



# **Manonmaniam Sundaranar University**

*DIRECTORATE OF DISTANCE AND CONTINUING EDUCATION*

*TIRUNELVELI - 627 012, TAMILNADU*

***B.A ENGLISH (FOURTH SEMESTER)***

## **British Fiction**

*(From the Academic Year 2021 onwards)*

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## BRITISH FICTION

### SEMESTER IV

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Jane Austen	:	Pride and prejudice
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Signe Pike	:	The Lost Queen

#### PRESCRIBED TEXTS:

- Jane Austen. *Pride and Prejudice*. Fingerprint Publishing, 2013.
- George Eliot. *The Mill on the Floss*. Fingerprint Publishing, 2016.
- Charles Dickens. *Great Expectation*. Fingerprint Publishing, 2016.
- Joseph Conrad. *Heart of Darkness*. Fingerprint Publishing, 2018.
- Agatha Conrad. *The Murder of Roger Ackroyd*. Harper Collins, 2017.
- George Orwell. *Animal Farm*. Rupa, 2010.
- Ian McEwan. *Atonement*. RHUK, 2007.
- Sarah Waters. *The Little Stranger*. Virago, 2010
- Julian Barnes. *The Sense of an Ending*. RHUK, 2012.
- Signe Pike. *The Lost Queen*. Atria Books, 2019.

**UNIT I**  
***PRIDE AND PREJUDICE – JANE AUSTEN***

**Introduction of the Author:**

Jane Austen (16 December 1775 – 18 July 1817) is an English Novelist known for all her 6 popular novels. In the beginning she published her novels anonymously in her patriarchal society. After gaining some fame she announced her name. Her novels come under various genres specially known as Domestic novels, Comedy of Manners and Comedy of Sensibility.

**Summary of the Novel:**

In 1813, Jane Austen published her Second novel named *Pride and Prejudice*. Like her first novel, this work also added glory to this anonymous writer. Elizabeth Bennet is the protagonist of the story. Here one can find different mannered personalities hence this novel comes under Comedy of Manners.

The Bennet family resides at their Longbourn estate in Hertfordshire, England, close to the village of Meryton, at the beginning of the 1800s. To ensure her five daughters' futures, Mrs. Bennet's top priority is to marry off each of them. She hopes that one of her five daughters might find a suitable match is enhanced by the arrival of Mr. Bingley, a wealthy bachelor who rents the nearby Netherfield estate because "It is a truth universally acknowledged that a single man in possession of a good fortune must be in want of a wife".

The family meets Mr. Bingley, his two sisters, and Mr. Darcy, his closest friend, at a ball where they are presented to the Netherfield party. The guests take a fondness to Mr. Bingley because of his cheerful and kind personality. Jane is the eldest Bennet daughter, and he seems curious in her. There is a deep dislike for Mr. Darcy because he is arrogant and disconnected, despite being reported to be twice as wealthy as Mr. Bingley. Since Elizabeth is the second-eldest Bennet daughter, he says she is not beautiful enough and refuses to dance. Elizabeth laughs about it with her friend, but she feels really wounded by it. Notwithstanding this initial impression, Mr. Darcy gradually starts to feel attracted to Elizabeth as they keep running into each other at social gatherings and he grows to like her openness and sense of humor.

Mr. Collins, the Longbourn estate heir, visits the Bennet family with the goal of using his patroness's advice to select one of the five girls as his future wife. Mr. Darcy's aunt is the Lady Catherine de Bough also revealed. He decides to give Elizabeth an attempt.

George Wickham, an attractive army man, introduces himself to the Bennet family and shares to Elizabeth about Mr. Darcy's earlier mistreatment of him. Elizabeth believes Mr. Darcy because of her prejudice against him.

At a ball dance, Elizabeth dances with Mr. Darcy in a rotation, and Mrs. Bennet makes a loud suggestion that she thinks Jane and Bingley will get engaged. To her father's relief and her mother's indignation, Elizabeth declines Mr. Collins' marriage proposal. Alternatively, Mr. Collins makes a proposal to Elizabeth's friend Charlotte Lucas.

With the aid of his sisters, Mr. Darcy convinces Mr. Bingley not to go back to Netherfield after hearing Mrs. Bennet's remarks at the ball and disliking the marriage. Elizabeth's dislike for Mr. Darcy worsens as she believes he was the reason behind Mr. Bingley's leaving, and a devastated Jane travels to London to see her Aunt and Uncle Gardiner in order to cheer herself up.

Elizabeth travels to Kent in the spring to see Charlotte and Mr. Collins. Lady Catherine extends an invitation to Elizabeth and her hosts to stay at Rosings Park. Rosings Park is also being visited by Colonel Fitzwilliam, Mr. Darcy's cousin. Fitzwilliam describes to Elizabeth how Mr. Darcy recently prevented a friend—possibly Bingley—from being paired with an unwanted person. Elizabeth understands that the engagement to Jane was not approved.

Elizabeth receives a proposal from Mr. Darcy, who expresses his love for her in spite of her limited social standing. She is taken aback, since she had no idea that Mr. Darcy was interested in her, and she fiercely rejects him, declaring that he is the last person she would ever marry and that she could never love a man who made her sister feel that way. She also charges him with treating Wickham unfairly. Mr. Darcy sarcastically brushes off the accusation against Wickham without answering it, reveling about his work in severing Bingley and Jane.

The next day, Wickham, the son of his late father's steward, turned down the "living" that his father had prepared for him and was paid money in its place, according to a letter that

Mr. Darcy provides Elizabeth. After spending the money rapidly, Wickham attempted to flee with Georgiana, Darcy's 15-year-old sister, in exchange for her sizeable dowry. In addition, Mr. Darcy notes that he kept Jane and Bingley apart because he thought Jane was unconcerned about Bingley and because of her family's impolite behavior. Elizabeth feels ashamed by the way her family has behaved and by her own prejudice against Mr. Darcy.

Elizabeth goes on a visit of Derbyshire with the Gardiners a few months later. They go to Darcy's estate, Pemberley. Mr. Darcy is extremely kind to Elizabeth and the Gardiners when he suddenly comes. Elizabeth is taken surprised by Darcy's actions and starts liking him; she even regrets refusing down his proposal. She informs out that Lydia, her sister, disappeared with Wickham. After telling Mr. Darcy, she hurriedly leaves. Following a torturous interval, Wickham agrees to marry Lydia. She tells Elizabeth that Mr. Darcy attended her wedding when she gives the family a visit. Mrs. Gardiner now is forced to inform Elizabeth that Mr. Darcy, at great expense and bother to himself, secured the match, in spite of the fact that he had sworn everyone engaged to secrecy.

Mr. Bingley and Mr. Darcy go back to Netherfield. Jane says yes to Mr. Bingley's suggestion. After learning that Elizabeth is engaged to Mr. Darcy, Lady Catherine approaches Elizabeth and demands that she swear she will never accept his proposal because she and Darcy's late mother had previously planned for him to get married to her daughter Anne. Refusing, Elizabeth gestures for the angry Lady Catherine to go. Encouraged by his aunt's outrage at hearing Elizabeth's rejection, Darcy approaches Elizabeth once more and is accepted. Thus the story ends with the marriage of two couples.

### **List of Main Characters:**

#### **Elizabeth Bennet**

Elizabeth Bennet, the most brilliant and quick-witted of the Bennet daughters and the protagonist of *Pride and Prejudice*, is a well-known female character in English literature. She has many admirable traits: she is attractive, intelligent, and has some of the best dialogue in a book that is mostly dialogue-based. She is able to rise above the foolishness and bad behaviour that permeate her class-bound and frequently cruel society because of her honesty, morality, and sharp wit. *Pride and Prejudice* is primarily the narrative of how she (and her true love, Darcy)

overcame all obstacles—including their own personal failings—to attain romantic happiness. Nevertheless, her sharp tongue and penchant to make snap judgements frequently lead her astray. In addition to dealing with an indifferent father, two misbehaving younger brothers, a despairing mother, and a number of snooty, obnoxious women, Elizabeth also has to get over her own false ideas of Darcy, which initially caused her to turn down his marriage proposals. Luckily, her charms are enough to keep him intrigued as she negotiates social and familial upheaval. She gradually learns to appreciate Darcy's noble nature and acknowledges the folly of her early prejudice.

### **Fitzwilliam Darcy**

Darcy is Elizabeth's male equivalent. He is the master of the vast Pemberley estate and the son of a well-to-do family. Elizabeth frequently comes across as a more likeable character since the narrator frequently presents Elizabeth's perspective of events rather than Darcy's. But in the end, the reader comes to see that Darcy is the one for her. Though he is honest and intelligent, he also has a propensity to pass judgement too quickly and harshly, and because of his wealthy upbringing and excessive pride, he is overly aware of his social standing. In fact, his arrogance causes him to mess up his courtship at first. For example, when he pops the question to her, he focuses more on how wrong she is for him than on her charms, beauty, or anything else that makes her seem good. Darcy becomes somewhat more humbled as a result of Elizabeth rejecting his approaches. Despite his dislike for Elizabeth's humble origins, Darcy shows his unwavering love for her when he saves Lydia and the entire Bennet family from scandal and defies his conceited aunt, Lady Catherine de Bourgh, by pursuing Elizabeth. Elizabeth ultimately repents of her previous, unduly harsh judgement of Darcy after he shows himself worthy of her.

### **Mr Bennet**

As Mrs. Bennet's spouse and the father of Jane, Elizabeth, Lydia, Kitty, and Mary, Mr. Bennet is the patriarch of the Bennet family. His absurd wife and challenging girls are the things that drive him to the brink of frustration. In response, he distances himself from his family and adopts an aloof demeanour interspersed with sardonic humour outbursts. Since Elizabeth and he are the two smartest Bennets, he is closest to Elizabeth. Mr. Bennet is first viewed as a sympathetic character due to his dry humour and composure in the face of his wife's hysterics, but as it becomes apparent that his detachment comes at a high cost, the reader progressively has

less of a liking for him. In actuality, he is a frail parent who occasionally fails his family. Specifically, when Lydia elopes with Wickham, his careless indulgence of her immature behaviour almost brings shame upon the whole community. Moreover, he appears to be very ineffectual when she vanishes. Mr. Gardiner and Darcy are left to find Lydia and make things right. In the end, Mr. Bennet would prefer to ignore the outside world than learn to live with it.

### **Mrs. Bennet**

Mrs. Bennet is a character who is extraordinarily tedious. She is a loud and ignorant woman who seems to care nothing else in the world but getting her daughters married. Ironically, her unwavering focus on achieving this goal usually backfires because she alienates Darcy and Bingley—the same people she is trying so hard to win over—due to her lack of social graces. Austen frequently uses her to highlight how important marriage is for young ladies. Mrs. Bennet also shows that stupidity exist at all social levels by acting as a middle-class counterbalance to upper-class snobs like Lady Catherine and Miss Bingley. However, Mrs. Bennet turns out to be such, Austen of being unfair in how she portrayed her—as if Austen, like Mr. Bennet, took a perverse pleasure in mocking a woman who was already despised due to her ill-breeding.

### **Lydia Bennet**

The youngest and wildest of the Bennet daughters is Lydia. Because she is obsessed with gossip, socialising, and men, just like Mrs. Bennet, she is her mother's favourite. "High animal spirits and a sort of natural self-consequence" are said to characterise Lydia. She exudes charm and beauty, yet she also acts rashly and impulsively. Lydia's actions regularly cause her elder sisters to feel embarrassed, and Lizzy gives a passionate speech about Lydia's character when Lydia gets the invitation to Brighton. According to her explanation, "the wild volatility, the assurance, and the disdain of all restraint which mark Lydia's character must affect our respectability in the world." Furthermore, Lizzy expresses her concern that Lydia is headed towards becoming "a flirt in the worst and meanest degree of flirtation.

Although Lydia naturally veers towards wild and self-centered behaviour, as a person she also exposes the shortcomings of her parents, especially her father. Lydia is shown as partially innocent of her actions due to her young age and lack of education because she does not have parental supervision or punishment. Lydia may come out as a fun and innocent character at first, but her elopement with Wickham demonstrates that her self-centered behaviour can have serious

consequences. “What a good joke it will be!” Lydia says in the note she left explaining that she has ran off with Wickham! But from Lizzy’s perspective, “the humiliation, the misery, she was bringing on them all” is what really matters. Lydia doesn’t consider how her choices may affect her sisters or herself. Throughout the course of the story, she acquires neither responsibility nor a sense of decorum. Despite the fact that a hurried marriage barely saves Lydia’s reputation, she concentrates on her own significance, saying, “Jane, I take your place today, and you must go lower, for I am Lydia may come out as a fun and innocent character at first, but her elopement with Wickham demonstrates that her self-centered behaviour can have serious consequences. “What a good joke it will be!” Lydia says in the note she left explaining that she has ran off with Wickham! But from Lizzy’s perspective, “the humiliation, the misery, she was bringing on them all” is what really matters.

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### **Critical Analysis:**

A chronological, linear structure underpins *Pride and Prejudice’s* plot. The main tension in Elizabeth Bennet’s story centres on her quest to find a suitable husband in spite of barriers posed by society norms and her own ignorance of her own needs. Numerous opponents that she



meets put up barriers to a happy marriage for her. There are two categories into which these adversaries fall. Initially, there are some characters who attempt to sabotage Elizabeth's happiness by convincing her to wed an unsuitable man. Among them are Mr. Collins, who tries to persuade Elizabeth to accept a marriage that would never satisfy her, and Mrs. Bennet, who believes Elizabeth should lower her expectations since she does not understand the kind of marriage her daughter wants. The persons that attempt to stop Elizabeth from getting married to Darcy, such as Miss Bingley and Lady Catherine de Bourgh, make up the second set of opponents. Elizabeth might be an antagonist to herself at times. Her failure to see that Darcy would be a suitable match for her and her stubbornness take her farther away from rather than closer to her happy goal.

Subplots centred on the romantic lives of various female characters have intimate connections to the main plot of Elizabeth's journey towards marriage. Its separation into volumes also shapes the plot structure. Three volumes were first released with *Pride and Prejudice*. The first volume's story begins with Jane falling in love with Bingley, with Elizabeth's meetings with Darcy and his growing feelings for her serving as supporting characters. The main issue in this first portion of the book is whether or not Jane and Bingley will be allowed to get married, since it appears that Darcy and Bingley's sisters are keen to keep them apart.

Elizabeth is obliged to refuse Mr. Collins when he starts chasing her, which leads to another dispute. By the time the Bingley family departs Netherfield for London at the end of the first volume and Mr. Collins marries Charlotte Lucas, he has finally conceded defeat and brought some resolution to these two early confrontations. It seems that neither of the Bennet sisters has much chance of being married, and since most people marry for money and position, so this point in the plot is a low one.

With a renewed emphasis on the potential union between Elizabeth and Darcy, the storyline intensifies once more. Elizabeth gives Mr. Darcy a second chance to talk to her after seeing Charlotte and Mr. Collins, which prompts him to ask her to marry him. This proposal, which takes place roughly halfway through the narrative, signifies the pinnacle of the desire Darcy has been attempting to fight off ever since he first saw Elizabeth. She rejected Mr. Collins earlier, and now she's rejecting his proposal as well. Elizabeth now thinks Darcy is a wicked man, and regardless of what he might give, she will not accept a marriage to a man she does not

love. But once Elizabeth rejects him, the storyline of Darcy and Elizabeth's relationship gets more intense. He divulges fresh information as a result of the proposal being turned down, which causes her to reevaluate her opinion of him. A new conflict—Lydia's elopement—interrupts the story of Darcy and Elizabeth's increasing devotion. The novel's plot revolves around this struggle until it is resolved.

The attention returns to Jane's storyline when Lydia's subplot is concluded with her decent marriage. When Elizabeth eventually gets back together with Bingley, the conflict that has existed since the beginning of the book is resolved. The attempt by Lady de Bourgh to keep Elizabeth from getting married to Darcy is the last obstacle that needs to be overcome. Elizabeth is ready for this, and she won't back down because of the past story points where she held her ground. The novel's climax occurs when Elizabeth accepts Darcy's second proposal after they have successfully surmounted all the challenges they faced. After the climax, there is a brief period of declining activity that includes the three couples' predicted futures and marriage preparations. *Pride and Prejudice* had a significant impact on the idea that realistic portrayals of ordinary occurrences and domestic conflicts might be just as captivating as more spectacular ones. Without the use of any unique storytelling devices, readers experience the plot's happenings in the same way as the characters do. The novel's events become more relatable because to this choice of plot structure. In a timeless comedy, the book ends with the marriage of three of the Bennet sisters, success and happiness for the good characters Jane, Elizabeth, Bingley, and Darcy and additional turmoil for the foolish or evil characters Lydia and Wickham.

## ***THE MILL ON THE FLOSS* – GEORGE ELIOT**

### **Introduction of the Author:**

George Eliot is the pen name of Mary Ann Evans who was a well known novelist of Victorian era. She has written seven popular novels among them *Silas Marner* and *The Mill on the Floss* have a special place. Her realistic, psychologically insightful, spatially-specific, and meticulously rendered rural landscapes are well-known qualities of her art.

### **Summary of the Novel:**

George Eliot's novel, *The Mill on the Floss*, was first published in 1860 and chronicles the turbulent lives of Maggie and Tom Tulliver, siblings, in rural England. The conflict between personal preferences and social norms is one of the themes that the book addresses, along with gender and class issues. Eliot wrote *The Mill on the Floss*, often regarded as her most autobiographical book, drawing on her own memories growing up in rural England.

The younger, bright, and impulsive daughter of the Tullivers of Dorlcote Mill in St. Ogg's is Maggie Tulliver. Maggie's very dark complexion, unusually high level of activity, and unusual intelligence irritate her shallow mother. Maggie's older brother Tom is the one who she is emotionally dependent on, even though her father frequently supports her. Maggie finds the most enjoyment in Tom's devotion, and when he shows her disdain, it devastates her dramatically since, like all children, she lacks perspective in her vision of the world.

Mr. Tulliver chooses to finance Tom's further schooling rather than having him take over the mill, despite the fact that Tom is not as diligent as Maggie seems to be. The Dodsons, Mr. Tulliver's wife's sisters, and him get into a family spat about this choice. Sensing that the Dodsons, lead by Mrs. Tulliver's sister, Mrs. Glegg, are snobbish and contrary, Mr. Tulliver resolves to break Mrs. Glegg's influence over him by returning the money she lent him. Being fond of his sister, he chooses not to pursue his sister for the money that they are unable to repay after lending nearly the same amount to her and her spouse, the Mosses.

Tom enrolls in Mr. Stelling's class as a cleric, and Maggie pays him multiple visits at the school. During one of these visits, she makes friends with Philip Wakem, the sensitive and disabled pupil of Mr. Stelling who happens to be the son of Lawyer Wakem, her father's nemesis. Maggie is sent to school with her cousin Lucy, but at thirteen, her father is eventually

called home after a protracted legal battle with Lawyer Wakem over the usage of the river Floss. Mr. Tulliver becomes sick and insolvent. Tom comes back home to help out the family because the Dodsons don't provide much assistance. When the mill is put up for auction, Lawyer Wakem purchases Dorlcote Mill and keeps the property based on a notion that Mrs. Tulliver unintentionally gave him.

The atmosphere at the Tullivers' remains gloomy even after Mr. Tulliver's recuperation. The reappearance of Tom's childhood friend Bob Jakin in Tom and Maggie's lives is one positive development. Maggie is lovingly given books by Bob, a trader, and one of them—*The Imitation of Christ* by Thomas Kempis—influences her to have a spiritual awakening that results in months of devout self-denial. Maggie is only convinced to give up her martyrish dullness in favour of the depths of literature and human connection when she runs into Philip Wakem again while out on a walk in the woods. As a result of Maggie's father's vow to keep Lawyer Wakem as his lifelong friend, Philip and Maggie have a secret meeting for a year.

To the family's astonishment and relief, Tom has made enough money on a business venture with Bob Jakin to settle Mr. Tulliver's obligations. After seeing Attorney Wakem and attacking him on the way home after the official debt repayment, Mr. Tulliver becomes ill and passes away the next day.

Maggie has been teaching in a different village for a number of years now. She returns to St. Ogg's to see her cousin Lucy, who has taken in Mrs. Tulliver, after growing into a tall, striking woman. Stephen Guest, Lucy's wealthy and attractive suitor, is Philip Wakem's buddy. Tom reluctantly gives Maggie permission to visit Philip when she requests for it. Maggie and Philip have reestablished their close connection.

Despite their mutual expectations and desires, Stephen and Maggie have found themselves progressively drawn to one another, even to the point of helplessness. Maggie intends for their attraction to be in vain because she will shortly leave St. Ogg's to pursue a teaching position somewhere. But Stephen follows her, and Philip realises what is going on right away. Philip cancels a boat trip with Maggie and Lucy because he is sick and envious and sends Stephen in their place. After Lucy headed downriver with the intention of leaving Philip and Maggie by alone, Stephen and Maggie unintentionally find themselves by themselves. Maggie is

pushed by Stephen past where they were supposed to meet Lucy and he asks her to wed him. They are far down the river, and the weather is changing. Philip and Maggie smugly board a bigger yacht, which

Maggie is viewed as a social outcast and a fallen lady when she returns to St. Ogg's. After returning to Dorlcote Mill, Tom renounces her, and Maggie, along with her mother, stays with Bob Jakin and his spouse. Maggie is the only one who has friendships with the Jakins and Dr. Kenn, the priest, even though the public is aware of Stephen's letter in which he takes full responsibility. After recovering from her grief-stricken stupor, Lucy goes to see Maggie in private to ask for her forgiveness. Philip also writes a letter expressing his faithfulness and forgiveness.

### **List of Main Characters:**

#### **Maggie Tulliver**

The main character in *The Mill on the Floss* is Maggie Tulliver. At the start of the book, Maggie is a bright but impulsive young girl. Maggie is portrayed by Eliot as being more creative and fascinating than the other members of her family as well as, empathetically, in need of affection. However, Maggie's intense obsessions can sometimes hurt other people. For example, she kills Tom's rabbits because she forgets to feed them. Maggie will look back on her early years with nostalgia and longing, although they are portrayed as being difficult. Maggie's impetuous behaviour, unusual intelligence, and unusually dark skin, hair, and eyes are frequent sources of disdain from Maggie's mother and aunts. Maggie solely worries about Tom's opinion, though, and he feels embarrassed around her and is unable to love her unconditionally. Maggie's introduction to a book containing Thomas Kempis's ideas, which advocate putting aside one's concerns for oneself and concentrating instead on other people's suffering and unearthly values, is the most significant event of her early life. During the trying year of her youth and her family's bankruptcy, Maggie comes upon the book. Maggie takes use of Kempis's writings in search of a "key" to understanding her unpleasant situation, and she embarks on a life of fasting and penance. Maggie, however, ironically implements her humility with a natural passion and pride even in her way of living. Maggie cannot be made to understand the foolishness of her actions and to accept her own need for intellectual and sensual experiences until she re-establishes her connection with Philip Wakem.

## **Tom Tulliver**

Tom Tulliver used to love being outside as a kid. Like his father, he occasionally favours using physical intimidation to resolve conflicts since he is better suited to practical knowledge than academic schooling. When Tom was younger, he was very close to Maggie; they are compared to two animals, and he reacts to her adoration almost intuitively. Tom prioritises “fairness” and “justice” over sensitivity in his relationships and decision-making. He has a strong, self-righteous understanding of these concepts. As Tom becomes older, he begins to display more of the Dodson calmness of mind than the Tulliver ferocious rashness, but he is still capable of calculated brutality, as seen when he scolds Philip Wakem for his deformity. Tom, disgusted by his father’s narrow-minded and backward attitudes and the chaos they brought about for the family, decides to become one of the rapidly emerging class of capitalist entrepreneurs worldwide. Tom has strong ideas about gender roles, and the main reason he can’t get along with Maggie is that she won’t allow him look after her or make decisions for her. Although Tom’s character seems capable of love and kindness—he frequently makes amends with Maggie and purchases a puppy for Lucy Deane—the challenging circumstances of his early life have caused him to become bitter and narrow-minded, much like his father.

## **Mr. Tulliver**

Similar to the other primary characters in *The Mill on the Floss*, Mr. Tulliver suffers from the effects of both his personal traits and his environment. His bankruptcy is the result of his own arrogance and recklessness, but Tulliver also seems to be completely overwhelmed by the way the world is changing around him, particularly while he is ill. Though Tulliver takes pleasure in and makes plans for his somewhat higher IQ than his wife, he remains “puzzled” by the language’s intricacies and the world’s growing economy. Mr. Deane and other members of the new class of venture capitalists are rapidly replacing the static, small, rural social networks and gradual savings that characterise Mr. Tulliver’s lifestyle. The sorrow of Tulliver’s way of life being lost is a component of the tragedy of his demise. One of the few examples of unconditional love in the book is Mr. Tulliver; the early chapters of the story are made interesting by his fondness for Maggie and his sister, Mrs. Moss. But when Tulliver is unable to get over his hate for Wakem, it is precisely this stubbornness and compulsive narrow-mindedness that ultimately brings him to his death.

## **Philip Wakem**

Perhaps the smartest and most observant character in *The Mill on the Floss* is Philip Wakem. As one of the few individuals who truly understands and values Maggie's brilliance, he first comes off as a relief in her early life. Philip is the only other character who truly gets this aspect of Maggie. Philip is a sophisticated, well-read, and skilled sketch artist. Due to his birth deformity—a bent back—Philip has become somewhat gloomy and resentful. He experiences the same lack of love in his life as Maggie. He can't help but be drawn to Maggie partly because of her seemingly boundless love. Because of his tenderness, diminutive size, and emotional sensitivity, Philip is sometimes referred to as "womanly," and it is implied that he does not have a strong desire for Maggie. Maggie is urged to stop her abnormal self-denial by Philip. Although he acknowledges her desire for peace, he reassures her that this is not the path to it. For the rest of the book, Philip seems to be giving Maggie the peace of mind she needs; we imagine their life together to be content, peaceful, and intellectually stimulating.

## **Themes:**

### **Past Experience:**

*The Mill on the Floss* presents its locations and characters as the living results of multiple generations' gestation. St. Ogg's has hundreds of years of history embedded in its very construction. In a similar vein, Maggie and Tom are the inherited offspring of two rival family lines with a lengthy history and inclinations—the Tullivers and the Dodsons. The past is present throughout the book and shapes the lives of those who are receptive to its impact. The first, meticulously outlined book concerning Maggie and Tom's early years serves as the backdrop for the majority of the work.

Maggie reveres her early memories, and her ties to that period of life influence how she behaves now and in the future. In this instance, Maggie's past is an inextricable aspect of her (and her father's) personality, making loyalty to it imperative rather than something to be avoided or something that will resurface to pose a threat. Because Maggie lacks a past filled with overcome hardships to help her put her current circumstances in perspective, Book First vividly illustrates the agony of living without a past. Maggie finds the depths of her childhood emotions almost intolerable.

Stephen is cited as an illustration of the perils associated with ignoring the past. The novel's moral yardstick, Dr. Kenn, laments the disregard for the past, of which Maggie has fought and of which Stephen is a part: Everything appears to be moving in the direction of loosening connections right now—that is, replacing the devotion to obligation that has its roots in the past with a carefree choice. Thus, one is left to the whims of the moment, vulnerable to emotional extremes and ultimately loneliness, without an awareness of the past with which to shape one's character.

### **Compassion:**

Despite not being a religious book, *The Mill on the Floss* is deeply concerned with a morality that ought to apply to everyone and strive for a sympathetic, caring relationship with others. In the St. Ogg parable, the ferryman is rewarded for his unwavering sympathy with another, and Maggie is rewarded for her profound empathy with others as she plays out the St. Ogg scene during the flood in her final rendition. The novel's counterpoint to this sympathy takes the shape of various egoistic tendencies. Tom is incapable of feeling empathy for Maggie. He adheres to the constrained, self-serving code of the up-and-coming businessperson:

When Tom confides in Mr. Deane that he is concerned with his reputation, the latter says, "That's the right spirit, and I never refuse to help anybody if they've a mind to do themselves justice." It's believed that Stephen prioritises himself over other people. The main thrust of his defence of his and Maggie's elopement is his preference for his own feelings over those of others, including Maggie. On the other hand, the moral victory inside the tragedy of the previous book is maintained by Maggie, Philip, and Lucy's shared sympathy. According to Eliot, the aim of art is to provide the reader realistic situations and characters in order to increase the reader's ability to empathise with others. This reasoning contradicts Maggie's immature austerity. Maggie is denying herself the precise intellectual and creative experiences that would enable her to comprehend her own suffering and feel sympathy for the plight of others, so her self-denial becomes morally harmful to her.

### **Knowledge:**

Particularly in the first part of the book, *The Mill on the Floss* is heavily focused on knowledge and education. The first few chapters spend a lot of time outlining how Tom and Maggie's ways of knowledge differ from one another. Tom had practical knowledge; he knew



everything there was to know about worms, fish, and other such creatures; he also knew which birds were cunning, how padlocks opened, and which way to lift gate handles. With the help of this concrete and organic understanding, Tom becomes more integrated with the environment. Maggie, on the other hand, knows a little bit more. Her creativity and love of reading are frequently portrayed as a means for her to escape the real world; other characters describe it as uncanny.

Maggie thought that the world outside the books was not a cheerful one.” The fact that Tom Tulliver obtained the education Maggie ought to have had contributes to part of the tragedy surrounding Maggie and Tom. Maggie isn’t blossoming; Tom is stuck. Tom learns that his bookish education will not help him when he needs to earn a living: Mr. Deane says to Tom, “The world isn’t made of pen, ink, and paper, and if you’re to get on in the world, young man, you must know what the world’s made of.” Tom immediately makes a successful transition back to the realm of entrepreneurship by utilizing his aptitude for practical knowledge. Tom is always shown as superior because of his practical expertise.

Tom has never been tolerant of Maggie’s curiosity about ideas, even as a little child. Tom’s tolerance for different knowledge modalities appears to be correlated with how limited his miseducation was under Mr. Stelling. However, Eliot does not waver in his assertion that, in this instance, Maggie is Tom’s superior due to her intellectualism—those with broader perspectives bear the burden of tolerance.

## UNIT II

### *GREAT EXPECTATIONS* – CHARLES DICKENS

#### **Introduction of the Author:**

Often considered the best author of the Victorian period, Charles John Huffam Dickens was an English novelist and social commentator who wrote some of the most well-known fictional characters in history. During his lifetime, his writings had unparalleled success, and by the 20th century, historians and critics had acknowledged him as a creative genius.

#### **Summary of the Novel:**

The thirteenth novel, *Great Expectation*, was written book by Charles Dickens is *Great Expectations*. It shows Pip, an orphan, going through school. It is the second book by Dickens that is told entirely in the first person, following *David Copperfield*. First published as a serial in Dickens's weekly publication *All the Year Round*, the book ran from December 1, 1860, to August 1, 1861. Three volumes of the novel were released in October 1861 by Chapman & Hall.

Seven-year-old Philip "Pip" Pirrip lives on the Kentish coast marshes with his ill-tempered elder sister and her kind blacksmith husband Joe Gargery. Pip goes to his parents' and brothers' graves on Christmas Eve, 1812. There, he unintentionally runs across an escaped prisoner who demands food and equipment from him, threatening to murder him. Pip snatches a file from Joe's tools and gives the prisoner the pie and brandy that were supposed to be served for Christmas dinner.

Pip's sister is going to search for the lost pie that evening when Joe is asked to fix some shackles by the troops who have arrived. As they enter the marshes to apprehend the prisoner, who is engaged in combat with another escaped prisoner, Joe and Pip go with them. Pip is cleared after the first prisoner admits to stealing food.

A few years later, Mr. Pumblechook—a cousin of the Gargerys—is asked by Miss Havisham, a wealthy and reclusive spinster who was dumped at the altar and now resides in the run-down Satis House—to locate a lad to visit her. Pip meets Miss Havisham and becomes captivated with her adoptive daughter, Estella. Miss Havisham promotes Estella's cold and antagonistic behaviour towards Pip. One visit, Pip picks a fistfight with another youngster, which

Pip easily wins. As she observes, Estella lets Pip kiss her later. Until he is old enough to study a trade, Pip pays frequent trips to Miss Havisham.

Joe goes with Pip to Miss Havisham's final visit, when she offers him money to train as an apprentice blacksmith. Dolge Orlick, Joe's grumpy helper, despises Mrs. Joe and is jealous of Pip. Joe promises Orlick that he may end his job for the day, but Orlick still feels that Joe is showing favouritism when he says he needs to take Pip someplace at lunchtime. Joe's wife is viciously abused when Pip and Joe are gone from the house, rendering her mute and unable of performing her duties. Pip becomes concerned when he notices that the attack was carried out with a leg iron since he thinks it may have been the same leg iron he assisted in releasing the prisoner from. Mrs. Joe is confined to her bed and cannot act as ferociously against Pip as she did prior to the incident. Biddy, Pip's old schoolmate, moves in to assist with Pip's care.

After Pip has been an apprentice for four years, a lawyer named Mr. Jaggers tells him that he has received money from an unidentified supporter, which has enabled him to become a gentleman. Pip pays a visit to Miss Havisham, supposing she is his benefactress, prior to departing for London.

Pip is shocked to see that London is not the "soft white city" he had anticipated, but rather a dirty, litter-filled city. This is Pip's first introduction to metropolitan England. Pip goes in with Herbert Pocket, the cousin of Miss Havisham, who happens to be the son of his instructor, Matthew Pocket, at Barnard's Inn. Pip recognises Herbert as the boy from their last fight. Herbert explains to Pip how Miss Havisham's fiancé deceived her and then abandoned her. Pip befriends two other students: Startop, a more amiable coworker, and Bentley Drummle, a rough guy from a wealthy noble family. Jaggers gives Pip the money he requires. Pip visits Jaggers and meets Molly, his housekeeper, who used to be a prisoner.

Pip is embarrassed to be seen with Joe as they pay him a visit at Barnard's Inn. Joe tells Miss Havisham that Estella would be paying her a visit. Miss Havisham encourages Pip to go back and see Estella, but he chooses not to go see Joe. He finds it unsettling that Orlick is currently working for Miss Havisham. He expresses his concerns to Jaggers, who assures him that Orlick will be fired. Once they return to London, Pip and Herbert share their romantic

secrets: Herbert is engaged to Clara, while Pip is in love with Estella. When Pip is transported to Richmond to acclimatize her to society, she meets Estella.

Herbert and Pip acquire debt. Following Mrs. Joe's passing, Pip goes back to his hometown to attend her burial. After he turns 21, Pip will get a set salary of £500 annually. Pip wants to improve Herbert's future prospects by secretly getting him a job with Clarriker's Shipbrokers, with the assistance of Jaggers' clerk, John Wemmick. Miss Havisham and Pip argue over Estella's coldness when they go to Satis House. By asking Estella to a toast in London, Drummle infuriates Pip. Estella responds that she has no qualms about entrapping Drummle when Pip later sees her seeing him at an Assembly Ball in Richmond and cautions her about him.

Abel Magwitch, the prisoner Pip met in the graveyard and who had been sent to New South Wales after being apprehended, is revealed to be his benefactor a week after Pip turns 23 years old. Once he was liberated there, he became wealthy, but he is under death threat and cannot go back to England. Still, he goes back to meet Pip, who served as his inspiration for all of his accomplishments.

Startled, Pip stops giving Magwitch money, but he and Herbert work up a scheme to get Magwitch out of England. Magwitch tells Pip about his background and discloses that Compeyson, the con artist who had abandoned Miss Havisham, was the escaped prisoner with whom he had battled in the graveyard.

When Pip visits Estella at Satis House again, he runs into Drummle, who has also gone to see her and has taken Orlick under his wing. Miss Havisham claims she did it to irritate her relatives when Pip confronts her for lying to him about his donor. When Pip professes his love to Estella, she icily informs him that she intends to wed Drummle. After a heartbreaking journey back to London, Wemmick informs Pip that Compeyson is out there hunting for him.

Wemmick recounts Pip how Jaggers got his maidservant, Molly, during supper at his house, saving her from the gallows after she was charged with murder. After Jaggers brought Estella in as a baby without disclosing her origins, Miss Havisham reared her to be cold-hearted and callous, as she regretfully reveals to Pip. Pip is also informed by her that Estella is now married. She asks Pip for forgiveness and gives him money to cover Herbert's salary at

Clarriker's. Miss Havisham's garment catches fire just as Pip is ready to depart, and in an attempt to save her, he hurts himself. Pip is dissuaded from following through on his suspicions by Jaggers after realising that Estella is the daughter of Molly and Magwitch.

A few days prior to Magwitch's intended escape, Pip is duped by an anonymous letter into visiting a sluice-house close to his former residence. There, he is apprehended by Orlick, who reveals that he has injured Pip's sister and plans to murder him. Pip is ready to take a blow from a hammer when Herbert and Startop show up to save him. When the three of them go to pick up Magwitch to row him to the steamboat bound for Hamburg, they are greeted by Compeyson, a police boat, who offers to help them identify Magwitch. Compeyson is grabbed by Magwitch, and they battle in the river. Magwitch is taken by the cops, seriously injured. Later, Compeyson's body is discovered.

Pip visits a dying Magwitch in the jail hospital, knowing that the Crown would get his money following his conviction. Eventually, Pip informs Magwitch that his daughter Estella is still alive. Pip receives an offer from Herbert, who is getting ready to go to Cairo, Egypt, to oversee Clarriker's office. Pip becomes unwell in his room following Herbert's departure and is threatened with jail due to debt. But Joe pays off the loan and heals Pip. When Pip eventually gets well and goes back to ask Biddy to marry him, he discovers that she has already wed Joe. Pip promises to pay Joe back, apologises, and departs for Cairo. He finally rises to the position of third in the firm there after moving in with Herbert and Clara. Herbert finds out later that Pip paid for his job at the company.

Pip sees Joe, Biddy, and their son Pip Jr. upon his return to England following eleven years of labour in Egypt. The widowed Estella then appears to Pip among the rubble of Satis House, pleading with him to forgive her and telling him that her misery and her violent marriage to Drummle until his death had opened her heart. Pip sees no hint of another parting from Estella as he holds her hand and they walk away from the starry ruins.

### **List of Main Characters:**

#### **Philip Pirrip (Pip)**

Great Expectations is a bildungsroman that follows the maturation of a single individual, Philip Pirrip, also known as Pip to the outside world. Pip, the protagonist of the bildungsroman,

is without a doubt the most significant character in *Great Expectations*. His actions form the novel's major storyline, and he also serves as the narrator, influencing the reader's interpretation of the narrative through his ideas and attitudes. Understanding Pip's character is perhaps probably the most crucial step in comprehending *Great Expectations*.

There are really two Pips in *Great Expectations*: Pip the narrator and Pip the character, who are the voice recounting the narrative and the person playing it out, because Pip is describing his story many years after the events of the novel take place. Dickens takes great effort to distinguish between the two Pips, giving Pip the narrator's voice maturity and perspective while also conveying Pip's character feelings about what is actually occurring to him. Perhaps the finest place to see this deftly rendered contrast is early in the novel, when Pip the character is still a small boy. In this instance, the narrator, Pip, lovingly makes fun of his younger self while still letting readers experience the narrative through his eyes. Pip's two most notable qualities as a character are his natural goodness of conscience and his naive, romantic idealism. Pip is driven by a strong desire to better himself and achieve any kind of improvement, be it moral, social, or scholastic. The same idealistic goal that drives Pip's desire to learn to read and his dread of punishment for misbehaviour also drives his desire to marry Estella and rise to the higher classes: once he comprehends concepts like poverty, illiteracy, and immorality, he no longer wants to remain impoverished, uneducated, or immoral. The narrator, Pip, is very critical of his own previous behaviour; he seldom gives himself credit for positive deeds but vehemently criticises himself for negative ones.

But as a character, Pip frequently has a limited perspective on the world because of his idealism, and he frequently oversimplifies circumstances in light of shallow ideals, which causes him to act inappropriately towards the people who are important to him. For example, Pip acts snobbishly and coldly towards Joe and Biddy when he transforms into a gentleman by acting as he believes a gentleman should act. However, Pip is really a very kind and kind young man at heart, as seen by his many deeds of generosity throughout the novel (such as aiding Magwitch and surreptitiously purchasing Herbert's way into business) and his fundamental affection for everyone who is close to him. Learning to put his natural conscience and generosity above his adolescent idealism is perhaps Pip's greatest developmental path throughout the book.

Soon after Pip first meets Miss Havisham and Estella, his ambition for success substantially eclipses his inherent decency. His idealistic wishes appear to have been granted after he receives his mysterious fortune, and he surrenders to a gentlemanly life of idleness. However, Pip's simplistic understanding of the social structure in his society is upended when it is revealed that the despicable Magwitch, not the affluent Miss Havisham, is his secret benefactor. In the end, he is forced to acknowledge that one's social standing is not the most significant attribute one possesses and that his behaviour as a gentleman has injured the people who matter most to him. This is seen in the fact that he grows to appreciate Magwitch while losing Estella to the brutal nobleman Drummle. Once he has learned these lessons, Pip matures into the man who narrates the novel, completing the bildungsroman.

### **Estella**

Estella, who is frequently regarded as Dickens's first compelling female character, is a darkly satirical figure who subtly challenges the idea of romantic love and is a harsh critique of the social structure she lives in. Estella, who was raised by Miss Havisham to torture men and "break their hearts" since she was three years old, gains Pip's affection by being purposefully cruel. Estella is cold, cynical, and manipulative, in contrast to the nice, charming, and compassionate heroine of a classic love tale. Estella is actually much lower-born than Pip, although representing Pip's first idealised life among the upper classes. Pip finds out near the end of the book that Estella is the daughter of the coarse criminal Magwitch, and as such, she originates from the lowest level of society.

Paradoxically, Estella does not find salvation in life among the upper classes. Rather, she falls prey to her adopted class twice. She is reared by Miss Havisham, who obliterates her capacity for emotional expression and social interaction, as opposed to Magwitch, a man of immense inner grandeur. And Estella marries the wicked aristocrat Drummle, who abuses her cruelly and makes her life miserable for many years, instead of the good-hearted commoner Pip. Dickens utilises Estella's life to support the thesis that a person's happiness and well-being are not strongly correlated with their social standing by suggesting that Estella may have had a much better life if she had been impoverished.

Dickens manages to keep Estella likeable even in spite of her icy demeanour and the negative forces in her life. Dickens provides the reader with a view into Estella's inner life by

describing her inner fight to act on her feelings rather than the imposed motives of her upbringing. This helps to clarify what Pip could find endearing about Estella. Though Estella constantly tells Pip that she has no heart and that she is unable to stop herself from hurting him, it appears that she does not want to hurt him. Instead, she seems to be pleading with him to leave her behind in order to find happiness. Ultimately, Estella has a similar developmental trajectory to Pip as a result of her protracted, traumatic marriage to Drummle; that is, she comes to rely on and trust her inner intuition. For the first time in the book, she emerges as her own woman in the novel's last scene. Suffering has shown to be more powerful than all previous teachings, as she tells Pip. I've been twisted and fractured, but I intend to get better.

### **Miss Havisham**

Though she isn't precisely a believable character, one of the book's most famous inventions is the insane, vindictive Miss Havisham, an elderly, wealthy woman who lives in a crumbling mansion and wears an ancient wedding dress every day. The singular, sad incident that defines Miss Havisham's life is her being abandoned by Compeyson on the day of their intended marriage. Miss Havisham vows then and there that she will never get over her heartache. She wears just one shoe since, upon learning of Compeyson's treachery, she had not yet put on the other shoe. She stops all the clocks in Satis House at twenty minutes to nine.

In an act of insane, compulsive brutality, Miss Havisham takes Estella in and uses her upbringing as a tool to exact her own vengeance on men. Miss Havisham is a prime example of a single-minded person seeking revenge in a disastrous way; her pursuit for vengeance causes enormous suffering for both herself and the people in her life. Miss Havisham is totally blind to the harm that Pip and Estella are suffering as a result of her actions. By the time the book ends, she has been redeemed when she understands that she has broken Pip's heart in the same way that she has broken her own, and instead of getting any sort of personal retribution, she has only made things worse. Miss Havisham asks Pip for forgiveness right away, reiterating the book's premise that misbehaviour can be redeemed by contrition and sympathy.

### **Abel Magwitch**

Although Magwitch is not there for a large portion of the book, she plays a significant role in driving the plot. Additionally, he plays a crucial role in transforming Pip's worldview. Magwitch tells Pip and Herbert about his life after making an appearance in London and



identifying himself as Pip's sponsor. Magwitch makes it apparent that poverty and neglect are the foundation of his life of crime. What the devil was I to do? Something has to get into my stomach. According to this theory, Magwitch would have chosen to be a productive member of society but was forced into crime due to a lack of other possibilities. His desire to have a taste of all he was unable to experience himself led him to decide to finance Pip's transition into a gentleman: "I've come to the old country to see my gentleman spend his money like a gentleman." I will be happy to do it.

Although Magwitch doesn't grow as a character, Pip's and the reader's impression of him evolves as more details become available. When it comes to his encounters with the younger Pip, Magwitch is a menacing and evil character. Pip is horrified and ashamed when he first discloses his involvement in Pip's life, to the point that "every hour increased my abhorrence of him." But as time passes, Pip starts to feel sympathetic towards Magwitch and worries about keeping him safe. Pip grows increasingly attached to Magwitch after discovering that he is, in fact, Estella's father. Pip's growing fondness for Magwitch helps to humanise him, even though we never learn much about his feelings or intentions. In the end, Pip swears, "I will never stir from your side," once Magwitch gets arrested. Pip finally gets the chance to demonstrate honesty and dedication to someone who has had a big influence on his life because of Magwitch's illness and death.

### **Joe Gargery**

Joe Gargery serves as a representation of the life that Pip first tries to reject but eventually learns to value. Joe is characterised as being "mild, good-natured, sweet-tempered, easy-going," and he gives Pip a lot of love and care when he's young. After Joe tells Pip about his own rough upbringing, lack of education, and determination to do everything in his power to improve Pip and Mrs. Joe's lives, Pip at first "feel[s] conscious that I was looking up to Joe in my heart." But as Pip gets fixated on living up to Estella's high expectations, he starts to feel more and more embarrassed of Joe. When the elder man goes with him to Satis House and later when Joe pays him a visit in London, he feels ashamed of Joe's actions. As Pip acknowledges, "I wanted to make Joe less ignorant and common, that he might be worthier of my society."

Joe is perceptive enough to notice how Pip is being handled and replies with quiet dignity, even if he never becomes upset or agitated with Pip's actions. Joe says, "You and I are not two figures to be known together in London," as he wraps up his trip there. I am incorrect

whether I am in the kitchen, the forge, or the meshes. Joe, in contrast to Pip, is confident in who he is and doesn't want to pretend to be someone he's not. Later, Joe writes Pip a brief note saying, "Not wishful to intrude I have departed," after tending to him throughout his illness. Pip is even more in awe of Joe because of his decision to settle Pip's debt, which demonstrates his faithfulness and affection. . By the book's end, Joe has established himself as a shining example of what it is to be a decent man thanks to his consistency and decency. In contrast to Pip, Joe demonstrates that his kind and nurturing skills have paid off by ending the book in a lovely marriage with kids.

### **Critical Analysis:**

#### **Narrative Style:**

In addition, the emotive environment and the morality of the characters establish a pattern beyond the chronological events and the blending of multiple narratives into a cohesive plot. The two primary narrative strands in *Great Expectations* are those of the young people, Pip, Bidley, and Estella, and those of the foster parents, Miss Havisham, Magwitch, and Joe. Another organizational component, Compeyson, Bentley Drummle, and Orlick, can be categorized as Dangerous Lovers. The hub of this web of acceptance, rejection, and hate is Pip. Dickens draws a comparison between this "dangerous love" and Bidley and Joe's relationship, which develops into marriage from friendship.

This is the novel's overall structure. The term "love" is used generically to describe Pip's genuine affection for Estella as well as the sentiments Drummle evokes in Estella, which are motivated by her ambition to move up in society. In a similar vein, Estella rejects Magwitch due to her disdain for anything that seems beneath her perceived social standing.

Since most of the characters in *Great Expectations* suffer physically, psychologically, or both, or die frequently and violently while suffering, the story has an unhappy ending. Resolutions that bring happiness stay unattainable while hatred grows. Bidley and Joe's marriage and the birth of their two children represent the sole happy ending because the other reconciliations—Pip and Magwitch excepted—do not change the overall plot. Even though Pip breaks free from the web of hatred, Dickens's first, unpublished ending does not grant him

happiness, and his future is left unknown in the altered second ending found in the published work.

Dickens employs a variety of literary techniques, such as caricature, humorous speech patterns, mystery, a Gothic setting, and a main character who undergoes slow transformations. Earl Davis commends the first-person narrative for offering a simplicity fitting for the story while avoiding exaggeration. He also highlights the close network of the structure and balancing of opposites. According to Davis, the novel's effect is strengthened by the symbolism associated with high aspirations.

### **Double Characters in a Personality:**

According to Julian Moynahan, examining Pip's relationship with Orlick—a illegal worker who works at Joe Gargery's forge—will help the reader better grasp Pip's nature than examining his relationship with Magwitch. David Trotter observes that Orlick is Pip's shadow, following Moynahan. Former forge coworkers, Pip and Orlick arrive at Miss Havisham's, where Pip enters and becomes a member of the group while Orlick remains outside, tending to the door. Orlick has different intentions for Bidley, while Pip views her as a sister. Pip is linked to Magwitch, while Orlick is linked to Compeyson, Magwitch's adversary. In addition, Orlick has "high expectations" and is envious of Pip's rise from the swamp and the forge to Satis House, where he is shut out and London's glittering society. Orlick is the heavy shadow Pip can't get rid of.

The vicious assault on Mrs. Gargery by Orlick serves as Pip's punishment after that. After that, Orlick disappears until making a symbolic reappearance in chapter 53 when he tricks Pip into going inside a closed, deserted structure in the marshes. Orlick must settle a score before committing the ultimate crime: murder. But because of his luxury, Pip hinders Orlick, who is nonetheless a slave to his illness and ultimately accountable for Mrs. Gargery's demise. Trotter claims that Dickens employs Bentley Drummle, Pip's upper class equivalent and the double of a double, in a similar manner. Like Orlick, Drummle lurks and lounges, biding his time. He is strong, swarthy, incomprehensible, and hot-blooded. Pip's hope is dashed when Estella rejects him for being a crude, impolite, yet well-born man. Orlick and Drummle both meet violent ends at the conclusion of their lives.

### **Critical Analysis:**

In addition, Sylvère Monod notes that the treatment of the autobiography differs from David Copperfield, as *Great Expectations* does not draw from events in Dickens's life; at most, some traces of a broad psychological and moral introspection can be found. Although the novel is written in the first person, the reader knows as an essential prerequisite that *Great Expectations* is not an autobiography but a novel, a work of fiction with plot and characters, featuring a narrator-protagonist.

Nonetheless, in light of his perspective as both protagonist and narrator, Pip tells the story of the little child he was, unaware of the world outside of his limited familial and geographic context, as Paul Pickerel notes. The clash between the two eras of time determines the course of the narrative. The book first depicts a neglected orphan, mimicking scenes from *David Copperfield* and *Oliver Twist*, but the cliché is swiftly surpassed. The motif emerges at the pivotal time when Miss Havisham and Estella enter Pip's life, when he learns that there is a world outside the marsh, and when the forge represents the future Joe imagined for him.

This is a red herring, since the weird lady inside Satis House and its decaying state indicate that an impasse is about to break. Since the reader now possesses more knowledge than the protagonist, there is a dramatic irony that bestows upon the reader a superiority that the narrator also shares. The protagonist's point of view does not merge with the narrator's and the reader's until Magwitch's return, a plot twist that brings disparate plot points together and propels them forward. The shocking occurrences towards the end of the story test the protagonist's perspective in this setting of incremental revelation. According to A. E. Dyson, this is how *The Immolations of Pip* goes.

## ***HEART OF DARKNESS* – JOSEPH CONRAD**

### **Introduction of the Author:**

Joseph Conrad has a real lengthy name that is Józef Teodor Konrad Korzeniowski. He was born and lived during this venture 3 December 1857 – 3 August 1924. He was a British novelist and story writer of Polish descent. Though he did not speak English well until his twenties, he is recognised as one of the best authors in the English language. He is recognised for having introduced a non-English sensibility to English literature and for being a master prose stylist. He created stories and novels, many of which have naval settings that show crises of human identity in the face of what he perceived to be an uncaring, unintelligent, and immoral world.

### **Summary of the Novel:**

Polish-English author Joseph Conrad wrote a novella titled *Heart of Darkness* (1899), in which the sailor Charles Marlow describes to his audience his experience serving as a steamboat captain for a Belgian firm in the interior of Africa. The work explores topics of power dynamics and morality while being largely recognised as a critique of European colonial dominance in Africa.

The main plot of *Heart of Darkness* is around the reflective sailor Marlow and his voyage up the Congo River to meet Kurtz, who is said to be an exceptionally gifted and idealistic man. Marlow accepts a position with the Company, a Belgian company set up for trading in the Congo, as a riverboat captain. Travelling to Africa and then up the Congo, Marlow finds the Company's stations to be rife with cruelty and general ineptitude. The local indigenous population has been coerced into working for the company, and as a result, they endure abhorrent mistreatment and excessive workloads at the hands of company representatives. The serene and magnificent jungle that envelops the white man's villages gives the impression that they are little islands, in stark contrast to the brutality and filth of imperial activity in the midst of darkness.

When Marlow gets at Central Station, the general manager—a sinister, plotting figure—runs the place. After discovering that his steamer has sunk, he must wait many months for replacement components. This is the time when he becomes more intrigued by Kurtz. Kurtz

appears to be viewed as a danger to the manager's and his favourite, the brickmaker's, positions. Rumour has it that Kurtz is sick, which adds to the expense of the ship's maintenance delays. After a long and arduous journey up, Marlow and the manager set off with a few agents, whom he refers to as pilgrims due to their peculiar habit of carrying long, wooden staves wherever they go up the river and a crew of cannibals in order to repair his ship.

Everyone on board feels a little uneasy due to the thick jungle and the depressing silence, and the pilgrims become even more agitated when they occasionally catch a glimpse of a local settlement or hear drumming. The firewood is for Marlow and his team, but they should approach with caution, according to a message they find in the shack with the wood stored. It's shrouded by thick fog not long after the steamer has taken on the firewood. As the mist lifts, a group of invisible aboriginal people attack the ship, firing arrows from the protection of the forest. Marlow uses the ship's steam whistle to scare away the locals after killing the African helmsman. Soon afterward, Marlow and his friends arrive at Kurtz's Inner Station, expecting to see him dead; instead, they discover a semi-mad Russian trader, who welcomes them upon their arrival, tells them he is the one who left the wood, and gives them assurances that everything is OK. According to the Russian, Kurtz is too big of a man to be judged morally by the same standards as regular people. Kurtz has reportedly become revered by the locals as a god and has carried out vicious raids in the area in an effort to obtain ivory. His methods are attested to by the assortment of severed heads that hang from the station's fence posts. A sizable contingent of aboriginal fighters emerges from the forest and encircles the pilgrims as they carry Kurtz out of the station-house on a stretcher. After Kurtz addresses them, the aboriginal people vanish into the forest.

Kurtz is pretty sick when the management brings him on board the boat. Kurtz's mistress, a stunning native woman, suddenly materialises on the coast and fixes her gaze on the ship. The Russian suggests that she has some sort of connection to Kurtz and has already caused problems by exerting pressure on him. Marlow is informed by the Russian, who has sworn to keep information secret, that Kurtz had ordered the steamboat attack to give the impression that he was killed, allowing them to retreat and let him carry out his plans. The Russian then departs in a canoe out of concern for the manager's wrath. When Marlow goes in pursuit of Kurtz after he vanishes throughout the night, he discovers him crawling on all fours in the direction of the

native camp. Marlow puts an end to him and persuades him to head back aboard the ship. The following morning, they head out down the river, but Kurtz's health is rapidly weakening.

While Marlow is steering the ship, he listens to Kurtz's speech. Kurtz gives Marlow a packet of private papers, which includes a thought-provoking tract on bringing civilization to the natives, which concludes with the cryptic words, Exterminate all the brutes. They had to halt for repairs after the riverboat breaks down. As he passes away, Kurtz says his final words to Marlow, who is stunned, The horror. Not long after, Marlow becomes ill and barely makes it. He eventually makes it back to Europe, where he visits Kurtz's intended, who is his fiancée. Despite the fact that Kurtz passed away more than a year ago, she is still in grief and regards him as a shining example of success and morality. When she asks what his final words were, Marlow finds it difficult to confront her delusions and tell her the truth. Rather, he informs her that Kurtz used her name as his final words.

### **List of Main Characters:**

#### **Marlow**

It's crucial to remember that Marlow is more than just Conrad's stand-in, even though he makes appearances in a number of his other writings. Marlow is a complex individual who simultaneously reflects and foreshadows the figures of high modernism. In many respects, Marlow is a quintessential conventional hero—tough, honourable, self-reliant, and a man of ability. But like William Faulkner's Quentin Compson or T. S. Eliot's J. Alfred Prufrock, he is also "broken" or "damaged." He is tired, doubtful, and cynical because he feels as though the world has fundamentally defeated him. Additionally, Marlow acts as a mediator between the "working tough" and intellectual figures. He is obviously smart, articulate, and a born philosopher, yet he lacks the baggage from centuries of Western thought. He is not just a manual labourer, though; despite being extremely competent at what he does skillfully repairs and then pilots his own ship. He uses work as a diversion from the pretence and rationalisation of others around him.

Marlow can also be understood as a middleman between Kurtz and the Company's two extremes. He is open-minded enough to at least somewhat empathise with either extreme, yet moderate enough for the reader to be able to relate to him. He serves as the reader's guide as a

result. Marlow's eventual illness and recuperation demonstrate his intermediary role. Marlow does not die, in contrast to those who face Africa and their own darkness head-on, but he does suffer greatly—much more than the Company men, who are just concerned with money and career progress. As a result, his experiences and memories have “contaminated” him, and like Coleridge's Ancient Mariner, he is destined to tell his story to everyone who will listen as a form of penance or purgation.

## **Kurtz**

Similar to Marlow, Kurtz can be placed in a broader tradition. Kurtz is comparable to the classic evil genius: a brilliant but eventually depraved person whose downfall is the stuff of legends. Kurtz shares ancestry with characters such as Faustus, Satan from Milton's *Paradise Lost*, Ahab from *Moby-Dick*, and Heathcliff from *Wuthering Heights*. Similar to these figures, he is notable for his grandiose, nearly megalomaniacal plotting in addition to his flair and eloquence. It is something, certainly, to draw enough notice to merit damnation in a world full of clumsy devils and mundanely nasty men. One may criticise Kurtz in the same way that one could criticise *Heart of Darkness* occasionally: style completely triumphs over content, justifying amorality and evil. In fact, one could say that Kurtz's extreme lack of substance is concealed by style, which not only takes precedence over it. Marlow calls Kurtz hollow multiple times. This could be interpreted negatively to suggest that Kurtz is not deserving of serious consideration. It also highlights Kurtz's potential to serve as Marlow's “choice of nightmares” since, in his fundamental emptiness; he turns into a cipher and a surface onto which other things might be projected. But just as Kurtz's eloquence shouldn't be permitted to overwhelm the evil of his conduct, neither this emptiness nor its meaning should be interpreted as benign. Rather, Kurtz gives Marlow a series of contradictions that he may use to assess both the men in the Company and himself.

In fact, Kurtz is more of a collection of pictures created by other people for their own purposes than a fully realised person. There doesn't seem to be a real Kurtz, as Marlow's meetings with Kurtz's cousin, the Belgian journalist, and Kurtz's fiancée reveal. He was a fantastic musician to his cousin, a superb politician and men's leader to the journalist, and a great humanitarian and genius to his fiancée. Marlow is left questioning the veracity of his memories



because all of these go counter to his interpretation of the man. However, Kurtz manages to stick with Marlow and the reader thanks to his charm and grandiose aspirations.

### **The Russian Trader**

The Russian Trader, acting on behalf of a Dutch corporation, entered the interior of Africa after serving aboard several Russian and English ships. He roamed the river by himself for two years before meeting Kurtz and joining his loyal following. The Russian Trader was accustomed to the kind of lofty philosophical ideas he would hear in Kurtz's talks even before he travelled to Africa. He tells Marlow that a person's youthful mind needs to be expanded, experiences should be gathered, and objects seen. Kurtz gave him just this practice, saying, "I tell you, this man has enlarged my mind." Marlow shows his respect for the Russian, if only due to his extraordinary resilience in strange and dangerous territory. Marlow does, however, also take issue with the Russian's blind allegiance to Kurtz, which he has adopted with a kind of enthusiastic fatalism. The Russian's impressionable innocence is most evident in his youthful appearance and the harlequin-like, spotty, colourful clothes that Marlow finds so endearing.

### **The General Manager**

When Marlow gets to the Central Station, he meets the General Manager of the Company, and the two of them set sail for Kurtz and the Inner Station. Paradoxically, the most noteworthy thing about the Manager's personality is how unexceptional and ordinary he is. Marlow describes him as normal, middle-sized, ordinary, and usual in his first impression, and this ongoing focus on his ordinaryness sets him apart from Kurtz, who is by all accounts anything but average. The personality friction that exists between Kurtz and the Manager is also evident in their relationship, as their quest for control within the company is motivated by a steadfast mistrust and hate of one another. Marlow notices right away that the Manager feels intimidated by Kurtz and appears to be looking forward to his demise, offering his signature, subtle smile as soon as he suspects his enemy's death.

Kurtz requests that Marlow keep his private documents away of the Manager's prying paws in the meanwhile. These actions seem to indicate that the Manager is constantly plotting or seeking for methods to sway circumstances to his advantage. Although the Manager does not possess the same level of power as the Brick maker, he does make it abundantly known that he puts his own interests first. Two additional noteworthy facets of the Manager's persona are his

capacity to arouse in others an inexplicable feeling of unease and his inexhaustible health, both of which bear wider resonances with Conrad's criticisms of imperialism. The Manager's sinister smile and eerie demeanour give the impression that the Company as a whole employs dubious means to accomplish its objectives. Conrad's criticism is reinforced by the fact that he never gets sick, which he credits to having no entrails and highlighting his moral bankruptcy. Marlow makes many references to the Manager's emptiness, suggesting that only those devoid of all morality could maintain such a depraved and deceptive manner of life. This characterization of the Manager ultimately gives Conrad yet another opportunity to emphasize the inherent maliciousness of Europe's colonial missions.

### **Critical Analysis:**

Heart of Darkness is comprehensible on the surface because of its semiautobiographical connection to Conrad's actual existence. Conrad's job as a merchant marine also carried him up the Congo River, much like that of his protagonist Marlow. Similar to Marlow, Conrad experienced a deep impact from the human depravity he saw during his boat tour of European colonialism in Africa. However, reducing Heart of Darkness to its similarities with Conrad's personal experiences is unduly simplistic. It would be helpful to look at its components that were essential to modernism's rise, such as Conrad's use of multiple narrators, his couching of one narrative inside another, the story's achronological development, and as the 20th century went on his almost post-structuralist mistrust of language's stability. In addition, his fiction honors the Victorian legends he was raised on, as seen by the popular heroism that forms a major part of the plot. In that regard, Heart of Darkness hovers on the brink of a passing Victorian sensibility and a growing Modernist sensibility.

This kind of early post-structuralist use of language—Conrad's insistence on words' intrinsic inadequacy to describe the real, in all its horrifying truth—is one of the most distinctly Modernist aspects of his work. Marlow's voyage is replete with encounters with the unfathomable, incomprehensible language, and an unquestionably "inscrutable" reality. In this sense, language repeatedly falls short of its intended function of communication. "It is impossible to convey the life-sensation of any given epoch of one's existence—that which makes its truth, its meaning—its subtle and penetrating essence," Marlow tells his audience, summarizing the phenomena well. We exist alone, just as we dream. Even with his remarkable

eloquence, Kurtz is unable to fully convey the horrifying darkness he saw all around him. All he can say is, “The horror! The horror!” Some reviewers have speculated that *Heart of Darkness*’s widespread appeal stems in part from the language’s ambiguity, or the freedom it provides readers to interpret. Some argue that this is one of the text’s worst weaknesses and that Conrad’s incapacity to give names to things is unbecoming for a writer who is regarded as one of the greatest. Maybe this proves the interpretive range of the *Heart of Darkness* in and of itself.

More mocking criticism of *Heart of Darkness* has replaced postcolonial analysis of the film. According to Achebe, Conrad was an outright racist who dehumanized Africans in order to utilize them as a backdrop for examining the interiority of the white man. Conrad criticizes the wrongs of colonialism, but he does little to eliminate the racism that supports the system; instead, he portrays the indigenous people of Africa as little more than a component of the natural world. Achebe is correct. Despite being considered as one of the most perceptive novels written by the West about the negative effects of European imperialism in Africa, this work does not give any special attention to the African people.

Similar criticisms have been made by feminist discourse, claiming that Conrad flattened his female characters in a manner akin to how he did with his African ones. Instead than being used as multifaceted entities, women are used as signifiers that blend in with the other signifiers that make up the text. The African queen becomes the embodiment of darkened nature and an eroticized symbol of its atavistic allure; Kurtz’s Intended, on the other hand, is just a signifier for the illusory reality of society that Marlow is trying to protect against the invading darkness of human nature. These shells have been stripped of all particularity and meaning so that Conrad can fill them with the significance he sees fit. Neither woman is interiorized, and neither is named—a rhetorical strategy that seems less about Conrad illustrating the failures of language than it does about him privileging his masculine voice above any possible feminine ones.

Much contemporary analysis—the aforementioned postcolonial and feminist critiques included—is centred not on text itself, but on other commentaries of the text, thereby elucidating the way that discussions in academia might unwittingly perpetuate some of the work’s more problematic elements. As a result, *Heart of Darkness*’s place in the literary canon is constantly shifting. It is no longer seen as an instructive work that exposes the depths of human depravity, but rather as an object that is both the result and a source of such depravity.

## UNIT III

### ***THE MURDER OF ROGER ACKROYD – AGATHA CHRISTIE***

#### **Introduction of the Author:**

Lady Agatha Mary Clarissa Christie, also known as Lady Mallowan, DBE, was an English author best known for her 66 detective novels and 14 collections of short stories, many of which followed the fictitious investigators Hercule Poirot and Miss Marple. *The Mousetrap*, a murder mystery that has been produced in London's West End since 1952, is the longest-running play in the world. It was written by her as well. Christie was a writer during the "Golden Age of Detective Fiction" and has been dubbed the "Queen of Mystery" or the "Queen of Crime"; her estate has since trademarked these titles. Six novels were also written by her under the pen name Mary Westmacott. With more than two billion copies of her novels sold worldwide, Christie is recognised by Guinness World Records as the best-selling fiction author of all time.

#### **Summary of the Novel:**

Agatha Christie is a British novelist. *The Murder of Roger Ackroyd* is her third mystery book with Hercule Poirot as the main character. William Collins published the book in the United Kingdom in June 1926. In 1926, Dodd, Mead and Company published an American edition. Since its initial release, the book has garnered positive reviews and been hailed as Christie's masterpiece.

The story's first-person narrator, Dr. James Sheppard, resides in the rural village of King's Abbot, outside of London, with his older, single sister, Caroline. Dr. Sheppard, a practicing physician in the area, gets entangled in the investigation of a murder and suicide that seem suspicious over the course of nine days.

Dr. Sheppard opens his narrative on the morning of September 17, with his patient Mrs. Ferrars, an affluent widow whose husband had passed away the year before, dying from an overdose. Dr. Sheppard had also seen Mr. Ferrars's death and concluded that his acute gastritis was caused by drunkenness. He now has to ascertain Mrs. Ferrars's cause of passing away. Caroline has a vivid imagination and an endless curiosity about everyone. She informs Dr. Sheppard that she thinks Mrs. Ferrars killed herself out of regret for poisoning Mr. Ferrars, not because she overdosed.

The villagers anticipated that Mrs. Ferrars and wealthy widower Roger Ackroyd, another patient of Dr. Sheppard's, would announce their impending marriage at the time of her death. Twenty-one years before, Roger had similarly lost his spouse to alcoholism, leaving him to raise her son Ralph Paton, whom Roger had adopted from a previous marriage. The late brother's widow, Mrs. Cecil Ackroyd, and her daughter, Flora, also reside with Roger at his Fernly Park estate. Geoffrey Raymond, his secretary, Parker, his butler, Ursula Bourne, his parlormaid, and Elsie Dale, his housemaid, make up his core crew.

Roger Ackroyd asks Dr. Sheppard to dinner on September 17th in order to discuss a problem that is really upsetting him. They retreat to Roger's study after dinner to have a private conversation. Roger reveals to Dr. Sheppard that he and Mrs. Ferrars were engaged for three months. She admitted to him the day before she passed away that she had poisoned her husband Ashley Ferrars, that she was the target of blackmail, and that she would identify the perpetrator in a whole day. At that moment, Roger reads aloud to Dr. Sheppard the suicide note written by Mrs. Ferrars, and Parker brings a blue envelope bearing her handwriting. But just before Mrs. Ferrars says who the blackmailer is, Roger stops reading aloud. In the manuscript he began writing following Roger's murder, Dr. Sheppard notes that Roger requested time to process the letter's contents. By 9:15, Dr. Sheppard gets home. He gets a call at 10:15 and quickly returns to Fernly Park to tell Caroline that Parker has told him that Roger has been killed.

Parker claims he did not make the phone call and is not aware of any homicide when Dr. Sheppard arrives at Fernly Park. When they force open the locked door from inside Roger's study, they discover Roger dead with a dagger stuck in his neck. The letter from Mrs. Ferrars is missing. When the police arrive on the scene, they see footprints coming through the open window and going into the study. No one in the home observed anything out of the ordinary, despite their interviews. Ralph was last seen at the Three Boars inn earlier in the day, but the police are unable to locate him. After gathering a pair of Ralph's boots, they examine them against the muddy tracks and discover that they match.

The following day, Flora goes to see Dr. Sheppard and Caroline to beg for assistance. Flora tells Dr. Sheppard that their new neighbour is the renowned investigator Hercule Poirot and invites him to join her in asking for his help in clearing Ralph, the man she is engaged to. Despite his retirement from active law enforcement, Poirot pays attention to Flora's request.

Poirot informs Flora that if he took the case, he would not give up until he obtained all the information and she consented to his conditions.

Dr. Sheppard is invited to accompany Poirot to the crime scene right away. Poirot notes what he observes after Dr. Sheppard gives the background material. A phone conversation, an open window, a door locked from the inside, and an odd chair are among the crucial hints Poirot points out to Dr. Sheppard. Truths come to light during Poirot's investigation. He names the people that Roger's passing might benefit. The cloaked blackmailer was going to come unseen. Due to their covert marriage, Ralph would not be eligible to inherit anything. Everyone involved is hiding something, according to Poirot's clear statement.

Growing doubtful about Poirot's methods, Dr. Sheppard documents the investigation in a private manuscript. Poirot gradually becomes less confident in Dr. Sheppard. A composite of the murderer appears as Poirot arranges the pieces of the puzzle using the evidence and his understanding of human behaviour. A formerly nice but now weak man who can't resist the desire to extort a rich widow and pushes her too far is how Poirot psychologically portrays the blackmailer. Per Poirot's theory, the man killed the person who was going to ruin him out of desperation as he faced being exposed for his crime.

Poirot brings the family and staff together after wrapping up his investigation, challenging them all to come forward by the next day, at which point he will disclose the murderer to the police. But only Dr. Sheppard is the target of Poirot's caution. Afterwards, Poirot informs Dr. Sheppard in private that he has exposed him as Roger's murderer and the blackmailer of Mrs. Ferrars). Poirot presents Dr. Sheppard with an option to being arrested and found guilty, to which Dr. Sheppard scoffs. Poirot then lays out the circumstances around motive, means, and opportunity. With the description of his crime and confession, Dr. Sheppard closes his manuscript. The poison that murdered Mrs. Ferrars is then used by him to overdose.

### **List of Main Characters:**

#### **Dr. James Sheppard**

The narrator of the tale and the village doctor of King's Abbot is Dr. James Sheppard. At first, Roger Ackroyd confides in and is friends with Dr. Sheppard's family. After Roger is killed, he joins Poirot as an investigator of his friend's death. Dr. Sheppard frequently asserts that he

hates meddling in other people's business and makes clumsy or caustic remarks. Though he displays contempt when regarded as stupid, he occasionally presents himself as foolish.

### **Hercules Poirot**

He is a well-known retired investigator assigned to look into Roger's death. Poirot is sometimes thought of as a bizarre and absurd tiny man with peculiar mannerisms and a noticeable moustache, but he really excels at studying human behaviour. It is well known that Poirot withholds critical assessments until he is confident in the details.

### **Roger Ackroyd**

In addition to being a successful manufacturer, he also owns the Fernly Park estate and was murdered. Notwithstanding rumours about his love chances in the hamlet, Roger is a wealthy widower who has not remarried. At first glance, Roger is thought to be morally upright and giving. However, those closest to him are aware of his tense and often irritated disposition.

### **Caroline Sheppard**

She is referred to as the sister of Dr. Sheppard and the town gossip. Though she occasionally demonstrates tenderness and sympathy, Caroline is an unforgiving critic. She studies the village's inhabitants with a benign attitude, but she has a propensity of drawing conclusions too quickly and obstinately maintaining that she is always right. Caroline believes she is a talented investigator and is determined to share what she knows.

### **Mrs. Ackroyd**

She is the potential murder suspect and widow of Roger's brother. A self-described martyr, Mrs. Ackroyd is preoccupied with Roger's financial responsibility to take care of her and Flora. She tends to gild the truth and has an absurd fear of discomfort. Her beliefs are repugnant and she speaks quickly, which makes others avoid her company.

### **Miss Elizabeth Russell**

She is a murder suspect in addition to being Fernly Park's cleaner. Miss Russell is a diligent worker who reminds Dr. Sheppard of himself, but she also has a severe eye, an acid smile, and a cast iron manner. She uses humour and cool demeanour to combat contempt for her position as a servitress.

## **John Parker**

He is a murder suspect as well as Fernly Park's butler. Although Parker is slick and effective in his work, his conceited and ambiguous manner makes the estate personnel and investigators suspicious of him.

## **Themes:**

The murder of Roger Ackroyd, who was stabbed to death in his chamber while reading a letter from his fiancé, is the main theme of the book, according to the author. Blackmail and avarice are the novel's main themes. Dr. Sheppard becomes a rapacious guy because of money. In order to make money, he approves of anything, even if it means blackmailing Mrs. Ferrars, a wealthy widow. His actions get him to disguise it, which in turn makes him want to commit more crimes.

## **Reasoned Inference**

The story makes sense, which is why the novel is so fascinating. Because it appears that no one can conduct the crime without anybody noticing, it gives the reader the impression that the matter is actually unresolved. The story seems fantastic and real because of this logical deduction. In a detective fiction, the approach of problem solving used to identify the murderer is called logical deduction.

## **Surprise and Suspense**

Suspenseful passages in Agatha Christie's *The Murder of Roger Ackroyd* pique the reader's curiosity and encourage them to read on. The initial tension arises when Dr. Sheppard calls Parker, Ackroyd's butler, to inform him that Roger Ackroyd has been murdered after meeting the stranger on his way home from Roger Ackroyd's house. Christie leaves her readers wondering about the identity of the "bad guy" and why they guessed correctly most of the time. Even though there isn't a single hint that points to Dr. Sheppard as a suspect, it is revealed at the conclusion of the story that he is the murderer.

## **Structure of the Plot:**

Based on the Freytag pyramid, the author believes that this novel's plot is disjointed. The final three chapters also contain the climax, therefore the order of events changes to exposition, complexity, climax, falling action, climax, and resolution.



First-person point of view is used in *The Murder of Roger Ackroyd*. The account is told by Dr. Sheppard. Since the entire narrative is told from his point of view, readers can conclude that he is more significant than Agatha Christie's well-known detective Hercule Poirot. Even though readers will never suspect him, they will learn at the conclusion of the novel that he is the murderer. When readers learn that Dr. Sheppard is a skilled liar rather than a decent man, they could get dissatisfied.

## ***ANIMAL FARM* – GEORGE ORWELL**

### **Introduction of the Author:**

English author, essayist, journalist, and critic Eric Arthur Blair was born on June 25, 1903, and passed away on January 21, 1950. Blair published under the pen name George Orwell. Clear prose, social criticism, resistance to tyranny, and support for democratic socialism are characteristics of his work. Orwell wrote fiction, poetry, literary criticism, and polemical journalism. His two best-known works are the dystopian novel *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (1949) and the allegorical novella *Animal Farm* (1945).

### **Summary of the Novel:**

George Orwell's satirical allegorical novella *Animal Farm* is a beast fable that was originally published in England on August 17, 1945. In an attempt to establish a society in which all animals are treated equally, freely, and with happiness, a group of anthropomorphic farm animals rebel against their human farmer. In the end, the uprising is put down, and the farm descends into an even worse state under the rule of Napoleon, a pig.

The Manor Farm's prize-winning boar, Old Major, calls a gathering of the animals in the large barn. He shares with them a dream he had in which all animals coexist together without interference from humans. He teaches the animals a song called "Beasts of England," in which he describes his dream vision poetically, and informs them that they must strive towards creating such a utopia. The animals enthusiastically welcome Major's vision. Three younger pigs, Snowball, Napoleon, and Squealer, formulate his primary ideas into a philosophy known as Animalism when he passes away just three nights after the gathering.

One late night, the animals fight their way to victory over Mr. Jones, the farmer, and drive him off the land. They give the land the new name Animal Farm and commit to realising Major's ambition. The cart-horse Boxer gives his all to the cause, dedicating his immense strength to the farm's success and making the promise to himself, "I will work harder," a personal motto.

Animal Farm prospers at first. While Napoleon brings a bunch of young puppies to learn about the ideas of animalism, Snowball teaches the animals how to read. The animals defeat Mr. Jones once more when he returns to reclaim his farm in what is known as the Battle of the Cowshed, and they seize the farmer's abandoned gun as a sign of their triumph. But as time goes on, Napoleon and Snowball start arguing more and more about the farm's future, and they start to compete with one another for control over the other animals.

Napoleon vehemently opposes Snowball's proposal to construct a windmill that can generate power. Snowball delivers an impassioned speech during the meeting to decide whether to move forward with the project. Napoleon only responds briefly, but then he makes an odd noise, and nine attack dogs—the puppies Napoleon had taken to "educate"—blow into the barn and drive Snowball off the property. After taking over as Animal Farm's leader, Napoleon announces that there won't be any more meetings. He claims that from then on, the pigs alone would decide everything—for the benefit of all animals.

Now, Napoleon immediately changes his mind about the windmill, and the animals work hard to finish it, Boxer most of all. After a storm one day, the animals discover the windmill overturned. Snowball returned to the farm to sabotage the windmill, according to Napoleon, despite the arrogant human farmers in the region declaring that the animals made the walls too thin. He organises a massive purge in which any animal that challenges Napoleon's unquestionable leadership and is thought to have taken part in Snowball's grand scheme will instantly perish at the hands of the attack dogs.

Napoleon starts to assert his authority and alter history to paint Snowball as a villain, and Boxer has adopted the second maxim, "Napoleon is always right." In addition, Napoleon starts to behave more and more like a normal person—sleeping in a bed, sipping whisky, and conducting business with nearby farmers. Although Squealer, Napoleon's propagandist, convinces the other

animals that Napoleon is a great leader and is improving things for everyone—despite the fact that the common animals are cold, hungry, and overworked—the original Animalist principles strictly forbade such activities.

Napoleon is duped by a neighbouring farmer named Mr. Frederick into buying some lumber. After that, the farmer attacks the property and blows out the windmill, which was restored at considerable expenditure. Following the windmill's destruction, a fierce battle breaks out, in which Boxer sustains serious injuries. The farmers are routed by the animals, but Boxer is weakened by his wounds. He realises that his time is almost up when he later falls while working on the windmill. One day, Boxer vanishes from sight. Squealer reports that Boxer was brought to the hospital and, before passing away, breathed his last in praise of the Rebellion. In reality, Napoleon has exchanged his most devoted and patient employee for glue in order to obtain funds for whisky.

As the years go by in Animal Farm, the pigs start to resemble people more and more—they start to walk straight, carry whips, and wear clothes. The seven tenets of animalism—also referred to as the Seven Commandments and written on the barn's side—eventually amount to only one, which states that “all animals are equal, but some animals are more equal than others.” During a dinner, Napoleon hosts a human farmer named Mr. Pilkington and announces his intention to form an alliance with the farmer against the labouring classes in both the human and animal societies. Additionally, he renames Animal Farm as the Manor Farm, asserting that this is the “true” name. It is no longer possible for the common animals to distinguish between the humans and the pigs as they peer through the farmhouse window at the aristocratic party.

### **List of Main Characters:**

#### **Napoleon**

From the outset of the tale, Napoleon is revealed as a completely dishonest opportunist. Napoleon never contributes in any way to the revolution, not to the creation of its philosophy, not to the terrible battle it demands, and not to the new society's initial attempts at self-determination, despite the fact that he is constantly present at the early meetings of the new state. He only ever expresses interest in the strength of his control over Animal Farm, never in the strength of the farm itself. As a result, the one project he enthusiastically takes on is teaching a

litter of puppies. But he educates them for his benefit rather than theirs or the benefit of everyone else; they end up becoming his own personal secret police or army, a violent means by which he imposes his will on others.

While Napoleon is most closely associated with the Soviet tyrant Joseph Stalin, he also more broadly symbolises the political despots that have arisen throughout human history, especially in the twentieth century. Napoleon, a French general who came to power on the backs of democratic ideas and perhaps even more of a despot than the aristocrats he replaced, is the namesake of this communist leader.

The fact that Napoleon may readily stand in for any of the great autocrats and political con artists in global history—including those who came into being after *Animal Farm* was written—is a monument to Orwell's keen political intelligence and the universality of his novel. The deceit and intimidation strategies of authoritarian dictators like Slobodan Milosevic, Pol Pot, Mao Tse-tung, Josip Tito, and Augusto Pinochet are sharply critical of Napoleon and his henchmen's actions.

## **Snowball**

During his time in a Trotskyist unit during the Spanish Civil War, Orwell formulated his initial ideas for a critical analysis of authoritarian communism, which impacted his rather optimistic depiction of Snowball. As a counterpart to Leon Trotsky, Snowball is a passionate ideologue who dedicates his life to advancing Animalism globally and enhancing Animal Farm's facilities. However, his idealism proves to be his undoing. He is no match for Napoleon's display of sheer might because he depends solely on his own reasoning and rhetorical prowess to win people over.

Even though Orwell paints a somewhat positive picture of Snowball, he avoids idealising him and makes sure to give him some moral defects. For instance, Snowball essentially concedes that pigs are better than other animals. Furthermore, if he hadn't been driven off Animal Farm, he intended, unwavering passion for ambitious undertakings like the windmill would have erupted into full-blown megalomaniacal authoritarianism. Orwell does, in fact, imply that we cannot eradicate government corruption by choosing moral people to hold positions of authority; rather, he constantly reminds us throughout the novella that corruption originates with power.

## **Boxer**

Boxer, the most empathetically rendered character in the book, embodies every virtue that the oppressed working classes are known for: commitment, devotion, and an enormous work ethic. However, he also has what Orwell considered to be the two main faults of the working class: an incapacity to recognise even the most obvious kinds of political corruption and a naive faith in the good intentions of the elite. Taken advantage of by the pigs just as much, if not more, than he had been by Mr. Jones, Boxer stands in for all of the unseen work that supports the political theatre being performed by the ruling class. The heartbreaking demise of Boxer at a glue factory serves as a striking example of the pigs' extreme treachery. But it might also highlight the unique significance of Boxer, who acts as Animal Farm's unifying factor before being hauled out.

## **Squealer**

Orwell studied how language is used by politicians in the era of mass media throughout his career. Squealer, the silver-tongued pig in Animal Farm, employs language abuse to use any means necessary to defend Napoleon's policies and acts to the proletariat. He restricts the scope of discussion by drastically simplifying language, such as when he tells the sheep to bleat, "Four legs good, two legs better!"

He confounds and terrifies the ignorant with too complicated jargon, like when he explains that pigs, the "brainworkers" of the farm, eat apples and milk not for their own enjoyment but rather for the benefit of their fellows. In this latter tactic, he also uses jargon and a perplexing lexicon of untrue and unbreakable numbers, instilling in the other animals a sense of doubt in their own abilities as well as a sense of hopelessness over their ability to ever discover the truth without the pigs' assistance.

Squealer is the ideal propagandist for any dictator because of his lack of morality, his steadfast devotion to his leader, and his rhetorical prowess. Squealer's name is also aptly chosen for him; squealing is, of course, the standard vocalisation of pigs, and Squealer's speech characterises him. Squealer's actions towards his fellow animals are perfectly evoked by the fact that to squeal is also to betray.

## **Old Major**

Orwell was a democratic socialist who greatly respected both Russian revolutionary leader Vladimir Ilych Lenin and German political economist Karl Marx. His criticism of *Animal Farm* focuses more on how later leaders corrupted the Marxist philosophy that drove the Rebellion than it does on the idea itself. The wellspring of the principles that the animals stick to even after their pig leaders have betrayed them is Old Major, who stands in for both Marx and Lenin.

Even though Orwell gives a mostly flattering image of Old Major, he does include a few minor ironies that let the reader wonder about the venerable pig's intentions. For example, Old Major is obliged to acknowledge that, despite his lengthy list of grievances about the way humans have treated animals, his own life has been long, full, and free from the horrors he has so vividly described for his rapt audience. It appears that he made up a phoney brotherhood with the other animals to win their acceptance of his vision.

## **Critical Analysis:**

The main conflict in *Animal Farm* occurs when the pigs' concentration of political power corrupts the animals' desire for equality and freedom. The first chapter, Old Major's lessons, and particularly "Beasts of England," the song that becomes *Animal Farm's* anthem, all convey the animals' original intent. The farmer, Mr. Jones, represents political power at the start of the novella by indulging himself while the animals go hungry. When the animals rebel against Mr. Jones, they succeed quite handily, leading them to believe that they have conquered governmental power itself. Actually, they have only triumphed over one manifestation of political authority.

By the time Napoleon steals the cows' milk at the end of Chapter 2, the pigs had come to represent political power. The pigs' rise to dominance and the other animals' increasing realization that their mission has not been accomplished are both chronicled in the upcoming chapters. Napoleon and the pigs in particular come to represent political power in three different ways. Initially, they take ownership of an increasing amount of the farms' resources. They steal apples and milk at first, and soon they sell animal items to pay for human indulgences like whisky. Second, the pigs escalate their violence, establishing the dog police force and putting people to death.

Third, the pigs assert their authority to define what constitutes truth. Squealer modifies both the narrative of the Battle of the Cowshed and the Ten Commandments of Animalism. The animals gradually come to the realization that their lives are no better than they were prior to the Rebellion in the meantime. Napoleon's decision to sell the chickens' eggs in Chapter 7 sets up the novella's conclusion. At last the chickens rebel when they realize that the pigs are their enemies. The hens are put to death and their insurrection suppressed mercilessly. Right now, Boxer is the only character who is holding onto the belief that liberation is possible. He has put in many hours to fulfill this mission that Old Major laid him, which for Boxer is symbolized by his dream of one day retiring to a special pasture. But when Boxer's retirement day arrives, he is murdered and sold. The animals are decisively defeated by Napoleon's political strength and the pigs at the moment of Boxer's defection. The animals discover they are unable to distinguish between humans and pigs when they see the pigs eating with human farmers in the last pages of Animal Farm. Because both groups are equally corrupted by the realities of political power, the pigs and the human farmers have united.

## UNIT IV

### ATONEMENT – IAN MCEWAN

#### **Introduction of the Author:**

Born on June 21, 1948, Ian Russell McEwan is a British author and screenwriter. He was named number 19 in The Daily Telegraph's list of the "100 most powerful people in British culture" and included in The Times' list of "The 50 greatest British writers since 1945" in 2008. Early in his career, McEwan wrote evocative, Gothic short stories. He was dubbed "Ian Macabre" for his first two books, *The Cement Garden* (1978) and *The Comfort of Strangers* (1981). Three somewhat successful novels from the 1980s and early 1990s came after these. With *Amsterdam*, he was awarded the Booker Prize in 1998. His critically acclaimed second book, *Atonement*, was made into an Oscar-winning movie starring James McAvoy and Keira Knightley. *The Children Act*, *Nutshell*, and *Machines Like Me* are some of his later books. He received the Jerusalem Prize in 2011 as well as the Shakespeare Prize in 1999.

#### **Summary of the Novel:**

Ian McEwan is the author of the 2001 British metafiction book *Atonement*. The story revolves around an upper-class girl's half-innocent mistake that destroys lives, her maturity in the shadow of that error, and a reflection on the nature of writing. It is set in three time periods: 1935 England, Second World War England and France, and present-day England. It was on the 2001 Booker Prize fiction shortlist and is widely regarded as one of McEwan's best pieces. *Atonement* was included in Time magazine's 2010 list of the top 100 English-language books published since 1923.

Thirteen-year-old Briony Tallis wrote a play, *The Trials of Arabella*, for her visiting cousins, fifteen-year-old Lola and her nine-year-old twin brothers, to be played on a summer's day in the English countryside in 1935. The cousins are residing with Briony's relatives pending the resolution of their parents' divorce. While her brother Leon is in town visiting his friend Paul Marshall, Briony is hoping the play will make an impression on him. Briony is shocked when her cousins perform her words differently than she had envisioned, and she is initially appalled by how immature she feels in contrast to Lola. Briony makes the decision to stop creating plays and transition from childhood to maturity.



Cecilia, Briony's sister, has just arrived back home from Cambridge. She graduated along with Robbie, Cecilia's childhood buddy, and the Tallises' charming son, and she doesn't know what to do next. Cecilia becomes irate with Robbie's attempts to assist her when she breaks a vase while trying to fill it with water from a fountain, so she undresses, plunges into the water, and gets the vase herself. From inside the house, Briony observes this exchange, perplexed by what she has witnessed.

After accepting the Tallises' invitation to dinner that evening, Robbie comes home and discovers he has fallen in love with Cecilia. He starts typing a letter to Cecilia, apologising for his clumsiness and detailing his desire to make love to her in a few vivid sentences. A second handwritten draft of the letter, which he intends to give, is written by him since he knows he cannot transmit that version. Robbie asks Briony to deliver the letter to Cecilia while he is travelling to the Tallis residence. But after Briony leaves, Robbie discovers he gave her the typewritten copy rather than the handwritten one. Disturbed by what it says, Briony reads the letter before giving it to Cecilia.

After telling Lola what Robbie said in his note, Briony and Lola both conclude that Robbie is insane. After reading the letter, Cecilia greets Robbie and the two proceed into the library to speak. After admitting to Robbie that she has been feeling something for him for a while, Cecilia and he start making love until Briony interrupts them. Robbie and Cecilia are upset that they are being cut off, but Briony feels as though she has just prevented her sister from being attacked. The twin brothers seek to be excused during dinner. Following their departure, Briony finds a note informing her that they have fled. The group splits up into search teams to scour the grounds for them. After wandering off on her own, Briony ultimately discovers Lola being raped by a man who flees before Briony can see him. Lola says she was unaware of the identity of the attacker. Briony is positive the man was Robbie because of what she saw that day. She tells the police, back at the Tallis residence, that she witnessed Robbie abusing Lola. After finding the twins, Robbie returns at dawn and gets taken into custody. Feeling upset, Cecilia tells Robbie that she will wait for him.

Robbie is found guilty and sentenced to three years in prison; however, he is freed early in exchange for enlisting in the military. Before war breaks out, Robbie and Cecilia are able to meet once in a café after exchanging letters while he was incarcerated. Even though Robbie is

fighting in France, they are still writing to each other. Cecilia has severed her ties to her family due to their part in Robbie's incarceration and started working as a nurse. In a single letter, Cecilia informs Robbie that Briony is also pursuing a nursing degree and that she would like to amend her testimony after realising her error. Robbie consoles himself with the hope that his conviction for the crime he did not commit may be reversed as he travels to Dunkirk, where the British forces are scheduled to evacuate. Robbie witnesses numerous wartime atrocities while travelling with two corporals and tries to assist people wherever he can. He eventually reaches Dunkirk, where he passes out in a bombed-out cottage after hearing that boats will transport the soldiers to Britain in the morning.

Now eighteen, Briony has chosen nursing over Cambridge as retribution for accusing Robbie unfairly, even though at the time she thought her evidence was accurate. Briony's assumption that Paul Marshall was the real rapist is validated when she finds out that Lola and Paul Marshall are getting married. Following the evacuation from Dunkirk, Briony attends to a number of injured and very ill troops, hoping that Robbie is still alive in each case. Briony visits the church on the day of Lola and Paul's wedding and muses over whether to oppose their union, but she chooses to remain silent. She then visits Cecilia's flat and discovers that she is with Robbie. Briony is glad that Robbie is still alive and that the two of them are together, even though it is obvious that Cecilia and Robbie have not forgiven her. Briony assures them that she would update her testimony and provide their family with accurate information regarding Lola's attacker.

Briony is dying of vascular dementia in 1999, the year he turns seventy-seven. In order to take care of some unfinished business, she visits the Imperial War Museum, where she runs into Paul and Lola Marshall, who have turned into successful benefactors. Briony recognises that her latest novel won't be published until after she passes away, even though Lola is in great health. She can't publish it while Lola and Paul are still living. With the exception of the conclusion, which depicts Cecilia and Robbie's unfulfilled reunion, her work is a genuine account of the events that have occurred up to this point in the book.

Robbie passed away prior to the evacuation at Dunkirk, while Cecilia perished in a bombing in London a few months later. With this work, Briony hopes to provide them with the happy ending they were never given, as she has spent her entire life trying to atone for what she

did to them. Briony celebrates her birthday with her family that evening, and the kids put on a performance of *The Trials of Arabella*. Before retiring to bed, Briony captures Cecilia and Robbie together, beaming.

### **List of Main Characters:**

#### **Briony Tallis**

Thirteen-year-old Briony has two passions—a need for control and a love of storytelling—that could exist separately but instead blend together. Briony is used to being in charge of her own sheltered life as a youngster, having parents that don't get too involved in her activities and siblings who are nearly 10 years older than her. Because she can build entire worlds in which she is the puppet master, writing satisfies her need for control. But Briony's feeling of control is upset when her cousins show up; they perform her play, *The Trials of Arabella*, differently than she had imagined. She decides to go from creating plays to telling stories as a result, which do not rely on actors, and to form her own story about reality that will lead to disastrous consequences.

In addition to being motivated by stories, Briony accuses Robbie because she wants to mature—or rather, because she believes she has matured already. When Lola, who is two years Briony's senior, shows up, this urge becomes even stronger. Briony was raised to believe she was smarter than most of the individuals in her immediate environment. Because she is still unable to comprehend Cecilia and Robbie's interactions, Briony concludes that they are malevolent. Briony's lack of critical thinking skills is evident in her lack of curiosity in her own presumptions and worldview.

Eventually, Briony grows up and realises how serious her error was in accusing Robbie of a rape that never happened. She then spends the rest of her life trying to make up for it, working as a nurse at first and then sharing Cecilia and Robbie's tale. But even if Briony tries to make up for her terrible error, she realises and accepts that she will never be pardoned.

#### **Cecilia Tallis**

Cecilia doesn't feel like she has control over her life, unlike her younger sister, and she doesn't really want it. Cecilia's ideas and deeds frequently conflict throughout the first part of the book. She can't force herself to pursue any of the various possibilities she knows are

available to her after Cambridge. When Leon offers to let Cecilia stay with him in London, she declines, even after deciding to move to London and look for work. Cecilia is resentful of her family even though she feels obligated to them. Cecilia doesn't recognise that she is in love with Robbie and that her emotions are what are preventing her from going on in life until she reads his note. But after Robbie gets jailed, their romance ends almost as quickly as it starts. Enraged by her family, Cecilia shuts them out and trains as a nurse, but in 1940 a bombing kills her. Cecilia's tale demonstrates how assumptions like the one Briony had can have unavoidable effects, even though Briony didn't mean to hurt Cecilia and was instead attempting to protect her.

### **Robbie Turner**

Robbie is a prime example of how socioeconomic status may actually affect a person's destiny. Robbie belongs to a distinct social stratum apart from the comparatively affluent Tallises, as he is the son of the charlady. However, Robbie is never made to feel inferior because he was raised by Leon and Cecilia as equals and benefited from Jack Tallis's generosity. But when Briony observes Cecilia and Robbie together, things change. Robbie initially appears to Briony to embody the classic character of the impoverished man who wins the hand of the virgin. Briony creates Robbie as a villain because she is unable to understand the bond between Cecilia and him. Regretfully, because of his past, Robbie is viewed by all the Tallises—aside from Cecilia—as someone who would readily commit a horrible crime. Robbie's failure to break free from the class he was born into ultimately leads to his downfall, despite his brilliance, diligence, and natural goodness.

### **Lola Quincey**

Lola is fifteen years old and antsy to be accepted as an adult when she first visits the Tallises' home. Lola is not yet the adult she wants to be, even though she plays the part and patronises Briony to the point where the younger girl feels uncomfortable. Despite Paul Marshall attacking her twice, she initially seems to like his attention. She lets Briony put the responsibility for the second assault on Robbie, while she puts the first one on the twins. Lola's perspective is never used to tell the story. Nonetheless, Lola's eventual marriage to Paul and her unwillingness to identify him as her rapist indicate that she might be terrified of Paul and possibly hold herself responsible for the attack because she was first flattered by him. Lola can't force herself to look

at her cousin when she marries Paul since she knows that Briony is the only other person who is aware of the truth. Lola carries her haughty demeanour into old age, in spite of her trauma and any inner conflicts she may be experiencing.

### **Paul Marshall**

In many ways, Paul Marshall is the complete opposite of Robbie Turner. He did not work for success; in contrast to Robbie, he inherited it from his wealthy family at birth. Cecilia characterises Paul as dull and unintelligent, in contrast to Robbie. Paul's high social status, however, prevents anyone from ever considering the possibility that he is Lola's real rapist. Paul lets Robbie take the heat for his own transgression. In a similar vein, Paul appears ready for conflict to break out at the start of the book in order to profit from selling his family's chocolate to the military. These behaviours demonstrate that Paul doesn't care who else gets harmed in the process—he just cares about getting what he wants. By the book's end, it is revealed that Paul turned into a well-known and exceedingly wealthy philanthropist following his marriage to Lola. Paul, the sole individual who gains anything from Briony's crime, is the real antagonist of the narrative.

### **Analysis:**

In the novel *Atonement*, a little girl's wish to grow up and her active imagination cause her to make a somewhat harmless error that has disastrous results. The work delves on a number of topics, including the blurring of lines between infancy and adulthood, the nature of perspective, the attraction of regret, and perhaps most obviously the narrative medium. This subject, which alludes to the narrative's fictional character, is evident in the novel's structure as a work of metafiction. Part One of the book alternates between the perspectives of several Tallis, Quincey, and Turner family members; Part Two is given fully from Robbie's perspective; and Part Three is told entirely from Briony's perspective. The majority of the book is told from a third-person point of view. The fact that the book has been Briony's attempt to make amends for her foolish error up to that moment is only disclosed in the epilogue. It emphasizes how potent stories can be to read about Cecilia and Robbie and get engrossed in their stories, just to find out that they never had a happy ending.

Briony, who is thirteen years old and on the verge of puberty, believes she is prepared for adulthood. When she meets Cecilia and Robbie at the fountain in the novel's inciting episode,

this feeling gets stronger. Briony learns from observing their interactions that there are some things she just can't understand. Briony finds this knowledge frustrating, but she knows that this can be useful to inspire her writing. Even though she considers Robbie to be a threat, she treats him and her sister more like fictional characters than real humans. Briony's response illustrates a theme that runs throughout the story: how perspective affects how one perceives reality. In addition to demonstrating Briony's naivete despite her desire to grow up, her response also demonstrates how she views the world via a narrative. This experience not only causes Briony to start thinking differently, but it also changes Cecilia and Robbie's relationship. Despite their long history together, Robbie discovers he is in love with Cecilia and sends her a letter that will forever alter their course in life.

When Robbie provides Briony the incorrect copy of his letter, putting Briony in direct opposition to Cecilia, the action picks up. The note merely validates for Briony her suspicions—that Robbie is a threat to Cecilia—that she had formed after witnessing him with her sister by the fountain. After telling Lola what was written in the message, Lola concludes that Robbie had to be insane. Despite her best efforts to act and dress like an adult, Lola's response, akin to Briony's, demonstrates her continued innocence in matters of adulthood. The novel does this by focusing on sexuality as the factor that distinguishes children from adults. The action picks up as Robbie and Cecilia confess their love for one another and make love in the library—only to be walked out on. Cecilia and Robbie are irritated by her interruption, but Briony feels as though she has just protected her sister from an attack. Once more, this situation demonstrates how an individual's perspective and presumptions can influence what they take to be the actual reality. Because of these presumptions, the true threat that is hinted at remains unknown. Lola holds the twins responsible for her bumps and bruises. Emily questions how young boys could possess such strength, and Paul accuses himself of breaking up the fight with a scratch. Paul is perceived as the least dangerous person because of his wealth and reputation.

The moment of truth comes when Briony discovers Lola on the floor, battered and accuses Robbie of raping her. Even though Briony didn't see the man, she assumed he was the one behind all of Robbie's acts. The novel's climax comes really early on. But it is actually the turning point, the moment Briony will never be able to undo the things she has done, and will attempt to make up for for the rest of her life. She has started the chain of events that will decide

Robbie's and Cecilia's lives by naming Robbie. Robbie passes away prior to being evacuated from Dunkirk after receiving an early release from prison in exchange for enlisting in the military. The narrative demonstrates how Briony's wrongdoing is directly connected to Robbie's demise by moving directly from the morning Robbie is arrested to his trip to Dunkirk. As all of this is going on, Cecilia distances herself from her family, works as a nurse in London, and is killed in a bombing. Robbie wouldn't have committed the crime that Briony accused him of, and Cecilia probably would have stayed with her family.

Nevertheless, Briony's tale withholds Cecilia and Robbie's actual destinies. Rather, she begins by telling her about Robbie's trip to Dunkirk as relayed to her by Corporal Nettle. Briony reminds readers of Robbie's good and giving nature by narrating the people he assisted along the road, despite his desperate desire to just go home to Cecilia. She continues by talking about the atrocities she saw at the hospital and her own experience becoming a nurse at the start of the conflict. Briony decides to become a nurse as a type of penance rather than going to Cambridge as she had originally intended, thinking that if she helps enough people, she might be able to atone for what she did to Robbie.

Briony's remorse is heavy; one can see Robbie in every soldier. When Briony finds out via her father that Lola is getting married to Paul, the action picks back up. The realization that her false testimony not only put a guy in jail but also made it possible for the real rapist to escape punishment and wed his victim only makes Briony's shame and regret worse. After this incident, Briony goes to see Cecilia. There, she is relieved to learn that Robbie is still alive and makes plans to make up for her mistakes. The epilogue discloses that Briony's final attempt to atone for her error was actually Cecilia's last meeting, not the actual encounter.

Despite having a prosperous job and a happy husband, Briony has spent her entire life harboring resentment at her childhood error. Paul and Lola, meantime, went on to become incredibly affluent and well-liked benefactors. Paul's arc demonstrates how real life frequently varies from novels in that evil individuals can ultimately triumph, in contrast to a story where the heroes triumph and the villain is punished. Nevertheless, Briony still has the same faith in the power of stories as she did as a child, and she hopes her last one will atone for her transgression.

## ***THE LITTLE STRANGER* – SARAH WATERS**

### **Introduction of the Author:**

Novelist Sarah Waters is from Britain. *Tipping the Velvet*, her debut book, and the books that followed, such as *Affinity*, *Fingersmith*, and *The Night Watch*, are what made her most famous. During her time in college, Waters obtained degrees in English literature. Waters was a doctorate-holding professor who taught before she began writing novels. Following her PhD thesis, Waters wrote her first novel right away. She believed she would write a novel while finishing her thesis, and she started as soon as the thesis was over.

### **Summary of the Novel:**

Sarah Waters wrote a Gothic fiction titled *The Little Stranger* in 2009. It is a ghost story that takes place in the 1940s in a run-down mansion in Warwickshire, England. Waters' fifth book, which breaks from her previous themes of lesbian and gay literature, has a male narrator who is a rural doctor who befriends an elderly aristocratic family who is losing their fortune and owns an extremely old estate that is collapsing around them. Tragedy is the result of confusing events that may or may not have supernatural origins, and the strain of balancing their financial situation with the family duty to maintain the estate.

Doctor Faraday, the narrator, is summoned to Hundred Halls, the Ayres family estate, to tend to the wounds that his eldest son Roderick acquired during the war as a pilot, but which have not yet healed. As he tours the expansive property, which is past its prime due to economic decline, high taxes, and the expensive upkeep costs pushing the Ayres family further into poverty, Faraday is perplexed by the sense of history, decay, and an air of strangeness. He also finds it difficult to relate to the people who live and work there.

In order to encourage her only unmarried daughter, Caroline, to meet some eligible men, Roderick's mother, the lady of the estate, plans to organise a big party. A small toddler is attacked by the family's amiable and senior Labrador, which results in tragedy.

Following the attack, Roderick exhibits observable behavioural changes. Initially, his mood and sudden alcoholism appear to be a result of stress related to handling the family's dire financial situation. When questioned, Roderick admits that he was the target of a dark, invisible force the night the dog attacked. He acknowledges that he allowed the energy to become fixated on him in



order to deflect its focus from his sister and mother. After Roderick's wall starts to show burn scars and Caroline wakes up to discover Roderick's room on fire, Roderick is admitted to a mental health facility.

Caroline and Faraday become close, with Faraday vacillating between amorous and romantic interest. His chats with the two maids and every member of the Ayres family reveal that something strange is occurring at Hundred Halls. Before long, he starts to think that the house might be "consumed by some dark germ, some ravenous shadow-creature, some 'little stranger' spawned from the troubled unconscious of someone connected with the house itself." When Dr. Faraday consults his other doctors, he uses scientific ideas of the body and mind to explain the strange occurrences, but he is sceptical that these simple explanations can explain the seemingly supernatural events.

The behaviour appears to intensify, become more regular and forceful, as though aggressively pursuing recognition. The sounds of their call bells, the phone ringing, and other nocturnal noises have the maids especially alarmed. Soon after, in these same locations, curious, juvenile writing starts to appear on the walls. One night, while investigating some unusual noises, Mrs. Ayres finds herself confined in her deceased daughter's nursery—she passed away from diphtheria when she was just eight years old. After the encounter, Caroline interprets the more violent happenings as just anger over her loss and a desire for their reunion. Caroline and the maids rescue Mrs. Ayres. Mrs. Ayres finds solace in what she perceives to be her daughter Susan's interactions. The servants quickly find Mrs. Ayres's body; she had hung herself so she might go to the other side and be with her daughter.

On the day of Mrs. Ayres's funeral, Caroline and Faraday decide to tie the knot. Six weeks from now is when the wedding ceremony is scheduled to take place. As the big day draws near, Caroline becomes less and less interested in the union and the plans for the celebration. In the end, she ends the relationship and says she wants to sell the Ayres estate. Faraday makes unsuccessful attempts to reason Caroline out of her inclinations to harm herself. Caroline meets an untimely demise while he is being held captive at work the night before their wedding.

Caroline went upstairs, the maid said, and then she fell to her death below, exclaiming, "You!" in shock. In an attempt to see what Caroline saw right before she passed away, Faraday

returns to the abandoned property in the years that follow. He eventually fails to locate the solutions he seeks.

### **Themes of the novel:**

#### **A Neo-gothic Novel**

Gothic fiction gave rise to Neo-Gothic literature. In England during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, gothic style was fashionable. Gothic fiction is typified by its use of terror, supernatural aspects, menacing tone, and the feeling of the past intruding on the present. It frequently takes place in a mediaeval environment. Gothic novels include Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* (1818) and Horace Walpole's *The Castle of Otranto*. Modern Gothic novels, or Neo-Gothic writings, share many of the same traits as its Gothic counterparts, while their settings are frequently more up to date.

Numerous elements of the standard neo-Gothic novel may be found in *The Little Stranger*. After the party in Hundreds Hall, paranormal activities take place on a regular basis, although none of them have a clear cause. Faraday makes an effort to make sense of what is happening in Hundreds Hall, but he is never able to do so completely.

Another important aspect of Gothic literature is the encroachment of the past on the present, which is alluded to by Waters as a possible reason for these events. A lot of the characters are plagued by unresolved personal issues. For instance, Mrs. Ayres is plagued by Susan's passing, whereas Roderick is tormented by the war. Waters places her tale just after World War II, bringing Gothic aspects closer to a contemporary setting.

#### **Class and Ambition**

The work makes many references to ambition and class. Similar to Waters' grandparents, who were domestics in a country estate, Faraday's mother worked as a nursery maid at Hundreds Hall at one point. The reader is first shown the building's opulence when the narrator is a child and attends a garden fête. He is so mesmerised by the structure that he plies a piece of it off and puts it in his pocket. He goes back to his original impression of the mansion and compares it to how it is now very regularly. During the last war, soldiers were billeted in its apartments. The family is unable to pay the taxes imposed on the British gentry due to the damage caused by two centuries of weather and wear. They try to make sense of the fact that they don't have enough

money to continue their family's heritage. Rebecca Starford in *The Australian* and Charlotte Heathcote in *The Sunday Express* both observe that the narrative is heavily focused on class.

As he describes how his family gave up everything, including his mother's life and health, in order to support him in his schooling, Faraday is also torn. He regrets not having accomplished anything with it and, when he goes to Hundreds Hall, he alternates between feeling complimented and insignificant for having known a family such as the Ayreses. But they appear adamant that they cannot afford to maintain the house, and Caroline and Mrs. Ayres are undecided about staying in the house once Roderick leaves. The family's forced sale of their land and belongings has Faraday furious the most. Reviewers pointed out that Faraday is an unreliable narrator and that there are minor inconsistencies in his statements to the family as their doctor as well as his dedication to house at their expense.

Near the conclusion, Faraday wonders what must be eating his family alive as he tries to rationally and scientifically explain why they are disintegrating. A friend reveals, "Something is called a Labour government." Barry Didock observes that Waters portrays the bleak atmosphere of postwar Britain that Evelyn Waugh emphasised in *Brideshead Revisited*, a time when societal transformations were occurring but the future did not appear hopeful.

Scarlett Thomas of *The New York Times* says that the characters' overwhelming worry about the future is the reason for people to question their sanity. Waters acknowledges that despite the historical setting of all of her books, she does not intend for them to evoke a strong romantic sense of nostalgia: "I'd hate to think that my writing is escapist." For me, the historical process of how things lead to others is what ties my interest in the past to my interest in the present."

### **Critical Analysis:**

Briony has been bitter about her childhood mistake her entire life, even though she has a successful career and a loving husband. Paul and Lola, on the other hand, went on to become extraordinarily wealthy and well-liked donors. Paul's path illustrates how real life frequently differs from fiction in that, unlike stories where the heroes win and the villain is punished, wicked people can finally triumph. Still, Briony believes stories have the same power they did when she was younger, and she hopes this last one will make up for her sin.

Even Faraday, from a far humbler upbringing, understands this and finds the prospect of Hundreds Hall being sold extremely troubling. It appears that he is even more concerned than the family members. Because of his mother's employment at Hundreds Hall as a child, Faraday had an idealized perception of the rural estate. In post-World War II Britain, the situation facing the Ayres family was not unique. The British tax system had undergone significant changes following the election of a new Labour government.

The *Little Stranger's* supernatural undertones could be interpreted as a reflection of the aristocracy's falling social standing in post-World War II Britain. In Waters's book, the Ayres family is plagued by a variety of ghosts, suggesting that they are thinking about the past even as the future draws near. At a time when Britain was rapidly modernizing, this was a problem for many aristocratic families who were living in the past and felt nostalgic about it.

### **Women's Position in the Novel:**

One could classify *The Little Stranger* as a feminist book. Mrs. Ayres throws a party early on in the book, and one of her main goals is to find Caroline a good spouse. Although Caroline and Roderick are single, Mrs. Ayres concentrates her energies on just one of her kids. In these situations, Caroline feels pressured to find a husband, which restricts her options. Mrs. Ayres's acts highlight this family's traditional and frequently antiquated mindset. Their aristocratic rank and customs are being maintained.

By the book's end, though, Caroline appears to have distanced herself from these concepts somewhat as a member of the younger generation. She seizes control of the Hundreds Hall sale and calls off what would have been, for her, a loveless marriage to Faraday. Caroline's eyes are on the modern world. She loses her life to the past of her home, though, as it still finds her.

## UNIT V

### *THE SENSE OF ENDING* – JULIAN BARNES

#### **Introduction of the Author:**

English novelist Julian Patrick Barnes was born on January 19, 1946. After Flaubert's Parrot, England, England, and Arthur & George made the shortlist three times, he won the Man Booker Prize in 2011 with *The Sense of an Ending*. Additionally, Barnes has authored crime fiction under the pen name Dan Kavanag. Barnes has written collections of essays and short tales in addition to novels. He was appointed a Commandeur of the Order of the Arts and Letters in 2004. The Geoffrey Faber Memorial Prize and the Somerset Maugham Award are among his other awards. The Jerusalem Prize for 2021 was given to him.

#### **Summary of the Novel:**

Julian Barnes is a British author whose book *The Sense of an Ending*. Published in the United Kingdom on August 4, 2011, the book is Barnes's twelfth book under his own name (he has also authored crime fiction under the pen name Dan Kavanagh). Retired retiree Tony Webster tells the story of *The Sense of an Ending*. He remembers how he and his group of friends met Adrian Finn in school and made a lifelong friendship. Tony muses over the routes he and his pals have taken when the past comes up with him.

English writer Julian Barnes published a novel in 2011 titled *The Sense of an Ending*. The book, which consists of two chapters, chronicles the life of retired man Tony Webster as he considers his early years and his connection with his ex-girlfriend Veronica Ford and his mysterious buddy Adrian Finn. Tony is nearing the conclusion of his life, and the title relates to the closure and purpose he wants. The book won the Man Booker Prize in England and was widely praised by critics when it was first published. In 2017, a film based on the book was released. The book is split into two sections, "One" and "Two," both of which are told from Tony Webster's perspective as a retired single man. The novel opens in the 1960s with four haughty school buddies, Tony, the narrator, and Adrian, the most brilliant of the four, two of whom stay in the story for the rest of it. As their school days come to an end, another boy there hangs himself, presumably after becoming pregnant by a female. The four buddies talk about how knowing the precise details of what transpired is challenging philosophically. Tony attends

Bristol University, whereas Adrian attends Cambridge University. Tony gets Veronica as a girlfriend, and he spends an unpleasant weekend at her family's house.

One morning when he wakes up, Veronica's mother, Sarah, tells him that they are the only ones in the house and apologises for her family's treatment of him. Couple tensions arise after Tony ends his relationship with Veronica and has sex with her after their breakup. Tony gets a letter from Adrian in his last year of college telling him that he is going out with Veronica. In his letter reply, Tony advises Adrian to speak with Veronica's mother because, in his view, she has been harmed in some way. A few months later, he learns that Adrian killed himself. In the note, which was written to the coroner, he said that it is the responsibility of the free person to reflect on the meaning of their existence and then decide whether or not to give it up. Tony finds the logic admirable. He describes in brief the next forty years of his life, which were uneventful and ended in his sixties. Now that Veronica's mother has left him £500—which Veronica cryptically refers to as “blood money”—along with two documents, Tony starts to narrate the second half of the book, which is twice as long as the first. As a result, he gets in touch with Veronica again and, following several encounters, reexamines the tale he told her in the previous section. Tony finds out that Veronica possesses Adrian's diary, which was handed to him, after speaking with the lawyers. He then starts emailing Veronica repeatedly to ask for the journal as a result.

After a while, Veronica gives Tony a single page from Adrian's notebook, which has his reflections on life as a sequence of increasing bets. Subsequently, Veronica encounters Tony on London's Millennium Bridge and presents him with the letter he once sent to Adrian. When Tony reads it again, he realises how nasty and terrible it was and how he has forgotten about it. Even so, he keeps trying to get Veronica to give him the diary. She then asks him to meet her at a place in North London, and she drives him to witness a group of intellectually impaired men being driven for a walk by their carer, identifying one of them for him. Tony is left in the dark by Veronica, and she doesn't explain anything to him. Over several weeks, Tony returns to the spot until he manages to find the man Veronica showed him in a pub. The man reacts angrily when Tony introduces himself and says he is Veronica's buddy. Tony recognises Adrian based on the characteristics of his face. Expressing regret via email to Veronica, he says he was unaware that she and Adrian were parents to a son. All that Veronica can say in response is,

“You don’t get it, but then you never did.” Tony strikes up a conversation with the caretaker when he returns to the pub where he first met the man, and she discloses that the man is actually Veronica’s half-brother because he is the son of Sarah, Veronica’s mother. It is up to the reader to make the connections. All that Veronica can say in response is, “You don’t get it, but then you never did.” Tony strikes up a conversation with the caretaker when he returns to the pub where he first met the man, and she discloses that the man is actually Veronica’s half-brother because he is the son of Sarah, Veronica’s mother. It is up to the reader to make the connections.

### **Review in ‘The Literary Edit’:**

Having not read anything by Julian Barnes previously, I had little idea what to expect, and while the book first appears to be a rather mundane story about the life of a rather ordinary man, looking back on years gone by, it quickly becomes clear that there’s more to the novel than meets the eye. A surprisingly fast-paced and utterly readable book, in *The Sense of an Ending* we meet protagonist Tony Webster – and an intricate cast of characters that have weaved in and out of his life; an ex-girlfriend; the school friend who committed suicide; the now ex-wife; the daughter. As the novel progresses, he looks back on memory and history, responsibility and blame, deceit, misunderstandings, aging, guilt, remorse – and, of course, a safely passive coasting on the smooth sailing surface of life, occasionally interrupted by the tidal waves of unexpected upheavals and disturbances. While a short and slight story, not a word is wasted and the rhythm of writing builds to deliver a poignant and punchy tale that offers a lyrical lesson about memory’s ability plays tricks on us.

### **Critical Analysis:**

It delves into philosophical questions about how humans construct our own narratives and the consequences of our selective memories. The book presents a complex and unreliable narrator, which keeps readers engaged and guessing throughout the story. With its subtle and thought-provoking plot twists, it encourages readers to reflect on their own pasts and the impact of our own perceptions on reality.

### **Themes:**

#### **Time**

One of the central themes in *The Sense of an Ending* is the intimate relationship people have with time. Tony acknowledges that “we live in time — it holds us and molds us,” but he

also remarks that he has never really understood time, which is how Barnes introduces the concept at the opening of the novel. Tony believes that time is pliable and that “the smallest pleasure or pain” can cause it to change. “Some emotions speed it up,” he says, “others slow it down; occasionally, it seems to go missing.” Tony also mentions how time felt more intimate and private when he and his buddies wore their watches with the faces on the inside of the wrist. As the book progresses, Tony elaborates on his remarks, drawing a distinction between the objective time recorded by clocks and the subjective time shaped by emotions and recollections. In a paradoxical declaration, Tony refers to personal time as “the true time,” indicating his belief that more subjective time is more accurate in reflecting an individual’s experience than quantifiable time. Though this kind of time is subject to shifting emotions, its flexibility also lets Tony revisit the past, refreshing old memories as he comes to terms with a more realistic understanding of who he was and is.

## **Suicide**

Suicide is another major element in the book. When Tony is still in high school, Robson, a fellow sixth-form student, hangs himself, setting the stage for this subject to begin. The mysterious incident makes Tony and his pals wonder what may have inspired Robson. They are also jealous of Robson since, while being brief, his life was spectacular enough to be considered “the stuff of Literature.” Adrian, a reader of Camus, says that the most important decision a person must make is whether to end their life or carry on with a ridiculous, pointless one. Adrian also references Freud’s notion of the competing but interconnected drives that shape human experience: the pleasure/sex drive (Eros) and the death drive (Thanatos). Adrian claims that Robson’s suicide means “Thanatos wins again.” In the book, Adrian commits suicide later on. He leaves a long suicide note, which he wants the authorities to make public, unlike Robson. But Tony doesn’t fully understand why he wants to die until he finds out Adrian is the father of Veronica’s mother’s child. Regarding Robson, Adrian took his own life because he was afraid and ashamed of having to deal with an unanticipated pregnancy. Even though Adrian attempted to use logic, philosophy, and poetry to support his choice, Tony and Alex come to the conclusion that, despite Adrian’s impressive act of suicide, it was also a horrendous waste of time.



## ***THE LOST QUEEN* – SIGNE PIKE**

### **Introduction of the Author:**

Author Signe Pike is the creator of the trip memoir *Faery Tale* and the recently optioned television series *The Lost Queen*. For more than ten years, she has studied and written about Celtic culture and history.

### **Summary of the Novel:**

The first book in an exciting historical series that reveals the untold story of Languoreth—a strong and, until now, tragically forgotten queen of 6th-century Scotland—the twin sister of the man who inspired the legendary character of Merlin—is described as “Outlander meets Camelot” by Kirsty Logan, author of *The Gracekeepers*.

*The Lost Queen* is a story of conflicted loves and survival set against the enchanting backdrop of ancient Scotland, a nation of myths and superstition inspired by the majesty of the natural world. Languoreth, the protagonist of the film, is bold, intelligent, passionate, rebellious, and intelligent. Languoreth, one of the most influential early mediaeval queens in British history, ruled during a period of great upheaval and violence, when the spreading influence of Christianity threatened to eradicate the ancient pagan beliefs and permanently alter her way of life.

Languoreth is thrown into a violent and dangerous world along with her twin brother Lailoken, a warrior and druid known to history as Merlin. Languoreth and the dashing warrior Maelgwn clash as a conflict brings the hero Emrys Pendragon to their doorstep. Enchantment forges their emotional bond, but Languoreth is given a marriage promise to Rhydderch, the High King’s son, who is tolerant of Christians. Languoreth has a responsibility to defend her country, the Old Way, and everything she values as Rhydderch’s wife.

### **Critical Analysis:**

*The Lost Queen* tracks Languoreth, Lailoken’s twin and daughter of one of Scotland’s thirteen minor kings. Her brother receives training to become a Wisdom Keeper, a kind of druid that combines the roles of an augur, mystic man, and counsellor. The two are brought up according to the Old Ways. Languoreth is resentful that she is only destined to produce a happy marriage for her family and cannot become a Wisdom Keeper herself. I found Languoreth’s

characterization to be incredibly difficult to follow throughout *The Lost Queen*. She is too conscious to be believed to be a real child in her early years.

As an adult, she is expected to be composed, wise, and the ideal spouse for upholding the sacredness of the Old Ways in a union with the High King's son, who is becoming more and more Christian. However, I cannot imagine a more unfit individual for this position. Although Languoreth is repeatedly assured throughout the story that she has numerous queenly attributes, in reality, she doesn't. She is actually impetuous, spoiled, and self-centered, and she consistently makes things worse for everyone concerned rather than improving them for her people and way of life. Observing her repeatedly ruin things is really annoying. Her father, King Morken, as well as her numerous siblings and cousins, are all endearing family members. Since *The Lost Queen's* development seems to be confined to this one part, it would have been beneficial to alternate between some of these casts of characters to properly develop them as well.

*The Lost Queen* would have benefited, at the very least, from alternating between the twins' points of view because the story presents Lailoken as the renowned Merlin of the future and they are meant to have such a close bond. The relationship between Lailoken and Languoreth feels flimsy and one-sided, despite their constant assurances. The only one who appears to be really aware of her twin is Languoreth, who appears to be far more focused on his sexual affairs and gallivanting with the Pendragon soldiers than on his family's situation. Unfortunately, the twins' friendship only becomes relevant when it serves the plot's purposes.

The novel's central romance is also not very well developed. Maelgwen, Languoreth's secret paramour, is gorgeous with green eyes, dark hair, and a warrior's build, but he doesn't really have much about him other than his initial love for Languoreth and his military service in her foster brother's army. The two meet sparingly throughout the decades that the narrative takes place, and their interactions are rarely substantive or conversational. The reader will only be disappointed if they approach the book with those kinds of expectations because their relationship is nothing like Jaime and Claire's enduring love story from *Outlander*.