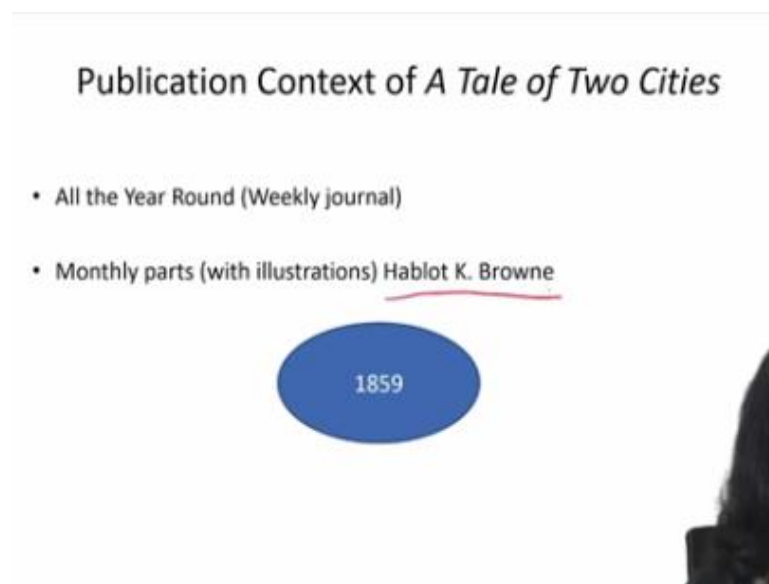


The Nineteenth-Century Novel
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Lecture – 18
Dickens' A Tale of Two Cities, Book I

Hello and welcome back. In today's lecture we will be looking at Dickens's historical fiction called *A Tale of Two Cities*. Dickens wrote only two historical novels, the other one is *Barnaby Rudge*. So *A Tale of Two Cities* is a very popular novel of Dickens and it is set in the times of the French Revolution. If you remember in the previous weeks, we had a look; a very close look at *Persuasion* by Jane Austen, and that fiction content, that fiction's content is domestic, it is very romantic. So today, in today's lecture we are looking at something which is quite, very distinct to what we have looked at earlier.

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Let me begin by offering the publication context of *A Tale of Two Cities*. This novel was published in the weekly journal *All The Year Round*, and it was also published as monthly parts, each month there was a section which was published with illustrations, and those illustrations were done by this illustrator called Hablot K. Browne. And this novel originated in 1859, and as you can see it is around the midpoint of the 19th century.

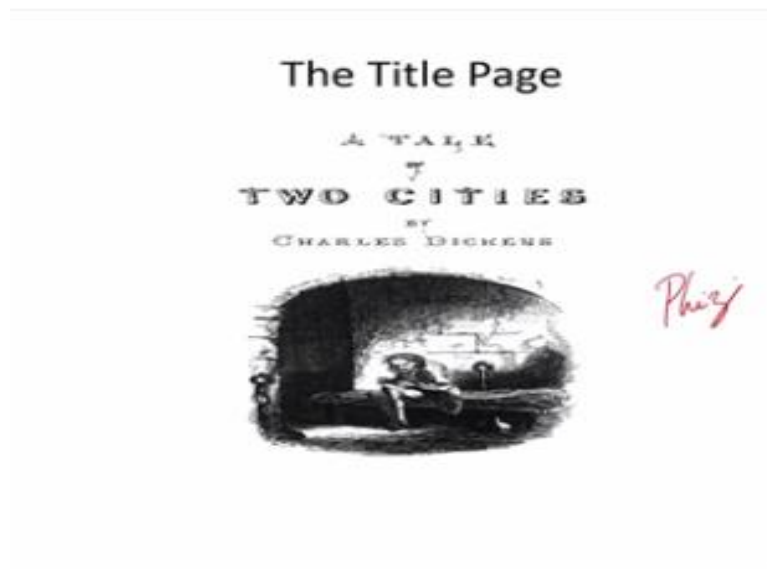
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A Tale of Two Cities

- "Late 18th century against the background of the French Revolution"
- Thomas Carlyle's *The French Revolution* (3 vol. 1837)

Let us look at the setting of the novel and the source of the novel. As I mentioned a minute ago, this novel is set in the late 18th century against the background of the French Revolution. And Dickens borrowed heavily for his historical material from Thomas Carlyle's *The French Revolution*, which was published in three volumes in 1837. So French Revolution offers a lot of content for this novel, French Revolution is at the heart of this novel, and we have also a plot which revolves around the domesticity of certain key characters which also complicates the plot.

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Let us look at the title page of this novel, and this illustration is done by Hablot Brown who is also known by this term "phiz". So if you look at the picture we have one solitary elderly man writing on a piece of paper, and if you have started reading the novel, you will know that that

figure is Doctor Manette who has been imprisoned in the Bastille for 18 long years. So it is a very catchy title page.

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Book The First; Recalled to Life
Chapter 1: The Period

dual aspects

- "It was the best of times, it was the worst of times, it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness, it was the epoch of belief, it was the epoch of incredulity, it was the season of Light, it was the season of Darkness, it was the spring of hope, it was the winter of despair, we had everything before us, we had nothing before us, we were all going direct to Heaven, we were all going direct the other way—in short, the period was so far like the present period, that some of its noisiest authorities insisted on its being received, for good or for evil, in the superlative degree of comparison only."

Contrast Extremes

And it is intended to catch the attention, the curiosity of the readers of that period. This is how the novel begins, I have a big chunk of text on the slide for you, it is one of the most famous lines in all of English literature, in all of world literature too and it kind of sets up the scene, the tone and the mood of the novel. This section is from the very first chapter of A Tale of Two Cities, in fact it is the very first set of lines that begin the novel.

And as I mentioned just now, it gives you a kind of a hint, a thematic, metaphoric hint as to the kind of issues, the kind of perspectives, the kind of contrasts that this novel is going to talk about, explore, and present before the audience. Let me first read the excerpt and then we will try to analyse the idea of duality or twinness in this novel.

“It was the best of times, it was the worst of times, it was the age of wisdom it was the age of foolishness. It was the epoch of belief, it was the epoch of incredulity, it was the season of Light, it was the season of Darkness, it was the spring of hope, it was the winter of despair, we had everything before us we had nothing before us, we were all going direct to Heaven, we were all going to direct the other way - in short, the period was so far like the present period that some of its noisiest authorities insisted on its being received for good or for evil in the superlative degree of comparison only.”

A very first reading of this section tells us that it is about contrast. There are a lot of juxtaposed ideas, let me pick some of them. It was the best of times, it was a very good time, and it was also the worst of times, so you can easily see that dual aspects are explored here. It was the age of foolishness, there was a lot of stupidity around, but at the same time it was the age of wisdom too, there was a lot of understanding about life about what is knowledge and other things.

So, again there is a set of contrasts presented to the reader here. It was a period of hope, people believed that they will have a happy life; at the same time, it was a period of despair. See the spring of hope and the winter of despair is specifically mentioned there, and people as I said believed that they were going to have good times ahead and at the same time, people believed that they are going to have bad times coming at them.

So, it was a period which believed in extremes. In fact, the narrator says that people kind of understood the period in the superlative degree of comparison only. So there is nothing moderate about this set of ideas that we have, light and darkness, two distinct ideas, faith and disbelief, again two distinct set of ideas, so people believed in extremes rather than coming to some kind of compromise or moderate understanding of life.

It was either good or evil and this is set in the late 18th century, but the third person narrator also mentions that this period, that is the 18th century period, was so far like the present period, it is like the period in which the novel is being written at the 1850, so again there is also a comparison made between the 18th century; late 18th century, and the middle of the 19th century.

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Chapter I

- It is likely that, rooted in the woods of France and Norway, there were growing trees, when that sufferer was put to death, already marked by the Woodman, Fate, to come down and be sawn into boards, to make a certain movable framework with a sack and a knife in it, terrible in history.

horror of that boy - Woods Tree - Guillotine

foreshadowing

So, again a lot of comparison is being made here. Now, in this first chapter, a very interesting foreshadowing is being made by the third person narrator. Foreshadowing gives us a hint of things to come. So what is the major event that is going to descend upon the people of France, let us see that. “It is likely that, rooted in the woods of France and Norway, there were growing trees, when that sufferer was put to death, already marked by the Woodman, Fate, to come down and be sawn into boards, to make a certain movable framework with a sack and a knife in it, terrible in history.”

Let me give you the context for this particular passage, that context is related to this phrase “that sufferer”. In this chapter, the narrator mentions that people were put to death for the slightest of mistakes that they committed, and one such example is being given of a boy who refused to bow down and honour the procession of monks, and since he did not, you know, offer honour to the sacred people, he was put to death.

And the narrator mentions that when this man was put to death, trees were cut down by this Woodman, this very powerful Woodman Fate, and that tree was sawn into boards and that set of framework was going to become a movable framework which will have a sack and a knife in it, and you will know once you read the novel that this excerpt is referring to the guillotine.

And that guillotine will kill thousands and thousands of people during the French Revolution, and it is a terrible thing in history. So a very interesting kind of connection is made between the horror of the boy who dies to the woods, especially the trees which will be used to make that,

you know, object called guillotine which will kill thousands of people during that reign of terror. So, all these are being foreshadowed at the beginning of a Tale of Two Cities.

And it is very interesting to see that play on words by Dickens there. Woodman is compared to Fate, and Fate is using the woods to punish the people who have committed grave crimes in society.

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So, this is the framework that we are talking about, and this is a wooden framework and this framework will punish people who have committed crimes against humanity.

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And how is this guillotine operated? It is clearly understood through a look at this picture. So when that pulley is left down, is let down, the knife will fall across the neck and the head will


be chopped off, and the head will fall into a sack, and that sack is what is being referred in this section. And let me show you the knife, the knife will fall here across the neck.

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Chapter I

- It is likely enough that in the rough outhouses of some tillers of the heavy lands adjacent to Paris, there were sheltered from the weather that very day, rude carts bespattered with rustic mire, snuffed about by pigs, and roosted in by poultry which the Farmer Death, had already set apart to be his tumbrils of the Revolution.

*Farmer - Death
Wadimon - Fate*



“It is likely enough that in the rough outhouses of some tillers of the heavy lands adjacent to Paris, there were sheltered from the weather that very day, rude carts bespattered with rustic mire snuffed about by pigs and roosted in by poultry, which the farmer Death had already set apart to be his tumbrils of the revolution.” So, what is this except referring to? In the earlier excerpt that I pointed out we were introduced to the idea of guillotine.

And now the narrator of the novel is introducing us to another object, perhaps the homely object which is connected with the French Revolution, and that object is the tumbrel. I will show you the picture of that object in a minute, but let us look closely at some of the other metaphors used here. Once again, the narrator points out that even before the revolution actually happened in 1789, there were things and activities which were set in motion which will bring that day into action.

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A tumbrel conveying prisoners to the guillotine



Condemned
prisoners
Cart

All these are employed by the people for the benefit of that day which is going to come. And let me show you the picture of tumbrel, this is the tumbrel which will convey prisoners to the guillotine, so these are all the condemned prisoners, and this cart is the tumbrel. Dickens calls it the rude cart, which means humbly, humble or rustic, so just as Fate which acted as the woodsman in cutting down trees which will be used to make the guillotine, here too rude carts are being readied which will be employed, utilized during the revolution.

But at this point of time, years before what is happening to the rude carts which is kind of bespattered with mire, pigs come and sniff at it, poultry roosts within the carts, but ultimately the cart will be used by farmer Death. What is interesting again in this set of excerpts is the fact that Dickens picks the metaphors from the idea of farming, from the rural world. Here, farmer becomes the agent of death.

Farmer who harvests, you know, grains, who harvest paddy using sickle becomes the agent of death, and earlier Fate is compared to the woodsman who cuts down trees. So all these metaphors are drawn from the humble, modest, rural lifestyle.

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Chapter I

- But that Woodman and that Farmer, though they work unceasingly, work silently, and no one heard them as they went about with muffled tread: the rather, forasmuch as to entertain any suspicion that they were awake, was to be atheistically and traitorous.

Guillotine
Death
2) Foreboding
Rural world
1) Extremes
Rich vs Poor
Hope vs Despair

And now once again, the narrator brings together two concepts which we were talking about. “But that Woodman and that Farmer, though they work unceasingly, work silently, and no one heard them as they went about with muffled tread: the rather, forasmuch as to entertain any suspicion that they were awake, was to be atheistically and traitorous.” So what is being discussed in this excerpt? Dickens says that this figure Woodman who is cutting down trees in order to make the guillotine, and this man farmer who is the personification of Death, who will lead the prisoners in rude carts to the guillotine, are working silently, unceasingly is without stopping, and nobody is able to hear them as they walk about with quiet footsteps muffled, you know, muffled is you cannot hear them distinctly; tread, tread is walking. So they, why are they walking in such a quiet manner? It is because they do not want to arouse the suspicion of anybody who is, you know, trying to listen to them.

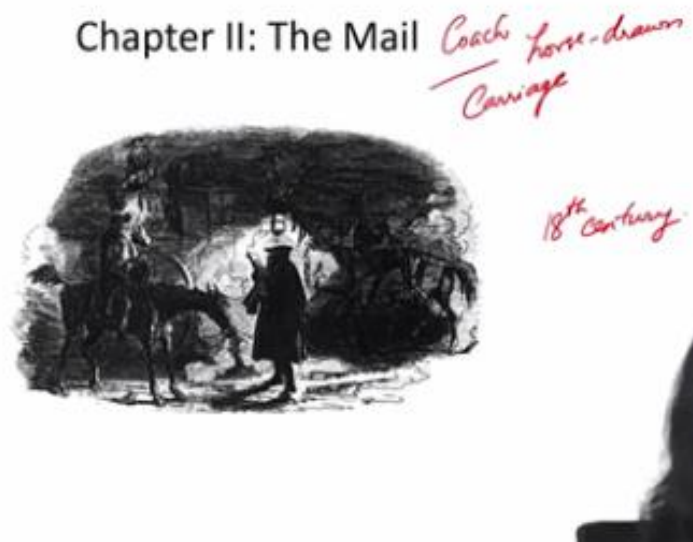
So, they do not want to wake anybody to this idea that things are set in motion which will bring a lot of change in society. So even to be aware of all these things is to be atheistic and traitorous, you will be treasonous to the society even if you kind of think that these things are set in motion, even if you harbour a hope or belief or expectation that these things will happen in society, that a thing called French Revolution can come into play.

So, if you want to sum up the set of ideas that I have discussed so far, one is; things are in extremes, life is understood in extremes because life is in extremes. For example, there is a lot of, you know, divide between the rich and the poor, therefore things are understood in extremes. Life is either full of hope or life is full of despair, that is what the first section told us very symbolically, either life is full of light or life is full of darkness.

So that is the idea that is being conveyed in that very first important passage. And the other point that the narrator is trying to put forth here is that, you know, people are not aware that things are set in motion which will bring about the French Revolution, and all these things are happening metaphorically in the rural areas because that is where there is a lot of want and deprivation. So there is a foreshadowing of things to come.

And Dickens draws these metaphors from the rural world. And those examples are clearly given there, which is that of the Woodman and the Farmer, who are preparing certain objects, who are preparing certain transportation which will punishment to those who had committed sins against the peasants.

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Now, let us look at chapter 2 which is called The Mail. The mail is the mail coach, so it is a basically a carriage which will, a horse-drawn carriage which will transport people from one place to another. So this is before the age of the railways, and we constantly need to remember that this is late 18th century that we are in in this novel. So we have an illustration here of a man stopping a mail coach, and this is the man who has come with a particular message to one of the figures who is travelling by this mail coach.

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Chapter II

- "Friday night late in November" — *Winter* *Invisibility*
- "There was a steaming mist in all the hollows, and it had roamed in its forlornness up the hill, like an evil spirit seeking rest and finding none. A clammy and intensely cold mist, it made its slow way through the air in ripples that visibly followed and overspread one another, as the waves of an unwholesome sea might do. It was dense enough to shut out everything from the light of the coachlamps but these its own workings, and a few yards of road; and the reek of the labouring horses steamed into it, as if they had made it all." *evocative*

And the man offers a letter to the passenger that he is interested in. So this scene happens one Friday night late in November, and this is the description which talks about the state of affairs at that particular night in November. Why have I put this except there on the slide for you? It is because to give you an idea of the kind of atmosphere that was there in those days, and particularly in that particular day in November and that atmosphere is also metaphoric, because it talks about various shades of you know, state of affairs that is happening in the novel and which is also reflective of the society of that period

"There was a steaming mist in all the hollows, and it had roamed in its forlornness up the hill, like an evil spirit seeking rest and finding none. A clammy and intensely cold mist, it made its slow way through the air in ripples that visibly followed and overspread one another, as the waves of an unwholesome sea might do. It was dense enough to shut out everything from the light of the coach lamps but these its own workings, and a few yards of road, and the reek of the labouring horses steamed into it, as if they had made it all."

Setting is pretty clear, it is late at night on a Friday in November, which means this is winter. And this is happening in a kind of a deserted space, there is no habitation, there is just wild nature. And at this point of time, there is mist everywhere, a steaming mist, as if it's, as if the mist is kind of roaming everywhere, here and there, the mist is roaming, it is circulating, and the mist is kind of personified as an evil spirit. Look at the phrase evil spirit, so the mist is compared to this spirit, and this spirit is restless as if it is kind of trying to seek rest and it is not finding any kind of rest, and it is clammy, it is wet to the touch, it is intensely cold.

And it is kind of making its way slowly through the air and it is making visible ripples. So it is a very evocative passage, what is the meaning of evocative? It kind of brings a vivid picture on your mind. And it is an unwholesome kind of mist too, it is not a very healthy mist, and it was preventing visibility, it was dense enough to shut out everything from the light, see, and again it reminds us of that first paragraph which begins the novel it was a season of light and the same time it was the season of darkness.

So even though there is light from the coach lamps, that light is being shut out by the mist, by this fog. And even the horses are steaming, adding to this mist through their steamy breath. So it is a very, very vivid picture that Dickens is painting through his third person narrator, and it tells us of a day, or precisely the night in November, and it tells us metaphorically that we are not able to clearly see what is happening around us.

So, this invisibility is symbolic of the lack of penetration that one suffers from in those periods; it was difficult for someone to understand the workings of society at that period.

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Chapter II The Mail

- “Not one of these could have said, from anything he saw, what either of the other two was like; and each was hidden under almost as many wrappers from the eyes of the mind, as from the eyes of the body, of his two companions.”

So, let us continue with this section on the mail, and this excerpt that is there on the slide tells us about the thoughts of the passengers who are inside the carriage, inside the mail coach. And the narrator says that, “Not one of these could have said, from anything he saw, what either of the two was like; and each was hidden under almost as many wrappers from the eyes of the mind, as from the eyes of the body of his two companions.”

So the narrator is philosophically pointing out that nobody inside the carriage was able to understand what the other person was like, as well as understand what was going on in that person's mind, because they were all wrapped up, and they were all covered, because remember, it is a November night, it is the height of winter, it is very, very cold, so everybody is nicely wrapped up with lots of clothes.

And the narrator says that each passenger was hidden under almost as many wrappers from the eyes of the mind as from the eyes of the body of his two companions. So there were three passengers in that mail coach that day, and every man was like an island, nobody knew what the other person was thinking about. Again, this is very, very symbolic in the sense that meaning was not understood by the people who were witnessing an event. So they are not able to understand the workings of any event.

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Chapter II: The Mail

• Wait at Dover for Man'selle. It is not long, you see, guard. Jerry, say that my answer was, RECALLED TO LIFE."

Mr. Lorry

And this is the message that is being given by a man called Jerry to a passenger in the mail coach. So Jerry is the man who stops the mail coach and offers the letter to one Mr. Lorry, and this is the message - Wait at Dover for mademoiselle. It is not long, you see, guard. Jerry, say that my answer was recalled to life. So Mr. Lorry gets the message that he is to wait for mademoiselle at Dover, at the place called Dover, and Mr. Lorry responds with this message to Jerry, which is recalled to life

So we need to keep an eye out for this figure called Jerry who will play important roles in the novel, and we will also be following Mr. Lorry. These are very, very important characters who

will kind of intervene in important points in the novel. So these are the two messages, the most important message is put there on the slide in block letters, recall to life.

And this is from the original novel, these are not my emphasis, the emphasis is there already in the book, recalled to life. And this phrase will be repeated time and again in the novel, someone is being recalled to life. Who is that someone? We will come to know shortly.

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Chapter III The Night Shadows

- "In any of the burial places of this city through which I pass, is there a sleeper more inscrutable than its busy inhabitants are, in their innermost personality, to me, or than I to them?"

The diagram features a central blue oval labeled "Mysterious self". To its left, a box labeled "in a frame" contains the word "SECRECY". Below the oval, the words "Secret self" are written. To the right, a handwritten note says "dead = living = narrator who is travelling", with an arrow pointing to the word "Comprehend".

This is chapter 3 of book 1, and the title is The Night Shadows, the shadows thrown by the night. "In any of the burial places of the city through which I pass, is there a sleeper more inscrutable than it is busy inhabitants are, in their innermost personality, to me, or than I to them?" So even in this particular chapter, the night shadows, the third person narrator is continuing in exploring the concept of mysterious self, that the self, that the individual is a mystery to the other who is next to him or her.

And this "I" is a reference to the third person narrator, who is like a man who is visiting a new place. And he says that if I go to a cemetery, a burial place of the city, is there a sleeper in a grave who is more inscrutable, who is incomprehensible, I cannot understand that person, who is more inscrutable than it is busy inhabitants are in their innermost personality to me or then I to them. It is a very interesting calm comparison.

He is comparing the dead to the living, and he says that both are the same in terms of my ability to understand, comprehend them, or their ability to understand me, because I am mysterious to them. So they all are the same in one way, the narrator who is visiting, who is travelling. So,

again, Dickens is preoccupied here with this innermost personality, the self, the secret self which is not at all revelatory to the other who is outside, who is a spectator, who is trying to understand the thought processes or the perceptions or the desires of this particular individual.

So, he says that the dead and the living are the same here. The dead in the cemetery, in the burial places and the living in the cities are similar because I am not able to understand any of these two sets of people, and neither are they able to understand me. I am as much a mystery to them as they are a mystery to me. So that is the point of this particular passage, and this ties into one of the major themes of the novel which is secrecy.

The idea that secrets are buried somewhere and then you have to dig, dig, dig at it to bring it to the surface and the entire novel is about a secret, and that secret will be revealed only at the end of or closer to the end of the novel. The big secret which will kind of bring about a lot of destruction, and out of that destruction, new things will emerge, new ideas, new people, new cities will emerge.

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Chapter III Night Shadows

- "No, Jerry, no!" said the messenger, harping on one theme as he rode.
"It wouldn't do for you, Jerry. Jerry you honest tradesman, it wouldn't suit your line of business! Recalled-- Bust me if don't think he'd been a drinking!"

*Rumination
of Jerry*

Now, let us continue with the reading of the excerpt there. "No, Jerry, no!" said the messenger, harping on one theme as he rode. "It would not do for you, Jerry. Jerry you honest tradesman, it would not suit your line of business! Recalled - ! Bust me if I do not think he had been drinking!" So this is the rumination or the soliloquy of Jerry. Jerry is talking to himself, that is what is basically happening in this excerpt.

He is talking to himself and he is not able to understand this message, recalled to life, he says that it is, I do not think that is what he meant, he says that probably he had been drinking, that is why he had babbled something like recalled to life. Because he says that if that is the truth, if being recalled to life is the truth, it would not do for you Jerry, it will not suit you Jerry, it will not be profitable for your business Jerry.

So, Jerry is talking to himself and it is very comical, at the same time, the reader's curiosity is provoked here because like Jerry, the reader is also trying to understand what this being recalled to life is all about. And they are also curious as to why Jerry who claims that he is a honest tradesman will not like that idea of being recalled, you know, why his business would be affected by this being recalled.

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Chapter III

Val
• "But, though the bank was almost always with him, and though the coach (in a confused way, like the presence of pain under an opiate) was always with him, there was another current of impression that never ceased to run, all through the night. He was on his way to dig some one out of a grave."
Mr Lorry
Jarvis Lorry

So, this is the man messenger who is talking to himself while he is riding back. "But, though the bank was almost always with him, and though the coach (in a confused way, like the presence of pain under an opiate) was always with him, there was another current of impression that never ceased to run all through the night. He was on his way to dig someone out of a grave." So this excerpt is referenced to the context of Mr. Lorry.

Jarvis Lorry is the full name of Mr. Lorry, and he is a banker, he works in a bank called Tellson and Co. And the narrator says that the bank was almost always with him, thoughts about the bank constantly preoccupied Mr. Jarvis Lorry, and since he is in the coach now, the mail coach, the horse-drawn carriage, since he is inside the coach, the coach also seems to be always with him.

And a comparison is being made to an opiate, a drug which is taken to suppress pain, so the implication is that even when you are trying to suppress pain under a drug, you are trying to bring down the level of pain by taking a drug, a medicine, you are not able to completely remove the pain, the pain is always there. Just like that, the bank is always with him and the coach is always with him too.

While this man is travelling, he is also remembering other things, and that other thing is that pain that he is trying to suppress too. So, in that memory in that remembrance, he is trying to dig someone from a grave, he is trying to recall somebody from the dead, he is trying to recover a body from a buried place and he is unable to suppress this thought which is also constant.

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Chapter III The Night Shadows

- "Buried how long?"

The answer was always the same: "Almost eighteen years."

...

"You know that you are recalled to life?"

"They tell me so."

"I hope you care to live?"

"I can't say"

Indifferent

*Imaginary Conversation
Mr. Lorry & the unknown
man who
had been
buried*

So, this is the conversation that he has, Mr. Lorry has with the man he has a dug up recently. And the question is, "Buried how long?" The answer was always the same: "Almost 18 years." "You know that you are recalled to life?" "They tell me so." "I hope you care to live?" "I cannot say." So, this is the conversation, an imaginary conversation, mind you, between Mr. Lorry and the person who has been buried, the unknown man, we do know who it is who had been buried for 18 long years.

And it is very interesting to see that this man does not care so much about being recalled, because look at the response to that question which asks I hope you care to live, do you want to live, and he says I cannot say. It is a very indifferent answer, and he is not even aware that he

has been recalled to life because he says that they tell me so, I am told that I have been recalled to life, so there is a lot of indifference to one's state after being recovered.


So, this is a conversation as you will know if you have started reading the novel, that it is Doctor Manette whose voice is responding to Mr. Lorry's question here, and this is the imaginary conversation that Mr. Lorry has while he is traveling in that mail coach, and it is this figure who is going to be the center of attention for several long years and in this novel.

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Chapter III The Night Shadows

- "in his fancy would dig, and dig, dig—now, with a spade, now with a great key, now with his hands—to dig this wretched creature out. Got out at last, with earth hanging about his face and hair, he would suddenly fall away to dust. The passenger would then start to himself, and lower the window, to get the reality of mist and rain on his cheek."

Handwritten notes:
key → lock & key → prisoner
The page
Gothic
Supernatural



In his fancy, he would dig and dig and dig now, with the spade, now with a great key, now with his hands, to dig this wretched creature out. Got out at last with earth hanging about his face and hair, he would suddenly fall away to dust. The passenger would then start to himself and lower the window to get the reality of mist and rain on his cheek. So, as Mr. Lorry is traveling, he is kind of in his own mind trying to dig somebody, and sometimes he uses a spade to dig and sometimes he uses a great key to open the door and get that man.

And sometimes he uses his hands to dig this wretched creature out, this man who has been buried for 18 long years. So this key is very interesting because it refers to somebody who is under lock and key, and the title page shows us a prisoner, and where is he being imprisoned? So that will also be answered as you read the novel. And this man is a wretched creature according to the narrator.

And if you go back to the title page, you will see what is his state of affairs, the man who has been buried alive for 18 long years. And in the fancy of Mr. Lorry, he sees this man, you know,

with dust about his face and hair and just as he is trying to recover this man, he would crumble a fall away to dust he will just you know disappear into dust. It is a very gothic passage, gothic is something to do with the supernatural.

And elements of the supernatural are suggested in this scene because you can see a man, you know, digging somebody out and just as that man is going to come out of the earth, he just disappears, he just falls away into dust. And the passenger, that is Mr. Lorry would then start to himself because this is like a dream; a surreal dream, the passenger would then start to himself and lower the window to get the reality of mist and rain on his cheek.

So, in order to understand that what he has seen in his mind is a dream not the reality, he would let the mist and rain fall on his cheek and that will give him tangible evidence that he has been dreaming. So this is a very, you know, evocative passage too just like the passage which describes mist and the fog swirling about them a mail coach. And again, even that passage has gothic suggestions and just as this passage.

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Chapter III The Night Shadows

- "He lowered the window, and looked out at the rising sun. There was a ridge of ploughed land, with a plough upon it where it had been left last night when the horses were unyoked; beyond a quiet coppice-wood in which many leaves of burning red and golden yellow still remained upon the trees. Though the earth was cold and wet, the sky was clear, and the sun rose bright, placid, and beautiful."

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So, this is Mr. Lorry looking out of the window, and he looks at the rising sun and he is able to see a ridge; ridge is this kind of land formation, and he is able to see the ridge of ploughed land and he also is able to see the plough there which had been left by the farmer when the horses were unyoked and allowed to rest. And beyond that farm land, there is a wood, there is a coppice wood; wood with coppice trees, and in that wood many leaves are shining because of the effect of sun's rays on them.

And some of these leaves are red in colour or golden yellow, and they are quite visible from the place in which Mr. Lorry is in, inside the horse carriage. And the narrator says that though the earth was cold and wet, the sky was clear, there was nothing, you know, to blemish the appearance of the sky and the sun rose in a beautiful manner, in a very quiet manner. Even though all is very quiet, everything is peaceful and placid, even though everything is serene, there is a sense that things are not very quiet, and there are indications; symbolic indications left there in the scene.

Let me pick out some of those symbolic indications. Look at the word plough, and that reminds us of the farmer. And what does the farmer represent in book one? The farmer represents death as we have seen, and what does the wood remind us of, what does the trees remind us of? In the previous excerpts, we saw that certain trees were cut down.

And these trees were turned into wooden boards and those wooden boards were turned into the guillotine which will chop off the heads during the French Revolution. So that coppice wood is not so quiet as is indicated in this passage. And the word burning red is also very suggestive, red is also very suggestive of bloodshed, and the idea of burning also tells us that things will come to a boil at some point in the, you know, near future, and all will not be clear, the sky will not be bright and placid and beautiful.

So, the first 3 chapters of A Tale of Two Cities is very metaphoric, there are no very clear-cut events that are told to the reader as of now, but there are hints as to what is going to come. If you look at the message that has been given to Jerry by Mr. Lorry, it tells us that somebody is going to be brought back to life, and if you look at the fancy, the imagination of Mr. Lorry, you will also realize that somebody is going to be brought back to normal society.

Somebody who has been put away, somebody who has been buried for so long. And we also get a sense that there has been injustice committed to certain people which has brought about a lot of psychological damage, and that is suggested in the response of the man who is replying to Mr. Lorry. His indifference, his confused state of affairs are the outcome of the injustice that have been meted out to him by the people who have been powerful in society.

So, there are a lot of hints about what this novel is going to be about in the first few chapters of book 1. And we are also introduced to two key characters directly which are Mr. Lorry, Mr. Jarvis Lorry who is a banker and Jerry who is a messenger, and he also has another job which he does very secretly, and that is also suggested in his own words when he is talking to himself while riding back after giving the message to the banker.

So, these important characters are introduced and there is also a reference to a Mademoiselle and we will come to know who that Mademoiselle is, and Mr. Lorry is to wait for this Mademoiselle before he travels further. So, all the key incidents are suggested here along with a big foreshadowing, a very heavy foreshadowing of the guillotine, of the tumbrels which will bring the prisoners to the scaffold where lots of executions are committed for the benefit of “the society”.

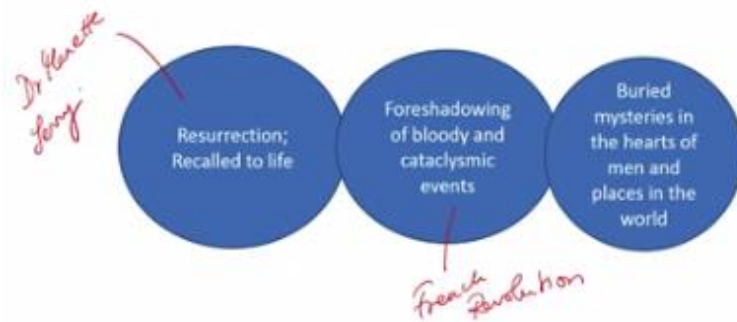
So, all these key incidents are metaphorically, thematically, figuratively indicated in the first few chapters. And my suggestion is to please read the novel closely, because it is not a very easy read but once you get into the flow of the novel, you will try and understand pretty clearly and easily what the novel is about. In fact, only the first few chapters are a bit difficult to understand because the language is dense.

But after that there will be a lot of narrative, there will be a lot of exciting events which will be interesting for you to understand the novel very easily, so do not be put off by these metaphoric sections and try and get the major idea which is that France is being prepared for the revolution and certain people are going to be caught up in this state of affairs which will bring a lot of, you know, a damage and injury and threat to a very beautiful family.

So all that is going to be discussed in the forthcoming weeks, which are going to be about the novel by Dickens.

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Themes



So, some of the major themes that have been covered in these sections of the novel are these, which is resurrection; resurrection means being recalled to life, and there is also a lot of foreshadowing of bloody and cataclysmic events, that is events related to the French Revolution, and there is also the sense that mysteries are buried in the hearts of men and women and in the places in the world.

So, these are also some of the major themes of this particular novel, so do pay attention to ideas of resurrection either in the context of Doctor Manette or in the context of Jerry who will be involved in this concept too, the concept of being recalled to life, and do look forward to noticing ideas which foreshadow cataclysmic events; events that will destroy the fabric of society. And again the idea that there are a lot of hidden secrets in the minds of the people and

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