UNIT 15 : JOHN STEINBECK: *THE MOON IS DOWN* II

UNIT STRUCTURE

15.1 Learning Objectives

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15.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After reading this unit, you will be able to:

- grasp the content of the novel
- appreciate the characters of the novel
- analyse the themes, style and language used in the novel

15.2 INTRODUCTION

In unit 14, you have studied the form of the novel in general and we have discussed the different aspects of the novel in relation to John Steinbeck's novel *The Moon is Down*. We also looked at the significance of the title of the novel and discovered how Steinbeck's allusion from *Macbeth* suggests that the invaders had brought a spiritual darkness to Mayor Orden's town. In our discussion of the context of the novel, we looked at the intellectual and

emotional needs that the novel had tried to fulfill among a free people when they had found their democratic ideals crushed by aggression in their occupied town.

This unit introduces you to a chapter-wise summary of the novel to help you to relate the story to the discussion on various aspects of the novel in a more meaningful way. However, the summary of the novel does not, in any way, claim to be a substitute for the original novel. It is hoped that the summary can make you interested in reading the novel.

There are other issues taken up in this unit besides the summary. You will be introduced to the principal characters of the novel. Besides, there is an attempt to look at the themes of the novel. Further, there is also an attempt to discuss the stylistic features of the novel.

15.3 SUMMARY OF THE NOVEL

Read the chapter-wise summary of the novel given below followed by a brief commentary on each chapter.

Chapter 1

The novel opens with the invasion of a sea-side European town on a Sunday morning exactly at 10.45. The town had been unprotected at that moment. Mr. Coroll, the town's popular storekeeper, had lent his fishing boat that morning to the postman and the policeman, two important officials of the town, for a fishing trip at sea. They were several miles at sea when they saw the small, desk transport, loaded with soldiers go quietly past them. They hurried back to the shore but were immediately taken prisoners of war and locked up in the town jail.



Glade : an open space in a wood or forest.

The town had a troop of twelve soldiers for its protection. But that Sunday morning, they had been away too, for Mr. Corell had arranged for them a shooting competition to take place six miles back in the hills in a lovely **glade** that Mr. Corell owned. When these soldiers heard the approaching

aircraft and saw the parachutes, they hurried back to town. When they arrived, the invaders opened fire on them killing six and severely injuring three. The other three escaped into the hills.

Meanwhile, a message was delivered to Mr. Orden, the Mayor of the town, that Colonel Lanser of the invading battalion would be meeting him at eleven o'clock in the Mayor's five room palace. An advance team led by Captain Bentick arrived at the Mayor's house where they met Dr. Winter, a friend of the Mayor. It was from captain Bentick that Dr. Winter learnt about the role of Mr. George Corell in the invasion. They took away the two fire arms of the Mayor and left.

At exactly eleven o'clock Colonel Lanser arrived in the company of Mr. Corell. Seeing him Doctor Winter informed the Mayor about Mr. Corell's role in the invasion. Mayor Orden was very annoyed to hear this and told Colonel Lanser that he did not wish to speak in his company. Ultimately, the Colonel ordered him out of the room.

After seating himself Colonel Lanser told the Mayor that their arrival was more like a business venture than anything also. They needed the coal mine and the fishing. He sought the co-operation of Mayor Orden in getting the coal out, stating that though he had technicians, he would like the local people to continue to work in the mine. He then added that the Mayor would continue as Mayor and would give the orders, penalize and reward as before.

Next, Colonel Lanser suggested that he and his staff would like to stay in Mayor Orden's house. He told the Mayor that when a staff lives under the roof of the local authority, there was more tranquility. People would think that there was more co-operation.

Chapter 2

Colonel Lanser and his staff of five officers took possession of three rooms and the upper floor of the Mayor's palace. Colonel Lanser's staff included Mayor Hunter, an engineer with a great interest in arithmetic who saw each man in terms of a mathematical figure that could be added, subtracted and multiplied. The officer next in seniority was Captain Bentick with his tremendous admiration for everything British. He was too old to be a captain but a curious lack of ambition had kept him in that rank.

The next officer in the staff was Captain Loft, a young man who had no unmilitary moments. He knew every kind of military courtesy besides the deportment of a soldier. The other two members of the staff, Lieutenants Prackle and Tonder, were undergraduates who were trained in the politics of the day. They were sentimental men given to tears and to fury.

Colonel Lanser alone was an officer with a vast experience of war in Belgium and France. He considered war as treachery and hatred, the muddling of incompetent generals, the torture and killing , sickness and tiredness, until at last, it was all over.

Colonel Lanser and his staff made themselves comfortable in Mayor Orden's house. On the day following the invasion, Major Hunter was busy with his engineering drawing in the room which they used like a club. He was assisted by Prackle and Tonder; Captain Loft entered the room after completing his round of duty. A little later Colonel Lanser arrived and instructed Captain Loft to relieve Captain Bentick at the coal mine as he was not feeling well.

Meanwhile, a sentry knocked at the door and informed the colonel that Mr. Corell wished to see him. Mr. Corell entered the room and at his request that he wished to see him alone, Prackle and Tonder were sent out of the room though Major Hunter was asked to stay.

Colonel Lanser noticed a white bandage on Mr. Corell's head. He told Corell to leave the town immediately stating that he did not believe the injury on his head to be an accident. Besides, he did not have enough men to provide Mr. Corell with a body guard.

But Mr. Corell had other plans. He told colonel Lanser that if Mayor Orden stepped down, he could take over as Mayor for a better co-ordination between the army and the civil administration. However, Colonel Lanser did not agree to the suggestion. He knew that as Mr. Corell had incurred the hatred of the people of the town, he was not suitable to be a Mayor. Colonel Lanser's job was to get the coal out. To do that, he must maintain order and discipline. That would be possible only when he could anticipate revolt; he must know

what was in the minds of the people. With Orden as Mayor, he had not been able to do that. Besides, he had no orders to carry out such a suggestion. So he suggested that Mr. Corell should go back to the capital.

At that moment Captain Loft entered the room in a tense mood followed by two stretcher bearers carrying the body of captain Bentick covered with blankets. Captain Loft reported to the Colonel that Captain Bentick was killed in the mine by a miner and that the miner was arrested. Colonel Lanser ordered Captain Loft to request Mayor Orden to see him immediately.

Chapter 3



Sullenly : in a morose and resentful manner.

In the town the people moved **sullenly** through the streets. Some light of astonishment was gone from their eyes, but still the light of anger had not taken its place. They went about doing their duties in sullenness, disturbed by the sudden change that had come to the town.

Joseph, the Mayor's serving man, and Annie, the cook, were directed to arrange the furniture in the Mayor's drawing room. The trial of Alex Morden, the miner who was charged with killing Captain Bentick with a pick axe, was to be held in that room.

Both Joseph and Annie had known Alex and his wife Molly. They felt that the invaders had no right to try Alex Morden. Annie, who had gained quite a reputation as an exponent of liberty by throwing boiling water on a soldier hanging about her kitchen, was very upset at Joseph's remark that Alex was to be shot. Joseph confided to Annie that William Deal and Walter Doggal escaped to England to seek help. He also confided to her that George Corell was not going to live long. People were getting together. They did not like to be conquered.

Presently, Mayor Orden entered the room in the company of Doctor Winter. Mayor Orden wondered for how long he would continue as Mayor. He observed that there was no sense in holding a trial for Alex Morden in his house. But Doctor Winter could see that by holding the trial in the Mayor's

house, the invaders could convince the people that there was justice involved.

Their conversation was interrupted by the arrival of Molly Morden, the pretty wife of Alex Morden. She enquired from the Mayor whether he was going to try and shoot Alex. She pleaded to the Mayor saying that Alex was not a murderer and had never broken the law. For a moment she stood still, then she turned stiffly and went out.

Colonel Lanser came in and told the Mayor that he wished to speak to him alone. Then Doctor Winter left the room.

The Colonel regretted what had happened but added that there were rules laid down for such situations. Orden asked the Colonel why did not they shoot Alex soon after the incident. The Colonel informed him that it was necessary to publicize this trial for the purpose of deterring the potential criminal. It was also necessary that the death sentence must be passed by Mayor Orden.

Mayor Orden then reminded the Colonel that he had killed six men when they came in. That had made him guilty of murder. In the existing war situation, there was no law. Colonel Lanser had destroyed the law when he came in, and a new law took its place. He told the Colonel that he would condemn Alex Morden if the soldiers manning the machine gun were condemned to death. But it was an impossible thing. Likewise, it was equally impossible to break a man's spirit permanently.

Chapter 4

Though it was eleven o'clock, it was fairly dark. In the drawing room of the Mayor's palace the lights were on. The court was in session. Colonel Lanser sat at the head of the table with Hunter to his right, then Tonder, and at the lower end, Captain Loft sat with a pile of papers in front of him. On the opposite side, Mayor Orden sat on the Colonel's left and Prackle was next to him. Beside the table between two armed guards stood Alex Morden, the prisoner.

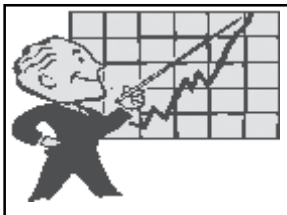
Captain Loft presented to the court the facts leading to the killing of

Captain Bentick by the prisoner with a pickaxe he carried. Mayor Orden asked one of the guards to bring a chair for Alex. Though Captain Loft told the Mayor that it was customary for prisoners to stand, at the Mayor's insistence, a chair was brought for the prisoner to sit.

Next, Captain Loft produced a medical report testifying that the blow with the pick axe had crushed Captain Bentick's skull. He also produced statements of witnesses of the crime. By considering these facts, Captain Loft stated that the military court had found Alex Morden guilty of murder and recommended death sentence.

Colonel Lanser asked the prisoner if he wished to deny the charge. Alex Morden confessed that he had hit the Captain but was in no position to know if he had killed the Captain. He further explained that he was a free man. He got mad and hit him hard. But it was the wrong man. He had actually wanted to hit Captain Loft. But he was not sorry for what he had done. Then Colonel Lanser announced the verdict. The court had found him guilty and sentenced him to be shot immediately.

At this point, Mayor Orden stood up and stopped over to Alex. He told Alex that the killing of the Captain was the beginning of a public anger. He should not go away with the impression that their Mayor was with the invaders. He affectionately kissed Alex on the cheek before the soldiers led him away to face the firing squad.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q1. What did Captain Loft reveal to the court regarding the killing of Captain Bentick?

Chapter 5

The days weeks and months dragged on and on. Severe winter filled the town with thick layers of snow. Then there was death in the air, hovering and

waiting. Accidents happened on the railway. The food supply was controlled – issued to the obedient and withheld from the disobedient, making the whole town coldly abiding. The hatred was deep in their eyes.

The soldiers felt insecure in this hostile town. No man relaxed his guard even for a moment. If he did , he disappeared in the snow. The soldiers longed for home. They began to detest the place they had conquered. Thus, it came about that the conquerors grew afraid of the conquered and their nerves wore thin. Three soldiers went insane. Fear crept in on the men and it made them cruel.

The officers were also subjected to the same fear. But their superior training and responsibilities did not show off their fear. They were under a double strain. For the conquered people watched them for mistakes and their own men watched them for weakness. Their spirits were strained to a breaking point. This was very much evident in the behaviour of Lieutenant Prackle and Lieutenant Tonder more than in Major Hunter or Captain Loft.

There was always some kind of trouble brewing somewhere. The dynamos broke down. Dumped cars in the mines were wrecked. Captain Loft decided that if the coal didn't come out, there would be no food for the families. He was certain to get the coal through this arrangement.

In course of the conversation with Prackle and Tonder. Captain Loft informed them that the British were defeated in every engagement and the war was just about to end. But Tonder was very much suspicious of what the Captain had said. Captain Loft was visibly annoyed at the suspicions of these two young officers. They appeared doubtful as to whether there would be reinforcements or replacements for them.

Then Tonder asked Captain Loft if that place was conquered. If they had really conquered the town, there was no reason for them to be afraid. Then he began to laugh a hysterical laugh until Loft slapped him in the face to stop him.

Chapter 6

In a small house with the roof filled with snow, sat Molly Morden, the widow of Alex Morden beside a warm fire all alone. She was unraveling the wool from an old blue sweater and winding the yarn, in a ball, when she was startled by the tramping feet of the soldiers patrolling the street. Suddenly there was a knock at the door. Molly fearing that it could be a soldier, called through the door. It was Annie, the cook of Mayor Orden.

Annie brought to Molly Morden the news that the Mayor, Doctor Winter and two of the Anders brothers had chosen her house as a meeting place. They would be arriving in three quarters of an hour. Annie gave Molly a little package of meat which she had stolen from the Colonel's plate. Molly unwrapped the little cake of meat and put it in her mouth quickly.

There was a knock at the door again. Molly went into the passage and thinking it was Annie, asked what she wanted. A man's voice answered her. It was Lieutenant Tonder. He entered the room and took off his helmet. In a pleading voice he told her that he would just want to talk to her. He wondered if they could forget the war just for a little while and talk. Molly told him that he could stay no more than fifteen minutes. She refused the help that he offered her to have the snow pushed off the roof. She told him about her husband who was killed by the firing squad. Tonder's face was full of misery. He remembered the incident.

Soon after Tonder left, Annie came in and asked Molly suspiciously if she had joined the enemy like Corell. When Molly assured her that she was not with the enemy, Annie called in the group. There were the Anders brothers, Mayor Orden and Doctor Winter. The Anders brothers informed the Mayor that they would be leaving for England by boat that night. They would take away Mr. Corell with them and throw him overboard.

Mayor Orden said that he had so much to talk to them about justice, injustice and conquest. He told them that though they were invaded they were

never conquered. Doctor Winter also expressed the view that all invaded people would want to resist. Mayor Orden told the two brothers to request England for explosives.

Annie entered the room quietly and said that there was a soldier coming up the path. Molly asked the group to leave by the back. After they had left, she picked up a heavy pair of scissors and opened the door to let the Lieutenant in.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q2. Briefly discuss the conversation between Molly and Tonder.

Chapter 7

The nights were dark and freezing cold. The soldiers could hear the distant bee hum of planes. They noticed a few planes circling high up. Mayor Orden too heard the drone of the plane.

High in the air two bombers circled. They cut their throttles and soared, circling. Each plane dropped hundreds of little blue packages. They plummeted a few feet and then little parachutes opened and drifted silently and slowly towards the earth. Then the planes turned and flew back in the direction from which they had come.

Each parachute brought down ten-inch tubes of dynamite. They drifted slowly and ended gently in the white fields and among the woods of the hills and they landed in trees and hung down from the branches. The people moving out of their houses in the country saw the spots of blue against the snow. They went to them and picked them up. They saw the gifts of the dynamite tubes and hid them in some secret place. The children too joined in the search as if they were on an **Easter egg** hunt.



Easter Egg : a decorated hard boiled egg or a chocolate egg given as a gift at the Easter which is a Christian Festival.

Belligerent : Hostile and aggressive.

The soldiers too found a few of them and brought them to Captain Loft. Major Hunter examined them and found that they were commercial dynamite. Meanwhile, the officers received the information that there was a damage in the railway lines at five places. The Colonel knew that soon they would be receiving orders from the capital to take stern action.

Prackle came in to see Colonel Lanser. He looked sullen and **belligerent**. Colonel Lanser told him that he was not a man any more. He was a soldier who must take orders and carry them out. Most of the orders would be unpleasant. He regretted that Tonder was not trained for such situation but only for flower-strewn streets.

After Prackle left, Mr. Corell came in. He told the Colonel of Major Orden's involvement in the resistance and suggested that both he and Doctor Winter should be arrested and that Orden must be held against rebellion. Colonal Lanser appeared very uncertain. But he arrested the Mayor and the Doctor.

Chapter 8

The news of the arrest of Mayor Orden ran quickly in busy whispers. The people went into the country, into the woods, searching for dynamite. They now became more organized and a cold hatred towards the invaders showed behind their eyes.

Doctor Winter was also brought in as hostage to the room where Mayor Orden was kept. Seeing Doctor Winter, Orden understood that it was bound to happen. Doctor Winter told Orden that Colonel Lanser had failed to understand the democratic ideal. "They think that just because they have only one leader and one head, we are all like that. They know that ten heads lopped off will destroy them, But we are a free people, we have as many heads as we have people." Both of them understood that their people would grow stronger with outside help.

Orden is aware of the fact that he would be killed. His thoughts of running

away or pleading for his life had left him ashamed. He told Doctor Winter that he was a little man in a little town; but there must be a spark in little man that could burst into flames. He told Doctor Winter that his situation reminded him of the "Apology" which professed to be the speech made in the trial by Socrates, which both of them had studied at school together. They spoke in whispers recollecting their school days and trying to remember how forty six years ago while reciting the words he still had problems with the word "departure". He recited the words once again to Doctor Winter in the presence of Colonel Lanser.

Then Colonel Lanser told Mayor Orden that he had arrested him as a hostage for the good behaviour of the people. However, Mayor Orden told him that they did not understand the people. They would carry on their work and would leave him no choice of living or dying. He added quietly that nothing could change the system. The invaders would be destroyed and driven out. The people did not like to be conquered. Once again the roar of an explosion was heard at a distance and Prackle came in to take Mayor Orden out. Before leaving, Mayor Orden told Doctor Winter in the words of Socrates, "I owe a cock to Asclepius. Will you remember to pay the debt?" Doctor Winter replied in Crito's words, "The debt shall be paid."

15.4 PRINCIPAL CHARACTERS

Mayor Orden

Orden is the central character in the novel. He is introduced to us in the opening chapter of the novel as the Mayor of the town that had been invaded by Colonel Lanser. Orden had been the Mayor of the town so long that he was regarded as the Idea-Mayor in the town. Every grown up people when they saw the word "mayor', printed or written, saw Mayor Orden in their minds. He and his office were one. It had given him dignity and he had given it warmth. However, when the town was invaded by the soldiers of Colonel Lanser, Mayor Orden was too confused to reconcile himself to these developments.

He was helpless against the superior military strength of the invaders. He could not even protest enough when the Colonel and his staff decided to shift to a portion of his five room house.

But what makes Orden endearing to the people is the rapport that he has been able to maintain with them to build up a climate of passive resistance against the invaders. He holds secret meetings under cover of darkness to organize the people to stand unitedly against the invaders of the town. He is aware of the collective strength of the people. So he tells Colonel Lanser : "When the town makes up its mind what it wants to do, I'll probably do that." He believes in the value of democracy. So he tells the Colonel. "We cannot act as quickly as you can, but when a direction is set, we all act together."

The most striking aspect of Orden's character is his sense of patriotism. Colonel Lanser did not agree to Mr. Corell's suggestion that Orden should be replaced as mayor because he knew that by giving a semblance of co-operation with the local authority, that is, the Mayor's office it would be easier for the invaders to carry on their objective of taking the coal out of the mines of the town. It was only towards the later part of the novel that Colonel Lanser could realize that Orden was having a bad influence on the people. Orden did not believe in the military might of Colonel Lanser. Thereby, Steinbeck draws a parallel between the situation of Orden and that of Socrates. Socrates was found guilty of not believing in the gods in whom the state believes, and of introducing other strange divinities. He was also found guilty of corrupting the young as a result of which he was given the death penalty. The final words of Orden were a reproduction of what Socrates had said in his trial. They significantly reveal Orden's character.

George Corell

Mr. George Corell is introduced in John Steinbeck's novel as a popular store keeper of the town of Mayor Orden. His popularity is evident from the fact that he has been a benefactor to all the important people of the town. He

was a regular guest at dinner in Mayor Orden's house. He was on friendly terms with two influential persons of the town– the postman and the policeman, and had even lent them his trim sailboat for a fishing trip at sea. He also organized shooting competitions for the local troops and offered prizes and free lunches. These gestures of Mr. Corell towards the people of the town bring out his popularity.

A notable aspect of Mr. Corell's character is his strewdness. Because of his popularity, there was little reason for the people of the town to suspect that he was the local man of the invaders and was working for the invasion. Mr. Corell had used his popularity to extract information from the people about the number of fire-arms in the town and other useful pieces of information for the invaders.

Mr. Corell was an ambitious man who had always wanted to be Mayor of the town. He had suggested to colonel Lanser to arrest Orden and to make him the Mayor of the town. He was unhappy when colonel Lanser told him that he had no authority to make him the Mayor of the town. But Mr. Corell did not give up. He made his report to the Leader and waited patiently for a reply at the cost of his life. He was attacked twice; yet he did not leave the town. At last he received a reply from the Leader granting him some authority over the town. He then immediately advised Colonel Lanser to arrest Orden and Doctor Winter. Thus, with the Mayor's arrest, Mr. Corell practically had the authority over the town.

Colonel Lanser

Colonel Lanser is introduced in the novel as the commanding officer of the battalion that had invaded the town of Mayor Orden. Among all the officers in the staff, he was the most experienced and knew what war really was in the long run.

He had been in Belgium and France twenty years before and had many unpleasant memories of the war. He tried not to think what he knew. He knew

that war was treachery and hatred. It was nothing but the muddling of incompetent generals. He knew that war was torture and killing and sickness and tiredness until at last it was over. Even years later, Colonel Lanser believed that nothing had changed except for new weariness and new hatreds.

Lanser considered himself a soldier who was given orders to carry out. He was not expected to question or to think, but only to carry out orders and he tried to put aside the sick memory of the other war and had the certainity that it would be the same. In Mayor Orden's town, he was expected to maintain order and to ensure that the fish and the coal were shipped out smoothly. Hence, when Alex Morden killed an officer of his staff, he held a trial in the presence of Mayor Orden before handing Morden over to the firing squad. Yet, in spite of his experience, Lanser could not foresee that fighting battles and subduing a free people are two different things. He was only a follower of the Leader while the Mayor was the elected representative of the town. Obviously, he found the words of Socrates recited by Orden very interesting and listened with great attention.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q3. What was the most striking aspect of Mayor Orden?

15.5 THEMES OF THE NOVEL

The publication of *The Grapes of Wrath* in 1939 brought John Steinbeck to the forefront as a world class novelist and at the same time, a clear-eyed political realist. A year later, in the summer of 1940, he had noted with grave concern the march of fascism in triumph over much of Europe. He was greatly disturbed at the destruction of the democratic spirit of man in the hands of the fascist forces of the **Nazis**. He understood that the US involvement in the war was inevitable. Over the next two or three years, he served voluntarily in the

office of the coordinator of Information (COI) and the office of strategic Services (OSS).

Steinbeck's duties at COI brought him into contact with the displaced citizens from the recently occupied countries of Europe, among them Norway and Denmark and France, Belgium and the Netherlands. By September 1941, Steinbeck decided to write a work of fiction contrasting the brute force of military occupation against a democratically elected government as the central thematic concern. That is how *The Moon is Down* was born in 1942.



Nazis : Members of the National Socialist Party which controlled Germany from 1932 to 1945 under the leadership of Hitler.

Allied : relating to Britian and its allies in the first and second worls war.

Steinbeck originally set his story in America taking a medium sized American town with a countryside of a kind he knew well. But Steinbeck's refugee friends suggested that the novel might boost the morale of the people of the occupied countries if the setting is shifted. He took their advice and placed the story in an unnamed country "cold and stern like Norway, cunning and implacable like Denmark…" obviously people began to see that the **Allied** propaganda was a theme of the novel. When the novel appeared, critics were more interested in predicting its potential as propaganda than anything else.

But cutting across this propaganda, the central theme of the novel surfaces with a remarkable brilliance – the theme of democracy. In the novel, a conflict between the two main characters, Mayor Orden and Colonel Lanser, is brought to the forefront. On the one hand is Colonel Lanser, the head of the occupational force who symbolizes fascism. On the other hand there is Mayor Orden, the democratically elected leader who symbolizes democracy. The conflict between Colonel Lanser and Mayor Orden is not merely a conflict of whether the Colonel would punish the machine gunners who killed the eight soldiers of the town or whether the Colonel had the authority to try Alex Morden and condemn him to death. The conflict represents a clash between democracy and fascism.

In his first meeting with Mayor Orden, Colonel Lanser seeks his cooperation to ensure that the coal is shifted out of the mines. He time and

again pleads with Mayor Orden to be co-operative. But Orden responds that "authority is the town". He tells Colonel Lanser that he will follow the direction set by the town. Colonel Lanser must understand that he is the Mayor elected by the people. Thus, Steinbeck is placing a democratically elected government against the brute force of military occupation.

Initially, the militarily superior invaders gained ground. But as time passes, the impression remains that ultimately the patriots will prevail because a society of free individuals is stronger in the long run than a totalitarian power dependent on "herd men". In the Mayor's words, "It is always the herd men who wins battles and the free man who win wars." Thereby Steinbeck attempts to celebrate the victory of democracy over fascism.

The Mayor stands out as a champion of democracy in the novel. His execution by the fascist forces will not affect the situation. There will be many more elected leaders. Mayor Orden had rightly driven home the truth to Colonel Lanser that the people did not like to be conquered and so they would not be.

15.6 STYLE AND LANGUAGE

One of the prominent aspects of *The Moon is Down* is the compactness of structure. The novel is made up of eight chapters. However, the locale of most of the events is Mayor Orden's house with occasional snatches of wide-angle visuals of the town and a chapter devoted to Molly Morden's house.

The compactness of the structure can be illustrated with reference to the locales of the story. For example, Chapter 1 presents a wide-angle view of the invasion of the town of Mayor Orden with the small dark transport loaded with soldiers that goes quietly past the sea-side. But the locale shifts immediately to Mayor Orden's tastefully decorated drawing room. The incidents of Chapter 2 take place in the upper-storey room of Mayor Orden's house now occupied by the staff of colonel Lanser. The events of Chapters 3 and 4 entirely take place in Mayor Orden's drawing room but now much of the elegance of the

room has faded away. The setting of Chapter 5 is the same as that in Chapter 2. It is only in Chapter 6 that the locale shifts to Molly Morden's house. But in the last two chapters, we are back in Mayor Orden's house.

As the story moves forward shifting from one chapter to the other the changing mood of the people as well as the invaders are brought into focus with the images of light and darkness very much suggestive of the state of mind of the characters who see it. The old flash-back technique is used sparingly to take us back to colonel Lanser's experience of the war in Belgium twenty years ago and weave a similar kind of experience of the war that is raging how in the town. This technique helps the reader to understand the inner world of Colonel Lanser as a "man of memories" In fact, compared to Colonel Lanser, the other officers in the staff are shadowy images only. Captain Loft is perhaps the typical military officer that invading armies had banked upon in war torn Europe.

A very striking aspect of *The Moon is Down* is John Steinbeck's powerful use of language from the very first page to the last. The novel opens with a minute-by-minute commentary of the military operation of the invading battalion under the command of Colonel Lanser on the town of Mayor Orden and setting the mood of the high drama that is to follow. Indeed, the use of language contributes in a powerful way towards a proper understanding of the states of mind of different characters in the play.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q4. Explain the style and language of the novel *The Moon is Down.*



15.7 LET US SUM UP

This unit deals with different aspects of the novel *The Moon is Down*. The unit broadly discusses the summary of the novel highlighting the

themes and style of the novelist. You have also read about the major characters of the novel. Steinbeck's powerful use of language is one of the striking features of the novel. You may read other works by the novelist to have a better grasp of his writing style and enjoy his literary contributions as well.



15.8 FURTHER READING

1. Page, Norman. (1984). *The Language of Literature,* Casebook series.
2. Steinbeck, John. (2000). *The Moon is Down.* Penguin Books.
3. Thornborrow, Joanna & Shan, Wareing. *Patterns in Language, An Introduction to Language and Literary Styple,* Routledge.



15.9 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Ans. to Q1: Captain Loft presented to the court the facts leading to the killing of Captain Bentick by the prisoner with a pickaxe he carried. Mayor Orden asked one of the guards to bring a chair for Alex. Though Captain Loft told the Mayor that it was customary for prisoners to stand, at the Mayor's insistence, a chair was brought for the prisoner to sit.

Ans. to Q2: When Molly opened the door she found it was Lieutenant Tonder. He entered the room and took off his helmet. In a pleading voice be told her that he would just want to talk to her. He wondered if they could forget the war just for a little while and talk. Molly told him that he could stay no more than fifteen minutes. She refused the help that he offered her to have the snow pushed off the roof. She told him about her husband who was killed by the firing squad. Tonder's face was full of misery. He remembered the incident.

Ans. to Q3: Refer to 15.4 (Principal Characters)

Ans. to Q4: Refer to 15.6 (Style and Language)



15.10 MODEL QUESTIONS

Q1. Discuss the role of George Corell in the invasion of the town.

Q2. Briefly describe how the town was invaded by Colonel Lanser.

Q3. Summarize the discussion in the first meeting of Colonel Lanser and Mayor Orden.

Q4. Summarize the trial of Alex Morden.

Q5. Narrate the circumstances leading to the killing of Lieutenant Tonder.

Q6. Sketch the character of Colonel Lanser.

Q7. How does Mayor Orden become the champion of democracy? Explain.

Q8. What is the relevance of Socrates' 'Apology' to the novel? Discuss.

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