A Tale of Two Cities — Its Themes.

Charles Dickens is a representative novelist of his age and occupies a prominent place among the great English novelists. His novels hold up a mirror to the 19th Century England, and, at the same time, present some hard facts of life. His experiences and understanding of human nature provide a sober colouring to the real world. Like his other novels, 'A Tale of Two Cities' also deals with some social and moral problems in details. No doubt, the background of this novel is the French Revolution with all its facts and fictions. But, one cannot fail to discern the various Themes hinted at vividly. Let us see it in a brief.

As the plot of the novel revolves round the historical facts of the French Revolution, the Themes of exploitation and injustice with unrestrained feelings of revenge get exceptional treatment. In the very beginning, the novel narrates whimsical acts of the Aristocratic class. The Aristocrats used to exploit the common people to their individual pleasures. The general mass were hapless victims to their cruelty and injustice. Evremonde, an aristocrat, victimises an innocent girl and her brother. When Dr. Manette helps them and tries to inform the authority, he is tortured and put behind bar for 18 years. When Evremonde crushes a child, he reacts as if the common people are meant to live only to his entertainment.

Similarly, when the Revolutionaries gather strength and take power in their hands, they also exhibit extremism in exploitation, injustice and brutality. Theirs may be the out come of their strong feelings of Revenge, but their animality cannot be justified at all. Dickens gives a vivid description to the inhuman acts of Revolutionaries. The mob is like demons who have no contact with humanity.

"The grindstone had a double handle, and turning at it madly were two men, whose faces, as their long hairs flopped back when the whirlings of the grindstone brought their faces up, were more horrible and cruel than the visages of the wildest savages in their most barbarous disguise."

The theme of love also gets sufficient elaboration. It has been dealt with all its flavours and magnitudes. Almost all the major characters of the novel display their touches of love. Miss Pross, a caretaker, loves Lucie so deeply that her love emboldens her to silence Madame Defarge, the most dreadful woman of the Revolutionaries. Charles Darny and Carton equally love Lucie. But, when Lucie decides in favour of Darny, Carton's love does not get discoloured. He still loves her with the same sincerity. His love is so genuine and deep rooted that he sacrifices his life at its altar. Really, he is a symbol of selfless love. Lucie is also not behind in this field. She also bears all the pangs and joy of love.

A thorough analysis of the novel reveals that Dickens' main purpose is not the depiction of the common life of the two cities — London and Paris. But his main contention is to present the theme Surrection, the image of Christ rising from his grave on the 3rd day of his crucifixion. It also hints at the renunciation. The details of the lives of Dr. Manette, Darny, Carton, Roger, Old Foulon, Solomon and Jerry Cruncher symbolise the resurrection. Dr. Manette's imprisonment for 18 years symbolises his death. His whereabout was kept secret, as if he has died. His release is just like his resurrection. His return to

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made possible only by Lucie's nursing, services, care and affection.

To Conclude, 'A Tale of two Cities' abounds in varieties of themes. With the history of the French Revolution as its background, it shows not only the manners and morals of the two cities of London and Paris, but it also throws ample light on some inner traits of human nature as well as religious belief. With the themes of exploitation, injustice, love and revenge, the Christian theme of Resurrection and renunciation also get due treatment. Really, This novel establishes Dickens' superiority both as a novelist and an artist with a thorough knowledge of human life.