

INTRODUCING ENGLISH LITERATURE - II

[English Elective - II]

**BA
Second Year
BENG - 202(E)**



RAJIV GANDHI UNIVERSITY

Arunachal Pradesh, INDIA - 791 112

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About the University

Rajiv Gandhi University (formerly Arunachal University) is a premier institution for higher education in the state of Arunachal Pradesh and has completed twenty-five years of its existence. Late Smt. Indira Gandhi, the then Prime Minister of India, laid the foundation stone of the university on 4th February, 1984 at Rono Hills, where the present campus is located.

Ever since its inception, the university has been trying to achieve excellence and fulfill the objectives as envisaged in the University Act. The university received academic recognition under Section 2(f) from the University Grants Commission on 28th March, 1985 and started functioning from 1st April, 1985. It got financial recognition under section 12-B of the UGC on 25th March, 1994. Since then Rajiv Gandhi University, (then Arunachal University) has carved a niche for itself in the educational scenario of the country following its selection as a University with potential for excellence by a high-level expert committee of the University Grants Commission from among universities in India.

The University was converted into a Central University with effect from 9th April, 2007 as per notification of the Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India.

The University is located atop Rono Hills on a picturesque tableland of 302 acres overlooking the river Dikrong. It is 6.5 km from the National Highway 52-A and 25 km from Itanagar, the State capital. The campus is linked with the National Highway by the Dikrong bridge.

The teaching and research programmes of the University are designed with a view to play a positive role in the socio-economic and cultural development of the State. The University offers Undergraduate, Post-graduate, M.Phil and Ph.D. programmes. The Department of Education also offers the B.Ed. programme.

There are fifteen colleges affiliated to the University. The University has been extending educational facilities to students from the neighbouring states, particularly Assam. The strength of students in different departments of the University and in affiliated colleges has been steadily increasing.

The faculty members have been actively engaged in research activities with financial support from UGC and other funding agencies. Since inception, a number of proposals on research projects have been sanctioned by various funding agencies to the University. Various departments have organized numerous seminars, workshops and conferences. Many faculty members have participated in national and international conferences and seminars held within the country and abroad. Eminent scholars and distinguished personalities have visited the University and delivered lectures on various disciplines.

The academic year 2000-2001 was a year of consolidation for the University. The switch over from the annual to the semester system took off smoothly and the performance of the students registered a marked improvement. Various syllabi designed by Boards of Post-graduate Studies (BPGS) have been implemented. VSAT facility installed by the ERNET India, New Delhi under the UGC-Infonet program, provides Internet access.

In spite of infrastructural constraints, the University has been maintaining its academic excellence. The University has strictly adhered to the academic calendar, conducted the examinations and declared the results on time. The students from the University have found placements not only in State and Central Government Services, but also in various institutions, industries and organizations. Many students have emerged successful in the National Eligibility Test (NET).

Since inception, the University has made significant progress in teaching, research, innovations in curriculum development and developing infrastructure.

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Introducing English Literature - II

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Unit-III Drama Oliver Goldsmith: <i>She Stoops to Conquer</i>	Unit 3: Oliver Goldsmith: <i>She Stoops to Conquer</i> (Pages 47-68)
Unit-IV One Act Play Percival Wilde: <i>The Hour of Truth</i> Farrell Mitchell: <i>The Best Laid Plans</i> Daviot Gordon: <i>The Pen of My Aunt</i> Frigyes Karinthy: <i>Refund</i>	Unit 4: One-Act Play (Pages 69-97)
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INTRODUCTION

English literature is a broad term used in many educational settings. It refers to the body of work written or spoken in the English language. It includes prose, poetry, and oral traditions. Literature symbolizes people, culture and tradition. It guides us towards a world full of experience and helps us evolve ourselves through its literary journey. It speaks to us in its various forms such as short story, poetry, drama, prose, fiction and so forth.

Drama has existed ever since man started recording history. It essentially is a story presented by various actors on stage before an audience. Drama is an organic form and a genre of art that comes closest to the human need for expressions. It is the only art form that engages the body as well as the mind and explores all the potential of the human condition in expression. Whenever there is a birth, marriage or death, there is drama—in all places and at all times. From the elaboration of ceremony in worship to the solemnity of ritual in death, there is drama. As William Shakespeare in his play *As You Like It* puts it, ‘All the world’s a stage, And all the men and women merely players.’

Percy Bysshe Shelley once said, ‘Poetry lifts the veil from the hidden beauty of the world, and makes familiar objects be as if they were not familiar.’ Poetry is an expression of the poet’s soul like all art is a representation of the artist’s soul. Poetry can be transcendental, topical, lyrical, romantic, serious, religious, or even morbid in nature. It can have as many shades as there are souls on this earth. Poetry is one of the most sublime arts. It is literature in its purest form, and is written in verse or metre. It mostly involves the use of poetic devices such as metaphors, similes and alliteration. One of its distinguishing characteristics is that it uses language aesthetically. Poets observe what is happening around them and use their imagination to express their feelings and emotions in their poetry. Every age has its poetical genius. While the Renaissance had Shakespeare and Milton to boast of, the 18th century had Pope and Dryden. On the other end of the poetic spectrum, we find poets who had romantic concerns like William Blake, William Wordsworth, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, John Keats, P. B. Shelley and Byron. These Romantic poets shared a common love for nature. But what is common among all poets is that they all represent and register the noblest ideas of their age in their poetry.

Someone has rightly said that writing good prose presents a bigger challenge than writing good poetry. This is because while the latter has a set pattern that can be followed, prose requires the writer to set or create his own pattern. In simplest terms, prose can be defined as the most basic form of written language, applying common grammatical structure and natural flow of speech rather than rhythmic structure that is seen in poetry. Its simplicity and loosely defined arrangement has led to its usage in the majority of spoken dialogues, factual discourse as well as contemporary and imaginary writing. Prose is used in essays, novels, short stories, newspaper reports, magazine columns, etc.

Short stories owe their popularity to their brevity. These stories can be read without breaks, in a single sitting. A short story can be read even on a short journey because it does not require too much time. No matter how busy you are, you would always have the time to read a short story. In fact, a short story, even with its limited length, is able to achieve what a novel does. This is the very reason why it is more

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challenging to write a short story than a novel. The author cannot afford to devote pages and pages introducing the main theme or the main characters. He has to make the story interesting, without sounding abrupt and achieve a lot more using fewer words. In addition, short stories are easier to understand and assimilate.

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This book, *Introducing English Literature - II*, has been written in the self-instructional mode (SIM) and is divided into five units wherein each unit begins with an 'Introduction' to the topic followed by an outline of the 'Unit Objectives'. The detailed content is then presented in a simple and an organized manner, interspersed with 'Check Your Progress' questions to test the understanding of the students. A 'Summary' along with a list of 'Key Terms' and a set of 'Questions and Exercises' is also provided at the end of each unit for effective recapitulation.

UNIT 1 SELECTED PASSAGES FOR EXPLANATION: *JULIUS CAESAR*

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Structure

- 1.0 Introduction
- 1.1 Unit Objectives
- 1.2 Selected Passages for Explanation: Part I
- 1.3 Selected Passages for Explanation: Part II
- 1.4 Summary
- 1.5 Key Terms
- 1.6 Answers to ‘Check Your Progress’
- 1.7 Questions and Exercises
- 1.8 Further Reading

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The play *Julius Caesar* has been written by William Shakespeare, the greatest dramatist of the Elizabethan Age. *Julius Caesar* is a historical play, first performed in 1599. It was the premier show of the newly rebuilt Globe Theatre. It was not published during Shakespeare’s lifetime. Appeared seven years after Shakespeare’s death in the First Folio of 1623. The play appeared in the Folio as *The Tragedy of Julius Caesar*, but was listed as *The Life and Death of Julius Caesar* in the table of contents. Most of the historical information for the play was taken from North’s translation of the work of the Greek historian, Plutarch. In this unit, you will be able to analyse selected passages from Shakespeare’s famous play *Julius Caesar*.

1.1 UNIT OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- Analyse selected passages from Shakespeare’s famous play *Julius Caesar*
- Assess the themes of the play *Julius Caesar*
- Evaluate the biographical sketches of characters like Julius, Cassius, Brutus, etc.

1.2 SELECTED PASSAGES FOR EXPLANATION: PART I

1. ‘Stand you directly in Antonius’ way
When he doth run his course.’

Explanation

It is February 15, the Feast of the Lupercal. Rome is not only celebrating the festival of Lupercal, but also rejoicing the victory of Julius Caesar over Pompey. Caesar enters in a ceremonial procession, with his wife Calpurnia, and his senators,

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accompanied by a huge crowd. He reminds Calpurnia to stand in Antony's way as he runs his course race naked through the city striking bystanders with a goatskin thong.

Superstition plays an important role in the play. During the celebration of festival of Lupercal, the priest of Lupercus, dressed in loincloth made of goatskin, sacrificed goats and a dog and smeared themselves with sacrificial blood. They then ran through the city carrying a goatskin thong, called a februa. Women placed themselves in such a way that the priests could strike them with the februa. It was a belief that a childless woman touched in this holy chase on the feast of holy Lupercal will soon be blessed with a child and freed from the sterile curse. Caesar is superstitious too, since he asks his wife to touch Antony in the middle of the race to become pregnant.

The initial impression of Caesar reveals him as a dictator. He shows no consideration for his wife's feelings when he refers to her sterility in public. Caesar's desire to produce a male heir also indicates that he intended to become the ruler of Rome and wanted to continue his reign. The power of politics is immediately brought to focus. Caesar authoritatively dictates others and gives curt orders. His orders are obeyed and his commands are executed. He instructs both Calpurnia and Antony to carry out his orders. Both instantly surrender to his dictates.

2. 'Yond Cassius has a lean and hungry look. He thinks too much. Such men are dangerous...

He reads much, He is a great observer, and he looks Quite through the deeds of men. He loves no plays As thou dost, Antony; he hears no music. Seldom he smiles, and smiles in such a sort

As if he mocked himself and scorned his spirit That could be moved to smile at anything. Such men as he be never at heart's ease Whiles they behold a greater than themselves, And therefore are they very dangerous.'

Explanation

These lines are spoken by Caesar in Act I, Scene II. Caesar and Antony have just come back from the games. Caesar sees Cassius, Brutus and Casca whispering to each other. He looks at Cassius and speaks these lines.

Caesar finds Cassius dangerous because he has soaring unfulfilled desires and ambitions which make him 'lean' and 'hungry'. Caesar says Cassius is envious of those who are greater than him. He is also very observant who penetrates through men's mind. He can see the hidden motives of men's actions. He is not interested in games and music. He does not smile much and whenever he does, it is to scorn or mock himself. People like Cassius are never at peace, they are restless when they see someone in higher position than themselves.

The lines draw a character sketch of Cassius, one of the Roman senators and main conspirators. Whatever Caesar has observed in the character of Cassius is true. He is jealous of Caesar because he believes he is no less than him. However, it is Julius Caesar, with all his infirmities, who enjoys power and the highest position in Rome. Cassius, personality clearly disturbs mighty Caesar.

From his insights into Cassius, it is evident that Caesar himself is an acute observer who can look through the deeds of men. Though, he voices his apprehensions about Cassius, but in his self-conceit, Caesar refuses to be intimidated by someone like him.

3. 'Then he offered it to him again; then he put it by again; but to my thinking, he was very loath to lay his fingers off it. And then he offered it the third time. He put it the third time by; and still as he refused it, the rabblement hooted, and clapped their chopt hands, and threw tip their sweaty nightcaps, and uttered such a deal of stinking breath because Caesar refused the crown that it had almost choked Caesar; for he swounded and fell down at it.'

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Explanation

Brutus has pulled Casca out from the crowd. They asked him for the reasons for loud cheering sounds the crowd made. Casca narrates the events that took place off stage to Brutus and Cassius. Casca tells Brutus and Cassius that the crowd shouted out loud three times because Julius Caesar pushed the crown offered to him by Antony and every time more gently than before. It appeared that Caesar loathed it to put off the coronet. Casca finds it all absurd since the crown was actually a coronet wreathed with laurel. After a while, Caesar was speechless and fainted in the market place with foam coming out of his mouth. While Brutus calls it epilepsy, Cassius dismisses as a tantrum. Casca reports that Caesar feigned fainting since every time he refused the crown, the crowd cheered louder. So, Caesar offered them his throat and fainted. On gaining senses, Caesar desired the crowd to consider his mistakes to be his infirmities. Many women forgave him for all his misconducts. Casca opines, people of Rome will forgive Caesar even if he stabs their mothers. Therefore, it is no better to pay heed. Caesar always faints when people do not act according to his pleasure and displeasure.

The narration gives us Casca's understanding of Caesar's personality. In his view, Caesar desperately wanted to accept the crown, even though it was just a wreath of laurel leaves and not the actual crown. To show his humility in front of the crowd he refused to accept it. The crowd so cheered Caesar's refusal of the crown that he had no choice, but to continue to refuse. Caesar was angered with the crowd's reaction and to win back their sympathy he suffered an epileptic fit. Many from the crowd immediately showed sympathy towards Caesar. Casca expresses his concern over the events that have just transpired. The incident reveals Caesar's ambition to become the king of Rome and we also get a glimpse of people's mind. The general public has mixed opinions about Caesar, while Brutus, Cassius and Casca clearly do not wish him to be any more powerful.

4. 'Well, Brutus, thou art noble; yet I see Thy honourable mettle may be wrought From that it is disposed. Therefore it is meet That noble minds keep ever with their likes; For who so firm that cannot be seduced?

Caesar doth bear me hard; but he loves Brutus. If I were Brutus now and he were Cassius, He should not humour me. I will this night, In several hands, in at his windows throw, As if they came from several citizens,

Writings, all tending to the great opinion That Rome holds of his name; wherein obscurely Caesar's ambition shall be glanced at. And after this let Caesar seat him sure, For we will shake him, or worse days endure.'

Explanation

These lines have been spoken by Cassius. Brutus and Cassius have been contemplating on the political situation of Rome and the repercussions of Caesar becoming the king. Brutus is in conflict with his own emotions. On one hand he loves Caesar,

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on the other, he seeks the good of Rome. He is committed to honour and virtue. It is only when Brutus expresses his reluctance to see Caesar as the king of Rome that Cassius unfolds his plan. Cassius is in a hurry to get rid of Caesar, Brutus is determined not to be rushed into any hasty decision.

After Brutus leaves, Cassius reveals his doubts in the above lines. Brutus is a noble man, but he can sway from his honour. Noble minds should keep company of other noble minds so that they are not trapped. Meeting Brutus often will help him retain his position on Caesar and not be influenced by anyone into changing his decision. Caesar dislikes Cassius, but likes Brutus. Cassius too knows of this bond of affection between Brutus and Caesar. He plans to throw writings in Caesar's window as if they have come from the citizens of Rome expressing high opinion of him. This will assure Caesar of his ambition. In the meantime, Cassius and his allies will execute their plan to depose Caesar. If this does not happen then they will have to see worse days than the present.

The lines reveal the character of both Brutus and Cassius. Though, Brutus leads the conspirators, but it is Cassius who plays the major role in influencing Brutus into assurance. In Cassius' words, Brutus is a noble Roman. His love for Caesar and Rome is strong, but he is going through a tumultuous phase. Brutus is in conflict with his own emotions. Cassius fears that his emotions for Caesar may overcome his loyalty to Rome if the connivance of Cassius is explicitly portrayed by the dramatist. He is sure to assassinate Caesar and will not let Brutus change his mind.

5. 'She dreamt to-night she saw my statue,

Which, like a fountain with an hundred spouts,

Did run pure blood; and many lusty Romans

Came smiling and did bathe their hands in it. And these does she apply for warnings and portents

And evils imminent, and on her knee Hath begged that I will stay at home to-day.'

Explanation

Caesar is with his wife Calpurnia in his house. Calpurnia stops him from going to the Senate. Decius comes to take Caesar with him to the Senate. He instructs Decius to inform the Senate that he will not attend the meeting today. Decius asks for the reason behind not going to the senate. Since, Caesar does not want to give any untrue reason for his absence, he relates Calpurnia's dream to Decius.

In the dream, Calpurnia has seen Caesar's statue. The statue has innumerable spouts like a fountain and blood is flowing from the spouts. Many blood thirsty Romans come near to the body smiling and wash their hands in the stream of royal blood. Calpurnia interprets the dream as a bad omen and a warning to Caesar. She has come down on her knees and begs Caesar to stay at home.

The scene foreshadows the impending death of Caesar. The dream and other portents foretell the death of someone of eminence. The dream of Calpurnia will come true this day. It is the ides of March and the soothsayer had asked Caesar to beware on this day in Act I, Scene II. His conspirators will murder him and wash their hands in his blood. Decius cleverly reinterprets the dream and convinces Caesar to accompany him to the Senate by appealing to his vanity. The manipulation of

facts in political situation is one of the major themes of the play. Decius' ironic interpretation of the dream also foreshadows Caesar's eventual rise to eternal fame.

The husband and wife scene clearly depicts the inferior position of women. Though, Calpurnia appears less submissive as compared to her first appearance in public, she is unable to persuade her husband to listen to her request to stay at home. Caesar does not mind telling Decius that Calpurnia begged him to not to go. As for Caesar, he maintains his public image in his private life too. He is dictatorial in her relationship with his wife as he is with his subjects and other senators.

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1.3 SELECTED PASSAGES FOR EXPLANATION: PART II

6. 'I could be well moved, if I were as you; If I could pray to move, prayers would move me: But I am constant as the Northern Star,
Of whose true-fixed and resting quality There is no fellow in the firmament. The skies are painted with unnumber'd sparks, They are all fire, and every one doth shine; But there's but one in all doth hold his place.
So in the world: 'tis furnished well with men, And men are flesh and blood, and apprehensive;
Yet in the number I do know but one That unassailable holds on his rank, Unshaked of motion; and that I am he,
Let me a little show it, even in this — That I was constant Cimber should be banished And constant do remain to keep him so... .'
'Et tu, Brute?— Then fall, Caesar!'

Explanation

Caesar speaks these lines in Act III, Scene I, after being stabbed many times by many conspirators who had decided to assassinate Julius Caesar. The whole conspiracy was led by Brutus. Brutus decides to kill Caesar because if he is crowned the king of Rome, he will grow in power, which will not be in the general good of Rome.

The other conspirators were Cassius, Casca, Cinna, Decius, Cimber, Nrutus, Trebonius.

Metellus Cimber approaches Caesar and asks for the reinstatement of his brother as a Roman citizen. Caesar's arrogance reaches astounding proportions as he refuses Cimber's plea based on his distaste for flattery and his power to remain constant. One by one each conspirator moves towards Caesar and encircle him. Having endured twenty-two stab wounds, Caesar is still standing. His wounds are splashing blood, which is the half fulfilment of Calpurnia's dream. It is the twenty-third wound inflicted by Brutus, the man he loved and trusted, that causes Caesar's life force to vanish. He echoes 'And you too, Brutus?' and falls dead to the floor.

The words are an expression of betrayal as well as shock. With the pathos of faithlessness, the last words also help to swing the sympathy of the audience back to Caesar. Caesar did not fall with the first twenty-two wounds by the other conspirators, but the last one proved fatal to his emotions. The dagger stabbed into his body by Brutus stunned him, he falls on the ground expressing his shock in the three words 'you too, Brute?'

Check Your Progress

1. When was the play *Julius Caesar* first performed?
2. Mention Casca's understanding of Caesar's personality in the play *Julius Caesar*.
3. What is one of the major themes of the play *Julius Caesar*?

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7. 'Friends, Romans, countrymen, lend me your ears;

I come to bury Caesar, not to praise him.

The evil that men do lives after them;

The good is oft interred with their bones;

So let it be with Caesar...

He was my friend, faithful and just to me; But Brutus says he was ambitious,
And Brutus is an honourable man.

He hath brought many captives home to Rome, Whose ransoms did the general
coffers fill. Did this in Caesar seem ambitious? When that the poor have cried,
Caesar hath wept;

Ambition should be made of sterner stuff.

Yet Brutus says he was ambitious; And Brutus is an honourable man. You all
did see that on the Lupercal I thrice presented him a kingly crown, Which he
did thrice refuse. Was this ambition?

Yet Brutus says he was ambitious; And sure he is an honourable man. I speak
not to disprove what Brutus spoke, But here I am to speak what I do know.
You all did love him once, not without cause.

What cause withholds you then to mourn for him? O judgment, thou art fled
to brutish beasts, And men have lost their reason! Bear with me. My heart is
in the coffin there with Caesar, And I must pause till it come back to me.'

Explanation

These lines are spoken by Antony in Act III, Scene II. Brutus has just addressed the citizens of Rome to tell them the reasons for killing Julius Caesar. He requested them to be patient until the end of his speech, and to believe him because of his honour and respect. Brutus' love for Caesar was no less than any of his friend. He weeps for Caesar who loved him, he honours Caesar for his courage. Brutus rose against Caesar not because he loved Caesar less, but that he loved Rome more. He did not want the citizens of Rome to die as slaves. He would rather have Caesar dead, and live as free men. No one in Rome is so low to live a life of a slave, no one will be vile to not love his country. He killed Caesar for his ambition. Brutus ends his speech saying that he killed his best friend for the good of Rome. In the meantime, Antony has come with the dead body of Caesar to give him an honourable funeral.

Antony speaks rhetorically. He has come to bury Caesar, not to praise him. The evil that men do lives after them and the good is often buried with their bones. Same will be with Caesar. Addressing Brutus as noble again and again, Antony says, if he said that Caesar was ambitious then he must be so and he has paid for his ambitions. It is by the permission of Brutus, an honourable man that he speaks. In a few minutes, Antony starts praising Caesar, a faithful friend and always just to him. Caesar brought many captives to Rome, whose ransoms filled the public treasury. When the poor cried, Caesar wept. If this is ambition then ambition should be made of sterner stuff. Yet Brutus, an honourable man, says Caesar was ambitious. On the feast of Lupercal, three times Caesar was presented with a kingly crown, and every time he refused. Yet Brutus, an honourable man, says he was ambitious. Here, he stands not to refute Brutus, but to speak what Antony knows of Caesar. All the Roman citizens loved Caesar at one time, not without cause. What has now

stopped them from mourning for him? He cries that men have lost their reason. He says he will not wrong Brutus and his allies, he will wrong Caesar, himself and the Romans. He mentions Caesar's will, which if the Romans come to know of, they would rush to kiss dead Caesar's wounds and dip their handkerchiefs in his blood, and beg a hair of his for memory.

The death of Caesar is a moment of emotional intensity in the play, especially for Antony, a loyal friend. Though Antony claims that he is not a great orator, but with his rhetorical funeral speech, he stirs the crowd to a frenzy. He ensures the downfall of the conspirators with his speech. He uses poetry to move the people of Rome to act violently against the conspirators. To win the confidence of the crowd, Antony addresses them as friends and assures them that his intention is only to bury Caesar with honour and respect. During his speech, Antony quotes Brutus who gave Caesar's ambition as a reason for his death. In his speech, Antony rhetorically and forcefully refutes Brutus' claims that Caesar was ambitious. Keeping in mind the instructions of Brutus, he reminds the crowd that Brutus and the other conspirators are honourable men. He alternates ironic references to Brutus' honour and nobility with evidences to prove that Caesar was not ambitious, as Brutus claims. By using irony, Antony does not violate the instructions of Brutus. Simultaneously, he proves that Caesar was not as ambitious as Brutus claims to justify his murder. He influences the crowd to understand the subtext of the funeral speech and completely tears down Brutus' argument that Caesar was ambitious.

Antony was wise in the choice of his words. He manipulated the crowd to move to frenzy. He paid attention to the effect of his words on the crowd. The moment he understood that he has undone Brutus, he passionately weeps for his beloved friend. His heart is full of intense grief. The crowd becomes silent and sympathizes with Antony. His genuine feelings and passionate words stir up the crowd, the mob has turned into a violent force, who rush to look for the murderers of Caesar. Antony successfully maneuvered the things to seek retribution. The blood thirsty crowd solicits revenge.

The mob was established as a character in the opening scene of the play, Act I, Scene I. It has its own set of characteristics and can be easily moved to change its mind on an issue with rhetorics. In the opening scene, the tribunes remind the people of their fickleness that it was not long ago they stood at the same place celebrating the return of Pompey. With their moving speech the crowd feels ashamed and moves away from the street. They seem to easily switch their allegiances. These impressionable commoners prove to be a great force in the turn of events. Antony uses his rhetorics to switch their allegiance to Caesar and punish the conspirators, leading to a civil war in Rome.

8. 'This was the noblest Roman of them all. All the conspirators save only he Did what they did in envy of great Caesar; He only, in a general honest thought And common good to all, made one of them. His life was gentle, and the elements So mixed in him that Nature might stand up And say to all the world, 'This was a man!'

Explanation

Antony speaks these lines on the death of Brutus. Brutus tells his friend Strato that it is impossible for them to win the battle against the triumvirate. He tells him about the appearance of Caesar's ghost that appeared to him at night. He asks Strato to

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hold his sword and runs into it and dies. Strato tells Octavius, no one, but Brutus alone could conquer Brutus. No other man gains honor by killing Brutus.

Antony respectfully calls Brutus the noblest Roman of them all who killed Caesar because all the other conspirators killed Caesar out of envy. Brutus, on the other hand, is troubled by Caesar's threat to the republican freedom of Rome. He did not want Rome to have a tyrannical rule of kings and dictators. It was his political choice to save the republic that entails his moral choice to kill Caesar. Brutus alone killed Caesar for the good of Rome. He was gentle and noble, and the goodness was so balanced in his personality that nature itself will stand up to the world to say that Brutus was a noble soul.

9. 'This dream is all amiss interpreted; It was a vision fair and fortunate. Your statue spouting blood in many pipes, 85 In which so many smiling Romans bathed, Signifies that from you great Rome shall suck Reviving blood, and that great men shall press For tinctures, stains, relics, and cognizance. This by Calpurnia's dream is signified.'

Explanation

These lines have been spoken by Decius. Decius has come to Caesar house to escort him to the Senate. Caesar tells Decius to inform the senate that he will not come. To say he cannot come will be false and dare not come will be falser. Decius insists on telling the real reason behind not going to the Senate. He tells Calpurnia does not want him to go out of the house. She saw a dream last night in which Caesar's statue, sprayed blood like a fountain with hundred spouts. Many joyful Romans came smiling and bathed their hands in it. She sees this as an evil omen and a warning. Calpurnia begged him on her knees to stay home.

Decius reinterprets the dream for Caesar as a good omen. He explains the dream as a vision fair and fortunate, the statue spouting blood from many pipes, in which so many smiling Romans bathed means that his blood will revive Rome. Many great men shall come to Caesar for his blessings and recognition. He further adds that the Senate has decided to give the crown of Rome to mighty Caesar this day. If he does not come to the Senate today, their minds may change. If Caesar hides himself because his wife asked him to, the Senate will make a mockery of him. They will whisper that Caesar is afraid. He asks to be pardoned for making bold statements and also because he loves Caesar. Caesar, instigated by Decius, decides to go. Just then Publius, Brutus, Ligarius, Metellus, Casca, Trebonius, and Cinna come and Antony follows. Ironically, Caesar asks the conspirators to be near him. Caesar welcomes the conspirators into his home and invites them to share wine with him. It can be interpreted as the biblical reference to the Last Supper. In an aside, Trebonius says so near will he be that Caesar's best friends would have been further. Caesar, ironically, wants to go as friends together with the group to the Senate. Brutus, in an aside feels saddened saying his so-called friends are not true. Decius shows his dexterity in manipulating Caesar by convincing him to go the Senate. He uses flattery to appeal to Caesar's vanity. Decius articulates one of the major themes present in *Julius Caesar*, the manipulation of people and circumstances to achieve one's own end.

Check Your Progress

4. What was Brutus' reason for killing Caesar?
5. What is the role of the mob in the play *Julius Caesar*?

1.4 SUMMARY

- Superstition plays an important role in the play. During the celebration of the festival of Lupercal, the priest of Lupercus, dressed in loincloth made of goatskin, sacrificed goats and a dog and smeared themselves with sacrificial blood.
- The initial impression of Caesar reveals him as a dictator. He shows no consideration for his wife's feelings when he refers to her sterility in public.
- The power of politics is immediately brought to focus. Caesar authoritatively dictates others and give curt orders.
- The narration gives us Casca's understanding of Caesar's personality. In his view, Caesar desperately wanted to accept the crown, even though it was just a wreath of laurel leaves and not the actual crown.
- The death of Caesar is a moment of emotional intensity in the play, especially for Antony, a loyal friend.
- Though Antony claims that he is not a great orator, but with his rhetorical funeral speech he stirs the crowd to a frenzy.
- The mob was established as a character in the opening scene of the play, Act I, Scene I. It has its own set of characteristics and can be easily moved to change its mind on an issue with rhetorics.
- In the opening scene, the tribunes remind the people of their fickleness that it was not long ago they stood at the same place celebrating the return of Pompey.

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1.5 KEY TERMS

- **Lupercal:** Lupercalia was a very ancient, possibly pre-Roman pastoral festival, observed in the city of Rome on February 15, to avert evil spirits and purify the city, releasing health and fertility.
- **Februa:** In ancient Roman religion, Februus, whose name means 'purifier', was the god of purification. Februus is possibly named in honor of the more ancient Februa, (also Februalia and Februatio), the spring festival of washing and purification.
- **Heir:** An heir apparent or heiress apparent is a person who is first in line of succession and cannot be displaced from inheriting by the birth of another person.

1.6 ANSWERS TO 'CHECK YOUR PROGRESS'

1. *Julius Caesar* is a historical play, first performed in 1599.
2. In Casca's view, Caesar desperately wanted to accept the crown, even though it was just a wreath of laurel leaves and not actual crown. To show his humility in front of the crowd he refused to accept it.

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3. The manipulation of facts in political situation is one of the major themes of the play.
4. Brutus decides to kill Caesar because if he is crowned the king of Rome, he will grow in power, which will not be in the general good of Rome.
5. The mob was established as a character in the opening scene of the play, Act I, Scene I. It has its own set of characteristics and can be easily moved to change its mind on an issue with rhetorics. In the opening scene, the tribunes remind the people of their fickleness that it was not long ago they stood at the same place celebrating the return of Pompey. With their moving speech the crowd feels ashamed and moves away from the street. They seem to easily switch their allegiances.

1.7 QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

Short-Answer Questions

1. Who is the protagonist in the play *Julius Caesar*? Is it Caesar who dies well before the end but whose power and name continue on? Or is it Brutus, the noble man, who falls because of his tragic flaws?
2. *Julius Caesar*, a play about statehood and leadership, is one of the most quoted of Shakespeare's plays in modern-day political speeches. Why do you think this play about conspiracy and assassination might appeal to politicians today?
3. Consider Brutus's actions. Is he right to join the conspiracy against Caesar?
4. Think about Caesar the mortal man as opposed to Caesar the public figure. How does he continue to wield power over events even after he is dead?
5. How does Cassius trick Brutus into joining the conspirators?
6. After an ominous dream, Calpurnia begs Caesar to stay away from the Senate and, at first, he agrees. What changes his mind?

Long-Answer Questions

1. Discuss inflexibility in the play *Julius Caesar*, focusing on Caesar and Brutus. How is each man inflexible?
2. Discuss friendship in the play. Consider Caesar and Brutus, Caesar and Antony, Brutus and Cassius, Antony and Octavius, or any other pairings. Are these true friendships or merely political alliances forged for the sake of convenience and self-preservation?
3. As Caesar's appointed successor, how does Octavius carry on the great general's legacy? Consider his use of language and commands as well as the ways in which the other characters regard him and refer to him.
4. Describe the encounter between Brutus and Caesar's ghost.
5. Explain the significance of Antony's final speech, beginning with the line, 'This was the noblest Roman of them all'.

1.8 FURTHER READING

Selected Passages for
Explanation: *Julius
Caesar*

Griffin, Miriam (Ed.). 2015. *A Companion to Julius Caesar*. United States: John Wiley & Sons.

Thomson, Peter. 1992. *Shakespeare's Theatre*. United Kingdom: Psychology Press.

Bergeron Moore, David. 1996. *Reading and Writing in Shakespeare*. United States: Associated University Press.

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UNIT 2 WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE: *JULIUS CAESAR*

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Structure

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- 2.6 Summary
- 2.7 Key Terms
- 2.8 Answers to 'Check Your Progress'
- 2.9 Questions and Exercises
- 2.10 Further Reading

2.0 INTRODUCTION

The play *Julius Caesar* is one of the famous tragedies written by Shakespeare. *Julius Caesar* is the story of an assassination, that is, the murder of a public figure. This play explores the ethical, political and psychological turmoil that surrounds such an event—the assassination of a public figure. This event highlights the chaos prevalent in the twentieth century history as well. In this unit, you will be introduced to the life and prominent works of William Shakespeare. Moreover, you will get to study his play *Julius Caesar* and analyse the major themes and literary devices of this play.

2.1 UNIT OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- Prepare a brief biographical sketch of William Shakespeare
- Assess the plays written by Shakespeare
- Summarize the play *Julius Caesar* act-wise
- Analyse the themes and literary devices of the play *Julius Caesar*

2.2 AN INTRODUCTION TO WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

John Shakespeare, the father of William Shakespeare, was a man of meagre means. But his fortune turned after he married Mary Arden in 1557. Mary was the daughter

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of a prosperous farmer, and earned him a house, fifty acres of land and money in the form of dowry. In 1564 William Shakespeare was born. Nothing much is known about Shakespeare's early life until 1582 when, as records suggest, Shakespeare married Anne Hathaway, daughter of Richard Hathaway. The date on Anne's tombstone indicates that she was older to the poet by eight years.

By the 1590s Shakespeare had already been known as an actor and plagiarist as confirmed by Robert Greene's pamphlet 'Greenes Groatsworth of Witte: Bought with a Million of Repentaunce'. In 1593 *Venus and Adonis* was published; it was dedicated to the Earl of Southampton. But the dedication does not imply any connection between the poet and the patron. *The Rape of Lucrece* was published in 1594, again dedicated to the Earl of Southampton, indicating that he first achieved his literary distinction through his references. By 1594–95 he was already a part of Lord Chamberlain's Company as an actor. In the following years, Shakespeare's name was registered in some financial ambiguities. But by 1598 Shakespeare seems to have emerged successfully in the professional front as his quarto editions of *Richard II* and *Love's Labour Lost* appear that year and there is mention of his acting in Ben Jonson's work, *Every Man in His Humour*.

In the meantime, Shakespeare's reputation as a playwright was increasing so much so that in contemporary literature references to his works are abundant. John Webster in the acknowledgement to *The White Devil*, 1612, has shown his gratitude to his predecessors and a few contemporary artists including Shakespeare.

Shakespeare's poems earned him well. But his plays were not that lucrative because the playwright gave up all rights of his work by selling his plays to the manager of the company. But his investment in real estate in Stratford and London brought him substantial fortune.

With the accession of James I after the death of Queen Elizabeth, the situation improved even more. James I's inclination towards the arts turned out to be a boon for Shakespeare as well as Lord Chamberlain's Company. The Revels Accounts of the Company identify Shakespeare as one of the prominent actors. The recognition ushered by the court added to Shakespeare's fame. Jonson mentions Shakespeare playing a role in *Sejanus* in 1603. But later his name does not appear among actors, suggesting that sometime after Queen Elizabeth's death he gave up acting.

Seven years after Shakespeare's death in April 1616, Heming and Condell, his former colleagues from the theatre, collected and published the First Folio consisting of thirty-six of his plays.

2.2.1 Shakespeare's Plays

Though it is slightly problematic to provide for specific dates for composition, publication and performance of Shakespeare's plays due to lack of information, yet for the sake of convenience certain dates have been accepted as standard. Below is a list of his works and corresponding dates of their performance and publication.

- 1592: March 3, *Henry VI Part I* produced. First printed 1594
- 1592–93: *Henry VI Part II* first performed. First print 1594
- 1592–93: *Henry VI Part III* first performed. First printed 1623
- 1594: January 24 *Titus Andronicus* first performance. First print 1594
- 1594: December 28, Confirmed performance of *The Comedy of Errors*

- 1593–94: *Taming of the Shrew* first performed. First print 1623
- 1594–95: *Two Gentlemen of Verona* first performance. First printed 1623
- 1594–95: *Love's Labour Lost* first performed. First print 1598
- 1594–95: *Romeo and Juliet* first performance. First printed 1597
- 1595–96: *A Midsummer Night's Dream* first performed. First print 1600
- 1596–97: *The Merchant of Venice* first performed. First printed 1600
- 1597–98: *Henry IV Part I* first performed. First print 1598
- 1597–98: *Henry IV Part II* first performance. First printed 1600
- 1598–99: *Much Ado About Nothing* first performed. First print 1600
- 1598–99: *Henry V* first performed. First printed 1600
- 1599–1600: *As You Like It* first performed. First print 1623
- 1600–01: *Julius Caesar* first performance. First printed 1623
- 1601: February 7 First Recorded production of *Richard II*. First printed 1597
- 1600–01: *Richard III* first Recorded performance. First print 1597
- 1600–01: *Hamlet* first performed. First printed 1603
- 1600–01: *The Merry Wives of Windsor* first performance. First print 1602
- 1602: February 2 First Recorded production of *Twelfth Night*. First printed 1623
- 1602–03: *All's Well That Ends Well* first performed. First print 1623
- 1604: February 7 First Recorded production of *Troilus and Cressida*. First printed 1609
- 1604: December 26 First performance of *Measure for Measure*. First print 1623
- 1604–05: *Othello* first performed. First printed 1622
- 1606: December 26 First recorded performance of *King Lear*. First print 1608
- 1605–06: *Macbeth* first performance. First printed 1623
- 1606–07: *Antony and Cleopatra* first performed. First print 1623
- 1607–08: *Coriolanus* first performed. First printed 1623
- 1607–08: *Timon of Athens* first performance. First print 1623
- 1608–09: *Pericles* first performed. First printed 1609
- 1611: November 1 First Recorded production of *The Tempest*. First print 1623
- 1611–12: *Macbeth* First recorded performance. First printed 1623
- 1611–12: *Cymbeline* First recorded performance. First print 1623
- 1611–12: *The Winter's Tale* First recorded performance. First printed 1623
- 1612–13: *Henry VIII* first performance. First print 1623
- 1612–13: *The Two Noble Kinsmen*. First printed 1634

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Check Your Progress

1. When was William Shakespeare born?
2. When was *Venus and Adonis* published?
3. What did Shakespeare do in Ben Jonson's work, *Every Man in His Humour*?
4. Who published Shakespeare's First Folio?
5. When was the first theatre built in England?
6. When did John Heywood live?
7. Name the first English comedy.

2.2.2 Drama in England

In comparison to the previous eras, English drama saw a sudden growth in the last quarter of the sixteenth century. The first theatre was built in 1576 in London. Even Shakespeare had composed more than half his works by 1600. The roots of drama in England are associated with religious ceremonies. In the earlier days, Latin was the official language of the church and of official proceedings. Latin was not understood by the common people.

As the presentations in drama became more elaborate, the stage also changed. It first moved to the churchyard, then to the fields, and finally to the streets and open spaces in the towns. The change in location was supported by changes in the language used. Latin was passé. Vernacular was used. Unlike priests who performed in Miracle Plays, now laymen participated. The attitude towards these productions changed. Priests were no more permitted to take part in plays. The content of the drama too had taken a leap where the subject matter was no longer restricted to the sacred scriptures or lives of holy people.

Moving on from Morality Plays, Interludes emerged; a feature that was common to both Miracle Plays and Interludes was the Vice, a character who appeared under the garb of hypocrisy and deceit and whose job was to have fun mainly at the expense of the devil. The Vice is significant because some of its features are found in the fools of the later dramas.

John Heywood, a significant author of Interludes, lived during the reign of Queen Elizabeth and Interludes continued to exist in the seventeenth century. But gradually it moved towards disappearance and a new movement came. With the emergence of Renaissance, the literary scenario was filled with new ideas especially from Italy and the classical world.

In drama, one can find a confluence of foreign material and local essence. Like the first English comedy, *Ralph Roister Doister* by Udall was adapted from the plot of *Miles Gloriosus* composed by Plautus to suit the taste of an English audience. It was around this time that Shakespeare appeared on the literary scene.

2.3 CLASSIFICATION OF THE PLAYS

Let us go through the classification of Shakespeare's plays.

- (i) **The Early Comedies:** *The Comedy of Errors*, *Love's Labour Lost* and *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* belong to this group. These early plays are rather immature where the plots are less original, the characterization is sketchy and the wit falls flat. Over all, the style is not that of a mature Shakespeare.
- (ii) **The English Histories:** These plays display the rapidly maturing art of Shakespeare and his concern with the contemporary desire for stable government. The history plays like *Richard II*, *Henry IV (2)* and *Henry V* are remarkable for memorable characters like Falstaff and the mingling of low life with chronicle history.
- (iii) **The Mature Comedies:** To this group belong *Much Ado About Nothing*, *Twelfth Night*, *The Merchant of Venice* and *As You Like It*. The plays are full of vitality; contain many comic situations and the most popular of Shakespeare's comic characters like Beatrice and Benedick, Sir Toby Belch and Touchstone who are full of warmth and humanity.

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- (iv) **The Sombre Plays:** Also called ‘Problem Plays’ or ‘Bitter Comedies’, these plays show the falsity of romance and the sordidness of reality. They are comedies because they do not end with the death of the chief characters, but reflect a cynical and disillusioned attitude towards life. *All’s Well That Ends Well*, *Measure for Measure* and *Troilus and Cressida* fall in this category.
- (v) **The Great Tragedies:** *Hamlet*, *Othello*, *Macbeth* and *King Lear* are the great tragedies of Shakespeare and mark the climax of his dramatic art. They are supreme in the realms of literature because of their intensity of emotion, psychological insight and powerful style.
- (vi) **The Roman Plays:** Though written at fairly wide intervals, they follow the lines of the tragedies and are based on North’s translation of Plutarch’s *Lives*. *Julius Caesar*, *Antony and Cleopatra* and *Coriolanus* belong to this group.
- (vii) **The Last Plays:** *Cymbeline*, *The Winter’s Tale* and *The Tempest* are the last plays, marking a befitting end to the career of the greatest dramatist in the English literary canon with their predominant note of reconciliation and forgiveness.

2.3.1 Features of the Plays

The features of Shakespearean plays are as follows:

- (i) **Originality:** Though the plots of his plays were largely borrowed (in keeping with the tradition of the age) with his Midas touch, he turned them into gold — impinging on them the mark of his originality by interweaving plot within plot as in *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, by making history glow with the spirit of his imagination in *Macbeth* and by giving each of his plays a uniqueness which has made them immortal in literature.
- (ii) **Characters:** Shakespeare’s forte lay in characterization and in terms of output and variety, he is unrivalled in literature. His characters, irrespective of their historical or romantic background, have a sure touch of humanity that makes them plausible, keeping them within the range of the audience’s sympathy. Regarding Shakespeare’s rich gallery of portraits, Edward Albert says: ‘... the villain Iago is a man of resolution, intelligence and fortitude; the murderer Claudius (in *Hamlet*) shows affection, wisdom and fortitude; the peerless Cleopatra is narrow, spiteful, and avaricious; and the beast Caliban has his moments of ecstatic vision.’ Looking at his versatility, one cannot help but exclaim like Hamlet ‘What a piece of work is man!’

Another significant feature of Shakespeare’s characterization is his objectivity and though many have tried, none has achieved his ability to remain neutral to heroes (Hamlet, Othello and Lear) and villains (Claudius, Iago, Goneril and Regan) alike. Each of the characters, from the king to the clown, has a philosophy of his own. As Hamlet says:

*There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio,
Than are dreamt of in your philosophy.
And Macbeth confesses in a soliloquy:
Life’s but a walking shadow, a poor player
That struts and frets his hour upon the stage
And then is heard no more: it is a tale*

*Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury
signifying nothing.*

For the melancholic philosopher Jacques in As You Like It:

All the world's a stage

And all the men and women merely players.

And finally as Prospero points out: *We are such stuff As dreams are made on,
and our little life Is rounded with a sleep.*

- (iii) **Metre:** The blank verse polished by Marlowe attains a brightness and shine in the hands of Shakespeare. He shows more range and variety than any other artist who dabbled in the use of the blank verse. The soliloquies of the great tragedies are a testimony to this fact, whether it is Macbeth

*Tomorrow, and tomorrow, and tomorrow,
Creeps in this petty pace from day to day,
To the last syllable of recorded time;
And all our yesterdays have lighted fools
The way to dusty death.*

Or, Hamlet's *To be, or not to be: that is the question: Whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune, Or to take arms against a sea of troubles, And by opposing end them?*

- (iv) **Style:** Besides his dramatic gift, Shakespeare was essentially a poet. The beautiful songs interspersed in his plays show his poetic genius. His style reveals a consummate craftsmanship and is a combination of versification and rarity of images with accompanying music. Such a style moves easily into the highest flights of poetry as in *Twelfth Night*:

*That strain again! It had a dying fall:
O! it came o'er my ear like the sweet sound
That breathes upon a bank of violets,
Stealing and giving odour.*

Iago's remark on seeing Othello already destroyed by jealousy

*Not poppy, nor mandragora,
Nor all the drowsy syrups of the world
Shall ever medicine thee to that sweet sleep
Which thou ow'dest yesterday.*

shows the beauty of the rhythm that brands Iago as an infernal villain.

Shakespeare is, undoubtedly, a universal poet and dramatist. In Ben Jonson's words, he 'was not of an age, but for all time.' His genius has stood the test of time and his plays trace the drama of human life with its share of joys and sorrows. As Legouis points out:

Free of every theory, accepting all of life, rejecting nothing, uniting the real and the poetic, appealing to the most various men, to a rude workman as to a wit, Shakespeare's drama is a great river of life and beauty. All who thirst for art or truth, the comic or the tender, ecstasy or satire, light or shade, can stop to drink from its waters, and at almost every instant of their changing moods find the one drop to shake their thirst.

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Check Your Progress

8. Name some of Shakespeare's plays which belong to 'The Early Comedies' category?
9. What are 'The Sombre Plays'?

2.4 ACT-WISE SUMMARY OF THE PLAY

Julius Caesar is thought to have been the play Shakespeare wrote for the opening of the new Globe Theatre in 1599. The printed version of the play appeared for the first time, seven years after Shakespeare's death, in the First Folio of 1623. The play appeared in the Folio as *The Tragedy of Julius Caesar* but was listed as *The Life and Death of Julius Caesar* in the table of contents.

The majority of Shakespeare's information about the people and events in *Julius Caesar* was taken from the work of the Greek historian, Plutarch's *Lives of the Noble Grecians and Romans* translated in English by Sir Thomas North. North rendered the French translation of Plutarch's work into English.

Julius Caesar, the play, deals with actual historical events in Rome and explores the political and social issues. Political questions are central to the play. The play deals with the values of Roman Republicanism.

2.4.1 Act I

Let us look at the scene-wise summary of the play.

Act I, Scene I: A Street in Rome

The play begins with the gathering of plebeians on the streets of Rome. Flavius and Marullus, both tribunes (elected officials that represent the people in the Roman republic), ask the common people why they are out in their best attire, rather than doing their daily work. The men receive indirect and condescending answers by the crowd, especially the cobbler. Eventually, Flavius and Marullus learn that the men are out to pay tribute to Caesar, who has had a recent victory on Pompey's sons. The feast of Lupercal has been combined with the celebration of Julius Caesar's victory over Pompey. The feast of Lupercal, a festival of fertility, was held on 15 February to honour Lupercus, god of flocks and herds. The commoners are rejoicing in the festivities by taking a holiday, dressed in their best clothes.

The tribunes chastise the tradesmen for their swift reversal of loyalties, from Pompey to Julius Caesar. They rebuke these commoners for showering praises on Caesar and rejoicing in his victory. They curse the revellers to be punished by gods and become nostalgic about Pompey and his glory. Flavius tells them to go and shed tears in river Tiber to mourn the victory of Caesar. Flavius and Marullus advise them to leave, which they do, seemingly feeling guilty. In order to lessen the celebrations in the honour of Caesar, Marullus and Flavius move around removing decorations from his statues and vandalizing anything that pays homage to Julius Caesar.

The celebrations of the common men are contrasted with the unhappiness of the tribunes, the official guardians of the rights of commoners, on the victory of Julius Caesar over Pompey. This puts the central conflict of the play into place. This scene reveals that there is a strong force, even within the government, that is against Caesar and afraid of his becoming too powerful. This conflict of interests further unfolds in the next scene when a full conspiracy against Caesar begins to take shape. It is evident that the officials do not want him to become politically stronger. Otherwise, they will have more to fear. The scene also demonstrates that the tribunes, while determined to avoid being controlled by a tyrant, are themselves behaving like tyrants.

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The mob is established as a character that has its own set of characteristics and can be easily moved to change its mind on an issue with the help of rhetoric. When the tribunes remind the people of their fickleness that it was not long ago they stood at the same place celebrating the return of Pompey. When berated by the tribunes, the crowd feels ashamed and moves away from the street. They seem to easily switch their allegiances. These impressionable commoners will prove to be a great force in the turn of events in the play.

Marullus and Flavius chide the commoners for not carrying their tools. On regular days, men do not walk on streets without their tools, an indication of their profession. This is a reference to an Elizabethan law that required workers to identify themselves by wearing their work clothes and carrying the tools of their trade. Shakespeare often used Elizabethan references in his plays, regardless of the actual timeframe in which the story was taking place, hence, making it easy for the audience to connect with his work.

Act I, Scene II: A Public Place

Caesar enters in a ceremonial procession, with his wife Calpurnia, and his senators, accompanied by a huge crowd. He reminds Calpurnia to stand in Antony's way as he runs his course race naked through the city striking bystanders with a goatskin thong. He gives the same order to Antony to which he gives his slavish acceptance saying whatever Caesar says will be performed. Amongst all the sounds of trumpets, a soothsayer warns Caesar to be cautious on ides of March, that is, the 15 March. Brutus repeats the warning of the soothsayer. Caesar dismisses the warning calling the soothsayer a dreamer.

All exit to witness the race, Brutus and Cassius stay. Brutus expresses his disinterestedness to enjoy the games, saying he lacks the vivaciousness and jest for life and its merriments like Antony. Cassius complains of Brutus' indifferent behaviour towards him which Brutus attributes to the conflicting emotions that he has been experiencing off late. No friend of Brutus, which includes Cassius, should be affected by it.

Cassius asks Brutus if he can see his own face to which Brutus replies that a person can see himself only through reflection in other things. Cassius insists on acting as a mirror to Brutus to show him what he himself does not know. He expresses his sadness on the ignorance of Brutus of his own worth which other respected Romans, except Caesar, praise. Admired by many for his great value, they wish to be guided by Brutus in these troubled times.

The spirits of Brutus are clouded with fear. He does not wish to seek what he does not have in himself. The cheering offstage reveals his fear and impels Brutus to believe that the public wants Caesar to be their king. Getting a hint from Brutus, Cassius manipulatively confirms from him about his intentions on Caesar being the king of Rome. Brutus clearly remarks, though he loves Caesar, he does not want him to become the king of Rome since that would not be in the common good of the country. He wishes to hear only about the welfare of people of Rome. He declares his intentions to look at honour and death indifferently if they bring no good to Rome. He loves honour more than he fears death. He declares his unwillingness to live under the oppression that threatens them. Cassius calls it a virtue.

Sensing the coldness of Brutus towards Julius Caesar, embittered Cassius launches a fierce verbal attack on Caesar. He begins with pointing at the physical infirmities of Caesar and narrates incidents from the past. Once upon a time, Caesar challenged Cassius to swim across river Tiber when the wild river roared. At this moment, when Caesar was nearly drowned he cried for help and it was Cassius who saved his life. Now, Cassius has to bow before Caesar who has become a god and Cassius is still a wretched man. Once in Spain, Caesar shook with fever, the colour of his lips was lost and his eyes, whose glances awed the world, had lost their lustre. He groaned in pain and the tongue that motivates the Romans who make his speeches immortal in their books, had cried for a drink to cure him. Calling Caesar a coward, Cassius remarks everyone is born as free as Caesar and he does not wish to stand in awe of someone whom he thinks is no better than him.

Cassius is amazed that such a feeble man Caesar should command the respect of the entire world and keep all the honour to himself. He believes that Caesar just strides a narrow world like a colossus and petty men like him honour him for his petty deeds. The fault is not in Caesar but in people who honour him. They have themselves chosen to be accepted as subordinates. Brutus and Caesar are just names, and when put together, it is Brutus who sounds fairer and weighs heavier than Caesar. There is no reason then why should Caesar's name be honoured more than Brutus. Caesar is not as great as he is thought to be. It is shameful time for Rome who has lost the breed of noble people. No age in history of Rome has had just one famous man.

More cheers, shouts and trumpets offstage worry Brutus. He believes the cheers indicate choice of people to heap more praise on Caesar.

Cassius tells Brutus not to be suspicious of his intentions reminding Brutus of the part played by his ancestor in dispensing tyranny from Rome. Brutus does not seem to be suspicious of Cassius' intentions. He is aware of the state of affairs in Rome and has already thought of the things Cassius talks about. Brutus is just reluctant to express himself on the political life of Rome at the moment. He assures Cassius that he will consider his words, listen to him patiently in future too, and will answer the issues later. Brutus feels ashamed of calling himself a Roman in these hard times. He is worried about the future of Rome if Caesar becomes the king. Cassius is glad to have been able to penetrate Brutus' mind and opinion on Caesar becoming a king.

After the games are over, Caesar returns with his attendants. Brutus notices anger on the faces of Caesar and Cicero and a pale look on Calpurnia's face.

Caesar warns Antony to be wary of Cassius. He suggests it is desirable to have fat people, who sleep well at night to be around him. Sleek headed, lean and hungry people like Cassius, who think too much are generally dangerous. Antony speaks for Cassius calling him a well-respected and noble Roman. Caesar gives his opinion of Cassius. He reads too much, is a close observer, and seems to understand the thinking of men. He loves no plays like Antony, hears no music, and he seldom smiles. And when he does, he smiles as if he mocks himself and scorns the spirit that could be moved to smile at anything. Such men are never at heart's ease when they see someone greater than themselves. That is why they are considered dangerous men. Such people should be feared. Caesar himself is not afraid of anyone. He asks Antony to come on his right side since his left ear is deaf.

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Brutus pulls Casca out of the crowd when the train passes. Casca informs Brutus and Cassius that the crowd shouted out loud three times because Julius Caesar pushed the crown offered to him by Antony and every time more gently than before. It appeared that Caesar loathed to put off the coronet. Casca finds it all absurd since crown was actually a coronet wreathed with laurel. After a while, Caesar was speechless and fainted in the market place with foam coming out of his mouth. While Brutus calls it epilepsy, Cassius dismisses it as a tantrum. Casca reports that Caesar is feigning unconsciousness since every time he refused the crown, the crowd cheered louder. So, Caesar offered them his throat and fainted. On regaining his consciousness, Caesar desired the crowd to consider his mistakes to be his infirmities. Many women forgave him for all his misconducts. Casca opines, people of Rome will forgive Caesar even if stabs their mothers. Therefore, it is no better to pay heed. Caesar always faints when people do not act according to his pleasure and displeasure. Cicero too spoke but in Greek and Casca did not understand anything but people who understand Greek shook their heads and smiled at one another. Another important news is that Marullus and Flavius have been deprived of their tribuneship and exiled for pulling down the banners in Caesar's honour and praise.

As Casca leaves, Brutus comments that Casca who used to be clever and witty in his school days, has grown up into being excessively blunt. Cassius comments Casca has put up this rude behaviour so that people may be able to assimilate his mocking remarks. He has the potential to perform any bold and noble enterprise.

After Brutus leaves, Cassius reveals his doubts. Brutus is a noble man but he can sway from his honour. Noble minds should keep company of other noble minds so that they are not trapped. Caesar dislikes Cassius but likes Brutus. He plans to throw writings in Caesar's window as if they come from the citizen of Rome expressing high opinion of him. This will assure Caesar of his ambition. In the meantime, Cassius and his allies will execute their plan to depose Caesar. If this does not happen then they will have to see worse days than the present.

The political situation outlined in Act I Scene I is presented concretely on the stage. The tribunes are not the only ones who do not wish to accept Caesar as their king. It is a larger group of Roman elites, holding eminent positions in the politics of Rome, who despise Caesar. It is easy to sense an impending doom on the future of Rome with conspiracy brewing against Caesar. The huge crowd, both acknowledging and disclaiming Caesar, show that he has both friends and foes in the country.

The initial impression of Caesar reveals him as a dictator. He shows no consideration for his wife's feelings when he refers to her sterility in public. Caesar's desire to produce a male heir also indicates that he intended to become the ruler of Rome and wanted to continue his reign. The power politics is immediately brought to focus. Caesar authoritatively dictates others and gives abrupt orders. His orders are obeyed and his commands are executed. He instructs both Calpurnia and Antony to carry out his orders. Both instantly surrender to his orders.

The action points to Antony's strong physicality which is contrasted with Caesar's infirmities. Marc Antony, also known as Marcus Antonius, was related to Julius Caesar from his mother's side. He was the right hand of Julius Caesar, a loyal supporter in all his political pursuits. Antony shows his total commitment to Caesar.

The Act reveals the character of Brutus in conflict with his own emotions. On the one hand, he loves Caesar, and on the other he seeks the good of Rome. He is committed to honour and virtue. Cassius too is aware of this bond of affection

existing between Brutus and Caesar. It is only when Brutus expresses his reluctance to see Caesar as the king of Rome that Cassius unfolds his plan. Since one can see one's face only in the reflection, Cassius, becomes a mirror to Brutus and tries to show what Brutus is capable of. The mirror as a reflection of the moral nature of man was a common literary device in Renaissance literature.

The character of Cassius is sharply distinguished from Brutus. While Brutus speaks of the common good, Cassius reveals his personal hatred for Caesar. More than holding a mirror to the virtues of Brutus, Cassius, in his magnificent description of the times he saved Caesar's life, accounts of himself as the heroic figure. His words are charged with jealousy and contempt. In his attempt to disregard Caesar, Cassius insists on his physical disabilities. Cassius is in a hurry to get rid of Caesar; Brutus is determined not to be rushed into any hasty decision. Caesar is precise in his judgment of Cassius' personality that he is a jealous man with sardonic humour, and one should be wary of people with such malicious disposition.

Superstition plays an important role in the play. During the celebration of festival of Lupercalia, the priest of Lupercus, dressed in loincloths made of goatskin, sacrificed goats and dogs and smeared themselves with sacrificial blood. Then they ran throughout the city carrying a goatskin thong, called a februa. Women placed themselves in such a way that the priests could strike them with the februa. It was a belief that a childless woman touched in this holy chase on the feast of holy Lupercal is soon blessed with a child and freed from the sterile curse. Caesar is superstitious too since he asks his wife to touch Antony in the middle of the race to become pregnant.

Act I, Scene III: A Street in Rome. There is a heavy storm with thunder and lightning.

Casca complains to Cicero about not having seen such a storm dropping fire ever before. It seems either a war is going on among gods in heaven, or the world has angered the gods so much that they have sent destruction upon mankind. He grumbles of having seen some portents about their country. Cicero, not disturbed by the storm, remarks that individuals may construe things according to their understanding and experience.

Cassius does not hesitate to interpret things after his fashion. For him the storm is a fearful warning from heaven about the turbulent political situation in Rome. Cassius utilizes this opportunity to manoeuvre Casca to join him in the conspiracy. Cassius considers it to be a pleasant night for an honest man. He advises Casca to cast aside his fear and see the impatience of heaven through these natural happenings. He relates them with the turbulent political situation in Rome. Heaven has made nature an instrument of warning against unpropitious future. Indirectly referring to Julius Caesar, Cassius calls him more dreadful than this night, not mightier than himself. As Casca announces the crowning of Caesar as the king of Rome next day in the Senate, Cassius vows to commit suicide, thus, liberating himself from the bondage of the tyrant and forcing the tyrant to accept defeat. Making a rhetorical speech, Cassius remarks no one can hold the strength of the spirit. No tyrant can keep someone by force. He accuses the Romans of being Romans only in flesh and blood and not in spirit and action. Their actions are not manly. It is not Caesar, but the Roman citizens, who are responsible for the crippling condition of Rome. The Romans, like trash, have accepted to the rule of as base a person as Caesar. Casca is one of them, adds Cassius. Cassius successfully manipulates the situation and

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incites Casca into declaring his support for the conspiracy against Julius Caesar. Cassius says that the plan intends to do something honourable and dangerous, as bloody, fiery and terrible as the appearance of the sky and the night. Some noble-minded Romans, Pompey supporters, have already agreed to help him in executing his plan and only waiting for his further orders now.

Cinna, who is already a part of the conspiracy to assassinate Julius Caesar, joins Casca and Cassius. He also mentions the portents he has seen. He insists that Brutus be on their side because people have a very high opinion of Brutus and their designs will be considered virtuous and worthy if Brutus joins them. To win Brutus, Cassius asks Cinna to execute a plan. He gives Cinna fabricated letters and directs him to keep one at his side table, one at the statue of old Brutus and throw one at Brutus' window. After which Cinna should join them at Pompey's Porch where other conspirators Decius, Brutus and Trebonius are already present. Cassius takes Casca with him to visit Brutus, whom he believes, has submitted his three parts to them already and the next conversation will win over the entire man Brutus on their side.

The fury and unnaturalness of the prodigies that accompany the storm are described with its vivid details. It points to the supernatural significance of these events. Shakespeare's plays, particularly tragedies, project a close relationship between the heavens, the natural world, and the human society. Disturbances in the heaven produce unnatural phenomena in the world of nature and political turmoil in the state. Any disorder or impending doom in the state would be mirrored in the natural world and in the heavens. The intimate relationship between these different realms of existence is conveyed through the imagery. It links the natural world with the political state of Rome. The unnatural portents reflect on the political upheaval planned by the conspirators. The storm conveys a sense of tumult and impending violence. But Cicero's wise and calm opinion that individuals may construe things according to their understanding and experience leaves the interpretation of the scary night open to judgment.

2.4.2 Act II

This section deals with Act II of the play.

Act II, Scene I: Brutus in his Garden

Brutus, in his garden, contemplates on preserving the general good of Rome by killing Julius Caesar. Though, he does not have any personal cause to kill him. Caesar wants to be crowned the ruler of Rome. But his nature is like that of a snake. A crown will give him a sting making him more dangerous. Greatness is abused when it separates remorse from power. Caesar's feelings never take over his reason. Lowliness is young ambition's ladder. Once Caesar achieves his ambition of ruling over Rome, he will turn his back on those who have helped him to reach that position. He will scorn those at the lower rungs. Caesar is a serpent's egg who must be killed before hatching because once hatched it will be deadly.

Lucius gets a letter for Brutus that he found in his study. The letter makes a call for Brutus to wake up, strike and help Rome. Brutus has often got such letters before. He promises to help Rome. Lucius confirms that next day is ides of March that is 15 March. Since Cassius first spoke against Caesar, Brutus has not slept. The time between the thought of a dreadful action and the first step taken to implement it is like a nightmare. Spirit and body are in conflict during that period and the condition of man is like that little kingdom that suffers the nature of a revolt.

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Lucius announces the arrival of a few men, one of them is Cassius while the others have hidden their faces. The other conspirators are Casca, Decius, Cinna, Metellus Cimber, and Trebonius. Brutus tells himself, these people are plotters. In an aside, he says that conspiracy does not seek any dark place to hide; it hides in smiles and friendliness.

Cassius introduces each person to Brutus mentioning how each one of them respects Brutus and desires he had the same opinion of him that is shared by every noble Roman. Cassius wants Brutus to swear by his promise. A Roman shall do as he says or die for his words. Oaths are for priests, cowards, and suffering souls who welcome wrongs. The thought of taking oaths will stain the virtue of cause and the strength of spirits. Even if one of them breaks the promise, every drop of blood spilled by a Roman is tainted.

The group wants to include Cicero in their conspiracy. His experience will help them in giving a good opinion. People would know that his judgment ruled their hands. And the wild youth of Rome will be overshadowed by his age and dignity. Brutus declines the proposal to include Cicero since he never follows anything that other men have begun. Cassius proposes to kill Marc Antony too since he is much loved by Caesar. He could hurt them later upon the death of Caesar. Brutus disagrees to the proposition to kill Antony since he is just a limb of Caesar. If the head (Caesar) is cut off then the limb (Antony) will become useless. He cannot do anything more than being Caesar's right hand. The conspiracy is against the spirit, ways, actions and beliefs of Caesar, and not the person. If they can kill that spirit there would be no blood. But Caesar must bleed for it. Brutus explains that murder should be done boldly and not out of anger. Brutus wants to kill Caesar with respect. It should be a sacrifice and not cold-blooded murder. This will make the cause seem necessary, and commoners will call them cleansers, not murderers. Cassius insists on killing Antony as he would be dangerous for them because of the love he has for Caesar. Brutus find no reason to fear him because for all his love for Caesar, all he can do is kill himself or die of his grief. Since he enjoys sports and happy company, he will not kill himself. Trebonius opines Antony will only laugh at the murder of Caesar in future.

Cassius is in doubt about Caesar's appearance in the Capitol next day. Lately, he has been superstitious at the unusual terror of this night and the warning of the seers which may keep him from the Capitol today. Decius takes the charge to bring Caesar out of his house. Decius knows the art of taming Caesar. He intends to bring Caesar to the designated spot of murder by the eight hour.

Metellus suggests to include Ligarius in the group since he too hates Caesar. It was Caesar who scolded him for speaking well of Pompey. Brutus agrees to include Metellus in their conspiracy. He also instructs the group to behave like actors and warns not to reveal their purpose through their faces.

Brutus and his wife Portia are in a conversation. Portia is worried about her husband's health. She has noticed Brutus not being himself lately and is anxious to know the cause of his grief. Brutus agrees to reveal the secrets of his heart.

Ligarius has come to meet Brutus and he addresses him as the soul of Rome, a brave son of honourable parents who has revived his spirits. Personally, Brutus feels sick of the conspiracy, it weighs heavy on his heart. Ligarius follows Brutus even without knowing the true intention.

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The scene shows the psychological disorder in Brutus' mind. The political confusion in Rome is paralleled by the confusion in Brutus' mind, and both are mirrored in the tumult of the storm. Brutus' thoughts are guided by his strong sense of duty. He abhors tyranny so much that he is prepared to kill the man whom he loves to prevent him from inflicting the slightest punishment to Rome. At the same time, he is perturbed about this decision which is evident in his attempts to justify the murder of Caesar and the description of his state of mind. He is rationally persuaded that he should kill Caesar, but is instinctively recoiling from the deed. Brutus' stand is further cleared as to why he does not want Caesar to be the king of Rome.

The internal conflict is evident by the outer conflict. The darkness outside suggests the darkness that will veil Rome. The storm is used to display the condition of Brutus' mind and heart. Oscillating between his friendship for Caesar and his commitment to the values of Rome, Brutus finally decides to kill Brutus. The outside turmoil presents the turmoil existing in the minds of other people. The storm and the ill omens are signs of disharmony in heaven as well as on the earth. It may also be interpreted as an indication of God's unacceptance of the plan to kill Caesar.

Cassius is able to win Brutus on their side. Most of the conspirators have personal motives and vendetta behind killing Caesar. Only Brutus wants him to be killed because of the good of Rome. The conspirators, except for Cassius underestimate the bond and the strength of Antony to react after the assassination of Caesar. Cassius alone could foresee what he is capable of. But others dismissed him as a mere frolicking person than a giant political force. It is he who will change the mind of the crowd with his rhetoric and turns them against the conspirators.

Brutus is also aware of the evil of conspiracy. It has to be covered even at night. The reference to Erebus in this Act was, in Greek mythology, to the dark underground passage to Hell. It was born of Chaos. Chaos was the primordial void that existed before order was created in the universe and from which all things, including the gods, proceeded. Immediately following the reference, Cassius and the other conspirators emerge from the dark, chaotic night and take their places in the dark and chaotic history of Rome that will follow the death of Caesar.

The scene of Brutus and his wife Portia in their garden is significant because we see Brutus first time in his private space. Brutus is gentle with his servant and respectful to his wife. He expresses concern over Portia's health. Brutus is a man who can feel deeply about people and their situations. He chooses to deny those feelings in public in an effort to maintain his honourable and stoic image. It is through Portia we come to know how much Brutus has changed.

Portia is a strong woman. She is proud of her lineage. She is not afraid to confront her husband demanding to know why he is so troubled. Portia does not allow Brutus to cover his activities with evasive stories about ill health. Portia reminds Brutus of her heritage and by association hopes to convince Brutus that she is stronger than the majority of wives. To prove her fearlessness, constancy, and equality, she shows Brutus the wound she has made on her thigh. The ability to suffer silently was highly prized as a Roman virtue and, by wounding herself, Portia seeks to prove herself constant and worthy of Brutus' trust. Brutus, in one of his most sincere and heartfelt responses tells Portia that she is a true and honourable wife. She is the one who can understand the true feelings of his heart.

Act II, Scene II: Caesar's House

William Shakespeare:
Julius Caesar

Caesar is worried about the general atmosphere and the appearance of the portents. The night is roaring, thundering and lightning. Calpurnia cried of Caesar's murder thrice in her dream. Caesar commands the priest to make sacrifices to appease the gods and wants to hear the news of the success of the sacrifices. He urges to go out but his wife stops him because of the omens in which Calpurnia has never believed before. Calpurnia describes the omens. She heard that a lioness gave birth in the streets of Rome, graves opened and gave up their dead, fierce fiery warriors fought upon the clouds, blood drizzled upon the Capitol, the noise of battle filled the air, horses neighed and dying men groaned, and ghosts shrieked in the streets. These uncanny incidents happened in the city and she is perturbed by them.

According to Caesar, nothing that the gods have planned can be avoided and these omens can be for anyone as much as for him. However, comets are seen and the heavens themselves blaze forth only for the death of princes, not for the death of beggars. The omens foreshadow the calamity to strike a royal personage and not a commoner. Caesar is adamant to go, for he believes cowards die many times before their deaths while the valiant dies only once. Men do not fear death since death is a necessary end; it will come when it is destined. The servant also comes with the news from the priests that Caesar should not go out of his house since they did not find the heart in the beast upon its sacrifice. Caesar says he would be a beast without a heart if he stayed at home out of fear. Cowardice is not Caesar. Danger and Caesar are like two lions from the same litter, and he is more dangerous than danger itself. So Caesar shall go to the Capitol. According to Calpurnia, Caesar's wisdom has been overcome by his confidence. She suggests him to send Antony to inform the senate that he is unwell. Just when Caesar agrees to his wife's request, Decius comes in to take him to the Senate.

Caesar tells Decius to inform the Senate that he will not come. Decius insists on telling the real reason behind not going to the Senate. He tells the Senate that Calpurnia does not want Caesar to go out of the house. She saw a dream last night in which Caesar's statue, sprayed blood like a fountain with hundred spouts. Many joyful Romans came smiling and bathed their hands in it. She sees this as an omen. Calpurnia begs him on her knees to stay at home.

Decius reinterprets the dream for Caesar as a positive sign. He explains the dream as a vision fair and fortunate, the statue spouting blood from many pipes, in which so many smiling Romans bathed means that his blood will revive Rome. Many great men shall come to Caesar for his blessings and recognition. He further adds that the senate has decided to give the crown of Rome to mighty Caesar this day. If he does not come to the senate today, their minds may change. If Caesar hides himself because his wife asked him to, the Senate will make a mockery of him. They will whisper that Caesar is afraid. He asks to be pardoned for making bold statements and also because he loves Caesar. Caesar, instigated by Decius, decides to go. Just then Publius, Brutus, Ligarius, Metellus, Casca, Trebonius, and Cinna come and Antony follows. Ironically, Caesar asks the conspirators to be near him. Caesar welcomes the conspirators into his home and invites them to share wine with him. It can be interpreted as the biblical reference to the Last Supper. Caesar, ironically, wants to depart with the group to the senate. Brutus, in an aside feels saddened saying his so-called friends are not true.

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Caesar's personality is further revealed. He cannot be accepted as a coward, no matter what may come. He can easily be manipulated in the name of courage and mettle. He is flattered by Decius. Caesar does want the crown and immediately wishes to go on listening to Decius about the senate's decision to offer him the crown today. Decius shows his dexterity in manipulating Caesar by convincing him to go the senate. He uses flattery to appeal to Caesar's vanity. Decius articulates one of the major themes present in *Julius Caesar*, the manipulation of people and circumstances to achieve one's own end. Others look happy but not Brutus. He is pained by the whole conspiracy; however, he does not express his feelings of pain explicitly. He comes across as a tormented soul.

The husband and wife scene clearly depicts the inferior position of women. Caesar puts on the same public image even in his privacy with his wife. Frightened Calpurnia is agitated by Caesar's refusal to acknowledge the premonitions of gods. For the first time, she accuses him of letting his wisdom be destroyed by his pride. Caesar does not mind telling Decius that Calpurnia begged him not to go.

The sighting of a comet was considered to be the sign of death of a monarch. In July (the month of Caesar's birth) of 44 BC, four months after Caesar's death, a comet, so bright that it could be seen during the day, was observed for seven days in the skies above Rome. Octavius Caesar utilizes the phenomenon to encourage the myth of Caesar's deification. The beast was without a heart. The dream of Calpurnia will come true this day. His conspirators will murder him.

Act II, Scene III: Between Caesar's House and the Senate

Artemidorus enters reading a letter he has written for Caesar. The letter says that Caesar should be cautious of Brutus, Cassius, Casca, Cinna, Trebonius, Metellus, Decius and Ligarius. They are not his friends. There is but one mind in all these men and it is bent against Caesar. He has to look around if he fears death because feeling safe makes a conspiracy easier. He prays for his well-being. Artemidorus' heart aches that virtue cannot remain devoid of envy's reach. If Caesar reads it he may live, if not, the fates are working with the traitors. This scene informs that others are also aware of the conspiracy. The effort of Artemidorus confirms that Caesar does have his supporters and well-wishers who want him to be saved.

According to Plutarch, Artemidorus was a professor of rhetoric. He had taught and was associated with many of Brutus' confidants. Therefore, he knew of the plot against Caesar. Artemidorus, listing the conspirators by name, has put his information in a letter that he intends to convey to Caesar as he approaches the Capitol. His attempt to save Caesar illustrates that Caesar has supporters as well as enemies, and, for the first time in the play, the conspirators are referred to as traitors.

Act II, Scene IV: Before Brutus' House

In this scene, Brutus shares the secret of Caesar's assignation with Portia. She is anxious to hear news from the Capitol. She is also afraid that in her nervousness she might reveal the secret and put her husband into danger. Burdened with the secrets, she has become hysterical to such an extent that she hears noises. Portia sees the soothsayer and asks him where he is going. The soothsayer is on his way to the Capitol to warn Caesar to guard himself, only if Caesar pays heed to his warning. The reappearance of the soothsayer at this point increases the tension. Portia, overcome by the emotional turmoil of the day, becomes unconscious. She

blames her polite nature for her weakness. She offers prayers for the success of her husband and exits from the scene.

The scene brings forth another trait of Brutus that he is faithful towards his wife. He had promised to disclose everything that keeps him awake. Brutus has indeed kept his promise to reveal all his secrets to his wife. Portia calls upon constancy to help her guard the secret. She does not want her heart and tongue to have contrary interests. Portia's condition reveals her anxiety. She finds it difficult to keep the secret in her bosom.

2.4.3 Act III

This section gives an overview of the summary of Act III.

Act III, Scene I: Outside the Capitol

This scene takes place in Rome, in front of the Capitol. A crowd, including Artemidorus and the soothsayer, awaits the audience. Trumpets sound. Caesar, Antony, Brutus, and all the other conspirators enter the stage.

Caesar mockingly tells the soothsayer that the ides of March has come; soothsayer retorts that it has not passed yet. Artemidorus, giving the letter to Caesar, insists he should read it right away as it concerns him. Caesar does not read it. Popilius wishes Cassius good luck for the farewell. Cassius is troubled thinking their plan has been discovered. Brutus asks him not to worry. Trebonius takes Antony away with him.

Inside the Senate, Metellus bows in front of Caesar. Caesar insults him saying his brother has been banished for a reason. If he bows, prays and begs for him, he too will be kicked out of his way like a dog. Caesar praises himself saying he does not act unjustly and will not change his mind without a just cause. The laws are the same for all. Brutus speaks in the favour of Metellus' brother Publius Cimber, and requests that he should be called back. Cassius joins them in begging for Publius. Caesar eloquently praises himself and says that he is as constant as the northern star, which is unlike all other stars in the sky. The skies are filled with million sparks. All are fire and everyone does shine, but only one holds its place. The world is the same, all men are flesh and blood but only one keeps his strong position and does not move. While all men kneel, Casca is the first one to stab Caesar, others follow him and Brutus is the last one to stab Julius Caesar. Julius' last words are 'Even you, Brutus' as he dies falling on the ground.

Cinna shouts 'Liberty! Freedom! Tyranny is dead.' According to Brutus, Caesar's death symbolizes that ambition's debt is paid. They request the senate to stay calm. They ask Publius to stop if any of Caesar's friends tries to harm them. Brutus does not want anyone else except the conspirators to pay for it or get hurt if at all. Antony flees to his house, stunned men, wives, and children stare, cry out, and run as if the world was coming to an end. Cassius says by cutting off twenty years of Caesar's life they have cut off so many years of anticipatory death. Brutus calls upon the murderers to bend and fill their hands with Caesar's blood up to the elbows, and smear their swords as well with his blood. He asks them to walk in the marketplace, waving their blood drenched daggers over their heads, and loudly screaming 'Peace, freedom, and liberty!' Cassius remarks they will be remembered in history as men who gave liberty and freedom to Rome.

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Antony's servant brings his message for Brutus. Brutus is noble, wise, brave, and honest. Caesar was mighty, bold, royal, and loving. Brutus feared, loved and honoured him. If Brutus will let Antony come to him in safety, and tell why Caesar deserved to die, he will show Brutus' due respect and love for him. He will follow Brutus in his new role, with all true faith. Calling Antony wise and valiant, Brutus sends the servant to tell Antony to come and meet him and all his questions will be answered.

Antony enters and seeing the body of Caesar says mighty Caesar lies so low, all his conquests, glories, triumphs, has shrunk to this small size. Antony says he is unaware of the intentions of Brutus and the other conspirators. If they intend to kill him then there is no better hour than Caesar's hour of death and no weapons worth half as much as their swords made rich with the noblest blood. There will not be any better time and place to die than next to Caesar and by those bloody hands which still stench and smoke.

Brutus requests Antony not to beg for his death. They may appear cruel and bloody but their hearts are full of pity. Just as fire drives out fire so does pity drives out pity. The murderers are full of pity for the wrongs suffered by Rome which has ultimately resulted in the assassination of Julius Caesar. But for Antony, there is just kind love and respect. Cassius adds that Antony will have a strong say in the selection of the leaders of Rome. Antony shakes each bloody hand in alliance, saying he can be seen either as a coward or a flatterer. It would grieve Caesar's spirit, more than his death. He expresses his love for Caesar. Antony extols Caesar's courage and asks for making peace with his murderers. Antony remarks that Caesar is laid on the ground like a deer struck by many princes.

Cassius doubts Antony's intentions as Antony offers his friendship but demands the reason for killing Caesar. He wants to know in what ways Caesar would be dangerous. Brutus says, listening to the reasons for killing Julius Caesar, even his son would be satisfied. Antony wants his friend's body to be brought to the market place so that he can speak at his funeral. Cassius asks Brutus if Antony's speech at Caesar's funeral can deeply move the people. Brutus decides to be the first one to speak on Caesar's funeral listing the reasons for his assassination. Brutus makes it clear to Antony that he may praise Caesar but will not speak a word against him and his friends. Antony agrees. All exit except Antony. Antony cries with a saddened heart. He asks for forgiveness for being meek and gentle with Caesar's murderers. Calling Caesar a piece of earth, his ruins be that of the noblest man that ever lived in the tide of times. He curses the hands that killed this noble blood. A curse shall fall upon the limbs of men. Antony predicts a violent civil war that will shake Italy. Blood and cruelty will become common. Caesar's spirit, eager for revenge, will cry havoc.

Antony gets the information that Octavius Caesar is on his way as Julius Caesar had sent him a letter to come to Rome. Octavius is camping just 20 miles from Rome. Octavius' servant sees the dead body of Caesar and cries. Antony commands the servant to report about the turmoil in Rome and cautions him it is dangerous for him to stay here. Antony asks the servant to help him to take Caesar's body to the marketplace. He decides to make a speech and see what is the reaction of the common public to this act of assassination.

Act III, Scene II: In the Marketplace

Brutus addresses the citizens of Rome and tells them the reasons for killing Julius Caesar. He requests them to be patient until the end of his speech. He requests them

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to judge him wisely. Brutus' love of Caesar was no less than a friend. He weeps for Caesar whom he loved and respected for his courage. Brutus rose against Caesar not because he loved Caesar any less, but that he loved Rome more. He did not want the citizens of Rome to die as slaves. He would rather have Caesar dead, and live as free men. No one in Rome is so low to live a life of a slave; no one will be vile not to love his country. Antony comes with the body of Caesar. Brutus informs the citizens that Antony was not involved in killing Caesar, but does benefit from it. He, like all the citizens of Rome, shall have a place in the ruling of their country. Brutus ends his speech saying just as he killed his best friend for the good of Rome; he will have the same dagger for himself when it shall please Romans to require him dead. Citizens praise Brutus and some shout to give honour to Caesar. While others are elated that Rome is rid of Caesar, the tyrant.

Antony starts the funeral speech. He says that he has come to bury Caesar and not to praise him. The evil that men do lives after them and their good deed is often buried with their dead body. The same will happen with Caesar. Addressing Brutus as noble again and again, Antony says, if he said that Caesar was ambitious then he must be so and he has paid for his ambitions.

Rhetorically, Antony starts praising Caesar as a faithful friend who was always just to him. Caesar brought many captives to Rome, whose ransoms filled the public treasury. When the poor cried, Caesar wept. Yet Brutus says that Caesar was ambitious. On the feast of Lupercalia, Caesar was presented with the kingly crown three times, and every time he refused. Here he stands not to refute Brutus but to speak what Antony knows of Caesar. All the Roman citizens loved Caesar at one time, not without cause. What has now stopped them from mourning for him? Antony cries that men have lost their reason. He says he will not wrong Brutus and his allies; he will wrong Caesar, himself and the Romans. He mentions Caesar's will, which if the Roman come to know of, they would rush to kiss dead Caesar's wounds and dip their handkerchiefs in his blood, and beg one strand of his hair for memory. Refusing to read the will, Antony claims that the crowd will be moved by it and he will wrong the honourable men Brutus and his friends who killed Caesar. Citizens call them traitors, murderers, and villains and urge Antony to read the will. He asks the citizens to make a ring around Caesar's corpse. He shows them the marks where he has been stabbed by Brutus and his allies. Brutus' cut was the unkindest of all because Caesar dearly loved him. All of them cry looking at Caesar's corpse drenched in blood. Now they shout out for revenge. Antony says he is not here to steal their hearts. He is not a fine speaker as Brutus.

Moreover, if these wise and honourable men have killed Caesar then there must have been a good reason. He does not want to stir their feelings. He would let the wounds talk for them. But if he were Brutus and Brutus were Antony, there would be an Antony who would stir the spirits of nation until every wound of Caesar would cry out, and move the very stones of Rome to rise in mutiny. As the citizens are ready to go and kill Brutus, Antony stops them to hear the will. It grants every Roman citizen 75 drachmas. He has also left all his walks, his private arbors, and new-planted orchards along the Tiber river for the Roman citizens and their heirs to enjoy forever. This was Caesar. Such men rarely come to earth to rule. Citizens exit with the body of Caesar.

A servant brings the news of the arrival of Octavius at Rome who waits at Caesar's house along with Lepidus. Brutus and his friends have fled Rome like madmen.

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This scene reveals information about Antony more than anyone else. The fear of Cassius that if Antony is left alive he will avenge Caesar comes true. Antony emerges as a strong politician who has the ability to turn the tide in his favour with his words. He is a loyal friend of Caesar and loved him dearly. With his heart set on taking revenge on the murderers of Caesar, he commands the attention of the crowd, convinces them that Caesar was not as ambitious as he was thought to be, aroused the sentiments of the crowd, turns them into a blood thirsty and violent mob, who kills Cinna the poet in their rage. The mob here displays its tendency of being persuaded easily through words alone.

Act III, Scene III: Street in Rome

Cinna, the poet, had a dream that he feasted with Caesar. It indicates that Cinna feels that what has happened to Caesar will also happen to him, that is, he will be killed. He will share the same fate as Caesar. He does not want to wander outside but something pulls him not to be on the street. Cinna encounters a hysterical mob. They demand to know his name. As soon as he says his name is Cinna they do not wait to listen his complete answer. He is mistaken to be Cinna the conspirator and is murdered.

The wild crowd incited by Antony's passionate funeral speech is looking for revenge. Innocent Cinna, the poet becomes a victim of the mob's mentality that overpowers reason completely. The incident sets the stage for civil strife in Rome.

2.4.4 Act IV

This section give an overview of the summary of Act IV.

Act IV, Scene I: A House in Rome. Antony, Octavius, and Lepidus

The triumvirate (Antony, Octavius, and Lepidus) discusses who among the opponents should die. They also discuss how they can cheat the people of Rome from the inheritance left to them in Caesar's will. Antony makes it clear that all the conspirators should die, including Lepidus' brother and Publius, Octavius' sister's son. Antony sends Lepidus to fetch Caesar's will. Antony calls Lepidus an unimportant man, fit to be sent on errands and is not sure to share power equally with Octavius and Antony. Octavius mocks Antony for taking advice from Lepidus as to who will be punished. Antony says he took advice to lay these honours on this man to ease the burden of some of the blame which Lepidus will carry as a donkey carries groaning gold and sweating under the load, either led or driven, as they point the way. And once he takes their treasure where they want, they will take down his load and turn him out like a donkey, to shake his ears and graze in the pastures. Though, Octavius says Lepidus has proven himself and is a brave soldier. Antony compares Lepidus to his horse who has also proven his worth for which he is given hay. He is a creature whom Antony has taught to fight, to turn, to stop, to go ahead. His body is controlled by Antony's spirit. Lepidus is just like that; fit to be thought of as a property. Antony informs Octavius of Brutus and Cassius raising armies and suggests to act in the right away. They need to prepare for war by gathering their most trusted friends to form armies.

The time between Act III, Caesar's funeral and Act IV, the formation of the second triumvirate, covers a period of more than a year. The second triumvirate was formed by three Romans—Antony, Octavius, and Lepidus. Antony and Octavius

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opposed each other but for the political stability of Rome they came together. They both exhibited power struggles and their differences openly, but remained united in their purposes. The scene exhibits the futility of the motivations of Brutus to kill Caesar. Instead, Rome experienced civil war, differences between the senators, and battles. Not harmony but discord is witnessed by Rome.

Act IV, Scene II: An Army Camp, near Sardis

Brutus is camping with his army in Sardis. He has sent for Cassius. Lucilius tells Brutus that Cassius received him politely but not with the same warmth and friendliness as he showed him in the past. Brutus replies when love begins to decay, it becomes forced ceremony. There are no tricks in plain and simple faith. But hollow men are like horses before a race. They promise spirit and make a brave show, but during the race, they break down, hence, failing in the test.

Cassius arrives and accuses Brutus of doing him wrong. To which Brutus says if he cannot wrong his enemies how can he do wrong to his brother. Brutus stops him from any argument in front of the army. The army should see only their love; else their morale will be affected. Cassius can vent his anger in Brutus' tent.

The relationship between Brutus and Cassius has declined over the period. The issue of friendship once again comes to the fore. Brutus clearly indicates that friendship between the two has deteriorated.

Act IV, Scene III: In Brutus' Tent

Cassius complains that Brutus publicly accused Lucius Pella of taking bribes. Since Cassius knows him, he writes a letter speaking for his side, but Brutus ignores him. Brutus accuses Cassius of having an itching palm and of selling honours for gold, to men who do not deserve them. A heated argument ensues between them and Brutus says he killed Caesar for justice and he will not let Cassius do any fraud. Brutus also says that he will not raise gold and money by evil means. He will not behave with his friends like Cassius did. Cassius feels Brutus has split his heart. He questions Brutus' definition of friendship. A friend should accept the faults of his friend rather than highlight them. But Brutus has made Cassius' faults look greater than they are. Cassius accuses him of not loving him while Brutus says it is his faults that he does not support.

Heartbroken Cassius does not mind young Octavius and Antony comes and takes revenge upon Octavius alone. Cassius is weary of the world as he is hated by the one he loves like his brother. This brother (Brutus) scolded him like a slave, listed all his faults and threw back at him. He weeps and offers his dagger to Brutus, tells Brutus to kill him. Cassius tells him to strike him like he did Caesar. The more he hated Caesar, the more he loves him. Commenting on Cassius' anger Brutus compares it with a flint that bears spark. They make peace.

Brutus says he is sick with grief. Portia, his wife is dead. She was depressed and swallowed burning coals. Cassius and Brutus agree that Octavius and Antony have made themselves very strong. Others join them for wine and war strategy.

Antony and Octavius are heading towards Phillipi with their mighty army. Octavius, Antony, and Lepidus have put hundred senators to death and seized their property. Antony also ordered the killing of Cicero and Octavius supported it. Brutus wants to march towards Phillipi while Cassius does not want to do that. Cassius shows disagreement but Brutus listens to none. Finally, Cassius agrees.

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Brutus sees the ghost of Caesar in his tent, which terrifies him. The ghost calls himself the evil spirit of Brutus and tells him that he will meet him at Phillipi. He sends his servant with a message for Cassius to leave with his forces early morning and he will follow them.

The clash between Brutus and Cassius is indeed a clash between idealism and realism. The clash highlights the issues of ethics and morality. Cassius is a realist who understands that an army cannot be maintained without huge amount of money. This sum cannot be raised ethically; therefore, Cassius resorted to bribery. In times of need it should be considered deprived. Brutus, living up to his ethics, does not subscribe to Cassius under any circumstance. He condemns bribe taking, it is corruption. It is ironical because for all his idealism and ethics, Brutus led the group of conspirators into killing Caesar.

The argument between Brutus and Cassius becomes a childish quarrel. Brutus belittles and intimidates Cassius. Throughout the argument, he asserts his moral and ethical superiority. His ego increases as the scene progresses and he resembles Caesar evermore in being a dictator. The disintegration of the argument also shows the decline of Cassius' personality who appeared confident and unruffled while conspiring a murder. Brutus eclipsed Cassius with his arrogance and conceit. It is the same Cassius who manipulated Brutus, Casca and others. The emotional side of Cassius is foregrounded. He renounces his own better judgment to please Brutus. He displays his love and friendship for Brutus and feels betrayed. He is dejected and subdued.

The short episode of the poet and his earnest advice to love and be friends carries deeper overtones. The original motive behind killing Caesar is completely lost. The promise of holding up to the ideals of republic in Rome is crushed. No one is seen holding the flag of love for Rome and Romans, love for freedom, love between friends, love for the country, and love of the Roman ideals. The poet, doing justice to his job, lays bare the truth. It is only ambition, for which Caesar was assassinated, that steers the politics of Rome. Rome is on the verge of annihilation. Brutus dismisses the poet as an empty and vulgar fool, thereby disregarding everything that he endorsed.

The appearance of the ghost is not a figment of Shakespeare's imagination. It has been taken from Plutarch's *Lives*. The ghost identifies itself as the evil spirit of Brutus. The ghost can be taken as the manifestation of Brutus. It may be the guilty conscience of Brutus or his troubled mind. From the beginning, we have been introduced to the internal conflict in Brutus on the conspiracy to kill Caesar. The mayhem that Rome witnesses, subconsciously troubles him more for being the cause of chaos and immoral act of murder. The ghost may also be taken as the ghost of Caesar fulfilling Antony's prophecy that the ghost of Caesar will appear, as an omen of Brutus' death.

2.4.5 Act V

This section gives an overview of the summary of Act V.

Act V, Scene I: The Plain of Philippi

The two camps of Antony-Octavius and Brutus-Cassius prepare for a battle. A messenger brings the news of arrival of the enemy forces. Antony commands Octavius to fight from the left. First Octavius refuses and finally agrees. Octavius

is being referred to as Caesar by Antony. He asks for Antony's instruction to attack but Antony wants Brutus' army to attack first. Brutus inquires is it for verbal combat they have stopped, since good words are better than bad strokes. Antony mocks at Brutus for his good words delivered with bad strokes. He means the hole that he made in Caesar's heart, crying 'Long live! Hail, Caesar!'

Cassius tells Antony that the strength of his blows is yet unknown. But his words, at Caesar's funeral, robbed the bees of their honey. He compares Antony's words with honey; they were eloquent to move people into frenzy. Angrily, Antony takes on Brutus and Cassius, calls them villains, who in the guise of being friends, licking Caesar's feet and with flattery, attacked Julius Caesar and killed him. Cassius reminds Brutus of the advice he had given to kill Antony alongside Caesar. If Cassius' words were respected, Antony would not have stung them with his words on the battlefield. Octavius insults Brutus and Cassius saying neither will have the honour to kill Octavius. He draws his sword and vows to avenge thirty three wounds inflicted on Julius Caesar. Brutus tells Octavius that he will not die at the hands of traitors unless he brings them along. Octavius remarks he will not die by Brutus' sword. Offended Brutus tells young Octavius, if he had been from a noble family like Brutus himself he would not have got a better death than to die at Brutus' hands. Octavius was just twenty-one year old at this time. Cassius insults both Caesar and Antony, calls Octavius a peevish school boy worthless of the honour to die with the sword of Brutus and Antony. Antony and Octavius leave challenging Brutus and his company.

Cassius says everything is at stake now. While Brutus and Lucilius talk apart, Cassius tells Messala that it is his birthday. He wants Messala to be a witness to the battle that was fought against his will just as Pompey fought a battle with Julius Caesar at Pharsalia against his better judgment and was defeated. This refers to the Epicurean way of life. Epicurus was a Greek philosopher and Cassius as a believer in his teachings, would not have admitted the evidence of omens. But now Cassius has changed his mind, he gives credit to omens to predict the future. While coming from Sardines two eagles perched on his soldiers and feed on their flesh. All those who accompanied them to Phillipi have left. In their place ravens, crows and kites fly over their heads and look down on them as if they are prey. Their fatal shadows are cast over them like a canopy. He says he is full of new spirit now and ready to face the dangers of war with fortitude.

Cassius and Brutus do not know whether they will see each other again, therefore, they talk to decide what to do if they lose the battle. Brutus does not wish to commit suicide since he believes in the Stoic philosophy which considers suicide cowardly. Till the time of his death he will patiently await the judgment of providence. Cassius asks him if he will be ready to be led in triumph through the streets of Rome if they lose the war. Brutus refuses to be taken hostage in chains on the streets of Rome. They leave to end the work begun on the Ides of March. Brutus and Cassius feel that they may lose the war, therefore, bid farewell to each other. Cassius says if they meet again they will greet each other with a smile and if they do not then this parting will be a good one.

From the conversation between Antony and Octavius, we come to know that Brutus and Cassius have descended from the hills onto the plains and Antony is amazed as well as thankful at the turn of the events. It was Brutus' unwise decision and Cassius confirms it while talking to Messala. Cassius, who could manipulate Brutus was now being led into unwise decision by him. He has definitely changed

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by now. He submits to the will of Brutus even against his better judgment leading himself into a life-threatening situation. He shows his discontentment with Brutus but only to Messala. He refers to birds namely, eagle, raven, kite and crows who are associated with death. His belief in Epicurean philosophy that gods do not meddle with human events gives way to the Stoic philosophy of predestined fate. The scene also reveals the differences between Octavius and Antony who are together only against the same enemy.

Act V, Scene II and III: The Battlefield

Brutus' men are fighting with Octavius' army while Cassius' army is battling against Antony's men. Brutus gives orders to Messala to command the whole army to come down from the heights and attack Caesar's camp since they lack the fighting spirit. Brutus' army overpowers Octavius' army. Brutus sends the news of victory to Cassius. Cassius' army is fighting with Antony's men. Brutus' men instead of helping Cassius and his men start celebrating their premature victory.

Cassius is defeated by Antony and Antony after reaching his tents informs Pindarus of his victory. Cassius sends Titus to see whose men are they in his tent and tells Pindarus to climb up the hill and look for Titus. The day of his birth will also be the day of his death, says Cassius. Pindarus tells him that Titus has been captured by the enemies. Cassius asks Pindarus, his slave to kill him. Pindarus stabs Cassius who dies. His last words denote the fact that Caesar is avenged with the same sword that stabbed him. Pindarus runs far away from Rome, to his freedom. Brutus won over the troops of Octavius and Antony won over Cassius' troops. Titinius comes back to give the news of Brutus' win just to see that Cassius is dead, who would have thought they have lost the battle. He says Cassius misunderstood everything. He crowns Cassius, calls him the sun of Rome. Messala regrets the misunderstanding on Cassius' part. He leaves to give the news of Cassius' death to Brutus to whose ears it will sound like darts. Titinius wishes that Cassius had understood well the victorious shouts. He makes Cassius wear the garland Brutus has given him. He takes Cassius' sword and asks the gods to allow him to take his life, thus, killing himself.

Brutus enters with Messala, young Cato and others. When he sees Cassius and Titinius, he calls Julius Caesar mighty even after death whose spirit moves around in the battlefield inflicting wounds on their bodies. He calls Cassius the last of the Romans, there will be no one of his kind ever. He owes more tears to Cassius than he can shed. Brutus sends his body for funeral. Brutus, with others, leaves for the battlefield to try their fortune the second time.

In this Act, Cassius is overcome with melancholy. He has resigned to his fate and is almost sure to die. Brutus says with the death of Cassius, the ideals of freedom and liberty of Rome held dear by both are thrown away. Brutus does not exhibit pain on Cassius' death in public. He does not wish to see the funeral also because that would make him emotionally incapacitated.

Act V, Scene IV and V: The Battlefield

Young Cato calls himself the enemy of all tyrants. He dies fighting. Lucilius, pretending to be Brutus, is captured by Antony's soldier. Lucilius says he has surrendered only to die. He tells Antony that Brutus is safe and no one can capture Brutus alive. Gods will defend Brutus and if they find him alive or dead, he will be

true to himself. Impressed by Lucilius' love and loyalty to Brutus, he commands his soldiers to keep Lucilius alive. He likes to keep such men as friends and not as enemies. Antony tells his soldiers to find out Brutus and inform him in Octavius' tent. He suggests the soldier to kill him and then kill Brutus that would give him honour. They have actually captured a soldier who is posing as Brutus.

Brutus has lost the final battle. He tells his friend, his fellow soldiers about the appearance of Caesar's ghost several times to him both at Sardis and Philippi. He knows he has to die now. He asks Strato to hold his sword and runs into it. Brutus dies saying he did not kill Caesar with even the half the goodwill with which he kills himself. Octavius comes to look for Brutus. Strato tells him no one can conquer Brutus. Brutus alone has conquered Brutus. No other man gains honour by his death.

Octavius declares to accept all those who served Brutus into his service. Messala gives permission to Strato to go in the service of Octavius. Antony respectfully calls Brutus the noblest Roman of them all who killed Caesar because all the other conspirators killed Caesar out of envy. Brutus alone killed Caesar for the good of Rome. Octavius offered Brutus all the respect and rites of burial because of his virtue.

The death of Caesar is avenged with the death of all the conspirators. Octavius speaks the last words of the play, thus, establishing himself as the dominant figure of authority in the new regime. This new Caesar becomes the most powerful force in the history of Rome.

2.5 THEMES AND LITERARY DEVICES

Let us study the major themes and literary devices used in the play *Julius Caesar*.

Themes

Rome is the setting of *Julius Caesar* and the focus is on the Roman republic and its ideals. Republicanism was a political position which was inherently challenging to the absolute monarchy. The question central to the play is whether Caesar actually had the ambition to become a king, and thereby establish his authoritarian rule. In this regard, the perspective of various characters is taken into account. Brutus, Cassius and the other conspirators judge all his actions to be ambitious. Ambition in the Elizabethan sense meant to be all-powerful. Antony, in the funeral speech, recounts the qualities which do not make him ambitious enough to be a threat to the Roman republic and its people and, hence, be murdered. Caesar's assassination is presented from conflicting perspectives of Brutus and Antony during the funeral speeches. Caesar's ambition is used as a reason by Brutus to justify his murder. Ironically, the assassination only leads to civil war in Rome, disturbing the general harmony and peace of Rome, not intended by the conspirators.

The public versus the private space is an important theme in the play. Most of the play is set in the public spaces of Rome. In Act II, Brutus and Caesar are found in their respective houses. In their private spaces too these statesman are never alone. Brutus opens up to himself in his own house. He is gentle to his servant and respectful and caring towards Portia. In private, Caesar, too, is alarmed by the portents. He instructs his servant to have the priests sacrifice an animal. As soon as Calpurnia enters, Caesar again wears his public mask and once again speaks with pride. Even with his wife, the privacy of his own house, Caesar is reluctant to part

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Check Your Progress

10. How does the play *Julius Caesar* begin?
11. Give an example of the use of superstition in the play.
12. What are the omens witnessed by Calpurnia in her dream?
13. How is the death of Caesar avenged?

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with his glorified and conceited image. Portia is able to assert her authority over Brutus who gives her advice to him. Caesar does not pay heed to his wife's words.

Friendship is also a vital topic for consideration in the play. Brutus who claims to love Caesar as a true friend leads the conspiracy to murder him. The conspirators are mostly men who were either pardoned by Caesar as prisoners of war or were honoured with positions of power in the senate. Brutus tries to choose between his friend and Rome, and he chooses Rome. Even Brutus is pursued to join the conspiracy not for friendship but because he is seen as noble and respectful by the plebeians. His presence will make the immoral act acceptable and worthy. Antony is a loyal friend of Caesar till the end of the play. He ensures that the conspirators are punished and moves the crowd to frenzy who demand justice and revenge. Friendship between Cassius and Brutus ceases by the end of the play. We notice a lack of warmth and friendliness between the two leading conspirators. Brutus taking a high moral ground snubs Cassius for his immoral actions and corruption. As a result, Cassius is seen forlorn and dejected at the end of the play.

Manipulation and rhetoric play an indispensable role in the play *Julius Caesar*. Politicians use their rhetorical skills to gain power and to influence large, fickle crowds, and seeming friends lie outright to each other. Rhetoric is central to the politics of Rome as well as to the development of the plot. It not only represents but also constructs political reality. In the opening scene, the tribunes rebuke the commoners celebrating Julius Caesar's triumphant return after victory over Pompey. They give a fine speech to make the revellers feel ashamed of the celebrations. Cassius manipulates Brutus and Casca to join the conspiracy to murder Caesar. Decius uses the art of manipulation to take Caesar to the senate. After the murder of Julius Caesar, it is Mark Antony who uses rhetoric to move the mob in the favour of Caesar and avenge the murder of his beloved friend. Most of the manipulation that occurs in the play is either achieved by the use of flattery or by instilling fear.

Suicide was condemned in stoic philosophy. However, from the Roman perspective, suicide was considered an act of heroism, if it was done in an effort to avoid living a life that conflicted with the moral and ethical values held in esteem by the person committing the act. For Cassius, living under the tyranny of Caesar was unthinkable. Thus, death would become his only alternative. Brutus who was a stoic philosopher commits suicide to avoid tyranny at the hands of Octavius and Antony. The others from Brutus' army die to show loyalty to their masters.

Throughout the play, many actions of the characters are influenced by their own free will and yet others are directed by fate. Cassius uses the concept of free will to persuade Brutus to remove Caesar from power. Cassius says that it is the fault of the Romans that they follow Caesar with all servility. Human beings are masters of their fates, therefore, they decide whether Caesar should be a king or not. Brutus willingly convicts himself to murder Caesar. The conspirators together assert their free will by killing Caesar. Caesar dismisses the soothsayer as a dreamer. However, the fate is displayed through many portents and warnings. The soothsayer forces death for Caesar on the ides of March. He ignores his wife's dreams and all the other portents. The poet Cinna says he did not want to come out on the roads. He has dreamt of having the same fate as that of Caesar. He is mauled by the frenzied crowd.

Conflict in *Julius Caesar* is both external and internal. External conflict reflects the conspiracy to assassinate Julius Caesar because of the differences in the political ideologies between the conspirators and Julius Caesar. At the end of the play, the

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war between the triumvirate as one army and Brutus and Cassius as another depict the power struggle. Internal conflict is experienced the most by Brutus before he finally decides to kill Caesar. He struggles to choose between his duty to uphold Republican idealism of Rome being challenged by the growing ambition of Caesar and his love and friendship with Caesar. His soliloquy reveals his inner thoughts and his motives behind killing his friend.

Shakespeare makes use of the supernatural events, circumstances or agencies to influence the action and the lives of the major characters. The play is full of omens and prophesies that come true. These agencies also undermine the sense that characters can exercise free will and influence the outcomes of their lives. Superstitions are attached to many natural occurrences. A falling comet indicates the death of a monarch. The omens foreshadow the murder of Caesar as well as subsequent chaos and mayhem in the city of Rome. The priests did not find the heart in the beast sacrificed for Caesar's good health which also indicates his impending death. The birds kite, eagle, ravens and crows seen hovering over the army of Cassius also indicate death.

Nature in Shakespeare's plays is often held as a mirror to the mind and heart of his characters. Nature appears in a distinct form to indicate the inward movements and working of the mind of the characters. The outside turmoil represents the inner upheaval which perturbs Brutus ceaselessly. This chaos in the universe also foreshadows the state of Rome in the near future. To Cassius, it is a sign from gods to carry on with their conspiracy and free Rome from tyranny. The heavy storm creates a sombre mood, foreboding a calamity. It sets the mood and tone of the play. It is also taken as the emotional burst of the gods. Casca calls the storm and thunder representing the wrath of gods on the deeds of human beings.

There are two women characters in the play, Portia and Calpurnia. Portia is Brutus' wife and Calpurnia is Caesar's wife. They occupy a secondary position in the play as compared with their male counterparts, even though most of their opinions are strong and their fears real. Caesar totally disregards Calpurnia's ominous dream. They are not taken seriously and their fears and opinion are disregarded. Portia submits to the idea that women are feeble and erratic who cannot keep secrets. They also represent the private and domestic realm. Both women plead with their husbands to be more aware of their private needs and feelings. Nonetheless, Caesar and Brutus rebuff the pleas of their respective wives. Their priority is duty as a senator and in the matters of public opinion. Calpurnia and Portia are powerless figures, although willing yet unable to help and comfort Caesar and Brutus.

Ambition resounds as one of the themes in the play. Brutus convicts himself to kill Caesar because he finds him ambitious. He believes that Caesar's ambitions are in conflict with the concept of Roman Republicanism. If he becomes the king, the values for which Rome stands that is, freedom and liberty will be lost in the dictatorship of a tyrant. Whatever Brutus believes is his own point of view. Antony declares that had Julius Caesar been ambitious to such an extent to be a threat to Rome and its people then he would not have refused the crown thrice in the public.

Literary Devices

Verbal irony is a statement in which the meaning that a speaker implies differs sharply from the meaning that is being expressed in the statement. When Antony repeats that Brutus and his co-conspirators are 'honourable men' in his funeral speech, he

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ironically uses words 'honourable' and 'noble'. The two words are resonant in Roman culture, and Antony's ironical usage of the two words proves to be tremendously detrimental to the politics of Rome. He does not consider the conspirators to be honourable. Brutus is the man who repeats the soothsayer's warning to Caesar, and ironically he is the man who leads the conspiracy.

Pun denotes a play on words that are either identical in sound (homonyms) or very similar in sound, but are sharply different in significance. In the opening scene, a cobbler uses pun on the word cobbler which means bungler as well as the shoemaker. He continues to have verbal fun at the expense of Marullus and Flavius.

Foreshadowing means the warning or the indication of something to happen in the future. There are several examples of anticipatory warnings evident in the play. For example, the conversation between Brutus and Cassius, the soothsayer's warning, heavy thunder and storm, lions roaming the capitol, ghostly women walking the streets, Armetelius' letter, and many other events all foreshadow the assassination of Caesar, disrupting the political situation of Rome, followed by mayhem and chaos in the city.

Imagery refers to the images taken collectively, and is used to signify all the objects and qualities of sense perception referred to in the works of literature, whether by literal description, allusion, or through similes and metaphors. Caesar is described as a falcon whose power will be weak if his popular support is withdrawn. The image of the storm infuses fear, terror and anxiety in the characters as well the readers. The images of infirmities of Caesar are vividly drawn by Cassius to Brutus. Caesar metaphorically compares himself to the northern star because it the brightest and constant star in the sky. He says he cannot be swayed by anybody's opinion. He is the master of his own thoughts.

Soliloquy is the act of talking to oneself. Playwrights have used this device as a convenient method of conveying information about a character's motives and state of mind, or as exposition, and sometimes with the objective of guiding the judgments and responses of the audience. Shakespeare has used soliloquy in his numerous plays as a vehicle to convey the thoughts and internal conflicts of the characters. In *Julius Caesar*, Brutus does not discuss about his inner life with anyone. It is through his soliloquy spoken in the garden where he expresses his state of psychological and emotional turmoil.

In literature, symbol is an object or event which signifies some feeling, trait, suggests a range of references, beyond itself. Signs and omens are interpreted as well as manipulated according to the whims of an individual. These omens are so vital in *Julius Caesar* that they become a thematic issue in the play. Casca, terrified by the storm, interprets it as a civil strife in the heaven or it seems that the gods are angry with the deeds of human beings. He fears that the gods do not approve of the conspiracy. A fallen comet stands for the death of a monarch; storm symbolizes the inner and the outer conflict. The northern star is the symbol of constancy.

Anachronism is the placing of an event or person or thing outside its historical context. Shakespeare has introduced a clock that strikes the hour in *Julius Caesar*. Shakespeare often used Elizabethan references in his plays, regardless of the actual timeframe in which the story took place to make it more accessible to his audience. The commoners walking without their signs of professions is a reference to an Elizabethan law that required workers to identify themselves by wearing their work clothes and carrying the tools of their trade. Another example of Shakespeare

using Elizabethan references in this scene is the reference to towers and chimney tops. There were no towers or chimneys in ancient Rome, but these anachronisms, chronologically misplaced events, words or details, bring the play into alignment with the experiences of the audience for whom the play was written.

William Shakespeare:
Julius Caesar

2.6 SUMMARY

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- John Shakespeare, the father of William Shakespeare, was a man of meagre means. But his fortune turned after he married Mary Arden in 1557.
- Shakespeare's poems earned him well. But his plays were not that lucrative because the playwright gave up all rights of his work by selling his plays to the manager of the company.
- In comparison to the previous eras, English drama saw a sudden growth in the last quarter of the sixteenth century. The first theatre was built in 1576 in London. Even Shakespeare had composed more than half his works by 1600.
- *The Comedy of Errors*, *Love's Labour Lost* and *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* belong to the early comedies. These early plays are rather immature where the plots are less original, the characterization is sketchy and the wit falls flat.
- Shakespeare's forte lies in character portrayal and in terms of output and variety, he is unrivalled in literature.
- *Julius Caesar* is thought to have been the play Shakespeare wrote for the opening of the new Globe Theatre in 1599. The printed version of the play appeared for the first time, seven years after Shakespeare's death, in the First Folio of 1623.
- The play begins with the gathering of plebeians on the streets of Rome. Flavius and Marullus, both tribunes (elected officials that represent the people in the Roman republic), ask the common people why they are out in their best attire, rather than working.
- The celebrations of the common men are contrasted with the unhappiness of the tribunes, the official guardians of the rights of commoners, on the victory of Julius Caesar over Pompey. This puts the central conflict of the play into place.
- Marullus and Flavius chide the commoners for not carrying their tools. On regular days, men do not walk on streets without their tools, an indication of their profession. This is a reference to an Elizabethan law that required workers to identify themselves by wearing their work clothes and carrying the tools of their trade.
- The spirits of Brutus are clouded with fear. He does not wish to seek what he does not have in himself. The cheering offstage reveals his fear and impels Brutus to believe that the public wants Caesar to be their king.
- Cassius tells Brutus not to be suspicious of his intentions reminding Brutus of the part played by his ancestor in dispensing tyranny from Rome.
- The political situation outlined in Act I scene I is presented concretely on the stage. The tribunes are not the only ones who do not wish to accept Caesar as their king.

Check Your Progress

14. Why is suicide considered an act of heroism from the perspective of the Romans?
15. Name the two prominent women characters of the play.
16. State the various literary devices used in the play *Julius Caesar*.

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- Act I reveals the character of Brutus in conflict with his own emotions. On the one hand, he loves Caesar, and on the other he seeks the good of Rome. He is committed to honour and virtue.
- The character of Cassius is sharply distinguished from Brutus. While Brutus speaks of the common good, Cassius reveals his personal hatred for Caesar.
- Act II begins with Brutus, in his garden, contemplating on preserving the general good of Rome by killing Julius Caesar.
- Lucius gets a letter for Brutus that he has found in his study. The letter makes a call for Brutus to wake up, strike and help Rome. Brutus has often got such letters before.
- In Act II, Caesar is worried about the general atmosphere and the appearance of the portents. The night is roaring, thundering and lightning. Calpurnia cried of Caesar's murder thrice in her dream.
- In Act II, Scene III Artemidorus enters reading a letter he has written for Caesar. The letter says that Caesar should be cautious of Brutus, Cassius, Casca, Cinna, Trebonius, Metellus, Decius and Ligarius. They are not his friends.
- Act III takes place in Rome, in front of the Capitol. A crowd, including Artemidorus and the soothsayer, awaits the audience.
- Inside the senate, Metelus bows in front of Caesar. Caesar insults him saying his brother has been banished for a reason. If he bows, prays and begs for him, he too will be kicked out of his way like a dog.
- Brutus requests Antony not to beg for his death. They may appear cruel and bloody but their hearts are full of pity.
- In Act IV, the triumvirate (Antony, Octavius, and Lepidus) discusses who among the opponents should die. They also discuss how they can cheat the people of Rome from the inheritance left to them in Caesar's will.
- The time between Act III, Caesar's funeral and Act IV, the formation of the second triumvirate, covers a period of more than a year. The second triumvirate was formed by three Romans Antony, Octavius, and Lepidus. Antony and Octavius opposed each other but for the political stability of Rome they came together.
- The two camps of Antony-Octavius and Brutus-Cassius prepare for a battle in Act V.
- In Act V Scene II and III, Brutus' men are fighting with Octavius' army while Cassius' army is battling against Antony's men.
- The death of Caesar is avenged with the death of all the conspirators. Octavius speaks the last words of the play, thus, establishing himself as the dominant figure of authority in the new regime. This new Caesar becomes the most powerful force in the history of Rome.
- Rome is the setting of *Julius Caesar* and the focus is on the Roman republic and its ideals. Republicanism was a political position which was inherently challenging to the absolute monarchy.

- Friendship is also a vital topic for consideration in the play. Brutus who claims to love Caesar as a true friend leads the conspiracy to murder him. The conspirators are mostly men who were either pardoned by Caesar as prisoners of war or were honoured with positions of power in the senate.
- Manipulation and rhetoric play an indispensable role in Julius Caesar. Politicians use their rhetorical skills to gain power and to influence large, fickle crowds, and seeming friends lie outright to each other.

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2.7 KEY TERMS

- **Rhetoric:** It is the art of effective or persuasive speaking or writing.
- **Ides of March:** It is a day on the Roman calendar that corresponds to 15 March. It was marked by several religious observances and became notorious as the date of the assassination of Julius Caesar.
- **Soothsayer:** It refers to a person who is supposed to be able to foresee the future.
- **Drachma:** The drachma was one of the world's earliest coins. Its name is derived from the Greek verb meaning 'to grasp', and its original value was equivalent to that of a handful of arrows.
- **Verbal irony:** It is a statement in which the meaning that a speaker implies differs sharply from the meaning that is being expressed in the statement.

2.8 ANSWERS TO 'CHECK YOUR PROGRESS'

1. William Shakespeare was born in 1564.
2. In 1593, *Venus and Adonis* was published.
3. Shakespeare acted in Ben Jonson's play, *Every Man in His Humour*.
4. Heming and Condell collected and published the First Folio consisting of thirty-six plays of Shakespeare.
5. The first theatre in England was built in 1576.
6. John Heywood, a significant author of Interludes, lived during the reign of Queen Elizabeth.
7. The first English comedy was *Ralph Roister Doister*.
8. Some of Shakespeare's plays which belong to 'The Early Comedies' group are —*The Comedy of Errors*, *Love's Labour Lost* and *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* belong to this group.
9. Also called 'Problem Plays' or 'Bitter Comedies', 'The Sombre Plays' show the falsity of romance and the sordidness of reality. They are comedies because they do not end with the death of the chief characters, but reflect a cynical and disillusioned attitude towards life.
10. The play begins with the gathering of plebeians on the streets of Rome. Flavius and Marullus, both tribunes (elected officials that represent the people in the Roman republic), ask the common people why they are out in their best attire, rather than working.

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11. Superstition plays an important role in the play. During the celebration of festival of Lupercal, the priest of Lupercus, dressed in loincloths made of goatskin, sacrificed goats and dogs and smeared themselves with sacrificial blood. Then they ran throughout the city carrying a goatskin thong, called a februa. Women placed themselves in such a way that the priests could strike them with the februa. It was a belief that a childless woman touched in this holy chase on the feast of holy Lupercal is soon blessed with a child and freed from the sterile curse.
12. Calpurnia describes that she heard a lioness gave birth in the streets of Rome, graves opened and gave up their dead, fierce fiery warriors fought upon the clouds, blood drizzled upon the Capitol, the noise of battle filled the air, horses neighed and dying men groaned, and ghosts shrieked in the streets. These uncanny incidents happened in the city and she is perturbed by them.
13. The death of Caesar is avenged with the death of all the conspirators.
14. From the Roman perspective, suicide was considered an act of heroism, since it was done in an effort to avoid living a life that conflicted with the moral and ethical values held in esteem by the person committing the act.
15. Portia and Calpurnia are the two prominent women characters of the play.
16. The use of verbal irony, foreshadowing, and anachronism are some of the literary devices used in the play.

2.9 QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

Short-Answer Questions

1. Prepare a brief biographical sketch of William Shakespeare.
2. List the major plays written by Shakespeare.
3. Mention the salient features of Shakespeare's plays.
4. What are the major themes of the play *Julius Caesar*?

Long-Answer Questions

1. Discuss the evolution of English drama.
2. Explain the major classification of Shakespeare's plays.
3. Prepare an act-wise summary of the play *Julius Caesar*.
4. How is internal conflict evinced through external conflict in *Julius Caesar*?
5. Give examples of the use of literary devices in *Julius Caesar*.

2.10 FURTHER READING

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UNIT 3 OLIVER GOLDSMITH: *SHE* *STOOPS TO CONQUER*

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Structure

- 3.0 Introduction
- 3.1 Unit Objectives
- 3.2 Life and Works of Oliver Goldsmith
- 3.3 Summary of the Play: *She Stoops to Conquer*
- 3.4 Act-Wise Summary of the Play
 - 3.4.1 Prologue
 - 3.4.2 Epilogue
 - 3.4.3 Themes and Characters
- 3.5 Summary
- 3.6 Key Terms
- 3.7 Answers to ‘Check Your Progress’
- 3.8 Questions and Exercises
- 3.9 Further Reading

3.0 INTRODUCTION

Eighteenth century poets — Alexander Pope, Oliver Goldsmith and Thomas Gray — belong to the Age of Enlightenment. Oliver Goldsmith is recognized as a fascinating English writer of the eighteenth century. He wrote a number of novels, plays, poems, essays and biographies. His works deal with themes such as social class and position, and wealth and poverty. His well-known works include *The Vicar of Wakefield*, *The Deserted Village*, ‘Citizen of the World’, and *She Stoops to Conquer*. In this unit, you will study the act-wise summary of the play *She Stoops to Conquer*, the character portrayal of the main characters and the depiction of the main themes of the play.

3.1 UNIT OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- Prepare a brief biographical sketch of Oliver Goldsmith
- Assess prominent works of Oliver Goldsmith
- Explain the main themes of the play *She Stoops to Conquer*
- Analyse the main characters of the play *She Stoops to Conquer*

3.2 LIFE AND WORKS OF OLIVER GOLDSMITH

Several details about the life of Oliver Goldsmith are precisely unknown. It is believed that Goldsmith was born in 1728 in Ireland. His father was a poor clergyman in a Church of Ireland. Due to meagre financial resources, Goldsmith struggled for education and later for his livelihood. He spent most of his youth in the Lissoy village. Goldsmith joined the Trinity College, Dublin in 1745 under the sizar system which allowed poor students to study in lieu of the work they did as servants for the tutors. He never enjoyed a good reputation at college because he did not do well in

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studies, violated the rules and also participated in a riot in which several people died. He received his degree in 1749. In 1752, he moved to Edinburgh to study medicine but left it without a degree. From 1753–56, he travelled across the British continent.

Goldsmith worked hard on the subject of theology for a couple of years but was rejected by the ministry. He failed as a teacher. He struggled to make a living as a tutor, a comedian, an apothecary's assistant, a physician in Southwark, an usher in a country school, all without any success. Eventually, he started writing reviews and essays for periodicals and embarked on a career as a Grub Street journalist and hack writer. He also started proofreading for the novelist and printer Samuel Richardson. The first book that appeared under the name of Goldsmith was entitled *The Citizen of the World; or, Letters from a Chinese Philosopher Residing in London to His Friends in the East*. These letters were published as a series of essays. These were fictionalized letters presumed to be written by a Chinese mandarin visiting England. Under the identity of an Asian visitor, Goldsmith satirized the follies and foibles of the fashionable London society. These letters brought Goldsmith into limelight and to the attention of Samuel Johnson. Through Johnson's friendship, Goldsmith became a member of the city's exclusive Literary Club, which included writers—James Boswell, Edmund Burke, and Thomas Percy, painter Sir Joshua Reynolds, and actor David Garrick. At the age of 47, Goldsmith fell sick of fever and died in 1774.

Works

Oliver Goldsmith was a poet, a novelist, a playwright and an essayist. As a journalist, he contributed articles to several magazines like Tobias Smollett's *Critical Review*, Ralph Griffith's *Monthly Review*, *The Busy Body*, *The British Magazine*, *The Bee* and *The Lady's Magazine: or, Polite Companion for the Fair Sex*, and *The Westminster Magazine*. He wrote many essays including 'The Citizen of the World' in two volumes, 'The Life of Richard Nash,' 'The Mystery Revealed,' and 'History of England' in four volumes, 'Roman History' in two volumes, 'The Life of Henry St. John, Lord Viscount Bolingbroke,' and 'The Life of Thomas Parnell' and his most famous essay 'On Theatre: A Comparison between Laughing and Sentimental Comedy'. He wrote numerous poems like *Edwin and Angelina*, *The Traveller*, *The Deserted Village*, *Retaliation* and *The Haunch of Venison*. His significant plays include *The Good Natur'd Man*, *She Stoops to Conquer*, *The Grumbler* and a novel *The Vicar of Wakefield*.

Goldsmith's fame chiefly rests on his masterpiece, a novel *The Vicar of Wakefield*, two plays *The Good Natur'd Man* and *She Stoops to Conquer*, two poems *The Traveller* and *The Deserted Village*. Goldsmith's *She Stoops to Conquer* was published in 1773.

Check Your Progress

1. Name the prominent works of Oliver Goldsmith.
2. When was *She Stoops to Conquer* published?

3.3 SUMMARY OF THE PLAY: *SHE STOOPS TO CONQUER*

Goldsmith's *She Stoops to Conquer* (1773) is seen as the first successful reaction to the sentimental comedy initiated by Steele. In a nutshell, the hero of the play Marlow is shy with ladies of his own social status, but quite open with servants, barmaids, and women of lower class. So the heroine, Miss Kate Hardcastle, decides to make him fall in love with her as someone from the lower class. She 'stoops' to an acceptable level to 'conquer' him. The play entertains and provokes laughter with its intrigues

and mischievous tricks that are not malicious. The play also marked an important step in the development of comedy by eclipsing the popular ‘sentimental comedy’ of the times. Though Horace Walpole, an advocate of sentimental comedy, attacked the play *She Stoops to Conquer* for being devoid of a moral lesson, the play proved to be an outstanding popular success when it debuted in 1773.

Sentimental comedy was developed in response to the perceived immorality of the Restoration theatre. It was founded on the belief that man is innately good and that he can be softened through tears that flow from contemplation on undeserved suffering. Goldsmith challenged sentimental comedy in his essay ‘A Comparison between Laughing and Sentimental Comedy’ published in 1773. In this essay, Goldsmith has written that comedy should excite laughter, by ridiculously exhibiting the follies of the lower part of mankind. All the classic writers of comedy aimed only at rendering folly or vice ridiculous. They never exalted their characters or made what Voltaire humourously calls a tradesman’s tragedy. He writes that in sentimental comedies, the virtues of private life and distress are exhibited while the vices and faults of mankind are not exposed. Sentimental comedies were successful among the people of his age. These plays portray all the characters as good and generous souls. Such plays did not do justice to the genre of comedy since they were more serious and moralizing in tone and the actors had block faces when they showed emotions. With the abundance of sentiment and feeling the plays lacked humour. The spectator was expected to pardon the faults or foibles, if any, in consideration of the goodness of their hearts. To Goldsmith, a genuine comedy is one that is a great source of entertainment and sentimental comedy provided none. Instead of ridiculing, it commended folly. Goldsmith believed if humour is banished from the stage, people would be deprived of the art of laughing. With *She Stoops to Conquer*, Goldsmith succeeded in introducing humour, mirth and delight, driving out the pathos of the sentimental comedy. The play proved to be innovative and exhibited a new kind of comedy.

Oscar James Campbell noted in an introduction to *Chief Plays of Goldsmith and Sheridan: The School for Scandal, She Stoops to Conquer, The Rivals* that the central idea of this play was suggested to Goldsmith by an incident of his boyhood. He was told that the house of Mr Featherstone was an inn and directed there for entertainment. Goldsmith, easily deceived by a practical joke, had gone to the squire’s house and treated him as a host. From this situation, grew his character and their games of cross purposes.

3.4 ACT-WISE SUMMARY OF THE PLAY

Let us go through an Act-wise summary of the play *She Stoops to Conquer*.

3.4.1 Prologue

Mr Woodward, the speaker, is dressed in black and holding a handkerchief to his eyes. He is mourning for the death of ‘Comic muse’ that is genuine comedy. He argues that comedy which produced genuine laughter and candidly entertained people is now dead. It has been replaced by a new type of comedy known as the sentimental comedy. If sentimental comedy takes over the stage completely then the comic actors like himself and Ned Shuter (who played the role of Hardcastle) will have no work in future. Woodward tries to imitate a sentimental comedy actor and feels hopeless as he realizes that moralizing will not work for comic actors like him.

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Check Your Progress

- Who is the hero of the play *She Stoops to Conquer*?
- What is sentimental comedy?

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The speaker hopes that Oliver Goldsmith, who, like a doctor, will restore an ailing patient, with five potions corresponding to the five acts of his comedy. Goldsmith will infuse comedy with lively and amusing situations and revive it by entertaining and giving comic relief to the audience. At the end of the play, the audience will decide whether the doctor is qualified or just another quack like many others of the time.

Critical Analysis

Prologues and epilogues were written to comment on the play and to introduce the audience with the objectives of writing the play. The Prologue also gave the reasons for composing the drama.

The Prologue of *She Stoops to Conquer* was written by Mr David Garrick, a well-known actor and producer of his times. He was a manager of a patent house in Drury Lane. The Prologue was spoken by Mr Edward Woodward, a contemporary comic actor. He was offered the role of Tony Lumpkin but the actor turned down the offer thinking that the play would not be successful. Ned Shutter, another comic actor of the times, played the role of Mr Hardcastle in the play. The Prologue is presented in the form of a metaphor where genuine comedy is the patient dying of sentimentalism while Oliver Goldsmith is the doctor who will resuscitate it through his play *She Stoops to Conquer*.

Act I Scene I

Summary

Scene I of the play begins with the entry of Mr and Mrs Hardcastle. Mrs Hardcastle is unhappy with their old fashioned house that resembles an old inn. She grumbles about not visiting the town every now and then like many others in the neighbourhood. She also complains that no one pays them a visit except Mrs Oddfish, the curate's wife and Cripplegate, the lame dancing master. Besides, another source of entertainment are the old stories of prince Eugene and the Duke of Marlborough told by Mr Hardcastle over and over again. Mrs Hardcastle does not enjoy these stories anymore and dismisses them as old fashion trumpery. She snubs her husband for always accusing her son Tony. Tony is neither educated nor mature; he has never been to school which Mrs Hardcastle says was due to his sickness. She believes as long as Tony has fortunes, education is insignificant. Mrs Hardcastle thinks Latin is a suitable form of schooling for Tony. Mr Hardcastle expresses fondness for everything old, old friends, old wine, old books, and old manners. He is critical of Tony, that he is a drunkard, growing fat, is a trickster and knows only mischief. He is not fit for any education. The only schools that he can visit are the ale-house and a stable. Mr Hardcastle believes that Tony and his mother have spoiled each other.

As Tony enters the stage, he is in a hurry to reach the alehouse, The Three Pigeons. His mother dissuades him from keeping the company of low and paltry set of fellows at the ale house. Dick Muggins, Jack Slang, Little Aminabad, Tom Twist are Tony's companions at the alehouse, whom he does not find of low disposition. Moreover, he cannot disappoint himself by not visiting the alehouse and leaves with his mother running behind him.

As Kate Hardcastle enters, Mr Hardcastle comments on her dress. He loathes the superfluous silk with laces which he feels are trimmings of vanity. He does not like this show. She reminds her father of the deal they have that she can wear

fashionable silk dresses of her choice during the day to receive visitors of her interest each day. In the evening, she dresses up according to her father's taste and welcomes his guests.

Mr Hardcastle informs Kate that he has invited his prospective son-in-law, a young man Marlow, who is the son of his longtime friend Sir Charles Marlow. No one from the family has ever met him. Mr Hardcastle has heard of him to be scholar, a well-bred young man with excellent services and will be employed to serve his nation. Marlow is said to be brave, generous, handsome, bashful and reserved. Mr Hardcastle believes that modesty resides in people who are endowed with noble virtues and, therefore, he likes Marlow for his reserved nature. Kate feels that Marlow's reserved nature has undone all his other accomplishments. Though impressed by his good looks, Kate is not enamoured by the quality of being reserved since such men become suspicious husbands. She also believes it would be difficult to develop friendliness and love in a marriage fixed like a business. Nevertheless, Kate agrees to take Marlow as her husband to fulfil her father's desire. Mr Hardcastle informs, it may happen that Marlow may reject her. Kate takes it lightly, she will not cry on rejection and indifference, instead will set out to find a gentleman of newer fashion. For Kate, it is more important for her husband to be handsome and young rather than be sensible and good natured. She is apprehensive about having a reserved husband. She would first secure a lover and then a husband.

Miss Constance Neville, a very dear friend of Kate, is the last person to enter the stage in Scene I of Act I. Kate breaks the news of Marlow to Constance. The audience learns from Constance that her beloved Hastings will accompany Marlow. The two gentlemen are inseparable friends. Constance appreciates Marlow for his good reputation and virtues. She also says that Marlow is timid and diffident in the company of modest ladies of her own class but he mixes well with girls of low social class. Another information divulged through their communication is that Mrs Hardcastle is the guardian of Constance's fortune. She wants Constance to marry Tony because of this good fortune, as this marriage will secure her son's future. Constance keeps Mrs Hardcastle happy by portraying a good picture of Tony and pretending to be in love with him though she knows they both do not love each other. Mrs Hardcastle also does not suspect Constance to have feelings for another man. She says if her relationship with Hastings grows and culminates into marriage she does not mind leaving the fortune. She will happily leave it for her aunt. Even Tony does not want to marry Constance. He would be happy to see her marry someone else.

Critical Analysis

The Act introduces the audience to the place of action that is a small countryside, in the house of Mr Hardcastle. Some background information, necessary to understand the play, is given to the audience. Mr and Mrs Hardcastle is an old couple and for both it is their second marriage. Mrs Hardcastle has a son Tony Lumpkin from her first marriage. Mr Hardcastle too has a daughter named Kate Hardcastle from his first wife.

Through a conversation between the two, Goldsmith instantly presents a contrasting nature of the two characters. While, Mrs Hardcastle has an interest in the London society and she takes a lively interest in the fashions of the day, Mr Hardcastle, on the other hand, is a traditional man. Their tastes also present a contrast between the hustling bustling life of London and its people and the serene,

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countryside and the simplicity of the rustics. Mr Hardcastle criticizes the vanities and affectation of the town, lamenting the loss of traditional values as the people of this age are lacking in sense and discretion. He believes whoever goes to London only comes back with fopperies and affectations. The worst is that earlier very few were affected by pretentiousness and snobbery but now it travels faster. Even her daughter Kate has become pretentious, influenced by the fashion, manners and French frippery after spending two years in London.

Although we see nothing of the surrounding countryside yet we hear about some of the neighbouring inhabitants. Miss Hoggs, Mrs Grigsby (a grig is a grasshopper) and Mrs Oddfish, all sound truly rural. Then there are Tony Lumpkin's low class friends who have rustic names and their occupations reflect their social class. Dick Muggins is the excise man, Jack Slang the horse doctor and there is Tom Twist.

The conversation between the couple throws light on some of the major characters and prepares the audience for their entry. Tony's entry confirms that Mr Hardcastle has given a more realistic account of Tony. He scarcely pays heed and respect either to his mother or his stepfather. Kate's entry immediately after Tony's exit puts them in stark contrast. She is polite in addressing both her father and stepmother; obedient in following Hardcastle's whim requiring her to wear simple dresses of her father's choice and meeting people of his choice in the evening.

The circumstances leading to plot development have also been established. Mrs Hardcastle's description of the mansion, comparing it with an inn prepares the audience for Marlow and Hastings to mistake the house for an inn and for Kate to be taken for a barmaid because of her plain attire in the evening.

Themes of wealth and inheritance are introduced. Tony Lumpkin has inherited an annuity from his father and Constance Neville owns a considerable quantity of jewellery which her aunt manages for her. She has to marry with the consent of her aunt or else lose her fortune.

The personalities of all the major characters of the play are revealed through their actions and dialogues. Kate is a confident and independent woman who will marry for love. At the same time, she ensures her father's happiness by making the man of his choice fall in love with her. We come to know about Marlow through Mr Hardcastle and Constance. Tony is fat, uneducated and outspoken. He is a trickster and loves to drink with his rowdy fellows. Hardcastle's description and his own actions confirm it.

Act I Scene II

Summary

Scene II of Act I is set in the alehouse, The Three Pigeons. Tony is sitting at the head of the table, which is a little higher, with the ease of being very much at home. A gathering of shabby looking fellows with punch (cigar) and tobacco surround him, all shouting and singing. Holding a mallet in his hand, he sings a song, in which he raises a toast to all drunkards, shuns learning, education, and dismisses schoolmasters and Methodist preachers. The third verse of his song is in praise of the low life at the countryside. The alehouse landlord announces the arrival of two gentlemen from London standing outside. They have lost their way and are asking for directions to Mr Hardcastle's house. Tony is sure that one of them is a gentleman

who has come to court his sister Kate. Instantly, Tony Lumpkin hits on a plan to avenge his stepfather's constant grumbles about his behaviour. He asks the landlord to bring them in.

As the gentlemen ask about the Hardcastles, in his own fantasy, Lumpkin describes Mr Hardcastle as a cross-grained, old-fashioned, whimsical old man with an ugly face. He describes Kate as an 'all trapesing, trolloping, talkative maypole'. He presents the old man's son (himself) as a pretty, well-bred, agreeable youth, that everybody is fond of. Marlow is reluctant to believe the information they have gathered about the father and his daughter from Tony's account. The daughter is said to be well-bred and beautiful and the son is an awkward brat spoiled by his mother. Tony and the landlord fabricate the description of the countryside as an area of boggy roads, hills and dangerous commons. As Marlow and Hastings express their desire to rest tonight in the tavern, Tony says there is no space. He directs them to his stepfather's house, describing it as an inn named The Buck Head run by an eccentric innkeeper who fancies himself as a gentleman. He presents Mr Hardcastle as an innkeeper on the verge of retirement aspiring to be recognized as one of the gentry. The deluded travellers leave for the inn.

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Critical Analysis

Act I, Scene II lays the basis for the ensuing plot that begins to work immediately. The mistakes of the night begin with Marlow and Hastings believing that Hardcastle's house is The Buck's Head inn and Hardcastle is the old, idiosyncratic innkeeper.

The scene further unfolds Tony's character. His picture presented in the previous scene matches his actions. His seating position shows his dominating position in the group which includes the rustics named in Scene I. Tony is happy drinking and merry-making. He asserts that he chooses his company. No one dictates him. He is his own master. We get a glimpse into Tony's background. People, in general know, that his father has left him considerable wealth which he will inherit when he comes of age. He is a living replica of his father, who excels in country pursuits. He also says that he will soon be a worth fifteen hundred pound a year on marrying Constance.

Goldsmith also creates two scenes of the countryside. One scene is set in Mr Hardcastle's mansion which lacks the fashion of the town but there is decorum and refinement. The other scene is set in the alehouse, a hub for the rowdy and boisterous low class rustics and drunkards like Tony. The setting and characters further present a social order with class bias.

Act II

Summary

The scene is set in Hardcastle's house. Mr Hardcastle, awaiting the visit of his prospective son-in-law Marlow, is seen instructing his servants Diggory, Roger and others on how to behave when the guests come to their house. These servants are not used to receiving guests and waiting at the table. Diggory, the head servant, is very talkative and loves to eat. Hardcastle instructs them not to talk, eat, drink or laugh hard in their presence and be attentive. He finds it hard to teach these servants who do not know anything about table etiquettes. The servants are only more confused. The scene is interrupted by the news of the arrival of Marlow and Hastings. Mr Hardcastle goes to receive his guests.

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Marlow and Hastings, with their servants, arrive at the scene. They admire the house instantly, clean and creditable, which as intended by Tony, is taken to be an inn. We learn from their conversation that Marlow has spent much of his life travelling, residing at the college or in an inn. This kind of life has not given him an opportunity to interact with reputable ladies. This factor is also responsible for his low confidence in the company of modest women. He does not remember of being acquainted with a single modest woman, except his mother. On rare occasions meeting a young cultured lady of his own class has left him petrified. He always looks for an opportunity to leave the room as he loses his confidence when the lady looks at him. He is also unable to counterfeit impudence since he is a modest man. He considers a modest woman, dressed out in all her finery, the most tremendous object of the whole creation.

On the contrary, Marlow is affable and boisterous with serving women and barmaids. He can say the finest things to the barmaid and the college bed maker but not a word of it to modest women. Jokingly, Hastings remarks that with this diffident attitude Marlow will never be able to get married unless his bride is courted by a proxy. Marlow is not even sure how will he court this woman whom he has come to meet and will simply answer her questions in yes and no. Hastings is surprised to know that a warm friend can be a cold lover. Marlow also asserts that he has come here to see the reconciliation of Hastings with Miss Constance Neville.

Mistaking Hardcastle to be an innkeeper, as intended by Tony, Marlow behaves arrogantly with him. Mr Hardcastle welcomes the two gentlemen in the Liberty Hall, at which the two young men poke fun throughout the conversation. While Marlow and Hastings speak of the need to change from travelling clothes into something fine like silk, the old man talks of his colonel uncle of which Marlow and Hastings make fun in an aside. The young men call for a cup of punch and then discuss the evening meal. They ask Mr Hardcastle for a bill of fare. It is a long menu because it has been prepared for special guests, Mr Hardcastle's prospective son-in-law and his friend. Marlow and Hastings are amazed at the quality and quantity of the proposed meal. They shun it thinking this big menu is to extract money from them. They ask for simple two-three things on the table. They force the old man to show them their bedroom. Mr Hardcastle is surprised to witness such imprudent and flippant behaviour. Nonetheless, he does what they desire. Marlow feels that the desire and learning to be a gentleman, has made the old man brazen. Finding the old man becoming troublesome, Marlow leaves the Liberty Hall to inspect his bedroom followed by the protest of Mr Hardcastle.

Hastings is surprised to see Miss Neville in an inn. Understanding that Hastings and Marlow have been duped by Tony, Constance clears the confusion. She tells him that it is her guardian Mrs Hardcastle's house and since it is old, it does look like an inn. She also mentions that Mrs Hardcastle is courting her on behalf of her son Tony who dislikes Constance. Hastings divulges his ploy to seize this opportunity to enter Constance's family and elope with her. Once the horses are refreshed they can travel to France. He wants to go to France because France gives freedom even to the slaves to choose their partners and the law of marriage among slaves is also respected. However, Constance is reluctant to leave without her jewels. She is anxious to get her jewels and secure her future. She has been asking for it from her aunt to wear it and will be successful very soon. Hastings does not desire anything but her. Together the lovers decide to leave Marlow in the deception that he is staying at

an inn because telling Marlow all this abruptly will make him leave the house and their plan to elope will not be executed.

Hastings informs Marlow that Constance and Kate have arrived. The family had come to dine in the neighbourhood and stayed back refreshing the horses at the inn. Marlow is reluctant to meet Kate. Constance and Hastings persuade Marlow to stay. After introducing Marlow and Kate to each other Hastings and Constance leave the place. A humorous conversation ensues between Kate and Marlow. Marlow is overcome by shyness, faltering and stuttering, scarcely able to complete his own sentences. In her solus, Kate sums up her impression of Marlow. She finds him attractive and a man of sentiment, sober, a serious, honourable and highly sensitive young man. He has good sense, but is ignorant of it. He is extremely engrossed in his fears. She determines to find out how she can boost his confidence and help him in overcoming his shyness.

The fashion styles of London are the topics of discussion for Mrs Hardcastle and Hastings as they re-enter the room. Hastings flatters Mrs Hardcastle on her hairstyle, her dress and her youthful appearance. Mrs Hardcastle is impressed with his talks of London which she loves and regrets that she has not been there. Hastings, to impress her, says it seems that she has been brought up in London as her manners are like the fashionable elite of London.

Mrs Hardcastle finds similarities of face and height in the two young people Tony and Constance and sees it as an auspicious sign of their suitability for each other. Meanwhile, Constance and Tony are fighting, Tony tells Constance to keep distance and that he does not wish to have any relationship with her. Mrs Hardcastle calls these fightings falling in and out of love many times a day as if they are already husband and wife. Tony Lumpkin upsets his doting mother and a rant between Tony and his mother ensues. She calls him a viper, a monster who is never seen in the house when in good humour or spirits. He is always found in the ale house, and that he never fulfils any duty towards his mother. She calls him a dear, sweet, pretty, provoking, and undutiful boy. The two ladies leave.

Tony and Hastings are left in each other's company. Hastings tries to know about his feelings for Neville. Tony makes fun of Constance and Kate. He calls Constance a bitter cantankerous toad in all Christendom, with lots of tricks in her thicket, as loud as a hog in a gate with friends, eyes as black as shoes, and cheeks as broad and red as a pulpit cushion. Hastings exhibits his feelings for Constance; she is well-tempered, silent and sensible. Her meekness and modesty charms him. Tony says Hastings finds her to be a well-tempered girl because he does not know her as well as him. Hastings loves Constance and wants to marry her, while Tony detests the thought of marrying her. He is being urged by his mother so that she can maintain control of Constance's fortune for his son. Hastings requests Tony to help him elope with Constance. Tony instantly agrees since he wishes to get rid of her as soon as possible. He also promises to help them get Constance's fortune.

Critical Analysis

The servants' scene once again emphasizes the contrast between the low life of the rustics to that of the gentry. The gap between the expectations of polished behaviour and what the servants can manage adds humour to the scene. The servants, in their conversation also emphasize that Mr Hardcastle is a great teller of military tales, which was also mentioned by Mrs Hardcastle.

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The play that Tony Lumpkin conceived starts working. Hastings and Marlow mistake Mr Hardcastle to be an old innkeeper who wishes to be a part of the gentry. The whole scene reveals the condition of taverns and inn and their owners. The maintenance of large mansions usually made the owners bankrupt, who later turned them into inns for their livelihood. Marlow, in spite of travelling widely, still lacks the assurance about these inns. The bad inns fleece and starve the travellers and the good ones tax them dearly for the luxuries. Everything appears so hospitable to them that the two fear the high charges for all of it.

The conversation between Hastings and Mrs Hardcastle exhibits the contrast between the opinion held by Mrs Hardcastle about the metropolitan city, London and the actual scenario. Mrs Hardcastle dwells in her own imaginative view of the world of the fashionable metropolitan London society. Her opinion of the elite London society which she has not experienced is based on the information given in 'the Scandalous Magazine' which contained reviews of books, plays and social circulars. Hastings has fun at her expense. Tower Wharf was certainly not a fashionable place. The Pantheon was in Oxford Street, the Grotto Gardens were less fashionable than Ranelagh and the Borough of Southwark was by this date not a place where the nobility resided. He pokes fun at Mrs Hardcastle's incomplete knowledge of London's fashionable society, of which she so yearns to be a part of. When Mrs Hardcastle joins Hasting's talk with Constance, her conversation reveals her pretensions and ignorance of the fashionable London life. Mr Hardcastle, too, is transported to the other world of campaigns in war. It is also a fabricated one with incorrect dates and names of places. Often, he narrates stories of valour and gallantry from the past.

Marlow, as described earlier, admits being shy and reserved with ladies of his own class, confident and boisterous with women of low class, and stating the reasons for such behaviour. He becomes uncomfortable and uneasy talking to a lady from the same class. Not once did he lift his eyes to look at Kate's face directly. He fumbled over the words throughout the conversation with the lady. Marlow's impudent behaviour with females of the lower class and refined conduct in the company of women of reputation, as well as his misbehaviour with Mr Hardcastle, thinking him to be the innkeeper and the servants emphasizes the entrenched system of class division in eighteenth century England.

The plan to elope to France where there is freedom to choose one's partner and respect for the institution of marriage is a critical statement on England's class conscious society where individuals marry with the intention of upholding their status rather than for love.

There is also one scene in the play in which Lumpkin has been presented as a friendly and agreeable person. Hastings draws attention of the audience to his virtue that he looks like a lad of spirit. Tony promises to get Constance jewels so that she can take them with her.

Act III

Summary

The scene in Act III is set in Mr Hardcastle's mansion. Mr Hardcastle alone is perplexed and wonders why his friend, Sir Marlow, recommended that Kate should marry young Marlow, who seems rude and unmannered. He believes that Kate, too, will be shocked to meet such an insolent man. As it is evening, Kate has changed

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her dress to live upto her commitment to her father to dress up with simplicity in the evening. Mr Hardcastle and his daughter share their views on Marlow. While Kate praises Marlow and approves of his ways which, she concludes, he has acquired from travelling across the world. She finds everything natural about the man. She is thoroughly impressed with his timidity. She claims to have not seen anyone so modest as Marlow, who met her with a respectful bow, stammering voice and a look fixed on the ground. He treated her with diffidence and respect, admired the prudence of girls that never laughed, tired her with apologies for being tiresome and then left the room with a bow. Mr Hardcastle disapproves of Marlow's ways and is convinced that he has acquired all that immodesty by travelling across the world, from the bad company and French dance masters. He is aghast by his brazen immodesty, asking twenty questions, and never waiting for an answer, interrupting his remarks with some silly pun, asking him to make punch (drink). He compares Marlow to a bully called Dawson from earlier in the century. Mr Hardcastle discerns that the first sight of Marlow has deceived his daughter.

Finally, father and daughter agree to reject Marlow as unsuitable, but for different reasons, Hardcastle because of Marlow's impudence, Kate because of his apparent bashfulness. Although Kate does not dismiss Marlow completely yet she feels that he may have some good qualities behind his diffident appearance. For her, a smooth face represents good sense and virtue. Hardcastle says if Marlow, whom he addresses as Mr Brazen, is able to reconcile the contradictions in his personality then only he can please both of them. Both are of the opinion that they are neither completely right nor wholly wrong about Marlow and proceed to find more about him.

Tony enters with a casket of jewels that he has stolen from Mrs Hardcastle's drawer and gives them to Hastings. Tony has the keys to all the drawers in his mother's bureau and that is how he was also able to go to the alehouse every day. He does not want Constance to be cheated of her fortune. Hastings believes it would be better if Mrs Hardcastle gives the jewel casket to Miss Neville herself. Tony tells him to keep the box till she gets it directly from his mother which is like parting with her tooth. Hastings is worried about her disappointment when she finds jewels are not in her bureau.

In the next scene, Constance is seen requesting her aunt to give her the casket of jewels. Mrs Hardcastle reprimands her with remarks about the unsuitability of wearing ornaments at such a young age. She will need them when her beauty will fade. Constance retorts something that will repair beauty at 40 years of age will improve beauty at 20 years of age. Mrs Hardcastle praises Neville's beauty which is absolutely natural blush and is beyond the beauty of thousand ornaments. Mrs Hardcastle tries to convince Constance saying that jewels are out of fashion and offers her own unfashionable semi-precious ornaments to Constance, which she refuses to accept. In an aside, Mrs Hardcastle tells Tony that she will hang on to the jewels till Tony and Constance get married and the fortune passes on to Tony. As she leaves to bring her own jewellery, Tony informs Constance that he has given the jewels to Hastings and they both can elope. Tony Lumpkin, as mischievous as he can get, suggests Mrs Hardcastle to tell Constance that the jewels have been stolen and he is witness to this incident. She does so. Moments later a dreadful wailing breaks out as Mrs Hardcastle discovers that the jewels are missing. Lumpkin continues with his mischief appreciating Mrs Hardcastle for being a fantastic actor. She bemoans

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that her son is unable to distinguish between jest and earnest and feels sorry for her niece. Ironically, she is the one who has been tricked.

Kate, simply dressed, is accompanied by her maid Pimple. Her simple dress led Marlow to believe that she is a barmaid in the inn. Every woman in the country wears simple dress in the evening and changes only when she visits or receives company. Also, Marlow did not look up at her face even once when she met him first as Kate Hardcastle. Also, Kate's face was hidden behind the bonnet. Therefore, he does not recognize her in her evening dress. Kate wishes to keep up that delusion. It is by keeping up the mistake she wishes to be seen, and that is no small advantage to a girl who brings her face to the market. By stooping to conquer she would make an acquaintance and victory gained over one who never addresses any but the wildest of her sex. Her chief aim is to take Marlow off his guard and examine his heart. Marlow enters whistling, happy to find himself away from the people of the house all alone. He muses that Miss Hardcastle is too grave and sentimental for him and she squints. Kate meets Marlow as a maid. The moment he looks at her, he wants to steel a kiss from her. He behaves the way Hastings had mentioned earlier about his behaviour in the company of women from the lower strata. He is unabashed with barmaids and others of the like. Marlow mentions he is a great favourite among ladies but he does not know what makes him so popular. At the Ladies Club in the town, a reference is made to a famous female coterie; he is called by the name Rattle. Telling his name Solomon, he flirts with Kate, mistaking her to be a bar maid. Offers to kiss her, salute her, to be at her service. He admits that cards, suppers, wine, and old women make him merry. Tries to hold her hand and kiss but fails and leaves.

Once again, Mr Hardcastle is shocked to see the impudence of the young man. But Kate wants to prove Marlow to be a modest man and wants to get a chance to convince her father of Marlow's modesty. She believes that he has only the faults that will pass off with time, and the virtues that will improve with age, and hopes that her father forgives him.

Critical Analysis

This Act highlights the diverse views held by Mr Hardcastle and Kate about Marlow's character. It seems Kate and Mr Hardcastle are talking about two different people. With Mr Hardcastle, whom he believes to be an eccentric innkeeper, Marlow shows his unruly side. Knowing Kate to be a fine lady, however, Marlow remains reserved.

This Act further confirms the personality traits of Kate, Marlow and Tony. Kate takes pleasure in being obedient to her father. Marlow is modest and shy in the company of his own class and wild when with the barmaids. Tony shows his righteousness by giving the casket of jewels to Hastings and making arrangements for him to leave with Constance.

Act IV

Summary

Mr Hardcastle receives a letter informing that Sir Charles Marlow will arrive shortly. Constance apprises Hastings of this information. The plans for elopement are made and Hastings wants to be out on their way to France as soon as possible because of the fear of getting caught since Charles Marlow recognizes him. He has given the jewels casket to Marlow. Marlow is a little confused about the casket. He has given

it to Mrs Hardcastle to keep it secure and safe. Hastings is horrified to know that the jewels casket is in the possession of Mrs Hardcastle and decides to leave without it.

Enchanted by the barmaid, Marlow is unable to free himself of her thoughts. He also expresses his intense desire to be one with her. He is totally in awe of her personality. He regrets not being able to kiss her.

Mr Hardcastle is exasperated with Marlow and his servants. He tolerates Marlow only because he is his friend's son. Angrily Mr Hardcastle commands Marlow to leave his house with the drunken pack of his servants immediately. He has endured Marlow's insolence for more than four hours and still there seem to be no an end to his immodesty. Marlow, on the contrary, not only refuses to leave but also claims to never have met with such impudence in his whole life before. Mr Hardcastle reveals that Sir Charles Marlow's letter made him believe Marlow to be a well-bred and modest man but he is no better than a coxcomb and a bully. Mr Harcastle informs Marlow of his father's arrival anytime soon which leaves Marlow puzzled.

A conversation follows between Kate and Marlow. He wishes to confirm whether the place is an inn and she is a barmaid or not. Kate calls herself a poor relation of Mr Hardcastle to whom the mansion belongs. She only manages the household. Marlow is ashamed for thinking Kate to be a barmaid. He feels sorry for his misbehaviour and for mistaking her simplicity for allurements. He expresses his feelings for Kate, thinking her to be a poor relation of Hardcastle, and that he is bewitched by her simplicity and he would be undone, if he stays any longer. Kate pretends to weep and Marlow calls it the first mark of tenderness he ever had from a modest woman. He is deeply touched. She is the only one from the family whom he would leave with reluctance. Owing to their different status Marlow cannot make her his wife.

Constance requests Tony to get the casket of jewels again; he refuses and informs her he has arranged for a horse for them to elope. Mrs Hardcastle arrives. Diggory, the servant brings a letter for Tony. Constance recognizes the handwriting, the letter is from Hastings. She tries to keep Mrs Hardcastle engaged so that their plan is not revealed. As Tony could not understand the handwriting, it is Mrs Harcastle who reads it, comes to know about their plan, and decides to send Constance to live with aunt Pedigree. She immediately prepares to leave for aunt Pedigree's house.

Hastings accuses Tony of disclosing the plan to his mother. Marlow blames Hastings for hiding the truth and not stopping him from the wrong act. Marlow tells Tony that it is because of his mischief that all here are in trouble and, hence, unhappy. All present on the stage are disappointed with the happenings.

Critical Analysis

The mistaken identities and circumstances start unfolding. As Mr Hardcastle mentions Marlow's father, he begins to think of mistaking the mansion to be an inn. Kate tells him it is Mr Hardcastle's house. Marlow confesses to have feelings for Kate and Kate also reciprocates those feelings. Hastings plan to elope with Constance is also disclosed to Mrs Hastings.

The conversation between Marlow and Hastings also throws light on Marlow's opinion about women belonging to the low class. Hastings warns Marlow that he cannot rob a woman of his honour to which the reply comes that firstly, barmaid

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of an inn does not have any honour and secondly, there is nothing in this inn for which he cannot pay. He means to say that he will pay the barmaid to be with him. And if she has virtue, he should be the last man in the world that would attempt to corrupt it. The scenes also reveals Marlow's character a little more and his thoughts about women of lower class. Once again the class differences are highlighted and the necessity to be in relationship only with people of the same class is asserted. As Marlow says that if, he were alone in this world with no social obligations he could have married her. But the opinion of the world matters to him. According to Marlow, difference of birth, fortune and education has prevented him from marrying her. Kate has also fallen in love with Marlow and reiterates the title of the play that she will preserve the character to which she has stooped to conquer her love.

Act V Scene I

Summary

Charles Marlow and Mr Hardcastle have come to know about Marlow's mistakes. Marlow possesses a fortune more than a competence already, and can want nothing but a good and virtuous girl to share and increase his happiness.

Marlow feels sorry for his misconduct. He apprises his father and Mr Hastings that he has not given Miss Hardcastle the slightest mark of his attachment or even the most distant hint to suspect him of affection. They have just had one interview, and that was formal, modest and uninteresting. The old men are unable to believe this statement. As he leaves, Kate joins the two old men. She admits that Marlow has professed of a lasting attachment and love, has said civil things to her, talked much of his want of merit, and her greatness. Old Marlow mentions his son's submissive nature and inability to have conversation with modest women. Kate suggests them to hide and see Marlow professing his love for her.

Scene II

Scene II is set in the back garden. Tony tells Hastings that he took the ladies for a round and brought them back to the Hardcastle's house instead of taking them to aunt Pedigree's house. Moreover, Mrs Hardcastle falls into the pond. She does not know that it is her own house. She sees someone coming and Tony frightens her saying it is a highwayman. It is actually Mr Hardcastle, who has come listening to the cry for help. Anxious, she hides behind a tree. Tony convinces Mr Hardcastle there is no one around and his mother along with Constance is at aunt Pedigree's house. Mr Hardcastle is surprised that they have covered such a long journey in such a short time. Mrs Hardcastle, thinking the old man to be a highwayman, pleads for mercy to take all the money but spare her son. Recognizing the voice of his wife, Mr Hastings thinks she is out of her senses. Blinded by her fears, she is amazed to see Mr Hardcastle in a frightful place, far from home. Mr Hardcastle understood that Tony has played a prank on her. Mrs Hardcastle swears to teach Tony a lesson. Tony retorts that the whole parish is of the opinion that Mrs Hardcastle has spoiled her son so she should also bear the fruits of the same.

Constance is reluctant to elope and wishes to marry with the consent of everyone in the family and also get her fortune. Hastings tries to persuade her to elope, stay in love from the moment, let fortune perish. Love and contentment will

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increase their fortune beyond the monarch's revenue. Constance wishes to be prudent. She believes that hasty decisions taken in a moment of passion lead to repentance in the long run. She has decided to talk to Mr Harcastle to resolve the issue for he is compassionate and just. Hastings is apprehensive because Mr Hardcastle may have the will to relieve her but not the power to do so since Mrs Hardcastle is her guardian and fortune keeper.

Scene III

Marlow admits to Kate (disguised as a poor relation) his inability to marry her. It agonizes him to be separated from her. Kate asks him to wait for a couple of more days and see his uneasiness subside. He confesses that he has already trifled too long with his heart. Now pride begins to surrender to his passion. The disparity of education and fortune, the anger of parents, and the contempt of his peers, begin to lose their ground. There is nothing that can restore him to himself except this painful effort of resolution. Kate, still playing the role of a poor relation, says his sufferings for her are of little value as they will soon be gone in a day or two once he leaves for his city. Soon, he will regret the feeling he harbours for her. She does not urge him to stay. Kate tells Marlow that her family and education is as good as Miss Hardcastle's family but they come to nothing if the family is not affluent. Acting sorry, she says she must remain contented with the slight approbation of credited merit. Kate says what began with indifference should also end with indifference. Any connection between them would appear mercenary on her part and imprudence on his part. She will never feel the confidence of being addressed by a secure admirer.

Marlow defends himself. He does not care for the fortune; it is her beauty at first sight that caught his attention. He likes spending time with her. He decides to stay and tell his father about her. He is sure that after seeing her, his father will not question about her class. Marlow will not repent any decision except that he did not understand her merit before and would like to atone for his past misconduct. Every moment reveals a new merit in her and increases his diffidence and confusion. Marlow kneels down and expresses his feelings to make her feel confident and secure.

Both the fathers, Charles Marlow and Mr Hastings, who were listening to the conversation hiding behind the screen, chide Marlow for wooing Miss Hardcastle in private but not accepting it before them. Marlow is surprised to hear that Kate is Mr Hardcastle's daughter. Kate pokes fun at him and asks which Marlow should she address, one who is a faltering gentleman, with looks on the ground, that speaks just to be heard, and hates hypocrisy; or the one who is loud, confident and keeps it up with Mrs. Mantrap, and old Miss Biddy Buckskin, till three in the morning. The two old men pardon Marlow for everything.

Mrs Hardcastle believes Hastings and Constance have eloped but Constance has not taken her fortune. Mr Hardcastle knows she cannot be so mercenary. Hastings and Constance enter the stage and announce they could not go without the consent of everyone. Hardcastle asks Tony whether he refuses to take Constance as his wife or not. Tony says that he has not come of age yet to pronounce this statement. Mr Hardcastle discloses the secret that Tony has come of age three months ago and his wife asked him not to reveal this fact. Tony formally announces his refusal to make Constance his wife. Marlow and Kate reconcile and decide to have a merry morning.

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Critical Analysis

Themes of class, marriage and money are again reinforced in this Act. Marriages are about making bonds stronger, as the old men say, and this will further lead to union of families. To own wealth and fortune is vital to be respectable in the society. As Kate mentions being affluent is more important than to have good education and family. The fact that it is Mrs Hardcastle who is responsible for spoiling her son, everyone believes it, is once again fortified. Kate, who stooped to conquer, wins Marlow's heart as a woman of social class lesser than his own. That justifies the title of the play. Marlow not only expresses his love to her but also firmly decides to convince his father and make Kate (belonging to low class) as his wife going against all restrictions of class.

The Act ends with the announcement of the union of both sets of lovers and that too with the consent of the family members.

3.4.2 Epilogue

Epilogue one is spoken by the actress who played the part of Kate Hardcastle. She speaks in the person of a barmaid. It summarizes the action, hoping that the humorous tale of how Kate, who 'stooped to conquer' justifies the author's abandonment of sentimental comedy. She stooped to conquer and win a husband for herself without any aid from her fortunes. And Marlow falls in love with the simplicity of the barmaid and not the fashionable Kate and her fortunes. She begins and ends the epilogue with the plea to obtain the appreciation of the audience for the play. She narrates the five stages of the barmaid's life. The structure of the epilogue corresponds with the lines spoken by Jacques in *As You Like It*.

The second epilogue is spoken by J. Craddock, who plays the role of Tony Lumpkin. This epilogue reiterates the theme of the play that assumptions of money and class should not matter much to anyone. He says that now he has renounced Miss Constance and will soon start receiving a thousand pounds a year. He will go to London since there people have some regard for the innate qualities of a person, no matter what he inherits. He will show the world what good taste is. He will set new fashions and prove it to the London gentry that they too are gentlemen.

Critical Analysis of the Setting

The play is set in eighteenth century England. The play is set in a country side, away from the urban London society. The place of action is in and around Mr Hardcastle's mansion. One of the scenes is set in the alehouse called The Three Pigeons, Tony's favourite hangout.

3.4.3 Themes and Characters

Let us now study the prominent themes of the play.

Class

The play showcases the reality of class distinctions and class snobbery. People belonging to the upper class are keen to find suitable partners from the same class for their children. Young men from good families might consider sleeping with a barmaid, but would not normally consider marrying one.

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Nevertheless, Goldsmith views class as more of a psychological construct, class prejudices are the product of social and psychological conditioning. The perspectives of the characters are influenced by the class to which they belong. For instance, Tony Lumpkin is a squire's son and like his biological father, prefers alehouse companions and country folk to people of his own class. He does not spend much time with any of his family members too. He is the only one who enjoys the company of low class people. Another example is that of Marlow. He is terrified of the respectability of women of his class like Kate Hardcastle. When he confronts Kate as a barmaid, Marlow is sexually interested in her, and gets emotionally involved when he comes to know that Kate is a poor relative of Mr. Hardcastle. But Marlow shows inability to marry a woman outside his class. Kate is the same person who plays different roles, and it is Marlow who invests those roles with social and psychological value. Kate, in disguise, cuts across the social boundaries and stoops to conquer love. Marlow's attitude towards Kate Hardcastle is another example of the vital role played by class in eighteenth century England. His behaviour throughout the play is natural and genuine.

Inheritance

The theme of inheritance is a common one which was largely found in the plays of the seventeenth and eighteenth century England. In these plays, the fortunes of young men and women were often controlled by their guardians. If they married without the consent of their guardian these young people would lose their fortunes. Continuing with the tradition, Goldsmith also sets the same condition for Miss Constance, niece of Mrs Hardcastle. She has to marry the man of his aunt's choice or she will have to part with the jewels that her uncle has left for her in his will. And it is to save Tony's future that Mrs Hardcastle wishes Miss Constance to marry Tony.

Money

Money is a practical need of life. Even amidst emotions, it is important to think of money. Kate, when playing the role of a poor relative to Mr Hardcastle, mentions to Marlow that men of their class marry women not for love but for their fortunes. Even Constance is reluctant to leave her casket of jewels behind. The characters are judged on the basis of lack or access to money. Marlow would hide his emotions for a woman who belongs to the lower class because his father would not accept this and, hence, will not give his approval for marriage. Even Mr Hardcastle is treated with disrespect till the moment he is thought to be the innkeeper. Mrs Hardcastle wants Tony to marry Constance for her fortune. It is Hastings who is ready to elope with Constance without her casket of jewels. He needs only her companionship and not her money. Tony is another character who does not care for money. He refuses to marry Constance because he does not like her. It does not matter to him if he loses the inherited wealth. Nonetheless, he can afford extravagance because he has access to wealth.

Love

The theme of love runs throughout the play. Hastings accompanies Marlow only for his love for Constance. It does not matter to him whether Constance is able to get her money from Mrs Hastings or not. All he wishes for is to get married to her. This is the reason he decides to run away to France where love marriages are accepted.

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Kate makes it clear in the beginning of the play that she would not marry someone whom she does not love. She has, therefore, 'stooped' from her status to make Marlow fall in love with her. This way she obediently respects her father's decision as well as fulfills her own desire to marry a man for love.

Mr and Mrs Hardcastle also share a bond of love that is strong and resilient. It is their second marriage. Mrs Hardcastle is loud, pretentious, greedy, a fashion freak and eccentric. She is the one who is responsible for Tony's presumptuousness. Mr Hardcastle loves the lady and treats her with all regards. He loves her with all her faults and attends her gently and in good humour. Mr Hardcastle is a loving and an affectionate father to both his obedient daughter Kate and his boisterous step son Tony.

Mrs Hardcastle loves her son so much that she covers up all his mischief. In order to protect Tony's future she wants Constance and Tony to get married even when she know they do not love each other. It is believed that Mrs Hardcastle's love and pampering has spoiled Tony.

City vs Countryside

Mr Hardcastle views town manners as pretentious. The conversation between Mr and Mrs Hardcastle and their respective tastes present a contrast between the hustling bustling life of London and its people and the serene, countryside and the simplicity of the rustics. Mr Hardcastle criticizes the vanities and affectation of the town, lamenting the loss of traditional values as the people of this age are devoid of sense and discretion. He believes whoever goes to London only comes back with fopperies and affectations. In his song in the alehouse, Tony praises the countryside and he is the one who enjoys the company of his rustic friends.

Kate provides a combination of being refined and simple at the same time. It is Marlow who praises her for having a refined simplicity. Having lived in town, she is able to appreciate the values of both sides of life and can find happiness in appreciating the contradictions that exist between them.

Characters

Mr Hardcastle, an old fashioned romantic, is a traditionalist who loves the past times, old manners, old books and old wine, and a rustic way of life. He is critical of the fashionable London society, which he believes, breeds vanity and affectation. He is a caring husband and an affectionate father. As a husband he loves his second wife with all her faults and treats her with his usual gentle good humour. As a stepfather, he is only gently critical of Tony. Mr Hardcastle understands Tony better than his mother and gives a more realistic appraisal of Tony's character. He is a doting father who wants his daughter to be happy in marriage and, therefore, firm in his decision to find a compatible match for Kate, but of course with her daughter's consent. He believes in class hierarchy.

Mrs Dorothy Hardcastle is an admirer of the fashionable London society. She yearns for it. Her first dialogues with her husband express her longing for a trip to the town. She takes lively interest in fashion. To accommodate the latest fashions she tries to look younger than her age. Her love for Tony, her son has spoilt him. Being a doting mother, she is not ready to admit any faults of Tony. In her selfish pursuit, she wants Miss Neville to marry Tony because of her inheritance and social standing. She is not at all concerned whether the two love each other or not.

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Tony Lumpkin is an ill-mannered and a spoilt freak who enjoys drinking with his alehouse companions. He is neither interested in studies nor conscious of his class. His buddies are rustics who drink with him at the alehouse. He amuses himself by gambling, drinking, and playing pranks on people. It is his mischievous act on Marlow and Hastings that puts the plot into motion. Tony is reluctant to marry Constance but cannot refuse until he legally comes of age. For all his immaturity and imbecility, Tony does show some strength of character. He refuses to marry for money and fortune. Though for selfish reason to get rid of Constance, he helps Hastings to run away with Constance. He even steals the jewels for the lovers from his mother's drawer which could have been his own had Constance married with Hastings without Mrs Hardcastle's consent.

Kate Hardcastle is an independent woman. She is polite in addressing both her father and stepmother. She obediently follows her father's whim to wear a plain dress in the evening. She seeks a companion in marriage with whom she is comfortable, and not just a wealthy gentleman. To ascertain Marlow's true feelings, Kate pretends to be a barmaid to get him to announce that he loves her despite her low social position.

Marlow is a young man who behaves differently with people of different class. He is informed to be a handsome, brave and generous scholar, a reserved fellow. Marlow mixes with girls of low class, brash and outspoken in the company of barmaids and other working class women, but shy and tongue-tied when in the company of women of his own class and standing.

3.5 SUMMARY

- It is believed Goldsmith was born in 1728 in Ireland. His father was a poor clergyman in a church of Ireland. Due to meagre financial resources, Goldsmith struggled for education and later for his livelihood.
- Goldsmith received his degree in 1749. In 1752, he moved to Edinburgh to study medicine but left it without a degree. From 1753–56, he travelled across the British continent.
- Oliver Goldsmith was a poet, a novelist, a playwright and an essayist.
- Goldsmith wrote numerous poems like *Edwin and Angelina*, *The Traveller*, *The Deserted Village*, *Retaliation* and *The Haunch of Venison*. His significant plays include *The Good Natur'd Man*, *She Stoops to Conquer*, *The Grumbler* and a novel *The Vicar of Wakefield*.
- Goldsmith's *She Stoops to Conquer* (1773) is seen as the first successful reaction to the sentimental comedy initiated by Steele.
- Sentimental comedy was developed in response to the perceived immorality of the Restoration theatre. It was founded on the belief that man is innately good and that he can be softened through tears that flow from contemplation on undeserved suffering.
- Oscar James Campbell noted in an introduction to *Chief Plays of Goldsmith and Sheridan: The School for Scandal, She Stoops to Conquer, The Rivals* that the central idea of this play was suggested to Goldsmith by an incident of his boyhood.

Check Your Progress

5. Who wrote the Prologue of the play *She Stoops to Conquer*?
6. How does Scene I Act I of the play *She Stoops to Conquer* begin?
7. What is the setting of Act I Scene II?
8. Why does Mrs Hardcastle want Constance to marry Tony?
9. Whom does Mr Hardcastle want his daughter Kate to marry?
10. How does Marlow's treatment of ladies of low class and high class differ?

NOTES

- Mr Woodward, the speaker, is dressed in black and holding a handkerchief to his eyes. He is mourning for the death of 'Comic muse' that is genuine comedy.
- Prologues and epilogues were written to comment on the play and to introduce the audience with the objectives of writing the play. The prologue also gave the reasons for composing the drama.
- The Prologue of *She Stoops to Conquer* was written by Mr David Garrick, a well-known actor and producer of his times. He was a manager of a patent house in Drury Lane. The prologue was spoken by Mr Edward Woodward, a contemporary comic actor.
- Scene I of the play begins with the entry of Mr and Mrs Hardcastle. Mrs Hardcastle is unhappy with their old fashioned house that resembles an old inn.
- Mr Hardcastle is critical of Tony, that he is a drunkard, growing fat, is a trickster and knows only mischief. He is not fit for any education. The only schools that he can visit are the ale-house and a stable. Mr Hardcastle believes that Tony and his mother have spoiled each other.
- Mr Hardcastle informs Kate that he has invited his prospective son-in-law, a young man Marlow, who is the son of his longtime friend Sir Charles Marlow. No one from the family has ever met him.
- Mr Hardcastle believes that modesty resides in people who are endowed with noble virtues and, therefore, he likes Marlow for his reserved nature.
- Kate feels that Marlow's reserved nature has undone all his other accomplishments. Though impressed by his good looks, Kate is not enamoured by the quality of being reserved since such men become suspicious husbands.
- For Kate, it is more important for her husband to be handsome and young rather than be sensible and good natured. She is apprehensive about having a reserved husband. She would first secure a lover and then a husband.
- Act I presents a contrast between the characters of Mr and Mrs Hardcastle. While, Mrs Hardcastle has an interest in the London society and she takes a lively interest in the fashions of the day, Mr Hardcastle, on the other hand, is a traditional man.
- Act I Scene II highlights Tony's character. Tony is happy drinking and merry-making. He asserts that he chooses his company. No one dictates him. He is his own master.
- The servants' scene in Act II once again emphasizes the contrast between the low life of the rustics to that of the gentry. The gap between the expectations of polished behaviour and what the servants can manage adds humour to the scene.
- Marlow admits being shy and reserved with ladies of his own class, confident and boisterous with women of low class, and stating the reasons for such behaviour. He becomes uncomfortable and uneasy talking to a lady from the same class.
- Act III further confirms the personality traits of Kate, Marlow and Tony. Kate takes pleasure in being obedient to her father. Marlow is modest and

shy in the company of his own class and wild when with the barmaids. Tony shows his righteousness by giving the casket of jewels to Hastings and making arrangements for him to leave with Constance.

- In Act IV Marlow confirms that difference of birth, fortune and education has prevented him from marrying Kate (woman of low class). Kate has also fallen in love with Marlow and reiterates the title of the play that she will preserve the character to which she has stooped to conquer her love.
- Themes of class, marriage and money are again reinforced in Act V. Marriages are about making bonds stronger, as the old men say, and this will further lead to union of families.
- The Act ends with the announcement of the union of both sets of lovers and that too with the consent of the family members.
- The play showcases the reality of class distinctions and class snobbery. People belonging to the upper class are keen to find suitable partners from the same class for their children.
- The theme of inheritance is a common one which was largely found in the plays of the seventeenth and eighteenth century England.
- Money is a practical need of life. Even amidst emotions, it is important to think of money. Kate, when playing the role of a poor relative to Mr Hardcastle, mentions to Marlow that men of their class marry women not for love but for their fortunes.
- The theme of love runs throughout the play. Hastings accompanies Marlow only for his love for Constance. It does not matter to him whether Constance is able to get her money from Mrs Hastings or not.

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3.6 KEY TERMS

- **Sizar system:** This system appears to have begun in the late sixteenth century in Cambridge and Dublin. This system allowed poor students to study in lieu of the work they did as servants for the tutors.
- **Foible:** It is a minor weakness or eccentricity in someone's character.
- **Solus:** It is alone or unaccompanied (used especially as a stage direction).
- **Coterie:** It refers to a small group of people with shared interests or tastes, especially one that is exclusive of other people.
- **Fop:** This term refers to a man who is excessively vain and concerned about his dress, appearance, and manners.

3.7 ANSWERS TO 'CHECK YOUR PROGRESS'

1. The prominent works of Oliver Goldsmith are *The Vicar of Wakefield*, *The Good Natur'd Man*, *She Stoops to Conquer*, *The Traveller* and *The Deserted Village*.
2. *She Stoops to Conquer* was published in 1773.
3. Marlow is the hero of the play *She Stoops to Conquer*.
4. Sentimental comedy is a genre of the eighteenth century literature in which comedy is aimed at producing tears rather than laughter.

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5. The Prologue of *She Stoops to Conquer* was written by Mr David Garrick, a well-known actor and producer of his times.
6. Scene I Act I of the play *She Stoops to Conquer* begins with the entry of Mr and Mrs Hardcastle.
7. Scene II of Act I is set in the alehouse, The Three Pigeons.
8. Mrs Hardcastle wants Constance to marry Tony because Constance Neville has a fortune to her name. Hence, through this marriage Tony's future would be secured.
9. Mr Hardcastle wants his daughter Kate to marry his friend's son Marlow.
10. Marlow is affable and boisterous with serving women and barmaids. He can say the finest things to the barmaid and the college bed maker but not a word of it to women of high class. He is extremely shy and lacks confidence in front of women of high class.

3.8 QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

Short-Answer Questions

1. Prepare a brief biographical sketch of Oliver Goldsmith.
2. Summarize the play *She Stoops to Conquer*.
3. Write a short note on the Prologue and Epilogue of the play *She Stoops to Conquer*.
4. Briefly summarize the role of Kate Hardcastle in the play.

Long-Answer Questions

1. Analyse *She Stoops to Conquer* as a sentimental comedy.
2. Discuss the title of the play *She Stoops to Conquer*.
3. Critically analyse the theme of wealth and inheritance as presented in the play.
4. Evaluate the characteristics of Marlow's personality.

3.9 FURTHER READING

- Baugh, Albert Croll. 1967. *A Literary History of England*, 2nd ed. New York, USA: Appleton-Century-Crofts.
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UNIT 4 ONE-ACT PLAY

Structure

- 4.0 Introduction
- 4.1 Unit Objectives
- 4.2 Percival Wilde: *The Hour of Truth*
 - 4.2.1 Major Works
 - 4.2.2 Critical Analysis: *The Hour of Truth*
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 - 4.4.1 Life and Works
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- 4.9 Questions and Exercises
- 4.10 Further Reading

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4.0 INTRODUCTION

A one-act play is a short piece of drama that consists of only one act. It usually has one or more scenes, but does not exceed one act. Some popular one-act plays include *A Marriage Proposal* by Anton Chekhov, *The Goat* by Edward Albee, and *The Long Christmas Dinner* by Thornton Wilder.

In this unit, you will examine the famous one-act plays namely, *The Hour of Truth*, *The Best Laid Plans*, *The Pen of My Aunt*, and *Refund*.

4.1 UNIT OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- Analyse the play *The Hour of Truth* by Percival Wilde
- Summarize Farrell Mitchell’s famous play *The Best Laid Plans*
- Assess the themes of the play *The Pen of My Aunt*
- Discuss the issues in Fritz Karinthy’s play *Refund*

4.2 PERCIVAL WILDE: *THE HOUR OF TRUTH*

Percival Wilde was born on 1 March 1887 in New York. He was a famous American playwright and author, and has written a lot of short stories too. He completed his graduation from Columbia University in 1906 and began his writing career in 1912. His plays got a lot of acknowledgement during the period of the famous ‘Little Theatre Movement’. He also wrote book reviews for the *New York Times* and the *New York Post*.

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Wilde married in the year 1920 to Nadie Marcres. He was also appointed the post of secretary and was later awarded the post of the director. He was also appointed as one of the members of the advisory board of the association of the Mystery Writers of America.

He was a banker by profession and besides being so, he was also a machinist's mate in the US Navy during World War I. He decided to become a playwright after his first short story gained popularity among the masses.

4.2.1 Major Works

The following is a list of his famous works:

Novels

- *Mystery Week-End* (1938)
- *Inquest* (1938)
- *Design for Murder* (1941)

Collections of short stories

- *Rogues in Clover* (1929)
- *P. Moran, Operative* (1947)

Plays

- *Dawn and One Act Plays Of Life Today*
- *Dawn*
- *The Noble Lord*
- *The Traitor*
- *A House of Cards*
- *Playing With Fire*
- *The Finger of God*

Confessional, and Other American Plays (1916)

- *Confessional*
- *The Beautiful Story*
- *The Villain in the Piece*
- *A Question of Morality*
- *According to Darwin*
- *The Unseen Host, and Other War Plays*
- *The Reckoning*
- *Eight Comedies for Little Theaters*

Films (Story)

- *Moonlight Follies* (1921)
- *The Guttersnipe* (1922)
- *The Rise of Duton Lang* (1955)

Non-fiction

- *The Craftsmanship of One-Act Plays* (1923)

4.2.2 Critical Analysis: *The Hour of Truth*

Percival Wilde's famous play, *The Hour of Truth*, is an intense psychological play which deals with the subject of corruption and the power of money on an individual's behaviour. Throughout the play, we see that there is an exploration of greed from several angles. The writer has depicted the influence of money in an individual's life because of which they even forget their moral values and principles. However, it is only towards the end of the play that the characters realize the fact that money brings only isolation, punishment, deception, frustration and endless shame rather than a sense of contentment.

Major Characters in the Play

The major character in the play are as follows:

Robert Baldwin: He is the main protagonist of the play and is an extremely honest and just individual and a sincere worker. He has been appointed as a secretary of the Bank President, John Gresham, as his secretary.

The character of Robert Baldwin is like an everyday American who works for a living, however, he is not able to earn a decent salary which is sufficient enough to support his family. Yet, he is an upright individual in both deeds and thoughts. His honesty is evident when John Gresham is accused of mishandling bank's money. John Gresham requests Robert Baldwin to say just three words, 'I don't remember' so that he will be able to escape punishment. He was also offering him a reward of a hundred thousand dollars. He, however, does not support the idea and eventually his honesty rewards him.

Martha Baldwin: She is the wife of Robert Baldwin who supports her husband and like her husband, is an honest individual. She knows the fact that her husband will not resort to unfair means in order to gain money. When she learns about the offer which her husband's boss has proposed to him, she, however, believes that the offer should be accepted. She further believed that they were being honest as her husband in reality did not know what had happened hence he was in a way telling the truth only. She also was convinced of the fact that they should support Gresham as they know him for quite long time and there would be no harm in supporting him.

John Gresham Baldwin and Evie: They are the children of Robert Baldwin and Martha Baldwin. They were earlier against the offer being offered by Gresham. However, they later felt tempted by the amount which was being offered. They, thus, urged their father to take the money and to invest that into some business. They also tried to blackmail their father, that if he will not agree, he will be portrayed as a person who had betrayed his own friend. They were, thus, of the opinion that there is no harm in being dishonest.

Summary of the Play

Robert Baldwin works as a secretary for a banker, John Gresham and has been working with him for almost thirty-five years. In the play, John Gresham is accused of a fraud and Robert Baldwin is the witness against his case. When the play opens Baldwin has been called by Gresham and Baldwin's family are seen as waiting for

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him at home. The children are worried as they think that their father may get involved whereas his wife is sure of the fact that he would not be involved. She is proud of her husband's honesty with which he has lived his life. They are also worried about the fact that differences might emerge between Robert and Gresham. Thus, the readers get an idea that Robert is an honest man. However, when Robert Baldwin returns home, the family gets to know that he has been offered a hundred thousand dollars by John Gresham if he says that 'I don't remember' and these words will free him from the accusation. However, Robert Baldwin who has been an honest man all his life is unwilling to do so. He feels that if he speaks those three words, then he will fall in his own eyes. He said that, 'all of my past would rise up and strike me in the face. It would mean to the world that for years I had been living a lie; that I was not the honorable man I thought I was.' When Gresham told him that he knew he would not accept the offer, he thought it as a compliment, however, his family thought it as 'rather an expensive compliment'.

Though it had been thought that the depositors would lose money, Baldwin was aware that there was enough money and they would thus not lose anything. However, he did not reveal this fact to the reporters and let it appear otherwise. He was in fact waiting for Gresham to make that announcement so that things would to some extent go in Gresham's favour, though he must still be punished for misappropriating funds. Baldwin's son John (who has been named John Gresham Baldwin after John Gresham), does not look at the misappropriation as a crime, but just a technicality, since no one is going to lose any money and finds it 'rather hard on Gresham'.

It, however, gets revealed later, that Robert Baldwin will need to refresh his memory with the help of notes for giving proper testimony. When Martha asks him 'tine day John was baptized, when Mr. Gresham stood sponsor for him: how proud we were! And when we came home from the church you said do you remember what you said, Robert?'

He replies: 'No. What was it?'

Martha says: You said, 'Martha, may our son always live up to the name which we have given!' 'Do you remember that?'

Baldwin replies: 'Yes dimly'.

Martha: 'It would be sad-very sad- if the name of John Gresham, our son's name, should come to grief through you...'

Robert Baldwin: {after a pause}: 'Martha, are you telling me to accept the bribe money that John Gresham offered me?'

The others do not consider it as a bribe and even John Gresham had referred to it as the difference between what Robert had been paid all along and what he should actually have been paid.

When his daughter asks what people will say when because of his testimony John Gresham goes to jail, Robert replies, that 'they will say I have done my duty. Evie: no more and no less'.

Evie believes that 'people might say that you had turned traitor to your best friend'.

The logic given to Robert is that when Gresham tells the people that he will pay back all their money then people will not want him to go to jail and at the same

time if his best friend is checking notes to make sure he goes to jail, people will be ill disposed to such a traitor friend. The children also try to explain Robert that no one is going to lose a cent and no one wants to see Gresham punished except Robert Baldwin.

Martha adds that she believes in being merciful and states the fact that Gresham had always been good to Robert. She then goes on to remind Robert that since the bank had been out of work and asks him what he will do now.

While Robert is hopeful of getting a job and thinks he is not getting one because no one will appoint a senior man as a clerk, it appears that the truth is that no other bank is willing to 'employ a man who was just as guilty as John Gresham'.

While Robert Baldwin feels that his not being guilty will be known to everyone on the morrow, the others tell him that people will just believe that he is proving himself not guilty to save himself and that not one will even believe that Gresham had been misappropriating funds which had become known to Robert '... only a day before the smash'.

His son then tells Robert that the only person with whom he can get a job is Gresham if he does not go to jail and that Gresham could offer him a partnership, 'with the hundred thousand capital you (Robert) could put in the business'.

Robert is shocked by this and then John uses another tactic by saying, 'of course, the capital doesn't matter. He'll owe you quite a debt of gratitude besides'.

Martha plays on her husband's emotions saying: 'A hundred thousand would mean a great deal to us, Robert. If you don't find a position soon, John will have to support us.'

John can earn only thirty dollars a week as compared to sixty dollars that his father was getting.

It is a clever play on Robert's emotions:

Martha: 'It's not fair to John.'

John (angrily): 'Oh, don't bother about me'.

[Evie begins to weep.]

John tells his father that not giving witness against Gresham is '...the square thing to do—he'd [Gresham] do as much for you'.

When Robert asks his family whether or not they want him to take the money, not one of the three is ready to answer. In fact, they are avoiding eye contact with him.

Robert says that he cannot be in partnership with Gresham as people will not trust him. John advises that with a hundred thousand in hand he could go into business with someone else.

At this point, Baldwin comes out saying what he thinks the family is trying to do: 'God knows, I never thought this day would come! I know- I know no matter how you try to excuse it—I know that if I take this money I do a dishonorable thing. And you know it! You and you, and you! All of you! Come, admit it!'

John tries to convince the fact that no one will get to know about it. Robert Baldwin wishes that they would all at least be honest with each other. He sees the truth in his wife's eyes and remarks: 'Shams! Liars! Hypocrites! Thieves! And I no better than any of you! We have seen our souls naked, and they stink to Almighty Heaven! Well, why font you answer me?'

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While the family is of the opinion that it is not wrong what Gresham is asking for, Baldwin is of the opinion that it is not right. However, he does get convinced that he will not testify against Gresham.

Just then the Marshall, the President of the Third National pays Baldwin a visit. He has a position in the bank that he would like Baldwin to take. Gresham had told Marshall of how Robert had refused the huge sum of money and how Gresham was sure no amount of money would make Robert do something he thought wrong.

Marshall goes on to say: ‘Baldwin, he paid you the supreme compliment: rather than go to trial with you testify against him, he confessed!’

Setting

The entire play is set in the parlour of a little cottage on a rather hot and sultry Sunday afternoon, when the sun is overhead and the baked clay underfoot are merciless. A mother, son and daughter are eagerly awaiting the return of Robert Baldwin. The weather is not good but seems to be clearing, heralding a better time, ‘in the distance, lowering clouds give promise of coming relief’.

Plot

Robert Baldwin works in the bank of Mr Gresham who is now in police custody for misappropriation of depositor’s money. Robert has been offered a hundred thousand dollars to save Gresham from punishment by just saying ‘I don’t remember’ to any awkward questions. Robert Baldwin is an extremely honest individual. The play deals with the reactions of the family members after they know about the offer made by Gresham. Thus, the influence of money has been dealt in this play.

Theme

Percival Wilde’s play *The Hour of Truth* is an intense psychological study which explains the influence of money in the lives of the individuals and the ways in which it tempts them to the path of corruption. Throughout the play, the greed and desire for money is analysed from different perspectives and how it influences different people. It has been observed that money can make people justify any action and can forget their values and morals. The theme of reward for the good and punishment for the bad is clearly apparent in the plot of the play. While all along it is put out that in doing the right thing Baldwin will be earning a bad name for himself and all the sympathy will be with Gresham, however, it does not appear like that towards the end of the play. The two main characters in this play are Robert Baldwin, the secretary of a reputed bank and the banker, John Gresham. Gresham has misappropriated money and is now offering Robert Baldwin a huge sum of money (as the difference between what he had been paid as salary and what he actually deserved) to get him out of punishment by confessing that he cannot remember what happened when asked a difficult question at the time of his giving witness. Baldwin refuses the bribe and is unwilling to lie. Even his wife, son and daughter try to reason with him and make him accept the money which is being offered by Gresham. However, towards the end of the play, Baldwin gives in and makes it clear that the thing should remain between the members of the family. He, thus, gives in to the power of money, however, his honesty is preserved and appreciated as Gresham accepted his crime and praised Baldwin for his honesty.

Check Your Progress

1. What is the main theme of the play *The Hour of Truth*?
2. Name the prominent works of Percival Wilde.

4.3 FARRELL MITCHELL: *THE BEST LAID PLANS*

Farrell Mitchell's famous play *The Best Laid Plans* revolves around the story of three men who formulate a plan and succeed in catching the burglars. The major characters of the play are:

- Wood and Spender: Two Friends
- Primrose: Butler
- 'Slick' Jack and 'Bungler' Bill: Burglars
- Cuthbert: Policeman
- Detectives

The play opens in an expensively furnished sitting room where we see a man (Wood) seated in an armchair close to the fire in the fireplace and is talking with another man (Spender) who is somewhere outside the room. Together, they have planned to go out and are approximately thirty minutes late.

Before leaving, the two have a conversation with the butler (Primrose) and it appears that certainly there is something afoot for which preparations have been made as it is evident from the following conversation:

Spender: 'You have your instructions clear in your mind?'

Primrose: 'Yes, sir'.

Wood: 'Is everything arranged?'

Spender: 'Yes, everything. All the jewelry locked away'.

Wood: 'And the key to your safe hid under the carpet by the fireplace'.

Spender: 'Nobody would think of looking there'.

Wood: 'Not even a burglar, my dear Spender'.

Spender: 'No. Not even a burglar. Come along. We'll go'.

When the men leave and the butler has also retired, then two thieves enter the room. They ensure that the curtains are properly drawn and only then they should switch on the lights. Bill is a greedy fellow who inspects everything which is expensive in the room whereas Jack just wants the jewelry. He warns Bill of leaving his fingerprints on things and getting caught later on. Bill has been to prison before but not Jack as a result of which, he considers himself to be a better planner and it is his planning that has kept him out of jail.

Bill is not sure that a plan is the only thing keeping them out of jail and he opines, 'I've got to admit it it's worked so far. One day it won't. Then we'll both go for a stretch.'

Jack is sure of the fact that his plan is foolproof. He asks Bill what that time is since he has his plan chalked out precisely. He explains the plan to Bill as follows:

Bill: 'Five minutes past nine'.

Jack: 'Exactly what it should be. And at ten past, Sergeant Willis of the Metropolitan Police comes down the street on his usual beat, phones from the box at the corner to his Section House, and at twenty-past nine, pushes off to see his favorite cook. Then the coast's clear until Police constable, Travers comes slowly down the street at ten o'clock exactly- which gives us forty minutes clear. If we did

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the job now Sergeant Willis would see us climbing out of the window and we'd fall right into the wide open arms of the law'.

Bill: 'You certainly have studied the situation, Jack'.

Jack: 'Yes. If that Spender bloke hadn't dilly-dallied about, we'd have had the sparklers by now and been away. That half-hour's thrown all my calculations out of joint. But, that's what I mean by planning. You're ready for anything that happens'.

Bill wants to know Jack's plans for the butler and Jack answers that, 'he tells me that he always listens to the nine o'clock news, and then, after that to the radio play that starts at twenty-past nine'.

Jack has an answer available and an already thought out plan for any kind of hurdle. He is, thus, fully prepared to carry out a successful robbery. The two of them successfully retrieve the key from under the carpet, rob the jewelry, replace the key and are ready to leave when suddenly the door opens and Spender and Wood enter. Spender is seen carrying a revolver.

Since they are caught now, Bill is worried and says that he will go to prison for all of five years since he has already been convicted before. Jack is not flustered and even says that they should remain patient.

At this point, the situation takes an interesting turn. Bill learns that the jewels are of a much higher value than Jack has made him believe and he is furious with Jack for trying to cheat him out of his fair share of the loot.

However, the confusion is cleared by Jack when he says that, 'there's no need to get your wool off. If I'd told you how much they were worth, you'd never have agreed to take on the job with me. You'd have been windy. That's true, isn't it?'

Bill: 'May be you're right! But what about my proper share?'

Jack: 'You'd have got it. I never swindle a pal'.

Just when Wood turns to call the police, Jack requests Wood to do a favour for him. Wood agrees and Jack asks '...Please look out of the window and see if it's raining'.

Wood draws the curtains and checks, draws back the curtains and informs Jack that there is no rain. Jack wants a re-check since he feels that he saw a glimpse of rain. He wants to make absolutely sure that there is no rain and requests Wood to re-check. It is decided that once he checks, Jack will have to tell the reason for this behaviour. He again performs the ritual of opening the curtain, checking and closing the curtain again. Jack then says that the story is a rather long one and it might make the two men think he is stalling his arrest.

He narrates that when he was holding a job in a city, he met a lady who predicted fortunes, who told him that he would lose his job and take to the kind of life he is involved in now. The prophecy came out to be true and she also informed him that he could never be caught on a day when it was not raining. Even this has proven true till now and he does not carry out any of his jobs on a rainy day. However, this time it is not raining and still, he has been caught.

Then he asks Spender for a favour and Spender is willing to grant him one, since Wood had granted Jack a favour. Jack has a question for Spender and not a task to perform as he had for Wood.

Jack: 'Would you care to tell me how you got wise to my plans?'

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Spender: ‘Certainly. Primrose suspected you from the beginning. He’s a wise old bird, is Primrose, and he spotted that you knew very little about Salvage. He’s used to be in Charge of its collection during the war, and he knows everything about it that’s worth knowing. So he led you on and gave you plenty of Information-false information. And here you are. Easy, isn’t it?’

While Bill stands fretting about what will happen to him in jail since he will be caught for the second time. He also opined that Jack did a worse job than a five year old, Spender reminds Wood to call the police and tells Bill and Jack to sit down.

Just as Wood moves to make the call, a policeman arrives on the scene. Spender asks Primrose to send the policeman in. Spender informs the policeman that they have caught the two thieves in the act of burgling. The policeman seems to know the two criminals and even knows their name, ‘I know them both, Sir. “Slick Jack” Lawrence and “Bungler Bill” North.’

Then the policeman went on to praise Wood and Spender: ‘We have been waiting Lawrence for a long time now. He’s done a lot of jobs around here. You’ve done well, sir’.

Wood feels that such a marvelous job calls for a celebration and offers the policeman, whom he addresses as sergeant, a ‘spot’. The policeman appears in a hurry and he says:

Policeman: ‘I am not a sergeant yet, sir only a constable. No thank you sir. Got to get going with these two men’.

But, Wood insists on his taking a drink and goes off to make it. Primrose follows saying that it would be better for him to make it instead. It is clear that the policeman is not going to take a drink and he politely but vehemently says:

Policeman: ‘Sorry, sir. But you know the police rules. No drinking on duty. It’s more than my position’s worth’.

Understanding the point that the policeman is making, Spender tells Primrose, ‘Tell Mr. Wood the officer cannot drink on duty’.

The policeman asks for leave from Spender so that he can take the two criminals away. He goes on to say that the sergeant will be at the telephone box and will send for the ‘Black Maria’ to pick up the criminals.

Just then, Wood enters and says sorry that the policeman cannot have a drink. He is inquisitive and wishes to know what it was that brought the policeman to the house at such an appropriate time. The policeman has a ready answer and he says: ‘I happened to be passing on my beat when I saw two figures in the gardens of the house. I thought they might belong here, but when they moved around to the side, I got suspicious and I nipped around too... They had both vanished when I got around and I didn’t quite know what to do. I made my usual routine call from the box, then I thought I’d look back and make few inquiries. When I knocked at the door your butler, brought me straight up...’

The policeman then handcuffs the two criminals together and again praises Spender and Wood for their great work.

Wood enquires of the policeman if he is confident of managing the two criminals on his own and then asks if he is sure that he will not have a drink. Wood seems to be really persistent and wants the policeman to take a drink before leaving.

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Spender reminds him that a policeman cannot drink on duty. Then Wood offers a drink to the criminals. However, Jack refuses and Bill says he would like a double scotch.

Jack tries to stop him, however, Bill is unwilling to listen to Jack and Wood really insisted on giving a drink to Bill. He persists in his hospitality saying: ‘No I insist. Let Burglar bill, have one, sergeant, before you take him along’.

The policeman says that they are now under his charge and he cannot allow them to drink. He further says, that, ‘and now, if you’ll excuse me, I’ll say good night and take these two with me’. Just then Wood says that the two of them, Spender and Wood, will be needed as witnesses.

The policeman tells him that the requirement will come up only when the matter reaches the court. Wood appears uneasy about going to court and says: ‘You never know. I just wondered whether our part of the job ended here. I don’t like police courts’.

The policeman tries to ease his worry by saying the court will not appear the same to a person who goes as a witness as it appears to criminals.

Finally, the policeman managed to make a move with the prisoners and just then four men rush into the room. Primrose is at their heels. Primrose tells Spender, ‘....These men are detectives from Scotland Yard’.

The policeman who had taken Jack and Bill into custody was not actually a policeman. This had become clear to Wood on seeing his shoes: ‘light-soled shoes’/ ‘to do any climbing while he is burgling’.

Wood goes on to say that under the pretext of getting a drink he had called up the police headquarters. And reveals part of his plan saying: ‘Then I talked to keep everyone here until the flying squad arrived’.

And the following lines explain how the burglars arranged their robbery (Cuthbert is the man posing as the policeman):

Jack: ‘Yes, Mr. Spender. I may as well tell you the truth. Cuthbert, here, is in the swim too. I always had him standing by if was ever caught on a job. He just has to come in and bluff it out as he did tonight. Then he walks us out of the house, and we’re free. It would have worked too, if it hadn’t been for your observant friend’.

Spender: ‘But how was Cuthbert to know you had been caught?’

Jack: ‘When Mr. Wood drew the curtains twice that was the sign’.

One of the detectives tells Jack: ‘Very smart, Lawrence. But criminals always overstep the mark sooner or later. You did this time.’

Wood is worried about the fact that he had set out to outsmart the criminals while they could have very easily outsmarted him.

4.3.1 Critical Analysis: *The Best Laid Plans*

In the beginning of the play, we find that Spender is constantly correcting Wood and tells him the approximate time by which they are late. This seems a bit odd since Spender is the one delaying and then it is he himself who is informing Wood of the exact delay. While Spender seems to be an individual who seems to believe in precision and exactness and on the contrary, is not on time too. However, towards the end of the play, the relevance of keeping exact time at that moment becomes clearly evident.

The playwright builds curiosity in the audience's mind by immediately introducing the element of precious jewels in a safe and the key to the safe securely hidden under the carpet. This is a premonition of the fact that things will certainly go wrong. But when Wood asks Primrose, the butler, 'Is everything arranged?' it has created a thought that there is something that might go wrong with the jewels.

And as the two men, Spender and Wood, leave the house and Primrose retires to his quarters, two thieves (Jack and Bill) arrive on the scene and rob the safe. They know where the key was and where the safe is and when the sergeant is on his beat, when he makes his call when the constable arrives and so on. The research, carried out by Jack, is complete and so is the planning since he even has alternative plans. He is confident of the fact that he will easily pull the job.

However, there has been a delay in their plan, as Spender had delayed in leaving the house. Then again, Bill has wasted sometime looking at the various expensive objects in the room and then wiping them clean since he did not want to leave his fingerprints and wants to visit the jail again. However, as soon as they were leaving, Spender and Wood enter the room and catch them red-handed. All along, when Bill is wasting time, tension is building in the mind of the audience and there is a feeling that these two might get caught. Then again, the planning as revealed by Jack makes it appear that they are completely safe.

After having been caught red-handed by Spender and Wood, there seems to be no escape for them. Jack seems to be stalling for time or an opportunity to make a run for it when he asks Wood to check twice if it is raining.

Apparently, the two of them are fated to go to prison since a policeman appears on the scene and takes charge of them. Wood seems in no hurry to end the chapter. He is extremely interested in knowing how the policeman happened to arrive at the right time and he appreciatively listens to the story and then goes on to offer the policeman a drink which he himself goes off to make. It does appear like he is going overboard since a policeman will not drink on duty and that is precisely what the policeman says. Then, Wood insists that the criminals should drink something.

While Jack refuses, Bill, true to his character, is keen on a double scotch and Wood is equally enthusiastic to make it. The policeman will have nothing of it since he cannot let criminals under his charge drink. Then somehow, the policeman manages to make everyone understand that he must go with the criminals and get the sergeant to a police vehicle to get them to the police station.

Again, Wood insists that he should go along with them as witnesses will be required. His instance is now like that of a person who is either not thinking straight or is obsessed. Again the policeman manages to convince him that it will be needed only when the matter comes to court and to this too, Wood has an objection, and tells that he does not like courts. The policeman then, says that, 'when he goes as a witness it will not be the same as if he had gone as a criminal'!

Finally, the policeman manages to start moving out when suddenly four men rush in followed by Primrose. These are the detectives that Wood had cleverly managed to get to the house by making a call to Scotland Yard when he left the room under the pretext of making drinks. It now becomes evident that all the while he was delaying the exit of the policeman with the criminals to give enough time to the detectives to reach the scene of crime. He asks the policeman how he happened to come, offering drinks to the policeman and even the criminals and wanting to go

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along as witnesses were all part of his plan to cause delay. And, also Wood had seen the shoes that the policeman was wearing. They were not police boots which hinted towards the fact that he was not a policeman but a criminal who was in league with Jack and Bill. He would have taken the two criminals out posing as a policeman and they would thus, would have been set free.

Spender and Wood now really want to know how the policeman managed to be on the scene at the right time. Jack's good planning is revealed. He had made Wood signal to the accomplice by opening and closing the curtain twice while checking for rain. Wood is upset at having been used by the criminals.

Wood: 'I did the signaling for him! And I thought I was clever! Spender, old bou, I need a drink to restore my self-confidence'!

Thus, towards the end of the play, the plans laid down by Jack and Wood failed, however, Wood still managed to save the day and thus, prevented the crime.

4.4 GORDON DAVIOT: *THE PEN OF MY AUNT*

Elizabeth MacKintosh was a famous Scottish writer who was born on 25 July 1896. She wrote under two separate pseudonyms: Josephine Tey and Gordon Daviot. She was renowned for her mysterious writing and in case of plays, she mostly used the pseudonym of Gordon Daviot. It has been observed that most of her plays had historical or biblical themes.

4.4.1 Life and Works

Elizabeth MacKintosh was born in Inverness. She was the daughter of Colin MacKintosh and Josephine (née Horne). Elizabeth studied at the Inverness Royal Academy, from where she went on to Anstey Physical Training College in Erdington, which was a suburb of Birmingham. In several schools across Scotland and England she taught physical training. She went back to Inverness in the year 1923 to tend to her mother who was ailing and where she stayed with her till she passed away later in the year. Elizabeth continued to remain in Inverness to keep house for her father. At that point, she ventured into her writing career.

The famous books of MacKintosh's are found under the pseudonym Josephine Tey. Elizabeth's mother's name was Josephine but it is not clear from where she picked up Tey. She has written about a dozen one-act plays and several full-length plays using the pseudonym Gordon Daviot. While the origin of Gordon is not known, the Daviot part comes from the scenic locale near Inverness of the same name where she and her family spend much of their happy time.

Her demise had put an abrupt end to a promising and distinguished career as a playwright and novelist. Post the demise of her mother and while she was keeping house for her father, she started to write and thus her writing career began. Having sold several short stories to several magazines amongst which was the *English Review*, however, by 1929 she managed to published her first novel, *Kif*, written under the pseudonym Gordon Daviot, it was the same name that she used for the first detective novel (featuring the Scotland Yard detective Inspector Alan Grant) that she wrote titled, *The Man in the Queue*. There were several other novels written by her under the pseudonym of Josephine Tey.

Check Your Progress

3. How did Wood realize that the policeman is an accomplice of the thieves?
4. Why was Jack not worried even after he was caught by Wood and Spender?

Her two-act play, *Richard of Bordeaux*, was received well by critics and ended up being played for enthusiastic audiences for over a year with John Gielgud in the title role. She was unable to repeat this success in theatre.

In 1936, her novel *A Shilling for Candles*, her first novel as Josephine Tey was immediately appreciated by Alfred Hitchcock and he went on to say that she had provided him with enough scope to build up an atmosphere of suspense and surprise. The film is based on the novel titled *Young and Innocent* (early 1938) which was about a young man who was charged for a murder which had not been committed by him.

The approach to historical investigation which Tey has used in *The Daughter of Time* was considered as the best novel of her. According to a critic Marghanita Laski, ‘Miss Tey has combined historical research with the suspense of the best fictional detection in a manner so stimulating that one can only beg her to hospitalize Inspector Grant again and again and again.’

This comment came about due to the plot of the novel: Alan Grant, Scotland Yard Inspector (a character who also appears in five other novels by the same author) is feeling bored while confined to bed in hospital with a broken leg. Marta Hallard, an actress friend of his, suggests that he should amuse himself by researching a historical mystery. She brings him some pictures of historical characters, aware of Grant’s interest in human faces. He becomes intrigued by a portrait of King Richard III. He prides himself on being able to read a person’s character from his appearance, and King Richard seems to him a gentle and kind and wise man. Why is everyone so sure that he was a cruel murderer?

With the help of other friends and acquaintances, Grant investigates Richard’s life and the case of the Princes in the Tower, testing out his theories on the doctors and nurses who attend to him. Grant spends weeks pondering historical information and documents with the help of Brent Carradine, a likeable young American researcher working in the British Museum. Using his detective’s logic, he comes to the conclusion that the claim of Richard being a murderer is a fabrication of Tudor propaganda, as is the popular image of the King as a monstrous hunchback.

The novel *The Singing Sands* (1952) was published posthumously. *The Privateer* (1952 as by Gordon Daviot) was a novel published just prior to her death. She left her estate including royalties from her books to the National Trust.

Works

The following is a list of her famous works:

Mystery novels

Inspector Alan Grant Novels:

- *The Man in the Queue* (or *Killer in the Crowd*) (1929) (as Gordon Daviot)
- *A Shilling for Candles* (1936) (as Josephine Tey) (the basis of Hitchcock’s 1937 film *Young and Innocent*)
- *The Franchise Affair* (1948) (Inspector Grant appears briefly at the beginning, mentioned a few times) (filmed in 1950 starring Michael Denison and Dulcie Gray)
- *To Love and Be Wise* (1950)
- *The Daughter of Time* (1951) (voted greatest mystery novel of all time by the Crime Writers’ Association in 1990)

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- *The Singing Sands* (1952) (turns on the discovery of the lost city of Wabar, based on the legend of Iram of the Pillars)

Stand-alone mysteries

These novels are set in the same 'world' /geography as the Inspector Grant novels:

- *Miss Pym Disposes* (1946) (as Josephine Tey)
- *Brat Farrar* (or *Come and Kill Me*) (1949) (the basis, without on-screen credit, for the 1963 Hammer production *Paranoiac*)

Other novels

- *Kif: An Unvarnished History* (1929) (as Gordon Daviot)
- *The Expensive Halo: A Fable without Moral* (1931) (as Gordon Daviot)
- *The Privateer* (1952)

Biography

- *Claverhouse* (1937) (as Gordon Daviot) (a life of the 17th-century cavalry leader John Graham, 1st Viscount of Dundee)

Plays

- *Richard of Bordeaux* (1932)
- *The Laughing Woman* (1934)
- *Queen of Scots* (1934)
- *The Stars Bow Down* (1939)
- *Cornelia* (1946) (as F. Craigie Howe)
- *The Little Dry Thorn* (1946)
- *Rahab* (1947)
- *Leith Sands* (1947)
- *Valerius* (1948)
- *The Balwhinnie Bomb* (1949)
- *Sara* (1951)
- *Dickon* (1955)

4.4.2 Critical Analysis: *The Pen of My Aunt*

The play *The Pen of My Aunt* is set in the period of 1944 summer, in German-occupied France. The play deals with a young French man caught by a German corporal. The boy does not have any proof with him, however, he claims to be the nephew of the person on whose land he was caught. When the owner of the estate is informed of the situation, he becomes his co-conspirator to save him from the law.

Characters in the Play

The characters are as follows:

Madame: The owner of a country house

Simone: Her young servant

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Stranger: A French soldier on the run

One-Act Play

Corporal: A German soldier

Summary

The play is set in two scenes. The first scene takes place in the grounds of the Madame's country house and the second scene in the drawing room of the same country house.

The first scene is an extremely short scene; the German corporal spots a young French civilian who is a stranger seen in the grounds of a French country estate in daytime. He thus, asks him to stop, which the stranger does. He does not have any proof with him and as a consequence of which he is marched off by the corporal.

The second scene opens in the drawing room of a French country house during the Occupation. A middle aged woman, Madame, is seen entering from the garden with a bunch of flowers in her hand and proceeds to arrange them in the vase. She is admiring the flowers when suddenly her servant Simone, a young girl, enters to inform her something.

Madame then begins to lecture her on the prevailing times as France is now occupied by Germans and it is a time of barbarism, the French thus, will not take much time to turn uncivilized: 'One thing we still possess, thank God; and that is good manners. The enemy never had it; and it is not something they can take from us.'

The stranger is then brought to Madame's house in a jeep accompanied by two German army men. While the servant girl is scared to see them, however, Madame is calm and waiting for the men to ring the bell. They do nothing of that sort to which Madame remarks: 'Yes. They have forgotten long ago what bells are for'.

The thirty year old civilian stranger enters and is followed by the German corporal close on his heels. This is where the play takes an unexpected turn and the stranger refers to Madame as his aunt: 'Ah, there you are, my dear aunt. I am so glad. Come in, my friend, come in. My dear aunt, this gentleman wants you to identify me.'

However, the reaction of Madame is the turning point of the play as she accepts him as her nephew. She informs the German corporal: 'But of course this is my nephew'.

The German corporal believes her and apologizes and says: 'But you will admit that appearances were against the young gentleman'.

At this point, Madame and then even the stranger posing as her nephew, begin to belittle the Germans and go so far as to say that the collar that the Germans wear prevents proper flow of blood to their heads which causes 'varicose veins in the head'. The play ends with the corporal saying: 'I have only one desire, Monsieur, and that is to see your papers'.

At this point, the French man, Madame and the young servant girl, Simone, come up with a clever lie that possibly the papers have gone with the clothes to the laundry and that when the laundry returns the next day, they will show the papers to the German corporal.

The corporal overhears Simone say that she has never in her life seen the young French man. He confronts the others in the house with this truth. This creates tension but then another lie is forged and they make the corporal believe that what Simone must actually have said is that she wished she had never seen him since he makes her slog with the huge amounts of hard work he makes her do.

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Towards the end of the play, Madame though is under the rule of the Germans as France has been occupied by Germany, however, she still threatens the corporal. The audience first believed that the stranger might get into trouble, however, is saved by Madame. She even convinces the corporal to take the young man to a safer place.

Madame's Character

The protagonist of the play is the Madame, a French woman, who is the owner of a large estate. It is her conflict which is the play's key focus and not the troubles of the French man after he has been caught by the German Corporal. Madame is the person who is defending her country which has fallen into the hands of Germany. She is also trying her best to uphold the honour of her country and its customs and traditions and the civilized manner in which its people conduct themselves in comparison to the barbarian ways of the occupying enemy. Furthermore, she is representative of a stereotypical French citizen who is clever, calm, cunning and artistic. Her attitude with the corporal is representative of the attitude of all French towards the Germans. Madame shows the corporal that she is indeed a 'collaborator', that she is providing all possible help to the Germans as far as their ruling France is concerned. While with her pretext, she has gained the trust of the enemy by acting as a collaborator, however, in reality Madame is involved with an undercover resistance movement against the German enemy and they are successfully deceiving the enemy into believing that they are being provided all possible help. She is, thus, portrayed as a person who is extremely organized and completely disciplined.

She has impeccable manners and has not deviated from them despite the barbaric ways of the occupying enemy. The French people are civilized and are not 'barbaric' like the Germans. A witty and sharp person, Madame, is not flustered by tough situations and handles them with ease and a calm exterior. When she is confronted by the stranger and the German Corporal who has the authority to cause harm to the French, she maintains her cool and stands by the French man who is not even known to her. The situation that falls upon her is sudden and strange but it does not fluster her. She creates clever deceptions one after the other to fool the German Corporal into believing that the stranger is actually her nephew. Fearless and courageous, she is true to her word and boldly and calmly faces German authority even though she is a citizen of the occupied land and now under German authority. Of the enemy, she has no fear, rather she is not averse to manipulating and even threatening the enemy. She comes to the corporal with the threat of getting him demoted.

She is a woman who is trying every sort of means in order to resist the enemy. With her skill and authoritative ways, she manages to get the German Corporal to believe that the stranger is actually her nephew. While Simone, Madame's servant girl, has been shown to be fearful of the German Corporal, of German's in general and of the situation that had developed, she gains strength from the manner in which Madame skilfully tackles the situation. Simone finds that she too has gained strength to be a part of the deception with the stranger by quarrelling over how 'messy' the stranger always is. In this play, Madame is a strong image of the French people and shows that they have the strength to resist their enemies.

Theme of the Play

The main theme of the play is the opposition of the French to the Germans in German occupied France. It provides an insight into the civilized and composed manners of

the French as opposed to the barbaric ways of the Germans. It brings the patriotism of the French and how they were putting on a front of being co-operative with the German occupiers while actually running a secret resistance movement against them.

Another theme in the play is that war is nasty and it makes individuals behave in unconventional ways. People would not deceive and lie in normal daily life but under war conditions, individuals possess the feeling of being patriotic and a virtue, to save your country, your countrymen, your home, your honor and dignity. The play therefore, is a critique on war, and its effect on individuals. Madame, who is a dignified person and has been a follower of rules and discipline also becomes conniving and a liar when it comes to saving a fellow countryman from the clutches of the Germans.

Critical Appreciation

The play *The Pen of My Aunt* is ridden with external conflicts, the first is that France has been occupied by the Germans and it is not a free country at that point. A French soldier dressed as a civilian is caught wandering in the woods without authorization and papers by a German Corporal. This is the second conflict since the French soldier has to save himself from getting arrested and will be punished by the Germans since he has no idea what they might do with him if he falls into the hands of the German conquering authorities. His life is at stake at this point.

However, this conflict is resolved when the owner of the estate, the Madame, when asked by the German Corporal readily identifies him as her nephew which frees him from the charges. The conflict is not over since nearly right to the end the German Corporal believes and then disbelieves that the man is Madame's nephew and is insistent that his only interest lies in seeing the young French man's papers. As mentioned, the corporal asks for the French man's papers and this too is an external conflict since the man has no papers to show. This conflict is again resolved by the combined efforts of Madame, her servant and the French man.

The three of them carry through the excuse that possibly the papers have gone with the laundry and should be back the next day and will then be shown to the corporal. Then there is the conflict in which Simone is heard by the corporal saying that she had never set eyes on the stranger. The trio manage to convince the corporal that what Simone had actually said was that she wished she had never set eyes on the stranger since whenever he comes, they make her work extremely hard. While there are many conflicts presented in the play, they are presented in a lively manner and make the play extremely humorous and one where the audience is eager to know how the conflict will be resolved.

The play had made a critique of the army, and the manner in which the army people are accustomed to a robotic and calculated life, without personal free will, just following orders in a set manner trained to live by commands.

The play also carries the theme of nationhood, brotherhood and patriotism. It depicts how the French people during the occupation of France by the Germans, were eager to protect their land from these invaders.

Madame: '...France maybe an occupied country, a ruined nation and a conquered race, but we will keep...the usages of civilization...'

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Madame: 'One thing we still possess thanks God and that is good manners, the enemy never had it and it's something they cannot take away from us...'

Madame: '...that is a risk one must take...'

Madame is portrayed as a person who is strong and patriotic, who does not fear anything. She strongly favours the French man in front of the German Corporal.

Madame: '... And you will have to answer it and behave as if you had been trained by a butler and ten upper servants...'

Madame: '...You have your place here that is what those creatures on our doorstep have...'

Madame: 'Simone, this may be an age of barbarism but I will not have any of it inside the walls of this house...'

Madame: '...to ask for his papers was routine, but to insist on their production is discourteous, I shall say so to your commanding officers...'

Madame: 'I tell lies my friend but no silly lies...'

Madame: '...that she wished she had never set eyes on my nephew...'

Madame: '...if I report on your conduct this afternoon, tomorrow you will be a private...'

Madame: '...to freedom!'

The stranger manages to get away from the clutches of the Germans and from the horrific fate that he would have had if he was found guilty. Madame identified him as her nephew and even kept getting him out of the various awkward situations that kept arising and finally she even ensured that the German Corporal provided him a lift and safely reached him to a place where he would be safe. Madame puts her own life at risk in her attempt to help out the stranger and save him from being captured by the Germans. The manner in which she behaves with the corporal to save the stranger is at times authoritative and her personality forces the corporal to agree with her, her cleverness is so powerful and her deceiving strength so perfect that the corporal does not suspect too much. Then there is her courage which goads the German Corporal into giving in and agreeing that the stranger is her nephew and even agreeing to reach the young French man to a safe place, unharmed, even when he is not allowed to undertake such a service for the French.

When the corporal informs Madame that the stranger is claiming to be her nephew:

(There is the slightest pause, just one moment of silence)

Madame: 'but of course he is my nephew...'

Stranger: '...you didn't know that that a packet of documents weighing half a ton were in the pocket, an identity card, a laissez passer...'

Madame: 'that she wished she had never set eyes on my nephew...'

Madame: '...take him to the crossroads and I shall forget your lack of efficiency...'

Madame: 'If I report your conduct this afternoon, tomorrow you shall be a private...'

In the play, the pen is a symbol of knowledge and of ultimate power, of creativity and of final authority, of wisdom. It stands for the wisdom and the power

imbedded in the character of the Madame, she is very clever and smart, she knows how to remain firm in tough situations and she can always stand up for the sake of her homeland.

Madame: ‘...certainly I write with it—but it is also my notebook—look I only need my hairpin and then so out of my quill pen comes my notebook...But enough for a list of names.’

Madame: ‘...you may use my desk...My own special pen...Isn’t it beautiful...’

The play ends on a happy note. The young French man is saved from the clutches of the Germans. From a historical point of view, the play is a depiction of truth and draws a parallel with what actually happened in the war. In the war, the axis was finally defeated by the Allied forces implying that the German’s were finally defeated by the French and driven out of France.

Madame: ‘...perhaps one day you will come back and dine with me and tell me the rest of the tale...’

Stranger: ‘...two years today perhaps?’

Madame: ‘one year today...’

Madame: ‘to freedom’!

Simone: ‘yes to freedom’!

Simone: ‘(with immense satisfaction) and a very bad end to that corporal...’

In the play, the Germans have been stereotyped. The Germans are hard-hearted, rational, cold, emotionless, proud, resolute and skillful, extremely judgmental, robotic, organized, disciplined and obedient. On the other hand, the French appear to be extremely artistic, well-mannered, innovative, emotional, peaceful, calm and composed, very cunning and clever, very creative and those who generally think in abstractions.

While Madame is the stereotypical French citizen, the corporal is a stereotypical German.

Corporal: ‘Ah madam, a little more discipline among your nephew’s generation and we might not be occupying your country today.’

Stranger: ‘You think it was that collar of yours that conquered my country, the only result of wearing a collar like that is varicose veins in the head.’

Madame: ‘...corporal, try to make your duties a little less literally, my countrymen appreciate the spirit rather than the letter...’

Corporal: ‘I have instructions Madame, and I obey them...’

Corporal: ‘...thank you Madame we Germans have come a long way from the gees...’

Corporal: ‘Yes only when someone tells me to...’

Madame: ‘...Very if it will help, I tell you’

Madame: ‘Then don’t be absurd Corporal, to be absurd twice in five minutes is too often...’

Simone: ‘Oh Madame, Madame, have you...’

Simone: ‘Calm Madame, with my insides turning over and over like a wheel!’

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Check Your Progress

5. What are the main conflicts highlighted in the play, *The Pen of my Aunt*?
6. State the main theme of the play.
7. What is the significance of pen in the play, *The Pen of my Aunt*?

4.5 FRIGYES KARINTHY: *REFUND*

NOTES

Frigyes Karinthy was born on 25 June 1887 and died on 29 August 1938. He was a Hungarian translator, journalist, poet, playwright and author. It was he who is looked upon as being the very first proponent of the concept of six degrees of separation. It was seen in a short story of his of 1929 entitled *Chains (Láncszemek)*. He is considered to be amongst the highly popular Hungarian writers. He was the father of poet Gábor Karinthy and writer Ferenc Karinthy.

Out of the works of Karinthy, there are two English translations, besides others, which are his science fiction novellas that continue the adventures of Gulliver, the character created by Swift. The work *Voyage to Faramido* is his early examination of artificial intelligence, and has a pacifist theme. The work *Capillaria* is a piece of satire which is darkly humorous and polished and carries the theme of ‘battle of the sexes’.

He was born to bourgeois parents who lived in Budapest, Karinthy’s parents converted from being Jewish a little while before his birth. His writing career began with journalism and he continued writing short, humorous blurbs throughout his career. Karinthy gained sudden fame post his 1912 publication *That’s How You Write (Így írtok ti)* which was a collection of his literary parodies. In the years that followed, he continued to expand the collection. Among his early works, his collection of short stories from school life *Please Sir! (Tanár úr, kérem, 1916)* also stands out for its grasp of the trials and tribulations of the average schoolboy. He admired the writings of H. G. Wells and the fiction that he himself wrote is greatly influenced by Wells. Karinthy went on to translate some works of Wells into Hungarian like *The Country of the Blind* and *The Sea Lady*. Karinthy’s best known translation was of A. A. Milne’s work, *Winnie the Pooh*, which was given the status of a cult book in Hungary.

World War I onwards, the writings of Karinthy took on a more engaging and serious tone, however, they still had a satirical element in them. It has been claimed that Karinthy was greatly influenced by Jonathan Swift and from it stem his works, *Voyage to Faramido (Utazás Faramidóba, 1916)* and its sequel, *Capillaria (1921)*. Several of the stories and novels of Karinthy carry the theme of the difficulties of man-woman relationships, in part because of his second marriage which was an unhappy one.

In 1936, Karinthy underwent a surgery in Stockholm for a tumor in his brain. He describes this experience in his autobiographical novel, *Journey Round my Skull, (Utazás a koponyám körül)*, originally published in 1939; a reissue appeared as a NYRB Classic in 2008 with an introduction by neurologist Oliver Sacks. Two years later, he passed away when holidaying in at Lake Balaton.

Personal Life

In 1913, Karinthy got married to Etel Judik, the actress. It was a happy marriage. Their son was named Gábor. In 1918, Etel died because of Spanish flu pandemic. Karinthy remarried in 1920. His second wife was Aranka Böhm, the psychiatrist. A second son was born of this marriage and he grew up to be the renowned writer Ferenc Karinthy. Although he did not speak the language, Karinthy was an ardent supporter of Esperanto, attending Esperanto congresses, and even became the president of the Hungarian Esperanto Society in 1932.

Karinthy is famous for his own strain of dry sense of humour. He said once, 'In humor I know no jokes'. One of the many examples of his dry humour was his advertising slogan for his book *Journey Round my Skull: The Newest Novel of the Famed Tumoris*.

The film *The Stork Caliph* (1917) by Alexander Korda was based on a novel by Mihály Babits. The script writing of the film was done by Karinthy.

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4.5.1 Critical Analysis: *Refund*

The famous play *Refund* is originally written in Hungarian language, however, the renowned author Percival Wilde translated the play in English.

The play *Refund* is an unusual story. It humorously deals with an extraordinarily ludicrous situation. The forty year old man, Wasserkopf is the protagonist of the story around whom the entire story revolves. Wasserkopf after completing his education was unsuccessful in securing a job. He thus accepted the fact that he was unable to do anything and was conflicted about the idea whether his education has ever taught him anything or not.

Wasserkopf met his school friend, Lederer, one day and they began talking about the latter's business. When Lederer told him about foreign exchange and Hungarian money, Wasserkopf could not grasp what was being said and he began asking Lederer questions related to foreign exchange. At this point, Lederer told Wasserkopf that there was no point of his education if he did not know even such a small thing and that he should go back to his school and get a refund for his fees since he does not seem to have gained anything from that education. Thus, the moneyless and jobless Wasserkopf found this suggestion to be a great one and he paid his school a visit to get a 'refund' on his school fees.

In German, the word 'Wasserkopf' means one who has a 'water head', or a person who is eccentric.

When the play opens, Wasserkopf who was a bad performer during his school days is paying a visit to his school after eighteen years of leaving the school with the intention of making the principal refund the tuition fees that he paid to the school while he was a student in that school. This request shocks the principal since it is now eighteen years since Wasserkopf has been away from the institution and has now returned with the feeling that there is nothing worthwhile that he has learnt during his education in the school and so he will get back his tuition fee for all the years that he was at the school. Wasserkopf informs the school that the certificate he received from the school was of no use and so far he has not even been able to get employment.

The principal is also confused as a result of this peculiar situation. An emergency staff meeting is called. The masters quickly realize that Wasserkopf is a cunning and crafty man who has come with the intention to extract money. What Wasserkopf wanted was to take a re-examination, miserably fail it and return from the school as a proud possessor of the refunded school fees. Realizing that Wasserkopf's actual purpose in coming to the school was to claim the refund, the teachers made up their mind to outsmart him with ensuring that any answer that he gave, no matter how erroneous it might be, was proven to be right for the question asked. The Mathematics Master stressed that it was essential that they stick together and implement the plan fully together. They thus decided that they should be united in the implementation of the plan and at the same time should assist each other.

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The masters were to give Wasserkopf an oral exam and his refusal to sit down for the exam was smartly interpreted by the Mathematics Master to be a signal to not go in for a written exam which would require Wasserkopf to sit.

The History Master posed the first question to Wasserkopf. He asked for how many years the 'Thirty Years' war had lasted. Though the question was so posed that it carried the answer in the question, Wasserkopf who was bent on failing answered that the 'Thirty Years war', lasted seven meters. The History Master could not think of a logic to prove such an absurd answer to be correct for the question that had been asked. But the Mathematics Master had a reply. He proved the answer right based on Einstein's Theory of Relativity. The Mathematics Master puts forth the argument that since space and time are relative terms, it is possible to represent years in terms of meter. Since a year can be one meter and seven years are seven meters and since the actual warfare happened for not over twelve in any single day, it was correct that the thirty years war lasted for seven meters. With his answer having been proven right, Wasserkopf passed the history exam. At this point, Wasserkopf goes on to call the History Master a numskull.

All the other masters pose their questions and for each absurdly incorrect answer provided by Wasserkopf some logic or the other is given to prove that it is the correct answer and he is marked excellent for each answer. Despite his providing incorrect answers and even being abusive towards the masters, the examiners showed no anger towards Wasserkopf since their goal was to prove him to be an excellent student.

The question posed by the Physics Master's was whether objects actually become smaller as people moved away from them or was it just some optical illusion. Wasserkopf replied with the single word 'Ass'. The Physics Master said that the answer was correct by providing the logic that the melancholic look of the ass is also an optical illusion. So, the answer that was given by Wasserkopf is made out by the master to be a logical one with providing a metaphorical explanation and this proves that Wasserkopf has correctly answered even that question and has passed. In return, Wasserkopf called the master a cannibal.

The question posed by the Geography Master is: 'What city of the same name is the capital of the German Province of Brunswick'? The Geography Master is easily able to prove that the capital of the German Province of Brunswick is 'same' which was the answer provided by Wasserkopf. The Geography Master is referred to as 'old reprobate' by Wasserkopf who has made it a point that he will call the masters nasty names.

When it was the turn of the Mathematics Master to ask Wasserkopf a question he carefully wove a net to trap him in. The Mathematics Master began with asking Wasserkopf a question which the master refers to being an 'easy' question and the question is: 'If we represent the speed of light by X and the distance of the star Sirius from the sun by Y, what is the circumference of a one-hundred-and-nine-sided regular polyhedron whose surface area coincides with that of the hip-pocket of a state railway employee, whose wife has been deceiving him for two years and eleven months with a regimental sergeant major of hussars'. The principal, Wasserkopf as well as every other master present for the re-examination of Wasserkopf is shocked by this question. Everyone knows that withal possible knowledge that Wasserkopf has he would have found that answer to that question difficult to provide. Yet he provides an arbitrary answer which is two thousand six hundred and twenty nine

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liters. There is tension in the air as the principal and other professors look expectantly in the direction of the Maths Professor, who coolly says that it is the wrong answer and that the correct answer is two thousand six hundred and twenty-eight liters and not twenty-nine. The master then goes on to say that Wasserkopf had failed in Mathematics and due to this fact it is right to refund his tuition fee to him. Now, the Mathematics Master lays down the actual trap where he asks Wasserkopf to provide an accurate calculation of the amount that should be refunded to him. Wasserkopf is too foolish to understand that the difficult question has now been posed to him. So, Wasserkopf calculates the various components of the amount that is due to him and arrives at the figure of 6,450 crowns and 50 heller. Upon obtaining the exact figure from Wasserkopf, the Mathematics Master tells the ex-student that actually this was the difficult question that he had been asked. In return Wasserkopf calls the Mathematics Master an ‘old stick-in-the-mud’. Since he has given the correct answer to the extremely difficult question, he is given the title ‘Mathematical Genius’.

So, it is with the masters’ close co-ordination and combined efforts that they are able to make it appear like Wasserkopf has cleared the re-examination with flying colours due to the excellent knowledge he possesses. Since he has cleared the re-examination there is no question of a refund on his fee and he is sent out of the school without a refund. The sly and crafty Wasserkopf is defeated by the masters.

The play ends with the masters and the principal taking out all their anger at the ex-student and having him thrown out of the school and finally being extremely happy that they have won:

The History Master: ‘So I’m a numskull, am I? Say it again and I’ll show you what is what!’ The Physics Master: ‘I’m a cannibal? What? And you were the one who tied a string across the aisle...’ The Geography Master: ‘Hypocrite? Nitwit? Ass? Me?’ The Mathematics Master: ‘Old stick-in-the-mud?’ The Servant (*entering*): ‘Yes, sir?’ The Principal (*indicating Wasserkopf*): ‘Remove that object!’ (*The servant seizes Wasserkopf by the collar and the seat of his trousers and rushes him off. The Principal turns to the staff and beams*). ‘Thank you, gentlemen, for your magnificent co-operation. In the future it will be our proudest boast that in this school a pupil simply cannot fail!’

(They shake hands and slap each other’s back)

Humour in Refund

In the play, the author has made use of humour to bring out the problems that exist in the education system which does not prepare the students to become individuals who are capable of functioning in the society as adults. The language used and the allusions go together to bring out the humour. The strategy that the masters form for outwitting Wasserkopf by ensuring that he passes while he is trying his best to fail the re-examination so that he can get a refund on the expenses that were incurred for his education is all put forth in an extremely humorous manner. The nonsensical questions, the weird answers and the logic used to prove the answer right add comedy to an otherwise serious issue. The Mathematics Master has a creative, non-linear thinking capable of proving every answer of the ex-student to be correct. The extraordinary manner in which the masters and the principal manage to completely turn the matter around creates a strange situation which is also humorous. The way Wasserkopf is tricked into a situation where he proves that he does know mathematics by calculation the amount that should be refunded to him is extremely humorous.

Themes

We will now discuss the themes of the play *Refund*.

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(i) Teachers and their lateral thinking

In the play, the simple questions asked by the masters, except the Mathematics Masters, were meant to ensure that the ex-student Wasserkopf would be able to pass the re-examination. But, Wasserkopf is determined to fail, and therefore, he provides extremely nonsensical answers to the questions. Yet, the clever masters use lateral thinking to somehow prove that the answers provided by Wasserkopf are absolutely correct.

The History Question was: For how many years did the Thirty Years' War last. The answer was: Thirty Years' War lasted seven meters. The logic given for the answer being correct: according to Einstein's Theory of Relativity time and space are relative terms because of which it is possible to represent years as meters. Since the war was fought for less than twelve hours a day it was actually fought for only seven years. Seven years can be represented as seven meters.

The Physics question: Do objects actually become smaller as people moved away from them or is it just an optical illusion. Answer: 'Ass.' The logic given for the answer being correct: Ass is the correct answer since the melancholic look of the ass is also an optical illusion.

To prove all other answers that Wasserkopf gave as logically correct, the masters made use of extremely innovative and creative thinking to successfully prove that Wasserkopf is indeed a genius and they made him pass the re-examination awarding him the title of Mathematical Genius. At the end, Wasserkopf is forced out of the school without a refund.

(ii) A criticism of the modern education system

The play depicts that Wasserkopf, who was considered a bad student, is now a person who is considered good for nothing. He has been unable to get a job and the school certificate that he has, has also proved to be useless. When he returns to his school to ask for a refund, the masters take him to be a sly and crafty person who is looking to get hold of money. The masters are all out to outwit him so that the school does not have to provide him a refund. The point of note here is that Wasserkopf has actually not been able to gain an education from his school which has provided him the necessary ability to live life with dignity. The masters, instead of looking at the pitiable situation that Wasserkopf is in despite having studied in that school, are all pooling their resources to fool him and outwit him. The masters and the principal do not seem to be at all bothered or worried about the welfare of Wasserkopf, instead they are all out to make the undeserving Wasserkopf pass the re-exam by hook or by crook just so that they do not need to pay up the refund.

The education system is not helping the students ready to live and function in the actual world. The syllabus is not geared towards teaching them life skills but is more tuned to memorizing. The student's creative and logical thinking is not developed and the actual knowledge that the student gains does not prove to be appropriate for being a productive part of society as an adult. Even such students who pass from school with flying colours might be misfits in society.

While the masters have the knowledge, which is itself evident from the type of questions that they are asking by building the answers into the questions at most times and from the manner in which they are able to prove that even the most absurd of the ex-student's answers is correct, the masters have not been able to pass on the same knowledge to the students of their institution. The ex-student who has come for a refund is an example. Even then, rather than thinking about how they could ensure that all students actually leave the institution with enough knowledge to function in society as productive individuals, they are thinking of what they can do to make sure that Wasserkopf cannot trick them and fail the re-examination.

The play throws light on several aspects of the education system and on the process of examination and promotion. It shows that a single exam is held for assessing the students' ability and capability. Just like the questions posed by the masters in the play, the actual exams are also generally full of excessively elaborate and frivolous questions. The students' career is linked with their performance in those examinations. Also, there are some such teachers who do not care for the students' welfare but are themselves working for self-preservation by passing or providing good marks to undeserving students. This tactic is used where the teachers are under tremendous pressure as their own position and promotion are linked with the percentage of students that pass.

The play ends with the principal saying: 'Thank you, gentlemen, for your magnificent co-operation. In the future it will be our proudest boast that in this school a pupil simply cannot fail!'

It is a point to note that while *Refund* is a one-act play which was written more than a century ago, is still relevant in the existing times.

4.6 SUMMARY

- Percival Wilde was a famous American playwright and author, and has written a lot of short stories too.
- Percival Wilde's famous play *The Hour of Truth* is an intense psychological play which deals with the subject of corruption and the power of money on an individual's behaviour.
- Robert Baldwin is the main protagonist of the play and is an extremely honest and just individual and a sincere worker.
- The character of Robert Baldwin is like an everyday American who works for a living, however, he is not able to earn a decent salary which is sufficient enough to support his family.
- In the play *The Hour of Truth*, John Gresham is accused of a fraud and Robert Baldwin is the witness against his case.
- Robert Baldwin informs his family that he has been offered a hundred thousand dollars by John Gresham if he says that 'I don't remember' and these words will free him from the accusation.
- The entire play *The Hour of Truth* is set in the parlour of a little cottage on a rather hot and sultry Sunday afternoon, when the sun is overhead and the baked clay underfoot are merciless.
- The play deals with the reactions of the family members after they know about the offer made by Gresham.

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Check Your Progress

8. How does the play highlight a humorous situation?
9. Why did Wasserkopf decide to visit his school to ask for refund?

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- *The Hour of Truth* is an intense psychological study which explains the influence of money in the lives of the individuals and the ways in which it tempts them to the path of corruption.
- The two main characters in this play are Robert Baldwin, the secretary of a reputed bank and the banker, John Gresham.
- Robert Baldwin gives in to the power of money, however, his honesty is preserved and appreciated as Gresham accepted his crime and praised Baldwin for his honesty.
- Farrell Mitchell's famous play *The Best Laid Plans* revolves around the story of three men who formulate a plan and succeed in catching the burglars.
- The play opens in an expensively furnished sitting room where we see a man (Wood) seated in an armchair close to the fire in the fireplace and is talking with another man (Spender) who is somewhere outside the room.
- When the men leave and the butler has also retired, then, two thieves enter the room.
- The two of the thieves successfully retrieve the key from under the carpet, rob the jewellery, replace the key and are ready to leave when suddenly the door opens and in come Spender and Wood.
- The playwright builds the curiosity in the audience's mind by immediately introducing the element of precious jewels in a safe and the key to the safe securely hidden under the carpet.
- Apparently, the two of them are fated to go to prison since a policeman appears on the scene and takes charge of them.
- Wood was delaying the exit of the policeman with the criminals to give enough time to the detectives to reach the scene of crime.
- Spender and Wood now really want to know how the policeman managed to be on the scene at the right time.
- Thus, towards the end of the play, the plans laid down by Jack and Wood failed, however, Wood still managed to save the day and thus, prevented the crime.
- Elizabeth MacKintosh was a famous Scottish writer who was born on 25 July 1896.
- She wrote under two separate pseudonyms: Josephine Tey and Gordon Daviot.
- In 1936 her novel, *A Shilling for Candles*, her first as Josephine Tey was immediately appreciated by Alfred Hitchcock and he went on to say that she had provided him with enough scope to build up an atmosphere of suspense and surprise.
- The approach to historical investigation which Tey has used in *The Daughter of Time*, was considered as the best novel of her.
- The play *The Pen of My Aunt* is set in the period of 1944 summer, in German-occupied France. The play deals with a young French man caught by a German corporal.

- The protagonist of the play is the Madame, a French woman who is the owner of a large estate. It is her conflict which is the play's key focus and not the troubles of the French man after he has been caught by the German corporal.
- The main theme of the play is the standing up of the French to the Germans in German occupied France.
- Another theme in the play is that war is nasty and it makes individuals behave in unconventional ways.
- The play *The Pen of My Aunt* is ridden with external conflicts the first of which is that France has been occupied by the Germans and it is not a free country at that point.
- The play had made a critique of the army, and the manner in which the army people are accustomed to a robotic and calculated life, without personal free will, just following orders in a set manner trained to live by commands.
- Madame is portrayed as a person who is strong and patriotic, who does not fear of anything. She strongly favors the French man in front of the German corporal.
- In the play, the pen is a symbol of knowledge and of ultimate power, of creativity and of final authority, of wisdom.
- Frigyes Karinthy was a Hungarian translator, journalist, poet, playwright and author.
- Karinthy's best known translation was of A. A. Milne's work, *Winnie the Pooh*, which was given the status of a cult book in Hungary.
- Several of the stories and novels of Karinthy carry the theme of the difficulties of man-woman relationships, in part because of his second marriage which was an unhappy one.
- The play *Refund* is an unusual story. It humorously deals with an extraordinarily ludicrous situation.
- Being moneyless and jobless, Wasserkopf decides to visit his to get a 'refund' on his school fees.
- Wasserkopf who was a bad performer during his school days is paying a visit to his school after eighteen years of leaving the school with the intention of making the principal refund the tuition fees that he paid to the school while he was a student in that school.
- The principal is also confused as a result of this peculiar situation. The masters quickly realize that Wasserkopf is a cunning and crafty man who has come with the intention to extract money.
- The play ends with the masters and the principal taking out all their anger at the ex-student and having him thrown out of the school and finally being extremely happy that they have won.
- In the play, the author has made use of humour to bring out the problems that exist in the education system which does not prepare the students to become individuals who are capable of functioning in the society as adults.

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- The extraordinary manner in which the masters and the principal manage to completely turn the matter around creates a strange situation which is also humorous.
- The way Wasserkopf is tricked into a situation where he proves that he does know mathematics by calculation the amount that should be refunded to him is extremely humorous.
- The play depicts that Wasserkopf, who was considered a bad student, is now a person who is considered good for nothing.
- The masters, instead of looking at the pitiable situation that Wasserkopf is in despite having studied in that school, are all pooling their resources to fool him and outwit him.
- The play throws light on several aspects of the education system and on the process of examination and promotion.
- It is a point of note that while *The Refund* is a one act play which was written more than a century ago which is still relevant in the existing times

4.7 KEY TERMS

- **Conniving:** It refers to someone who is involved in doing activities which are illegal, immoral or harmful.
- **Heralding:** It refers to a sign which is about to be materialised.
- **Flustered:** It refers to a person who is in a state of agitated confusion.

4.8 ANSWERS TO ‘CHECK YOUR PROGRESS’

1. The main theme of the play *The Hour of Truth* deals with the influence of money in the lives of the individuals and the ways in which it tempts them to the path of corruption.
2. The prominent works of Percival Wilde are enlisted as follows:
 - (a) *Mystery Week-End* (1938)
 - (b) *Inquest* (1938)
 - (c) *Rogues in Clover* (1929)
 - (d) *Dawn*
 - (e) *The Noble Lord*
 - (f) *The Traitor*
 - (g) *Confessional*
 - (h) *The Beautiful Story*
 - (i) *The Villain in the Piece*
3. Wood realized that the policeman is an accomplice of the thieves as he was apprehensive about the fact that how can a policeman appear on the exact time and also because he was not wearing the correct boots which a policeman wears.
4. Jack was not worried even after he was caught by Wood and Spender as he was a good planner. He knew that even if someone catches him, then his accomplice dressed as a policeman will come to his rescue.
5. The main conflicts highlighted in the play *The Pen of My Aunt* are external conflicts which is that France has been occupied by the Germans and it is not

a free country at that point. Secondly, a French soldier dressed as a civilian is caught wandering in the woods without authorization and papers by a German corporal. He thus, has to save himself from being arrested.

6. The main theme of the play is the opposition of the French to the Germans in German occupied France.
7. The significance of pen in the play *The Pen of my Aunt* stands for knowledge and of ultimate power, of creativity and of final authority, of wisdom. It represents for the wisdom and the power imbedded in the character of the Madame.
8. The extraordinary manner in which the masters and the principal manage to completely turn the matter around creates a strange situation and highlights humorous situation in the play *Refund*.
9. Wasserkopf decided to visit his school to ask for refund because he was unable to secure a job and believed that his education has not given him anything. However, he grew more eager when his friend Lederer asked him questions related to foreign exchange reserves and he failed to provide any answers.

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4.9 QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

Short-Answer Questions

1. How was Wasserkopf forced out of the school without a refund?
2. Write a short note on Madame's character from the play *The Pen of My Aunt*.
3. How is the character of Robert Baldwin been portrayed in the play *The Hour of Truth*?
4. Why do you think Madame was supporting the French man?
5. How can you say that Jack was a good planner in the play *The Best Laid Plans*?

Long-Answer Questions

1. Discuss the ways in which the Masters tried to outwit Wasserkopf.
2. Explain the themes of the play *The Pen of My Aunt*.
3. Discuss the ways in which Wood helped to prevent the crime in the play *The Best Laid Plans*.
4. Analyse the treatment of money and its influence on the lives of the individuals in the play *The Hour of Truth*.
5. Critically analyse the play *Refund*.

4.10 FURTHER READING

- Bailey, Matilda; Leavell, Ullin Whitney. 1963. *A World of Experience*. United States of America: American Book Company.
- Moon, Samuel. 1965. *One Act: Eleven Short Plays of the Modern Theatre*. United States of America: Grove Press.
- Daviot, Gordon. 1981. *The Pen of My Aunt*. New York: Irwin Publishing.
- Karinthy, Frigyes. 1938. *Refund: A Play in One Act for Seven Males*. New York: Samuel French.

UNIT 5 LITERARY FORMS

Structure

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- 5.1 Unit Objectives
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- 5.10 Questions and Exercises
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5.0 INTRODUCTION

Literary terms are words used in, and having specific meaning in discussion, review, criticism and classification of literary works such as stories, poetry, drama, and essays.

There is no authorized list of such words. Words that are used frequently for the purposes described above come to be recognized as literary forms. Literary forms are essential for a complete understanding of literature. In this unit, you will study the various literary forms such as lyric, ballad, ode, sonnet, epic, elegy, satire, dramatic monologue, drama, one-act play, essay, novel and short story.

5.1 UNIT OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- Discuss the various forms of poetry: lyric, ode and elegy
- Assess the salient features of a ballad, sonnet, epic and satire
- Define a dramatic monologue
- Explain the various tragic and comic English plays

- Analyse the growth and development of the novel form
- List the famous essays and short stories in English

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5.2 FORMS OF POETRY: LYRIC, ODE AND ELEGY

There are various forms of poetry that have emerged over a period of time. In this section, we will discuss ode, lyric and elegy.

5.2.1 Ode

The root of the word ‘ode’ lies in the Greek word ‘aeidein’ which means ‘to sing’ or ‘to chant’. This form is a part of the lyric poetry tradition. An ode is a poem that has a formal poetic diction, sometimes addressed to an absent person, or an object, and dealing with a subject which is serious in nature.

An ode usually has three segments: strophe, antistrophe, and epode. In the earlier days odes were accompanied by music and dance. The performance involved two choruses or individuals. The first chorus/individual recital or singing of the strophe, followed by the second chorus or individual reciting/singing of the antistrophe and then both together singing the epode. Romantic poets used this lyrical form to express their strongest sentiments.

There are three varieties of odes, distinguished by form and structure: the Pindaric, the Horatian, and the Irregular.

The Pindaric ode is named after the classical Greek poet Pindar, who is acknowledged with introducing the ode form. It was performed by a chorus and accompanied by dancers. These performances consisted of strophe, antistrophe, and epode. Pindaric odes were performed to commemorate victories related to athletic pursuits.

William Wordsworth’s poem, *Ode on Intimations of Immortality from Recollections of Early Childhood*, is an excellent example of a Pindaric ode in English. It begins with a formal opening, the middle segment mirrors the opening; and the ending — that is of varying length — is composed with a variety of metrical structures:

*There was a time when meadow, grove, and stream,
The earth and every common sight
To me did seem
Apparelled in celestial light,
The glory and the freshness of a dream.
It is not now as it hath been of yore;—
Turn wheresoe’er I may,
By night or day,
The things which I have seen I now can see no more.*

The Horatian ode owes its name to the Roman poet Horace. It is more informal, less elaborate and more tranquil and meditative in tone than the Pindaric ode. This form is more apt when one is reading or writing for personal pleasure, rather than

for theatrical performances. The Horatian ode has a regular pattern of stanza. An example is Allen Tate's poem *Ode to the Confederate Dead*:

*Row after row with strict impunity
The headstones yield their names to the element,
The wind whirrs without recollection;
In the riven troughs the splayed leaves
Pile up, of nature the casual sacrament
To the seasonal eternity of death;
Then driven by the fierce scrutiny
Of heaven to their election in the vast breath,
They sough the rumour of mortality.*

The third variety of ode, the irregular ode, is formal in manner and has the characteristics of the classical ode in terms of its thematic value. One of the well-known examples in this form is *Ode on a Grecian Urn* written by John Keats. The other examples of this kind of ode are Robert Lowell's *Quaker Graveyard in Nantucket*, Percy Bysshe Shelley's *Ode to the West Wind*, and Robert Creeley's *America*. It is important to mention here that the 'qasida' form found in Persian poetry has similarity with the ode form.

5.2.2 Lyric

Lyric is a form of poetry that addresses emotional and personal matters. Let us now discuss lyric poetry.

Lyric poetry

In Greece, during the ancient period, any poem which was accompanied by a lyre (a musical instrument) was called a Lyric. Lyric poetry is an umbrella term for any poem which is short and conveys personal feelings and opinions, has a single speaker and possesses a song like quality. It could be elegy, ode, sonnet song or hymn.

Lyrics in Latin literature were found as early as in first century BC by Catullus and Horace. In the Middle Ages in England 'lyric' poetry manifested itself through folk songs, hymns (a lyric with religious subject), songs of the troubadours (the poet and musicians of aristocratic origin in France). Lyric found its existence in other non-English counterparts of the globe.

'Eihazal' originated in Persia around tenth century. Thematically this poetic form always centres on love and contains couplets. Omar Khayyam, Amir Khusrau, Alisher Navoi are proponents of this form. In China, 'sanqu' poetry, written in regional dialects gained prominence. Petrarch developed the sonnet style in Italy which was later used by many writers. The word 'sonnet' in Italian means 'little song', a fourteen line rhyming song following the iambic pentameter. Petrarchan sonnet is divided into two sections: an 'octet' (first eight lines) and a 'sestet' (last six lines). 'Bhajan' in the Indian context refers to short religious poems; some exponents of these writings were Tulsidas, Kabir, and Soordas.

Lyric poem in sixteenth century gained prominence through sonnets composed by Sir Philip Sydney and Shakespeare. The early Romantics as well as the late Romantics like Wordsworth, Shelley, Byron, and Keats also used this form in various experimental ways. Lord Tennyson was another major poet during the Victorian era.

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His poetry collection like *Poems, Chiefly Lyrical* (1830) was well appreciated. *In Memorium* (1850) and *Maud* (1855), both written by Tennyson, contains 133 and 27 lyrics respectively. There have been a few experiments with this genre in the modern period as well.

5.2.3 Elegy

The form of elegy originated in ancient Greece as lamentations for the dead. Elegies can be simple, encomiastic, reflective, critical or pastoral. The simple elegy is a funeral song for an individual. Spenser's *Daphnida* was modelled on Chaucer's *Book of the Duchess* and is an example of a simple elegy. The encomiastic elegy is a memorial for a great person in which the poet recollects his life and personality, e.g., Spenser's *Astrophel* on the death of Sidney; Milton's *Lycidas* for Edward King; Arnold's *Thyrsis* for Arthur Hugh Clough are examples of this kind of elegy. The reflective elegy has a melancholic and reflective mood. Thomas Gray's *Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard* is a prominent example of this type of elegy. *Anglo-Saxon Deor, the Wanderer* and *The Seafarer* also come in this category. The critical elegy was used in the nineteenth century as a medium for literary criticism, e.g., Arnold's *Memorial Verses* in which he pays tribute to Wordsworth and places him above Goethe and Byron. Pastoral elegy is one in which the poet laments the death of a dead companion using the elements of the pastoral. It is in the tradition of Greek *Theocritus, Bion and Morchus*. By conventions, the poem begins invoking the muses and refers to classical mythology. The whole of nature joins the mourning which leads to a funeral procession. Digression is common in such elegies. The poem ends on a note of hope as do Milton's *Lycidas*, Shelley's *Adonis* and Arnold's *Thyrsis*.

In modern usage, it is the theme that matters and not the metre. The theme of an elegy must be mournful or it should be sadly reflective. It is usually a lamentation for the dead, though it may be inspired by other sombre themes, such as unrequited love, the fall of a famous city and the like. It is written as a tribute to something loved and lost. Thus, in writing an elegy, an English poet is not limited to any one form, but may choose whatever most fitting seems to him.

Though grief is the dominant emotion in the early part of the elegy, the note often changes towards the close, as the poet reconciles himself to the inevitable such as *Lycidas* closes on a note of optimism:

‘Weep no more, woeful shepherds, weep no more,
For Lycidas, your sorrow,
is not dead, Sunk though he be beneath the watery floor.’

5.3 SONNET, EPIC, BALLAD AND SATIRE

Let us now study the literary forms—sonnet, epic, ballad, and satire.

5.3.1 Sonnet

In this section, we will study the sonnet form which is one of the most enduring literary forms of poetry in English. The sonnet form was introduced by Wyatt and Surrey in the sixteenth century in English. Before we move on to talk about English sonnet, let us go through the origin and development of the form. The word sonnet itself was introduced in English language in 1557 as the title of Surrey's poems. This is either directly borrowed from Middle French sonnet or directly from Italian sonetto, literally ‘little song’. The root word is also either the Old Provençal

Check Your Progress

1. Name the three segments of an ode.
2. Define lyric poetry.
3. Give an example of a simple elegy.

diminutive of son ‘song, sound,’ or Latin sonus ‘sound’. In either case, the definition of sonnet has both the attributes. Sonnet was the most common form of poetry in the late Middle Ages. By the thirteenth century, it had developed a standardized form. The form consists of fourteen equal lines that follow a set rhyme scheme. The sonnet form was perfected in the fourteenth century during the Italian Renaissance by Francesco Petrarca, the Renaissance scholar and poet. Sir Thomas Wyatt in the sixteenth century translated some of the Petrarchan sonnets in English and is credited with introducing the sonnet form in English literature.

The traditional Italian or Petrarchan sonnet is a fourteen-line poem with an octave and sestet. Usually, these fourteen lines follow the hendecasyllable (a line of verse containing eleven syllables) and Alexandrine (a line of two hemistichs [half-lines] of six syllables each, separated by a caesura) meters. The octave, first eight lines normally ask questions and the sestet, the last six lines answer them. At the end of the eighth line of the Petrarchan sonnet there is a ‘volta’ or ‘turn’, a point in the sonnet where the idea or theme is turned on its head. This will be like a question is answered (or introduced), or the subject matter is further complicated. Usually the volta takes the form of a ‘but’ statement contradicting or complicating the content of the earlier lines. A Petrarchan sonnet follows the rhyme scheme abba, abba, cdecde, though with some variation, especially within the final six lines.

The first eight lines have interlinked rhyming scheme that also point out the same idea or theme in them. Further, we can understand that the rhyme scheme ‘abba’ typically starts at a point moving towards another and coming back again to the starting point. This talks about the closely knitted subject matter within the four lines. After the volta along with a change in the idea or theme, the rhyming scheme also takes a turn. The variations of rhyme in the sestet can take the form of cdc cdc or cddc ee. The theme in the Petrarchan sonnet is usually the unattainable love of the beloved. However, this is mostly unrequited love. As a result, in the sonnet, the lover will be seen praising the beloved and justifies his love for her. The beloved in this sonnet is portrayed as an ideal who also teaches the lover the feeling of love. In one of his famous collection of sonnets ‘Rime Sparse (Scattered Rhymes)’, Petrarch talks about his transcendental longings for Laura. These longings are translated into an earthy and impatient expression of physical desire in some of his sonnets. This theme is further exploited by the poets who followed him. The theme later became so entangled with the sonnet form that people started defining sonnet as a love song and it became associated with high poetic diction, vivid imagery, and romantic love.

1. Wyatt and Surrey

As mentioned earlier, the sonnet emerged in English literature in the sixteenth century through Thomas Wyatt and his younger contemporary Henry Howard, Earl of Surrey’s translation of Petrarchan sonnet into English. The early circulation of their sonnets was in manuscripts only. Their sonnets were first published by Richard Tottel in his *Songes and Sonettes* that is better known as Tottel’s Miscellany in 1557. Now let us go through Petrarch’s Rime # 140 which was translated by Wyatt and Surrey. The first line of the sonnet is translated as ‘The long love that in my thought doth Harbour’ ‘The love that doth Reign and live within my thought’ respectively.

*THE long love that in my thought I harbour,
And in mine heart doth keep his residence,
Into my face presseth with bold pretence,*

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*And therein campeth displaying his banner:
 She that me learneth to love and to suffer,
 And wills that my trust, and lust's negligence
 Be reined by reason, shame, and reverence,
 With his hardiness takes displeasure.
 Wherewith love to the heart's forest he fleeth,
 Leaving his enterprise with pain and cry,
 And there him hideth, and not appeareth.
 What may I do, when my master feareth,
 But in the field with him to live and die?
 For good is the life, ending faithfully.*

In this sonnet the lover is captivated by the beloved. This captivation is further strengthened by the use of military images. The love of the mistress has camped in his heart displaying the banner. This intense love is translated into a carnal desire towards the beloved. But he is overcome by the chastity of the lady which forces him to be faithful. The beloved teaches him to restrain his passion and also to be reigned by reason and shame. As the beloved is not reciprocating the love, the lover feels himself to be abandoned by his fearful master and wants to put an end to his life. This is a drama of erotic excitement. The lover is inhabited by love that causes him to undertake things that involve risk or danger. It also causes him to suffer pain and embarrassment. But then he realizes that love is beyond this aspect. At another level, that sonnet is an engagement with the aristocratic and humanist system that seems attractive in the beginning but is finally understood as incompatible. In Surrey's translation of the same sonnet, there are some minor changes. The speaker's heart is already captive before the sonnet starts. Later he insists very strongly upon his own act in this entire episode. Finally, the poem ends with a reminder of good life with the lover, but for Wyatt it ends with a sweet death. Surrey in this translation experimented with the rhyming scheme of 'abab cdcd efef, gg' which was perfected later by Shakespeare.

Despite the fact that Wyatt and Surrey introduced this form in English language, it is Shakespeare and Spenser who credited with the introduction of this form. Both of them essentially changed the rhyming scheme and stanza structure and along with them the meaning associated with it.

2. William Shakespeare

William Shakespeare is widely known in literary circles as the famous playwright of English literature. He has thirty-seven plays to his credit; all of them with varied themes and characters. In addition, he has also written three narrative poems and 154 sonnets. The Shakespearean sonnet is divided into four stanzas. The first three are quatrains (four line stanza) followed by a couplet (two line stanza). The form is often named after Shakespeare, not because he was the first to write in this form but because he became its most famous practitioner. It has the following rhyme scheme 'abab, cdcd, efef, gg'. The division of three quatrains and a final concluding couplet offered him greater amount of variety with regard to rhyme and theme than is usually found in its Italian predecessors. All his sonnets typically use iambic pentameter, a ten syllable line where the first syllable is unstressed and the second syllable is stressed. Shakespeare uses the three quatrains to develop an idea with three

different images and finally reach the conclusion in the couplet. The change in mood or theme mostly happens in the beginning of the third quatrain with a final couplet concluding the arguments. But most often, he waits till the couplet ends and usually summarizes the theme of the poem or introduces a fresh look at the theme. Out of these 154 sonnets, the first 126 sonnets written are addressed to a fair young man in his youth and the last 28 sonnets are addressed to a dark lady. Nobody knows that a flesh and blood person exists in reality or not. The themes of the sonnets abound in love, beauty and mortality. This sequence was published in 1609.

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Sonnet 18

*Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?
Thou art more lovely and more temperate:
Rough winds do shake the darling buds of May,
And summer's lease hath all too short a date:
Sometime too hot the eye of heaven shines,
And often is his gold complexion dimm'd;
And every fair from fair sometime declines,
By chance, or nature's changing course, untrimm'd;
But thy eternal summer shall not fade
Nor lose possession of that fair thou ow'st;
Nor shall Death brag thou wander'st in his shade,
When in eternal lines to time thou grow'st;
So long as men can breathe or eyes can see,
So long lives this, and this gives life to thee.*

In this sonnet, the speaker is describing the beauty of the beloved (here the young man). This is introspection on death and a consolation in the end that the young man will remain immortal through this poem. The sonnet starts with a question on metaphor whether to compare the young man with summer season or not. However, he says that summer has its finest moments but his beloved is far more superior than this season. Further, summer will soon depart just like any other beautiful thing in nature. Likewise, the young man also has a short life which will soon be past. As the lover, it is the speaker's intention to immortalize the beauty in verse and preserve it for future generations to cherish. The sonnet ends with a very bold claim that as long as there are men on this earth, they will read this sonnet and will help the young men to relive their memories. This is a typical example of romantic intimacy.

3. Edmund Spenser

Edmund Spenser is an English poet. He is known for his epic poem *The Faerie Queene* which is a celebration of the Tudor dynasty. He is known for his experiments in the stanza form. He divided his long poem into nine line stanzas of which the first eight lines are written in iambic pentameter and the last line is in iambic hexameter. It follows the rhyming scheme of 'ababbcbcc'. This stanza is called a Spenserian stanza. He has also written a sequence of sonnets called *Amoretti*. It tells the story of Spenser's own successful courtship and marriage to Elizabeth Boyle. In this sonnet also he experimented with the form. The resultant form is called the Spenserian sonnet. This sonnet is also divided into three quatrains and a final couplet with

iambic pentameter lines. The rhymes are interlinked as in ‘ababbcbccdcdee’. The interlinking of rhymes in the three quatrains also tells us that they speak of similar themes and the couplet will offer a conclusion. Let us look at one of his sonnets.

Amoretti, Sonnet No.75

*One day I wrote her name upon the strand,
But came the waves and washed it away:
Again I write it with a second hand,
But came the tide, and made my pains his prey.
Vain man, said she, that doest in vain assay,
A mortal thing so to immortalize,
For I myself shall like to this decay,
And eek my name be wiped out likewise.
Not so, (quod I) let baser things devise
To die in dust, but you shall live by fame:
My verse, your virtues rare shall eternize,
And in the heavens write your glorious name.
Where whenas death shall all the world subdue,
Our love shall live, and later life renew.*

This example is taken from *Amoretti* sonnet No.75. As we have noted, the sonnet has linked rhyme scheme in the quatrains. This suggests the linked rhymes of such Italian forms as *terza rima*. Here, the poet is talking about the transitory nature of human life. This idea is depicted through the use of the metaphor of writing his beloved’s name on the beach sand which is then wiped away by the coming tide. When the lover repeats this action, his beloved scorns and scolds him and tells him that it is a futile effort. Her life is also like that name which will be erased from the face of earth when the time comes. As with the Shakespearean sonnet, the speaker/poet is trying to overcome the temporal aspect of life writing a sonnet. The speaker then turns to writing the sonnet. He says that the body may decay and will turn to dust. But he will not let her memory die. The virtues of his beloved and their mutual love will be made eternal through the poem. This poem will further elevate her status and reserve her place in heaven. This will also be a guiding force for the latter’s life.

The earlier sonnets dealt with the love of the lover for his beloved. But in the seventeenth century, the sonnet adopted other themes as well. For example, the metaphysical poets John Donne and George Herbert wrote religious sonnets highlighting their love for God. Both the Shakespearean and Petrarchan rhyme schemes were popular throughout the seventeenth century period. But poets kept on experimenting with newer styles as well.

4. John Milton

John Milton, the famous English poet, is better known for his epic poem *Paradise Lost*. We will carry out an analysis of it in the epic section. He was a civil servant for the Commonwealth of England under Oliver Cromwell. However, like other English poets, he has also written sonnets. Let us go through sonnet No. 19 from his poem *On His Blindness*.

*When I consider how my light is spent
When I consider how my light is spent,*

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*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
 To serve therewith my Maker, and present
 My true account, lest he returning chide;
 Doth God exact day-labour, light denied?
 I fondly ask. But patience, to prevent
 That murmur, soon replies, "God doth not need
 Either man's work or his own gifts; who best
 Bear his mild yoke, they serve him best. His state
 Is Kingly. Thousands at his bidding speed
 And post o'er Land and Ocean without rest:
 They also serve who only stand and wait."*

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This sonnet is similar to the Italian form of writing sonnets. The octave is divided into two quatrains and the sestet is divided into two tercets (three line stanza). The rhyming scheme is 'abba abba cdc cdc'. The first eight lines raise questions to God who has created him and has given him immense talent. The last six lines discuss the answer that he receives from God. The speaker of the poem is the author himself.

Milton lost his sight at a very young age. This brings the irony prominent in this sonnet to the fore. Milton tells his readers that he knows his potential but is unable to deal with it. This is because his primacy of experience has been lost. He is not able to see anything now. He is very scared to think that he is not using his talent to his fullest potential. He thinks that God will punish him for not using his talent. He is also questioning his creator—God—but knows that he should be careful while doing so. A patient wait has helped him receive the answer. The answer clearly states that God does not want man's gift or work to praise him. God rather expects man to bear his mild yoke. Hence, this sonnet is an exploration of Milton's relationship with God and his faith in God. He refers to the parables that Jesus told in this sonnet. In line 3 he talks about the servant who buried the talent given to him by his master and did not do anything about it. The servant lost faith in the eyes of his master and was thrown out because of this action. The style of the sonnet has been derived from the Baroque Period.

5. John Donne

John Donne is recognized as one of the prominent metaphysical poets. Metaphysical poets are largely cognizant for their use of metaphysical conceit in their poems. Metaphysical conceit is an extended metaphor that combines two immensely diverse ideas into a single idea, often using imagery. Poems like *The Canonization*, *The Flea* are all examples of the use of this metaphysical style. Donne is known for his unique treatment of love and amorous courtship in his poems. However, later in his life, he became an Anglican priest. During the tenure of his poetic career, he is known for his famous Holy sonnets. Here, the lover is mankind and the beloved is God, his creator. Let us go through the explanation of one such sonnet of *Holy Sonnets*.

*Batter my heart, three-person'd God
 Batter my heart, three-person'd God, for you*

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*As yet but knock, breathe, shine, and seek to mend;
That I may rise and stand, o'erthrow me, and bend
Your force to break, blow, burn, and make me new.*

*I, like an usurp'd town to another due,
Labor to admit you, but oh, to no end;
Reason, your viceroy in me, me should defend,
But is captiv'd, and proves weak or untrue.
Yet dearly I love you, and would be lov'd fain,
But am betroth'd unto your enemy;
Divorce me, untie or break that knot again,
Take me to you, imprison me, for I,
Except you enthrall me, never shall be free,
Nor ever chaste, except you ravish me.*

In this sonnet, John Donne like Milton, has created a dialogue with God. The speaker is aware of his shortcomings. He is very fickle minded and is going astray from the path of God. His heart is craving for worldly pleasures. So he wants God his creator to come and save him. He feels that it is the duty of God, the creator, to save his creation. This, he feels, can only be done by overthrowing God's enemy who is residing in the heart of the speaker. God has to forcibly imprison him to free and purify him. In this sonnet, he mixes the style of the Italian and Shakespearean sonnets into one. The first eight lines of the sonnet have a rhyming scheme of 'abba abba' that corresponds to the Petrarchan sonnet. But in the last six lines, the rhyming scheme is 'cdcd cc' where you have a concluding couplet like that of Shakespearean sonnets. The use of violent metaphors like battering, captive, usurped town, and so forth shows the speaker's intense longing for God.

The tradition of writing sonnets went out of date during the Restoration period. However, the tradition of writing sonnets returned during the period of the French Revolution. The penchant for sonnet continued during the Romantic period. The sheer number of sonnets written during this period itself stand testimony to this fact. For example, William Wordsworth wrote 523 sonnets, John Keats 67 sonnets, Samuel Taylor Coleridge 48 sonnets, and Percy Bysshe Shelley wrote 18 sonnets. These sonnets imbibed the elements belonging to both the Shakespearean and Petrarchan traditions.

6. William Wordsworth

Wordsworth and Coleridge heralded a new era in English Literature with their publication of the *Lyrical Ballads*. This period came to be known as the Romantic period. Wordsworth defined poetry as the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings recollected in tranquillity. *The Prelude* is one of the significant poems written by Wordsworth. In addition, he has written several sonnets as well. Some of his famous poems are *Composed Upon Westminster Bridge, The World is Too Much With Us* and *London, 1802*. Let us study one of the ecclesiastical sonnets from the poem *Inside of King's College Chapel, Cambridge I* which is a historical record of the origin of the Anglican Church till his own time.

*Tax not the royal Saint with vain expense,
With ill-matched aims the Architect who planned—*

*Albeit labouring for a scanty band
Of white-robed Scholars only—this immense
And glorious Work of fine intelligence!
Give all thou canst; high Heaven rejects the lore
Of nicely-calculated less or more;
So deemed the man who fashioned for the sense
These lofty pillars, spread that branching roof
Self-poised, and scooped into ten thousand cells,
Where light and shade repose, where music dwells
Lingering—and wandering on as loth to die;
Like thoughts whose very sweetness yieldeth proof
That they were born for immortality.*

This sonnet is part of the sonnets that talk about the ecclesiastical architecture. In this context, he mentions the types of spiritual church in truth and charity (34–37); in humble altar and low pile (38–41); in cathedral and college chapel (42–45); the eternal city (46–47).

7. Percy Bysshe Shelley

P.B. Shelley is one of the renowned Romantics. He is known for his powerful poems like *Ode to the West Wind*, *To a Skylark*, and so forth. His sonnet *Ozymandias* is also highly anthologized. Shelley innovated radically, creating his own rhyme scheme for the sonnet *Ozymandias*.

*I met a traveller from an antique land
Who said: Two vast and trunkless legs of stone
Stand in the desert . . . Near them, on the sand,
Half sunk, a shattered visage lies, whose frown,
And wrinkled lip, and sneer of cold command,
Tell that its sculptor well those passions read
Which yet survive, stamped on these lifeless things,
The hand that mocked them, and the heart that fed:
And on the pedestal these words appear:
“My name is Ozymandias, king of kings:
Look on my works, ye Mighty, and despair!”
Nothing beside remains. Round the decay
Of that colossal wreck, boundless and bare
The lone and level sands stretch far away.*

This sonnet mentions a traveller’s account of the ruins that he has seen of an ancient city. The traveller recounts that while he was travelling to a place where ancient civilizations once existed, he had seen an abandoned statue in the middle of a desert. From the title, we can make out that the land he has visited is Egypt. The statue exists in a dilapidated condition. There are two stones that look like legs of an individual but there is no trunk attached to the statue. He could only see the face of the statue from which he could see the stern and powerful look of a ruler. The traveller states that the sculptor was skilled enough in depicting the emotions

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of a ruler on the statue. On the pedestal near the face, there is an inscription that tells anyone who might happen to pass by, basically, ‘Look around and see how awesome I am!’ But except the statue there is nothing to tell the greatness of his rule and empire. There is just a lot of sand, as far as the traveller can see.

This sonnet acts as a warning to the city/country that he lives in and the king. During Shelly’s time, we could see that France’s hegemony has ended like that of the empire of Ozymandias. Likewise, the sonnet forebodes a warning that England’s rule will also end soon. The king and the nation should not take pride in whatever they have achieved in terms of prosperity and power.

Another important aspect of the sonnet is its point of view. What is said in the poem comes from the writing made by the sculptor on the statue of king Ozymandias. This is read by an unknown traveller who narrated that to the speaker. This helps in creating a sense of the mystery of history and legend. Everything about the narration is shrouded in mystery. The traveller is unknown. Also, we are not sure whether the traveller has actually seen the statue and interpreted it correctly or not. Moreover, the statue itself is a creation of a sculptor, who might or might not have truly captured the passions of the king. Our best access to the king himself is not the statue, not anything physical, but the king’s own words.

8. Gerard Manley Hopkins

G. M. Hopkins is one of the prominent poets of the Victorian period. However, his experiments with the poetic form have categorized him as a Modern poet. He got converted to Catholicism and became a priest. His religious conviction and reverence for nature is very evident in all his poems. Most of his sonnets were written in sprung rhythm, for example *The Windhover*. He like other English poets experimented with the sonnet form in *Pied Beauty* and *That Nature is a Heraclitean Fire and of the comfort of the Resurrection*. Let us study a sonnet of the poem *God’s Grandeur* written by Hopkins.

*The world is charged with the grandeur of God.
It will flame out, like shining ftnrn shook foil;
It gathers to a greatness, like the ooze of oil
Crushed. Why do men then now not reck his rod?
Generations have trod, have trod, have trod;
And all is seared with trade; bleared, smeared with toil;
And wears man’s smudge and shares man’s smell: the soil
Is bare now, nor can foot feel, being shod.
And for all this, nature is never spent;
There lives the dearest freshness deep down things;
And though the last lights off the black West went
Oh, morning, at the brown brink eastward, springs--
Because the Holy Ghost over the bent
World broods with warm breast and with ah! bright wings.*

This sonnet talks about how nature represents Gods glory. This sonnet validates the presence of god and also justifies his existence. Nonetheless, human beings who focus more on material prosperity have started destroying Nature. Nature rejuvenates

itself to greet the man daily in the morning. God is also gracious and gives the power of rebirth to Nature.

9. Wilfred Owen

Wilfred Owen is one of the famous English poets who wrote during the period of the First World War. His poems showcase the excruciating experiences of the First World War. He was influenced by his friend and mentor Siegfried Sassoon. Let us read some lines written by Wilfred Owen in the Preface to an anthology of his poems.

This book is not about heroes. English Poetry is not yet fit to speak of them.

*Nor is it about deeds, or lands, nor anything about glory, honour, might, majesty,
dominion, or power, except War.*

Above all I am not concerned with Poetry. My subject is War; and the pity of War.....

To conclude, we can say that sonnets remain one of the most enduring forms of poetry in contemporary times. The early English practitioners such as Edmund Spenser (who gave his name to the Spenserian sonnet), Michael Drayton, and William Shakespeare (who is also credited with a second form of English sonnet) largely wrote about the theme of love in their sonnets.

Further, authors such as G.M. Hopkins have challenged the traditional format of the sonnet form, by varying the rhyme schemes, and rhythm.

5.3.2 Epic

Epic poetry is one of the genres of poetry and a major form of narrative literature. This is one of the oldest forms of poetry as well. An epic is often defined as a lengthy poem that recounts the adventure of a hero or a great war. The narration is usually in a continuous form. Aristotle has ranked the epic as second only to tragedy. In order to be called an epic, the poem needs to fulfill the following criteria.

- The poem has to be long and all the lines should be in a particular meter.
- The subject matter of the poem should be serious.
- The language should be formal and the style elevated.
- The hero should be a quasi-divine figure or a semi-god itself.
- The actions of the hero will affect the fate of a tribe, a nation, or (in the instance of John Milton's *Paradise Lost*) the entire human race.

In addition, there are some epic features which are distinct of writers. These features have been drawn from the traditional epics. There are differences between traditional and literary epics. Traditional epics are also called folk epics. They were not written but transferred orally from generation to generation. They were about a tribal or national hero during a warlike age. Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey* in Greek, in Sanskrit Valmiki's *Ramayana* and Vyas' *Mahabharata*, the Old English *Beowulf*; the French *Chanson de Roland*, German epic *Nibelungenlied* and the Spanish *Poema del Cid* are all examples of traditional epics. There is no written testimony regarding the authors of these oral epics. The Greek epic is attributed to Homer, for example. Northrop Frye, in his acclaimed book *Anatomy of Criticism* (1957) talks about how Homer established for his successors the 'demonstration that the fall of an enemy, no less than of a friend or leader, is tragic and not comic,' and that with this 'objective and disinterested element,' the epic acquired an authority based 'on the vision of nature as an impersonal order'.

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Literary epics, on the other hand, were written by individual poets but certainly drew inspiration from the traditional form. The Latin epic poem *The Aeneid* written by Virgil, the English epic poem *Paradise Lost* written by John Milton, *Hyperion* by John Keats are examples of literary epics. *The Aeneid* served as the model for *Paradise Lost*. *Paradise Lost* in turn became the fragmentary epic *Hyperion*.

The other distinctive features of an epic which are found in literary works across the world are as follows:

- The epic starts in *media res* that is, in the middle of things.
- The poet invokes the muses in the beginning of the poem to sustain the long poem.
- The poem mentions supernatural events usually attributed to the will and actions of the gods.
- A list of heroes is mentioned in the poem.
- The heroes are always discussed with epithets.
- The use of epic similes is mostly prevalent in the poems.
- The poet remains omniscient throughout the poem.

Many works like Dante's *Divine Comedy* and Spencer's *The Faerie Queene* do not strictly adhere to the traditional or literary epic style but their scale and grandeur is the same. Nowadays, the term epic is applied to literary works who follow that model without the verse form. Prose forms like Herman Melville's *Moby-Dick*, James Joyce's *Ulysses*, and so forth are treated as epic poems because of the large-scale treatment of the subject matter. Georg Lukács, Hungarian Marxist philosopher, further uses the term bourgeois epic for all the novels that talk about the social reality of their capitalist age on a broad scale. Lukács said that 'the novel is the epic of a world that has been abandoned by God'.

Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey*

The study of a Western epic will have to start with Homer's epic either *Iliad* or *Odyssey*. In this section, we will look at *Iliad* and the model that it has provided for the later writers to follow.

Iliad is a sustained song of around sixteen thousand lines written in dactylic hexameter. The poem invokes the muses for the successful completion of the poem. Muses in Greek mythology are the nine goddesses, who are the daughters of Zeus and Mnemosyne, and who preside over art and science. They not only act as the poet's inspiration but also give an authoritative tone to the entire poem. The same pattern applies to *Odyssey* as well.

Iliad begins with the *Song of Ilium* and, thus, the audience in its very first line is introduced to Achilles' anger. The hero is a figure of great national importance. He is the Greek warrior and demigod Achilles, who is the son of the sea nymph Thetis and mortal Peleus. In *Odyssey*, the poet talks about the wanderings of Odysseus after he leaves the shore of Troy after winning the battle back to his home in Ithaca.

The setting of the epic has a similar magnitude. It takes in its purview the entire world. *Iliad* talks about a world war like scenario in which all the nation states in and around the Aegean (Mediterranean) sea participated. In *Odyssey* also, the hero's journey covers the entire Mediterranean sea and the places surrounding

it. He even goes to the underworld to understand the meaning of life and ultimately finds a safe way home.

The hero's action is also larger than life. The hero performs superhuman deeds or undertakes risks which require supernatural powers to survive. Achilles in *Iliad* kills numerous Trojan soldiers so much so that the river turns red with their blood. Further, he even wounds a goddess. The way in which Odysseus overcomes the hurdles placed by the one-eyed giant Polyphemus, how he gets away from the tricks of Circe are all examples of his superhuman abilities and finally, how he returns home even after he is opposed by gods and goddesses is very impressive in the poem.

The use of the supernatural element is a distinctive feature of epics. The gods take an active part in the lives of the mortals. For instance, in *Iliad*, there are gods and goddesses who take sides of the two armies.

Apart from these epic features, there are so many aspects which are a part of the oral traditional epics and these are as follows:

- *Iliad* follows a ring structure, that is the first and last book has similar events.
- In *Iliad*, words, phrases and sometimes entire passages are repeated by different characters in different scenes. For example, Agamemnon sends Odysseus to Achilles to bring him back to the war. In this scene, Agamemnon asks Odysseus to make certain promises which are repeated by Odysseus to Achilles.
- There are type scenes in *Iliad*. Type scenes are typical scene, that is, there are events that tend to recur and whenever similar events are described it follows a set pattern. For example, when a duel is described, first the participants give a proposal to fight, it is followed by a verbal fight, then different arms are hurled in a sequence and finally one of them is hit brutally and dies.
- The events in *Iliad* follow a minor to major parallelism. This implies that the intensity of the events increases and reaches a culmination in the last books. For example, there are so many duels fought in *Iliad*. It starts with Paris and Menelaus and culminates with Achilles and Hector.

Virgil's *The Aeneid*

Virgil's *The Aeneid* is an example of a literary epic. Virgil was asked to write a grand epic to celebrate the glory of the Augustan age in Rome by Emperor Augustus. He took Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey* as his template and created an epic that surpasses both of them and created an example for others to follow. But he could not complete the epic and in his death bed he wished the manuscript to be burnt. But it was his friend and patron, Maecenas, who did not follow the last wish of Virgil and kept the manuscript for posterity. Just like other traditional epics, Virgil's Aeneas, the hero of the epic, is the son of the goddess Aphrodite. He was prophesied to be the founder of the new Troy which he set out to build and finally laid the foundation of the Roman Empire.

The entire poem is written in spondee hexameter of almost twelve thousand lines. He also starts with the invocation to the muse and then begins to tell about the wanderings of the hero and the war that he has fought for building the empire. Virgil asks the muses for help to complete the long narrative poem. Like Homer's *Iliad*, *The Aeneid* has two invocations—first in book I and second in book VII.

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The poem starts in *media res* at a critical point in the action. Aeneid does not start in the beginning of things. He has already wandered for twelve years and reaches Carthage his penultimate stop where he narrates his wanderings to Dido, the queen of Carthage. He starts with the fall of Troy and how the Greeks treacherously defeat the Trojans because they could not win by force. Then in the fifth book, he moves into the present state of affairs. He goes on to describe Aeneas' travel through the underworld where he learns about his destiny.

The story of the epic, as we have noted, is associated with war or adventure. In the case of *The Aeneid*, it is associated with both war and adventure. The first line of the poem itself talks about it 'Of arms and the man I sing'. Out of the twelve books, the first six books talk about Aeneas' adventure through the Mediterranean for twelve years and the last six books talk about a great war fought between Aeneas' allies and Turnus' allies.

The epic talks about several legendary heroes. In *The Aeneid*, this happens in the seventh book where there is an entire catalogue of the allies of Turnus. This is a significant feature of the epic and so Virgil invokes the muses again. Further, Aeneas is a demigod and his actions will result in the building of the Roman Empire that will change the course of the entire human history.

The Aeneid is also full of epithets like Pius Aeneas, graceful Turnus, and so forth. He also uses epic similes. In one such example, the author compares Aeneas and Turnus with bull fighting for the female which is an extended simile.

Chaucer's *The Canterbury Tales*

Though *The Canterbury Tales* cannot be considered as a true epic, yet it has incorporated several features of an epic. This is also a long narrative poem written in iambic pentameter. The Prologue contains the list of heroes in the poem. All the twenty-nine people are described in detail in this poem. This poem is about a group of pilgrimages visiting Canterbury. The invocation is not there in the traditional sense but you can see that the poem starts with the mention of the April showers and the wind blowing on the earth which is symbolic of the blessings of God.

Milton's *Paradise lost*

John Milton's *Paradise Lost* can be seen as the true English literary epic. He has used blank verse in this poem. It is a long poem and comprises approximately twelve books of ten thousand lines.

The author starts the epic by stating his argument, or the epic theme. He further invokes the muses to inspire him in his great task of writing. Nevertheless, for Milton the muses are not the Greek daughters of Zeus but the Christian Holy spirit who inspired Moses and other biblical characters. The muse is addressed with the epic question, the answer to which provides the inaugural beginning of the poem.

Just like the earlier lines, the narrative starts in *medias res*. The angels are hurled to hell and he is trying to gather his scattered forces and to determine the path of revenge in the beginning of the poem. Beginning with Book V and right through Book VII, the author through the medium of the angel Raphael, narrates to Adam the events in heaven which have led to this particular situation.

In the first book, we are presented with the catalogue of the principal characters. These characters are described through various means. They are often

given set speeches that reveal their diverse temperaments and moral attitudes; for example, the debate in Pandemonium, Book II.

Milton's epic is not narrow in terms of space and time. Although its action focuses on the temptation and Fall of Man, yet it encompasses a broad time span from the creation till the end of the world. Likewise, the spatial scope of *Paradise Lost* is also very vast. The actions in heaven, the revolt in heaven by the rebel angels against God, are narrated to us; we see action on earth that is Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden, in hell where Satan gives his great speech.

The hero of the poem possesses superhuman qualities. According to some critics, the heroes are Adam and Eve, who are the progenitors of the entire human race. If we regard Christ as the protagonist, He is both God and man. If we regard Satan as the hero, then he is an angel. The war is between God and Satan. Satan uses human beings as his arms. The journey and adventure related to journey can be seen in the journey of Satan through chaos to discover the newly created world of human beings.

An epic poem is a ceremonial performance and is narrated in a ceremonial style, which is deliberately distanced from ordinary speech and proportional to the grandeur and formality of the heroic subject and architecture. Hence, Milton's grand style is the use of formal diction and stylized syntax, which are largely based on Latin poetry.

Locke's the Rape of the Lock

The Rape of the Lock written by Alexander Pope is a famous mock-heroic poem. A mock epic or mock-heroic poem is a kind of parody which imitates, in a sustained way, both the elaborate form and the ceremonious style of the epic genre, but applies it to narrate a commonplace or trivial subject matter. In a masterpiece of this type, *The Rape of the Lock* (1714), Alexander Pope views through the grandiose epic perspective a quarrel which takes place between two families, the Petre and Fermor families over the theft of a lady's curl. The poem includes such elements of traditional epic such as the use of supernatural element, a voyage on board ship, a visit to the underworld, and a heroically scaled battle between the sexes.

To conclude, we can say that the epic genre is divided into two types, traditional and literary. The traditional epic provided some features that the later literary writers tried to incorporate in their works. As epic is an elaborate poem written in a stylised language, not many writers have employed this form unlike the sonnet. Nonetheless, there are many renowned epics written in the English language.

5.3.3 Ballad

A ballad is a song that tells a story. It was traditionally sung orally and hence it is either called a folk ballad or traditional ballad. These narrative pieces were composed by a single author and sung to all types (literate and illiterate) of people. Traditionally, these songs were transmitted orally and as a result, the subsequent generation of singers have introduced several changes in these ballads. Most often the ballad is set to music and has a refrain (a repeated chorus). Ballads have a long history and are found in many cultures. The story mentioned in the poem is usually a folk story or a popular story derived from a tragic incident that has happened in the society.

A typical ballad consists of a quatrain that is a four line stanza. The first and the third lines will be in tetrameter in iambic foot and the second and fourth lines

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will be in trimeter iambic foot. That is, they usually have eight or six syllables in a line, where the even numbered syllables will be stressed. Similarly, the rhyme scheme is often ‘abcb’ because of the musical quality of this rhyme pattern, that is, only the second and fourth line will rhyme. This is called the ballad meter or ballad stanza. This is even followed in the literary ballads. An example from *Lord Thomas and Fair Annet*:

‘O art thou blind, Lord Thomas?’ she said,
 ‘Or canst thou not very well see?
 Or dost thou not see my own heart’s blood
 Runs trickling down my knee?’

Some of the other features of a ballad are listed as follows:

- A ballad is dramatic, condensed, and impersonal.
- A ballad begins with a brief description or introduction and tells the story without self-reference or the expression of personal attitudes or feelings.
- Formulas (repeated words, phrases, sentences) are also used in the ballad to help the singer remember the course of the song. Some of the examples are stock descriptive phrases, a refrain in each stanza and incremental repetition, in which a line or stanza is repeated, but with an addition that advances the story.

Like the traditional epic, the traditional ballad has greatly influenced the form and style of literary ballad. The literary ballad imitates the form, language, and spirit of the traditional ballad.

While ballads have always been popular, it was during the Romantic movement of poetry in the late eighteenth century that the ballad resurfaced and became a popular form. Many famous Romantic poets, like William Wordsworth, wrote in the ballad form. Now we will look at two of the most famous English ballads one by Keats and the other by Coleridge.

La Belle Dame sans Merci

John Keats’s poem *La Belle Dame sans Merci* is a typical example of a literary ballad as it follows the typical example of a ballad. The poem is divided into twelve quatrains that follow the rhyme scheme of ‘abcb’. In each quatrain, the first three lines are of iambic tetrameter and the last line an iambic trimeter, which is just about the traditional ballad meter. This gives the impression that each stanza is self-contained and gives it a slow movement.

*O what can ail thee, knight-at-arms,
 Alone and palely loitering?
 The sedge has withered from the lake,
 And no birds sing.*

There are multiple voices in the poem like the narrator—a knight—the lady his beloved who is extremely beautiful and a person who is asking the narrator what happened. None of them are identified in the poem, in keeping with the ballad tradition. The ballad opens with the questions put up to the knight. This stanza is repeated in the twelfth stanza as the refrain. But the refrain has some minor variations and is an answer to the question in the first stanza. This gives the poem

a good enclosure by bringing the poem back to the beginning. This repetition also emphasises the fate of the unfortunate knight.

The ballad talks about the man who is wandering in the cold hills. He narrates how he was guided by the girl without mercy to that hill like many other men and left alone. The landscape and the trees also represent the inner feelings of the knight.

*The sedge has withered from the lake,
And no birds sing.*

The entire story is written in a simple language with repetitions and absence of any kind of detail. This is a typical storytelling tradition of the ballad, along with the strong but impersonal emotions therein. Here, the poet shows how the narrator forgets everything in the arms of the beautiful lady.

*She found me roots of relish sweet,
And honey wild, and manna-dew,
And sure in language strange she said—
'I love thee true'.*

The following lines talk about the beautiful lady who can enchant any man like Circe in the Greek tradition. But, in the end, she leaves them alone because she enjoys doing it.

*I saw pale kings and princes too,
Pale warriors, death-pale were they all;
They cried—'La Belle Dame sans Merci
Hath thee in thrall!'*

This poem also talks about an encounter that has given the narrator both pleasure and pain. Some critics see it as Keats' rebellion towards pain associated with love. The reason for the death of the person is not mentioned in the poem. It is left to the imagination of the reader. It can be a warning to obsessions as well, be it love or drug or anything else.

*And there she lulled me asleep,
And there I dreamed—Ah! woe betide!—
The latest dream I ever dreamt
On the cold hill side.
The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*

Another famous ballad is *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner* written by Samuel Taylor Coleridge. This tells the story of a mariner who has returned from a long and arduous journey and shares the terrible events encountered by him on the sea. This poem has a much longer and a much more elaborate plot than the typical folk ballads. But he opens the ballad with an abrupt and impersonal third-person narration of the traditional ballad. The old sailor narrates the story to one of the three guests who were going to a wedding.

*It is an ancient Mariner,
And he stoppeth one of three.
The sailor grabs the attention of the guest by his hypnotic eyes.
He holds him with his glittering eye—
The Wedding-Guest stood still,
And listens like a three years' child:
The Mariner hath his will.*

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He then tells his sad but horrific journey on the ship and how it got caught in the winds and went astray to the Antarctic. He tells them how an albatross guided them to safety from the icebergs that trapped the ship. Then suddenly the sailor decided to shoot the albatross.

*With my cross-bow,
I shot the albatross.*

At first, the sailors were against the mariner but seeing that there is light wind and the ship is moving in the right direction they changed their mind and supported the mariner.

*'Twas right, said they, such birds to slay,
That bring the fog and mist.*

But suddenly the winds changed their direction and the ship is in trouble again. They understood their mistake in supporting the mariner in shooting the albatross. The sailors now started blaming the mariner for shooting the albatross. The sailors tie the albatross on the neck of the sailor blaming him for the bad things that are happening on the ship.

*Ah! Well a-day! What evil looks
Had I from old and young!
Instead of the cross, the albatross
About my neck was hung.*

The ship is near the equator and they have again lost their way on the sea. The ship reaches a place where there are so many slimy creatures. The sailors are not able to continue as the provisions on the ship have also exhausted. All the soldiers except the ancient mariner die of thirst.

*Water, water, every where,
And all the boards did shrink;
Water, water, every where,
Nor any drop to drink.*

Finally, after a troubled journey of seven days and night, he is saved when he blesses the snakes. He appreciates their beauty and he thanks and praises God. Suddenly, the albatross that was on the neck falls down ending the curse. The sailors who were dead rise in good spirit and steer the ship towards safety. Now, he wants to do penance and that is why he wants to talk to them who will guide him in his prayers. After he narrates the entire story, he goes back home. The guest who was stopped does not feel like going to the wedding anymore and he also returns and wakes up the next morning as a wiser man.

*He went like one that hath been stunned,
And is of sense forlorn:
A sadder and a wiser man,
He rose the morrow morn.*

A ballad like an epic has an oral origin. However, later writers have adapted it to form a literary genre. They all follow the same tradition of storytelling in a simple and impersonal tone.

5.3.4 Satire

Satire is a literary genre which makes use of humour, exaggeration, ridicule or irony to criticize a particular topic in the context of contemporary issues. Poetry is seen as a powerful vehicle for satire. Romans were the ones who used satirical poetry very effectively for different purposes. Though primarily a literary device, it can also be seen in other art forms as well. It evokes in the reader feelings of amusement, contempt, scorn, or indignation towards the subject.

The practitioners of this form had vehemently justified it by saying that it is a corrective measure of human vice and folly. For example, Alexander Pope said that ‘those who are ashamed of nothing else are so of being ridiculous’.

Satire can be divided into direct satire and indirect satire. In a direct satire, the speaker is the first person and addresses the reader of a character in the text itself. Horace and Juvenal are pioneers in the use of this type of satire. Horace uses a speaker who is characterized as an urbane, witty, and tolerant man of the world. He is often moved to ironic amusement than to indignation at the spectacle of human folly, pretentiousness, and hypocrisy. The poem uses a relaxed and informal language to evoke from readers a wry smile at human failings and absurdities—sometimes including his own. Horace described his aim as ‘to laugh people out of their vices and follies’. In Juvenalian satire, on the other hand, the speaker is characterized by a high moralist seriousness. He uses a dignified and public style of utterance to criticize modes of vices and errors which are no less dangerous because they are ridiculous, and who undertakes to evoke from readers contempt, moral indignation, or an unillusioned sadness at the aberrations of humanity.

In indirect satire, there is no direct address to the reader or the person addressed. The most common indirect form is that of a fictional narrative, in which the objects of the satire are characters who make themselves and their opinions ridiculous or obnoxious by what they think, say, and do, and are sometimes made even more ridiculous by the author’s comments and narrative style.

Absalom and Achitophel

Absalom and Achitophel was written by John Dryden. It was published anonymously in 1681. This is a political satire. In this poem, the poet craftily uses the story of the rebellion of Absalom against King David described in the Bible as the basis for discussion of the background to the Popish Plot (1678), the Exclusion Crisis (1679–1681), and the Monmouth Rebellion (1685). In the biblical history, Absalom who is the son of David, rose in revolt against him. He is guided by the advice of Achitophel who was the trusted adviser of David but rebelled against him. But Hushai, another advisor of David, helped him contain the rebellion. In the end, Absalom dies hanging by his hair from an oak tree.

Dryden’s poem tells the story of the first provocation. In the poem, Monmouth is portrayed as Absalom, the beloved boy; Charles is portrayed as David and Shaftesbury as Achitophel. The poem places most of the blame for the rebellion on Shaftesbury and makes Charles a very reluctant and loving man who has to be king. The poem also refers to the uproar of the Popish Plot.

Dryden’s *Absalom and Achitophel* has various levels of meaning. It talks about the relationship between fatherhood and son. It shows how self-indulgent

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love creates unfair conflict. Also, it can be read in the backdrop of feminism and how female power threatens political power.

...for several mothers bore
To god-like David, several sons before.
But since like slaves his bed they did ascend,
No true succession could their seed attend.

Next, it can be read as an argument on the renaissance idea of the superiority of children born out of wedlock.

whether, inspired by some diviner lust,
Mac Flecknoe

John Dryden who was a Tory, in 1682 wrote *Mac Flecknoe*, subtitled ‘A Satire on the True Blue Protestant Poet, T.S’. (which is a reference to Thomas Shadwell). *Mac Flecknoe* while representing a permanent type of the pretentious poetaster specifically satirized the living author Thomas Shadwell.

Here in this poem, Dryden portrays Shadwell as a bad writer with bad taste. In this poem, he uses the mock heroic style, tremendous wit and hysterical hyperbole. He uses all these to create an inflated tone to parody the subject.

Let them be all of thy own Model made
Of Dulness; and desire no Forreign Aid,

The opening of the poem has an epic grandeur and creates a feeling that his subject is also a heroic figure. Dryden makes allusions towards two of Thomas Shadwell’s plays, *Epsom Wells* and *The Virtuoso*. He also satirises the metrical feet and rhyme scheme used by Shadwell in one of his poems *Psyche*.

And big with Hymn, Commanders of an Host,
The like was ne’re in *Epsom Blankets Tost*.

The poet is seen arriving in the beginning of the poem. The water is full of filth. All the people are happy to see him except for another contemporary poet who is envious of the fact that he is not chosen as the successor to the throne. Dryden states that the realm in which Shadwell rules is very small and he is ruling over people who are not at all educated.

This *Flecknoe* found, who like Augustus young,
Was call’d to Empire, and had Govern’d long;
In Prose and Verse was own’d without Dispute,
Through all the Realms of Nonsense, Absolute;

The poem ends with the old king descending the throne. The new king Shadwell is more devoid of wit than his predecessors. This is how Dryden concludes his satire.

Satire in English has been written in every period beginning with the Middle Ages. But it was during the Restoration and eighteenth century that the satire reached its zenith. The names of those who wrote satires include Dryden, the Earl of Rochester, Samuel Butler, Wycherley, Aphra Behn, Addison, Pope, Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, Swift, Gay, Fielding, Johnson, Oliver Goldsmith, Robert Burns and William Blake. However, the twentieth century is also rich in satirical works.

Check Your Progress

4. Name one famous epic poem written by Edmund Spenser.
5. List any two essential criteria of an epic poem.
6. Define a ballad.

5.4 DRAMATIC MONOLOGUE

The dramatic monologue is a prominent genre of Victorian poetry. It is considered the most significant innovation of the age, rather we can say that it highlights the age. It has been widely used by a number of poets like Alfred Tennyson, Algernon Swinburne, Felicia Hemans and Augusta Webster. Its use continued throughout the twentieth century, influencing poets, both British and American, from T. S. Eliot and Ezra Pound to Peter Porter and Richard Howard.

Dramatic monologue is a kind of poem in which a single fictional or historical character other than the poet speaks to a silent ‘listener’ of one or more persons. Through dramatic monologues, the poet’s own thoughts and the mind of the impersonated character are revealed. Although dramatic monologue was practiced by Tennyson and Arnold, it was developed and perfected by Robert Browning. Major examples of this form in English are Tennyson’s *Ulysses* (1842), Browning’s *Fra Lippo Lippi* (1855) and T. S. Eliot’s *The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock* (1917). These poems have theatrical quality. In dramatic monologues, the speaker is talking to someone who is a mute listener but the speaker expresses his point of view, psychology. The speaker may or may not be telling the truth but he is trying to convince someone of something. Sometimes what the speaker does not say is just as revealing and interesting as what he or she does say in the poem. The speaker reveals his/her character and motives to the reader, while remaining unaware that he is doing so. Robert Browning is the master of dramatic monologues. *My Last Duchess*, *The Last Ride Together*, *The Lost Mistress* are his famous monologues. The lover is very upset as all is over between him and his beloved in *The Lost Mistress*; he begins,

*All’s over, then: does truth sound bitter
As one at first believes?
Hark, ’tis the sparrows’ good-night twitter
About your cottage eaves!*

There is always an abrupt and dramatic opening in such monologues; colloquial expressions are used by the speaker. The lover is talking to his beloved at rejection of his love by her. The reader can also visualize the setting before his eyes; this is the hallmark of a dramatic monologue.

The monologue aims not so much to proclaim its subject matter but to build up the character of the speaker. Browning’s monologues characteristically consist of nonstop narrative spoken by a single character to a definite listener. It is the character created by the poet who is speaking his thoughts and not the poet himself. Browning’s characters are just like real live human beings with complicated personal histories. Each dramatic monologue has the following characteristics:

1. The whole poem is spoken by a person other than the poet in a particular situation. For example the Duke in *My Last Duchess* bargains with an agent for a second wife.
2. This persona addresses and interacts with one or more other people but we know of the auditor’s presence and what they say and do only from clues from the discourse of the single speaker.

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- The monologue is so organized that its focus is on the temperament and character that the dramatic speaker unintentionally reveals in the course of what he says.

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Of course there are clear disadvantages of the dramatic monologue as well. The very fact that the narrative perspective is so limited can make the poems appear frivolous and unnecessarily light-hearted given the dark subject matter (murder and/or madness, prostitution and poverty). Browning is especially known for dramatic monologues which certainly hide the intentions of the author just as much as they hide the intentions of the speakers. For example, in *My Last Duchess*, we ask ourselves, if Browning is making a serious statement about the treatment of women in Victorian Italy.

5.5 DRAMA

Drama is an ancient form of art written in prose or verse accompanied by various tools and techniques meant to be staged. It is unlike poetry or prose. It is an art dependent on many other tools unlike a written text which has to do with words only.

Plays, on the contrary, involve ‘multiple art, using words, scenic effects, music, the gestures of the actors, and the organizing talents of a producer’ (*A Short History of English Literature*). It is written with the purpose of presenting a fiction or reality in front of people. Its main objective is successful representation of a plot to be viewed by audience. Therefore, the textual portion in a drama is always dependent on love and acceptance of the viewers.

An essential quality of drama is its objectivity. A play whether divided into acts or not, has plot, characters, background, theme, dramatic unities, techniques and so on. Besides them all, it must aim to please its audience and has to be acted by people in public. Its duration is short and everything has to produce an exemplary effect within the few hours on stage in a play: drama is ‘a composite art, in which the author, the actor, and the stage manager all combine to produce the total effect’.

A play must seek perfect economy in the choice of words, actions, deliverers of those actions, time, and place, so that all may synthesize into bringing the desired end or effect. The novelist’s art is leisurely, but the dramatist’s art is too strategic to escape his limitations. He is always handicapped. His is a weaver’s hand because a play is shaped by both internal and external agencies.

A playwright cannot speak his emotions directly; he has to use his characters to express them. The action has to be divided into the share of some characters and every character must act the intended way to achieve the expected end. Then only a drama would be successful. The dramatist’s identity, behaviour, character and feelings need not be seeking direct expression. He has to maintain complete objectivity and impersonality.

In England, as a form of literary art, drama began in the Middle Ages. However, it is difficult to trace the exact period of its beginning in the English scene. When the Romans came to England, they set up huge amphitheatres and certainly, plays were being acted in those times. As the Romans left, the culture too came to a standstill. In the Middle Ages minstrels, clowns and tumblers used to sing long heroic poems or epics or ballads in praise of the court. They acted. Even their costumes were motley ones and were easily recognised as those welcomed figures at ceremonies, public places, the king’s court, or anywhere. They used to boost the morale and passionately

Check Your Progress

- What is a dramatic monologue?
- Name some prominent dramatic monologues written in English literature.

moved all those who heard them: it could be also traced as the inception of drama, yet it was not an organized establishment.

Undoubtedly, there has been an intricate relation between Christianity and plays when it comes to trace the origin or genesis of drama in England. In medieval England, the minstrels at church used to act stories from the Bible after the sessions of sermons would be over. It was done in order to entertain and impart on people the religious sentiments. Drama at this stage was acted and managed by the minstrels and clerics. The common cult of drama was not accepted by the then church and court because it exuded the message of too much freedom in the society, hence the Roman theatres were closed and condemned. Later on this style of acting by a person or two from church developed into a group of people consisting of priests and choir-boys acting biblical themes enthusiastically with words and chorus. These 'liturgical dramas' based on the birth of Christ developed as supporting church and the church promoted them on several festive occasions beside its normal proceedings. Liturgical plays used religious spectacles as their themes. Although church has been the authority to re-establish drama, soon it was felt that the interest in plays were larger than being restricted merely under the precincts of church, or considering it a mere religious activity. Dramatic enterprise proliferated. It also entailed the element of comic and variegated attires.

In England, if we go by the chronology, such religious plays have been valued as the greatest part of the national tradition and culture. They also became precursors of 'Morality' and 'Mystery plays'. In the Morality plays, people acted as virtues and vices. These plays were written by religious authors or church clerics. 'Everyman' is regarded as the most popular Morality play till the late fifteenth century. The Morality plays were based on religious lessons and they developed naturally. They mirrored genuine truth and realism and evoked pathos. In style and treatment, they were direct and sincere.

Between the proceedings of the church, a new birth of short and direct play was acknowledged, called the 'Interludes'. These Interludes were also based on the popular themes like the morality plays, but they were not allegorical in nature. Most of the times these Interludes were enacted to entertain the gentries of the period. These Interludes often slipped into depicting a theme, which was not a biblical narrative. 'Fulgens and Lucrez' is an example of such an Interlude, but it is quite developed in its plot-construction. An Interlude had more entertaining dialogues, less number of characters, small plot and interesting stories to woo its audience. Especially, meant for the Tudor families, these Interludes were the combination of rough humour, complicated action, little instruction where happenings were mostly 'sudden and unexpected.'

At the same time, the English soil was witnessing the production of a new type of drama called 'Miracle plays,' the newest in growth of its kind. It was a forceful say which paved way for the modern drama that culminated into the productions contributed by the University Wits and Shakespeare. It is surprising and strange how native English drama, that started from the clerics acting in the outer precincts of a church, developed into Morality, Interludes and Mystery plays gaining the beauty as well as gaiety of essence, theme, structure, the dramatic unities, the various kinds, pathos, irony, humour and the art of sublimation in the hands of Marlowe and Shakespeare!

Probably the development of drama owed its growth to new scholars from the universities in England and the Renaissance, which forcefully pushed the active and

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ambitious minds to explore and inculcate the classical literature. The University Wits enunciated the art of drama in the forms of tragedy and comedy both with innovation and tradition in the Elizabethan Age. Then Shakespeare's Age followed together with Ben Jonson's 'comedy of humours'. The Restoration comedy of manners followed next, which tended to be on the verge of obscene, vulgar and socially disreputable that raised brows of common men, especially the Puritans.

Again drama developed its pace in the eighteenth century with Johnson's historical plays, but they were not that recognizable as their predecessors. In the twentieth century, William Butler Yeats brought drama back innovating the Irish theatre exploring the medieval age with Celtic undercurrents, and many followed his trend.

George Bernard Shaw and Thomas Stearns Eliot were two major twentieth century figures who used drama to convey their ideas, exploring different themes. Twentieth century theatre introduced many new styles and trends in modern drama from all over the world. In the twentieth century English drama, trends dominated, which were subtle and thought-stimulating such as realism and myth introduced by the psychological studies inspired by Sigmund Freud and Carl Jung (his theory of collective unconscious). With the insight of psychology, they expressed myth and 'a poetic form of realism' based on the search conducted by these two psychologists. They mention and aim at truth common to all humans.

Yeats and Synge with Lady Gregory aimed to portray and develop poetic realism describing the Irish peasant life. The audience did not accept their themes with a pleasant nod and their concept of poetic realism was doubtfully questioned by the spectators.

Following the steps of the Norwegian playwright Henrik Ibsen, who created drama of ideas by using realism, George Bernard Shaw discovered the 'problem play' or 'drama of ideas' in England, where he picked up social issues or drawbacks and tried to give solution to them. It was Shaw who stressed on emancipation of women and promoted the thought of raising the importance of women in our lives rather than treating them as subordinate members of our society. Surprisingly, he himself preferred to stay single.

After the First World War, political theatre became a trend where social and political issues and propaganda became vehicles to reach the masses. The Women's Rights Movement of the 1930s was voiced by 'agitprop', which was a renowned political theatre. The Dada Movement was related to First World War. Ibsen's idea of 'realism' was related to representation of human behaviour as it was seen in real life: it mirrored the society that a human being observed, what we call the human nature. Such a play concentrated on the present and described every strata of population rather than idealizing or worshipping a hero. They picked up characters from normal life focusing on any gender, race or strata of the society.

Plays depicting social realism having backdrop of the First World War dealt with political consciousness describing rural poverty caused by the lack of right governing system where a class was too rich and the other was levied with heavy taxation resulting in economic depression. Shaw became its chief exponent.

Samuel Beckett's *Theatre of the Absurd* introduced the existentialist theory that abstract existence played great role in life above everything in it. This type of drama in being was essentially poetic and full of imagination and exhibited the

downplay of language. This theatre gave birth to many other types of drama like ‘Symbolism, Surrealism, Dadaism, Drama of Cruelty, Expressionism, and so on’.

Dadaism was a protest against colonialism and the subsequent First World War in most of the European nations. It was a movement carried by those literary artists who opposed nationalism. Dadaists were ‘anti-art’ or avant-garde who went against expressing too pleasing an art or value. There were mainly French, Swiss and German writers involved in this movement. Major dramatists like Yeats to Pinter were an inseparable part of the Symbolist or Aesthetic Movement in theatre. They used underlined symbolism as their plot or structure of a play. From plot to stage everything used to be stylised in a specific mood. The movement took surge in the beginning of the twentieth century to influence all the later generations which followed them.

Surrealist Movement was next to the Aesthetic Movement. Both these trends were founded in the mystic. Surrealist Movement changed the stage set up like the Symbolist Movement. In it, action sounded louder and words were downplayed. Such plays exhibited unsurmised happenings and surprise. Samuel Beckett was an outstanding surrealist. *Theatre of Cruelty* portrays ‘representational medium’ and is focussed on dealing with the current situations. They took the responsibility of ‘presenting’ and ‘representing’ both.

The art of ‘expressionism’ in theatre was the gift of the German playwrights. It either gave short, straight sentences, or long, and poetical speeches. Such plays would not specify names of characters and dealt with current reality looking forward to a safe and happy future, rather it aimed to incorporate ‘spiritual awakening’ presenting plot in various episodes.

The modernist approach of Bertold Brecht came up with ‘epic theatre’ with rejection of realistic theatre. He took inspiration from the Greek form of epic poetry for epic theatre. Jacobus describes it as a dramatic vision arrayed with ‘stark, harsh lighting, black stages, placards announcing changes of scenes, bands playing music onstage, and long, discomfiting pauses.’ Brecht applied that a play must signify to the audience as its own rather than alienating them to feel detached while watching it. He thought epic theatre plays would relate to people as their part, and be not just its silent spectators. Its theme would be theirs rather than a remote sense or relation to them. It often aimed at presenting a social issue.

5.5.1 Tragedy

The definition and genesis of tragedy goes back to the classical literature of Greece. Aristotle, the master-craftsmen, is held as the father and preceptor of ‘classical tragedy’. Tragedy is a form of drama. ‘Tragedy is the imitation of an action that is serious, and also, as having magnitude, complete in itself...with incidents arousing pity and terror, with which to accomplish its purgation of these emotions.’ (Aristotle, *Poetics*, 6). The origin of drama looks back to the period between 600 and 400 BC. It was during this period that poetry and drama both blossomed: both being complex art forms: both carving enormity of brilliance ever after. The most important dramatists of this period were Aeschylus (525–456 BC), Sophocles (496–406 BC), Aristophanes (448–380 BC) and Euripides (484–406 BC). They are considered the pillars of Greek concept of art called drama. It is said the drama was conceived from the ‘songs and dances of ancient rites and religious festivals connected to the seasons.’

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Tragedy sprouted in Athens many years ago and has its base in the choral poetry. It is a Greek concept that Dionysius, the god of nature, died and took rebirth in a cycle each year. Thus, they performed a chorus in the form of hymn to pay tribute to him, named 'dithyramb'. Aristotle described that tragedy was born from this dithyramb, played by a solo actor called Thespis. The story goes that Thespis began to converse with dithyramb. The contextual meaning of the word tragedy is 'goat-song.' This goat was taken as a gift for that song.

Aeschylus, the great dramatist, was the one who initiated the art of tragedy in classical literature. He is taken as the original founder of European play. The subjects of his plays were man's relations with God and man's roles here on earth. His plays carried moral values and judgments profoundly. He produced around ninety plays among them seventy-nine are available in title and seven are expected to be existing too. His renowned drama is *Prometheus Bound* followed by a trilogy called *Oresteia*. Aeschylus's gift to the drama was addition of a second actor and reduction in the size of chorus.

Sophocles wrote more than hundred dramas among which only seven are available under these names Ajax (450 BC), Antigone (442 BC), Oedipus Rex (425 BC) and Electra (409 BC). Aeschylus was writing in the period of Greece's Golden Age of democracy, and Sophocles was the product of its climax. Euripides was the youngest among this famous trio of tragic Greek playwrights. As Sophocles added cry over man's fall, while exalting over the resumption of his spirit, Euripides portrayed common human beings with exceptional delineation and extraordinary sympathy, especially for the female.

Tragedy was chiefly concerned with men of importance and it voiced their downfall. But Euripides wrote tragedies and introduced 'tragi-comedies' varying into different types which can be aptly named romantic plays, melodrama or extreme comedies. His famous dramas are *Medea*, *Bacchae*, *The Trojan Women*, *Hecuba*, *Ion*, *Iphigenia in Tauris*, *The Phoenician Women* and *Andromache* beside other two portrayals of ghastliness and dementia called 'Electra and Orestes'.

Apart from Greece, the gift of tragedy travels from the ancient Rome where the name of Seneca (Lucius Annaeus Seneca, 4 BC-AD 65) finds the place of the first known tragedian. His plays displayed vigorous bloodshed and the element of horror containing a lot of aspects, which technically could not be staged. It was a combination of real life happenings or elements which a stage could not represent, especially the facts related to murder, cutting into pieces, showing heavy things to be carried from one to another, and the likes.

Seneca had a multiple persona who wrote plays, poetry, satire, philosophy and was trained in rhetoric, besides being a politician. He was banished from the kingdom of Claudius in AD 41 for committing adultery with the emperor's niece, whereupon he trained Nero the strategies of statesmanship. When Nero took over as emperor, Seneca was appointed his advisor. Finding Nero not under his guidance, he preferred retirement. His students blamed him of conspiracy and forced him to commit suicide. The tragic life and death of Seneca arouse terror and pity, as they were part of his plays in abundance. The Senecan trend called 'stoicism': an approach to drama which was devised during 3rd century BC in Athens. It was a popularly applied trend in Rome from 100 BC to AD 200. Stoicism made its influence on the Christian way of thought.

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Seneca derived his inspiration from those heroic playwrights of Greece like Aeschylus, Sophocles and Euripides. In England, all his available nine plays were translated during 1559–1581 during the Renaissance and Revival. His tragedies *Medea*, *Oedipus*, *Trojan Women*, *The Phoenician Women*, *Agamemnon* and *Phaedra* were motivated by the Greek masters of the Golden Age of classical drama. The master dramatists of the Elizabethan Age have been said to have read and shown their impact on their thinking and delineation of plays. It was his structure which was massively used in the English tragedies. Seneca framed his tragedies in the following ways:

- He constructed his tragedies in five acts.
- The hero who meets tragic fall displays no sign of fear toward death, rather he bears death with a strong heart and dignified grace.
- A foreboding of death or a ‘Cloud of Evil’ is vanquished by the ‘defeat of Reason of Evil’, which yields to ‘Triumph of Evil’ and finally as seen in *The Trojan Women*.
- The stage is full of corpses at the end of the play.

It was Seneca who became the role model for the Renaissance playwrights in the development of the plot. Thomas Kyd’s the *Spanish Tragedy* (1582–92) and Christopher Marlowe’s the *Jew of Malta* (1589/90) are specimen of Senecan tragedy. The standards of tragedy define that it would portray a hero of noble belonging whose tragic fall is developed through the structure of the play. The actions of the hero may have ruining consequences, which might not be their own making.

Tragedy states the sequence from high to low. In tragedy, a wrongdoing or vice might be punished. Tragic hero is often a mighty person who is warned through a tragic end that he must not abuse his power. Classical tragedies depict kings, Gods and demi-gods.

In contrast, comedy, which is the oldest form of drama, for it began almost as early as our existence, takes ordinary characters from life. When human society designed a structure where places were allocated or assigned to people of eminence, the emergence of tragedy is stated to have taken birth. Thus, tragedy is linked with the growth of hierarchical order when man began to fight for power and position. As a result of this, they wore the attire of the powerful, claiming themselves to be the powerful judges of humanity. They took providence into their hands and manipulated it into a wrong manner to decide who is right and who is wrong.

Aristotle’s (384–322 BC) *Poetics* (335 BC) studies and evaluates Greek dramatic art and discusses tragedy in comparison to comedy or epic poetry. His estimation founded tragedy like all other types; telling that tragic poetry is a mimesis (mirror of life or imitation). He believes tragedy is a serious art which enwraps undeviated accomplishment to serve its purpose.

Poetic mimesis is an action copied as presenting it like a replica undermining universality of theme and ideals unlike history where facts are strewn on paper straightaway. Poetry is a superior art form that exults human soul. The end of tragedy is to achieve ‘catharsis’ in its viewers or readers, which must create and stimulate emotions like pity and terror. This catharsis should effect on the audience so much that they come out of theatre with a heaving heart, elevated soul and purified conscience with a heightened cognizance towards the behaviour of God and man. Catharsis is the moment in which the hero of the tragedy would suffer some dramatic and damaging change into his fortune.

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Although Aristotle himself differed from the idea of disastrous change that was how the tragic heroes would have shown as it is in the episode of Oedipus at Colonus. He divided tragedy into six main parts—fable or plot, characters, diction, thought, spectacle (scenic effect), and melody (music). The former two are the most essential characteristics of a tragic drama. He has explained and analysed these parts and their extent as well as appropriate use in his poetic at length citing instances from the classic tragic plays of the Greek masters of the Golden Era, especially Sophocles. *Poetics* also discusses the art of Aeschylus, Euripedes and many other dramatists whose works of art are extinct now. The extract below shows translation from Aristotle's *Poetics*:

Tragedy is an imitation, not of men, but of action and life, of happiness and misery. And life consists of action, and its end is a mode of activity, not a quality. Now character determines men's qualities, but it is their action that makes them happy or wretched. The purpose of action in the tragedy, therefore, is not the representation of character: character comes in as contributing to the action. Hence the incidents and the plot are the end of the tragedy; and the end is the chief thing of all. Without action there cannot be a tragedy; there may be one without character. . . . The plot, then, is the first principle, and, as it were, the soul of a tragedy: character holds the second place.

According to Aristotle, the plot of a tragic play is an abstract idea of 'an arrangement of incidents' (Chapter-6). The story is made of the incidents which are termed raw material by him. The way these raw materials shape up into incidents, which construct a cogent and well organised whole, is called a plot. He asserts that 'the first principle, then, and to speak figuratively, the soul of tragedy is the plot; and second in importance is character'.

He believed that characters add into that dramatic destiny of a tragedy, so they are agents to support the action of the plot 'by character that element in accordance with which we say that agents are of a certain type' (Chapter-6). Further, he explained that 'poets do not, therefore, create action in order to imitate character; but character is included on account of the action' (Chapter-6). Tragedy means an imitation of an action.

Aristotle paid special attention on explaining plot, which must have a beginning, middle and an end. It must be a whole. The plot, therefore, should have 'exposition, conflicts, rising action, climax, falling action and catastrophe (dénouement)' in tragedy. A plot should contain single theme which must deal with the rise and fall of the hero's fortune and all the events should support in weaving that central idea. The hero is more or less a sufferer as things are beyond his control, or not the part of his nature. This is a major difference in the modern and the ancient concept of drama as in the classic tragedy; the plot and action are designed at the cost of the protagonist whereas the modern drama explores the psychological motivation of the hero. About the emotion that his suffering should arouse, Aristotle defines: 'pity is aroused by unmerited misfortune, fear by the misfortune of a man like ourselves.' The central character should be endowed with goodness and characteristic flaws '... a man who is highly renowned and prosperous, but one who is not pre-eminently virtuous and just, whose misfortune, however, is brought upon him not by vice or depravity but by some error of judgment or frailty; a personage like Oedipus.'

The hero should not hurt the moral sentiments of the audience besides maintaining truth, his character and of stable behaviour. His characteristic weakness is called 'hamartia' by Aristotle. The protagonist's series of actions expose him

to his tragic fall. These actions might be an outcome of his thoughtlessness or ignorance or improper decision. Although a tragic hero would be of noble and high birth with greatness, his hamartia dilutes his image of perfection. He suggests the three dramatic unities: the unity of time, the unity of place and the unity of action. He also mentions various styles, techniques and dramatic devices like 'reversal' (peripeteia) and 'recognition' (anagnorisis). One by one he mentioned the other five parts of tragedy, but plot to him played the foremost role. His *Poetics* was a product of a century after the death of the classical tragedians of Greece. His time saw unexpected changes in the Greek society and art forms.

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5.5.2 English Tragic Plays

The rise of tragedy in England goes back to the Elizabethan Age when *Gorboduc* (1561) by Thomas Sackville and Thomas Norton was acted. English tragedies receive inspiration from Seneca. *Gorboduc*, the protagonist, is a mythical emperor of ancient England. This play exhibits the use of blank verse for the first time in English drama, the art, which was later developed by Christopher Marlowe.

Drama saw its massive proliferation and development in the Elizabethan England during 1585 and 1642. The demand of drama was very much in the society and every seventeenth day a new play had to be staged. The Elizabethan tragedies follow the Senecan trend of construction and treatment. At this period, drama had just come out of its religious boundaries and saw a new birth of varieties. Therefore, the playwrights imitated the art of their classical masters and perfected it in order to develop their own style. The ten available plays of Seneca were translated. Of which these three *Troas*, *Thyestes*, and *Hercules Furens* were translated by Jasper Heywood.

Based on Senecan type, Thomas Kyd wrote the *Spanish Tragedy* in blank verse, which suited the stagecraft and used the theme of horror, crime and revenge motif which inspired Shakespeare's tragedies. Christopher Marlowe (1564–93) was the last dramatist among the University Wits from Cambridge whose short tragic life yet radical brilliance created and shaped English tragedy. His major tragedies include *Tamburlaine the Great* (1587), *Doctor Faustus* (1592), the *Jew of Malta* and *Edward II*. Marlowe was ambitious and his plays amply embody this trait.

His *Tamburlaine*, a fourteenth century herdsman, gains power by being victorious over all his enemies and his lust for power becomes the reason for his tragic fall. He thrives in power, challenging God and men combined with his 'mighty line':

...the ripest fruit of all,
That perfect bliss and sole felicity,
The sweet fruition of an earthly crown.

But contrary to the Christian ideals maintained in his *Tamburlaine*, Marlowe embarked on delineating a character, *Doctor Faustus* by using a German traditional tale of a magician who sells his soul to the devil for attaining the universal knowledge. *Tamburlaine* depicts the power which is challenged by physical encounters whereas *Faustus* explores the inner, introspective and psychological depths of the theme of the lust of power. Marlowe's description of the dramatic devices such as pathos and irony at the climax of the play is considered matchless:

Ah! Faustus
Now has thou but one bare hour to live,

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*And then thou must be damned perpetually:
Stand still you ever moving spheres of heaven,
That time may cease, and midnight never come:
Fair Nature's eye, rise, rise afain, and make
Perpetual day, or let this hour be but
A year; a month, a week, or natural day,
That Faustus may repent, and save his soul
O lente lente currite noctis equi.
(O, gently gently run you horses of the night.)*

Shakespearean tragedy alone holds the foremost place in English letters of all ages as nothing surpasses it. The Elizabethan stage in the sixteenth century was studded with the oft-quoted dramas of William Shakespeare (1564–1616), an actor and shareholder in the theatre business. As a playwright, his success lay in his qualities which thematically encompassed 'loyalty and disloyalty, and their consequences on human life'. He beautifully paints human passions, and an uncommon discord between reason and feeling where, at last, reason loses its direction and fails. He describes the understanding of his art:

*And as imagination bodies forth
The forms of things unknown, the poet's pen
Turns them to shapes and gives to airy nothing
A local habitation and a name. (Act V, I, A Midsummer Night's Dream)*

He was an objective observer of human nature and his characters have freeplay of their own spirits with natural cadence of development. His characters never transcend human barriers of good and evil. They exist in a moral world. His plays were addressed to his audience and he manipulated the resources best to enrich stagecraft. His major tragedies are *Hamlet* (1603), *Macbeth* (1611), *Othello* (1604), *King Lear* (1606), *Antony and Cleopatra* (1606), and *Coriolanus* (1609). They were all written between 1600 and 1606. His *Richard II* (1595), *Richard III* (1592), *Romeo and Juliet* (1597) and *Julius Caesar* (1599) are excellent historical or romantic tragic dramas. His period of tragedy is diluted with his other genres of plays. His tragedies have powerful diction, poetical outbursts, noble characters, each shows a serious conflict of a soul caught between reason and action, and each of his heroes exhibit a frailty, or prejudice of character. The hero's action is repentant at the dénouement section. The action of his heroes decides the destiny of their country too. His tragedies are deep studies of human psyche and his poetry. His tragic hero's central action and the portrayal of the world where he moves, affects the atmosphere. His plays please different levels of audience.

Hamlet, his early tragic drama, is a self-conscious scholar prince of Renaissance who is bright, of sad temperament and contemplative. He sketches the character of a man caught between his action and overdoing of thinking. Horatio's speech at the end is full of power of imagination:

*Now cracks a noble heart. Goodnight, sweet prince,
And flights of angels sing thee to thy rest. (V, 2)*

Designed successfully for the stage, *Othello* is the story of a black moor who is too much suspicious of his wife: a white and very beautiful lady of noble being.

This weakness of his is well exploited by the villain Iago, an iconic character in the history of English dramas, who manoeuvres this frailty of the hero in such a manner that he kills his wife culminating into his suicide too, at the end of the play. And speaks of his misunderstanding pining over which he ended his life:

*When you shall these unlucky deeds relate,
Speak of me as I am; nothing extenuate,
Nor set down aught in malice: then must you speak
Of one that loved not wisely but too well;
Of one that not easily jealous, but being wrought
Purplex'd in the extreme. (V, 2)*

His poetry and artistry as a tragedian reaches the extreme of excellence and beauty in *Macbeth*. Macbeth is ambitious which makes him fall prey to avarice and subsequent murder of King Duncan provoked by his wife Lady Macbeth. He becomes the king according to the prophesies of the three witches. He kills many others to hide the secret of his first crime, while at last, he himself is slayed in the battle. His famous soliloquy is eloquent of his feeling of futility after achievements acquired by wrong manner:

*Life's but a walking shadow, a poor player
That struts and frets his hour upon the stage,
And then is heard no more. It is a tale
Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury,
Signifying nothing. (V, 5)*

King Lear, his late tragic play, is about a titular person who becomes insane after dividing his property into two parts for two of his three daughters on the basis of their flattery. His decision brings tragic end to all.

In the period that followed Shakespeare, George Chapman (1559–1634), Beaumont (1584–1616) and Fletcher (1579–1625) wrote tragedies. But the 17th century dramatists wrote tragedies of excesses and unreal world, which partly irritated a certain sect of audience. John Webster's the *White Devil* and the *Duchess of Malfi* are considered tragedies of revenge motif and excess of bloodshed. The great restoration playwright John Dryden (1631–1700) wrote heroic tragedies among which *All for Love* is a repetition of Shakespeare's theme of *Antony and Cleopatra*. However, Dryden has an exclusive gift of mastery of poetry and that is evident in his plays too. In the early 20th century, John Masefield and J. M. Synge (1871–1909) were writing tragedies beside other genres of drama. The Irish National Movement was invoked by W. B. Yeats (1865–1939), J. M. Synge, Sir James Barrie (1860–1937), and Sean O'Casey (1880–1964), writers of great ability. Synge's *Riders to the Sea* (1904) is a moving tragic play.

Norwegian playwright Henrik Ibsen has been the most stupendous force behind the twentieth century theatre. George Bernard Shaw composed a satirical tragedy which won the coveted Nobel Prize for literature *Saint Joan* (1923). Shaw was a writer of problem plays, and his *Saint Joan* is also a sequel to expose the odds of the society. However, the use of the theme of a fourteen-year old 'maid' who is sacrificed on the blames of blasphemy or anti-God statements is full of irony and pathos. The climax is terrifying and thought-provoking. Under the cover of verbal wit and raillery, Shaw dealt with a very serious theme here. His tragic play *Candida* is

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brilliant too. T. S. Eliot (1888–1965) wrote *Murder in the Cathedral* (1935), Edward Albee, Arthur Miller (USA), Eugene O’Neill, and August Strindberg (Sweden) are some of the major thinkers and tragic playwrights of the modern English drama.

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5.5.3 English Comic Plays

The word ‘comedy’ has an ancient and classical background ahead of tragedy, which means an amusing spectacle. The word is a mixture of merry-making and poet or singer. In Aristotle’s *Poetics*, he discussed comedy as ‘The passage on the nature of comedy in the *Poetics* of Aristotle is unfortunately lost, but if we can trust stray hints on the subject, his definition of comedy (which applied mainly to Menander) ran parallel to that of tragedy, and described the art as a purification of certain affections of our nature, not by terror and pity, but by laughter and ridicule.’ (Rev. J. P. Mahaffy, *A History of Classical Greek Literature*, London, 1895) Further, comedy refers to ‘The classical sense of the word, then, was “amusing play or performance,” which is similar to the modern one, but in the Middle Ages the word came to mean poems and stories generally (albeit ones with happy endings), and the earliest English sense is “narrative poem” (such as Dante’s *Commedia*). Generalized sense of “quality of being amusing” dates from 1877.’

The purpose of comedy is to ‘entertain by the fidelity with which it presents life as we know it, farce at raising laughter by the outrageous absurdity of the situation or characters exhibited, and burlesque at tickling the fancy of the audience by caricaturing plays or actors with whose style it is familiar. (Fowler)’ *Dionysos* (360–340 BC) is a famous classical Greek comedy.

Aristophanes and Menander were chief writers of comedy plays who laughed at the politicians, philosophers and their contemporary artists. The art of comedy too is based on its classical Greek structure like tragedy: the first part had chorus, music and dance in flashy costumes, which represented the characters in the play normally called ‘parodos’; and, the next phase was ‘agon’ when the main plot was exposed to the audience through verbal wit or debate; the third phase of comedy play was ‘parabasis’ when the chorus communicated directly with the viewers, and even spoke on behalf of the playwright; and, the last phase was ‘exodos’ when the chorus finished the play with another and final song and dance. The performers were professional actors who displayed a vast array of characters ranging from human to non-human representations in motley costumes and painted or masked countenances. Only two or three main actors were there in which one was the protagonist, and the others were not much significant to the plot. Classic comedy did not allow many main actors, so the actors had to carry many roles at the same time. Facial gestures, dresses and make-up were important tools to evoke fun.

Dramas in Athens were performed in the open air theatres. The stage used to be designed particularly for a comedy. The actors could enter the stage from various sides, even from the public arena. During the 5th century BC in Greece, on any festive occasion there would be a panel of ten judges to evaluate the performance of both tragedy and comedy dramas. The following is an extract from Aristophanes’s renowned comedy:

*Oh would some god, with sudden stroke,
Convert me to a cloud of smoke!
Like politicians’ words I’d rise
In gaseous vapour to the skies.*

(50, Act One, Scene One, *The Wasps* by Aristophanes)

Another extract from Aristophane shows the depth of comedy in the classical drama:

(On modern poets)

Small fry, I assure you, insignificant squeakers and twitterers, like a lot of swallows. A disgrace to their art. If ever they are granted a chorus, what does their offering at the shrine of Tragedy amount to? One cock of the hind leg and they've pissed themselves dry. You never hear of them again.

(159, Act One, Scene One, The Frogs by Aristophanes)

The difference between tragedy and comedy is that tragedy depicts the moral or heroic struggle of the protagonist ending in death or destruction whereas comedy aims to amuse through wit, ridicule, farce, satire and ends happily. Comedy exposed vices or frailties of the people or society through humour. Its end is of correction through wit and humour.

In England, Elizabethan dramatists tried their hands in the art of comedy of which the foremost name was that of poet, playwright and politician John Lyly (1553/4-1606) from Oxford. He had a natural gift for comedy which he exhibited best in his books *Euphues* or the *Anatomy of Wit* (1578) and *Euphues and His England* (1580). His style was named 'euphuism.' His chief plays include *Endymion* (1591), *Campaspe* (1584), *Sapho and Phao* (1584), *Gallathea* (1592), *Midas* (1592) and *Mother Bombie* (1594). Most of these pioneer university wits tragedies and comedies served as inspiration to the later Elizabethans, and the writers of the following generations.

Tragedy and comedy complement each other as they blend together in life. And literature is but a just representation of human existence. Shakespearean comedies are often a blend of seriousness and fun. All his comedies indicate or wear a sober thread in its plot. They often tend to be ironical or satirical about elements of life and human nature. Shakespearean comedy has brilliant diction and songs. His dialogues are interspersed with metaphors, word play and clever phraseologies. Its major theme is love and pair romance. Often the characters are disguised or they change their outward appearance to achieve what they are looking for. There are obstacles in the path of these lovers which they overcome by their wit, wisdom and cleverness. His comedies have a more complex plot with multiple threads of sequences and finally untying into a harmonious whole. The characters prove the theme of moral uprightness and virtues at the end of the story, and the evil-minded characters are made to realise that they have been on a wrong path. But all these have a polite way of moulding incidents into a single whole.

His plots for comedies are more twisted and entangled than those of his history or tragic dramas. As it is in his tragedies that none resembles the other exactly in style or pattern, similar approach can be seen in his comedy plays which are all different. Variety of plot styles are intertwined with exuberant and copious flow of twirls in the structure to keep the audience excited and always in wait for the next moment. Usually, the climax of the drama takes place in its third act and the final scene makes the lovers accept or declare their love for each other. The characters, most of the times, hide their identities and feign some other name and role throughout the play cascading into different streams until they meet the final sea and reveal themselves to be what they are in reality. Virtue always leads the play and keeps a watch over cunning as well as deceitful characters. These tricks of false characters are played in order to avoid the schemes and plotting of the villains. For example, the plot of

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As You Like It drives all the important characters into the forest of Arden where they stay in disguised until the cloud of villainy is blown away by the auspicious wind and everything is fine.

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Not only that, his female protagonists are specially clever in his comedies and tragi-comedies, who by their sheer wit, clever understanding of the facts, precaution, and wise manipulations of the situation at hand keeping an eye over future, turn the drama into perfect end. His chief comedies are *Twelfth Night*, *As You Like It*, *Love's Labour's Lost*, *Two Gentlemen of Verona*, *Comedy of Errors*, *Taming of the Shrew*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *The Tempest*, *Much Ado About Nothing* and *All's Well That Ends Well*. Shakespeare borrowed his themes frequently from history but shaped them with his original genius which makes his art unrivalled. All his plays of all the three genres use acts and scenes according to the demand of the structure. Shakespeare experimented with themes, stagecraft, dramatic devices, plot construction, diction, poetry, characters and at the same time, assorted tradition with such uniqueness that his dramatic art becomes unquestionable. He was a keen observer and critic of human nature in all his plays. Theseus in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* says:

*Lovers and madmen have such seething brains,
Such shaping fantasies, that apprehend
More than cool reason ever comprehends.
The lunatic, the lover and the poet
Are of imagination all compact:
One sees more devils than vast hell can hold,
That is, the madman: the lover, all as frantic,
Sees Helen's beauty in a brow of Egypt:
The poet's eye, in a fine frenzy rolling,
Doth glance from heaven to earth, from earth to heaven;
And as imagination bodies forth
The forms of things unknown, the poet's pen
Turns them to shapes and gives to airy nothing
A local habitation and a name. (V, I)*

That is how he perceived and justified all poets. Most of his comedies are placed under the category of romantic comedies. Away from Shakespeare's romantic world of fancifully magnificent and entertaining tales, there was another dramatist in the same age who wrote comedy vigorously to evolve a new style of drama. Ben Jonson (1573–1637) was a robust and powerful moralist who aimed his best to reform the classical comedy in English literature in the 16th and 17th centuries. Thriving through professions unlikely to adorn him with the gift of knowledge that he possessed, Jonson received recognition from eminent universities of England when he began to act in plays.

In comedy, Jonson adhered strictly to depict his own age with realism, romance and maintain the dramatic action with the three dramatic unities of time, place and morally sound theme. He focused on the plot innovation that drama should have a single scene using a single span of a day. He was held as a person strict with the rules of dramatic art:

*The laws of time, place, persons, he observeth,
From no needful rule he swerveth.*

Jonson did not portray the goodness like Shakespeare did: Shakespeare painted the charming *Belmont* or *Forest of Arden* or the playfulness of Puck, but Jonson acquainted his audience with scoundrels and Thames in his play *Bartholomew Fayre*. He introduced comedy of humours and his first successful drama was *Every Man in His Humour* (1598). Jonson loved following classical methods and his characters were called ‘humours’ where they present aspect of moral nature throughout the play, which is subjected to mockery:

*when some one peculiar quality
Doth so possess a man that it doth draw
All his affects, his spirits and his powers
In their confluxions all to run one way,
This may be truly said to be a humour.*
(*Every Man Out of His Humour*, 1599, Quarto 1600)

Jonsonian ‘static’ characters or types potently gripped their audience through whom he ridiculed the frailty or weaknesses of the society and human nature. Later on, when corruption, with the rise of the bourgeois, affected social life, Jonson became bitter in his comedies. His outstanding comedies are *Volpone*, *Silent Woman*, *Alchemist* and *Bartholomew Fayre*. The *Alchemist* presents three characters—Subtle, Face and Doll—who are rogues, whereas *Volpone*, or the *Fox* displays avarice on a grand scale.

The Restoration playwrights took him for their model and later on, the master of oratory, the 19th century novelist Charles Dickens revived Jonson’s gift to the English letters. Jonson was an original genius and extremely learned craftsman. Among his contemporaries were Philip Massinger (1583–1640) and John Ford (1586–1639) with whose work theatre came to be closed during the period of Civil Wars.

Theatres opened again after 1660 when Charles II was restored on the English throne. In comedy, Restoration Era breathes its exuberance and excellence as a period apart from others. There were many types of styles tried by the writers of comedy in this age, but chief exponents of comic plays then were Sir George Etherege (1635–91), William Wycherley (1640–1716) and William Congreve (1670–1729).

Etherege’s *The Man of Mode* brought the concept that comedy would not obligate to sketch a moral world, it would often negate romance, but only portray the gentry of the day. It would paint the contemporary ladies and gentlemen as they were their witty repartee and the city life full of ‘amorous intrigues.’

Wycherley explored Etherege’s style with keener interest and observation. To his immoral and obscene world he blended the dramatic devices of satire and mockery. He successfully exploited his study of Moliere and Ben Jonson. His famous comedies are the *Country Wife* (1672–3) and the *Plain Dealer* (1674).

The most brilliant among these Restoration writers of comedy plays is William Congreve (1670-1729). He avoided the deep exposition of the society which Wycherley styled by going back to use of ‘surface gaiety’, as done by Etherege. Congreve’s sparkle was immediately recognized and valued by the audience. He never ended on being too boisterous as he was a very careful artiste. His major contribution is the *Old Bachelor* (1693), *Double Dealer* (1694), *Love for Love* (1695) and *Way of the World* (1700). His specialities as an artist were his wholeness of vision of a narrow world with dexterous accuracy of its delineation of values. In

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his world, there was no fight between good and evil, but the elegant was victorious over the unsophisticated, wit surpassed the dull and dignity overcame roughness. He does not let sentiment, or morality penetrate his city drawing rooms or sitting parlours where witty conversations, fashionable ladies and gallant gentlemen flirted with each other exposing the vices of London men and manners reckoned as the foremost symbols of culture.

George Farquhar's the *Beaux' Stratagem* (1707) served the purpose of a link between the comedy of manners of his age and the upcoming 18th century novels. John Dryden, the greatest poet, critic and playwright of the period in his *Marriage à la Mode* (1672) gives his estimation of the Restoration comedy:

Why should a foolish Marriage Vow,

Which long ago was made,

Oblige us to each other now,

When passion is decay'd.

We lov'd, and we lov'd, as long as we could:

Till our love was lov'd out in us both:

But, our Marriage is death when the Pleasure is fled:

'Twas Pleasure first made it an Oath.

The noteworthy 18th century comedies were John Gay's the *Beggar's Opera* (1728), Richard Steele's *Tender Husband* (1705), George Lillo's *London Merchant* (1731), Oliver Goldsmith's *She Stoops to Conquer* (1773), Richard Sheridan's *Rivals* (1775), *School for Scandal* (1777) and the *Critic* (1779). The art of comedy gradually saw decline in its values and style as it travelled from 16th to 17th and 18th centuries.

The 19th century is known for novel and poetry as theatre did not have any noteworthy participation in literature during that period. The style of probing into a social problem descended onto English drama through Henry Arthur Jones (1851–1929) and Sir A. W. Pinero (1855-1934) of which the later had a sustained and successful career as a playwright. Oscar Wilde (1854-1900) and George Bernard Shaw were the most prominent voices of the period during the first three decades of the 20th century. Wilde's famous comedies are *Lady Windermere's Fan* (1892), *A Woman of No Importance* (1893), *An Ideal Husband* (1895) and *The Importance of Being Earnest* (1895). His *The Importance of Being Earnest* is a light humoured play where he has tried to revive the art of Congreve. Harley Granville-Barker (1877-1946) brought out a stark realism of his contemporary life dealing with issues of society. John Galsworthy (1867-1933) also tried his hand into writing drama, however his novels are more perfect pieces of his art. His works are *Man of Property* and *The Silver Box* (1906).

The Abbey Theatre in Dublin was thriving with swarms of viewers when Lady Gregory and William Butler Yeats together tried to revive the traditional Celtic folklores combined with fertile imagination and mystical tinge of the Medieval Age in the dawn of the 20th century. Yeats' plays *Countess Cathleen* (1892) and the *Land of Heart's Desire* (1894) recalled mysticism and country tradition of his motherland. John Millington Synge (1871-1909) had a more profound approach towards theatrical artistry in comedy. He expressed his travel experiences through dramatic craftsmanship in comedies like the *Playboy of the Western World* (1907).

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All the tragedians and comedy writers were part of promoting the Irish National Movement. George Bernard Shaw (1856–1950) was ahead of all these nationalist artistes who alone raised their voices against the flaws in social structure. He was a staunch moralist and although his plays are categorised as Romantic in tradition, he maintained his form of drama to be a vehicle of his sparks that would reach each nook of the stubbed humanity. Shaw had a very successful career as a dramatist. He was an outspoken genius who never feared anyone in his lifetime. He laughed and ridiculed at the oddities of human nature and social behaviour ‘in full-throated ease’ and suggested possible amendments for the problems with which he dealt in his plays.

His dramas portray ‘life force.’ Shaw held the ideals of Socialist Fabians to his heart. He lived ideally and showcased ideals in his plays too. He was a lively, witty as well as a brilliant person who displayed these qualities in diction, form, art, themes, moral message and creative intelligence. His verbal wit is put parallel to Congreve’s and Wilde’s. He possessed an unusual clarity of vision of the social ills, which he mixed with comedy with the excellent touch of irony and command over language. For all his uniqueness, Shaw remains matchless an artist in the history of twentieth century English drama. He began as a dramatic critic with his *Our Theatre in the Nineties*. His first play was *Widowers’ Houses* (1892) and till 1949, his *Buoyant Billions* was being staged, when he was ninety-three.

Shaw voiced out contemporary themes in his plays mixed with realism and wit. His task was that of an observer and teacher in his plays. His plays are not the mechanical products of sapless age and straining realism, but were absolute entertainers. His gallery of characters does not escape a single profession or walk of life, which does not receive reproof or criticism. He created brilliant dramas incessantly one after another, more than sixty in number, of which the exceptionally charming ones are *Devil’s Disciple* (1897), *Mrs. Warren’s Profession* (1893), *Arms and the Man* (1894), *Candida* (1894), *You Never Can Tell* (1897), *Caesar and Cleopatra* (1898), *Man and Superman* (1903), *Major Barbara* (1905), *The Doctor’s Dilemma* (1906), *John Bull’s Other Island* (1904), *Fanny’s First Play* (1911), *Pygmalion* (1912), *Back to Methuselah* (1921), *Geneva* (1938), *Saint Joan* (1923), the *Apple Cart* (1929), *Too True to be Good* (1931), *On the Rocks* (1933), the *Millionairess* (1936) and *In Good King Charles’s Golden Days* (1938-9).

Shaw fought for the ideas of equality of men and women besides being a democratic liberal and politically ideal mind. His dramas are like those musical shows which engage and leave us into a thoughtfully recharged world.

After Shaw, the major English comedy playwrights were Noël Coward (1899-1973) with his *Hey Fever* (1925), *Private Lives* (1930), *Design for Living* (1932), *Present Laughter* (1942) and *Blithe Spirit* (1941); Samuel Beckett (1906–1989) with his absurdist comedy *Waiting for Godot* (1955); Harold Pinter (1930–2008) with his *Birthday Party* (1958); Tom Stoppard (1937-) with his *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead* (1966). Many of these famous dramatists wrote short plays for radio and television in the latter half of the twentieth century like Harold Pinter, Samuel Beckett, Tom Stoppard and John Mortimer.

5.5.4 English Tragi-Comedies

In literature, the term ‘tragi-comedy,’ means a play with serious conflict but happy resolution. There has been no specific definition assigned to the type, however,

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Aristotle defined this genre of play of serious action ending happily. The Roman dramatist of comedies, Plautus (254 BC to 184 BC) coined this term in his play *Amphitryon* where a character Mercury used ‘tragicomoedia.’ Plautus declared:

I will make it a mixture: let it be a tragicomedy. I don't think it would be appropriate to make it consistently a comedy, when there are kings and gods in it. What do you think? Since a slave also has a part in the play, I'll make it a tragicomedy.

In the context of England, the concept of tragi-comedy was a romantic play with no strict regulations to follow the classical unities of time, place and action. It blended all types of characters both high and low, and captured unbelievable or marvellous action. The plays encompassed shades of tragedy and comedy, the two elements we find in our everyday life. William Shakespeare used tragi-comedy with dexterity of graceful dramatic art. His *Merchant of Venice* (1605) is an excellent example of this art category where Antonio's life is saved by the clever Portia, or else it would have been a tragedy where he had to lose his life in the hands of Shylock. His other tragi-comedies include *Winter's Tale* (1611), *Cymbeline* (1623), *Pericles* (1619), *The Tempest* (1611), *Two Noble Kinsmen* (in collaboration with John Fletcher 1634) and *Measure for Measure* (1604). The last one is labelled as ‘dark comedy’ because it depicts grim action. Shakespeare's contemporary Fletcher wrote *Faithful Shepherdess* (1608).

The style tragi-comedy aimed at no profound action, it presented moderate sentiments, moderate passions, moderate amusement, pretension of conflicts and happy conclusion. Together Beaumont and Fletcher composed *Phylaster* (1610) and *A King and No King* (1611).

The drama in the Jacobean Age was considered obscene. It was censured by the puritans and theatres showcasing the plays were closed in 1642 owing to the reaction from the people.

After the restoration of Charles II to the throne of England in 1660, theatres reopened but there were no immediate potent tragi-comedies. In the 18th century, Sir Richard Steele wrote the *Conscious Lovers* (1722). Later, George Lillo's *London Merchant* (1731) and Oliver Goldsmith's *She Stoops to Conquer* (1773) became the famous vehicles of this genre. They called it *Sentimental Comedies*. The 20th century plays by Shaw and Wilde are excellent specimen of tragi-comedies. Shaw explained in his preface to *Major Barbara* (1905) how ‘the tragi-comic irony of the conflict between real life and romantic imagination’ was essential to the completion of the dramatic art.

Norwegian playwright Henrik Ibsen's *Wild Duck* (1884) is a famous tragi-comedy. Anton Chekhov of Russia was skilled in the art of tragi-comic dramas. In 1962, Edward Albee wrote *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* Thomas Stearns Eliot's dramas in the first half of the 20th century are great proponents of this genre. His *Cocktail Party* (1949) and the *Family Reunion* (1939) extend the style of tragi-comedy.

5.5.5 One-Act Play

The term came into prominence to refer to one-act plays written in the late nineteenth century, though this form existed long before the term emerged. The Little Theatre movement was a major reason behind the popularity of these one-act plays because they supported and popularised experimental drama. This form of play has a limited

number of characters and very few scenes. The play is short but comprehensive as it revolves around a single incident; it has two or three characters and has no sub-plots or minor characters.

Jeffrey Adams' *Shooting Tori* (1996) is a ten-minute political comedy whose language is American English. It is set inside an elevator on a late afternoon in October. *Turned Tables* (2000) by Hugh Aaron is a 12-minute realistic drama written in English and is set in Rio de Janeiro. David Matthew Barnes's play *Clean* (2002) is a fifteen-minute comedy-drama written in English which is set at a bus stop in Beverly Hills, California, USA on a Wednesday afternoon. *Vultures* (2002), written by Christine Emmert is a 40-minute black comedy in English, is set in a New York apartment building.

5.6 ESSAYS, NOVELS AND SHORT STORIES

An essay is any short composition in prose that undertakes to discuss a matter, express a point of view, persuades to accept a thesis on any subject, or simply entertain (M. H. Abram).

5.6.1 Essay

It is a short piece of writing reflecting a writer's own point of view about a particular subject. It may have diverse elements as its focus such as literary criticism, political manifestos, observations of daily life, reflections of an author, recollection, personal philosophies, learned arguments, or criticism of life, events or happenings.

Essay is 'a composition of moderate length on any particular subject, or branch of a subject; originally implying want of finish, but now said of a composition more or less elaborate in style, though limited in range' (Oxford English Dictionary). A Philosophical essay may turn into a treatise in length. It is subjective because it is a literature of self-expression (W. H. Hudson).

Examples: Alexander Pope's (1688–1744) *An Essay on Criticism* (1711) and *An essay on man* (1734) are essays in verse being an exceptional variation to the form. John Locke's (1632-1704) *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (1690), *Some Thoughts Concerning Education* (1693), *Two Treatises on Civil Government* (1689), *A Letter Concerning Toleration* (1689), Thomas Malthus's *An Essay on the Principle of Population* (1798) are a few great examples of essay writing.

Objective: An essay should be brief, precise, argumentative, fact or philosophy-based, and logically satisfying. It should explain a certain aspect of a subject. Francis Bacon's essays are the best examples of the kind.

Philosophical Essay

The word 'philosophy' means study of the nature and meaning of human life in its entirety. It is a particular set or system of beliefs resulting from the search for knowledge about life and the universe. It is a set of beliefs or an attitude to life that guides somebody's behaviour (Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary). If an essay is concise, clear or abstract analysing of a particular subject reflecting strong logical currents through it, it is called a Philosophical Essay. It relates more to an intellectual activity than a physical one. It shows the views of a person who has explored a specific subject-matter deeply through immense research.

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Check Your Progress

9. Name the two major dramatists of the twentieth century who used drama to convey their ideas.
10. Name the major English tragic plays.
11. Give examples of one-act plays.

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Objectives: In a philosophical essay, the object of the writer is constructive having a positive vision, usually in the defence of a cause. That cause may exist already, or may be an assumption. Besides it may be a disagreement or a critical agreement reflecting a philosophical point of view, standing against a purport with a set of logic of the writer. In any of these, a philosophical essay must argue having strong reason and evidence as its background.

Basic Requirements/Elements

A philosophical essay should begin to search and establish a view in the context of a problem. It should have a definite point of view — either for or against the given argument. The problem and the person in its defence or disagreement should focus on a particular point of view based on assumptions sprouting from the problem itself. Its implications, critical assessment and a critical defence with a past, present and future should be part of the essay. It should provide support to that particular subject of philosophy or idea. The range of a philosophical essay is very vast.

Plato's (429–347 BC) *The Republic* (380 BC) argues that knowledge equals virtue and he defends his cause by giving logical support to it. If he states that half of the population should be prepared for army in a nation, he means then only the rest in that nation may go to have a sound sleep and proper development. Aristotle (384–322 BC) argues in his essay '*Poetics*' (335 BC) that all art is *mimesis* and he proves the point that all art imitate life. To prove this he gives a long list of arguments which rule the formal ground of any literary writing. Such essays were relevant not only to their own period but to all the times.

Structure: A philosophical essay should have the following features:

- **Clarification:** should explain and create a lucid picture of the issue to be discussed.
- **Justification:** The essayist can either present another reference and justify it with his own views or should illustrate and justify his personal stand with strong arguments,.
- **Evaluation:** The argument should be evaluated once again in order to reach a plausible conclusion.

A philosophical essay should have a purpose, an argument, facts, negative or positive stand, a unique view, a critical connectivity or chain of thoughts in relativity. The pattern of the essay should be:

Purpose → justification → argument → evaluation.

Eminent Philosophical Essayists

Plato, Aristotle, Sophocles, Francis Bacon, John Milton, Sir Thomas Browne, John Donne(John Bunyan, Daniel Defoe, Jonathan Swift, Joseph Addison, Sir Richard Steele, John Locke, Thomas Hobbes, Matthew Arnold, and Karl Marx are some eminent philosophical essayists.

The Spectator, *The Story of Salmacis and Hermaphroditus* from Ovid's *Metamorphoses* (1694), Aristotle's *Poetics*, Plato's *The Republic*, Francis Bacon's *Of Reading, Of Studies, Elements of the Common Law of England, Advancement of Learning*, John Locke's *Glorious Revolution of 1688*, and Thomas Hobbes's *Leviathan* are some famous philosophical essays. Mark Twain, George Orwell (1903–1950), E. M. Forster, and Toni Morrison are modern philosophical essayists.

Scientific essay

A scientific essay is objective in style and is devoted to recounting of facts and events. It should be fact-based. The facts should exist or should have proof to prove its occurrence. In a scientific essay the writer uses certain terminology related to certain branch of study that the essay explores.

The main elements of a scientific essay are as follows:

- A scientific essay is about a branch of science.
- It is objective.
- It deals with fact and truth.
- It uses specific terminology related to the branch of science.
- It is fact- based and has a page limit.
- It is a formal essay.

Famous scientific essayists: Charles Darwin, Sir Issac Newton, Louis Pasteur, Michael Faraday and Ernst Rutherford are some famous scientific essayists. Charles Darwin's *On the Origin of Species*, Michael Faraday's *The Classical Field Theory* and Rutherford's *The Structure of the Atom* are famous essays in this genre.

5.6.2 Novel

Novel is a literary form of art that is a recent development. It came to picture in the eighteenth century in English literature. It is an extended fictional narrative in prose having a plot, characters and a theme. It is published in print on paper. It should be of a considerably longer length. Novel comprises of a subject matter and a theme that should appeal universally. Novel is a sustained story in prose having characters and events usually imaginary. It has two primary aims: entertainment and instruction.

Elements

Plot, character and atmosphere — A novel is a complex narrative. It should create something new. Every novel is intended to display a certain plot around which the story moves. It should present an array of characters and a protagonist. The portrayal of different characters is something that adds colour to its plot. It should create an excitement or tension in the atmosphere. The building of tension refers to its beauty and art of handling. It should add some pathos to attract the sympathy of the readers. It should convey an idea, or emotion, or a message, or moral. It must engage the reader and should elicit emotion and sympathy in the reader. It should be simple and imaginative, rhythmic and structured.

Language, style and imagery: Language is a technical device. A novel should use simple prose full of imagery, humour, symbol, metaphor, sarcasm, irony, and pathos and like tools to make it sound more effective and engrossing. It should use a style and develop a technique. It should be rich in symbolism. It should evoke images into the reader. It also should build an atmosphere and create an effect. A tone and rhythm should be maintained throughout the story. Its rhythm should have gravity according to scenes and situation. It must invoke an idea and develop a theme by exposition, crisis and resolution. It might be inspired by some other work of literature or philosophy. It may be creative and carry a novel idea also. In this manner, there are certain important features that a novel should have. It should maintain the three classical unities: Time, Place and Action. A novel is an

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extended narrative different in form than a short story, or novelette or novella. The difference of form lies in its magnitude for a novel has a wider range of characters, complex plot or plots, atmosphere and more sustained exploration of character and motives compared to other forms of shorter narrative. Its beginning is cited from the eighteenth century and it is considerably a new emergence as a literary genre. But in short history of only two and half centuries, novel has developed a wide variety of subject treatments, technique, and styles.

Origin: Novel is a Roman word which is derived from the medieval term romance. However, the English name for this form is taken from the Italian novella meaning 'a little new thing' which was earlier a short tale in prose. In the fourteenth century in Italy, there was a popular trend for such tales that were both serious and scandalous. We have the example of Boccaccio's Decameron. This set an example for the generations to follow. The concept of novel has broadened in the modern age. The term 'Novella' (in German 'Novella') is used for a shorter composition called Novelette: a prose fiction which has shorter length than a novel, like Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*. It is of middle length.

Historically, the tradition of prose romances is a very old phenomenon. They were written by the Greek writers in the third and second centuries A.D. Generally they dealt with the story of separated lovers who encountered many dangerous adventures and escaped what could damage them and came to be reunited at the end. These Greek prose romances influenced the European literature time to time. The important examples of these Greek romances are: *Aethiopia* by Heliodorus and the pastoral narrative *Daphnis and Chloe* by Longus. In England, Thomas Lodge's *Rosalynde* on which Shakespeare based his *As You Like It* and Sir Philip Sidney's *Arcadia*, were the English pastoral romances of the Elizabethan age.

Like pastoral romance, Picaresque narrative can also be called the predecessor of novel. It began in the sixteenth century Spain. The Frenchman Le Sage wrote the famous picaresque prose called the 'Gil Blas' (1715). The style has originated from the Spanish word 'Picaso' which means 'rouge'. Therefore a picaresque narrative is a prose-tale which typically concerns the escapades of a careless, unworried, flippant, easy going rascal who lives by his own wisdom without making a change in his nature through the long series of events and adventures. Although Picaresque fiction deals with a rogue's story of adventures, it is based on realism and is divided in episodes. They are a humorous satire on human nature. In England, Thomas Nashe's *The Unfortunate Traveller* (1594) is the first example. It may be called the harbinger of the English novels. The Spanish writer Cervantes's great prose narrative *Don Quixote* (1605) which is quasi-picaresque influenced the English writers most. It is also credited for giving birth to the modern English novel. Following this prose narrative, Defoe wrote *Robinson Crusoe* (1719). *Robinson Crusoe* marked the beginning of the modern English novel. Don Quixote is an engaging crazy young man who tries to live by the ideas of chivalric romance in his everyday life and explores the relations of illusion and reality in human life. Mark Twain's *Tom Sawyer* (1876) and Henry Fielding's *Tom Jones* are among noteworthy examples of this genre. This form of prose narrative turned into what we call the modern novel.

Development of novel: As a literary form, novel broke from the tradition of prose romance or narrative which used timeless stories to focus on the unchanging moral truths. This modern meaning of novel has been an outcome of an intellectual atmosphere shaped by the great seventeenth century philosophers Descartes and

Locke. They laid stress on the importance of individual existence and also felt that reality can be discovered if an individual does use his or her own senses. Dependent experiences were not needed. In this manner, the novel emphasized specific as well as observed details in the form of prose. It also individualised its characters by placing them into a time frame and space. The subjects selected for a novel reflect the popular eighteenth century concern with the social set-up of an individual's day to day life.

The modern novel saw its birth in Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* (1719) and *Moll Flanders* (1722): The former deals with the life of a man portrayed in the tradition of picaresque; the latter is about a woman protagonist who is a thief. Both are based on the tradition laid down by Cervantes. The English writers made innovations into the type created by Cervantes. So in the English picaresque tradition, the episodes are individual connected with each other and arranged serially. It is because they happen to one person who is the protagonist. But the protagonist in both of these works is set so in a realistic background that the story looks like a portrayal of everyday life. In this regard, Defoe is called the originator of realistic novel in English literature. Samuel Richardson's *Pamela* (1740–41) displayed a different style of novel writing. It is ranked as a sentimental novel exploring the psychology of a woman under certain emotional circumstances. It was written in the form of epistles and so it is called an epistolary novel. Richardson is often categorised an originator of the novel of character. This kind of fiction penetrated deep into an individual's emotions and psyche. This work is marked by deft handling of plotting of emotional and sentimental events. His second novel *Clarissa* (1747–48) is a better handling of art experimenting with the same methods. Therefore, it can be stated that Defoe and Richardson were the two most significant pillars who established the modern form of English novel. They were also those who did not idealise the legendary great figures, mythological stories, history, or consider any of them as the subject for their novel. They saw life as it was and characters for their plot were chosen from real lives in England at that time. The English novel saw a marked growth in their hands.

Growth as a form: In the Renaissance, the essence of Humanism was the greatest outcome. This had been a frequent practise in the English literature and it served the important part of the eighteenth-century novel. In this period many reformers were working hard for the uplifting of the common man. The world was becoming modern due to the Industrial Revolution. It gave birth to the rise of the middle class and they demanded a form of literature which could satisfy their emotions and dealt with their problems. Novel emerged as a form to meet their demands. Earlier the eighteenth century literature focused on the high class people but the English novel described the life of the middle class. The eighteenth century literature focused on poetry and drama which are rather the constrained forms having strict rules to follow. But novel was an easy reading with simple, lucid prose which was easy for the new emerging audience to understand because they were not intellectually so high. The reason why novel became a popular choice instantly as it came to public notice was because of this. Novel was not only simpler to read but also less allusive and it had an interesting story to convey a wide range of characters, incidents, events. It had dialogues and narration which appealed a greater audience. Novel in the hands of Austen, the Gothic writers and the Victorians, the form was practised vigorously. This replaced the other forms like poetry and drama in the Victorian age as it had a greater range of audience. It shows that the demand of novel had surpassed the difference of intellectual entertainment which poetry and drama could furnish. It was the reason why novel became the central form of literature. Even

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an ordinarily educated man could enjoy the form and attain the pleasure of reading. As it depicted the life of an ordinary man, people could associate themselves with the stories mirrored in it. It was because of its readership which aimed at the middle class population chiefly the women and servants, novel became more famous than any other form of art. It described the domestic and social concerns.

Vehicle of experiment: The English novel from *Robinson Crusoe* and *Pamela* only were vehicles of experimentalism. For example, Robinson Crusoe was not in reality a rogue as the picaresque tradition meant neither Pamela had been a Princess but a servant woman. In this manner thematically, this form originated as an experiment and rebellion against the set norms of themes and characterisation. In the realm of the art of narration too, the form had been experimenting. It not only brought innovation in the theme and characterisation by introducing realism and a wide social range but also in the technique of writing. In the beginning different modes of presentation were tried by authors. The role of the narrator proved very important in the art of conveying a new technique. In a story, the narrator is the person who becomes the representative of the writer and forms connection between the writer and the reader. The novel as a literary form emerged experimenting with the art of narration. Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* and *Moll Flanders* are written in first person narration, both being fictional autobiographies. Moll Flanders introduced the use of poetry in its prose. Robinson Crusoe has dates like in a diary and a table of good and evil in it which renders it the look of the record of regular account of events in a person's life.

Richardson's *Pamela* is the novel written in the form of letters. But later on their contemporary Henry Fielding introduced the third party omniscient narrator in his novels. That was a different form of narration. His novel *Tom Jones* (1749) is one of the world's greatest valuable pieces of art. Earlier his *Joseph Andrews* (1742) too had used the same third party narrative technique which is the most popular way of storytelling. It has been used mostly by the modern writers. His works mentioned are in the picaresque narrative tradition. The nineteenth century was the period which witnessed the development of novel as a form of art. There were eminent writers such as Austen, Dickens, Thackeray and George Eliot who used the same narrative technique of omniscient narration and gave their stories a touch of life. In this technique, a narrator looks at the story plainly without being involved in the emotions of the characters or taking the side of the author. Through this technique, the author can reveal the thoughts of any character with more freedom and can have more liberty of expression. The Victorian novelist Henry James, generally regarded as modern, invented a new technique of narration called the 'point-of-view' in which the mind of his characters became the focus of interest of the novel. Often it was seen through a single point-of-view, the development of the story took turns around the same point-of-view. In this kind of novel, the reader is supposed to have full knowledge of an event. His famous novel *Portrait of a Lady* is an example.

Later in the twentieth century, the stream of consciousness is another innovation in technique. Begun by Dorothy Richardson, this narrative technique saw its edge in the hands of Virginia Woolf and James Joyce. In the stream-of-consciousness technique, the narrator follows the images captured by the human mind, bit by bit. It will be put in the narrative form as our mind would connect to that specific image. In this manner the prose seems rather an unexpected series of fall of events and unconnected. In this kind of prose usually one character is chosen whose record of consciousness would be put in the narrative. Likewise, even the art

of narration, apart from the plot and other technologies, saw centuries of development and innovation in the art of narration in novel as a literary form.

Diverse trends: Novel as a literary form is one of the most popular genre of English literature of this time. Its popularity is the most compared to other literary genres. Different trends as explored by various authors have made this literary form more close to people's choice than any other form. For this, one does not need to fall into any technicality except for those written by a few very innovative experimentalists. It has also tried to cover all the spheres of human feelings and behaviour in its compass. Novel has many trends beginning from rogue or picaresque novel, realistic novel, sentimental novel, novel of humanism, historical novel, biographical novel, allegorical novel, romantic novel, Gothic novel, science fiction, pseudo-scientific fiction, social novel, novel of character, novel of morality, psychological novel, stream-of-consciousness novel, regional novel, novel about naturalism, crime novel, detective novel, etc. Like this every author has some of the peculiarities and there are additions by his or her works in the whole literary form of novel writing. Therefore its range has been proliferating as ever, as the form becoming popular day by day. Every bookstall will have maximum number of novels it at all rather than the poetry or drama.

The basic aim of novel: Novel is a literary form of art which provides its readers an escape from reality as well as a form of entertainment. Novel aims at conveying a story with fictitious characters, plot, theme, setting, time, place, action, message, imagination, etc to engage the reader. Its basic goal is to appeal reader with a fine story and good reading. It began to please and entertain the readers. It has many significant parts. In other words, novel is composed of various important components.

As every great work of art has its construction, novel too has ingredients. The most important aspect of a novel is its plot.

5.6.3 Short Story

A short story will normally concentrate on a single event with only one or two characters, more economically than a novel's sustained exploration of social background. There are similar fictional forms of greater antiquity—fables, folktales, parables.

The short story is a comparatively recent development in English Literature. Chaucer's *Parson's Tale* and *The Tale of Melibee* are attempts at prose stories. In Italy, however, Chaucer's friend, Boccaccio had written his own tales contained in the *Decameron*, in prose with much greater success. In the eighteenth century, Steele and Addison evolved the tale with a purpose to drive home a moral but this is again different from the present day tale of 'impression' or 'idea'.

The short story is a favourite form of present day writing. Short story became famous as a genre in the nineteenth century. People confuse it with novella which has some resemblance to this genre. Novella is a shorter form of a novel. But short story comprises fewer characters, less incidents and a single plot.

Brief narratives have been in existence throughout history of mankind some of which are jests, anecdotes, studied digressions, short allegorical romances, moralizing fairy tales, short myths, and abbreviated historical legends. However, according to the definition of the term short story as the nineteenth and twentieth

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century writers have stated, none of the above qualifies to be accepted as a short story. But they do make up a large part of the milieu from which the modern short story emerged.

Short story, as a genre, has been largely ignored. With hardly any critical acclaim, the most valuable studies of the form that exist are often limited by region or era (e.g., Ray B. West's *The Short Story in America*, 1900–50).

Irish short story writer, Frank O' Connor, has recently endeavoured to give this genre a defined status. He is of the view that stories are a means for 'submerged population groups' to address a dominating community. Most other theoretical discussions, however, are predicated in one way or another on Edgar Allan Poe's thesis that stories must have a compact, unified effect.

The short story is not merely a greatly shortened novel. It shares the usual constituents of a novel—plot, character and setting. The number of characters is limited, and only a single significant episode is touched upon. Crisp narration is its essence. The setting is also not elaborate. Character is disclosed in action and dramatic encounter but seldom fully developed. The emphasis is more on creating a mood rather than the telling of a story.

It developed as a distinct literary genre only in the 19th century in the works of writers such as E. T. A. Hoffmann, Heinrich Kleist, Edgar Allan Poe, Prosper Mérimée, Guy de Maupassant, and Anton Chekhov.

A short story to be able to hold the reader's attention should not cover a long time span. The theme could be a single event that turns out to be the decisive element in a person's life. Each character introduced is crucial to the story as it adds a new dimension. The number of characters introduced should be kept to the minimum as too many characters would take away from the intensity of the plot. The best stories are the ones that follow a narrow subject line. Guy de Maupassant's *The Necklace*, O. Henry's *The Gift of Magi* are very interesting short stories.

5.7 SUMMARY

- Literary terms are words used in, and having specific meaning in discussion, review, criticism and classification of literary works such as stories, poetry, drama, and essays.
- There is no authorized list of such words.
- The root of the word 'ode' lies in the Greek word 'aeidein' which means 'to sing' or 'to chant'. This form is a part of the lyric poetry tradition.
- William Wordsworth's poem, *Ode on Intimations of Immortality from Recollections of Early Childhood* is an excellent example of a Pindaric ode in English.
- Lyrics in Latin literature are found as early as in first century BC by Catullus and Horace.
- The form of elegy originated in ancient Greece as lamentations for the dead. Elegies can be simple, encomiastic, reflective, critical or pastoral.
- The sonnet form was introduced by Wyatt and Surrey in the 16th century in English. The traditional Italian or Petrarchan sonnet is a fourteen-line poem with an octave and sestet.

Check Your Progress

12. Define an essay.
13. What is a scientific essay?
14. What is a short story?

- William Shakespeare is widely known in literary circles as the famous playwright of English literature. He has thirty-seven plays to his credit; all of them with varied themes and characters. In addition, he has also written three narrative poems and 154 sonnets.
- Edmund Spenser is an English poet. He is known for his epic poem *The Faerie Queene* which is a celebration of the Tudor dynasty. He is known for his experiments in the stanza form.
- John Donne is recognized as one of the prominent metaphysical poets. Metaphysical poets are largely cognizant for their use of metaphysical conceit in their poems. Metaphysical conceit is an extended metaphor that combines two immensely diverse ideas into a single idea, often using imagery.
- Wordsworth and Coleridge heralded a new era in English Literature with their publication of the *Lyrical Ballads*. This period came to be known as the Romantic period. Wordsworth defined poetry as the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings recollected in tranquillity.
- G. M. Hopkins is one of the prominent poets of the Victorian period. However, his experiments with the poetic form have categorized him as a modern poet. He got converted to Catholicism and became a priest.
- Epic poetry is one of the genres of poetry, and a major form of narrative literature. This is one of the oldest forms of poetry as well. An epic is often defined as a lengthy poem that recounts the adventure of a hero or a great war.
- Virgil's *The Aeneid* is an example of a literary epic. Virgil was asked to write a grand epic to celebrate the glory of the Augustan age in Rome by Emperor Augustus.
- Though *The Canterbury Tales* cannot be considered as a true epic, yet it has incorporated several features of an epic. This is also a long narrative poem written in iambic pentameter.
- *The Rape of the Lock* written by Alexander Pope is a famous mock-heroic poem. A mock epic or mock-heroic poem is a kind of parody which imitates, in a sustained way, both the elaborate form and the ceremonious style of the epic genre, but applies it to narrate a commonplace or trivial subject matter.
- A ballad is a song that tells a story. It was traditionally sung orally and so either it is called a folk ballad or traditional ballad. These narrative pieces were composed by a single author and sung to all types (literate and illiterate) of people.
- John Keats's poem *La Belle Dame sans Merci* is a typical example of a literary ballad as it follows the typical example of a ballad. The poem is divided into twelve quatrains that follow the rhyme scheme of abcb.
- Satire is a literary genre which makes use of humour, exaggeration, ridicule or irony to criticize a particular topic in the context of contemporary issues. Poetry is seen as a powerful vehicle for satire.
- The dramatic monologue is the prominent genre of Victorian poetry. It is considered the most significant innovation of the age rather we can say that it highlights the age. It has been widely used by a number of poets like Alfred Tennyson, Algernon Swinburne, Felicia Hemans and Augusta Webster.

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- Browning's monologues characteristically consist of nonstop narrative spoken by a single character to a definite listener. It is the character created by the poet who is speaking his thoughts and not the poet himself.
- Drama is an ancient form of art written in prose or verse accompanied by various tools and techniques meant to be staged. It is unlike poetry or prose. It is an art dependent on many other tools unlike a written text which has to do with words only.
- Probably the development of drama owed its growth to new scholars from the universities in England and the Renaissance, which forcefully pushed the active and ambitious minds to explore and inculcate the classical literature.
- Samuel Beckett's *Theatre of the Absurd* introduced the existentialist theory that abstract existence played great role in life above everything in it. This type of drama in being was essentially poetic and full of imagination and exhibited the downplay of language.
- The definition and genesis of tragedy goes back to the classical literature of Greece. Aristotle, the master-craftsmen, is held as the father and preceptor of 'classical tragedy'. Tragedy is a form of drama.
- The rise of tragedy in England goes back to the Elizabethan Age when *Gorboduc* (1561) by Thomas Sackville and Thomas Norton was acted. English tragedies receive inspiration from Seneca. *Gorboduc*, the protagonist, is a mythical emperor of ancient England.
- In the period that followed Shakespeare, George Chapman (1559-1634), Beaumont (1584-1616) and Fletcher (1579-1625) wrote tragedies.
- The word 'comedy' has an ancient and classical background ahead of tragedy, which means an amusing spectacle. The word is a mixture of merry-making and poet or singer.
- An essay is any short composition in prose that undertakes to discuss a matter, express a point of view, persuades to accept a thesis on any subject, or simply entertain (M. H. Abram).
- A philosophical essay should begin to search and establish a view in the context of a problem. It should have a definite point of view — either for or against the given argument.
- A scientific essay is objective in style and is devoted to recounting of facts and events. It should be fact-based. The facts should exist or should have proof to prove its occurrence. In a scientific essay the writer uses certain terminology related to certain branch of study that the essay explores.
- Novel is a literary form of art that is a recent development. It came to picture in the eighteenth century in English literature. It is an extended fictional narrative in prose having a plot, characters and a theme.
- A short story will normally concentrate on a single event with only one or two characters, more economically than a novel's sustained exploration of social background. There are similar fictional forms of greater antiquity — fables, folktales, parables.

5.8 KEY TERMS

- **Baroque period:** The term baroque has been widely used since the nineteenth century to describe the period in Western European art music from about 1600 to 1750.
- **Sprung rhythm:** It is a poetic metre approximating to speech, each foot having one stressed syllable followed by a varying number of unstressed ones.
- **Blank verse:** It is a verse without rhyme, especially that which uses iambic pentameters.
- **Pandemonium:** It refers to wild and noisy disorder or confusion; uproar.
- **Incremental repetition:** It is a device used in poetry of the oral tradition, especially English and Scottish ballads, in which a line is repeated in a changed context or with minor changes in the repeated part.

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5.9 ANSWERS TO ‘CHECK YOUR PROGRESS’

1. An ode usually has three segments: strophe, antistrophe, and epode.
2. Lyric Poetry is an umbrella term for any poem which is short and conveys personal feelings and opinions, has a single speaker and possesses a song like quality. It could be elegy, ode, sonnet song or hymn.
3. Spenser’s *Daphnaida* was modelled on Chaucer’s *Book of the Duchess* and is an example of a simple elegy.
4. A famous epic poem written by Edmund Spenser is *The Faerie Queene*.
5. The essential criteria of an epic poem are as follows:
 - The poem has to be long and all the lines should be in a particular meter.
 - The subject matter of the poem should be serious.
6. A ballad is a song that tells a story. It was traditionally sung orally and so either it is called a folk ballad or traditional ballad.
7. Dramatic monologue is a kind of poem in which a single fictional or historical character other than the poet speaks to a silent ‘listener’ of one or more persons.
8. Some prominent dramatic monologues written in English literature are Tennyson’s *Ulysses* (1842), Browning’s *Fra Lippo Lippi* (1855) and T. S. Eliot’s *The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock* (1917).
9. George Bernard Shaw and Thomas Stearns Eliot are two major 20th century figures who used drama to convey their ideas, exploring different themes.
10. The major English tragic plays are *Tamburlaine the Great* (1587), *Dr. Faustus* (1592), *Hamlet* (1603), *Macbeth* (1611), *Othello* (1604), *King Lear* (1606), *Antony and Cleopatra* (1606), *White Devil* and the *Duchess of Malfi*.
11. Jeffrey Adams’ *Shooting Tori* (1996), *Turned Tables* (2000) by Hugh Aaron and David Matthew Barnes’s play *Clean* (2002) are examples of one-act plays.
12. An essay is a short piece of writing reflecting a writer’s own point of view about a particular subject. It may have diverse elements as its focus such as literary criticism, political manifestos, observations of daily life, reflections of

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an author, recollection, personal philosophies, learned arguments, or criticism of life, events or happenings.

13. A scientific essay is objective in style and is devoted to recounting of facts and events. It should be fact-based.
14. A short story will normally concentrate on a single event with only one or two characters, more economically than a novel's sustained exploration of social background.

5.10 QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

Short-Answer Questions

1. What are the three varieties of ode in English?
2. Define an elegy.
3. List the salient features of a Petrarchan sonnet.
4. Name the famous literary epics.
5. What are the essential features of a ballad?
6. What are the characteristics of a dramatic monologue?
7. Write a short note on English tragic and comic plays.
8. Name some eminent philosophical essayists.

Long-Answer Questions

1. 'Lyric poem in sixteenth century gained prominence through sonnets composed by Sir Philip Sydney and Shakespeare.' Explain the statement.
2. Analyse the contribution of various English poets in the development of the sonnet form.
3. 'Epic poetry is one of the genres of poetry, and a major form of narrative literature.' Discuss.
4. Critically analyse *La Belle Dame sans Merci* as a literary ballad.
5. Why is poetry considered a powerful vehicle for satire? Give reasons for your answer.
6. Robert Browning is the master of dramatic monologues. Give examples to substantiate your answer.
7. Explain the growth and development of the novel as a literary form in English language.
8. 'The short story is a comparatively recent development in English Literature.' Discuss.

5.11 FURTHER READING

- Ford, Borris (Ed.). (1990). *Pelican Guide to English Literature, Vol. 5 From Blake to Byron*. Penguin.
- Frazer, G.S. (1965). *The Modern Writer and His World*. London: Penguin Books.
- Hough, G. (1965). *The Romantic Poets*. London: Hutchinson.
- Kumar, Shiv K. (2003). *British Victorian Literature*. New Delhi: Atlantic Publishers.