Chapter Four

4. THE THEME OF SUFFERING IN THE WORKS OF SOME OF THE POETS, DRAMATISTS AND NOVELISTS IN ENGLISH LITERATURE

"All wisdom comes from the Lord and is with Him forever." Sirach 1:1

4.1 Introduction

Literature is a reflection of life. As the writer of Ecclesiastes remarks, "of making many books there is no end". (Ecc. 12:12) Good literature serves both for delight and instruction. It exhibits originality, embellishes and edifies the reader with moral and psychological truth. It also helps us to attain better understanding of ourselves and of our fellow human beings. The writer is the painter of certain aspects of life. Adversity, pain, and death are part of human existence. Some writers translate their pain into their works, while others prefer to project the vicarious experience of the same emotion thereby, equipping the reader with better knowledge of life through the experience of others. Life is full of sobs and smiles. Many people consider life to be a sad interlude or a 'walking shadow' (Macbeth 5.5.24).

In the words of John Payne,

“A little pain, a little pleasure,
A little heaping up of treasure;
Then no more gazing upon the sun.
All things must end that have begun".1
Life is so transient and before one begins to understand the meaning and purpose of life and its struggles, time waits for him no more. Suffering is real and inescapable. In almost all forms of literature, there is reference to pain and affliction; but in tragedies the writers describe it and expound it. A very brief study is undertaken here to analyse the theme of suffering in the works of some of the poets, dramatists and novelists in English literature.

4.2 Poetry

The writers differ in their depiction, of pain and affliction. For example Chaucer (1340 – 1400) who is known as ‘the father of English poetry’ paints life as he sees it.

4.2.1 Chaucer's The Canterbury Tales

The Canterbury Tales is a narrative poem. It is an unfinished collection of stories told by the pilgrims bound for Canterbury. In the Prologue, Chaucer gives the clearest picture of the late medieval life. Chaucer’s prologue is one of the greatest masterpieces of English literature. Most of the people described in the Prologue belong to the middle class. Chaucer never attacks his characters. His satire is never harsh but gentle.

The Pardoner, is one of the celebrated pilgrims and his tale deals with the subject of greed. Though it is a simple tale, it is rich in its theme. The Pardoner's Tale is the story of three drunkards who want to slay death as it had slain their friend. An old man tells them that they can find Death, in a particular place in a forest. They follow crooked paths and instead of Death, discover a treasure under a tree. They plan to carry away the treasure and wait until dark. They send the
youngest among them to get food and wine for them. As soon as he is gone, the
two older men decide to kill him. The youngest man also takes a similar decision
and poisons the wine, hoping to possess the gold. When he returns, they kill him,
after which, they sit down to drink the wine and they also die. They are foolish
men, who fail to become spiritual and the lust for gold leads the three men to
death. Suffering is caused by their personal acts of lust and as a result of their
wrong action they destroy one another.

4.2.2 Milton's On His Blindness, Lycidas, Paradise Lost and Paradise
Regained.

In the sonnet On His Blindness John Milton (1608 – 1679) the great
English epic poet mourns the loss of his eyesight. His personal suffering is
expressed in the following lines:

"When I consider how my light is spent,
Ere half my days in this dark world and wide
And that one talent which is death to hide
Lodged with me useless, though my soul more bent" ¹a

In the second part of the poem, he consoles himself and accepts his
affliction and affirms his belief that "they also serve God best who patiently bear
their yoke".²

In Lycidas, Milton expresses his grief for the death of his college friend
Edward King. He was drowned when his ship was wrecked on crossing to Ireland
in 1637. The poem is considered to be a pastoral elegy in which Milton mourns as
if he were a shepherd and laments the loss of a fellow shepherd.

"For Lycidas is dead, dead ere his prime,
Young Lycidas and hath not left his peer
He must not float upon his watery bier
Unwept, and welter to the parching wind,
Without the meed of some melodious tear.”

Death’s cruel hand has snatched away Edward King in the prime of his youth. The loss of friendship and the death of his friend causes Milton immense pain.

In Paradise Lost Milton deals with the reasons for the suffering of mankind. Universal sorrow is depicted in Paradise Lost. Adam’s disobedience brought sin, suffering and death into human existence. Paradise Regained portrays how paradise was regained by the saving grace of Jesus Christ.

4.2.3 Wordsworth's The Solitary Reaper

Wordsworth (1770 – 1850) is one of the greatest English poets. He is a nature poet and his language is the language of every day speech. Lucy Poems are nostalgic in theme and mournful in tone. Michael is a tragic narrative poem, which expresses the sufferings of the old man. It is the story of an old shepherd in the Lake District. The song of the solitary reaper moves the poet. The solitary reaper sings to herself ‘a melancholy strain’ in her native dialect. The poet imagines that she sings at her work of unhappy times or of some natural grief:

“Some natural sorrow, loss or pain,
That has been, and may be again?”

The poet is unable to fathom the cause of the sadness in her song, but he imagines that her intense personal pain is revealed in her melancholic song.
S.T. Coleridge (1772 – 1834) is a romantic poet, philosopher and critic. While Wordsworth, Coleridge's friend, tried to spiritualise Nature, Coleridge was interested in the mysterious and supernatural aspects of nature.

Coleridge's personal sorrow and despair are reflected in *Dejection an Ode*. The poem was written in a time of crisis. It is a poem of despair over the failure of his imagination, his unhappiness in marriage, and his hopeless love for Sarah Hutchinson. His personal pain and misery are disclosed in the following lines:

"A grief with out a pang, void, dark and drear,
A stifled, drowsy, unimpassioned grief,
which finds no natural outlet, no relief,
In word, or sigh, or tear."  

*Dejection an Ode* recounts the deep sorrow of the poet; In another poem, *Rime of the Ancient Mariner*, Coleridge narrates the suffering of the seafarer.

*The Ancient Mariner* deals with a mysterious story. The mariner has committed a dire crime by shooting an albatross, the white bird (which has been following the ship, playing with the shipmates, and bringing the good winds). The mariner has committed a crime against God and nature. His vile deed results in evil and death. The wind drops and the ship is suddenly becalmed. There is no water to drink. The physical suffering begins:

"Water, water every where
Nor any drop to drink."  

In their distress and privation, his comrades hang the dead sea-bird around his neck; and the mental anguish of the seafarer is aggravated by the death of his
comrades. One by one, the sailors die of thirst and only the mariner survives. His desolation and hopelessness are made complete by his loneliness.

"Alone, alone, all alone,
Alone on a wide wide sea!"  

For seven days and nights he endures hell (232 – 233). He undergoes both physical and mental agony; but when he blesses the living things, the dead albatross the symbol of his guilt falls from his neck. The mariner can pray again, for he has realised the love of God, through the beauty of the world and all living things. His afflictions have brought about a sea-change in him. Thus the poet throws light on the suffering of the ancient mariner. From his tragic experiences, the reader can gain knowledge that all living creatures should be shown love and concern.

4.2.5. Thomas Gray's An Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard

Some poets are by nature sad and melancholic. Thomas Gray (1716 – 1771) is noted for his melancholic spirit. As Ifor Evans remarks, "some sadness of spirit within him paralyzed action and made creative work almost impossible". He was one of the transitional poets who was considered to be a precursor of the Romantic Revival in English poetry.

Thomas Gray's An Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard is different from other conventional elegies. The poet does not mourn the death of a friend but mourns the death of the poor people in general. The life of the poor is compared and contrasted with that of the rich. He explains the truth that Death is a leveller and that the path of glory leads only to the grave.

"The path of glory leads but to the grave."
The poet expresses his grief over the wasted and unexplored talents (55–56). He reflects upon his own death and feels that he will be remembered by "some hoary-headed swain."  

4.2.6. P.B. Shelley's Ode to the West Wind

P.B. Shelley (1792 – 1822) is a revolutionary poet. He is not spared of unhappiness in life. Tragedy in his personal life (his wife's suicide) and the inability of the world to appreciate his high ideals weighed him down. His poetry is the medium for his messages, and in Ode to the West Wind, he seeks the aid of the west wind to lift him up.

"Oh, lift me as a wave, a leaf, a cloud,
I fall upon the thorns of life! I bleed."  

Shelley’s gloom is echoed also in Ode to a Skylark. The poet is enthralled by the rhapsody of the bird. The poet feels that the bird’s ignorance of human misery must be the source of its melodious song. He laments the unhappiness and the dissatisfaction of human beings.

"We look before and after;
And pine for what is not;
Our sincerest laughter
With some pain is fraught;
Our sweetest songs are those that tell of saddest thought."  

Shelley’s sorrow is purely personal and his poems proclaim the depth of sorrow and gloom in his heart.
4.2.7. John Keats' Ode to a Nightingale

Like Shelley, John Keats (1795 – 1821) is also known as one of the Romantic poets. He is remembered as the poet of the senses. A note of sadness is conveyed in the Ode to a Nightingale. Listening to the melodious song of the bird, the poet wishes to escape from the fever, the weariness and sorrows of this world. Keats refers to his personal suffering, his ill health, his apprehension of death, and brother Tom’s death in lines 24 – 27. His painful cry reveals the sickness and miseries of human life.

"Here, where men sit and hear each other groan;
Where palsy shakes a few, sad, last grey hairs,
Where youth grows pale, and spectre – thin and dies;”14

His despair has no relief. Keats’ escape into the world of imagination (poetic fancy) gives him only temporary relief from his suffering but it offers no lasting comfort.

4.2.8. Lord Tennyson's In Memoriam

Lord Tennyson (1809 – 1892) is the greatest Victorian poet. He is the spokesman of the Victorian age, especially of its moral and spiritual ideals. In Memoriam was written in memory of his friend Arthur Henry Hallam. It is not only the record of his sorrow on the death of his friend but also an expression of Tennyson’s views on the problems of life and death. It reveals his anxiety, his implicit faith in eternal life and human limitations. It is a collection of poems of different types – stories, arguments, and scenes from nature. Hallam was believed to be exceptional by his friends. The friendship between Tennyson and Hallam deepened, when Hallam fell in love with Emily, Tennyson’s sister and proposed to marry her. His friendship with Hallam must have proved to be a great source of
strength to him; but Hallam's death in Vienna on September 15, 1833 caused great
sorrow. The poet seeks God's forgiveness for his grief over his friend's death.

"Forgive my grief for one removed,
Thy creature, whom I found so fair
I trust he lives in thee, and there
I find him worthier to be loved."^15

Yet Tennyson's mental anguish lingers on. His faith in immortality (31 –
36) consoles him with a possibility of future reunion. Sometimes he even wonders
if it is half sin to express his pain in words (Poem 5) and in his terrible pain and
loss he exclaims:

" 'T is better to have loved and lost
Than never to have loved at all."^16

As Richard Gill observes, "In Memoriam is one of those works of art in
which an author, by thinking over what is of the utmost personal concern to him or
her, touches upon what is of general concern to very many people. In short, from
what is intensely private there springs that which is publicly central. In Memoriam
expressed feelings, tried to formulate significances and asked questions that many
readers felt, spoke and asked or, from their own state of puzzled inarticulacy,
struggled towards."^17

Tennyson believes that his friend Hallam has gone to be with God (poem
one) and his implicit trust in God and immortality empowers him to overcome his
loss and pain.
4.2.9. Francis Thompson's Daisy, and The Hound of Heaven

Francis Thompson (1859 – 1907) a religious poet inspires faith and courage. He is well known for his mysticism. He believes that suffering is integral part of human existence. In Daisy he declares:

"Nothing begins, and nothing ends,
That is not paid with moan;
For we are born in other’s pain,
And perish in our own." 18

The poem clearly reveals the fact that life is a parade of suffering. Man is born in pain, and dies in pain.

The Hound of Heaven is a mysterious poem, which discloses God’s love for the souls of men Thompson points out that man seeks happiness apart from God. Man suffers and fails; suffering and failure lead him back to God and not away from Him. The poet finally concludes the poem stating that there is lasting happiness only in complete surrender to God. All his (poet's) suffering has been only a prelude to joy which God has bestowed upon him. (178 – 179). Thompson believes in the significance of pain and suffering in one’s life.

4.2.10. Wilfred Owen's Insensibility

Man is afraid of poverty, disease, loneliness, depression and death. Wilfred Owen's (1893 – 1918) poetry expresses a soldier's anger, anxiety and agony in battlefield. The war was Owen's only vital experience and this theme dominates his poems. In his poems pain does not cry out. As a war poet, he tries to explain to those at home, what the trenches were like and describes clearly how fear of death and suffering dumbed the sensitive and drove them mad. The poet’s agony is expressed in the poem Insensibility.
"Having seen all things red,
Their eyes are rid
of the hurt of the colour of blood for ever."\textsuperscript{19}

Man is insensitive to the suffering of his fellow beings; by selfishness and
greed he makes living a hellish experience for others.

\textbf{4.2.11. W.H. Auden's In Memory of W.B. Yeats}

W.H. Auden (1907 – 1973) wrote \textit{In Memory of W.B Yeats}, on the death of the poet. In this elegy the poet expresses his thoughts and observation about Yeats. Auden was profoundly fascinated by Yeats inspite of his mythical vision of life and poetry. In this elegy, the poet mentions his sudden illness, which preceded his death (12 – 17).

\begin{quote}
"The provinces of his body revolted,
The squares of his mind were empty,
Silence invaded the suburbs
The current of his feeling failed..." \textsuperscript{20}
\end{quote}

Auden has brought out a graphic description of the poet's death.
The chart presents a graphic picture of the description of suffering in the poets and the characters.

### 4.2.12. Chart

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S. No</th>
<th>Character/ Poet/ Poem</th>
<th>Cause of Suffering</th>
<th>Effect</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Chaucer's Canterbury Tales, Pardoner's Tale</td>
<td>Greed</td>
<td>Death</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Milton's On His Blindness Lycidas</td>
<td>Personal/loss of eyesight</td>
<td>Suffering and complaining</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Death of a friend</td>
<td>Suffering</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Coloridge's Dejection an Ode</td>
<td>Personal/failure of imagination</td>
<td>Despair</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The Ancient Mariner</td>
<td>Mariner shooting an Albatross</td>
<td>Loss of companionship, desolation and despair</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Thomas Gray's Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard</td>
<td>General / Death of the poor people</td>
<td>Grief</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>P.B. Shelley's Ode to the West Wind</td>
<td>Personal/Lack of appreciation</td>
<td>Grief and despair</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>John Keats' Ode to a Nightingale</td>
<td>Personal/death of his brother, his illness</td>
<td>Sorrow/transient relief from the song of the bird</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Wilfred Owen's Insensibility</td>
<td>Man's callous nature</td>
<td>Grief</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4.3 Drama

4.3.1. Introduction

The central theme of all literature is life, love and death. The poets share
their emotions and experiences in their writings. The revelation of both personal
and universal pain is not uncommon in literature. The dramatists like the poets,
explore tragic themes, experiences and explain the meaning of life. A brief attempt
is made here to analyse the concept of suffering and pain, in some of the
dramatists in English literature.

It can be observed that there are three influences in the development of
English drama, namely the native tradition, the Latin influence and the Italian
influence. The Mystery and the Miracle plays, the Morality plays and the Interlude
seemed to have developed in the native tradition. Terence and Plautus were the
Latin models for comedy and their influence can be seen in Nicholas Udall’s
Ralph Roister Doister. The Italian influence is found in tragedies like
Gascoigne’s Jocasta and Wheatstone’s Promos and Cassandra. Senaca was
taken as a model for tragedy. Sackville and Norton wrote Gorboduc, the first
English tragedy with an English theme in the Senacan manner – the revenge
tradition.

The university wits helped in the development of the drama. They took the
drama as their special province. John Lyly (1544 – 1606) chose the stories of the
classical deities as the material for his plays. He established prose as the right
medium of expression for comedy.

The Woman in the Moon is a satire on women. George Peele (1558 –
1597) wrote King David and Fair Bathsheba a modernized miracle play. The
Old Wives Tale is a satirical drama. Robert Greene (1558 – 1592) wrote
Alphonsus, Orlando Furioso, James IV, Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay. Tragedy developed in the hands of Thomas Kyd and Christopher Marlowe.

4.3.2. Tragedy

Tragedy is a story of human suffering. It is a play with an unhappy ending. The hero suffers and dies at the end of the play and his world crushes with him. He may struggle in his ordeals and be defeated, or accept his suffering with resignation, or bear pain with a hope of reward in the next world. There are scenes of pain and terrible suffering in a tragedy which may evoke tragic emotions in the reader.

4.3.3. Thomas Kyd – Spanish Tragedy

In The Spanish Tragedy, Thomas Kyd (1557 – 1595) introduced horrors, crimes, and the Senecan motive of revenge. The revenge of Hieronimo (the father) for the murder of his son Horatio provides the theme of the play. The father is portrayed as a distracted, suffering and self-communicating character in the play. Shakespeare’s Hamlet bears a faint resemblance to Hieronimo in his suffering for the demise of his son, but Hamlet mourns the death of his father. Death of a loved one causes intense pain and misery.

4.3.4. Christopher Marlowe's Dr. Faustus

Christopher Marlowe (1564 – 1593) is one of the greatest creative forces of English literature. He gave life and reality to his characters. Marlowe's tragic heroes (Faustus, Barabas) are not the playthings of destiny. Forces from within compel their tragic doom. Dr. Faustus is the tale of a scholar who has sold his soul to the devil in return for twenty-four years of knowledge and pleasure. He has preferred earthly pleasures to spiritual blessings. His damnation is inevitable with the signing of the pact. He has abjured scriptures and rejected God.
The proud scholar is painfully aware of the eternal damnation. He moans:

"Where art thou Faustus, wretch, what hast thou done?
Damned art thou Faustus, damned, despair and die."\(^{21}\)

Yet he could plead for God's mercy and give up despair (5.1.61). But it is too late for repentance. The horrors of hell are discovered. The reader is sadly aware of the last minutes of his life, when he will be dragged into perpetual damnation. In his mental torment he cries:

"The devil will come and Faustus must be damned,
I'll leap up to my God! who pulls me down?
See, see where Christ's blood streams in the firmament!
One drop would save my soul, half a drop – Ah my Christ –."\(^{22}\)

In the final hour of his earthly life his pain is intense, inescapable and fully deserved; he is the author of his own sorrow and death. Adam and Eve sought forbidden knowledge and were punished with suffering and death. Being a scholar, Faustus is not ignorant of the consequences of the thirst for forbidden knowledge. For fleeting earthly pleasures he forsakes God, ignores divine counsels, and indulges in sensual pleasures. Repentance comes too late and his eternal death is imminent. Dr. Faustus is truly a pathetic figure; but his suffering is penal. It has a sad but plain message for all those who forsake God.

4.3.5. William Shakespeare

William Shakespeare (1564 – 1619) wrote for the Elizabethan theatre, manipulating the contemporary stage with great resource and invention. He had a great understanding of human psychology, profound personal experience, a compassion for his fellow beings and a richness and command of language. As
Ifor Evans remarks, “with his skill in theatrical invention, he combined a genius for applying poetic language to drama.”

In his tragedies, Shakespeare handled the theme of suffering in the lives of persons in great honour and position. The great tragedies share some common features. Each play depicts a nobleman, in a perplexing situation. He suffers for his tragic flaw; and the entire nation suffers with him for his action. A brief analysis is made to depict the suffering of the tragic heroes in Shakespeare’s four great tragedies.

4.3.5.1. Hamlet

Hamlet is the most popular play in the English language. It is the story of a sensitive man who revolts against the grossness of human existence. Hamlet’s father is murdered by his brother Claudius who seizes the throne and marries Gertrude, the wife of his dead brother, Hamlet’s mother. The ghost of the dead king appears and discloses the crimes of his brother to Hamlet and commands him to revenge his murder. Hamlet’s suffering and misery increase as he delays his act of revenge. He realises that it is both a political and moral issue.

“He hath kill’d my king, and stained my mother,
Popp’d in between the election and my hopes,
Thrown out his angle for my proper life,
And with such cozenage, – is’t not perfect conscience
To quit him with this arm?”

His procrastination costs the lives of his mother, Ophelia, Polonius, Laertes and finally himself. His melancholy is the cause of his inaction, which springs from the moral shock of his mother’s behaviour.
Hamlet is a prince, a scholar and a man of moral principles. His father's death and his mother's over-hasty marriage horrifies him. He feels that his flesh is sullied. Claudius the smiling damned villain has stained his mother, which causes him great sorrow. Ophelia fails to understand his melancholy. He suffers loneliness and rejection. He looks up to Ophelia in his mental anguish, who offers him no solution. His friends Rosencratz and Guildenstern turn spies. Denmark seems to be a prison for Hamlet. His grief, anger and disgust drive him to contemplate suicide (3.1.57 – 61). He wonders if it is noble to suffer in the mind or fight against a 'sea of troubles'.

Hamlet is a noble hero who undergoes immense mental anguish. He fulfils his father's command and convinces his mother of her guilt. By his heroic death, he has triumphed over his enemy. The other characters also have their share of sorrow and pain. Ophelia is an object of pity. She is willing to sacrifice her love for Hamlet and she prefers to obey her father. Her brother's absence and father's death prove to be disastrous for her. Her grief is too much to endure and she becomes insane and her tragic death is very pathetic. Polonius does not understand Hamlet's love for Ophelia. He separates Ophelia and Hamlet and is responsible for their ruin. Polonius serves as a spy for Claudius – the cruel and wicked king. Polonius suffers a cruel death for his service to a criminal King. Laertes like his father is instrumental for the alienation of Ophelia and Hamlet. He becomes an accomplice of Claudius to destroy Hamlet, and is killed in the attempt.

Claudius is the cunning smiling villain of Denmark. He is the source of pain and sorrow to Hamlet. He is a murderer and suffers for it with a guilty conscience. He tries to poison Hamlet but he is justly done to death by noble Hamlet. Gertude deserves contempt and scorn. She suffers for her incontinence and over-hasty marriage. Hamlet's father's ghost warns Hamlet not to punish her but the heavens have justly given her deserts. Rosencratz and Guilderstern die for
their treachery. Like other tragedies, Hamlet unfolds a story of great suffering and grief.

4.3.5.2 Othello

The tragedies are stories of intense human suffering. The hero suffers in his mind, body and soul. In Othello, Shakespeare exhibits the agony of a devoted husband, who kills his wife out of jealousy. Othello is a domestic tragedy which deals with the theme of sexual jealousy. An ensign (Iago) expects promotion to lieutenancy. He is exasperated when his general Othello appoints Cassio in his place. Iago manages to secure Cassio's dismissal. By his villainy and clever schemes, (handkerchief incident) he poisons the mind of Othello and convinces him of the adultery of Desdemona with Cassio. As a result, Othello strangles his wife to death; later he learns the truth about Desdemona’s chastity and innocence from Emilia (Iago’s wife) and stabs himself and dies “upon a kiss.”

Othello is a tragic figure; he is a noble moor, a born soldier, and a man of adventure. He is brave and generous. In the first two acts, he is portrayed as a great general, the trusted servant of the state. He is also a devoted lover and husband (1.3.167 – 168). His greatest weakness is his credulous nature. His credulity and simplicity make him an easy victim of Iago’s malignity. Iago dupes him because he knows about Othello’s simplicity.

“The moor a free and open nature too,

.................................................

And will as tenderly be led by the nose...

As asses are.”

Othello suffers great pain when he is torn between suspicion and love (3.3.260 – 67). Iago has succeeded to poison Othello’s mind that he is full of
dangerous and bloody thoughts. Othello loves Desdemona so very passionately and admits that when he ceases to love her, chaos reigns supreme in his heart. Desdemona, 'the sweet creature' and fair and innocent lady has played the strumpet. Desdemona, the object of his love is no more chaste. And is his mental torture, he says, “farewell to tranquil mind” (3.3.349). Othello’s occupation is even gone. He takes a sacred vow to execute judgement. He weeps and his sorrow is heavenly; for she must die, otherwise Desdemona will betray other men. He strangles her to death and later discovers the truth. He considers himself as a barbarian who has thrown a pearl away which was richer than all his tribe. He sadly acknowledges that he is perplexed to the extreme and declares:

“That loved not wisely, but too well;
Of one not easily jealous, but, being, wrought,
Perplexed to the extreme.”

He realises that there is no meaning in life without love – Desdemona. His pain culminates in death – and he dies kissing Desdemona. There is tragic sublimity in his death.

Desdemona is a model of innocent suffering. She is chaste and innocent; she is of a “blessed disposition”. She is a simple woman who adored Othello. Her father praises her for her quiet spirit (1.2.94 – 96), but she dared to disobey him and marries Othello. She never suspects Othello of jealousy. Her death is tragic; she dies for her love.

Emilia is devoted to Desdemona. She is not divine like Desdemona but she pleads eloquently for her mistress. She reveals her love for her (5.2.199). She is ignorant of her husband’s villainy and she also becomes the victim of his cruelty. It is a sad and terrible mistake that Othello believed in the honesty of Iago, the heartless villain, who is the harbinger of pain and death for Othello and Desdemona.


4.3.5.3  

**King Lear** is the most pessimistic tragedy of Shakespeare. King Lear suffers for his wrong judgment and love of flattery. The king has three daughters namely Goneril, Regan and Cordelia. King Lear plans to divide his kingdom between his daughters in proportion to their expression of love. The elder daughters flatter him. Though Cordelia loves her father, she says nothing. King Lear is maddened by her stubborn silence and divides the kingdom equally between Goneril and Regan. Goneril and Regan fail to exhibit true affection and do not take care of their aged father. King Lear is not allowed to enjoy privileges of royalty. The powerless king is both enraged and shocked by the ingratitude of the daughters. King Lear is driven out into the storm where he suffers immensely both in body and in mind. Cordelia, who has married the king of France, plans to restore the kingdom to her father and she arrives at Dover with the French army. King Lear is filled with remorse for his harsh treatment of his youngest daughter. The king is confused but happy to be reunited with his dear child. Her tender love and concern for him restores him to sanity; but unfortunately the French army is defeated and Cordelia is hanged.

In the final act king Lear comes bearing the body of Cordelia and later he dies of a broken heart.

**King Lear** is the most painful of the tragedies of Shakespeare sufferings make King Lear insane. Shakespeare explores the tragic experiences of King Lear and depicts how suffering has completely changed his behaviour. Though he desires to "shake all cares and business" (1.1.28) from his age, he still loves authority and power. Goneril and Regan treat King Lear with scant of grace and dignity. His humiliation is complete when Regan advises him to return to Goneril.
King Lear is maddened by the cruelty of his callous daughters. Decrepit and old he pleads to the heavens for patience.

“You think I’ll weep;
No, I’ll not weep:
I have full cause of weeping; but this heart
Shall break into a hundred thousand flaws
Or ere I’ll weep. O fool, I shall go mad.” 28

In the storm scene, he desires to be “the pattern of all patience.” 29 The shock of the storm deranges his mind, but even in his despair distress and disillusionment, he begins to sympathize with others. He discovers himself and others in his pain and cries out:

“I am a man
More sinn’d against than sinning.” 30

Lear’s mounting grief leads him to insanity but in his path of pain, there are kind people like Cordelia, Kent and the fool to suffer with him for his cause. The play abounds with pain but there are different grades of suffering. King Lear’s grief is modified by the tenderness of Cordelia and the happiness of the reunion is short-lived. Cordelia is hanged and king Lear’s suffering becomes unparalleled. His sorrow is reflected in his pathetic cry:

“I might have saved her; now she’s gone for ever!
Cordelia, Cordelia! stay a little.” 31

The feeling of pain and grief is intensified by the suffering of various characters in the play. Cordelia is honest, clear-sighted and full of tenderness. Her reticence causes her suffering, but her attachment to her father is too strong to be expressed in words. Cordelia sacrifices her life for her father. She is an object of pity and admiration. She is an innocent sufferer and her noble sacrifice will be even commended by gods (5.3.20 – 21).
Kent is a devoted servant of King Lear (1.1.129 – 132). He is noble and brave. He displays wisdom and foresight. He suffers for his master and after his master’s death he has no other desire but to follow King Lear (5.3.20 – 21).

The fool is devoted to the king and deeply attached to Cordelia. The fool suffers with his master. He satirises the king for giving away his kingdom, and tries to outjest his master’s injuries. He does not think of his suffering. His master’s grief fills him with anguish. He suffers for those whom he loves.

Gloucester suffers for his lack of judgement. He fails to understand Edgar’s character and he becomes the victim of Edmond’s treachery. He loses his eyesight and in his helpless plight, Edgar comes to his rescue, saves him from suicide and cares for him. His physical sufferings cleanse him and reveal to him the worthlessness of his past life. He learns submission to the will of God and dies.

Edgar is noble and brave. Edgar suffers due to the villainy of his brother Edmond. In the storm scene, his heart goes out to the mad king, for his untold misery; but he can not remedy them. He endeavours to relieve his father of his mental and physical anguish. He forgets his pain while serving others in grief. He is a noble sufferer. He does not deserve suffering. The spectacle of pain in King Lear is no pleasant experience. Shakespeare depicts various types of suffering in King Lear.

4.3.5.4 Macbeth

Macbeth is a dark and terrible play. Macbeth and Lady Macbeth suffer for their cruel murder of King Duncan. Macbeth and his wife believe in the prophecy of the witches, kill Duncan the king of Scotland and seize the throne. Macbeth decides to kill Banquo, Macbeth’s friend who knows about their crime. Banquo’s ghost appears to Macbeth at the feast of his coronation. Macbeth plans to kill
Macduff; but being warned earlier, he escapes to England; his wife and children are murdered by Macbeth's men. Macbeth and Lady Macbeth learn that their guilt is made public. Macbeth visits the witches and is falsely assured that he never will be harmed by Macduff, "one of woman born." Macbeth prepares to defend the castle of Dunsinane against the English who have joined Macduff and other Scottish leaders in their opposition against the tyranny of Macbeth.

Lady Macbeth breaks down under the pressure of guilt and anxiety. She relives the night when Duncan was murdered in their house. She gives way to remorse and melancholy and she puts an end to her misery by committing suicide. Macbeth decides to fight to the end, and is killed by Macduff. Malcolm Duncan's son becomes the king of Scotland.

*Macbeth* is a tale of suffering. Macbeth is a courageous soldier. He suffers most before the murder of Duncan. He has a tragic flaw namely ambition.

"... but only
vaulting ambition, which overleaps it self
And falls on the other."^{33}

His suffering is caused by his fear of murdering his kinsman and king. He is "too full of the milk of human kindness (1.5.15) but his wife taunts him with his weakness and vacillation. After the deed is done, his punishment begins. He suffers in his mind. Remorse fills his mind and guilt makes him a coward. He is tortured in the mind; He is hallucinated but believes that it is the supernatural agencies, which discover 'secret'st man of blood'. Macbeth does not brood on his deed, and saves himself from insanity. He becomes a hardened criminal. The noble warrior becomes a depraved murderer and justly suffers for it.
Lady Macbeth goads her husband to commit the terrible act. In her desire to become "partner of greatness", (1.5.10) she plays the role of a mentor. She is very cruel and advises her husband to hoodwink the world.

"... look like the innocent flower
But be the serpent under't." (1.5.63 - 64).

She prays to the spirits to unsex her and fill her with dire cruelty (1.5.38). She would have killed Duncan herself if he had not resembled her father (2.1.78). She is a partner in his crime. Her undaunted courage vanishes. She is filled with remorse and deep melancholy. Her cry is heart rending:

"All the perfumes of Arabia will,
not sweeten this little hand oh! oh! oh! "34

Lady Macbeth also faces damnation and suffering for her evil deed. While Macbeth has hallucinations in his waking hours, she has agony in her sleeping hours. Her agony is greater than she could bear. Her remorse is devastating. She is haunted by her guilt; and her unconscious mind is tainted with grief. She is gravely troubled in conscience and she puts an end to her anguish by committing suicide. Macbeth learns about her death, and he realises the futility of his crime; life seems to be meaningless (5.5.26 - 28). Lady Macbeth and Macbeth suffer for their wicked deeds. The witches and the evil spirits arouse feelings of fear and awe. The horror of the murder of Duncan fills the audience with terror. In Macbeth, Shakespeare probes into the unknown recesses of the mind. The hallucination of Macbeth and Lady Macbeth's sleep walking scenes reveal Shakespeare's great psychological insight.

King Lear, Hamlet and Othello are basically virtuous, they suffer and die, and there is tragic grandeur of sublimity in their deaths; but the end of Macbeth and Lady Macbeth do not excite any pity in the reader.
John Webster (1580 – 1635) is well known for his two great tragedies – *The White Devil* and *The Duchess of Malfi*. Both plays deal with the revenge theme. They focus on murder, and murder in revenge for murder with violent details.

The Duchess of Malfi suffers for her choice of a husband. The Duchess exhibits her courage in her dangerous venture to choose a husband beneath her status – Antonio her steward. Her two revengeful brothers Ferdinand and the Cardinal carry out their villainy to the farthest verge of human depravity. They are blinded by their fury, which poisons the springs of pity in them. They show an unnatural rage, which is beyond all reason and humanity. Ferdinand threatens to kill the Duchess and her husband. The Duchess apprehends danger and secretly manages to send Antonio to Ancona, but unwittingly she betrays the secret to the villain Bosolo who conveys the information to her brothers. She goes to the shrine of Loretto where she meets Antonio for the last time, Soon after this meeting she is arrested and imprisoned; she is subjected to various tortures. In her imprisonment, she gives majesty to adversity and she seems perfect in her tears (4.1.5 – 9).

According to the Duchess, the world is a tiresome theatre and she has to play a part against her will (4.1.82 – 83), and she is accustomed to her sad lot, like a galley slave with his oar (4.2.27 – 28). Cariola her maid is her sole comfort in her melancholy. She is tormented by various means – a dead man’s hand is offered to her in the dark, she is shown the wax figures of Antonio and her children. Mad men sing and dance before her, which is followed by Bosolo's arrival with the executioner, coffin and bell. Finally she is strangled to death.
The Duchess of Malfi is innocent, gentle, graceful and dignified. She is often compared with Desdemona for her purity, innocence, simplicity and tragic death. Adversity brings out her tenderness and heroic fortitude. Her guilt is not heinous, but she is subjected to brutal torture. The masque of madmen (4.2) is introduced to effect a grotesque and ghastly horror upon the tormented Duchess. Webster makes use of the horrible and physical terror in the fourth act to react upon the mind and spirit of the tortured woman. There is terrible gloom in the play. The Duchess desires to safeguard the lives of her husband and son and her anguish is expressed in her parting speech.

"Farewell, boy,
Thou art happy that thou hast not understanding
To know thy misery, for all our wit
And reading brings us to a truer sense
of sorrow – In the eternal church, sir,
I do hope we shall not part thus." 35

After their parting, the Duchess is so distraught with sorrow and despair that she loses her mind and talks foolishly of the vanity of dogfish and the salmon (3.5.123 – 137).

In the presence of death, she exhibits her strength of spirit. She is not afraid of death, for she hopes to meet excellent company in the next world (4.2.206 – 207). In the very moment of her terrible death, she stays the hands of her cruel 'executioners and bows her knees to attain the mercy of God (4.2.228). Her suffering is unmerited; Her 'sacred innocence', mental agony and horrible death evoke pity and terror.
In the play *Samson Agonistes*, Milton depicts the suffering of Samson, the Hebrew champion. He is blinded and made captive by the Philistine lords, the oppressors of the Jewish people. The chorus (comprising of his friends, neighbours and tribesmen) comment on his miserable appearance, and contrast it with his former glory, strength and heroic deeds. Samson is ashamed of his folly and accepts full responsibility for his disgrace, shame and suffering. He complains of his loss of eyesight, which aggravates his other sufferings (68 – 69). His aged father Manoa tries to console him and proposes to secure his liberty. In the mean time, the Philistines plan to celebrate the capture of Samson and proclaim a day of thanksgiving to their god for his capture. The Philistine lords demand Samson to appear before them to display his strength in their presence.

Samson daringly refuses to go with them for his religion forbids him to take part in any heathen rituals (1320). He does not want to disgrace himself further by displaying his strength to amuse his enemies. The Philistine lords return with new threats. Samson changes his mind and decides to go with them as if he gets a sudden inspiration from God (1383 – 84). Manoa comes back with the hope of procuring his son’s freedom but a Hebrew messenger comes and informs them about the triumphant death of Samson (1658). Samson is the sole author of his grief. He has foolishly entrusted his sacred secret of his strength to Delilah. The Philistines have blinded him and abused him. Samson feels that he is a ‘moving grave’ (103). Once he was the dread of his enemies; but he has become an object of scorn and mockery. Apart from his physical pain, Samson also undergoes mental torment. He contrasts his present miserable condition with the prophecies at his birth. Like Job, he is tempted to question God’s justice in his life but constrains himself (61 – 62) and accepts the divine will. Samson’s sorrow, shame
and the anguish of his soul lend him sleepless nights and tormenting thoughts. He cries,

“My griefs not only pain me
As a ling’ring disease,
But finding no redress, ferment and rage.”

Samson has lost his hopes and he has no hopes or remedies for his sufferings. In the depth of his despair like Job, he only longs for a speedy death to get rid of his misery (650).

The mighty Samson, like Job the righteous man, has undergone physical, emotional and mental torture. In his heroic death he vanquishes his cruel enemies and brings honour and fame to his father’s house (1710 – 1713, 1719). There is triumph in his tragic death and moral victory in his self-destruction. He deserves admiration and respect for his noble death.

4.3.8 George Bernard Shaw – Joan of Arc

The Afflictions of Joan of Arc

In St. Joan G.B. Shaw (1856 – 1950) exhibits the ordeals and the sufferings of Joan of Arc. St. Joan is more than a historical play which deals with the story of the heroine of faith. St. Joan helped to free the land of France from the English armies in the fifteenth century and she believed that God spoke to her. She stated that she would only obey the voice of God. She refused to obey the princes for they expected her to do contrary to what she believed (voice of God). She was burned as a heretic in 1431. The authorities in the church were afraid that she would break the unity of the church and destroy their power in Europe. Her
secular foes were of the notion that she would destroy their power by inspiring the people to unite together.

In the play St. Joan, the Archbishop condemns her of impiety, disobedience and conceit. She is bewildered and confused to learn that she will be dragged through the streets and will be burned as a witch (132). The Archbishop even frightens her by reminding her that no one will come to her rescue (133). She does not exhibit her agony of the mind but boldly expresses her implicit faith in God.

"It is better to be alone with God,
His friendship will not fail me,
Nor His counsel, nor His love.
In His strength I will dare, and dare and dare until I die." 37

Joan is endowed with moral courage, devotion, originality and immense faith in God. In the inquisition scene, Joan of Arc is asked to sign in the form of recantation. She is accused of sedition, idolatry, disobedience and heresy. Inspite of the rebellion in her soul (161) she signs it and is safe from ex-communication. Later she realizes that she has to repent for her errors in solitary contemplation in perpetual imprisonment. She cannot bear to imagine a life, "shut from the light of the sky and the sight of the fields and flowers" (162). She is brave enough to prefer the physical torture of the flames, and tears the paper into fragments. She is condemned as an obstinate and incorrigible woman (163). She had to tread the path of pain for her individual judgement and implicit trust in God. Joan of Arc is an object of sympathy and admiration. She is a perfect example of an innocent sufferer.
T.S. Eliot (1888 – 1965) wrote on the murder of Becket in his famous play *Murder in the Cathedral*. Becket was Archbishop of Canterbury between 1162 and 1170. There was a long drawn out conflict between the king (Henny II) and the church on certain constitutional matters. Reginald Fitz Waters William De Traci, Hugh de Morville and Richard Britto considered Becket to be a traitor and murdered him on twenty ninth of December, 1170 in his own Cathedral church.

In part one, the chorus is conscious of a nameless fear and they sense disturbance of the season with the return of the Archbishop (20). The first priest also echoes his fears in his speeches (110). The chorus and the priests like the Archbishop have their share of grief. Becket prepares his flock for suffering.

“They know and do not know what it is to act or suffer
They know and do not know that action is suffering
And suffering is action.”

Eliot expresses his views on suffering in *Murder in the Cathedral*. Every human being has to suffer in the final action. Action or inaction has the same significance. We do not act of our will, nor do we suffer according to our will. We are made to act and suffer by God; hence an individual must surrender himself to God and not exercise his own efforts. Becket has understood this truth and that is why he is relieved of the pain of his approaching death – his martyrdom (67 – 70).

Thomas Becket refuses the temptation to power offered by the second and third tempter and the fourth tempter offers him the choice of greater damnation – martyrdom. Becket has to find a way out of this temptation. He is also tempted to yield to the sin of despair (599). The tempters assert that every thing is vain and illusive. At this juncture Thomas must have gone through spiritual agony and
mental anguish; but he overcomes the temptation with the illumination that he can neither act nor suffer by his own action. If he chooses his own will, he will be damned for the sin of pride. If he surrenders his will to the divine will, he can attain peace, for in His will there is peace. He accepts his tragic death with patience and moral courage. The godly man suffers persecution and prepares his audience for his noble sacrifice.

As Elliot points out, in the eternal design of God, whether people like it or not, they have to suffer in action or by inaction. Literature abounds with tragic experiences of individuals and communities. The concluding part of the chapter focuses on a few characters of fiction.
The depiction of suffering and pain in the dramatic characters is presented in a Tabular form:

4.3.10 Table

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S. No</th>
<th>Dramatist/ Name of the play/ Character</th>
<th>Cause of suffering</th>
<th>Effect</th>
<th>Outcome/Redemption</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Thomas Kyd, Spanish tragedy Hieronimo</td>
<td>Murder of son Horatio</td>
<td>Sorrow</td>
<td>-------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Marlowe, Dr. Faustus</td>
<td>Sale of his soul to the devil</td>
<td>Eternal damnation</td>
<td>Revenge of the murderer and death of Hamlet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3a</td>
<td>Shakespeare, Hamlet</td>
<td>Murder of his father, mother's overhasty marriage</td>
<td>Anger and melancholy</td>
<td>Murder of Desdemona, and death of Othello</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b</td>
<td>Othello</td>
<td>Suspicions about Desdemona, his wife's fidelity</td>
<td>Mental agony</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c</td>
<td>King Lear</td>
<td>Lack of judgement, love of flattery</td>
<td>Separation from Cordelia</td>
<td>Death of Cordelia, death of King Lear</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d</td>
<td>Macbeth and Lady Macbeth</td>
<td>'Over leaping ambition', partnership in crime</td>
<td>Murder of King Duncan</td>
<td>Loss of life, Death of Macbeth, Lady Macbeth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Webster Duchess of Malfi</td>
<td>Her choice of marriage incurs the displeasure of her brothers</td>
<td>Wrath of the wicked brothers</td>
<td>Murder of the Duchess, her husband and children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>G.B. Shaw, St. Joan</td>
<td>Opposing the local and church officials</td>
<td>Incurring the displeasure – condemnation of the authorities</td>
<td>Burnt to death at the stake</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>T.S. Eliot, Murder in the Cathedral, Thomas Becket</td>
<td>Becket's dissenion with King Henry II</td>
<td>Anger of the knights</td>
<td>Murder of Becket</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4.4 *Novel*

As Ifor Evans observes, "... the novel can be described as a narrative in prose, based on a story in which the author may portray character, and the life of an age and analyse sentiments and passions and the reaction of men and women to their environment..." \(^{39}\)

The novel is a great art, and the novelists like the poets and dramatists deal with life, love and death. The novel has also served as a vehicle for social reform, instruction and for religious exhortation. For instance, Dickens is remembered as a social reformer and Graham Greene is well known for his catholic novels. Dickens and Hardy differ in their depiction of pain and suffering in their novels. Hardy presents tragic characters with more intensity of pain. Dickens focuses more on the social evils of his day. An analysis of the sufferings of Oliver Twist is presented in the ensuing pages.

4.4.1 *Charles Dickens – Oliver Twist*

Charles Dickens (1812 – 1870) is one of the greatest novelists of the Victorian age. He hated the social system in his country. In his novels, he attacked the corruption of his age and aimed at reforming the society. He wanted to convey a message through fiction. He excelled as a great storyteller of the commonplace in the common situations. He portrayed the hardships and the tragedies of every day life.

Dickens wrote with a purpose. In *Nicholas Nickelby* he sought to correct the flaws in the educational system. In *Oliver Twist*, he aimed at improving the
conditions of the workhouses. The history of the orphans has always been one of great sorrow. Oliver had his share of poverty, hunger, drudgery and moral debasement. He is born in a workhouse in extreme poverty. As an infant, he is a victim of neglect and malnutrition. From the workhouse, he passes on to the establishment of an undertaker where he is starved and ill-treated. Oliver suffered the tortures of slow starvation for three months (11). He asks for more gruel (12), for which crime, he is kept as a prisoner, "Oliver remained a close prisoner in the dark." 40

Out of sheer desperation, he runs away from the workhouse to London, where he faces more degradation, misery and shame in the company of criminals (Fagin and his gang) but by a pleasant accident, he is redeemed by kind people who make him happy.

Oliver is subjected to various sufferings. In the workhouse he is insulted for his illegitimate birth; and is starved and abused. Fagin and his criminal gang expose him to more privations. His tragic experiences have not hardened him. He preserves his innocence even in the low company of the Jew. The suffering of Oliver Twist forms the texture of the novel. In Oliver Twist, Dickens attacks the heartless administration of workhouses and describes the sufferings of the paupers.

4.4.2 George Elliot - Silas Marner

While Dickens employed fiction as a platform for his social approach, George Eliot (1819 – 1880) desires to "enlarge the possibilities of the novel as a form of expression." 41 She is considered to be one of the most intellectual novelists of her time. In Silas Marner, she throws light on the remedial influence of 'natural human relations'.
In Silas Marner, the first plot deals with the life of the weaver by name Silas Marner. His faith in God and man is shattered by the treacherous deed of his unfaithful friend. Love of gold becomes his first priority in life; but Duncan Cass robs him of his money, which ruins the world of Silas again. Then Eppie, a small child comes into his life and she seems to represent his lost treasure. He loves the child and seems to enjoy the happiness of fatherly love and the friendship of his neighbours. In the second plot, George Eliot deals with the love of Godfrey Cass and Nancy. Godfrey fails to acknowledge his first marriage and does not reveal the truth that Eppie is his own child. Godfrey is frustrated to know that Eppie has no desire to go with him (Ch. 19) for she has already accepted Silas as her father.

Silas Marner is by nature simple, credulous and affectionate. He is duped by William Dane, which causes him pain, and his heart is filled with despair (662). He is helpless and miserable when he discovers the loss of his gold. “Again he put his trembling hands to his pocket, and gave a wild ringing scream, the cry of desolation.” His sufferings and loneliness have not changed his nature. He begins to love Eppie as himself (789) and she returns his love and makes him happy. Godfrey’s degrading (first) marriage brings bitterness and misery. He is disillusioned when Eppie rejects him and prefers to stay with Silas. Duncan suffers for his misdeed. He robs Silas' money and this leads to his death in the stone pit. His selfish pre-occupation ends with his death. Silas Marner faces treachery and deceit in his life but he is rewarded with love and affection for his kindness to Eppie. While Silas Marner describes the theme of love (love thy neighbour). Hardy exhibits his characters as victims of a cruel fate.
4.4.3 Thomas Hardy – Mayor of Caster Bridge and Far from the Madding Crowd

Thomas Hardy (1840 – 1920) sees life as cruel and purposeless. His chief characters are helpless victims of destiny. In Mayor of Caster Bridge, Henchard suffers for his tragic flaws – his fiery temperament and selfish nature. It is the story of a man who sells his wife in a drunken mood to a sailor at a country Fair. The next morning he is filled with remorse and takes a solemn vow and gives up drinking. With his hard work, and disciplined life, he gradually becomes a prosperous corn merchant and the mayor of caster bridge. After eighteen years, his wife returns with her daughter (she believes that her sailor husband is no more). Henchard marries her and his business grows under the management of Farfare. But they become rivals and while Farfare becomes prosperous. Henchard loses his business. He learns from his wife that Elizabeth Jane is the child of the sailor. His wife dies; Elizabeth Jane marries Farfare, and Henchard realizes that he has lost every thing. He is pushed into isolation, misery and death.

Henchard suffers for his callous act of selling his wife. He shows disregard for the conventional, social and moral order of the society. He welcomes Farfare into his house who later ruins his business. His wife's return disturbs his secure life of a mayor. He loves Elizabeth Jane but when he discovers the truth that she is the daughter of Newson he hates her and treats her harshly. Later he shows respect for her womanhood and years worthy of a better man (19, 140). He utters a lie to Newson, to keep Elizabeth Jane with him. The misery of the self-alienated man is complete when Elizabeth Jane (the object of his love and affection) is removed from him by her marriage to Farfare. He is a lonely man and a tragic gloom settles upon the audience. The sense of gloom is heightened by the death of the goldfinch, which is meant to be a wedding gift. It also symbolizes his alienation from Elizabeth. Elizabeth Jane also has to face tragic situations in her life. She is also
lonely like Henchard. She is modest and has no delusions about her comeliness and lack of glamour. Gossip has no appeal to her (245). She earns the love of Henchard by her sympathy and kindness. She is exposed to tragedy in her early age. She is stoical and realizes that life is basically painful and that happiness is only “the occasional episode in a general drama of pain” (411).

In *Far from the Madding Crowd* Hardy portrays the heroine Bathsheba Everdene who suffers for her impulsive action. Bathsheba is loved by Gabriel Oak, a sheep farmer. In an accident, his flock is killed, and he seeks employment in Bathsheba’s farm. Boldwood, a rich farmer in the neighbourhood also falls in love with Bathsheba, but Bathsheba falls in love with Troy, a soldier and marries him. Troy has earlier abandoned Fanny Robin the mother of his child. Troy is filled with remorse when he discovers about Fanny’s death. He deserts Bathsheba after a few months of marriage. Troy is reported to have drowned; and believing that Troy has died, Bathsheba accepts the marriage proposal of Boldwood. Troy reappears and Boldwood kills him and is arrested. Bathsheba marries faithful Gabriel who puts an end to her suffering.

Bathsheba suffers for her unwise love for Troy. Oak bears the insults of Bathsheba and silently suffers. Boldwood’s extreme passion for Bathsheba turns him a murderer. Fanny Robin is an object of pity for she is a victim of Troy’s treachery.

4.4.3 Graham Greene – *Heart of the Matter*

Hardy’s tragic characters are describes as helpless victims of fate. There is no divine purpose in their affliction. They die with out any hope of redemption but Graham Greene’s (1904 – 1991) heroes are saved by the grace of God. Both as a
moralist and a realist, Greene excels. His heart goes out to the underdog, the condemned members of society. He tries to vindicate their stand in life and eternity.

Greene portrays them as candidates of divine mercy. Greene’s novels deal not only with man in relation to society but basically with man’s relationship to God. He has introduced religious concepts and modern psychology to explore the root cause of man’s distress. Fear, pity, man’s search for salvation and of God’s love for man are the recurring themes of Greene’s novels. His novels also deal with the nature of sin or guilt and the ultimate sanctification and redemption by a divine intervention.

Brighton Rock deals with the theme of betrayed innocence. In Power and the Glory, the whisky priest betrays his pious office, but is ultimately redeemed by his final act of sacrifice. In the Heart of the Matter, Greene deals with guilt, suffering and suicide. Suicide according to the church is an unforgivable sin; but Greene has created such an extreme situation to show that for the Hound of Heaven each person is of special value and he would over rule any mistake to redeem the sinner. Greene also denounces conventional piety and aims at bringing into focus the relationship between God and the individual.

The Heart of the Matter is the story of Major Henry Scobie, an upright police officer. He is stationed in a British colony of West Africa, during the Second World War. He is overlooked for promotion and his wife Louis is unhappy and miserable. To get a passage for his wife to South Africa, Scobie borrows money from Yusef, a Syrian trader and smuggler, who later blackmails him and makes him an accomplice in smuggling diamonds. In his wife’s absence out of compassion Scobie develops an attachment for a nineteen-year-old widow. In the mean time, Louis having learnt of his affair makes a hasty return to West Africa.
Due to her importunity, Scobie partakes a sacrilegious communion. To ward off suspicion and to keep away the painful truth of his adultery from his wife, he has hurt God twice by partaking communion with out absolution. He is filled with despair and plans to commit suicide, deeply aware of the eternal damnation for such a transgression.

Major Scobie, though an ordinary human being rises to tragic proportions with his abundance of a virtue (pity). Scobie’s tragic flaw is his overwhelming sense of pity for others, which has its origin in his love for God. It was pity that eventually brought about his ruin. He is drawn to Helen Rolt out of compassion than sexual love (168). Scobie can not witness pain and his immediate desire is to alleviate pain. He is over burdened with remorse, guilt and despair for his infidelity to man and God. Unwilling to inflict pain on Helen and Louis, he prays; "O God, give me death before I give them unhappiness" (202). Scobie is a devout man – obviously a man of prayer. He prays, and repents, but his spiritual agony is aggravated by the knowledge of his weakness; He is unable to give up his affair. Desperate as he was, he prays over and over again, “Lord have mercy, Christ have mercy”.  

Scobie does not believe in shifting his burden to God, he makes up his mind to spare God also of unhappiness. Through his mental agony he attains self-knowledge and the truth that his peace is only in God. For the sake of a suffering child, he has sacrificed his peace, and by his death, and union with God he would once again be at peace. He does not want to insult God at the altar (281) and has final words are, “Dear God I love…” (281). Scobie’s suffering ends with his union with God.

Suffering is both personal and universal. Writers differ in their depiction of pain and affliction. The study of tragic experiences and of people endows us with a better understanding of the significance of pain in life.
4.4.4 Suffering in Art and Suffering in the Life of Job

People suffer for their personal acts of sin; or they suffer for their innocence. Samson Agonistes suffers for his disobedience to the divine ordinance. Shakespeare’s tragic heroes are great sufferers for their tragic flaws. Hardy the pessimist portrays his characters as helpless victims of a cruel Destiny. Becket explains the truth that all of us have to suffer in an eternal action (211). Suffering is action and action is suffering. In fact there is a divine purpose in permitting pain in every one’s life. Job was a perfect and upright man. God permitted suffering in his life (1:12). He was the target of the enemy of God and man. Satan destroyed his health and wealth and even killed all his children; but he spared his wife to tempt him to forsake God. Job in his fiery trials of life, did not forsake God but clung to him in faith (13:15). God blessed Job after his test of faith.

In a humorous vein, Coleridge makes fun of the devil in his poem called Job’s Luck. The sly devil removed every thing from Job except his wife; but she becomes a source of blessing in the design of God (42:13).

“Sly Beelzebub took all occasions.
To try Job’s constancy and patience;
He took his honours, took his health.
He took his children, took his wealth
His camels, horses, asses, cows –
And the sly Devil did not take his spouse.
But Heaven that brings out good from evil,
And loves to disappoint the Devil,
Had predetermined to restore
Two fold all Job had before,
His children, camels, horses, cows, –
Short sighted Devil, not to take his spouse!” 44
The modern man can not accept or realize that man's suffering is also caused by the devil (2:7) but God utilizes them for sanctification and for double blessings.

The portrayal of suffering and pain in the characters of fiction is presented in the chart.

### 4.4.6 Chart

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S.No</th>
<th>NOVEL</th>
<th>Causes of Suffering</th>
<th>Effect</th>
<th>Outcome</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Dickens/ Oliver Twist</td>
<td>Poverty, illegitimate birth</td>
<td>Suffering in the workhouse</td>
<td>Happiness restored with the discovery of the parentage and adoption by Mr. Brownlow</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>George Eliot/ Silas Marner</td>
<td>Loss of gold, treachery of friend</td>
<td>Despair and frustration</td>
<td>Eppie's presence brings happiness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 a</td>
<td>Thomas Hardy/ Mayor of CasterBridge/ Henchard</td>
<td>Sale of his wife, breaking traditional standards</td>
<td>Remorse and loneliness</td>
<td>Alienation from daughter Elizabeth Jane, death</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b</td>
<td>Far from the Madding Crowd/ Bathsheba</td>
<td>Wrong choice of husband</td>
<td>Harsh treatment of her husband and unhappiness</td>
<td>Happiness restored by Gabriel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Graham Greene/ Heart of the Matter/ Major Scobie</td>
<td>Wrong relationship with the young widow, adultery</td>
<td>Remorse and contemplation of suicide</td>
<td>Hopes to make peace with God in death by suicide.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
REFERENCE

Chapter Four


2. Nambiar, 58


7. Wilson, 18.

8. Wilson, 22.


19. Green, 46 – 47.

20. Seshadri 52.


22. Gill, 5.2.142 – 145.

23. Evans, 155.


26. Ridley, 1.3.397, 399 – 400.

27. Ridley, 5.2.345 – 347.


29. Deighton, 3.2.33.

30. Deighton, 3.2.54 – 55.

31. Deighton, 5.3.269 – 270.


33. Deighton, 1.7.25 – 27.

34. Deighton, 5.1.46 – 47.

36. Prince, 46.


38. Coghill, 32

39. Evans, 212.


41. Evans, 255.


44. Wilson, 75.