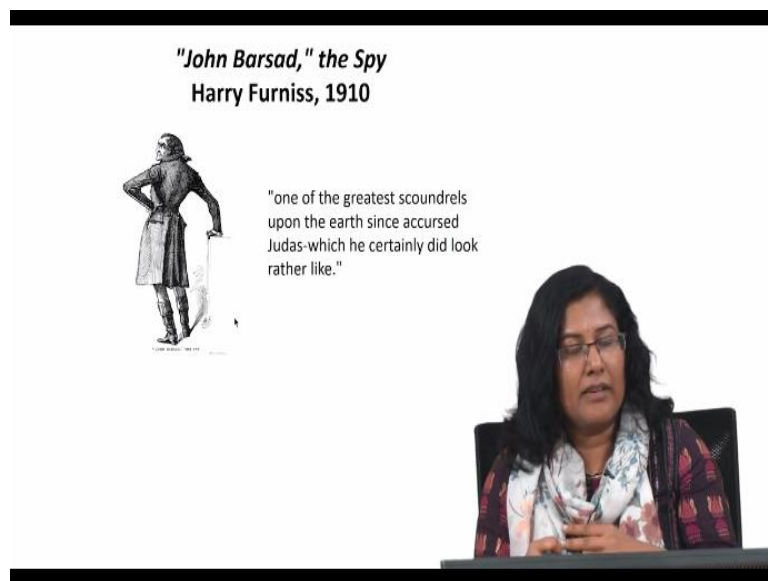


**The Nineteenth-Century Novel**  
**Prof. Divya. A**  
**Department of Humanities and Social Sciences**  
**Indian Institute of Technology – Madras**

**Lecture - 22**  
**Dickens' A Tale of Two Cities Book II: Chapters 3**

Hello and welcome back. Today is the last session for week 5, and will look at chapter 3 which is titled A Disappointment. So what is the disappointment that the narrator is talking about? That question will be answered in this chapter.

**(Refer Slide Time: 00:34)**



This is the man who is called John Barsad. He is actually the spy, and this illustration was done by Harry Furniss for the 1910 Edition of A Tale of Two Cities. This is the man who is accusing the innocent Charles Darnay of spying against Britain for France. The information that Charles Darnay supposedly gave is in the context of the American Revolution, and that gains a lot of importance in this particular scene.

And according to the narrator, he is one of the greatest scoundrels upon the earth since accursed Judas which he certainly did rather look like. So the point here is that Barsad is similar to Judas who betrayed Christ, and that is the comparison that is being drawn here. And the other implication, suggestion, is that Charles Darnay is as innocent as Christ himself was. So that is the other meaning that is being subtly communicated here.

**(Refer Slide Time: 01:52)**

---

## Flashback and Evidence



Now we have an embedded narrative or a flashback, and in that embedded narrative of five years ago, Darnay meets Mr. Lorry, Mr. and Miss Manette on board a ship from France to England. So you need to remember that scene which we saw in chapter 6 of book I. In book I chapter 6, we saw that Mr. Manette is recovered from Saint Antoine and taken back to Britain for him to recover with the help of his daughter.

So in that passage from France to England by ship, they meet Charles Darnay, and this meeting is evoked in the trial at Old Bailey. And we have all 3 of them, Mr. Lorry, Mr. and Miss Manette offering their evidence in the trial of Charles Darnay, and their evidence is interpreted maliciously by the Advocate General who wants to condemn Charles Darnay.

**(Refer Slide Time: 03:07)**

---

## Miss Manette and Charles Darnay

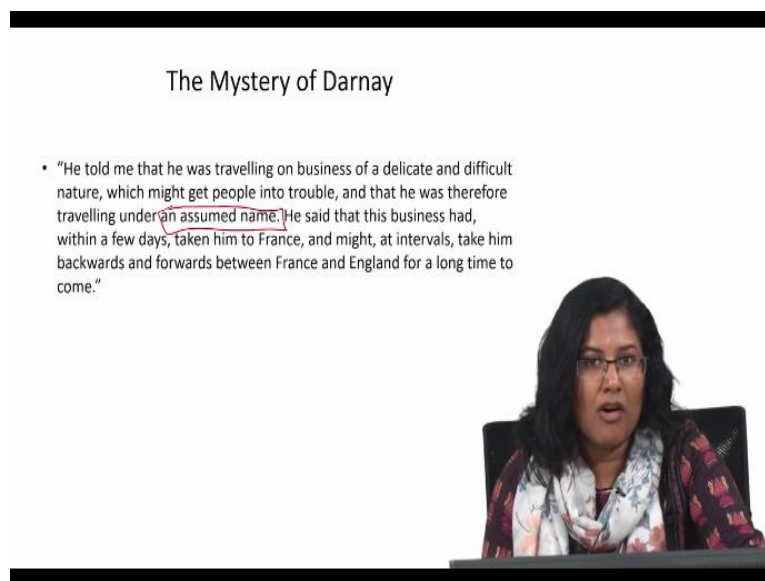
- "He expressed great gentleness and kindness for my father's state, and I am sure he felt it. That was the manner of our beginning to speak together."



Miss Manette offers her testimony about Charles Darnay which is kind of trying to condemn Charles Darnay, because that is how it is going to be interpreted by the accusers of Charles Darnay. And Miss Manette says that “he expressed great gentleness and kindness for my father's state, and I am sure he felt it. That was the manner of our beginning to speak together.” So in that journey of five years ago on board a ship from France to England, Darnay was very helpful to Miss Manette in relation to the older man Mr. Manette.

He was very helpful and that was how they began to talk to one another. So that is the point of their meeting.

**(Refer Slide Time: 03:58)**



The slide features a title "The Mystery of Darnay" at the top. Below the title is a bullet point containing a quote: "He told me that he was travelling on business of a delicate and difficult nature, which might get people into trouble, and that he was therefore travelling under an assumed name. He said that this business had, within a few days, taken him to France, and might, at intervals, take him backwards and forwards between France and England for a long time to come." The phrase "an assumed name" is underlined in red. In the bottom right corner of the slide, there is a video inset showing a woman with dark hair and glasses, wearing a patterned scarf, speaking.

And further she says, “He told me that he was traveling on business of a delicate and difficult nature which might get people into trouble, and that he was therefore traveling under an assumed name. He said that this business had, within a few days, taken him to France and might at intervals take him backwards and forwards between France and England for a long time to come.”

So this is the context for Charles Darnay. This is what Darnay tells Miss Manette. And he says that I am traveling under an assumed name. It is a very interesting point that will get him into trouble, not only at this point in Old Bailey, but also later as you will come to know once you have read the book. And he also says that he has business in France which might force him to travel back and forth between France and Britain.

So what is the primary idea that we get from Darnay's narrative is that he is not telling the entire truth. He is not giving a lot of details to Miss Manette. He is hiding a lot of information about his origin and the purpose of his business. Further, even though Miss Lucie Manette is extremely sympathetic of Charles Darnay now, and she is very grateful to Darnay for being very helpful five years ago, despite all her favorable, you know, attitude towards Charles Darnay, she also realizes that her narrative is going to get Darnay into trouble. So even though she is telling the truth, you know, as much of the truth that she knows to the court, she realizes that her narrative is going to put a kind of a complicated aura about Darnay which will condemn him. So this is the context that surrounds the narrative that happened five years ago which is communicated by Miss Manette now.

All that we know about Darnay is that he is traveling under an assumed name. He has to travel back and forth between the two countries and he is not being very transparent about the nature of his business. And all these lack of transparency would lead the jury and the people and his accusers into believing that he is perhaps a spy, a French spy, which is why he is travelling between the two countries often enough.

**(Refer Slide Time: 06:33)**

The Likeness

- "Look well upon that gentleman, my learned friend there", pointing to him who tossed the paper over, "and then look well upon the prisoner. How say you? Are they very like each other?"
- Allowing for my learned friend's appearance being careless and slovenly if not debauched, they were sufficiently like each other to surprise, not only the witness, but everybody present, when they were brought into comparison.

*Mr. Stryver*  
*Sydney Carton*  
*Charles Darnay*

The slide is presented by a woman in a video call. She is wearing glasses and a patterned jacket. The slide content is overlaid on a white background.

Now, so how is Darnay going to be taken out of this quandary? How is Darnay going to be saved, who is going to do the saving? That is the big question. And we have a character called Sydney Carton to whom I referred a minute ago. Sydney Carton is the assistant of Mr. Stryver who is trying to defend Charles Darnay, and Sydney Carton who has been looking at the ceiling all through the trial till now, suddenly tries to scribble something on a piece of paper and passes it on to his senior.

And Mr. Stryver looks at the writing on the piece of paper and then he continues his argument, which goes like this. “Look well upon that gentleman”, that gentleman is Sydney Carton. He says that, he says to the court, “Look well upon that gentleman, my learned friend there, pointing to him who tossed the paper over.”

So Sydney Carton writes on a piece of paper and throws the paper over, and you might want to think about his attitude as well, the way he behaves. And Stryver says, “And then look well upon the prisoner.” That prisoner is Charles Darnay. “How say you? Are they very like each other.” And he says that look at the prisoner, look at my friend Sydney Carton, my assistant, my learned friend there, don't they look similar? “And further allowing for my learned friend's appearance being careless and slovenly if not debauched, they were sufficiently like each other to surprise, not only the witness, but everybody present, when they were brought into comparison.”

So the narrator says that though Sydney Carton, the learned friend, was carelessly dressed very untidily in, you know, very untidy in terms of his appearance, he was sufficiently like Charles Darnay to confuse everybody, and there is an idea now that Charles Darnay could not be the person who is accused of being a spy.

So there is an air of doubt brought into that trial scene of Charles Darnay. Charles Darnay's identity could not be proved beyond doubt that he is indeed the man who was seen at all these various places by all these men such as Barsad and Roger Cly who were accusing him of being a spy, who were accusing him of being the man who exchanged papers with other suspicious characters.

So his identity could not be proved beyond doubt because, you know, Charles Darnay need not be the man who was present at that particular hotel, it could even be Sydney Carton because you know they two looked like one another. So the point is that there are other people like Charles Darnay who could have been the ones who have committed such crime. So there is a doubt brought into the trial scene.

**(Refer Slide Time: 10:05)**

## The Likeness



France } mirror  
Britain }  
Darnay }  
Carton }



So this is an illustration, and the title of the illustration is The Likeness, the similarity between Carton and Darnay. And the idea of being twins is an important thematic of A Tale of Two Cities. So France and Britain are like one another. They are twin cities, they resemble one another, they are mirror images and so are Darnay and Carton. One is a Frenchman living in Britain; the other is an English gentleman.

One is a debauched man, very careless about his love, the other is very disciplined, he is a professional and that is Darnay. So again we have the idea of duality, twinning, and we have other twins such as Lucie Manette and Madame Defarge being, you know, contrary twins, contrasting pair of women in this novel which will bring out the polarities in extreme situations in Britain and France in that period.

**(Refer Slide Time: 11:25)**

## Sydney Carton

- "Something especially reckless in his demeanour, not only gave him a disreputable look, but so diminished the strong resemblance he undoubtedly bore to the prisoner (which his momentary earnestness, when they were compared together, had strengthened), that many of the lookers-on, taking note of him now, said to one another they would hardly have thought the two were so alike."



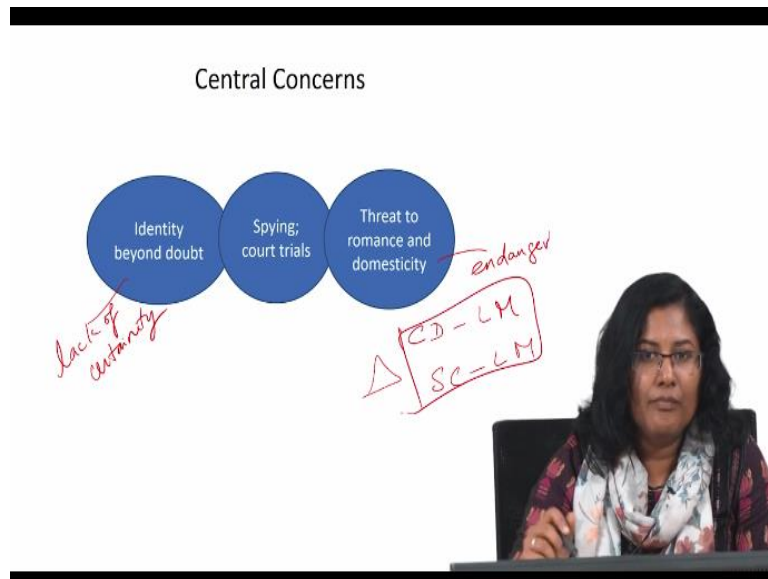
Now let us talk a little bit about Sydney Carton. This is what the narrator has to say about him in this chapter. “Something especially reckless in his demeanour, not only gave him a disreputable look, but so diminished the strong resemblance he undoubtedly bore to the prisoner (which his momentary earnestness, when they were compared together, had strengthened) that many of the lookers-on, taking note of him now, said to one another they would hardly have thought the two were so alike.”

This is the third person narrator judging both Carton and Charles Darnay, and also trying to judge the two from the point of view of the crowd. So let us take this excerpt pretty slowly. The narrator says that Sydney Carton looks reckless. There is an air of recklessness about him, he does not seem to care too much about himself, he is not very serious in his demeanour, in his appearance.

He looks almost disreputable, almost debauched, that is what Stryver says, his senior says about him. And when he is in such an attitude, when he is being very reckless, when he is being very disreputable, there is no similarity between Carton and Darnay, and that is what the crowd thinks too. See that is the point I mentioned here, that many of the lookers-on the crowd thinks that they do not look so much alike now.

But when Carton is very honest, when he is being very sincere, they were like one another. His momentary earnestness made him comparable to Charles Darnay. So Charles Darnay is the better twin here. Charles Darnay is the good side of Sydney. Charles Darnay is what Sydney would look like if he is very disciplined, if is very serious about himself, if he leads a very structured life. So that idea is communicated in terms of the pair here that we have at the trial scene at Old Bailey.

**(Refer Slide Time: 13:49)**



Now one of the central concerns in these chapters that discuss the trial scene, firstly the point is that identities cannot be established beyond doubt. There is always this question about is this the man or the woman whom we are talking about, who played a major role in a particular event. So identities become very fluid. Charles Darnay looks like Sydney Carton; Sydney Carton looks like Charles Darnay. Who is the one who is being very ideal here, who is the debauched man.

So all these questions come up in terms of this idea of identity. So identities are fluid, flexible, nobody is very sure, the lack of certainty is a major thematic point in this novel. The other central concern of this novel is the notion of spying. This is the point that I also talked about in the earlier sessions in week 5, that is the idea of spying. People are always spying on one another and there are several court trials even within this novel.

And this Old Bailey trial is the first of several trials that we will witness in A Tale of Two Cities. So people are constantly being judged, you know, the government is constantly intervening, the bureaucracy is intervening, the bureaucracy is trying to find out who is the real criminal and the bureaucracy is trying to condemn people, so that is a constant theme. And the other point that is gradually, you know, gaining strength is the point about romance and domesticity, the thematic of romance and domesticity.

We have a hint that Darnay and Lucie Manette are romantically involved. We can see that Lucie Manette is very sympathetic towards Charles Darnay. She is favorably inclined towards him. We also see that Sydney Carton is favorably inclined towards Lucie Manette.



So we kind of see a relationship between Charles Darnay and Lucie Manette. We also see a kind of a one-sided romantic affinity on the part of Sydney Carton for Lucie Manette.

So a kind of a love triangle is about to begin and which will have narrative and thematic implications for the novel. So the other important point in terms of this theme is that the government, the bureaucracy, the institution is going to endanger romance and domesticity, especially in the context of these characters. Thank you for watching. I will continue in the

n

e

x

t

s

e

s

s

i

o