

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

Lecture – 25
Dickens A Tale of Two Cities Book II Chapter 9 to 12

Hello and welcome to Week 6's lectures. In today's session we will be looking at chapters 9 to 12. In the previous session we began chapter 9. We were looking at the significance of certain sculptures which had classical associations, and we will continue with that in today's lecture. We are at the entrance to Marquis Evermonde's home in the countryside, and if you remember the previous session, we saw that there were a lot of sculptures of Gorgon's head in the boundary walls to Marquis' home and the third person narrator gives his further information about the specific objects which were displayed in the home of this aristocrat.

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The Gorgon's head

- It was a heavy mass of building, that chateau of Monsieur the Marquis, with a large stone court-yard before it, and two stone sweeps of staircase meeting in a stone terrace before the principal door. A stony business altogether, with heavy stone balustrades, and stone urns, and stone flowers, and stone faces of men, and stone heads of lions, in all directions. As if the Gorgon's head had surveyed it, when it was finished two centuries ago.

*Stony
hard - cruel
business*



“It was a heavy mass of building, that chateau of Monsieur the Marquis, with a large stone court-yard before it, and two stone sweeps of staircase meeting in a stone terrace before the principal door. A stony business altogether, with heavy stone balustrades, and stone urns, and stone flowers, and stone faces of men, and stone heads of lions in all directions. As if the Gorgon's head had surveyed it, when it was finished two centuries ago.”

So everything about the exterior to the home of the Marquis was made of stone. Look at the number of times the word stone is repeated; stone court-yards and then stone sweeps of staircase, a stone terrace, a stony business altogether. So Dickens spells out the metaphor by

this adjectives stony, this is hard, cruel business, the business of the aristocrat. So the metaphor is also spelt out there, and then let us get back to the counting of the reference to stones.

We have one here, stone balustrades, stone urns, stone flowers. Even the flowers which are represented in the architecture is stony, it is made of stone, and then the faces of male sculptures against stone, stone heads of lions. Everywhere the sculptures are build out of stone, everywhere you look you're met with stones. And the narrator says that it is as if the Gorgon, the classical Gorgon which had the capacity to turn those who looked at these creatures into stone, it is as if these Gorgon's have come and had a look at this exterior structures of the Marquis, and they have turn these structures into stone. So that is the metaphorical and the literal signification of this particular architecture of this aristocrat who is known as Marquis Evermonde. The name will be clear soon enough.

So what is the figurative significance? As I mentioned before it is a reference to the hard heartedness of the aristocrat here, the cruelty, the harshness, the ruthlessness is signified in the reference to the stony nature of the home. The home is also a guideline to the minds and manners of the inhabitants.


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The Gorgon's head

*Objects
Manners*

- "a hall grim with certain old boar-spears, swords, and knives of the chase; grimmer with certain heavy riding-rods and riding whips, of which many a peasant, gone to his benefactor Death, had felt the weight when his lord was angry."

*welcome VS grimness
harsh
cruel*



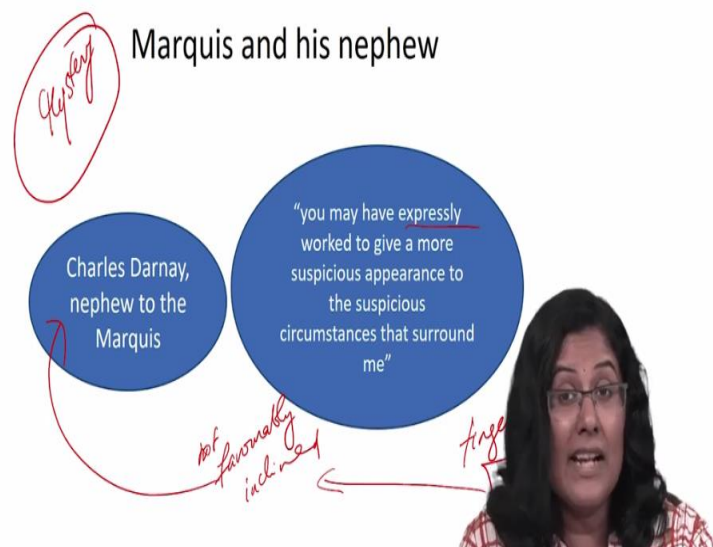
Now let us look at the way the hall is decorated, the hall of the home of Marquis Evermonde the aristocrat question. The hall is "grim with certain old boar-spears, swords and knives of the chase, grimmer with certain heavy riding rods and riding whips, of which many a peasant, gone to his benefactor Death, had felt the weight when his lord was angry." So the hall is

decorated with implements that were used for punishment.

So look at the whips, the whips which whipped many a peasant, which hurt many a peasant, and these peasant also went to their benefactors, who are referred to as death. So its death is a welcome space, death becomes a haven to rest. So death figuratively becomes a person who does good things, who is very generous, who is like a benefactor, who is like a guardian here. So and there are also other objects such as spears, swords, knives, all these are weapons which inflict a lot of injury and harm to the receiver.

And this place has an aura of grimness. It is not a welcome space, totally not a welcome space. It is quite the contrary, it is very harsh; it is very cruel. So you can see that the atmosphere, the ambience, the home, the domestic space of the aristocrat bears all this markers of cruelty. So all these are markers, all these objects.

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Let us see who is visiting this particular home of the Marquis, and we will be surprised, the first time readers of the novel will be even shocked to see that Charles Darnay is the nephew to the Marquis Evermonde. The man who is, you know, very, very cruel and harsh, the man who recently killed a child by running his carriage over that little life, and we are surprised to see the relationship between Darnay and this Marquis Evermonde.

And Charles Darnay is not very happy with his uncle, and he says that you are also the reason behind my arrest and trial at London. And he says that you have given, you know, rise to

certain suspicious circumstances about me, which led to my arrest, and he says you may have expressly worked to give a more suspicious appearance to the suspicious circumstances that surround me.

So he points a finger of blame at his uncle the Marquis, and we are also given the impression that the uncle is not favorably inclined towards his own nephew, and we wonder why, which again points to a mystery in the past of these relatives, and we would know why exactly there is a lot of ill feeling and resentment between the two of them. So we also are given to understand that the uncle is a shady character, because he deliberately sets out to harm and even have his nephew killed by the British government, by giving rise to certain situations and circumstances which indicates that Charles Darnay could have been a spy, and we are also given to understand that perhaps Barsad and his friend Cly were working with the Marquis in order to kind of collect a set of evidence against Charles Darnay. And Charles Darnay is aware that his uncle is behind the trial scene in fact.

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The Marquis and the Nephew

Charles Darnay

"We have so asserted our station, both in the old time and in the modern time also," said the nephew gloomily, "that I believe our name to be more detested than any name in France."

time-tested noble hated

- "Repression is the only lasting philosophy. The dark deference of fear and slavery, my friend...will keep the dogs obedient to the whip, as long as this roof...shuts out the sky."

Two philosophies

Darnay vs Marquis

The Court estate

Now we have a set of conversation between the Marquis and the nephew which tells us about two different approaches to life, two different philosophies. One held by Darnay, and the other by his uncle the Marquis. Let us see what they are, the two philosophies, and this is the uncle's words here. "We have so asserted our station, both in the old time and in the modern time also," said the nephew gloomily.

So we have Charles Darnay here, Charles Darnay is in fact the speaker of this set of words, who says that "I believe that our name to be more detested than any name in France." And to

this assertion of Charles Darnay, we have the response of the Marquis, who says that “repression is the only lasting philosophy. The dark deference of fear and slavery, my friend, will keep the dogs obedient to the whip, as long as this roof shuts out the sky.”

It is a very interesting exchange, and two extreme opinions are also shared here. The nephew says that we have been completely hated by everybody, and he says that we have forced our situation in life, we have become oppressors of the people who are beneath us in social station, both in the olden days and in the modern time too. So we have been continually oppressing the people using our status in life as the reason, as a privilege to oppress.

And he says that we are completely detested, we are completely hated, we are more hated than any other noble line. This particular noble line of the Evermondes are detested, loathed by the people than any other noble lineage in French history, and to which comments the Marquis says that repression is the time tested philosophy, lasting here at refers time tested. It is something that is proven over the course of time, and therefore he implies that repression is the best philosophy.

It is good to oppress people, in fact it is good to have people fear the aristocrats, fear us nobility. It is good to have people in slavery because only when we are fearful, only when we are scary, the dogs will be obedient to us, to our usage of the whip. And I want to go back to the previous slide here where there are reference to whips here, and whips which have been used on the peasants.

So he says that it is good to injure, hurt, and make people frightened of us, only then we will be obeyed. And that is the philosophy of the Marquis. And he says that this is going to be the truth, repression is going to be the truth by which we will lead a life as long this roof, the home, the country estate which has a lot of stone structures. As long as this structure kind of blocks out the sky.

As long as this roof is standing between us and the sky, this philosophy is going to hold. And that is what the Marquis believes in. But, Charles Darnay insists on offering a different take on his uncle's philosophy.

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Charles Darnay

Aristocracy

- "bound to a system that is frightful to me, responsible for it, but powerless in it; seeking to execute the last request of my dear mother's lips, and obey the last look of my dear mother's eyes, which implored me to have mercy and redress; and tortured by seeking assistance and power in vain."

trapped in aristocracy

Helpless

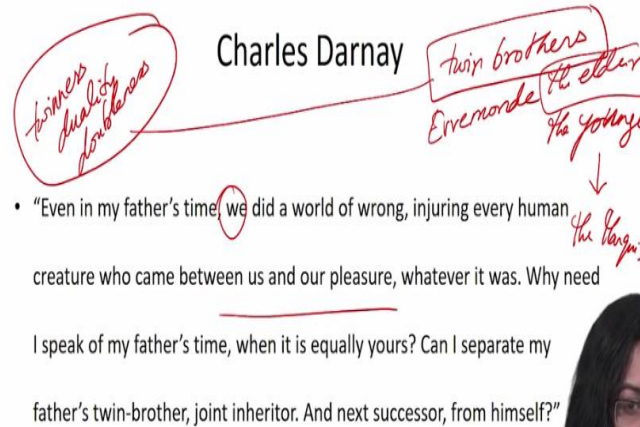


He says that "I am bound to a system that that frightful to me, responsible for it but powerless in it, seeking to execute the last request of my dear mother's lips and obey the last look of my dear mother's eyes, which implored me to have mercy and to redress, and tortured by seeking assistance and power in vain." So the system that Darnay is talking about here is the aristocracy.

And he says that in this system, which is frightful to me, which is scary to me, I also feel responsible, I have a certain set of obligations that I have to deliver, but I am also made powerless in the system to do real good. And I also want to execute carry out the wishes of my dear mother who has asked me to perform certain duties when she died, and he is striving to carry out his obligations advised by his mother, and he is also not able to fulfill it for certain reasons and therefore he is also tortured.

So we get a sense that Charles Darnay is very helpless. He somehow caught in this system, he is trapped in the system of aristocracy, and he wants to carry out certain duties at least which have been endowed on him by his mother as a kind of redressal through a certain set of people whom these people have wronged but he is not able to do it, because he is not able to kind of find out the location and the identity of these set of characters. So this is the mysterious context to some of the quandaries in which Darnay finds himself. And Charles Darnay also further offers references to the past in which the Marquis and his brother have committed injustices against the peasantry.

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And he says that “Even in my father time we did a world of wrong, injuring every human creature who came between us and our pleasure, whatever it was. Why need I speak of my father’s time, when it is equally yours? Can I separate my father's twin brother, joint inheritor, and next successor from himself?” So Charles Darnay is pointing out to the grievous injuries that the Marquis' brother and Marquis did in the past and in the present too.

And we also come to know that the father is no longer alive, the father is dead, the father of Darnay is dead, and he says that in the past we did a world of wrong, our noble lineage did a world of wrong. We have injured people who came between us and our pleasure. We were completely exploiting everybody who came under sight. And he says that my father’s time is also your, your time because you were twins, my father and you were twins.

So you have jointly shared all the injustice that you committed against the peasantry. And he says I cannot separate my father's twin brother, that is I cannot separate you and my father because you are also the inheritor and the next heir to my father. So we kind of get a sense of the family connections of Charles Darnay.

So we have their twin brothers, the two Evermonde brothers, Evermonde the elder and the younger. The younger is the one who is alive right now, the elder has passed away, the younger one is the current Marquis, the heir to the property, and he is the one who killed the child by riding over the kid with his horse carriage. So the other symbolic thing that we need to remember is that the idea of twiness, duality, doubleness runs through the entire narrative.

So here we have the Marquis brother, two Marquis brother mirroring each other, and that idea of duality is also carried on in this particular novel, and we have other twin aspects such as London and Paris being twin cities, and then we have Lucie Manette and Madame Defarge as twin female characters with widely contrasting desires from their lives, and so on and so forth.

And then this also connects us to the idea of extremes of philosophies, you know, on one hand we have the revolution on the other hand we have the aristocracy oppressing the people. That does not seem to be moderate part, so to speak so far now, but there are hints of that as you read the novel when we realize that the family of the Manettes become a kind of a shining embodiment of this middle path the moderate quality.

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Charles Darnay

*Renounces France and his property
*a curse on it and on all this land

"If it ever becomes mine, it shall be put into some hands better qualified to free it slowly ...from the weight that drags it down..."

Repudiation = compensation

disgruntled moment

So Charles Darnay claims that he is going to renounce his aristocratic lineage, his connections with the French nobility, and he says that I do not want to do anything further with this set of connections. And he says that I do not want to also lay claim to the property because there is a curse on it, and on all this land which is owned by the upper class, the French aristocrats. And he says that if it ever becomes mine, it shall be put into some hands better qualified to free it slowly from the weight that drags it out.

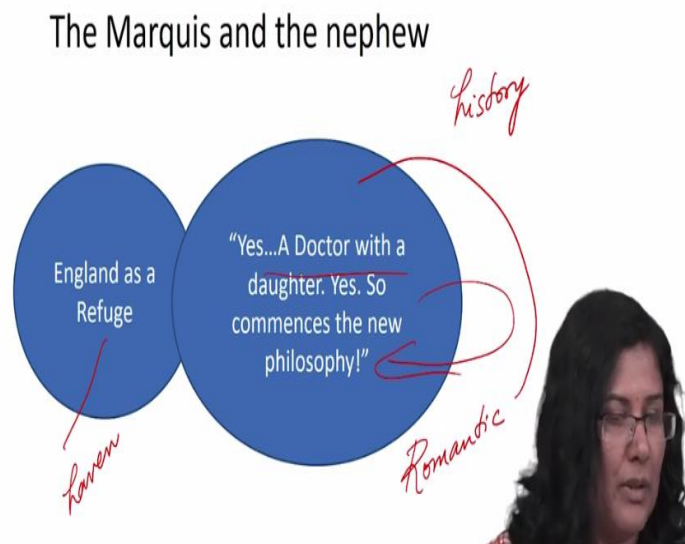
And he says that if they comes a point a time when I am the heir, when I am the owner of this particular property, I will pass it on to better hands, hands which will be capable of offering redressal to the people who are associated with this particular property in France, and those people will be able to kind of remove the weight that burdens the history of this particular

lineage and the country estate.

It is a very poignant moment in the story, because we see that Darnay really genuinely wants to offer some kind of reparation, reparation is compensation, for generations who have been grievously injured by the behavior of the aristocracy. And he is not able to do anything about it, and therefore he says I will give it away to someone who is capable of doing all those redressal. And this passage should remind you of certain lines in Austen's Persuasion when we see Anne Eliot commenting that Kellynch hall has passed on to better hands.

Hands which will be capable of running the estate in a better manner than the Eliots themselves did. So we can see that kind of thematic connections between Persuasion and A Tale of Two Cities in terms of the role and place and function of the country estate.

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Now let us look at the different attitudes of the Marquis and his nephew about England. Nephew thinks of England as a refuge, of a heaven in fact. Whereas the Marquis thinks that his nephew has shirked his responsibilities and run away to this country to be rid of all these responsibilities, whereas the Marquis says that I am now happy there because I earn my bread by my own labour, and he says that yes, I have also started making friendships and social connections with the doctor with a daughter, and the Marquis very slyly and ironically says that yes, it is a doctor with a daughter, and yes so commences the new philosophy, and he says that the Marquis, he implies that the nephew is simply trying to have a romantic fling, romantic associations with this particular daughter of a doctor. And we are also led to believe that perhaps the Marquis knows about the history of the doctor here and therefore he is not

very happy with his nephew.

So for Darnay, England is a place which gives him a lot of protection. Protection from the clutches of the burden of the aristocracy, and the Marquis is very clever because he knows that Darnay is in a relationship, at least has sociable connections with a doctor and a daughter, and he knows that perhaps Darnay is romantically connected with the daughter, and he misinterprets those connections and suggests that perhaps the philosophy is this romance that is budding between the two, and that particular philosophy is making Darnay shirk off his philosophy of repression and oppression which underlines and underlies the aristocratic principles in the French countryside. Now Darnay goes to bed, and the Marquis just before he retires for the night is moving about in his bedroom.


And the third person narrator very sharply kind of summarizes the metaphoric elements that can be elicited in the body language, in the demeanour of the Marquis.

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The Marquis

- "Rustling about the room, his softly-slipped feet making no noise on the floor, he moved like a refined tiger:--looked like some enchanted Marquis of the impenitently wicked sort, in story, whose periodical change into tiger form was either just going off, or just coming on."

Sophisticated Creature like a Tiger
magic health
↳ Madame Defarge



"Rustling about the room, his softly slipped feet making no noise on the floor, he moved like a refined tiger, looked like some enchanted Marquis of the impenitently wicked sort, in story, whose periodical change into tiger form was either just going off or just coming on." It is a very metaphoric section in terms of the characterization of Marquis Evermonde. The third person narrator says that this man is very softly moving about on the carpeted floor of the bedroom.

And that kind of soft movement can be compared to a very sophisticated creature like the

tiger which is about to spring onto its prey, onto its victim, and that is one figurative association. The other association comes from the world of magic, for example an ogre can change forms, and it can change from say a cat to a tiger, and from a tiger back into a cat, depending on its desire.

In that kind of transformation, this particular Marquis is like some ogre which has already become a tiger, is about or is about to become a tiger. So it is a magical moment that retains its cruelty, its harshness, its beastly character, that is what is emphasized in this particular description of the Marquis by the third person. So it is almost very tigerish, that is what is implied here.

And this tigerish attribute is something that Madame Defarge also possess. And by connecting these two characters, the Marquis and female antagonist, by commenting that they all look like beastly characters, Dickens is somehow saying that there is a parallel between these two systems the oppressed and the oppressor. So the aristocrat and the injured peasant come to resemble one another in their desire for oppression on the one hand, and in the desire for vengeance on the other. In both these desire they are beastly, they are tigerish.

So it is a very enchanting paragraph as well in the sense that, you know, the Marquis is constantly in this beastly character of the element of the tigerish. Now the Marquis goes to bed and he does not get up in the morning. Why? He is killed in his bed. He is stabbed to death by someone who wanted to wreak vengeance on the Marquis.

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The Marquis

- "Drive him fast to his tomb. This, from Jacques"

*Brief Letter
- knife - ? => Gasparde*



So this chapter ends with this comment that “Drive him fast to his tomb. This, from Jacques.” This comment is actually written in a piece of paper, a brief letter and that letter is stuck to the knife that stabs the Marquis to death. So who is this man who murdered the Marquis? And the answer is kind of clear, it could not be any other than Gaspard, the father who lost his young child to the reckless driving of the Marquis.

The man who hid on the underside of the carriage of the Marquis, and who travelled slyly, who travelled secretively, and who waited for his time when the Marquis was on his own and stabbed him to death. So what is very interesting is that though the tiger is the one that hunts his victims, though the Marquis is tigerish, it is interesting to note that it is the tiger who got hunted here by the peasant whom the tiger injured.

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Chapter 10: Mr Darnay, the professional

- As a tutor, whose attainments made the student's way unusually pleasant and profitable, and as an elegant translator who brought something to his work besides mere dictionary knowledge, young

Mr. Darnay soon became known and encouraged.

“He had expected labour, and he found it, and did it, and made the best of it. In this, his prosperity consisted.”

Not
merely
labour

middle
class
look
ethic



Now let us come to chapter 10 where we see a domestic picture in London at the home of Soho Square, and in this home the majority of the scene is set. And we get to know also more about Charles Darnay, the tutor, the professional. So what is his context in terms of his professions, in terms of his romantic aspirations with regard to Lucie. So Darnay is a professional, and he is “a tutor, whose attainments made the student's way unusually pleasant and profitable, and as an elegant translator who brought something to his work besides mere dictionary knowledge, young Darnay soon became known and encourage.” So Darnay is extremely successful as a professional tutor, because he is not offering mere book learning, he is also kind of offering original guidance and original work, therefore he becomes popular.

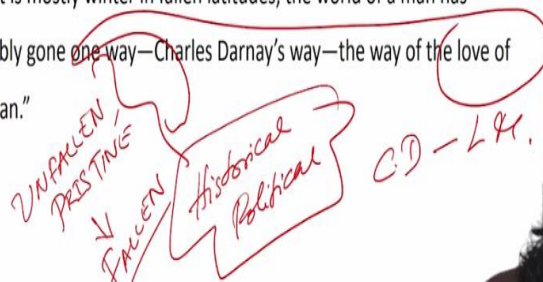
And the third person narrator says that “He had expected labour and he found it, and he did it

and made the best of it. In this, his prosperity consisted.” So in Britain, he expected hard work, so we see the middle class work ethic at play here too. So in Britain, Charles Darnay does not live like an aristocrat, in fact he works for his living, and in that work he is prosperous. And what is very interesting is that the narrator also suggests that his work is not mechanical, not mechanical labour. There is a kind of an original contribution to knowledge with reference to the translation work that Darnay engages in, and that becomes interesting in the context of Darnay, because that suggest that he is being a professional and not a worker. And Darnay prospers in Britain.

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Romantic Plot

- “Now from the days when it was always summer in Eden, to these days when it is mostly winter in fallen latitudes, the world of a man has invariably gone one way—Charles Darnay’s way—the way of the love of a woman.”

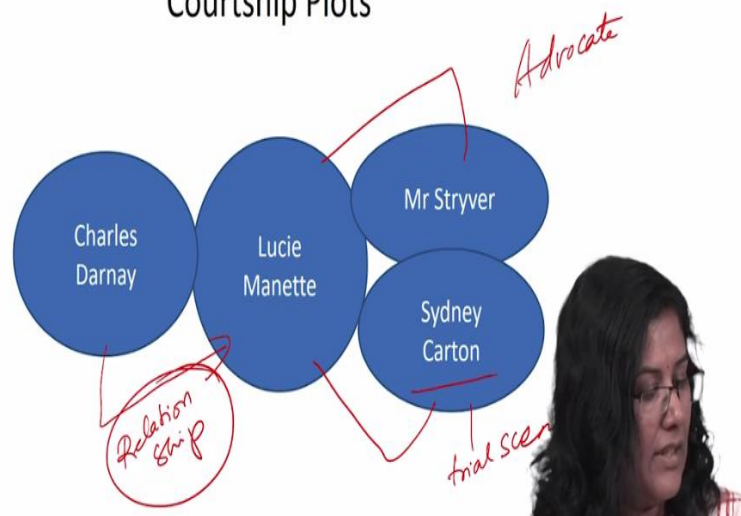


Now in this chapter we do get the sense that the romantic plot is beginning to unravel. So far we did see the historical plot, we did see the political plot, and now for the first time we have the domestic plot germinating in relation to Charles Darnay and Lucie Manette. And this is the comment that the third person narrator has to say about the function of Darnay, and he kind of turns this into a philosophy which effects all young men from the time of Eden.

He says that “Now from the days when it was always summer in Eden, to these days when it is mostly winter in fallen latitudes, the world of a man has invariably gone one way, Charles Darnay's way, the way of the love of a woman.” So from the time of the garden of Eden when human beings were unfallen, were pristine, to the days when the human species had fallen the theme is same, the theme is the love of women on the part of man. So that is the point that the third person narrator is hinting at, and he also seems to say that romance is inevitable.

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Courtship Plots



So we have a clot of ourtships plots developing here with Lucie Manette at the center. We have Charles Darnay who is interested in Lucie Manette, and we have Mr. Stryver the advocate who is also interested in marrying Lucie Manette, and of course there is also Sydney Carton, whom we have sensed is also affected by Lucie Manette in a romantic manner. So this is evidenced during the trail scene, and we also see that there is some kind of relationship between Lucie and Charles Darnay during the trial scene too.

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The Father-Daughter Bond

- "I know that in loving you she sees and loves her mother at her own age, sees and loves you at my age, loves her mother broken-hearted, loves you through your dreadful trial and in your blessed restoration. I have known this, night and day, since I have known you in your home."

Sacredness

"hallowed light"



Now we have Charles Darnay speaking to Doctor Manette about his desires in terms of a romantic union between Lucie and himself. He says that "I know that in loving you she sees and loves her mother at her own age, sees and loves you at my age, loves her mother broken hearted, loves you through your dreadful trial and in your blessed restoration. I have known this, night and day, since I have known you in your home." So Charles Darnay is kind of

saying to Doctor Manette that I am aware that she is very much a close relation of yours because she has suffered quite a bit in her past.

And due to the heart break of her mother, due to the death of her mother, and because of the dreadful trial that you underwent for 18 long years. So because of all this you share a special relationship, and I do not want to come in between, I do not want to break the bond, I have come to strengthen your bond. And he says that there is a hallowed light about your relation, there is a sacredness to your relationship, which I do not want to disturb or stain. And he says that I am going to strengthen it by wanting to bind myself with Lucie Manette.

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Darnay's proposal

- "I look only to sharing your fortunes, sharing your life and home, and being faithful to you to the death. Not to divide with Lucie her privilege as your child, companion, and friend; but to come in aid of it, and bind her closer to you, if such a thing can be."



And he spells it out very clearly to Doctor Manette, and he says that "I look only to sharing your fortunes, sharing your life and home, and being faithful to you to the death. Not to divide with Lucie with her privilege as your child, companion, and friend, but to come in aid of it, and bind her closer to you, if such a thing can be done." So the point here is that he wants to strengthen the relationship between the father and the daughter by marrying her, and

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