philippe had received the crown through the choice of people, admittedly a small bourgeois elite. He claimed neither the divine right of kings, like the Bourbons nor the power of the sword, like Napoleon. Louis Philippe called himself the citizen King, and sent his sons to public schools. France was industrially more backward than Britain. In the mid nineteenth century, the majority of the French people were still connected with agriculture.

However, industrialization was spreading, in ways that sometimes proved negative for the regime. The spreading of railways led to deficit financing. It was said that Louis Philippe, a man of the Enlightenment, failed to understand the Industrial Revolution or Socialist theories.

From 1830-34, there were almost continuous insurrections in Paris and Lyon. A decade of relative prosperity and stability followed, to be interrupted by another crisis in the mid 1840s. Guizot, the Chief Minister, a noted historian and a liberal of the English pattern, did not understand the complex problems of an evolving society or popular discontents. 64,000 people in Paris were supposed to be without regular means of subsistence.

How far are these conditions reflected in Flaubert's novel? Most of the action takes place in Yonville-L 'Abbaye, a small town situated on the confluence of three provinces. Normandy, Picardy and Ile-de-France. It is largely an agricultural centre, though we are told that agricultural activities are relatively expensive here, because the soil is not very fertile. Also, the region produces the worst cheese in France! The agricultural fair, awarding prizes to the best cultivators and cattle-breeders, is obviously an event of great importance. Emma's father is a wealthy fanner, who can afford to give his daughter a convent education. There are also railways and "filatures" spinning or cotton mills, which mark the district. Ironically Emma's daughter will work in such a mill sinking from the petty bourgeois clan of professionals, well-off traders and farmers (the mother of Charles Bovary was a hosier's daughter) to the working classes. The critic Edmund Wilson sees this as a result of the irresponsibility of her parents and as an example of the relationship between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat (The Frederic-Rosanette relationship in L'Education Sentimentale is interpreted by the critic in the same way. The fate of little Berthe Bovary might be inteipreted in another manner : the instability of the petty bourgeoisie and the increasing polarization of society.

What was the age of little Berthe Bovary when she was forced to earn her living?

We do not know. However, child labour was common enough in contemporary France. Laws had been passed to ban labour of children below eight and night work for minors below sixteen, but these rules were seldom observed. Emma, after dismissing Nastasie, who had served Charles Bovary before his marriage employs a fourteen years old girl, Felicite. Interestingly, she had the same name as the servant girl in "A Simple Heart". At the agricultural fair, a servant woman receives a prize for years of faithful service on a farm. Her silence and work-hardened hands contrast with the empty rhetoric of the officials.

The merchant and money-lender Lheureux and his associates reflect, on a smaller scale, the financial scandals that were rocking the July monarchy. They also anticipated the financial transactions of the Second Empire that are portrayed, in the novels of Zola, such as L'Argent (Money) or La Curée (The Chase).

The other side of the coin was widespread poverty, recorded officially. The conversation between Emma and the priest Bournisien is significant, in this context. Emma tries to articulate her problems but the priest is quite incapable of understanding, let alone helping her. He speaks instead of the miseries of the poor, who lack adequate food or winter fuel. The author seems to show both sides at fault. The priest Bournisien is unable to understand that there might be other problems, besides physical need. On the other hand, Emma feels little about those who face real misery, rather than imaginary sufferings. At a later stage, she does become involved in charitable work, even to an excess, but this does not give her real mental satisfaction. The elder Mme. Bovary remarks caustically that her daughter- in-law would be rid of her fancies and vapors if she had to do manual work and earn her living. But we are shown the hardly enviable state of Catherine, who has worked hard as a farm servant for years. Nor is Emma's daughter, reduced to the level of a child labourer in a spinning mill, likely to be happier than her mother. Are these, then, the only social and cultural options available?

The Homais-Bouminien debate has already been discussed and mirrors an important aspect of contemporary French society. In the words of Martin Tumell :

"The exchanges between Bournisien and Homais are something more than comic relief, something more than the bickerings of the village priest and the village, rationalist. They reflect the conflict between religion and science which rent France in the nineteenth century. However, the important point is that neither religion nor rationalism of the Homais type helps the heroine or the common people."

Journals in growing number, catered to an increasing mass of the reading public. We see Emma's addiction to popular journals and her mother-in-law's aversion to them.

The Orleanist Government apparently interfered enough to irritate the press, without really curbing it. The Second Empire was more draconian. At least one reason for the prosecution of Madame Bovary was its appearance in a journal that was believed to be liberal and anti-Government.

2.6 The Characters of the Novel

First of all, of course, it is the heroine who deserves, discussion. Emma Bovary is one of the most famous fictional characters in the world. The term "bovarysme", coined by a philosopher, Jules de Gaultier, has passed into the vocabulary of several European languages.

The possible real life origins of Emma have already been presented. An additional incident might be mentioned. The Delamares belonged to the Flaubert family circle. The senior Mme Delamare who had lost her son and daughter-in-law and was left to bring up the orphan grandchild, sometimes visited Gustave's mother at Croisset. By a strange coincidence, Louis Bouilhet, a minor writer and a close friend of Gustave, once paid a visit to Crosiesset on such a day. He met the old lady and heard her tragic story. Bouilhet later persuaded his friend that this tragicomedy of real existence was eminently suitable for a novel. At that time Flaubert, who had just returned from the exotic oriental journey, was planning to write a "realistic" novel set in contemporary Flanders. Bouilhet persuaded him that a story of his own Normandy and people whom he knew well, would be better. As we have seen, there were other prototypes of Emma. But perhaps Flaubert came closest to the truth when he declared, "Madame Bovary C'est moi." "MaDAME Bovary, that is myself'.

Two of the oldest and most frequent charges against the creator of Emma Bovary were as follows. She is too petty, insignificant to be the heroine of even a tragic-comely. In the words of Henry James. she is "a very small affair". We feel little for her except a kind of amused pity, as she tries to rise above her own background and milieu, to which she really belongs. In the second place, the author has been too hard on his heroine despite, or perhaps because of the fact, that she was his own alter ego. Contemporary critics, as different as Sainte Beuve, Burdelaire and Matthew Arnold agree on this point. In the words of Arnold, as he compares Emma Bovary with Anna Karenina of Tolstoi :

Emma Bovary follows a course in some respects like that of Anna, but where, in Emma Bovary, is Anna's charm?He (Flaubert) is cruel with the cruelty of petrified feeling, to his poor heroine. He pursues her without pity or pause, as with malignity, he is harder upon her himself than any reader even, I think, will be inclined to be (3).

Or as Turnell puts it,

She (Emma) possessed a number of solid virtues which were deliberately played down by the novelist. It was after all to her credit that she possessed too much sensibility to fit comfortably into the appalling provincial society of Yonville Ã Abbaye and it was her misfortune that she was not big enough to find a way out of the dilemma. We cannot withhold our approval from her attempts to improve her mind or from the pride that she took in her personal appearance and the running of her house. The truth is that Flaubert sacrificed far too much to these. These virtues express his instinctive appreciation of what was sane and well-balanced in the French middle classes, (4).

Possibly there is some truth in such criticism. But the art of the tale lies precisely in making Emma sufficiently superior to her milieu, to suffer but not enough to rue it or break away. The Prosecutor, Pinard was right about one point. Emma, for all her faults and follies, remains the most attractive character in the novel. She reads not only the journals of cheap romance but serious classics, like Balzac, George Sand, Scott, though it is doubtful how far she understands them. She tries learning history and philosophy, though with doubtful success.

2.7 Flaubert : Madame Bovary : Recommended reading

1. Benjamin F Bart: Flaubert, University of Syracuse Press, New York, 1967.
2. Jean-Paul Sartre : The Family Idiot! Gustave Glaubert tr. Carol Cosman, Chicago Press, 1981.
3. Enid Starkie : Flaubert: the making of the Marter, Weitenfeld & Nicholson, 1967.
4. Francis Steegmuller: Flaubert and Madame Bovary, a double portrait, Hamish Hamilton, London, 1958.
5. Victor H. Brombert: The novels of Flaubert, themes and techniques, Princeton University Press, 1966.
6. Jonathon D. Culler : Flaubert: The uses of uncertainty. Ithaca, Cornell University Press, 1985.
7. Raymond Giraud : Flaubert; a collection of Critical Essays, Prentice-Hall, New Jersey, 1964.
8. Diana Knight: Flaubert's Characters : the language of illusion, Cambridge University Press, 1985.
9. Anthony Thorlby : Gustave Flaubert and the art of realism.
10. Benjamin F. Aurt; Modame-Bovary and the Critics: a collection of essays, New York, the University Press, 1968.

11. Alison Fairlie : Flaubert, Madame Bovary, Edwin Arnold, London, 1962.
12. Stephen Health : Gustave Flaubert, Madame Bovary, Cambridge University Press, 1992.
13. Dominick La Capra : Madame Bovary on trial; Ithaca, Cornell University Press, 1982.
14. Rosemary Lloyd : Modame Bovary.
15. Stirling Haig; Flaubert and the gift of speech : dialogue and discourse in four "modem" novels, Cambridge University Press, 1986.
16. Margaret Ñ, Tillett: On reading Flaubert, Oxford University Press, 1961.
17. R. J. Sherrington : Three Novels of Flaubert; a study of technique, Oxford, Clarendon, 1970.
18. Flaubert and post-modernism ed. Naomi Schor and Henry F. Majewski, University of Nebraska Press, 1984.
19. H. Meili Steele : Realism and the Drama of Reference, Strategies of representation in Balzac, Flaubert and James, Pennsylvania State University Press, 1988.
20. Charles Bernheimer : Flaubert and Kafka, studies in psychopoetic structure, Yale University Press, 1982.

2.8 Questions

1. "The Sentimental Education" is the title of another novel by Flaubert but it would be equally applicable to Madame Bovary", Do you agree? Give your reasons.
2. "....Madame Bovary though strongly individual, ardently living her own life, is a general type. She can be found in France, in all classes, in all milieux". Do you agree with this comment by Zola? Give your reasons.
3. Consider the sub-title of Madame Bovary : "Customs of the province". Do you think this justified? Give your reasons.
4. "The story of Charles Bovary frames the tale of Emma Bovary" Do you agree? Give your reasons.
5. Discuss the element of fantasy and symbolism in Madame Bovary.

Unit 3 ❑ Thomas Mann : Death in Venice

Structure

3.1 Objective

In this unit we shall be discussing a novella (a short novel or perhaps, a long short story), understand it in the context of the author's life and work and find out the various ways in which the story can be read and critically appreciated.

3.2 Introduction

Thomas Mann is regarded as one of the most important German writers of the 20th century. Winner of the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1929, Mann's novels and short stories are known for their ability to mingle serious, intellectual concerns with realistic story-telling marked by a liking for comedy and irony. Heavily influenced by German philosophy and culture, he succeeded in turning himself into a towering figure of German high culture. His open opposition to the Nazi regime in the 1930's and 40's led to his emigration to the United States where he became a Professor at a university. He died in Switzerland.

3.3 Brief Note on Author

Thomas Mann was born on 6 June 1875 in the seaport town of Lübeck. Otto von Bismarck, popularly known as "the Iron Chancellor", had created the modern German nation just four years ago. Mann's father Heinrich was the owner of a successful granary and shipping business. His mother Julia was the daughter of a plantation owner. The young Thomas imbibed the "German" virtues of discipline and endurance at an early age.

He published his first novel *Buddenbrooks* in 1901 to great critical and popular acclaim and two years later, *Tonio Kröger.* Although, as his published diaries make clear, his sexual desires were mostly directed towards men, he married Katia Pringshiem on 11 February 1905 when he was 29 and she was 21. Katia came from a wealthy Jewish family and had a mathematics professor as a father. Thomas and Katia had three sons and three daughters, all of whom were destined for fame in their own right.

His subsequent novels include *The Magic Mountain* (1924), *Doctor Faustus* (1947), and *Confessions of Felix Krul!* (1954). With the rise of Nazi Germany, Thomas Mann and his family went to Switzerland for a holiday in 1933 and never returned to Germany. He publicly denounced the Nazis in 1936 and took Czech citizenship. Two years later he settled in the United States, becoming a Professor at Princeton University. He later moved to California. When he finally returned to Europe in 1952, it was to Switzerland where he died on 12 August 1955.

3.4 Brief Note on the Text

At some stage in his life, certainly before 1911, Mann decided to write a novel the plot of which would involve an old and established writer disgracing himself by falling in love with someone much younger. Initially the writer was to be the best-known literary figure of German Romantic period-Johann Wolfgang von Goethe. Goethe had fallen in love with a seventeen-year-old girl named Ulrike von Levetzow when he was on holiday in Marienbad in 1823. He was seventy-four. Mann had also decided on a tentative title for the novel- *Goethe in Marienbad.* When the novel was finally written the nature of the passion changed from heterosexual to homosexual because in May 1911 Thomas Mann, aged 35, fell in love with a young Polish boy named Count Wladyslaw Moes. The aristocratic ten- year old was holidaying in Venice with his mother, three sisters and an older friend. Thomas Mann had also gone there on holiday with his wife Katia and brother Heinrich on 26 May. Although the expression of Mann's love for Wladyslaw was limited to only watching him from a distance, the romantic attentions were noticed not only by the boy himself, but also by Katia. Mann himself had made no attempts at hiding his obsession with the boy.

Although the fifty-three-year old protagonist is emotionally and professionally modelled on Mann himself (both are in love with a young boy and both write on similar subjects), the character is physically modelled on the composer Gustav Mahler. Mann deeply admired and respected the composer and the news of his death reached Mann during the Venetian holiday. The character's name is also partially derived from Mahler's name-Gustav.

However, at the time of the writing of *Death in Venice* Mann was also reading a lot of books whose influence one can trace in the novella. He was reading not only Goethe's *Elective Affinities*, but also Plato's *Symposium*, the *Phaedrus* and Plutarch's *Erotikos*. He was also reading György Lukács's *Soul and Form*.

He wrote the novel between July 1911 and July 1912. It was published in two parts in the October and November 1912 issues of *Die Neue Rundschau* before appearing in book form in February 1913. The response to the book was, in the words of the Mann scholar Anthony Heilbut, "Immediate and overwhelming". According to Heilbut, during Mann's lifetime *Death in Venice* appeared in thirty countries and in thirty-seven editions. It was made into a film in 1971 by the Italian director Luchino Visconti and turned into an opera by the British composer Benjamin Britten in 1973. Critics have pointed out novels which seem to have been modelled on *Death in Venice*, such as *A Single Man* by Christopher Isherwood, *The Beauty of Men* by Andrew Holleran and *Love and Death on Long Island* by Gilbert Adair. All of this goes to show the enormous power and influence this novella had and continues to have over the creative imagination of the Western world.

3.5 Outline of the Story

Munich-based Gustave von Aschenbach is a fifty-three year old writer. A widower with a daughter who is now married, Aschenbach decides to go for a walk exhausted as he is by work one afternoon. He wanders into a cemetery where he finds himself gazing at an exotic-looking man. As a result of this experience he is suddenly seized with a desire to travel to somewhere exotic. After giving the matter some thought he decides to go to Venice. On the ship he is accosted by an old man who, in his dress and make-up, seems to want to appear much younger than he is. After getting off the ship, he hires a boat to go to a place from where he would take a steam-ship to go to the Lido, near Venice. But the boatman turns out to be illegal, one without a licence. However, on arriving at Hôtel de Bains at the Lido he checks in and goes for a walk.

Soon after, he dresses up for dinner and goes down to the hall. It is here that he spots an "entirely beautiful" fourteen-year old boy sitting in a group of people speaking in Polish. Next morning when he goes down to the beach, he finds the Polish has

already arrived there. From the sound of the calls that members of that group make to the fourteen-year- old boy von Aschenbach surmises that he must be called Tadzio. He catches sight of the boy again later in the day as he finds himself in the same life as the boy and his young companions. At such close quarters Aschenbach notices the boy's teeth and finds them jagged, pale and anaemic. With a strange satisfaction he concludes that the boy may not live long.

Later in the afternoon he takes a steamer to Venice and finds the air unpleasant and sickly. Since he had once earlier experienced this air and it had made him unwell, he decides that he should leave the sea resort as soon as possible. He gets ready to end his holiday, pays his hotel bills and arranges for his luggage to be sent ahead of him to a destination from where his luggage will sail with him back to Germany. However he delays his departure from the hotel, leaving only after he has had a glimpse of Tadzio. As he leaves the Lido he is distressed to find that the air is freshening up and regrets his hasty decision to cut short his holiday. When he reaches the destination where he would be reunited with his luggage he is informed that his luggage had been mistakenly sent off to another destination along with a different set of luggage. Secretly delighted, he makes a show of anger and says that he wishes to return back to the hotel till his luggage is restored to him. So, he returns to his hotel and is happy to see Tadzio again. From that day onwards he and Tadzio often pass each other either on the beach or in the hotel and he starts to believe that Tadzio too is perhaps enjoying the man's attentions. Tadzio becomes the inspiration for him to resume his writing again. On one evening as the two passed each other Tadzio smiled at von Aschenbach. The man is deeply affected by the smile. He retires to a secluded part of the hotel garden and verbally declares his love for Tadzio although there is no one there to hear him except himself.

Soon after he starts to hear and notice around him the presence of a subdued panic and concern. There is vague talk of some sickness but nobody tells him what exactly the sickness is. When one evening a group of street musicians come to the hotel to entertain the guests, von Aschenbach asks one of them if there is some kind of sickness spreading through the city, but the musician laughs it off. It is finally from a clerk at a British travel agency that he learns the truth: the city is in the grip of the Asiatic cholera. The British gentleman advises von Aschenbach to leave as soon as possible. Aschenbach also prepares to inform Tadzio's mother about the Lido's secret health scare but ultimately does not. Instead he concentrates on his own appearance in order to attract the attention of Tadzio. He agrees to the hotel barber's suggestion and has his grey hair dyed, his cheeks rouged and his lips painted. Gustav von Aschenbach continues following Tadzio around till one day overcome with exhaustion and clearly infected by the cholera epidemic he dies on the sea beach. But before

dying he has a vision of Tadzio walking into the waters of the sea and pointing towards the horizon with one outstretched arm. Mann writes, "And as so often he set out to follow him". Later that day a shocked world receives the news of the famous writer's death.

3.6 Aspects of the Novella

3.6.1 Dionysian and Apollonian

Death in Venice may be read in several ways. One of the most obvious ways of reading it is to see it as a battle between the heart and the mind; two powerful faculties that influence the way we live our lives. In mythological terms, roughly speaking, mind is supposed to be the territory of the Greek god Apollo and the heart is supposed to be the territory of the god Dionysus. In this novel Apollo and Dionysus seem to be fighting over the sovereignty of Gustav von Aschenbach's life. It is easy to justify such a reading of the novel because Mann was influenced by the German philosopher Nietzsche who argued for a "Dionysian" higher being in his book *Thus Spake Zarathustra.* According to Nietzsche, man should not be merely happy to be alive, but should develop into a higher being with his own inherent divinity. Therefore the Dionysian acquires a divine value in Nietzsche's idea. We shall see how Mann brings the element of divinity and spirituality in the novella. As we see in the story, von Aschenbach can be said to have been a devotee of the god Apollo because he has built his life and career through sheer intellectual rigour and exercise and by completely suppressing his emotions. As I said in my note on Thomas Mann, von Aschenbach also believes in adhering strictly to the German virtues of discipline and endurance. He has denied himself any kind of emotional on indeed sexual indulgence all his life. His life has been a life of total emotional repression and ruthless intellectual control. His conception of art is also deeply moral. According to him beauty should have a moral purpose. So, even aestheticism-enjoyment of beauty for its own sake-should be tempered by intellectual and moral control.

However, the novella traces von Aschenbach's gradual drifting away from Apollonian discipline towards Dionysian liberation. It starts almost at the beginning when he is suddenly seized by a desire to travel to somewhere exotic after looking at an exotic gentleman at a Munich cemetery. Because this desire to travel is not calm and calculated but hasty and impulsive, we can say that Apollonian control starts to weaken. The fact that he starts to imagine exotic lands that appear to him attractive

and dangerous both at the same time may be seen to indicate that he regards this desire as not quite moral but rather illicit and immoral. This can also be understood as the stirring of sexual desire, triggered off by the sight of the man in the cemetery. The old man on the ship who wants to look young and becomes a ridiculous figure in his attempt to do so is also meant to be an Appollonian warning to Aschenbach of the dangers of allowing the heart to rule one's life. Gustav von Aschenbach is disgusted by the sight of the old man because he is still under Appollonian influence.

But the Dionysian enters von Aschenbach's life finally and permanently with his first sighting of Tadzio. He tries valiantly to explain away to himself his attraction towards the young boy by thinking of the boy in terms of Greek sculptures, beautiful but cold and lifeless. He invokes mythology and art to justify to himself that his appreciation of Tadzio's beauty is nothing but the intellectual exercise of a learned and sophisticated man of letters. Yet his behaviour seems to tell a different story. His depression at the prospect of leaving Venice may be not so much because the air starts to clear but because he would never get to see Tadzio again. His delight at returning to the hotel is mostly because this would allow him to look at Tadzio for some more days. If we think of the two gods as the embodiments of Reason and Unreason, then from this point in the story Dionysian unreason assumes control. In his determination to appear attractive to Tadzio, von Aschenbach turns himself into a figure as ridiculous as the one he had earlier been disgusted by. It is also his staying on at the Lido and ignoring the Apollonian warning of the British travel agency clerk that ultimately costs him his life.

However, one should be careful not to read the novella as a simple advocacy of Reason over Unreason or vice versa. Such readings would be difficult to justify because of the way in which Mann ends von Aschenbach's life. It ends with Aschenbach's spirit following Tadzio in the direction of the horizon, looking forward to "an immensity rich with unutterable expectation", according to David Luke's translation. So the triumph of the Dionysian, if one can call it that, also means Aschenbach's spiritual liberation, thereby confirming Nietzsche's concept of the Dionysian. However, according to Mann: "What I was trying to achieve was an equilibrium between sensuality and morality, such as I found ideally realized in [Goethe's novel] *Elective Affinities*". What he may have been trying to do is to investigate the "fundamentally mistrustful, fundamentally pessimistic view of passion", as Mann wrote in a letter to his friend after the book was published.

3.6.2 Neoclassicism

If we look at the style in which this novella is written we may be tempted to see it as an exercise in neoclassicism. Although neoclassicism is normally a literary movement that is attributed to the sixteenth, seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, there was a brief phase of neoclassicism in the early twentieth century. This phase was in reaction to the dominance of Naturalism. There were several artists and critics, among them the aforementioned Lukacs, who believed that Naturalism was too subjective and too interested in immediate and random sense perceptions. While Lukács advocated Realism as an antidote to Naturalism, because he believed the former to be more objective, there were those who returned to a neoclassical style of writing. The kind of writer that Mann wants us to classify

Aschenbach as would be neoclassical. This is because we see in Aschenbach's way of thinking about art and literature a strong ethical, didactic, even utilitarian bias. For him, art has to be a moral exercise and a moral expression. He describes his work as a "cold, inflexible, passionate duty". He says that he had sacrificed his feelings in order to inculcate in him a sense of perfection. He says that his work lacks improvisation. Mann tells us that Aschenbach had decided on being famous early in his life and had dedicated himself to that project with a discipline that was already a part of this genetic inheritance. His motto is *"durchhalten!"* which means 'staying the course and not giving up'. Although physically he was weak and not really meant for hard labour he had forced himself to follow a punishing routine of writing from an early age. For uncomplaining endurance he regards one of the earliest Christian saints, Sebastian as an exemplary role model. St. Sebastian was tied to a tree and killed by being shot at with arrows by the Roman army because of his Christianity. In paintings of the saint we see him in a position of calm resignation as his almost naked body has the ends of pierced arrows sticking out of it. We are also told that as von Aschenbach grew older and his fame increased and honours were showered on him, his style became more and more conventional, conservative and formal.

However, as David Luke points out, Mann's own style seems to be naturalistic, in the sense that in it we can find a kind of compassionate psychological understanding which Lukács would dismiss as too subjective. But then again, it would perhaps be unfair to ask Mann to be so completely objective since the story is so closely based on incidents of his own life.

3.6.3 The city as a character

It is interesting that Mann fell in love with Wladyslaw in Venice and therefore decided to set his novella in that city because Venice had by that time already become a significant playing field for the Western imagination in general and the homosexual imagination in particular. As Tony Tanner points out in his book *Venice Desired*, the city is rich in its history of being an inspiration to 19th century artists, writers and poets. He significantly enough mentions those figures from the 19th and early 20th century who have also been known to possess a homosexual element in their life and/or work-Byron, Ruskin, Melville, Proust and Henry James. For many of these writers, especially for John Ruskin, Venice is a place which has both architectural splendour and squalor, corruption and degradation. It is this combination of the beautiful and the squalid which Mann can use to easily spin out his tale of love and death, beauty and sickness. In 1892 the poet, translator and art-critic John Addington Symonds went to Venice and it was there that he was finally able to express his homosexuality, away from the strictures of England and his marriage. The late Romantic German poet August Graf von Platen-Hallermünde (1798-1835), who was also homosexual, thought that Venice held for him a "special melancholia". It is this "special melancholia" which we can see in *Death in Venice*. We should also remember here that Mann gave a lecture on Platen in 1930. So, by the time Mann set his novella in Venice it already had a secure place in the literary imagination as a place of beauty, sadness, sensuality, mortality, exoticism. In Mann's novella Venice becomes a place which gives Aschenbach glimpses of extreme beauty and exacts a heavy price for that glimpse. Throughout the novella there are hints of mortality associated with exoticism and sensuality. Let us take these instances one by one :

1) It is at a cemetery that Aschenbach decides to take a holiday in an exotic land, which eventually becomes Venice.

2) He is made uncomfortable by the heavily made-up but obviously ugly old man on the ship to Venice.

3) The gondola, or Venetian boat; in which Aschenbach travels on his way to the Lido is described as if it were a coffin and the boatman, or gondolier, resembles the mythical boatman of Hades, Charon.

4) Although Tadzio-whom he meets in Venice-is "entirely beautiful" he has teeth that indicate illness and, Aschenbach hopes, early death.

5) Venice has a secret which brings death-the cholera epidemic-just as Aschenbach's secret-his love of Tadzio-brings about his own death.

There are many more such examples which you may want to find out in the text where death is suggested in some form or the other.

So, Venice does not remain a mere setting in the novel but seems to become a character in its own right; a character that plays the part of both Apollonian Messenger of warning and Dionysian messenger of liberation, sensuality and disorder. These two roles ultimately combine in the way it brings death to Aschenbach.

3.6.4 Eros and Thanatos

Earlier we discussed the implied presence of two Greek gods-Apollo and Dionysus. Here we discuss the presence of two Greek ideas-Eros and Thanatos. In *Death in Venice* we see two ideas dominating the structure of the story. One is Eros, which stands for sexual love. The other is Thanatos, which stands for death. But as we see these two ideas are constantly merged into one another so that sexual love, or even just sexuality, seems to automatically imply death. In this light we can once again read the incident at the Munich cemetery. But it would be useful to pay more attention this time to see how Tadzio is presented in the novel. But before Tadzio, let us look at the way in which youth and death have been combined in the story.

Take the example of St. Sebastian. In numerous paintings he is presented as wearing little more than a loin-cloth, like Christ does on the crucifix, and he is shown to be a young and handsome man who is dying. Although Mann refers to St. Sebastian to illustrate his point about silent endurance, it may be helpful for us to see that the image of this saint is also associated with youth and death. When Aschenbach sees Tadzio on the second day he describes the boy's head as that of Eros, the Greek god of love. However, by describing his less-than-healthy teeth, Aschenbach suggests sickness and early death. Watching Tadzio dressed in white, playing in the hotel tennis court, Ascenbach is reminded of the mythological figure of Hyacinthus who was killed when a discus was thrown at his head by a cruel god because Hyacinthus had aroused the love of two gods and only one could have him. Here also we see a beautiful young boy dying an early death. When Tadzio smiles at Aschenbach, the smile is described as belonging to Narcissus. Narcissus was a young man in Greek mythology who was so excited to see the beauty of his face in reflection in a pool that he fell in love with his own reflection and dived into the pool to embrace the image, drowning to death. So in his choice of figures from Christian history or Greek

mythology Mann concentrates on the figures' age at the time of death, their gender and their physical appearance.

However, as has been pointed out by various critics and by Mann himself, Tadzio, himself serves as a harbinger of death. He is also seen as Hermes Psychopompos, the messenger of death. He assumes this symbolic significance in the last scene where he seems to be escorting or rather guiding the spirit of Gustav von Aschenbach from the temporal to the spiritual world.

3.7 Questions

1) Comment on the use of mythology in the novella, illustrating your answer with suitable examples.
2) How and why do you think Mann shows Gustav von Aschenbach to be a man whose life and work is characterised by severe discipline?
3) Do you consider Venice to have been a suitable setting for this novella? Give reasons for your answer.
4) In how many ways does Mann suggest death and mortality in the novella?
5) Based on your reading of the novella which of the two conditions do you think is more important for creativity-discipline or emotional fulfillment?
6) Why do you think the Venetian authorities try to keep news of the cholera epidemic a secret and how does that help the theme of the novel?
7) Do you think that Mann combines elements of the neoclassical and the naturalistic in the novella? Illustrate your answer with examples from the text.
8) From your reading of the text do you think that Mann has been able to successfully combine the Dionysian and the Apollonian in the novella? Give reasons for your answer.

3.8 Suggested Reading

1) *Death in Venice and Other Stories* by Thomas Mann. Translated and with an Introduction by David Luke.
2) *Thomas Mann : Eros and Literature* by Anthony Heilbut.
3) *The Concept and Function of Death in the Works of Thomas Mann* by Lydia Baer.
4) "Sensuality and Morality in Thomas Mann's *Tod in Venedig*" by Frank Baron. *Germanic Review* 45 (1970).

5) *Thomas Mann.* Edited by Harold Bloom.
6) *Thomas Mann* by Ignace Feuerlicht.
7) *Thomas Mann* by Henry Hatfield.
8) *Thomas Mann : A Collection of Critical Essays.* Edited by Henry Hatfield.
9) *Thomas Mann: A Biography* by Ronald Hayman.
10) *Thomas Mann: A Critical Study* by R. J. Hollingdale.
11) *Thomas Mann and Italy* by Ilsedore B. Jonas.
12) "*Death in Venice* by Thomas Mann: A Story about the Disintegration of Artistic Sublimation" by Heinz Kohut in *Psychoanalysis and Literature.* Edited by Hendrik M. Ruitenbeck.
13) *Thomas Mann's Short Fiction: An Intellectual Biography by Esther H. Leser.*
14) "The Failure of a Repression : Thomas Mann's *Tod in Venedig*" by James R. McWilliams in *German Life and Letters* 20 (1967).
15) *Thomas Mann : A Life* by Donald Prater.
16) *Thomas Mann : The Uses of Tradition* by T J. Reed.

Unit 4 ❑ Franz Kafka : The Castle

Structure

4.1 Objective

The Objective of this unit is to introduce you to the work of the novelist Franz Kafka. We will be studying his novel *The Castle*, understanding it in relation to Kafka's life and exploring some of the many ways in which this novel may be read and analysed.

4.2 Introduction

Franz Kafka is regarded as one of the most intriguing writers of the early 20th century. His novels are known for their casual presentation of strange events taking place in a world where nothing seems to mean what it is supposed to. The main character in his novels repeatedly finds himself in situations that he cannot understand. He seems to be living in a world where nothing makes sense. But, inspite of all this confusion, he is still troubled by a feeling of being pursued by powers that are about to harm him. Kafka's protagonists are always ultimately lonely and confused. In his novels there is always a sense of a lonely and confused individual being oppressed by powers that the individual does not understand or recognise. This bewildering sense of being persecuted by abstract powers and being overwhelmed by enigmatic situations is called "Kafkaesque".

4.3 Brief Note on Author

Franz Kafka was born into a middle-class Jewish family on 3 July 1883 in Prague, which in those days used to belong to Austria. According to all accounts of his life, he felt dominated by his father; a feeling that never left him till his death. He had three sisters but all of them died in Nazi concentration camps. His culture was German and Jewish, both minority cultures in Prague. His belonging to a minority culture and having a minority language (although outside of Prague German was the language of power) may have made him feel even more lonely and oppressed. Although he did well in school, acquired a degree in law, and got a job in the Workers' Accident Insurance Institute, he could not live a full life because he was diagnosed to be with tuberculosis in September 1917 when he was 34. Although he attempted to have relationships with a few women, none of them led to marriage. While it is now known that he was repulsed by sexuality, his letters (published after his death, as his novels were) reveal that he was specially attracted to men also. The one enduring friendship that he had was with Max Brod, whom he met in 1902. His illness forced him to take frequent leave until he decided to retire in 1922 when he was only 39. He died on 3 June 1924. However, in his brief life he managed to write much short fiction, prose pieces and three unfinished novels. After his death, Max Brod chose to ignore Kafka's wishes and decided to publish the three unfinished novels, letters to friends, family, editors and his diaries.

While all critics agree that Kafka's work is marked by an overwhelming, dark presence of an abstract, incomprehensible and malevolent authority-which may be Kafka's way of representing his father—but no two critics have been able to agree on what exactly his novels are about. The fact that his father seems to have had such a crippling influence on him is reflected in many of his writings. In his story "The Judgement" (1913) a son who rebels against the authority of his father is driven to suicide. In his story 'The Metamorphosis" (1915) the main character Gregor Samsa-who one day wakes up and finds himself transformed into a giant insect-dies when Samsa's father throws an apple core at him. His three unfinished novels are *The Trial* (1925), *The Castle* (1926) and *Amerika* (1927).

The German critic Walter Benjamin (who was also Jewish, like Kafka) is credited with introducing Kafka to the general audience in 1934 by writing an essay on him. Kafka has been discussed in various ways by various critics, starting with his friend Max Brod. Brod was one of the first critics to claim that Kafka's novels are allegories

of man's search for divine grace. Similarly, in his 1940 introduction to *The Castle*, Thomas Mann calls Kafka a "religious humorist". This interpretation has been shown to be untenable by several later critics. His work has been shown to be Existentialist after the concept propounded by the French philosopher Jean Paul Sartre. In more recent times Kafka-critic Ruth Tiefenbrun has concluded that the predicament of all of Kafka's heroes is based on the fact that they are all homosexuals, which she sees as being a result of Kafka's own mostly-concealed homosexuality. Theodor Adorno praised Kafka because according to him, Kafka's work is a specific response to the historical and social conditions of modernity. French poststructuralist philosopher and psychoanalyst duo Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari have focussed on Kafka's German-Jewish identity to build their theory of "minoritarian literature". According to them, minoritarian literature is that in which dominant ways of thinking are combined with aspects of minority culture to make a new kind of literature which challenges power. In a way, the Deleuze-Guattari concept may be seen as a continuation of Kafka's troubled relationship with his father, who represented power.

4.4 Brief Note on the Text

Kafka's novels were written between 1913 and 1924. In 1920, Kafka wrote down what may be seen as a brief outline of a new novel that he was thinking about. He writes :

> If you want to be introduced to a family you do not know, you seek out a common acquaintance and ask him to oblige you. If you cannot find one, you put up with it and wait for a favourable opportunity.
>
> In the little place where we live a chance must occur. If opportunity does not present itself today, it will tomorrow without any doubt. And if it does not, you will not shake the pillars of the world on that account. If the family can bear to do without you, you will bear it at least no worse.
>
> This is all self-evident, K. Alone does not see it. Of late he has got it into his head that he must push his way into the family of the lord of the manor, but instead of trying the normal social channels he goes straight for it. Perhaps the usual way seems too tedious, and he is right there, but the way he tries to go is after all impossible. Do not think I am exaggerating the importance of our squire. A sensible, hardworking, honourable man, but nothing more. What does Ê want of him? Does he want a post on the

estate? No, he does not want that, he is himself well off and leads a carefree life. Is he in love with the squire's daughter? No, no he is free of any such suspicion.

This novel would go on to become *The Castle*. Although the outline of the story seems simple enough, it nevertheless keeps getting more and more complex as Kafka fills in the details in the course of his writing. Kafka started to write *The Castle* in January 1922. This was the time when he was spending a lot of time in various sanatoria because of his health, since he had been diagnosed to be with tuberculosis about five years ago. He was also in love and this relationship was the most satisfying of all because Milena Jesenská, a Czech lady, was already married (although unhappily) and unwilling to leave her husband. According to Kafka biographer Ronald Gray, this was ideal because Kafka did not want to get married either, given his abhorrence of sex and his greater dedication to writing. According to some, however, Kafka started writing *The Castle* after his relationship with Milena ended. Like Kafka's sisters, she also died in a Nazi concentration camp.

He read the first chapter out to Max Brod soon after he finished it in 1922. However, the novel was suddenly abandoned in the middle of the twentieth chapter in the autumn of the same year. As for how the novel was to have ended we only have the words of Max Brod to whom Kafka had apparently told the ending. The fragmented novel was published in German in 1926 and its English translation came out in 1930.

4.5 Outline of the Story

K. arrives at a village under the identity of a land surveyor who has come to survey the land of the Castle-an imposing but distant building which stands on a hill, dominating the landscape. He is allowed to spend the night at a nearby inn. The inn-keeper Schwarzer telephones the Castle to ask if they had appointed someone as land surveyor. First he is told that there has been no such appointment and then he is told that there has indeed been such an appointment. Next morning K. is curious to find out more about the owner of the castle-Count West West-but fails. He says he is expecting two assistants. When the assistants turn up-Arthur and Jeremiah-they seem to be from the Castle and are not carrying any of the equipment they should. Barnabas, a Castle Messenger, appears and gives K. a letter from Klamm, a Castle official. The letter confirms K's appointment and asks K. to be in touch with the Mayor for further instructions. K is keen to meet Klamm and goes with Barnabas to the latter's house to discuss how this meeting can be arranged. Barnabas has two sisters-Amalia and

Olga. K. leaves the Barnabas house with Olga and finds a place to stay—Herrenhof bar. The barmind there is Frieda. Olga and Frieda do not like each other. Frieda is the mistress of Klamm. K. gets a glimpse of Klamm through a small peephole in a door. Later, after all the people leave, Frieda and K. make love on the bar floor. Their love-making is interrupted by Klamm's calling for her. Frieda tells Klamm that she was leaving him and going off with the land surveyor. Strangely enough, the two assistants are there too. All four of them go to Bridge's Inn to stay together. The next day K. declares his intention to marry Frieda. She is overjoyed.

K. meets the Mayor and is confused by him because the Mayor not only tells him that there is no need for a land surveyor, that Klamm's letter has a valid signature but the contents of the letter make no sense and that the telephonic confirmation of K's status may have been a castle joke! When K. returns to the inn the landlady reveals that she used to be Klamm's mistress for a short time. On going up to his room, K. finds a teacher he had met earlier sitting there. The teacher says that the Mayor has found K. impolite, but has nonetheless agreed to appoint K. as a school janitor since there is no need of a land surveyor. Although initially refusing the offer, K. accepts it on Frieda's insistence. While Frieda leaves for the school building to set up house there, K. returns to the Herrenhof inn to find Klamm. He fails again. At the Herrenhof he meets Klamm's village Secretary Momus who asks K. some questions so that it becomes easier for K. to meet Klamm but K. refuses to be interrogated by Momus and leaves.

Out in the street he meets Barnabas who now gives K. a letter from Klamm in which Klamm expresses satisfaction at the way K's land survey is going! K. tells Barnabas that he must tell Hamm about K's desire to meet him. K. and Frieda break into the school shed for some wood to build a fire. That night, K. finds one of his assistants, Arthur sleeping next to him. He hits Arthur and the assistant goes away.

Next morning, when a teacher named Gisa discovers that the shed has been broken into she demands to know who did it. The assistants and Frieda point to K, whose job is therefore taken away. But K. tells the teacher that will not be possible because he has been appointed by the Mayor. In the meantime Frieda has started suspecting that the only reason K. is with her is because she was Klamm's mistress and therefore may help him to meet the Castle official. But K. manages to temporarily allay her doubts.

Worried by the absence of Barnabas, K. goes to his house to see what could be

the matter. Although he is not there, his two sisters are K. starts to talk to Olga and hears the story of the family's ostracisation. It turns out that a Castle official named Sortini had once propositioned Amalia but she had refused. As a result of that refusal, the family has been shunned by the entire village ever since. Their father has also lost his job in the village Fire Brigade.

K meets Jeremiah-one of the assistants-in the street. Jeremiah tells him that Arthur has complained to the Castle against K. and that Frieda was leaving K. to start a relationship with Jeremiah. In the meantime, Barnabas has failed to get K. an audience with Klamm but has managed to get an appointment with another Castle official. This official is Erlanger. The meeting is to be at the Herrenhof inn. While there he meets Eneda who is once again a barmaid there, K. enters a room hoping to find Erlanger there, but finds yet another official. This one is Btirgel. He tells K. that the best way to get to the castle is to accidentally meet an official (like he has just done), but before he can hear all of what the official had to say K. is overcome by tiredness and sleep. The official dismisses K. and leaves.

Next morning the officials wake up and there is much turmoil over the delivery of files. They all hold K. responsible for the disorder and take him to the bar, where K. falls asleep looking at the landlady's dress. When K. wakes up in the evening he finds himself talking to Pepi who used to be the barmaid at the inn after Frieda left. Now that Frieda is back she has been demoted to her previous position of chambermaid. Pepi tells K. that Frieda is a bad person who never loved K. K. disagrees. The landlady comes in and takes K. to see her clothes collection, since K. had earlier commented on her dresses being too old fashioned. The landlady tells K. sarcastically that he ought to become a fashion co-ordinator.

K. had come to the Herrenhof inn with Gerstacker, a man who takes K. to the inn on K. second day in the village. This man offers K. a job of tending his horses. They go to the man's house where K. sits down to talk to Gerstacker's mother. This is where the novel suddenly ends.

According to Max Brod, however, the novel was supposed to end with K. on his deathbed, surrounded by villagers. Suddenly a letter arrives which states that although K. should not be allowed to stay in the village but considering the current situation he is allowed to live and work there.

4.6 Aspects of the Novel

4.6.1 As Dream Literature

In 1914 Kafka wrote, in reference to his literary work, 'The taste for the representation of my dreamlike inner life has reduced everything else to a subordinate position". Looking at most of his work, if not all, it would appear that in them Kafka is simply transcribing his dreams. The action in his novels is strange and inexplicable by the common laws of credibility and logic. One has to exercise almost a "willing suspension of disbelief' to enter the world of Kafka's stories. We shall discuss in what ways *The Castle* can be read as an example of dream literature.

Western literature has a long tradition of using dreams as literature. The earliest example we have is that of Artemidorus. His treatise *Onirocriticon* is regared as being the first attempt at inteipreting dreams. Then we have Macrobius. He lives from the late 4th to early 5th century A.D. His *Commentary on the Dream of Scipio* was the most influential text as far as discussion of the meaning of dreams was concerned. In this book he showed that it was important to understand the relationship between dreams and fables in order to realise spiritual truths like the nature of the soul of God. His book was influential all through the medieval period and till the end of the 17th century. Poets such as Dante, Chauce and Milton were influenced by it. Romantic essayist Charles Lamb introduced a special aspect into dream literature when he wrote "Dream Children"-an essay in which he dreams of his telling stories to his two children. He was unmarried and did not have any children. Then, in 1900 Sigmund Freud publishes his revolutionary book entitled *The Interpretation of Dreams.* In it he shows how dreams are essentially the result of our unconscious desire for the fulfillment of some wish. The interesting thing is that Freud uses literature to explain his method of interpretation. So, he uses texts as diverse as Sophocles' *Oedipus Rex,* Shakespeare's *Hamlet,* Wilhelm Jensen's *Gradiva* and E.T.A. Hoffman's "The Sandman".

If you go through the novel you will find numerous examples of events that do not make sense. Characters appear suddenly and disappear just as suddenly. They say things that contradict their earlier statements. They are present where they should not be. The strangeness is not restricted to the characters alone. The entire novel seems to be taking place in a village where the day never breaks but is permanently plunged in the darkness of the night K. is always confused by the actions of the Castle and

the Castle officials. This confusion makes it difficult for any critic to say for certain if the novel means any one thing.

Dreams are representations of not only our wishes but also of our fears. As I have said before, Kafka was terrified of his father. His feeling of having been paralysed into inactivity by his dominant father is always reflected in his stories. In every story there is a dominating male figure representing authority. In *The Castle* it is mostly Klamm but also Sortini, Erlanger and Btirgel. But it is Klamm whose physical resemblance to Kafka's Arthur has been pointed out by various critics. So, when Kafka said that he had a taste for representing his dreamlike inner life, he may also have been saying that he ensured a dreamlike sense of confusion, mystery and apparent inexplicability in the form and content of his work. Kafka-critic Charles Neider attempted a Freudian reading of *The Castle.* In it he has tried to show that the novel consists of "a web of symbols" that are mainly sexual and that it is a panorama of the various states of consciousness and that there is a treatment of the Oedipus complex in it.

4.6.2 Existentialism and The Castle

In 1943 French philosopher Jean-Paul Sartre published a book called *Being and Nothingness.* This book is regarded as the starting point for the theory of Existentialism. According to Sartre, "Existence is prior to essence". By this he meant that we-human beings-have no essence, or rather that nothing distinguishes us from any other form of life just because we are born. We exist before we have an essence. Our essence is formed only when we act. We create our essence through the choices we make. He spoke of human freedom in a godless world. According to the existentialist way of thought, man is aware of the limits of knowledge and this makes him fearful of the nothingness to come, because there is no religious or spiritual assurance for him in that future. This also makes man profoundly lonely.

The Castle was written before Sartre's book, but it has many qualities that may be called existential. Kafka was a Jew but did not believe in the religion to which he was born. That automatically made Kafka's universe godless. In this novel, K. is not known by what he is, but by what he does. He is also, ultimately, unsure of his status in the village and therefore lonely and ill-adjusted. Although, according to the reported end of the story he is accepted into the village as a permanent resident, it only

happens when he is about to die. So, his sense of loneliness remains till the end. His attempts at relationships are failures, eventually. He is also aware that he can never know the truth about the Castle or understand its workings. He is conscious of the fact that his knowledge of the castle will always be limited and confused. It is this awareness of the limits of how much he can know that strikes the reader as a typically existentialist element of the novel. In fact, the character of K. is even more existentialist than usual, because he does hot do what he initially says he is supposed to (survey the Castle land) and yet gets praised for his work. His real acts consist of his attempts to meet Klamm. We never understand why he never does any of the work that he is supposed to and does something which is bound to yield no result. So, the essence of K. is therefore not that he is a land surveyor (it is quite clear that he is no such thing in the first place), but that he is an inquisitive man determined to accomplish a task that has no relevance to his appointed position at all. Not only that, he is also asked to work as a school janitor. But in true existentialist mode, Kafka has often described himself in terms of the work that he does. For example he writes in his diary, "I do not hope for victory and the battle as a battle gives me no joy, it gladdens me only because it is the only thing to be done." As pointed out by Katka critic Roy Pascal, K. seems to be saying, "My task is all I have". When you read the novel try and identify the ways in which elements of existentialism lie scattered through out the text.

4.6.3 As Divine Allegory

Although Kafka is widely believed to have been irreligious there have been many attempts at reading his work as spiritual texts, as I said in the introduction to Kafka's life and work. Ronald Gray pays attention to this reading of Kafka in his discussion of the novel. Gray traces the usage of the castle as a religious symbol to St. Teresa of Avila. She writes in her book, "I began to think of the soul as if it were a castle made of a single diamond or of very clear crystal, in which there are many rooms, just as in Heaven there are many mansions." So, since Max Brod's famous statement, there has been a lot of discussion which has assumed the castle to represent Heaven and the village, the world. Here are some of the ways in which a religious reading of the novel is possible.

1) People in the novel speak of the Castle in the same way that people normally speak of God.

2) Any attention from the Castle is seen as a receiving of grace, that is, divine favour.

3) When Kafka speaks of the telephone connections between the village and the castle there seems to be a play, even if it be ironical, on the idea of prayer.

4) The role of the Castle Messenger Barnabas may be seen as that of an angel who does not quite understand or cannot properly perform his job.

5) The one person who has received any favours from the Castle is Frieda, whose name, as Roy Pascal, points out, means, "Peace".

But there are several arguments that are put forward to dispute this reading. Critic Erich Heller, for example, thinks of the Castle as not so much Heaven as Hell, the residence of Evil. However, since Max Brod's reading and Thomas Mann's inroduction to the 1940 edition of *The Castle* this analysis given above has remained potent.

4.7 Questions

1) How can *The Castle* be read as an example of "dream literature"?

2) Attempt a psychoanalytical reading of *The Castle*.

3) Is a reading of *The Castle* as a religious allegory justified? Give reasons for your answer.

4) How can K. be called an existentialist character?

5) Discuss Kafka's treatment of his women characters. (Hint: Their attitude towards the castle, their attitude towards K., Amalia as a rebel, Kafka's own attitude to the women in his life)

6) How does Kafka treat the concept of abstract power/authority in *The Castle?*

4.8 Suggested Reading

1) *The German Novel* by Roy Pascal

2) *Franz Kafka* by Ronald Gray

3) *Kafka: His Mind and Art* by Charles Neider

4) *Franz Kafka and Prague* by P. Eisner
5) *Franz Kafka : A Biography* by Max Brod
6) *Franz Kafka : A Critical Study of his Writings* by W. Emrich
7) *Kafka* by Erich Heller
8) *Kafka : A Biography* by Ronald Hayman.
9) *Kafka : Judaism, Politics and Literature by R. Robertson*
10) *F. Kafka: Towards a Minor Literaute* by Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari
11) *Critical Essays on Franz Kafka* Ed. by R. Gross
12) *Kafka* by Pietro Citati
13) *Franz Kafka : A Study of the Short Fiction* by A. Thiher

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— রবীন্দ্রনাথ ঠাকুর

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