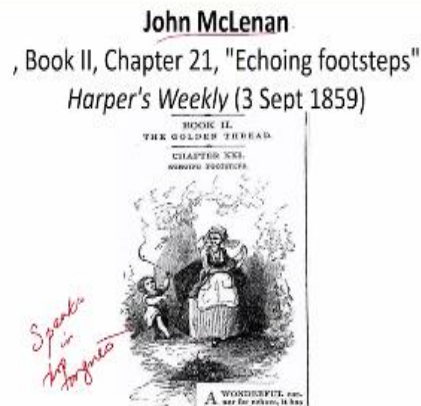


The Nineteenth Century Novel
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Lecture – 32
Dickens' A Tale of Two Cities: Chapters- 21

Hello and welcome back to the final session for week 7. In this session we will be looking at chapter 21 titled Echoing Footsteps. What are the footsteps that are kind of falling on the French country?

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Now we see in this illustration that little Lucie is growing up, she is thriving, and Miss Pross is kind of like the guardian figure, and that is the message that is communicated in this illustration. And we also know that Lucie, little Lucie speaks in two tongues. She is able to converse in French as well as in English because of her unique context, she has French parents and she grows up in England under the guidance of people like Miss Pross and Mr Lorry, Sydney Carton and others. So again a very dual identity is conferred on Little Lucie and that is captured by John McLenan for the Harper's Weekly magazine which was published in America at that time.

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Mr Stryver and Darnay

- The polite rejection of the three lumps of bread-and-cheese had quite bloated Mr.Stryver with indignation, which he afterwards turned to account in the training of the young gentlemen, by directing them to beware of the pride of Beggars, like that tutor-fellow.

Hit at the lack of fortune of Darnay and his family.



Now once Darnay is settled in his home and is, you know, running his marital home, we do get to see Mr. Stryver intervene in his life. And how does he intervene? Mr. Stryver also gets married to a widow with three children, and he thinks that Darnay would be perfect to tutor these three boys. And Mr. Stryver comes to the home of Darnay and asks him to tutor his boys and Darnay rejects.

“The polite rejection of the three lumps of bread and cheese had quite bloated Mr. Stryver with indignation, which he afterwards turned to account in the training of the young gentleman, by directing them to be aware of the pride of beggars, like that tutor fellow.” So, once Stryver asks and Darnay politely rejects, you know, Mr. Stryver is offended, and in fact he tutors the young gentleman to be aware, to detect the pride of beggars such as the tutor fellow Darnay.

And in this particular attitude of Mr. Stryver we see the snobbishness, the condescension of the wealthy bourgeoisie. And that is depicted in a caricature manner by Dickens. And the lack of fortune of Darnay and his family is also pointed out for derision. Look at the way he calls the tutor as a beggar, so that is also something that we need to be aware of. Even though the Manettes are comfortable financially, they are not very wealthy, not wealthy at least like Mr. Stryver. And he in fact offers the three boys to Darnay as a source of income, three three lumps of bread and cheese. So, which is probably the reason why Darnay was offended by this request and turned Mr. Stryver down. So, there is this comic intervention of Stryver and that comic

discourse also makes certain revealing points about the attitude of the middle class professions, professional men such as Mr. Stryver.

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Other echoes

- “But there were other echoes, from a distance, that rumbled menacingly in the corner all through this space of time. And it was now, about little Lucie's sixth birthday, that they began to have an awful sound, as of a great storm in France with a dreadful sea rising.”

Sluggish sea on a sandy shore England vs Storm in France Sea turbulent



There are also other echoes in Lucie's life, and those echoes are more terrifying, and let us say, let us see what that echo is. “But there were other echoes, from a distance, that rumbled menacingly in the corner all through the space of time. And it was now, about little Lucie's sixth birthday, that they began to have an awful sound, as of a great storm in France with the dreadful sea rising.” So, we do get to see that France is erupting in revolution, and the echoes of that is heard from a great distance, from England in that corner of Soho Square.

So everything is quiet, marital life for Lucie and Darnay goes smoothly except for minor intervention such as Mr. Styver's request, condescending request, except for all these minor issues, life goes on peacefully until there is a great storm in France, and look at the way the revolution is described by the narrator here.

The revolution is a storm, and not a storm on land, but it is a storm in the sea. So it becomes especially turbulent when there is a storm at sea, and that is a perfect metaphor to capture the chaos, the radical shift, the destruction, the change of guard that is brought about by the French Revolution. So, the revolution is like a dreadful sea that is rising and rising to envelope and flood out the entire population.

So, that is the image that Dickens is going for here. And if you compare this dreadful sea rising with the sleepy sea on a sandy shore that was mentioned a while ago, a little while ago by the narrator, we can see the contrast between England which is referred to as a quiet sea, and that has been contrasted against the dreadful sea that is rising in France. So, in England, the domestic peace in England is compared with the turbulent revolutionary scene in France.

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“gloomy and threatening the sky”

• “hot, wild night”

• “the old Sunday night when they had looked at the lightning from the same place.”

• “un uneasiness in Paris”

• “Our customers over there, seem not to be able to confide their property to us fast enough. There is positively a mania among some of them for sending it to England.”



The scene is in Soho Square, in the home, and this is a companion seem to the one that we see, that we saw early on in the Soho Square at the beginning of the novel, when we have Lucie Manette and her visitors who gather together and talk about, you know, the footsteps that Lucie is a referring to. So similar scenes is set up here now, on the eve of the revolution, and the night is hot and wild.

It is a turbulent weather, the weather is not very conducive, it is not peaceful, and it is on “the old Sunday night when they had looked at the lightning from the same place.” So the narrator also brings to our attention that this is like the same scene that night years ago, when they had looked at the lightning from the same place in the home of Soho Square, and Mr. Lorry mentions that there is a great uneasiness in Paris.

There is a lot of anxiety, there is a lot of worry in Paris, and he says that our customers in the Paris branch of Tellson's bank “seem not to be able to confide their property to us fast enough. There is positively a mania among some of them for sending it to England.” So, Mr. Lorry tells that our French customers are transferring money to the English branch, they are sending their property to us in England fast.

They are, there is almost a hysteria in the way that they are acting about it, they want to do it quickly so that their money is safe. So, people are able to assess that something is massively amiss, something huge it is going to attack them in terms of the regime change.

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The fall of the Bastille

- A tremendous roar arose from the throat of Saint Antoine, and a forest of naked arms struggled in the air like shrivelled branches of trees in a winter wind: all the fingers convulsively clutching at every weapon or semblance of a weapon that was thrown up from the depths below, no matter how far off.

metaphorical representation

Roar of the Revolution = roar

Reminiscent of the mob scene in England



And the Bastille falls; the fall of the Bastille does happen, and there is “a tremendous roar that arose from the throat of Saint Antoine, and a forest of naked arms struggled in the air like shrivelled branches of trees in a winter wind. All the fingers convulsively clutching at every weapon or a semblance of a weapon that was thrown up from the depths below, no matter how far off.” It is a fantastic scene in the sense that the revolution is described here as a roar.

Early on we saw that it was described as a stormy sea, but here it is a tremendous roar. And where is that roar coming from? From the throat of Saint Antoine, it is a very metaphorical representation, Saint Antoine is configured as a human being, but we know that Saint Antoine is a neighbourhood. It is a section of Paris where the Defarges and the other people live.

So this place is represented as a human being, and from that human being's throat, a tremendous roar arises. And once that roar is arisen, there is a forest of naked arms, and these arms struggle in the air like shrivelled branches of trees. Why are they shrivelled? Because they are in penury, they are starving. Therefore, these arms are like shrivelled branches, branches which do not have any leaves on them, and they are like trees in a winter wind.

Winter, there is harshness, there is bleakness, there is nothing fertile about winter, and therefore these are trees are without any leaves and these people are shrivelled up, and the fingers are all clutching convulsively, instinctively clutching at every weapon or anything that resembles a weapon, and they are kind of moving towards a particular place, and it is as if the weapon was thrown up from the depths below, from the seas, and they do clutch it and move together with those weapons. And this is a mob scene, a mob scene that is reminiscent of a mob scene in England when there was a funeral procession for Roger Cly. So you can make a comparison between these two mob scenes.

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The Sea Rises; Illustration by H.K. Browne



And this is an illustration by Hablot Knight Browne of the crowd that is moving towards the Bastille. The Sea is rising, it is a sea of people, and look at the, you know, shrivelled arms and everybody is clutching a weapon and there is Madame Defarge with a dagger, and this is a new character call Vengeance, and she is carrying a drum.

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The Fall of the Bastille

- Deep ditch, single drawbridge, massive stone walls, eight towers, cannon, muskets, fire and smoke. One drawbridge down! "Work, comrades all, work! Work, Jacques One, Jacques Two, Jacques One Thousand, Jacques Two Thousand, Jacques Five-and-Twenty Thousand; in the name of all the Angels or the Devils—which you prefer—work!" Thus, Defarge of the wine-shop, still at his gun, which had long grown hot.
- "To me, women!" cried madame his wife. "What! We can kill as well as the men when the place is taken! And to her, with a shrill thirsty cry, trooping women variously alarmed, but all armed alike in hunger and revenge."

armed



The Bastille falls, the prison which had imprisoned Dr. Manette for 18 long years is destroyed, brought down by the people, and this is the narration which describes the fall of that big symbolic, you know, structure of French State. "Deep ditch, single drawbridge, massive stone walls, eight towers, cannons, muskets, fire and smoke. One drawbridge down! 'Work comrades all, work! Work Jacques one, Jacques two, Jacques one thousand, Jacques two thousand, Jacques five and twenty thousand; in the name of all the Angels or the Devils, which you prefer, work!' Thus Defarge of the wine shop, still at his gun, which had long grown hot."

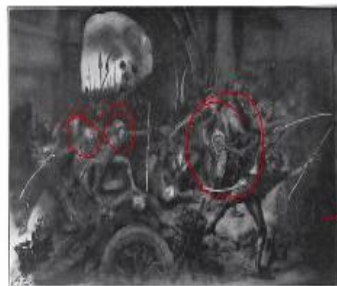
So, this is the consciousness of Defarge which is brought to the reader's attention with the help of the narrator in this novel. And there is a deep ditch which kind of protects or guards the prison, and there are a lot of drawbridges, and that drawbridge falls.

And then there are massive stone walls and there are towers which are attacked by canon, muskets, fire and smoke, and there is one drawbridge down. And then we have our Defarge who is encouraging all his companions to work, work, work, and then he encourages Jacques one, two you know, 2000 and 25000. So, there are so many Jacques around him, and he says work in the name of angels or devils, that is a favourite, you know, phrase with which defarge swears and he encourages them, prods them to work. And he has this gun in his hand, and it has long grown hot because he had been constantly using it.

And his wife is not left behind in this kind of work. She says, "To me, women! Come to me. 'What! We can kill as well as the men when the place is taken!' And to her, with a shrill thirsty cry, trooping women variously alarmed, but all armed alike in hunger and revenge." So Madame Defarge does not want to be left out in this destruction of the Bastille and she says that women can kill as well as the men when the place is taken, when the Bastille is taken. And to her, all these women gather around and they are variously armed. And what are they armed with? They also armed with hunger and revenge. So, they use, exploit their hunger and desire for revenge and attack the men who are there.

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The Fall of the Bastille by Harry Furniss. 1910.



*grimness
in the
atmosphere.
fog,
smoke.*



And this is another illustration by Harry Furniss of the fall of the Bastille. Look at the grimness, there is a lot of grimness in the atmosphere as well as in the faces of the people. There is a lot of fog and smoke. It is a lot of chaos, there is a lot of indistinctive aspect to this illustration which tells you that it is very difficult to gather precisely what is happening. But we all know that, you know, there is a lot of violence and bloodshed.

And in the midst of it there is Vengeance hysterically happy at the fact that there is chaos, and she is beating her drums in ecstasy, and it is a macabre image that she represents.

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One hundred and five, North Tower!

- There was a small, heavily grated, unglazed window high in the wall, with a stone screen before it, so that the sky could be only seen by stooping low and looking up. There was a small chimney, heavily barred across, a few feet within. There was a heap of old feathery wood-ashes on the hearth. There was a stool, and table, and a straw bed. There were the four blackened walls, and a rusted iron ring in one of them.



When they Bastille falls, Defarge goes up to a particular tower which is called 105 North Tower, and he goes in the company of another Jacques and he also brings up, you know, a person who was working there, he brings a tower guard as well with him to the cell. And he is the man who kind of opens that particular cell so that Defarge and his companion can go in and check the place out. So, this is the scene which describes that cell which was occupied by Doctor Manette before he was released.

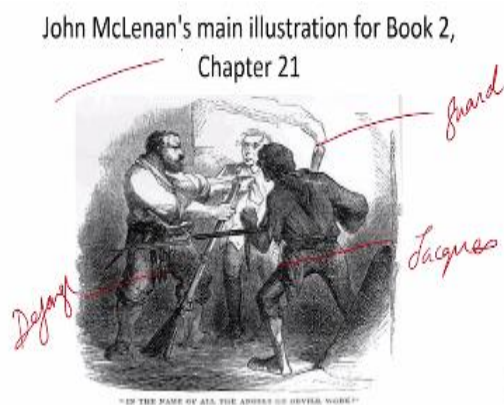
“There was a small, heavily grated, unglazed window high in the wall, with a stone screen before it, so that the sky could be only seen by stooping low and looking up. There was a small chimney, heavily barred across, a few feet within. There was a heap of old feathery wood ashes on the hearth. There was a stool, and table, and a straw bed. There were the four blackened walls, and a rusted iron ring in one of them.”

So, this is the description of the cell which was occupied by Dr. Manette, and it is a very small space, it is a kind of a tower space, and there is a small window high in the wall, and there is a small screen, a stone screen, and if you want to look at the sky you have to kind of stoop low and look it up, look up at the sky, and the chimney was also there, it is very small, and the fire was heavily barred across, and there are wood ashes on the hearth, there is a stool and some tables and the walls are blackened, and there is an iron ring indicating that a prisoner was imprisoned to the wall with the help the ring.

So, on the walls we do see these initials A and M, and then this phrase “a poor physician”. Of course it is referring to Alexander Manette who was a poor physician who was imprisoned by the state for so many years. And all these objects are attacked, especially the worm eaten stool and table are attacked by Defarge and his companion Jacques, and they, you know, break to pieces these objects in a few blows, and this reminds us of the activity of Miss Pross and Mr. Lorry when they destroyed the shoemaking objects of Doctor Manette, and they set fire to this set of material too.

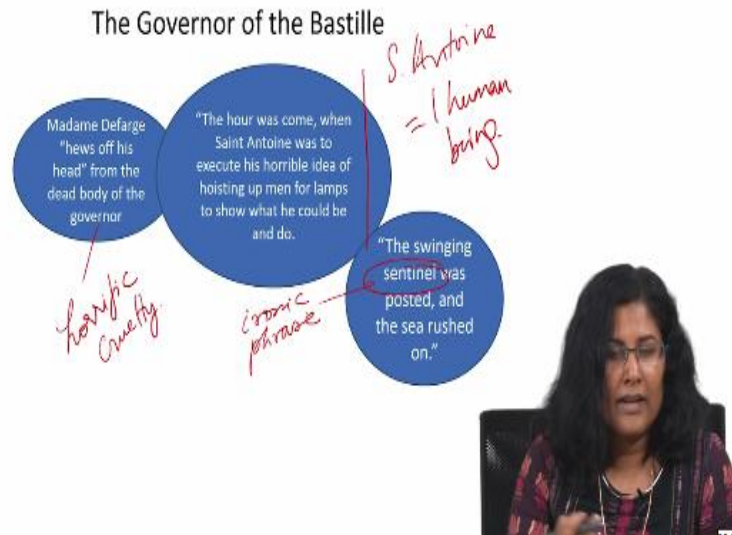
“They fired the little pile which blazed high and hot.” And therefore this is the thing, this is the activity which was foreshadowed by Mr. Lorry and Miss. Pross in that scene in Soho Square home when they very secretively destroyed the old companion of Doctor Manette. So, that is one thing that we need to remember in terms of the symbolism of the scene, but in terms of narrative importance that is one thing that happens which is that Defrage scans the chimney, looks very closely at the walls, and he looks up at the chimney, small chimney, and he very quietly takes away something which is buried there in the wall but nobody notices it until quite later on. So, that is something we need to keep in mind.

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And this is the illustration. We have Defarge here, we have a Jacques, and then we have the turnkey, the guard who opens the cell to Defarge and his companion. This is by John McLenan and this is the illustration for chapter 21 for Harper's Weekly magazine.

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Now, the governor of the Bastille is taken by the prisoner, is taken by the French revolutionaries, he is captured by them, and it is Madame Defarge who cuts off his head from the body. So, this governor is dragged by the people, dragged down the steps, and at the end of his assault his head is cut off by Madame Defarge. It is a horrific scene, and that establishes the cruelty of Madame Defarge. And "the hour was come", the narrator says, "when Saint Antoine was to execute his horrible idea of hoisting up men for lamps to show what he could be and do." And in this excerpt too, Saint Antoine is referred to as one human being, and it is as if this human being is, you know, coming up with the horrible idea of hoisting up men, hang men, and instead of lamps being lit at a height, it is these men, you know, the people whom the revolutionaries kill are, you know, hung up like lamps.

And it is a horrific image that we have, and once again we are reminded of another hanging and that hanging was of Gaspard by the state. Gaspard was executed by a hanging at a scaffold near the fountain were the Marquis killed a young child. So, there are a lot of mirror images that we come across, both in Britain and in France, and in both in the countryside and in the urban regions, both committed by the French state as well as committed by the French revolutionaries.

So there are lots of, you know, parallelisms that we see in terms of the themes. So the swinging sentinel was posted, and the sea rushed on. So, the body was hung up for everybody to see, the body becomes a sentinel, it is a kind of an ironic phrase here, the swinging sentinel. Of course the body cannot be a sentinel, it cannot be a guard, it is just a dead body that is hung up so that the others look at it and see that the revenge has come on, and the sea rushed on, the people take over, the French revolutionaries take over.

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The remorseless sea

• "The remorseless sea of turbulently swaying shapes, voices of

vengeance, and faces hardened in the furnaces of suffering until the touch of pity could make no mark on them."

Seven prisoners, seven gory heads of pikes, the keys of the towers... discovered letter and other memorials of prisoners of old time, long dead of broken hearts..."



"The remorseless sea of turbulently swaying shapes, voices of vengeance, and faces hardened in the furnaces of suffering until the touch of pity could make no mark on them." So, once again, this is how the narrator describes the group of people, the crowd of French revolutionaries who have no touch of pity in them. They have been hardened in the furnaces of suffering, the fire has hardened them, and all they can think of is vengeance.

Which they take out and kind of exhibit by hanging people like, like lamps. So at the end of the day, in terms of the Bastille, they are able to recover seven prisoners, they are able to release seven prisoners, and seven guards are executed and the heads are put on pikes, and they also recover the keys to the towers, and they also discover letters and the memorials of prisoners of old time and long dead of broken hearts.

So, these memorials tell us about the death of all these people who die of broken hearts because they are not able to get back to their loved ones and they are not able to return to their family. So, these are the physical evidences gathered by the French revolutionaries, and it is not quite a lot, just seven prisoners and some letters and memorabilia are all they get at the end of the day with

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