

SECTION - A

Chapter : 1

INTRODUCTION TO ENGLISH DRAMA

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1.0 Objectives

We will discuss the growth of traditional English drama. Here we observe development from Elizabethan age to restoration period. We shall also discuss the intellectual, social and political reasons that influenced the theatre during this period of time.

After reading this chapter, you will be able to:

- a) Outline main trends in traditional English drama
- b) Describe the development of English drama
- c) Discuss the constituents of drama

1.2 INTRODUCTION- DRAMA : A HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

Literature has, three important kinds of values: It vitalizes language. It makes space for enjoyment. It tells us things we would not otherwise have known about the humanity of which we form a part. The reader must feel that what he is reading has something to do with his life.

Principles of dramatic construction and the laws of dramatic techniques are imposed by the form-a stage play. A play as a piece of literature puts greater demands. A playwright has to supply external conditions from it derives much of its life and the whole machinery of actual performance. The distance of the performer from spectator makes certain expressions impossible. Surprise at the end of Greek tragedy was not possible as spectators knew the story. Chorus, with its elaborate odes and solemn dancing gave tragedy its lyrical and operatic character. The stage for which Shakespeare wrote was in various fundamental particulars quite unlike that of our time. The lack of stage property -movable scenery on the Elizabethan boards helps us at once to explain various structural features. Lack of drop curtain had a marked influence on dramatic methods of that time. We appreciate the dramatist was subjected to severe restrictions. Hence we cannot apply yardstick of our time.

1.3 ELIZABETHAN DRAMA

Characteristics of Elizabethan age

Christian Europe in the Middle Age lived within a magic circle both geographically and intellectually. After collapse of Roman Empire this closed and limited civilization has left us the Gothic cathedrals, and ancient universities. In fifteenth century was still producing much that was admirable in art. The Holy Roman Empire, which had attempted to unit Christendom, had failed hopelessly as a political power. The church, though enormously wealthy and powerful, was corrupt and lethargic In Italy since fourteenth century the great intellectual movement called humanism was started. It paid attention to study of ancient Greek and Roman thought .Fall of Constantinople provided impetus. In Germany printing was invented. It was possible to multiply books with speed and accuracy and make them available at affordable price. The Italian Renaissance was not only revival of scholarship; it was artistic and scientific revival.

Renaissance reached England late. The movement was political and social. Inspired by Italy and France a quest for new knowledge in history, politics, theology, philosophy, science and art started. Art and literature became free. Drama found a new enthusiasm both in religious and secular minds.

The age had an ideal environment in which art and literature could flourish.

Economic prosperity, spirit of experimentation and adventure was the order of the day. The age produced serious and significant drama of which it could be proud.

Renaissance England produced a distinctive form of drama. It was not free from foreign influence. Tragedy had political and historical concerns. Political ambition and struggle for power were its recurrent themes. We note carefully the difference between Classical and Elizabethan tragedy. Classical tragedy generally begins at a climactic moment in story and presents catastrophe. The Elizabethan tragedy tells the whole story. During the Renaissance unity of time, place and action were considered essential for tragedy. Exclusion of comedy from tragedy was insisted on.

The idea that the comic scene would destroy tragic dignity came from the Aristotle's notion.

Neither Shakespeare nor Ben Jonson meant a photographic portrayal of time. They only meant that drama should portray human nature whatever may be the romantic realm to which the characters are transferred. The Elizabethan drama had developed independently of classical models imported from Greece or Rome, and the Romantic passion of love helped its pride of the place in both comedy and tragedy.

While getting acquainted with seventeenth century poetry and drama, we observe two distinct traditions. Metaphysical school differs totally from earlier Spenserian concern, imagery and expressions. Reacting against the intellectual emptiness, Jon Donne a leading Metaphysical poet draws his imagery from a wide variety of sources-erudition, science, commerce, geographical discoveries and Astronomy.

Ben Jonson represents another tradition of seventeenth century. He wrote lyrics, songs for his plays, verse epigrams. He was influenced by Latin lyrics. His tone anticipates the Augustan late seventeenth century

Marlowe gave tragedy the magnificent instrument of his blank verse and also endowed with the concept of character. As a poet, Kyd could not compare with Marlowe, but he showed, in the structure

of the play, a skill which Marlowe did not equal. Shakespeare always wrote for the contemporary theatre, manipulating the Elizabethan stage with great resource and invention. He was able to satisfy the desire for dramatic pleasure at a number of different levels of appreciation, sometimes even incorporating them in a single play. E.g. Hamlet or Othello have melodrama, subtle presentation of character, as well as language unequalled in beauty. To satisfy his audience was his primary purpose, but this was not enough, for he had to satisfy himself, and plays like Hamlet and King Lear show that he wrote the plays as his genius directed. His earliest work was in the plays on English history, including the plays on the reign of Henry IV and Henry VI. Perhaps the best example of Shakespeare's originality and ingenuity is his romantic comedy.

The Midsummer Night's Dream, in which the romantic action is enriched by the fiery elements. Verse gives that atmosphere which Shakespeare can construct distinctively for each dramatic action. Shakespeare then wrote his 'dark comedies', in which the pattern of romantic comedy is combined with satire which exposes the treachery of love, the deceit of honour, and the uselessness of war. The great period of Shakespeare's tragedy is to be found in the plays which begin with Hamlet, and include works like Othello and Macbeth. The last romances, of which, The Tempest is the last. It indicates a change of vision in which there is gentleness and optimism, as well as forgiveness and fantasy. Among the great dramatists who followed Shakespeare were Ben Jonson with plays like Every Man In His Humour (1598) and Volpone (1602), and later Thomas Dekker, Beaumont and Fletcher, John Webster and William Wycherley. This period produced mainly satire (e.g. Jonson) and tragedy (e.g. Webster).

Elizabethan Stage:

During the Elizabethan age lack of a proper printing and publishing system or law of copyright to protect authors, resulted in haphazard writing of the plays. Shakespeare's plays were published in folios and quartos. A folio was a sheet printed on both sides and folded once; forming two leaves (four pages). In 1623, after Shakespeare's death, John Hemminge and Henry Condell collected his plays in a single volume and published them in the First Folio. While doing so, they overcame tremendous obstacles, but they also created problems that

will torment textual scholars. They added words and lines which are obviously not Shakespeare's own.

Before the Elizabethan age, there were no proper theatres in England. Wandering groups of actors would arrive in towns and villages, set up a rough stage with a few poles and planks, and perform short plays or course comedies. The group of actors would often set up a stage in the yard of an inn or pub. Logically the first theatres built in England in the Elizabethan age were little more than re-creations of such yards. Later, permanent playhouses or theatres like the Fortune, the Swan, the Lord Chamberlain's Men, were built on the same lines. The typical Elizabethan theatre was a bare platform which jutted out into an unroofed yard or pit, where the poorer people stood in the open air to watch the performance, while the seats in the gallery were sold for an additional fee and were usually occupied by the more affluent people or the nobility. The stage itself had a canopy over it to protect it from the elements, often with 'the heavens' (stars and other devices) painted on it. There was a curtained recess at the back of the stage, used for many purposes, as the area in which Hermione's statue was kept in *The Winter's Tale*. There was a gallery at the back of the stage which could be the battlement in *Richard II*, or the balcony from which Juliet speaks in *Romeo and Juliet*.

1.4 RESTORATION PLAYS

In 1660, when King Charles II returned to England, the theatres became active. The Restoration refers to two significant things. Firstly, it refers to the reestablishment of King Charles II after republican experiment during 1640-1660. Secondly it is a period of designation 1660-1700, often to cover the marked special cultural characteristics of tolerance over religious and political passion which this fact symbolized.

Most of the people had got weary with rigours of Puritanism and instability that arose from Cromwell's death. Thus there was an inescapable reaction against puritan morality and manners. King himself was an indolent sensualist possessed of both wit and cunning. He led and encouraged an atmosphere of hedonistic liveliness in court.

The wit and ideals of writers of this age do not reveal roots in deeper patterns of life of the times. All that we mean by "Mood and the tone" of Restoration really permeated from London and was limited to the circle of court wits. The man from country was always portrayed a country bumpkin and utter lack of sophistication. This was partly because of the influence of France where so many Charles' hangers on had spent their exile, and partly because of the Restoration theatre took over and developed the tradition of the private rather than the public life, which had in some degree managed to survive the prohibition of dramatic performances.

Restoration comedy

It has conspicuous limitations the extent of which may be seen by comparison with Elizabethan age. But inside this limited range, certain situations and character types are seen amusing. The dramatist's keen interest in social achievements and follies of their extra-ordinary is communicated down the ages. If for example sex-antagonism and physical appetite are not the whole love, they are important phase of it. Restoration drama had honesty to display these more adequately than many subsequent ages have done.

Witty exchanges of words, handling of the exchanges the "gay couple" of hero and heroine were highly prized qualities in the conversation of gentlemen. Verbal cleverness and intellectual agility of this kind were novelty

Sentimental comedy

Hazlitt truly said of the sentimental "comedies," It is almost a misnomer to call them comedies; they are rather homilies in dialogue". We observe the following features in Sentimental comedies:

- (i) Absence of the true spirit of comedy, we mean absence of humour
- (ii) Characters from sober and serious middle class without any vice in them
- (iii) A sense of morality and virtue in them

For nearly fifty years genuine comedy was out and tears took place of laughter. The drama was lacking humour or wit it appealed to emotions of pity and serious.

A transition from comedy of manners to sentimental comedy took

place. Spectators were happy that virtue triumphed at the end, a sense of reformation and rejoice prevailed. We may recall their names as Richard Steel, Hugh Kelly and Richard Cumberland.

The sentimental comedy was comedy only in name. A. Nichol points out "In place of laughter they sought tears; in place of intrigue, melodramatic and distressing situations, in place of gallants and witty, pathetic heroines and serious lovers". Most of their plays called "comedy" without development of the comic elements.

In the Prologue of "She Stoops to Conquer" is a frontal attack of these tendencies. "o damn everything that's low" says one of the fellows in the inn and he is answered with "The gentle thing is the gentle thing at any time." Miss Hardcastle in first interview with Marlow plays to him in "sober sentimental" vein and slyly calls him a man of sentiment. Ms Neville says "liked the book better the more it made them cry". Sentimental novels and sentimental plays then were in plenty.

No comedy however relies entirely on wit. Dryden mostly did not approve the mixed way, all wit, nor all humour, but the result of both. Though it is convenient to adopt the Scholar's categories of comedy of "Manners" of "humours" and of "intrigue" most plays do because they had to please all sections of audience.

Comedy of Manners :

Unlike comedy of humours which presents characters whose behaviour is completely determined by a particular whim (humour), this form of drama deals with the conventions and the manners of the affluent aristocracy of the age. The failure to conform to them or inept imitation of them is exposed to laughter. The play depicts society without moral concern. Critic Charles Lamb considers the world of this place a dream, but Bonamy Dobra argues that the world of comedy is a real world that covers the whole movement of the age, its morals, fashions, affections etc. There is a frank treatment of sex and marriage in this genre and even human relationships are rationalized. There are familiar types like a jealous husband, a foolish wits and a bold woman with a desire to have a young lover. Even plots are not important, witty dialogues and repartee is employed. Restoration comedy shows a cynical attitude towards sex and even in its satire as no force. It is weak and immoral.

It was a time when ruler was notorious for his licentiousness and a corrupt court that formed a clique around the king determining the kind of drama for the age. Irreligiousness and immorality became the distinguishing features of Restoration Comedy. A Critic points out "It was a time when a husband was introduced only to be cuckolded, marriage was mentioned only to be laughed at, God and Religion to be blasphemed" and the rakish hero won all admiration of the audience. That is why this comedy with its immorality and rules could produce only a satirical portrayal of rich society around the king and the court on superficial level soon came to be known as Comedy of manners. Charles Lamb calls it "artificial comedy".

Congreve reached a pinnacle of fame and glory. Charles Lamb praised him, Macaulay admired him. But S. T. Coleridge accused Congreve and opined "Wickedness is no subject of comedy". This was Congreve's great error and peculiarity of him. Congreve possessed brilliant technique, verbal style excellent construction and depth of feelings. He sincerely believed that it was the greatest virtue to be a gentleman.

Heroic drama of Restoration period

Pompous language or bombast was a frequent component of Heroic drama. Almost all were written in heroic couplet. Heroic couplet means iambic pentameter lines rhyming in pairs. Jon Dryden demanded that "A heroic play ought to be imitation in light of a heroic poem and consequently love, and valour ought to be the subject. Dryden is a major writer of this dramatic form. "The Conquest of Granada" is one of the better heroic tragedies. His "All For Love is an adaptation of Shakespeare's Anthony and Cleopatra. Nathaniel Lee and Henry Fielding are other two noteworthy names.

1.5 CONSTITUENTS / ASPECTS OF DRAMA

A grasp of theme helps us to see what the plot is about and what the plot suggests in its universal meaning. While doing so, we distinguish drama into type and can observe certain common features. Finally we reach a stage of acquiring skill to attempt what can be called a critical evaluation. These works have measured up for long that they probably will always be valued. They will always be a part of the literary cannon.

Aspects of Drama

The general principles in prose fiction laid down for the study of plot, characterization, dialogue, local and temporal setting, and interpretation of life, hold good for drama as well. The principles of dramatic construction and the laws of dramatic technique arise out of requirements of circumstances. Thus, it is not possible to understand the structural peculiarities without some knowledge of the theatre. In Elizabethan time shallowness of the "speaking place" prevented mass scenes and elaborate stage pictures required depth and perspectives. The distance of the performer from the spectators made detailed gestures impossible. Rapid utterances, low tones, and changing inflections would have been lost in an open theatre. Hence the language had to be rhetorical and not conversational. Confining our attention to a couple of points, let us simply note the way in which Shakespeare's work was affected by the lack of moveable scenery and the absence of a drop -curtain. Instead descriptions of nature are found. These are to be largely accounted for by reference to fact that the stage was without scenery. The dramatist has to deal with motives and character within the narrow span of comparatively few scenes. Drama offers little scope for characterization divorced from action. Concentration is a necessary condition of dramatic characterization. It is interesting to note that the great creators of characters in drama seem sometimes to become absorbed in the development of character for its own sake. There is undoubtedly more in the character of Hamlet, for example, than is actually required to account for his part in the plot. Impersonality is equally important. The novelist can himself mingle freely with the men of his story, lay their thoughts before us or pass judgment upon them. The dramatist cannot do this; he has to stand apart.

Characterization is the fundamental and lasting element in the greatness of any dramatic work. Play does not owe its permanent position in literature to the quality of plot. The interest which keeps them alive is the interest of the men and women in them. A first condition of dramatic art is brevity. Dramatist has to do with motives of the characters within the narrow area. This offers little scope for characterization. He has to deal with the progress of the story. There is undoubtedly more in character of Hamlet than is actually required by plot. Plot shows us a man in action discloses characteristics and

outlines full movements. Characterization is exhibition of passions, motives, feelings in their growth, engagements and conflicts. Dialogue becomes an essential adjunct to action. The principal function of dialogue is characterization. Utterances of any person in a play will furnish a continual running commentary upon his conduct and character. Soliloquy and asides are dramatist's means of taking us down into the hidden recesses of a person's nature, and of revealing those springs of conduct which ordinary dialogue provides him with no adequate opportunity to disclose. Despite aversions of modern reader this feature goes well down till Victorian time. The change in dramatic technique does not disprove its utility in its significance in psychological utility.

Every dramatic story arises out of some conflict- some clash of opposed individuals, or passions or interests. Freytag suggests a pyramidal model. We pass through exposition, initial incident, growth of action to its crisis, crisis or a turning point, the resolution and catastrophe. Exposition should be brief and clear. With initial incident we enter upon the real business of the play. The play of motive should be distinctly shown. Proper relation between character and action maintained. The play of antagonistic forces cannot go on indefinitely. Sooner or later the balance begins to incline decisively to one or the other side. This we call turning point or crisis. Crisis should be natural and logical outcome of all that has gone before. The crisis past, we enter upon that portion of the play in which the dramatic conflict is to be brought to its conclusion. The special difficult of the denouement is now apparent.

It is usual to distinguish between the two chief kinds of drama- comedy and tragedy- by reference to the nature of the catastrophe. There are however many plays in which as in tragic-comedy the interest of the plot is largely tragic; though at the last the Fate smiles on most of the good characters. Catastrophe- whatever form it takes, it must obey the great law of causality. This establishes the natural and logical outcome of the forces which have worked during the entire action.

DRAMA : A HISTORIC PERSPECTIVE

Beginnings of the drama in England are obscure. No account of English drama can be possibly be complete unless reference is made to the services of the early Church, to the relics of pagan ceremonials preserved among the peasantry, and to the development of activities in other lands. In Greece, both comedy and tragedy took their rise from religious ceremonials. Tragedy emerged out of a religious observance, and to the end it remained integrally related to the service of the gods. From Greece, the stage was passed on to Rome and, although there it lost its initial power, it pursued its activities up to a time when the Empire eventually fell, in the fourth century. But critics claim that they can be traced to the tenth century. It is also said that the Church, which had condemned the theatre of the Roman Empire, brought it back to England through spectacles and themes and later, through Interludes.

In the Middle Ages Church was virtually everything. Tropes in the ninth century permitted an extension, in music and even in language. Tiny playlets led to dramatic extensions. Medieval folk were lacking in the means of entertainment, and naturally they flocked to watch the liturgical performances: thus very soon the Churches were found inadequate for the accommodation of all the men and women anxious to see these shows. Latter on the venue shifted to outside. The clergy still provided the actors. Monks and priests provided script and make these pieces more appealing to unlettered public. Thus began use of vernacular dialogue. Church authorities were quick in recognizing the danger lying ahead of them. Thy suppressed what church itself had brought about into being. In many countries like France and Italy Latin was replaced by local language. Societies were specifically created for the purpose of acting and producing drama. Records show a day was formally introduced in calendar for the presentation of amateur shows. In this way during thirteenth century mystery cycles, generally called 'miracle plays' came into being. These plays were exhibited out of doors. No attempt was made to construct theatre. These plays were not restricted to any particular district of England. The mystery plays have no author, or many authors. They constantly changed.

Morality Plays

Personification and the appearance of such characters lead us to newer type of drama. The method of staging is the same as that which had been used in Biblical plays; but clearly the characters were not taken from Bible. Instead, the spectators had before them a drama the protagonist of which was a great human being. To one side of him were persons of evil nature and other side an angel. When we think of the term morality and when we consider all the characters and abstractions, we are inclined to suppose that in this kind of dramatic development was to be seen retrogression rather than progress. The person of the mystery plays was nearly all given names and basis was to root them. Drama was rooted in reality. It was the world of ideas and moral concepts. To dismiss these works summarily would be false. In moving into realm of abstractions the playwrights paradoxically came closer to the world around them. Their technique influenced considerably later Elizabethan drama.

The changes in the form of drama (in the Renaissance period) can be in part explained by the revival of interest in classical drama. The classical drama gave examples for both comedy and tragedy to dramatists like Kyd, Marlowe and Shakespeare for plays like The Spanish Tragedy, Dr. Faustus, Macbeth, and many others. Theatres like The Swan and The Globe were built and theatre companies like the Lord Chamberlain's men and the Admiral's men began to flourish.

Theme is sometimes used interchangeably with 'motif', but the term is more usefully applied to a general concept or doctrine, whether implicit or asserted, which art imaginative work is designed to incorporate and make persuasive to the reader. John Milton states as explicit theme of Paradise Lost to 'assert Eternal Providence,/And justify the ways of God to men'. Some critics have claimed that all nontrivial works of literature, including lyrical poems, involve an implicit theme which is embodied and dramatizes in the evolving meanings and imagery.

Plot The Plot(which Aristotle termed the mythos) in a dramatic or narrative work is constituted by its events and actions, as these are rendered and ordered towards achieving particular artistic and emotional effects. This description is deceptively simple, because the actions (including verbal discourse as well as physical actions) are performed by particular characters in a work, and are the means by

which they exhibit their moral and dispositional qualities. Plot and characters are therefore interdependent critical concepts- as Henry James has said, ' what is character but the determination of incident? What is incident but the illustration of character?'

Structure Many new critics use the word structure interchangeably with 'form', and regard it as primarily an equilibrium, or interaction, or ironic and paradoxical tension, of diverse words and images in an organized totality of 'meanings'.

Characters are the persons represented in a dramatic or narrative work, who are interpreted by the reader as being endowed with particular moral, intellectual, and emotional qualities by inferences from what the persons say and their distinctive ways of saying it-the dialogue and from what they do- the action. E.M.Forster, in *Aspects of the Novel*, introduced popular new terms for an old distinction by discriminating between flat and rounded characters. A flat character (also called a type, or 'two-dimensional'), Forster says, is built around 'a single idea or quality' and is presented without much individualizing in detail, and therefore can be fairly adequately described in a single phrase or sentence. A round character is complex in temperament and motivation and is represented with subtle particularity; such a character therefore is as difficult to describe with adequacy as a person in real life, and like real person, is capable of surprising us.

1.6 Check Your Progress.

- 1) What distinguishes drama from other forms?
- 2) What are dramatic conventions?
- 3) Which play can be rightfully called the greatest Restoration Comedy?
- 4) Who is called the father of English Tragedy?
- 5) Who is the creator of grandiloquent blank verse?
- 6) Give a list of tools of drama.
- 7) Which elements gave Greek drama its lyrical and operatic character?
- 8) Which Restoration elements provided for the developments of literature?



- 9) Name the two schools of expression in the Seventeenth century poetry.
- 10) What does the term 'Restoration Age 'signify?
- 11) What is the difference between Comedy of manners and sentimental comedy?
- 12) What is the difference between Comedy of manners and Comedy of Humour?
- 13) Name a major writer of heroic drama of restoration age.
- 14) How did the vernacular dialogue begin?
- 15) What is a morality play?
- 16) What is a flat character?
- 17) What do you mean by a theme?
- 18) Describe the characteristics of Renaissance period.
- 19) Distinguish between two dimensional characters and rounded ones?

1.7 SUMMARY

Jonson was determined to purge what he considered its fantastic absurdities. In his view plots were full of absurdities. There were inconsistencies in characters, violations of the unities, stress was on make-believe and characters remote from reality. Jonson thus aimed at subjecting drama to a rigorous discipline, bringing in realism. Jonson's contribution to comedy consisted in realism and the creation of 'humor' characters treated satirically. Jonson's characters are simplified creations. The scrupulous observance of unities of time, place and action is typical of Jonson's comedies. The unities required that the action of a play should be a single one uncomplicated by any sub-plot or any material that is apt to distraction. The time of action is restricted to one day. In *Volpone*, the unities of time and place are observed, but the action is complicated by a sub-plot. *Volpone* is among the greatest comedies of the Jacobean period, that never failed to appeal to audience wherever it was staged.

1.9 CONCLUSION

This chapter enables us to know the history of drama in English. We appreciate the process of development. Beginning with religious and liturgical roots it took to literary ways and turned into secular art. We may consider morality drama as an infant stage. It blossomed into a beautiful stage during Renaissance. It acquired a large following. Even at that stage a variety of themes were tried. The scrupulous observance of the unities of time, place and action is the typical of Jonson's comedies. The nomenclature of the characters associated with beasts and birds of prey, implies dehumanization.

Check Your Progress - Answers

1.6

1. Drama is meant to be performed, though often it is read.
2. Dramatic conventions are conditions agreed between dramatist and audience.
3. Critics give preference to Goldsmith, however one may choose Congreve.
4. Christopher Marlow is rightfully called father of English Tragedy.
5. Create of grandiloquent Blank Verse was Marlow.
6. Tools of drama are text, language, theme, plot, structure, character and dialogue.
7. Chorus, elaborate ode and solemn dancing gave Greek drama its character.
8. Restoration of King Charles II and hedonistic liveliness provided for development of literature.
9. Two schools are Metaphysical school and Spenserian school of imagery.
10. Two factors were mark of type, one influence of France and reaction against puritanical morality.
11. Comedy of manners has verbal cleverness and intellectual agility. Sentimental comedy stands for absence of spirit of humour, sober characters and sense of morality and virtue.

12. Comedy of humours deals with a character having whim who behaves dealing with conventions and manners of an aristocratic affluent society. This drama also has an element of intrigue. Unlike comedy of manners, comedy of humours depicts society having no morals.
13. Dryden was the most successful heroic drama writer.
14. Language of primitive drama was rhetorical. Medieval folk were lacking in Latin and Greek and hence local language replaced them.
15. A type of drama in which personification and appearance of such characters were characteristic was called morality play.
16. A flat character is also sometimes called two dimensional character is presented around a single idea or quality. It lacks complexity.
17. A general concept or doctrine incorporated in work of art is called Theme.
18. Characteristics of Renaissance are:
Economic prosperity, widened intellectual horizon, spirit of experimentation, spirit of adventure, serious and significant drama, lyrical exuberance, eye for beauty, and authorized version of Bible.
19. Two dimensional characters are also called flat characters. Here only one property or quality is shown ignoring all other aspects of character. In a rounded character many aspects are considered by writer to make it lifelike.



CHAPTER : 2

BEN JONSON: VOLPONE

2.1	Objectives
2.2	Introduction
2.3	Life and works of dramatist
2.4	The Comedy of Humor
2.5	Analysis of the play
2.6	Characterization
2.7	Check your progress
2.8	Summary
2.9	Conclusion
	- Check your progress - Answers

2.1 OBJECTIVES

We shall discuss intellectual, social and political factors that influenced Ben Jonson and his work. After reading this chapter, you will be able to:

- a) Outline the main characteristics in Elizabethan age
- b) Describe the main aspects of drama
- c) Discuss the theme of 'Volpone'
- d) Discuss the plot of the play
- e) Discuss the different dramatic techniques used by Jonson
- f) Outline the relevance of the characters in the overall scheme of the play
- g) Describe the historical background of the play

2.2 INTRODUCTION

The plays of Elizabethan dramatist including Shakespeare may best be described as 'romantic drama'. They take us to some unidentified locale where we suspend disbelief and follow the fortune

of the characters. The Forest of Arden in 'As You Like It' or Prospero's island in 'The Tempest' are not the geographical places on the map. When Hamlet said drama should hold the mirror up to nature or when Jonson applauded Shakespeare for doing so neither Shakespeare nor Jonson meant a photographic portrayal of the time and place. They only meant that drama should portray human nature in the main whatever be the romantic realm to which the characters are transferred. The Elizabethan drama had developed independently of classical models imported from Greece or Rome. The romantic passion of love, its pride of place in both comedy and tragedy were home-grown.

Unlike Shakespeare who does not seem to have held any inflexible theories about drama, Ben Jonson set out with a definite view on his art. It is in sharp contrast to the main body of Elizabethan drama that we have to understand the comedy of Shakespeare's principal rival Ben Jonson. Jonson was a great scholar steeped in the works of the ancients and their Aristotelian and their Renaissance interpreters. Seneca in tragedy and Plautus and Terrence in comedy were role models whom the Elizabethan scholar held up for admiration and emulation. Jonson admired the untutored genius of Shakespeare. But he rebuked Shakespeare's gross violation of the classical unities of time, place and action, his attempt to represent wars with a few men strutting about the stage, his introduction of incredible monster like Caliban. Ben Jonson felt the legitimate course for comedy was to follow the norms set. Shakespeare did not seem to have held any inflexible theories about drama. Ben Jonson set out with definite views on his art, and he set them forth in his many prologues, inductions and critical essays. We may consider them as his literary manifesto and evaluate his performance in the light of what he professed to do.

2.3 LIFE AND WORKS OF DRAMATIST

Benjamin Jonson was born in London in 1572 as a son of a clergyman. He attended Westminster school. A boy with a scholarly bent of mind, poverty prevented his admission to college and literary ambitions. His career as soldier was short lived.

He joined Henslowe's Company setting his foot as an actor with little

success. Jonson made his significant debut on the stage in 1598 with his 'Every Man in His Humor'. It signaled the advent of a new genius on the stage. In collaboration with Gabriel Spencer an attempt was made to take up and improve Thomas Nash's drama-The Isle of Dogs. This brought a great deal of trouble. It was officially condemned as 'seditious and scandalous'. The most splendid phase of Jonson's career as a dramatist opens with Volpone closely followed by Epicene or The Silent Woman, The Alchemist and Bartholomew Fair.

His other works are listed here: Cynthia's Revels (satire), The Poetaster (satire), Sejanus (tragedy), Volpone (comedy), The Alchemist (comedy, his neatest and best), Catiline, Bartholomew Fair, The Devil Is an Ass, The staple of News, The New Inn the Magnetic Lady, The Tale of a Tub.

In 1616 his works were published in printed form in Folio in 1616. By this time Shakespeare was dead. He assumed a dictatorial manner and castigated what he considered to be romantic excesses. We cannot help feeling that the principal target of his attack was Shakespeare. His criticism of violation of the dramatic unities follows closely what Sir Philip Sidney had already said in his "Apologie for Poetrie". Further he would scorn romantic absurdities and improbabilities such as grotesque representation of great wars and the stage imitation of violent storms and thunder. And he would observe the time honored and healthy convention of comedy.

He introduced in his comedy: Deeds and language such as men do use, persons such as comedy choose to show an image of the times, sport with human follies, not with crime.

In the Introduction to his play "Every man his humor" Jonson tried to give Philosophical basis to his comedy. This reminds us of modern dramatist Eugene O'Neil, who tried to lay the psychological foundation of his plays in psychoanalysis. Jonson's innovation consisted in inventing and perfecting what is called "the comedy of humors" and its basic psychological theory is set forth in great details in the introduction.

2.4 THE COMEDY OF HUMOR

Jonson set out to purge contemporary drama of what he considered its absurdities-impossibility of plot, inconsistencies of character and violation of unities. He wanted to bring in a vital realism. He aimed at discipline, inventing it with realism, in short to mix profit with pleasure. He drew his characters by observing Puritan London. In medieval past in Latin world ancient concept of 'humor' was popular. Static types like the jealous husband, the stern father and cunning servant were used in Morality plays. Jonson's comedies were concerned with these weaknesses, holding them to ridicule.

Jonson brought in realism and created humor characters treated satirically. Thus he set a pattern for Comedy of Manners. But Jonson is also blamed for creating static types. His characters seem to have no personality, no complexity. We observe this again in Shaw.

Roman custom of Captatio is un-English custom. Hence he chose Venice so that practice of offering gift to a wealthy, childless old man on the brink of death with the ulterior motive of substantial return by the way of a legacy might sound credible to English audience. The sordid world of Volpone was figment of imagination.

2.5 ANALYSIS OF THE PLAY

The opening fifty lines have built-in satire on the greed of material wealth. Jonson selects from among the legacy-hunters three typical dupes and labels them off with names of birds of prey. The earliest to arrive is Voltore the Advocate. Mosca assures him that his patron is too ill but that his only heir is advocate. Aristocratic citizen Corbaccio (raven) comes in with a bag of golden coins. Old and deaf Corbaccio hopes to outlive Volpone and inherit his property! He executes will in favor of Volpone, thus disinheriting his only son. The greedy old man hopes that his property will soon come back to him with Volpone's own at his death. Volpone's third visitor is the Corvino (crow) who has come with an orient pearl to tempt Volpone. Volpone is very much pleased with the catch.

The second act opens with the ridiculous Sir Politic Would-Bee and an English traveller Peregrine whom the knight tries to regale with incredible accounts of news such as lions whelping in the Tower. It seems to be against his stated ideas. The conversation between the

knight and the traveller takes place near Corvino's house. Here Volpone disguised as an Italian mountebank, mounts his table and promotes his medicines. Sir Politic pretends to be a poet. Volpone's jargon interests Corvino's simple wife, who opens her window and throws down to him a handkerchief as a mark of her interest. Corvino, the jealous husband, rushes in, thrashes the mountebank and his associates, and locks his wife up in her room. This episode is intended mainly to show how very jealous Corvino could be, and how under the influence of gold he could bring himself to prostitute his wife to Volpone. Corvino showers abuse upon her, drags her by hair and threatens to kill her, Mosca is too clever for the foolish husband. Mosca visits him in his house and informs him that a council of physicians have decreed that Volpone may have a chance of prolonging his life if a young woman is made to lie with him. Further, he confides in him that several of his friends have offered their wives, daughters, to do this favor for the old man, who has gone too far towards death to enjoy a woman. Maddened by cupidity Corvino declared that it will be no other woman but his wife. Now Volpone has an unwelcome visitor in Lady Politic Would Be when he is eagerly waiting for the arrival of Celina, Corvino's beautiful wife. Volpone excuses that he is very ill. Lady Politic offers many prescriptions for cure. Volpone calls for Mosca. The clever rogue invents a ruse that the Knight her husband has just been found going in a gondola with a prostitute. Though she herself is of easy moral Lady Politic at once leaves in search of her erring husband.

Mosca's next dupe is Bonario, Corbaccio's son, whom he brings to Volpone's house promising him to show him how his unnatural father has disinherited him. At this stage, in Act III, the complication reaches climax. Corvino brings his wife to Volpone's house without disclosing to her his real intention, and Bonario is promptly led into the gallery by Mosca. Corvino leaves his virtuous wife in Volpone's house as suggested by Mosca. Volpone leaps out from his bed and rushes towards Celia with a lyrical outburst. (It may be said that the only virtuous characters in the play are Celia and Bonario.) The Lady thus confronted by the voluptuary, inflamed with sexual passion entreats him to spare her chastity. She curses the beauty of her face for putting her in this predicament. But retribution comes. Bonario rushes down from the gallery and wounds both patron and

parasite and rescues the Lady from imminent danger of rape. Volpone's discomfiture is increased by the arrival of Corbaccio and Voltore who like veritable birds of prey, have been hovering over the place to smell death. But Mosca rises to the occasion and invents his plot with quick ingenuity.

Act IV opens with Sir Politic and Peregrine, the one indulging his propensity for expatiating upon plots and schemes and the other incredulously listening to him and occasionally making sarcastic comments about the Knight's folly. Lady Politic apprehends her husband and upbraids his friend as 'a lewd harlot, a base fricative, and a female devil in male outside.' Peregrine is deeply offended and thinks that it is a plot hatched by husband and wife. Now Mosca interrupts them and tells an incredible gross lie- that the prostitute has been apprehended and produced before the Senate. Lady Politic apologizes to Peregrine but she does it in such a way that Peregrine suspects that she is making covert advances to him with the connivance of her husband. The scene now shifts to the Senate House where Voltore's eloquence turns the tables upon Bonario and Celia. Corbaccio swears that his son is a bastard that he has attempted to murder his old father. Corvino corroborates Voltore's charges unashamedly that 'This woman is a whore of most hot exercise, more than a partridge.' The conspirators headed by Mosca have succeeded in producing Lady Politic to bear false witness against Bonario and Celia. The stupid Corvino is prevailed upon by Mosca to believe.

It was much better that you should profess yourself a Cuckold, thus, than that the other should have been proved, i.e. that he offered his wife for prostitution. Mosca promises Lady Politic that he will urge his patron to raise her from the fourth or fifth place to the first in his will. Thus Lady Politic and through her, the sub-plot of the Politics are firmly brought into the main plot. Fourth Act now ends with the triumph of the evil forces, and the only two virtuous characters in the play are branded as a parricide and an adulterous.

Fifth Act opens with soliloquy of Volpone. It shows him triumphant in his villainy. He is blinded by his success and he calls for 'some rare, ingenious knavery'. He is also blind to the possible triumph of his clever parasite at his master's expense. Volpone now proposes to enjoy himself thoroughly by throwing his dupes, 'my vulture, crow and

raven', into utter despair by announcing that he is dead leaving Mosca sole heir to all his wealth. He commands Mosca to put on a gentleman's dress and flaunt himself in front of Voltore, Corbaccio and Corvino and show the will in which he playfully makes over to Mosca all his wealth. Now Mosca overdoes his role, blackmails his master and refuses to part with what he has received by virtue of legal document that his master has executed in fun. Volpone now begins to laugh by the other side of his mouth. His problem is now to get out of the 'Fox-trap' of own invention. He will not give in, nor will Voltore. At the second of the Senate late in the afternoon Volpone discloses his whole villainy and Voltore now comes up as a real advocate for truth. But so great is the influence of wealth that one of the magistrates considers Mosca as a proper man and quite a suitable match for his daughter. Low birth will readily be offset by gold! But Volpone and Voltore will bring down ruin upon them rather than allow the low-born parasite to triumph. Then the gulls and those who gulled them are both punished according to the degree of their crime. Mosca is to be whipped and sent to perpetual prisoner to work in the galleys. Volpone's wealth is to be confiscated on behalf of hospital; Voltore's name is to be removed from the roll of advocates, Corbaccio's son is to inherit all his wealth and the unnatural father is to be sent to monastery thereto learn to die well since he has not learnt to live well. And Corvino is to be rowed round about Venice.

In this survey we omitted one episode which stands out as almost unrelated to the main plot, and that is Peregrine's revenge on Sir Politic for what he considers to be a trick played upon him by both husband and wife together. Peregrine informs Sir Politic that he is going to be searched for sedition against the state of Venice. But the indefatigable master of plots and schemes has already devised a plan of escape. He creeps into a huge tortoise shell, creeps and crawls along, but finally he has to reveal himself in utter humiliation. This is a cruel joke and it takes comedy into the lower region of farce. The omission of this episode will not injure the structural unity of the play.

Jonson adheres to the unities of time and place. The unity of action requires that action of a play should be in a single uncomplicated plot. Any sub-plot or other element is likely to distract, that the scene of action is the same throughout. The duration of

action represented on stage is restricted to the length of a law. Jonson adheres to this percept. In *Volpone*, the action is complicated by a sub-plot.

Volpone is set in a sombre key. We admit that Sir Politic's Peregrine's aberration are follies. Can we apply this term to *Volpone* and Mosca and their dupes? If, however, Jonson confined himself to *Volpone's* during the legacy-hunters and if *Volpone* himself is dismissed in derisive laughter the action would have answered to the description of "sporting with follies". But *Volpone* attempted seduction of Celia, his deadly duel of wit; his parasite Corbaccio's disinheritance of his son and Carvio's eager attempt to prostitute his wife to *Volpone* can by no stretch of imagination be called follies. They are unmitigated crimes. The courts sentence on them takes full count of severity of their crimes and the punishment is well deserved.

The world of *Volpone* is squalid. It is full of greed and other deadly sins. All are within the scope. We note pride of *Volpone* and Mosca, Sir Politic and Voltore. All are proud of some quality they possess, either real or imaginary. *Volpone* is a legal juggler. Sir Politic has is absurd inventions. Lechery is too obvious in *Volpone's* attempted seduction of Celia. Envy is a natural companion of greed in all legacy hunters. Wrath reveals itself in Corvino's outburst at the mountebank and his wife. Sloth is suggested by the parasitism of Mosca. Thus the intrigue in the 'sickroom' has an air of all deadly sins. Every intriguer in the play labors under the illusion the he is scheming successfully until he is caught in his own trap. Comic justice works itself out. It is reinforced by the treatment meted out to all the legacy hunters by Mosca. They fall under the weight of their culpable deeds of shame before they leave *Volpone's* house, frustrated and crestfallen. Jonson's aim in comedy was to laugh at contemporary follies while exposing them. They are all wicked, none has a redeeming quality. The enormity of their crimes follows out of their vice nature. Jonson realizes the comic justice in the Fourth Act is subjected to stern punishment in Fifth Act.

The punishment inflicted on Sir Politic is on the account of his feigning ingenuity. *Volpone* suffers for actually scheming; whereas Sir Politic suffers for an imaginary scheme. The sub-plot involving Sir Politic and Peregrine has been condemned by many critics as an excrescence. Otherwise the play is sombre. Jonson is blamed for

violating the unity of action. We see two plots running in parallel; this gives the drama a sense of a Burlesque in the true tradition of English comedy.

2.6 CHARACTERIZATION

According to medieval belief, fluids blood, Cholera, phlegm and black bile correspond to four elements - air, fire earth, and water. These are present in every human body. The balanced blending of these fluids (or humours as they are called) make normal man, but the preponderance of any one of these humours make a man sanguine, choleric, phlegmatic or melancholic. If these were the only humours Jonson's stock would consist of only four character types. But the humours enter into endless permutations and combinations and give rise to several oddities and eccentricities. Though Jonson set forth this quasi-physiological theory in all seriousness there hardly was anything original about it. Theophrastus and other character writers had hit off briefly but vividly several types of eccentrics and the comic writers of Italy had exploited this trick in their comedy.

The dramatis personae are cryptically and precisely defined at the beginning and what we are shown is not how they grow up in front of us but how they expose their follies to derisive laughter. Jonson's characters are types rather than individuals. They are portrayed as they pose in the social mirror. Unlike Shakespeare's characters that are portrayed in the 'round'; Jonson's characters are 'flat'. Jonson's art reminds us of the cartoonist rather than sculptor. His portrait gallery like that of Charles Dickens abounds in caricatures rather than characters. He grasps firmly a few oddities of character; labels them off with a name expressive of their character and makes them dance to the tune he sets. He satirizes with merciless pleasure the follies that he observed in the society in which he lived

Characters in his comedy are named after beasts and birds of prey. This is to indicate certain dehumanization by greed. It also shows moral deformity of the society. Names in the household are suggestive of their particular natural deformity: the dwarf is Nano (suggesting smallness). The eunuch is called Castrone suggesting

emasculatation. Mosca suggests parasitism.

Volpone is not merely a comedy of humours. It is a satirical comedy in which social vices and crimes as well as social follies are held up to ridicule and chastisement. Everything is drawn to exaggeration. Jonson's introduction of Sir Peter; his wife in a comic under plot is a concession. The soul of the piece is the parasite Mosca, Volpone's "witty mischief.

2.7 Check Your Progress.

- 1) What influences are evident in Jonson's drama?
- 2) In what way did Shakespeare differ from Jonson?
- 3) Name the important dramatic works of Jonson.
- 4) Do you consider Jonson as innovative? Why?
- 5) What does Jonson aim at in Comedy?
- 6) How does the drama Volpone begin?
- 7) Who are the only virtuous characters in the play?
- 8) What does Volpone's soliloquy in the beginning of the fifth act result into?
- 9) Do you consider episode of Peregrine's revenge significant?
- 10) What is the world of Volpone?
- 11) Describe ancient theory of body fluids.
- 12) Give examples of Jonson's way of naming characters.

2.8 SUMMARY

The piece is a dramatic satire, or better stills a satirist's comedy. Not a single character in it is real, even in the sense proclaimed by Jonson himself. Everything is drawn to exaggeration. The intrigue is slight and the denouement is reached by the weak dramatic device of making triumphant villainy overreach itself or be suddenly pricked in conscience. Unity of time is observed. Minor fault as the unnecessary tedium of the Fox's role as a mountebank are not very serious. The soul of the piece is the parasite Mosca, Volpone's witty mischief.

T. S. Eliot says it is generally conceded that Jonson failed as a tragic dramatist; and it is usually agreed that he failed because his genius

was for satirical comedy. His characters are and remain, like Marlowe's simplified character; but the simplification does not consist in the dominance of a particular humour. The simplification consists largely in reduction of detail, in the seizing of aspects relevant to the relief of an emotional impulse which remains the same for that character in making the character to conform to particular setting. This stripping is essential in art, to which is also essential a flat distortion in drawing: it is an art of caricature, of great caricature, like Marlowe's. It is a great caricature which is beautiful; and a great humour, which is serious. The world of Jonson is sufficiently large; it is a world of poetic imagination; it is sombre. He did not get (What G. Smith called the third dimension or the life of the characters out of their theatrical existence) the third dimension, but he was not trying to get it.

The greatness of Jonson's plays comes from his ability to bring, by means of irony, two great views of human nature into perfect juxtaposition. On the one hand we have a vivid depiction in Volpone and Mosca of an exuberantly sensual delight in physical world, here symbolized by gold, and a bursting vitality which enables men to believe that by himself he can make world and man to conform to his desires—here symbolized by acting. These are the views which we take to be characteristic of Renaissance and Jonson gives them shape and language which for sheer vitality and evocative power have never been surpassed. The brilliance of phrases and the urgency of rhythms in such speeches guarantee that Jonson himself responded powerfully to his optimism. At the same time he was a Classicist of his age profoundly committed to the principles of order and tradition in religion, society, and literature.

2.9 Conclusion

This chapter introduced to us Ben Jonson who is one of the few great Elizabethans with a distinctly modern appeal. It created a kind of curiosity and interest in English drama. The squalid world of Volpone is a world deformed by disease and debased not merely by greed but by all the seven deadly sins. The play is as a savage satire on human cupidity. He seems to follow the rigor of comic law insisted by classical practice.

In the next chapter we turn to Marlowe, the greatest of Shakespeare's predecessors.

Check Your Progress - Answers

2.7

1. Aristotelian theory, Seneca tragedy, Plautus and Terrence comedy were role models for Jonson.
2. Both did not mean photographic portrayal in time and place. Shakespeare held no rigid theory of drama. Jonson did.
3. The following are a few of his important works: *Epicoene* or *The Silent Woman*, *The Alchemist* and *Barthomew Fair*.
4. Jonson was innovative in the sense that he introduced philosophical basis to his comedy.
5. Jonson aimed at discipline and mixing profit with pleasure.
6. Drama opens with a satire on greed of material wealth. Three typical dupes are introduced.
7. Celia and Bonario are only two virtuous characters in drama.
8. At the beginning of Act V, Valpone is blinded in success. His soliloquy results into exposure of his villainy.
9. Sir Politic's *Peregrine* is an aberration and may be considered as folly. Some critics condemn it as excrescence.
10. The world of Valpone is the world of squalid, full of greed and other sins.
11. According to medieval belief fluids blood, cholera, phlegm and bile correspond to air, fire, earth and water. Their balance controls the body.
12. Valpone suggests fox. Carvino suggests crow. Corbaccio suggests raven. Mosca suggests parasite. Castrone suggests emasculation. Nano suggests smallness.

□ □ □

CHAPTER : 3

CHRISTOPHER MARLOWE: DR. FAUSTUS

- 3.1 Objectives
- 3.2 Introduction
- 3.3 Life and works of dramatist
- 3.4 Analysis of the play
- 3.5 Theme
- 3.6 Plot and Structure
- 3.7 Characterization
- 3.8 Language and style
- 3.9 Check your progress
- 3.10 Summary
- 3.11 Conclusion
 - Check your progress - Answers

3.1 OBJECTIVES

After reading this chapter, you will be able to:

- a) Outline the main characteristics in Elizabethan age
- b) Discuss the theme of 'Dr. Faustus'
- c) Discuss the plot
- d) Discuss the different dramatic techniques used by Marlow
- e) Outline Marlow's use of language and style
- f) Outline the relevance of the characters in the overall scheme of the play
- G) Outline the life and works of Christopher Marlow

3.2 INTRODUCTION

"How greatly it was all planned!

He was aware that Shakespeare did not stand alone. This was the tribute paid to Marlowe by Goethe, the great German poet and

play-Wright. Goethe's Faust though based on the same Faust Legend is much more philosophical than Marlowe's play. Name of Marlowe is usually associated with that of Shakespeare whenever Elizabethan drama is mentioned. "Marlowe is the predawn light which ushered in the sunrise of Shakespeare" is the tribute commonly paid to Marlowe. (In fact there is an extant theory that Marlowe himself wrote for Shakespeare.)

3.3 LIFE AND WORKS

Christopher Marlowe born in 1563, the second child of a prosperous Canterbury shoemaker, went to King's School on a scholarship at the age of 15. Two years later he won a scholarship from his school and went to Corpus Christi College, Cambridge. In 1584 he took his B.A. and in 1587 his M.A. degree. As he had lived there as a student on scholarship for six years it was presumed that he would take Holy Orders and join the priesthood. But there were rumors that he was thinking of becoming a Roman Catholic at Rheims and the M.A. degree was withheld for a time by the Cambridge University till the Privy Council ordered that the degree be awarded as Marlowe was on Government work and had done "her Majesty good service". The Privy Council's interceding on behalf of Marlowe proves that he was working as a Government informer and spy. It is one of the ironies of his life that first he was accused of trying to become a Roman Catholic and later just six years later accused of being a heretic and an atheist who denied Jesus Christ! As a student he was just ordinary and showed neither great scholarship nor any brilliance: certainly none suspected him of any poetic propensities!

After taking his M.A. degree, Marlowe lived mostly in London and wrote a number of plays, the first of them *Timberline* in 1588 or 1589. The play employs blank verse for the blustering central character of Tamburlaine very powerfully. Here and there the blank verse does show Marlowe deep understands of its potentialities. In his later plays the *Jew of Malta*, *The Tragedy of Dido* (with Nash as his Collaborator) and *Edward II* the verse from changes, becoming increasingly pliant in its suppleness and expressiveness. In *Dr. Faustus*, his blank verse reaches its highest point as the verse form is completely in tune with the needs of the play. Marlowe is also supposed to have assisted Shakespeare in writing *King Henry VI*. He wrote a poem 'Hero and

Leander' and peculiarly enough he was known to his contemporaries more as a poet than as a playwright.

It was evident that Marlowe continued to serve the Government as a spy. In spite of his close association with Sir Thomas Walsingham, he was in constant danger of being prosecuted for 'atheistic view's by the same Council which had absolved him of "Roman Catholic propensities" earlier. On 3rd May 1593 in a tavern at Deptford he dined with three disreputable characters and the same night after dinner in a drunken brawl his companion, the double-spy Ingram Freezer stabbed him in self-defense. Marlowe died on the spot of a wound in the eye.

Marlowe was a young man of bold self-assurance, a typical product of the adventurous age, passionate and fiery in word and act, flippant and biting in his talk, particularly of whatever the elders held in reverence, but kind and generous as a companion. Great tributes were paid to him by his contemporaries as a poet and as a friend. There are complex and sometimes absolutely opposed reactions from critics. But all agree that Christopher Marlowe did pave the way for the great achievements of Shakespeare in the field of drama.

Dr. Faustus was most probably written in 1592. In 1587 the first Faustbuch in German was published and a translation in English appeared in 1592. It was based on the Faust legend which was current in Germany for quite some time. In 1587 the first Faustbuch in German was published and a translation in English appeared in 1592. The translator is known only as PF and his identity has still not been established. Marlowe must have read this book and based his play on the English Faust Book very faithfully following it but making a few additions for his dramatic purposes. Some of these are Faustus' soliloquy on the vanity of human science, the Good and Bad Angels evidently taken Morality Plays and the substitution of the procession of the Seven Deadly Sins (Obviously under the influence of Mystery and Miracle plays). The selection was done judiciously. Omitting a large amount of irrelevant material he was able to shape the rather rambling and incoherent story into a dramatic unity. That he was able to infuse a living characterization into the legend of Faustus making it into a powerful tragedy speaks highly of Marlowe's dramatic art which brought Goethe's encomium on the admirable construction of Dr. Faustus.

University wit

The term University wit was used to indicate a professional set of literary men. Marlowe was the central figure. Among others we include Lyly, Greene, Peele, Lodge and Nash. Historically, Marlowe ranks among the greatest dramatists of all times. A.C.Ward says that it is not merely that historically he is the head of the whole movement. He made blank verse into something rich and ringing and rapid. He made it the vehicle for the greatest English poetry after him. He symbolized youth of his time, its hot bloodedness its lust after knowledge and power. The simple brutalism of the creed with means justifies by the end, the teaching of Machiavelli. Marlowe turned it to his own use within a span of seven to eight years he revolutionized English playwriting. His turbulent spirit and high flying genius found a fit echo in the rhetoric of the stage power fascinated him.

Marlow had a frequent, over luxuriance of imagination, a lack of restraint and an extravagance bordering on the ridiculous. But no criticism can obscure his greatness. He found the drama crude and chaotic. But he left it a great force in English literature. Despite faults of construction, obvious carelessness and other flaws present in youth, Marlow's achievements are very important. Not even Shakespeare could do that Marlow could do.

3.4 ANALYSIS OF DRAMA

The opening speech of the Chorus announces Marlowe's purpose. Faustus, a man of humble origin, has acquired great learning: but his arrogance causes him to overreach and ruin himself. We are to witness a tragedy of presumption- the tragedy of pride and arrogance.

This motive held a strong attraction for the poet whose most-favored character had declared that Nature.

The attraction makes itself felt from the beginning of the play. In the first scene, Faustus dismisses the traditional subjects of study and turns instead to magic, with conceited self-satisfaction and impatient scorn; he rejects philosophy, medicine law and divinity: and with almost breathless eagerness he contemplates the "world of profit and delight, power, of honour, of omnipotence" which he expects to enjoy as a magician. The whole earth, and the winds and clouds above it,

will be subject to his absolute control, while waiting for his friends Valdes and Cornelius, who are to instruct him in concealed art's he swiftly reviews some of the widely varied uses to which he intends to put the skill he seeks. These testify to his ardent curiosity, his desire for wealth had luxury, and his nationalism, as well as to longing for supreme uncontrolled power. Such qualities mark him unmistakably as a man of Renaissance; and a whole series of sensuous allusions maintains throughout the scene of the extended horizons of that age of discovery Faustus craves for gold from the East Indies, for pearl from the depths of the ocean, and for "pleasant fruits and princely delicates from America; Valdes and Cornelius, who are to instruct him in concealed arts' he swiftly reviews some of the widely varied uses to which he intends to put the skill he seeks. These testify the ardent curiosity, his desire for wealth, luxury and his nationalism, as well as to the longing for supreme uncontrolled power. Such qualities mark him unmistakably as a man of the Renaissance; and a whole series of sensuous allusions maintains throughout the scene of the extended horizons of that age of discovery. Faustus craves for gold from the East Indies, for pearl from the depth of oceans, and for the pleasant fruits and priestly delicates from America. Valdes refers to the Indians in the Spanish colonies, to Lapland geniis, to the agonise of Venice, and the annual plate fleet which supplied the Spanish treasury from the New World. There was much here to fire the imaginations of English theatregoers; and they would heartily approve of Faustus' determination to chase the Prince of Parma from the Netherlands. After all, only defeat of the Spanish Armada had prevented Parma from invading England in 1588. Nor were Englishmen ignorant of the, fierily keel at Antwerp's bridge'.

So Faustus' dream of power which is mainly materialistic includes much that must have appealed strongly to the people for whom Marlowe wrote; and the liveliness and zest with which it is expressed show that much in it must likewise have appealed strongly to the poet himself. At the same time, Faustus' declaration-"A sound magician is a demy-god" forces us to recognize the presumptuous nature of his ambition. He evidently aspires to be something more than a man. Without surprise, we learn that his conscience is uneasy. He does not admit it probably because he is not at all conscious of it, but the internal conflict is externalized in the admonitions of his Good

and Bad Angels. The first sentence of the Good Angel, a warning against incurring 'God's heavy wrath's crystallizes our fears for one who has much of our sympathy; and these fears are augmented when, in the following scene, the two Scholars perceive the 'danger of his soul'.

Faustus, however, stubbornly persists in his chosen course. In scene III, he succeeds in calling up Mephistophilis and proposes his bargain with Lucifer; in scene V, he signs his soul away to Lucifer and questions Mephistophilis about hell; in scene VI, he questions Mephistophilis about astronomy and is later entertained by an informal show of the Seven Deadly Sins which is designed to distract him from thought of repentance.

But things are not very smooth for Faustus during these three scenes; Faustus suffers a number of rebuffs. Having performed the ritual by which, he believes, 'the spirits are enforced to rise', he naturally regards the appearance of Mephistophilis as a proof that he can order him about. He proceeds to do so with a quite absurd arrogance. Mephistophilis disillusiones him. Faustus' charms, he explains, did not compel him to come: they merely drew his attention to Faustus' attractively sinful frame of mind, and he came of his own accord, 'in hope to get his glorious soul'. In scene V, after singing the bond, Faustus asks for a wife. Marriage is a sacrament, and naturally Mephistophilis cannot give him one. Mephistophilis' reply takes the form of crude practical joke, followed by a promise of any number of concubines. In scene IV, when Faustus questions him about astronomy, Mephistophilis tells him nothing. Wagner could not have told him; and, when Faustus asks who made the world Mephistophilis reluctant to acknowledge the Creator, refuses to reply. His refusal provokes a crisis in their relations.

Anyone less infatuated and less arrogant than Faustus might have inferred from these rebuffs that the power he was acquiring so presumptuously fell far short of the 'omnipotence' of which he had dreamed. Faustus, however, brings himself to disregard not only these checks but also several quite obvious and explicit warnings. Of these, the most obvious is provided by the congealing of his blood and its forming the words 'Homo fuge', when he is busy singing the bond with it. Even Lucifer's grotesque show of the Seven Deadly Sins, with Pride appropriately at their head, can be seen as

potentially admonishing whatever Faustus' actual response to the performance might be. But the most eloquent warning comes from that melancholy, tortured, and surprisingly truthful friend. Mephistophilis himself within fifty lines of their first meeting, Faustus asks him what caused the fall of Lucifer. Mephistophilis ascribes it correctly to 'aspiring pride and insolence' that is, to factors such as are visible in Faustus himself.

'And what are you,' inquires Faustus, 'that live with Lucifer'?

Meph : Unhappy spirits that fell with Lucifer, Conspired
against our God with Lucifer, and are forever
damned with Lucifer.

Fau. : Where are you dammed?

Meph : In hell.

Fau. : How comes it then that art out of hell?

Meph : Why, this is hell, nor am I out of it, Thinks thou that,
I, who saw the Face of god

And tasted the eternal joys of heaven Am not tormented with ten
thousand hells. In being deprived of everlasting bliss?

Mephistophilis, no doubt, means only to voice his own anguish. But his words would have conveyed a warning if Faustus had been capable of receiving one. It is the same after the signing of the bond in scene V. Faustus asks where hell is, Mephistophilis first locates it in the centre of the sublunary, elemental part of the universe, then goes on to speak of it, as he did earlier, as the spiritual condition of those who are entirely separated from God;

Meph : Hell hath no limits, nor is circumscribed In one self
place, but where we are is hell, And where hell is,
there must we ever be; And to be short, when all the
world dissolves And every creature shall be purified.
All places shall be hell that is not heaven.

Fau. : I thing hell's a fable.

Meph : any think so still, till experience change thy mind':
(v 122-9)

Faustus does not merely neglect these warnings. He sweeps them aside with impatient, flippant arrogance. When his blood congeals to prevent his singing away his soul, he asks himself

indignantly: "Is not they soul thine own"? It is time that the injunction 'Home fuge' shake his complacency for a moment. But he receives the Seven Deadly Sins with unreflecting jocularly; and in his glib and insensitive retorts to the anguished Mephistophilis, sombre speeches about hell he boastfully asserts his human self-sufficiency. How ridiculous that it has to instil courage in to Mephistophilis and comfort him!

"What is great Mephistophilis so passionate for being deprived of the joys of heaven?

Learn thou of Faustus manly fortitude And scorn those joys thou never shalt possess", (iii 85-8)

What better irony is there when he denies the existence of hell to Mephistophilis!

Meph : but I am instance to prove the contrary.

For I tell thee I am damned and now in hell.

Fau : Nay, and this be hell, I'll willingly be damned:

What, sleeping eating, walking and disputing"!

Faustus, then, concludes an infamous bargain in order to enjoy the knowledge, the pleasure, and above all the omnipotent power for which he craves. In scene I, we do feel a certain degree of sympathy, and even of admiration, for him. This becomes more and more severely qualified as the play proceeds and his swallowing-down of rebuffs and refusals, together with his frivolous dismissal of one warning after another, exposes the inordinate appetite which dominates him. He is willful, headstrong and blind.

His bargain requires him to abjure God. As early as in the original evocation of Mephistophilis, he is fully prepared to do this. At the beginning, he feels few misgivings. Indeed, scene III ends with a further expression of kind of elation which characterized him in scene I. But shortly before signing the bond he wavers. Again the good and Bad Angels appear and externalize his internal struggle with his conscience: "contrition, prayer, repentance' which could reconcile him with God, is denounced by the Bad Angel as illusions, fruits of lunacy'. Such doctrine helps Faustus to silence the voice of conscience. Once more he achieves the heady elation and cries out arrogantly.

'Why, the signory of Emden shall be mine', but not before he has glimpsed a further temptation to despair.

This temptation recurs momentarily when he first sees the words 'Homo fue'. It confronts him in full strength, however, at the beginning of scene VI. The Bad Angel then assures the man who has abjured God that he is beyond the reach of Divine Mercy. Faustus confesses that his heart hardened, that his conviction of his own damnation prevents him from repenting, and that he has thought of suicide:

**"And long ere this I should have done the deed
Had not sweet pleasure conquered deep despair"**

Here the stress on, sweet pleasure, should be noted as it denotes his sensuous nature. But fifty lines later, after Mephistophilis refuses to say who made the world, Faustus comes near to achieving repentance. For once, he seems to be listening so the Good Angel and words of prayer begin to pass his lips. At this crisis, feeling that the situation has gone out of his hands, Mephistophilis invokes the aid of Lucifer and Beelzebub. They intimidate Faustus and as soon as he again abjures God, gratify him with the shows of the Seven Deadly Sins. Almost childishly, Faustus enjoys the colorful scene not perceiving the suggested damnation.

It is clear from this scene that the deed of gift which Lucifer required Faustus to sign is not really so binding and, that the initial sin has not damned him once and for all. The utterances of the Good and Bad Angels on their two appearances would be pointless if it were not still possible for Faustus to repent and by so doing to cancel the bond ; and the continuous measures taken by Mephistophilis show that damnation is a continuous process 'For although..... (Faustus) had made..... (Satan) a promise, yet he might have remembered through true repentance sinners come again into the favour of God.' In fact, the deed is validated from minute to minute only by Faustus' persistent refusal to relinquish such power that he thinks he has acquired by his presumption.

So Faustus, abjuring God in the hope of becoming something more than a man, "to be equal to God" succeeds in fact in separating himself from God, isolating himself in large measure from his fellows, and consigning himself to the hell so powerfully suggested by Mephistophilis. Repentance remains possible; he represses yet other

spontaneous impulse towards it as late as in scene XV. But it is unlikely to develop in one so lacking in humility and so greedy for the sensuous satisfaction, incomplete though they tend to be, which his sin brings him.

The tragedy is that his achievements are so poor while his aspirations were sky-high. Incomplete they are indeed in comparison with what he felt able to promise himself. From scene VIII to scene XVII we watch him exploit his dearly-bought power. He goes on the rampage in the Vatican: he intervenes, effectively but inconclusively, in the scene between the Pope and Emperor: he conjures for Charles V and revenges himself on a heckler; when the heckler retaliates, he takes a second revenge: he conjures for the Duke and Duchess of Vanholt; he tricks a horse dealer; and when the horse dealer retaliates, he takes his revenge on him too. For the 'world of profit and delight' which these escapades represent, Faustus voluntarily barter his soul. Was it only for these trivialities that he has sacrificed his immortal soul!

It is possible that these passages are mainly that work of Marlowe's collaborator: and the change of authorship no doubt accounts for the temporary transformation of Faustus from an ambitious but sometimes fearful sinner into a jaunty pep baiter and practical joker. Marlowe clearly wishes us to see that Faustus had made an even worse bargain than what had at first appeared; and the rebuffs and refusals which Faustus endures as already described, in scene III, V and VI are only to prepare us for this perception. All his pranks are on the physical plane and physical torture is the worse baiting he practices.

We have observed several crises of conscience on Faustus' part. Towards the end of the twenty four years allowed to him in the deed of gift. In scene XVIII, an Old Man exhorts him to repent before it is too late;

Though thou hast new offended like a man.

Do not persevere in it like a devil?

Yet, yet, thou hast an amiable soul,

If sin by custom grow not into nature:

Then thou art banished from the sight of heaven;

No mortal can express the paints of hell. (Xviii-41-7)

As Greg remarks, this Old Man might almost be the personified abstraction Good Counsel from a Morality play. Equally reminiscent of the same older form of drama are Marlowe's use throughout of the two Angels, and of the diabolical characters, and his taking as his theme the struggle between the forces of good and evil for the soul of a representative man.

The good counsel has an immediate effect upon Faustus. But he lacks faith in God's mercy, this effect in merely to drive him towards despair. He is so deeply in both that, he cries in desperate anguish:

"Damned art thou, Faustus, damned despair and die" (xviii.56)

Mephistophilis hands him a dagger, and only the old Man's intervention and his assurance that God's mercy is still available prevent Faustus from stabbing himself. As he struggles to repent and fight against despair, Mephistophilis repents the treatments which proved so successful in scene VI. First he terrorizes Faustus who is clearly afraid of physical torture like all intellectuals. "Revolt or I'll in piecemeal tear thy flesh".

Then when Faustus has submitted and has offered to renew the bond, he gratifies him with the sweet embraces' of Helen of Troy. Naturally, this is not Helen herself-Just as 'the royal shapes/Of Alexander and his paramour' were presented by sprits, He lions, too, is impersonated by a Devil; and Faustus in embracing her commits the sin of demoniality, of bodily intercourse with demons. The Old Man, learning this, concludes that he can now do nothing for Faustus; and by the next scene; his last. Faustus has finally added to this original presumption and abjuring of God the further mortal sin of despair.

Before he surrenders himself to Helen, Faustus utters his famous apostrophe, beginning:

Was this the face that launched a thousand ships?

And burnt the topless towers of Ileum? (Xviii-99-100)

Throughout this rhapsody we hear once more the note of elation which was so strong in the earlier scenes of the play; and the long-continued popularity of the speech apart from its context shows that readers have been able without misgiving to take it as expressing a simple eager aspiration. But the speech is actually addressed to a friend, the devil-women who will indeed such forth Faustus' soul ; it

is the immediate prelude to the sin which plunges him into irremediable despair ; and its significance is underlined by the presence during most of it of the Old Man, whose comment becomes vocal at close. Arousing these conflicting responses, the incident may reasonably be regarded as epitomizing the basic theme of the whole play, the decay of the moral values of Faustus.

By scene XIX, then, Faustus has entirely lost hope. In a prose passage he takes a moving farewell of the scholars. Mephistophilis assures him that it is now too late to repent; and when the Angels enter immediately afterwards they merely moralize upon the fact of his damnation. There follows the great soliloquy which express Faustus' state of mind and feeling during his lost hour.

There is general agreement that this is Marlowe's most mature passage of dramatic verse. It contrasts sharply even with the apostrophe to Helen. Shrinking in terror Faustus first addresses himself in a long series of monosyllables terminated emphatically by the polysyllable which focuses his dread:

**"Now hast thou but one bare hour to live,
And then thou must be damned perpetually".**

He appeals for time, almost shrieking for "a year, a month, a week, a natural day" in which to repent, thus implicitly admitting that his deed of gift did not make repentance impossible; and this appeal culminates in this poignant quotation of a line of Latin verse. Ovid, whom he quotes, wished to lengthen out the pleasure of the night; Faustus wishes simply to postpone the anguish of the morrow. The uselessness of the appeal is conveyed in a two-line sentence which, starting with an almost stately slowness, accelerates sharply to allude again to his imminent damnation:

**"The stars move still, time runs, the clock will strike,
The devil will come, and Faustus must be damned".**

Even as late as this, he has an intimation of the divine mercy; through it is now unattainable by him:

See where Christ's blood streams in the firmament"! And he seems to strain upwards in the broken line which immediately follows. Again he quails when tormented by the fiend; and by calling desperately upon Lucifer to spare him he surrenders himself afresh.

The farcical prose scenes call for little attention. Naturally, topics, which are important in the more serious scenes trend to be echoed in them. Wagner, for example, asserts that Robin 'would give his soul to the devil for a shoulder of mutton' (v.9-10); and in scene X Robin conjures up an irate Mephistophilis. No doubt there is a touch of crude burlesque in such places. But the current critical fashion ordains that we should discern in them profound, subtle, and sustained irony. Some others ask if it is not doing violence to common sense in the name of literary criticism. Most of the resemblances which have been traced between these funny scenes and more serious action of the play are quite remarkably slight. One instance is this. In scene IX' Faustus snatches away the Pope's food and drink; in scene, X, the two clowns enter with a cup they have stolen from an inn. What kind of resemblance is this? They are not even very funny, but some critics feel that it is all intended to stress the mundane nature of the trivialities Faustus pursues.

Thus we find Marlowe dramatizing a narrative which is already full of tragic potentialities though tacking in tragic dignity, giving an unmistakable individuality to the character of Faustus, rescuing him from the typical magic-pondered and devil's servant type of the legend. The tragedy of Faustus is not in his desire for unlimited power but in the means he adopts for it. His pride, arrogance and lack of understanding of the process of evil which corrupts him are supremely well presented. He surrenders entirely to evil's machinations the very moment he thinks he has attained suzerainty over the agent of Lucifer, Mephistophilis. The insidious eating away of his goodness by evil is the cause for his decadent use of the power he has gained bartering away his own soul. His tragic fall is that he misuses all his power in puerile and vulgar things, though his intention was to be 'great as God'. Our sympathy of Faustus is stirred as he again passes through conflict, though again and again he succumbs to evil. But we do not over sympathize with him, for the great scholar Faustus of the early part of the play has used power only to pander to his sensuous vulgarity what should have been Apollo's laurel turns out to be a more wayside flower bush! But the tragic intensity of his fall is indicated in the vast difference between his aspirations and his achievements. Knowing full well that he is slipping to Hell, he vainly tries to repent and his failure is a

consequence of his own arrogance and fluctuating infirm mind. It is only at the end that we see the tragic intensity of the last scene is presented as the finest artistic achievement of Marlowe's dramatic genius. But it is right to point out that the plot and character of Dr. Faustus prepare us for it and it is a grand culmination for the tragic decadence of a great scholar and a great soul.

3.5 THEMES

Unlawful knowledge :

Hero is born in lower class family; he had been educated in University. He received a doctor's degree in divinity. He had also studied Aristotle's philosophy, Physics and Roman law. He had a discontent. He decided to study magic. He believed he can be immortal. According to scripture, necromancy is unlawful. His own mind tells him so. But he is a secular person. He regards heaven and hell as fables. He boldly goes ahead in pursuit of worldly knowledge leading to worldly power and glory. He signs a deed with Lucifer bartering away his soul for twenty- four years of free life according to his soul He is intent upon such knowledge as can be acquired with the help of the Devil and the price is eternal damnation. And yet he persists in his ambition. He ignores the subsequent warnings of Good Angel and an Old Man. He is reminded of the celestial joys that accrue from the study of the Scriptures and the faith in the Holy Trinity. But it has no effect on him. His mind is more inclined towards sensuality than spirituality. The result is death and damnation.

Ambition and its downfall :

The tragic history of Dr. Faustus is also a study of man's over-ambition and fall due to it. Faustus tells several times that he is mere man. But he aspires to be God-almighty. This ambition to gain unearthly power is illegitimate. Marlow himself was fascinated by power. In The Jews of Malta, it is the power of wealth. In Dr. Faustus it is occult power. Faustus sells his soul to the power of the evil in return for a period of absolute power on earth. It is significant that the first thing he does is to question Mephistophilis about the secrets of the universe. Intellectual curiosity comes first: pleasures afterwards.

Science versus Spirituality :

Faustus represents the Renaissance man whose quest for

knowledge was aroused by the study of classics. In the fifteenth century the whole Europe was awakened to a new sense of the universe. There were attempts to know the secrets of nature. The real point about Dr. Faustus is that he does not buy power from the devil only for devilish ends or for mere self-indulgence. He buys it to bring within the reach of man's knowledge otherwise unattainable. The Faust of Gounod's opera is by comparison a mere vulgar. Marlowe's Faustus represents the curiosity of a scientist who transfers his attention from scriptures to the books of utilitarian knowledge about the world.

Sensuality versus Spirituality :

After acquiring the services of Mephistophilis as a ministering power, Faustus wastes no time to ask for a wife. He wishes for the fairest maid in Germany. He makes no concealment of the fact that he cannot live without a wife. When Lucifer presents the pageant of the Seven Deadly Sins he is overjoyed. He exclaims: ' O this feeds on my soul'. Helen's kiss can make him immortal and her lips are heaven. Faustus' dominant trait is sense gratification. He is sensualist from the moment he takes up the book of magic and ponders over what it may bring him. One of the implications of the play is that sensuality at the cost of spirituality is dangerous. What does the man gain if he possesses all the wealth but loses his own soul? This is a peril which the world of secular knowledge is constantly facing even today. Materialism has led to the fall of innocent man.

The question of freewill :

The tragedy of Faustus is a tragedy of proper moral choice. Faustus enjoyed freewill in shaping his own destiny. Whenever a choice is offered to him he chose the Devil. He reaffirms his faith in Mephistiphilis and Lucifer. He repents only for the moment. His indulgence in earthly pleasures is insatiable. When the Old Man warns him he does pay attention. He signs the contract, wishes for Helen to extinguish the last sparks of divinity. He ruins himself both deliberately and in defiance of the advice given to him by good forces.

Theism versus atheism :

Marlowe has cast Dr. Faustus into dramatic form the theme of a

man who denied God and fell into despair. Faustus has less faith in God or Scriptures than Lucifer. He says 'When Mephistophilis shall stand by me, what God can hurt'? He mocks at the Pope and plays tricks on Friars. He imagines that Helen is heaven and her kiss can make him immortal. But the moral of the play is a pointer towards theism. We find no proof of atheism in the play. At the time Marlowe wrote, not to have believed in God and witchcraft both would have been construed into the rankest atheism and irreligion.

3.6 PLOT

Goethe, the legendary literary figure praises "How greatly it is all planned". The point is Marlowe's greatness of planning led to the charge of persistently hyperbolic treatment of his subject. But at the same time it resulted in a merit. It gave his soaring freedom of imagination. Regarding third charge the lack of humour there is a great deal of defense in favor of Marlowe. His work was styled in Greek Tragedy. We do not find his works humorless.

Dover Wilson says that Marlowe emancipated the English mind from classical notions of stiff decorum. Before him stage was in a chaotic condition. The classicist had the form but no fire. The classical and Senecan tragedies were written with strict unity of time, place and action. Marlowe was the first dramatist to add romantic beauties to the English drama. He blazed a new trail in both in thought and technique. The English tragedy before him was a string of carnal, bloody and unnatural acts. It was melodramatic like Gorboduc or Cambyses. Construction itself was loose and incoherent. The elements of the morality plays met together but never showed integration.

Marlowe attempted to redeem the English drama from certain crudities. He gave life-like characters marked with vigor and fire. He brought in the element of struggle in the hero. He did introduce new dramatic poetry but paid scant attention to the structural beauty of the play. Plot moves on not with proper inter-link of scenes but with progressive rise and fall of the fortune of the hero. There is hardly any unity of time and place. However there is unity of impression. Every scene contributes to the theme of the play.

He mixes tragedy with comedy as if the two go hand in glove. He

brings in Fool to relive deeply- afflicted hero. He was a poet, not a craftsman. His strength lay in his dramatic outlook and dramatic verse.

Structural weakness of Dr. Faustus

In the words of Helen Gardener tragedy shows a man of a social being, involving with his fellowmen. Tragic character orders his life as well as the lives of those around him. He makes mistakes according to his own nature. Viewed from this concept Dr. Faustus is hardly a social being. He is a man of his own imagination, not of reality. He chooses his field unwisely and his choice is his own concern. He falls alone only warning others. He is not a tragic hero in the proper sense. He is solitary figure whose life delights no man and whose death depresses none.

Marlowe's Dr. Faustus is undoubted, but its greatness lies in single scenes. The play is little more than a framework by a great play. Its opening speech and the closing presentation of the final hour of retribution reaches a depth of pathos which no other has equalled. The weakness lies in the middle scenes, some of which are crude, grotesque, and even farcical-so inadequate that some have doubted Marlowe's authorship.

Wharton points out to Marlowe's tragedies have just a trace of dramatic conception, but loads of tedious uninteresting scenes, extravagance and barbarous ideas of time. His scepticism was constructed by the prejudiced and peevish puritans into absolute atheism. It led to unfortunate catastrophe of his untimely death. Is it a punishment from heaven upon his execrable impiety?

3.7 CHARACTERIZATION

As in a Morality play, Dr. Faustus shows signs of poor characterization. Almost all the characters are shadowy and featureless. Marlowe's Mephistophilis is not the cynical spirit of evil drawn by the genius of Goethe, but a mere common place drudge of the infernal power. Of course he is not without signs of remorse and passion. Even the character of Faustus has no individuality. There are no details, no personal traits, no eccentricities or habits, nothing that is intimate or individual. No indication of how he differs from others.

Character sketch of Dr. Faustus

His learning in theology excelled the other scholars. He resolved to study necromancy and become an earthly god. For this he has to transfer his faith from Christ to Lucifer. He has even to forsake his soul. He thinks that the bargain is fortune because it will satisfy his will to power. His passion for knowledge is accompanied with self-gratification. He is a sort of scientist and his passion for power is to be understood in proper light. He is the representative of modern man who wants to explore the whole universe and know the secrets of life and death. The knowledge he wants to gain can also be helpful to others. When he pleases others with his magic skill, he becomes utilitarian. He produces grapes for Duke's wife. But his tragic history does plead that knowledge without wisdom is dangerous thing. The soul of a man is as important as his flesh.

In the character of Dr. Faustus, Marlowe dramatizes the values of the Renaissance, as well as those of Reformation. He is a dualistic figure. He is the hero of the new age of Renaissance. He is humanitarian, a lover of truth, a fearless explorer of nature, a friend of man and an avowed enemy of God. From Reformation point of view, he is evil all compact, monstrous in egoism and pride, anarchic in selfishness, blasphemous, rake less, godless and damned. Behind this duality, Marlowe the Renaissance poet holds the cordial view of his character, but the Christian audience nurtured in the Biblical faith, hostile.

Mephistophilis

In medieval legend, Mephistophilis is a devil to whom Faust sold his soul for riches and power. In common parlance, he is a crafty, powerful, malevolent devil. In German Faust legend, he is the personification of the devil. He is an evil principle eternally in conflict with man's spirit. Goethe makes him enter into a pact with Faust bartering away the latter's soul. But Mephistophilis does not succeed in his mission. Faust does not wish any scene of sensual delight to become a permanent sight which was the condition whereby Faust would lose his soul to him.

In Marlowe's play he is a sub-ordinate character. He appears before Faust in response to the incantation of his magical words. His first impression is ugly. He is very pliant to Faust who finds him in full of

obedience and humility. Mephistophilis is an instrument of Lucifer. He helps his master in winning the souls of those who have given up their faith in God. As soon as he hears that somebody is racking the name of God and abjuring the scriptures and Christ the saviour, he rushes towards him to take charge of his soul. He tells Faust that the shortest cut for calling up the evil spirit is to abjure the trinity and pray devoutly to the prince of Hell. Thus Mephistophilis is the enemy of religious virtue and friend of worldly vices. He is not cunning. He plays with open cards and hides nothing from Faust. It is creditable for him to be frank and candid of his past and present. There is a hell within and he reminds Faust of the eternal joys of heaven.

His role: He plays an important role in the play. His first task is to warn Faust about the step he is taking. Indirectly, he makes it clear that the abjuring of religious virtues means perdition and ceaseless suffering. He is thus a touchstone of Faust's mind. He is loyal to both Lucifer his master and Faust. He is obedient to Faust but not against the interest of his master. Though a subordinate character he dominates the play along with Faust. He does not disguise the reality of hell or heaven, blasphemy or holiness. He admits his own sin and speaks self-pityingly about his fall from heaven. Thus he is an urban devil. He is certainly not a repulsive character. He has certain grandeur. His melancholy figures are not like that of Milton's serpent in *paradise Lost*.

3.8 LANGUAGE AND STYLE

Marlowe's achievements which helped or influenced the growth of English Drama are mainly in two fields. He used the blank verse with suppleness, freeing it from the bondage of the mechanical staccato rhythm of ten syllables, five-beat pattern seen in earlier works. It is to be conceded that Marlowe was not the first to use Blank Verse in drama or tragedy, but it is to be admitted that he was the first to use Blank Verse giving it life and making it a powerful medium of expressive dialogue. The tragedy *Gorboduc* (1561) was written in Blank Verse: but the Verse is mechanically pedantic, accurate in its iambic beat and decasyllabic count and clumsy as every line ends almost with a pause to the idea if not a full stop. It is Marlowe's achievement that he perceived the potentialities of this verse medium, and penetrated its rhythm giving life to it and making

it supple. It became a magnificent vehicle for drama, achieving a rhythm both majestic and pliant- fit enough to express every kind of idea or emotion. It came to perfection in the hands of Shakespeare whose use of it has made it appear like natural speech. Of course Marlowe's blank verse is not of the same all-embracing perfection of Shakespeare's verse, but it was Marlowe who groomed the verse to proportion, so that Shakespeare could use it with mastery and perfection- The blank verse of the earlier tragedies of Marlowe has the weakness of mechanical rhythmic beats but in his later plays we see Marlowe making the verse pliant to his purpose- a long way from the dead verse used in "Gorboduc".

The second great achievement of Marlowe is that he introduced character into drama. The interplay of character and action as an essential part of drama was seen by Marlowe and he paved the way for the great character dramas of Shakespeare and others. Telling a story with a purpose, earlier drama had no interest in the characters at all. Morality presented the struggle between Good and Evil for possession of man's soul. The two qualities were personified with Good standing on one side, simple in appearance, soft in speech, dignified in manner, soothing in its actions and most probable dull in its total impression compared to the Evil standing on the other side, colourful in appearance, loud in speech, blustering in manner, charming in its action and most attractive in its total impression. Evil always is more seductive than Good and has greater charm and pull over man's weak soul. This fact was brought forth using these two qualities as personified types playing with man's soul as the stakes. The human being in the middle represented 'Everyman' and as such did not have any distinctive quality of his own. Individuality is the most important ingredient of the distinctive character of any person and this was lacking in the Moralities commonly staged in those days. The Miracles and the Mysteries, religious plays based on the life of Christ and the Saints of the Church, followed set rules of presentation of the stories. Again, here, the interest was in the faith to be impressed upon, the faithful followers of the Church and not in the presentation of the characters. People were merely types and not characters for the purposes of this type of religious drama. Though Marlowe has used the Morality as an inspiration and has emulated it in a few scenes in Dr. Faustus, he has forged a new kind of drama in which

character is distinct. In fact it was he who brought drama into fullness of life by adding character to the already existing elements of plot and conflict, extent in the Morality, Miracle and Mystery plays which were popular during the period. Thus these two innovations make Marlowe the Harbinger of English Drama. The influence of Marlowe on Shakespeare is itself a fascinating study, as can be seen by comparing Marlowe's Edward II with Shakespeare's Richard II. A comparative study of evil in Dr. Faustus and Macbeth is also of engrossing interest.

Marlowe had the defects of the temperament of his age. Dr. Faustus is a proof of the credulous ignorance which still prevailed and a specimen of the subject which then were thought not improper for tragedy. A tale which at the close of the sixteenth century had the possession of the public theatres of cities, now only frightens children at a puppet show in a country.

Marlowe had a frequent over luxuriance of imagination a lack of restraint and an extravagance bordering on the ridiculous. But no criticism can obscure his greatness. He found the drama crude and chaotic but he left it a great force in English literature. Despite faults of construction, obvious carelessness and other flaws present in youth, Marlowe's achievements are very important. Not even Shakespeare could do all that Marlowe could do.

Enough has been said perhaps to display something of the dramatic urgency and widely varied expressiveness of a great monologue, in which Faustus shows himself agonizingly aware of 'the heavy wrath of God' against which his good Angel has already warned him. Towards its close, his fort wears his humanism. Having prided himself on his reliance, and having even striven to be more than a Man, he now longs to be less than a man: he wishes he could be 'a creature wanting soul', some brutish beast', which at death world face mere extinction and not eternal damnation. He curses his parents for engendering him. No doubt the 'books' which he offers to burn are primarily his books of magic. But the world reminds us of his exclamation to the Scholars earlier in the scene: 'O, would I have never seen written berg, never read book!' and we retain the impression that Faustus is ascribing his downfall in part to his learning. Hearing them to all that has preceded them, we can surely have no hesitation in thinking of Faustus as embodying the new

inquiring and aspiring spirit of the age of the Renaissance, and of Marlowe as expressing ultimately, his awed and pitiful recognition of the peril into which it could lead those whom it dominated. But we must beware of assuming too simple a relationship between any artist and his work; and, even if the relationship was in this instance a simple one Doctor Faustus apparently belongs to the last year of Marlowe's life and therefore to the latest stage of whatever development he was undergoing.

3.9 Check Your Progress.

- 1) What were the charges against Marlow during his post-university days?
- 2) If Shakespeare does not stand alone, who shares his glory?
- 3) Name Marlow's first play.
- 4) What is Faustbuch?
- 5) What do you mean by University wit?
- 6) What is the result of unlawful knowledge?
- 7) What are the major themes of the drama?

3.10 SUMMARY

Marlow had the defects of the temperament of his age. Dr. Faustus is a proof of the credulous ignorance which still prevailed and a specimen of the subject which then were thought not improper for tragedy. A tale which at the close of the sixteenth century had the possession of the public theatres of cities, now only frightens children at a puppet show in a country.

3.11 Conclusion

The Faust Legend

(This has been taken from the introduction to the editions of play by Gerg, Ward, Osborne and Modlen) Johann, Faustus.

From the disreputable reality of Faustus the "Scholar-Mountebank" of the Renaissance was woven by legend and romance the Faust who captured the imagination of Marlowe and Goethe. This Faustus, in the solitary sublimity of the supreme rebel, is the literary equal of the

Prometheus of Aeschylus and Lucifer, the true hero of Paradise Lost. All three are emblems of the recurring conflict great adventurous minds with the restrictions imposed by conventional religion and morality. In each pride is carried through arrogance to conceit. In the nobility of his aspiration Faust perhaps stands first. For knowledge, and for the glamour of that power which knowledge brings, open eyed, he stretches forth his hand to pluck off the fruit of the Forbidden Tree. The inevitable catastrophe but enhances the grandeur of his choice.

But behind the literary Faust is the historical Faustus, who lived when the Renaissance was at its height. His was the more common tragedy of the misuse and decay of great intellectual gifts. Our knowledge of the historical Faustus is derived from some dozen references in little-read authors, and most of these were written upon hearsay evidence by men biased in his disfavour. Yet together they give us a surprisingly vivid picture of the man.

There are other references, of less importance but confirming the general impression given by the above; among them is one by Luther, who doubts Faust's pretensions although crediting him with powers of prediction.

It will have been noticed that even the name varies from writer to writer. The Georgius Faustus of Heidelberg of Conradt Mudt serves as connecting link between the George Sabellicus, Faustus junior of the Tritheim and the Johann Faust of the Heidelberg University records. Commentators now identify these. His true name was George Sabel. "Faustus" was a nickname which eventually supplanted his real name. Like Fortunatus and Prospero (in Shakespeare's *Tempest*) it simply means "the lucky one" H.G. Meek argues that Faustus junior suggests a "Faustus senior" i.e., that Sabel took the name from some previous "Faustus" whom he took as his model. This personage he finds in the father of St. Clement, whom Simon Magus changed into his own double. The change of Christian name is not so easily accounted for. But "Johann" was a popular name among conjurers and popular magicians. Thus Johann Faustus would be an admirable trade name for a purveyor of popular magic. These suppositions must remain conjectural, but the identification of Johann Faustus with George Sabel is almost certain.

Let us now try to reconstruct the man. George Sabel, or as he

was later known, Johann Faustus, was born at Knittlingen in the Palatinate, about 1488. he was endowed with a fine intelligence and immoderate self-confidence. He took the best degree of his year in the University of Heidelberg. But even before this his reputation and attainments were sufficient to earn for him the friendship of the Lutheran reformer and General Franz von Sickingen, .one of the greatest patrons of literature and learning of the day, and the interest of Johann Warding, Astronomer Royal to the Elector Palatine.

He lived at the height of the Renaissance, when the recently re-discovered classics still held something of novelty, and science and learning were full of glamour. His intellectual curiosity, his diversity of interests, and his self-confidence are typical of his age. We find him studying the classics, interested in the new religious ideas which were the precursors of the Reformation, and after credited with being expert in all branches of occultism from astrology and alchemy to the divagations of popular mystagogy. It must be remembered that at this time astrology and alchemy were regarded as serious sciences and magic and demonology were universally accredited. Most of the outstanding scholars of the age, divine and secular alike, incurred the reputation of sorcery.

Although his journeys were later exaggerated, he undoubtedly travelled much and far. His travels fall into two periods. Before his degree he lived the life of a wandering scholar. In the latter part of the fifteenth century the roads in Germany were infested with scholars travelling from one University to another in order to pursue their studies. Their condition was wretched; they were usually poverty stricken, and gaged or stole their bread or earned a supper by singing or playing. Owing to the scarcity of books the courses of lectures at different Universities were important. These destitute students became the companions of Faust in his later years and pondered to his exaggerated self-conceit. It is pertinent to remember that they were popularly believed to study Black Magic.

After his course at Heidelberg degeneration set in. selfconfidence turns to boasting and boasting to charlatanism. As the anecdote about his knowledge of Plato and Aristotle illustrates his erudition, the story that he claimed by diabolical agency to be able to restore the lost plays of Plautus and Terence illustrates his charlatanism.

He now becomes a travelling fortune-teller and quack mystagogue,

basking in the admiration of the ignorant and associating with needy students and gypsies. He claims to have supernatural powers and calls the devil his brother-in-law. One can see the typical psychology of the charlatan-inflated self-worship, the absolute need of admiration, which he obtains by high-sounding titles and a swaggering air, and the gradual drift towards even lower ranks of society. With the increase of his malady his morals deteriorate. From the peddling of quack scholarship he sins to the peddling of quack medicines, which earns him the hostility of the medical profession he is publicly expelled from Ingolstadt and is forced to make a hurried retreat from punishment in other cities. He was apparently not persecuted for necromancy.

Thus Faust displays the best and the worst of the Renaissance having both its insatiable curiosity for learning and its erratic tendency to superstition and to overweening conceit. His is the pathetic figure of a great mind going to ruin. The keen intelligence is outweighed by the love of ostentation and craving for flattery which drew him even lower. We see the Casanova of the Renaissance in the character of Dr. Faustus.

Check Your Progress - Answers

3.9

1. Charges against him were that he was an informer and a spy, he was trying to become Roman Catholic and he held atheistic view.
2. Obviously, Christopher Marlow!
3. Tamburlaine was his first play, written when he was still at University.
4. The German Faust book first appeared in Frankfurt in 1587. It was translated into English. This is Faust book.
5. The poets who possessed academic knowledge of literature are called University wit.
6. Result of the unlawful knowledge is sin.
7. The major themes of the drama are as follows: Sensuality versus Spirituality, Hell versus Heaven, The Question of Freewill.



CHAPTER : 4

WILLIAM CONGRIEVE: THE WAY OF THE WORLD

- 4.1 Objectives
- 4.2 Introduction
- 4.3 Life and works of dramatist
- 4.4 Analysis
- 4.5 Theme
- 4.6 Plot
- 4.7 Characterization
- 4.8 Language & style
- 4.9 Check your progress
- 4.10 Summary
- 4.11 Conclusion
 - Check your progress - Answers

4.1 OBJECTIVES

We shall discuss intellectual, social and political factors that influenced William Congreve and his work.

After reading this chapter, you will be able to:

- a) Outline the main characteristics in Elizabethan age
- b) Describe the main aspects of drama
- c) Discuss the theme of 'The Way of The World'
- d) Discuss the plot of the play
- e) Discuss the different dramatic techniques used by Congreve
- f) Outline Congreve's use of language and style
- g) Outline the relevance of the characters in the overall scheme of the play
- h) Describe the historical background of the play and
- i) Outline the life and works of William Congreve

4.2 INTRODUCTION

The play was written immediately after the puritan onslaught on the theater. Congreve gave a moral design to his play. While doing so, he reflected the mores and manners of the upper class. He steered clear of sexual licentiousness that had dominated the typical period. Congreve tried to cure the excesses and abuses of social manners. The moral problem presented is at the centre of "The way of the World". There are various attitudes depicted in the play. Far from idealizing his hero, Congreve gives a realistic representation of a Restoration beau. Not falling prey to unscrupulous and cynicism of Restoration rake, he represents common sense attitude morality

4.3 LIFE AND WORKS OF DRAMATIST

William Congreve was born at Bardsey, near Lees in 1670. His father was an army officer. He was educated at Kilkenny School and attended trinity college, Dublin. His first novel incognita was unsuccessful. His first comedy the old bachelor was instant success. The double dealer followed in the same year. The play enhanced his reputation. The next play Love for Love (1695) was well received. It was his most popular work. Congreve's only tragedy, the mourning bride was highly successful at that time but is almost forgotten now. His last comedy, the way of the world now generally acclaimed his magnum opus, was coldly received by his contemporaries. He did produce in collaboration with Vanbrugh, the farce squire trelooby (1704). He held many public offices. He had many admirers and friends. He died in London and was given pompous burial at Westminster abbey. He held many government offices.

4.4 ANALYSIS OF THE PLAY

Lady Wishfort, a buxom widow is the pivotal character in the play. Her daughter, once married and widowed, is now is married to an immoral and unscrupulous rake Fainall. Naturally Mrs. Fainall, as the only child of her mother, is to inherit the entire estate. Lady Wishfort has also a niece called Millamant whose estate will be forfeited if she marries without her aunt's consent. So her lover Mirabell is anxious to propitiate the old aunt and even to make love to her in order to cover his designs on the young niece. Lady Wishfort has a friend

called Mrs. Marwood, a through-bred adulteress formerly in love with Mirabell and now living in adulterous relationship with Fainall. Lady Wishfort stands in a long line of widows pretending to be still young and hankering after young lovers. Now lady Wishfort is aspiring for the love of mirabell and therefore she is not likely to give her consent to his marriage with Millamant. It has therefore become necessary for Mirabell to devise some trick to achieve in his purpose. Therefore with the secrete connivance and active co-operation of Mrs. Fainall and lady Wishfort's maidservant Foible, Mirabell decides to send his man servant Waitwell disguised as his uncle Sir Rowland to woo the old lady. But Mirabell takes the precautionary measure of marrying Foible to Waitwell before so that later lady Wishfort's marriage with disguised servant may be declared null and void when her ladyship agrees to allow him to marry her niece.

Meanwhile another plot is being hatched against lady Wishfort. Mrs. Marwood informs Fainall of his wife's secret love-affair with Millamant before her marriage. Now the villain resolves to black mail his wife and mother-in-law and demand control of his wife's property and that of lady Wishfort on reversion at her death if he is not to divorce his wife and publish her infamy. But now Mirabell comes forward with the disclosure that Mrs. Fainall, when she was a widow in secret love with mirabell, had conveyed all her property to him on the trust by a legal deed. And so lady Wishfort could not do anything even if she wished to. Mirabell now entangles all the threads which seemed to strangle her ladyship's marriage is not binding and that she is as free as before. In return she allows him to marry her niece cum her estate. He is the man with real power and therefore he outwits Fainall, who subsequently reconciles himself with his wife for the sake of her money. Mirabell and Millamant resolve to adjust themselves to each other and they give us the promise of better generation than one represented by lady Wishfort or Mrs. Marwood and Fainall.

In the opening scene of the play we expect the dramatist to get through the expository business as quickly as possible. Congreve does not do it satisfactorily. We are introduced characters. Mirabell and Millamant are in love. Mirabell pretends to woo lady Wishfort, millamant's aunt. Mrs. Marwood exposes his trick. Old lady now wants to take revenge. Millamant's fortune depends on her marrying

with her aunt's consent. Mirabell plans to thwart lady Wishfort's scheme. The preliminary part of it is put into execution by arranging a marriage between waitwell and foible. As a safety Mirabell keeps the marriage certificate. There is a talk of a proposal to marry Millamant to Sir Rowland in order to disinherit mirabell.

In act 2, the action shifts from the chocolate house to St. James Park. We have a bout of a brilliant talk. Mrs. Fainall and Mrs. Marwood are in conversation. At this stage we do not know that the one is an adulterous wife and the other is cast mistress. Mrs. Marwood knows from experience that lovers are fickle minded but she is not going to despise the fruits of love as they come. They both pretend to despise mirabell but we know how secretly they are both in love with him. The ladies are interrupted by the arrival of mirabell and Fainall. Restoration society did not consider it good taste for husband and wives to be seen together. So Fainall and Marwood take one way and Mirabell and Mrs. Fainall another. Fainall has been through the facade created by his wife and his mistress; he knows that they both love mirabell; and both have equally dissembled their aversion. He himself has been wilfully ignoring 'the gross advances made to him (Mirabell) by my wife; that permitting her to be engaged, I might continue unsuspected in my pleasure, and take you (Mr. Marwood) oftener into my arms in full security'. He upbraids her for preventing the marriage between mirabell and Millamant by disclosing the secret of their love to lady Wishfort. Millamant would have then 'forfeited the moiety of her fortune', which then would have fallen to his wife. He asks, 'and wherefore did i marry, but to make lawful prize of a rich widow's wealth, and squander it on love and you? His mercenary motive and his unscrupulous nature are thus revealed in all their hideous nakedness. Fainall promises to make amends to Mrs. Marwood by robbing his wife and marrying his mistress.

In the dialogue between Mirabell and Mrs. Fainall we understand that Mrs. Fainall detests her husband as much as he hates her. Mirabel's advice to her is, 'you should have just so much disgust for your husband as may be sufficient to make you relish your love'. It is now revealed that Mrs. Fainall was palmed off to Fainall when she in her widowhood was suspected to be present. Thus you see that the great shocks of secrets in the play are released in small doses.

Mirabell explains to her his plot of setting up a 'pretended uncle' in his servant Waitwell. But he would forestall the possibility of making his servant another Mosca (in Jonson's *Volpone*). That is why he saw it that Waitwell and Foible were already 'married and bedded' in the morning. He would relieve her ladyship from an obnoxious marriage by producing 'certificate of her gallant's former marriage', but that would be on condition she permitted him to marry Millamant without holding back 'the moiety of her fortune in her possession'.

It is only at the end of act ii that we are allowed to see the much talked about Millamant. In the first two acts we have been listening to nothing but polish dialogue and sparkling wit interspersed with malicious observation about married infidelity. Now the act iii opens with a scene of broad humour. Lady Wishfort is fretting and fuming at the absence of Foible, who alone knows the art of beautifying her ladyship, and filling her wrinkles with paint and rouge. Foible comes in and artfully fires her mistress's blood by an account of Sir Rowland's violent love for her. Lady Wishfort fusses herself now with preparation for receiving Sir Rowland. The mischievous Foible remarks that her ladyship has frowned a little too rashly and that there are some cracks discernible in the white varnish. The old coquette now looks at her mirror and remarks, 'I look like an old peeled wall'. Her pitiful efforts in the mirror to rehearse ways of bewitching her lover are ludicrous in the extreme. The much awaited sir wilful Witwood arrives. He announces himself 'nephew to the lady Wishfort of this mansion'. His half brother is ashamed of this country bumpkin as his relation. Sir wilful in his brusque manner takes him to task for not knowing his friends and relations, elders and betters. Meanwhile Mrs. Marwood acquaints Fainall with his wife's secret liaison with mirabell and prompts him to blackmail her to lady Wishfort who to escape from the slander will settle upon Fainall all her property. She will now go to work upon lady Wishfort. Now at the end of the act iii there are two plots - one directed by mirabell and the other by Fainall- both against lady Wishfort. Who will succeed is the problem.

Act iv opens with lady Wishfort's ridiculous fuss about the way in which she is to receive sir Rowland and the first impression she is to give him. We are again in the lower region of broad comedy. And Sir Wilfull is reluctantly compelled to go through a half-hearted and

ridiculous ceremony of wooing Millamant after emboldening himself with a generous allowance of liquor. It is now that mirabell comes into the room and presses his suit. Here we have the much celebrated 'bargaining scene or proviso contract' scene, where Millamant and mirabell put forth their conditions before the lady 'may be degrees dwindle into a wife' and the man 'may not be beyond measure enlarged into a husband'. Critics have listed several such proviso scenes to show how very popular they were on the restoration stage, but none has surpassed this scene in brilliance and functional appropriateness. Here we have an example of what Bonamy Bobree calls 'an attempt at rationalization of sexual relationships' in restoration drama. Beneath the apparent frivolity of the dialogue there is terrible seriousness. Millamant is anxious not only is to prolong her premarital freedom and glamour, she is also anxious s to test whether her mirabell will be true to her. It is not a heartless girl who tells Mrs. Fainall, 'well, if mirabell should not make a good husband, i am at a loss- for I find I love him violently'. Mirabell on the other hand, is anxious that his conjugal felicity should not be wrecked on the quicksand of the restoration modes and fashions.

The encounter between lady Wishfort and waitwell disguised as sir Rowland is one of the most amusing scenes in the play. Her ladyship easily falls into the trap; she agrees to sign the contract and the supposed Sir Rowland declares his intention to 'get an heir that shall defeat the last remaining glimpse of hope in any abandoned nephew' (Mirabell).

In Act V lady Wishfort realizes the trick that has been played on her. Fainall has gone to get Waitwell arrested and Mrs. Marwood has disclosed the whole plot to lady Wishfort. Her ladyship is now in a towering range against her maid servant. Foible discloses to Mrs. Fainall that her husband and Mrs. Marwood are nearer related than even their parents thought for. Now Fainall's villainy closes upon lady Wishfort; he threatens that ' he will have my lady's (i.e. Mrs. Fainall's) fortune made over to him, or he will be divorced'. Mrs. Fainall, however, stoutly denies the charge of adultery, and accuses her husband and Mrs. Marwood of making false allegations. As she leaves the scene in righteous indignation, Mrs. Marwood expatiates at length the horrors of dragging the matter to a court of laws, and her ladyship in despair agrees to push up the scandal and submits to a

compromise. Fainall hypocritically admits that he has been persuaded by Mrs. Marwood, her ladyship bosom friend, to a compromise on the condition that her ladyship abandons the idea of re-marriage that she settles on him 'the remainder of her fortune not made over already, and for her husband's discretion'. Further he insists that Millamant has forfeited her estate by a wilful marriage without her aunt's consent and that this estate also should be settled on him. He gives him enough time to ponder till he returns with the draft of the document. Now millamant's cleverness reverses the villainous plot of Fainall. Sir Wilfull Witwood and Millamant approach lady Wishfort pretending that they have agreed completely with her ladyship's wish that they would marry. They persuade her to allow the 'repentant' mirabell to come in. Sir Wilfull insists on her ladyship forgiving mirabell. The old lady relents and admits to herself, 'his appearance takes up in my breast'. Now Fainall comes back triumphantly flourishing the instrument (the legal document) lady Wishfort is to sign, but then she has neither the will nor the power to transfer to anyone her niece's property, for she has agreed to marry the man of her aunt's choice. And to clinch the issue Wilfull in his bluff country manner threatens, 'withdraw your instrument sir or i shall draw mine (his sword). Fainall refuses to give in. He reiterates, 'i insist on my first proposal. You shall submit your own estate to my management and absolutely make over my wife's to my sole use'. Lady Wishfort now turns to mirabell for help. She would break her nephew's match if mirabell could save her and her daughter from utter ruin. The adulterous relation between Mrs. Marwood and Fainall is exposed by foible and mincing. Then another witness is called in and that is waitwell with a black box. Fainall is shocked to see that it is a 'deed of conveyance of the whole estate real of Isabella languish, widow, in trust to Edward mirabell. This prior document has rendered the later deed conveyance to Fainall null and void. Lady Wishfort consoles herself, that her daughter has inherited mother's prudence. Sir Wilful, (like Tony Lumpkin in goldsmith's she stoops to conquer) had no intention of marrying: he entered the plot out of compassion for the lovers, and now he gladly declares his rejoining at the prospects of Millamant with mirabell. The last words are Congreve's own exhortation, and can be constructed as coming from a light-hearted applauder of the restoration beau monad.

4.5 THEME

The theme of the play is the love between Mirabell and Millamant. The action centres on lady Wishfort's design to frustrate their love and Mirabell's clever outwit, which ultimately is fruitful.

4.6 PLOT AND STRUCTURE

The play was a failure on the stage when it was produced first, and when it was later revived. It is true that in recent years the play won applause with academic audiences. As an acting drama the way of the world has many defects. We are treated to such dialogues which, in spite of its surface brilliance, do not create enough tension or dramatic action. Alexander Pope wonders whether Congreve's fools are fools indeed. The distinction is too subtle for an audience to catch, and even if they catch it, it fails to amuse. One should admit, however, that scenes of high comedy like the one in which Millamant agrees to dwindle into matrimony, or the scene in which waitwell masquerades as Sir Rowland can rouse the interest of any audience.

Further, Congreve bungles in his expository scene. The dynastic and emotional complexities of the character are baffling even to the most alert audiences. To quote Kathleen Lynch, 'the salient facts of the predicaments that must be resolved in the way of the word are dropped allusively, almost casually, here and there, and when the play is read, a hawk's eye is required to detect them and keep them in order. The close family relationship of the characters and their developing schemes are not easily remembered: and when all threads have been entangled, it appears that nothing is really concluded. It is unlikely that Fainalls will cease wrangling. Lady Wishfort will continue to bank for a young lover. Mirabell and Millamant are apprehensive that the constancy for which they long may not be realized. Almost every gentle woman in the play has been or is in love with mirabell and almost all are bound by ties of consanguinity. Several secrets are held back from the audience and are dealt out in such small measures that as Norman N. Holland says, they give up all attempts at the understanding these ties. Sometimes it appears that some of these ties are cooked up for the occasion. For example, one fails to understand how Sir Wilfull Witwoud, the half-brother to the false Witwoud, can dispossess

Mirabell of his expected estate. And then, if mirabell and sir wilful are so intimately related to lady Wishfort, how could her ladyship be so deceived by the impersonation of waitwell as Mirabell's uncle? These complications can only lead to confusion. At the end of the play we realise only that a trick has been played on lady Wishfort and that mirabell rescues her from it and marries Millamant. Other details are hazy. The play is the refined essence of restoration comedy, but for a successful acting drama more palpable plot and action are necessary.

4.7 CHARACTERIZATION

The world of Congreve's play is not as narrow as it is sometimes painted. We are not bound by the walls of a fashionable drawing room. The outside world represented by Sir Wilful is also included.

His characters are not heartless. As seen in the case of Mirabel and Millamant - the central characters - are not heartless. They pretend to be less in love than they really are. The ladies and gentlemen are typically human. Our sympathy tends to be inclined towards most sympathetic ones in the play. Congreve's heroine is chaste. The adultery of Finall with Mrs. Marwood is condemned. The relationship of Mirabel and Mrs. Finall is condoned. Mirabel's continuing regards and concern for his past mistress are certainly to be recognized.

Congreve was both fastidious and good natured, possibly a good combination for comedy. HE hates what is hateful wholeheartedly. He hates malice: the deeply rooted selfish malice of Finall as well as shallow malice of Whitewood. Congreve's gaiety and high spirit is noteworthy. We observe gaiety in conversation between Mirabel and Milament. A certain delight, unfriendly conversation having different temperaments.

Lady Wishfort, a buxom widow, "in her vigorous fifties" is pivotal character in the play. Her daughter, once married and widowed, is now married to an immoral and unscrupulous rake, Finall. Naturally, Mrs. Finall, as the only child of her mother, is to inherit the entire estate. Lady Wishfort has also a niece called Millamant whose estate will be forfeited if she marries without Aunt's consent. So, her lover Mirabel is anxious to propitiate the old aunt and even to make love to

her in order to cover his designs on the young niece. Lady Wishfort has a friend called Mrs. Marwood, (note here "Mrs" does not indicate marital status) a thorough bred adulteress, formerly in love with Mirabel and now living in a adulterous relationship with Finall. Lady Wishfort stands in long line of widows pertaining to be still young and hankering after young lovers.

The dynastic and emotional complexities of the characters are baffling even for the most alert audience. These complications can only lead to confusion. At the end of the play, we realize only that a trick has been played on lady Wishfort and that Mirabel rescues her from it and marries Milament. Other details are hazy. The play is the refined essence of Restoration comedy.

The bargaining scene shows how Congreve attempted "to rationalize sexual relationships". The premarital freedom and glamour have to be preserved as far as they could be, but perfect marriage demands mutual sacrifice and adjustment.

4.8 LANGUAGE AND STYLE

His language:

He differed with others of his age in respect of what he possessed and what he wanted. He was wittiest of them all. He had humour, elegance in characterization and incidents. His style was perfect; his comic dialogues were in highest mode. Every sentence was filled with pointed and polish. Every page is brilliant in conceit and epigram in prose. There is not a single dull line or an utterance. He was the first to introduce such style which he carried to classical refinement. His works are singular treat to those who have a cultivated taste and a peculiar flavour.

High pitched Dialogues:

The sparkle of dialogue reminds one not only of Shakespeare, but of Marivaux. In its fineness it sets about analyzing sentiments. Still it is of a less highly quintessential turn that of the French writer, and less formerly busied with shades of meaning. It reveals rather in impertinent sallies and witty diversions, aided by a wonderful gift for repartee and neat phrasing.

At its source the art of Congreve is intellectual. Congreve would show its full power the exceptional felicity of a language in which

nothing is left to chance. Behind that elegant exactness, that perfect propriety, that easy tone, that balanced and firm rhythm, very scrupulous care is taken for details. No English writer has better possessed the natural art of making witty people speak, of lending to the idlest of their remarks, the piquant touch of the unexpected. Here nature is enhanced by the most artistic desire to give each word its proper value, the sense of its connection with its characters, and of general harmony in which plays its part. Congreve's prose is the finest and the most brilliant of the age of neo classicism.

One has only to open it at random to light on some gem of comic insight polished to a fine lustre of expression. Even a waiting maid at a chocolate house when asked what time her clock says cannot reply without jocular "turned off the last canonical hour, sir". Creator's genius reaches crescendo in "as love without enjoyment, or wine without toasting".

4.9 Check Your Progress.

- 1) What lies at the centre of the drama?
- 2) Name the first comedy of Congreve
- 3) Did Congreve ever try tragedy?
- 4) Name the pivotal characters in the drama.
- 5) How does the opening scene execute its business?
- 6) Who is the pretended uncle?
- 7) Describe in short 'bargain scene'.
- 8) What is the theme of this drama?
- 9) Is anything concluded at the end?
- 10) Do you consider the central characters heartless?
- 11) In what way is Congreve intellectual?

4.10 SUMMARY

Dryden committed a grievous mistake in elevating Congreve to the rank of William Shakespeare. But in his time Congreve reached the pinnacle of fame and glory. Lamb praised him and Macaulay admired him. Hazlitt, writing about the masterpieces of restoration age wrote 'the way of the world' is an essence almost too fine; and sense of pleasure evaporates in an aspiration after something that

seems too exquisite ever to have been realized'. Coleridge accused Congreve and wrote 'wickedness is no subject for comedy. This was Congreve's great error and peculiar to him. The dramatic personalities of Dryden, Wycherley, and others are often viciously indecent but not like Congreve's wicked. Meredith said 'he hits the mean of the fine style and a natural in dialogue. He is at once precise and valuable..in this he is a classic and is worthy of treading a measure with Moliere. Congreve's plays are known for brilliant technique, verbal style, excellent construction and depth of feelings. He was acknowledged master of the comedy of manners and the way of the world is the finest flower of the restoration comedy. Congreve sincerely believed that it was the greatest virtue to be gentleman and to be a wit involved degradation of humanity. In the dedication to the way of the world he wrote 'those characters which are meant to be ridiculed in most of our comedies are fools so gross that in my humble opinion they should rather disturb than divert the well natured and reflecting part of an audience; they are rather topics of charity than contempt; and instead of moving our mirth they ought very often to excite our compassion. What we find in his drama is in his hunger for beauty that is in his play s hidden under the veneer of 'cold critical surface'.

4.11 CONCLUSION

The greatest literary activity during the Restoration was drama. Restoration comedy came into existence just at the same time as heroic tragedy did. A whole group of plays gave vent to a scornful condemnation of religious and moral hypocrisy. Restoration comedy is a fruitful kind of literature. No more brilliant comic dialogue exists than that of Congreve in *The Way of the World*. Congreve's greatest achievement in this play is a style and verbal alertness which place the characters by means of their words. If it is asked whether he is the equal of French Moliere, the answer is NO; but he is the nearest English approach to Moliere. In the next chapter we take to Sheridan. We note the characters and tastes of the Restoration patrons of the theatre were quite different. We know by now that drama's laws drama's patrons give. Charles II and his courtiers had been exiled in France during the Puritanical rule in England. This how English society acquired neoclassicism.

Check Your Progress - Answers

4.9

1. The common sense morality of hero lies at the centre of the drama.
2. The Old Bachelor was his first comedy.
3. The Mourning Bride was the only tragedy he wrote.
4. Lady Wishfort is the pivotal character in the drama.
5. Expository business of opening scene is certainly unsatisfactory. Dynastic and emotional complexities of characters are baffling.
6. Mirabell sets up servant Waitwell as uncle who is pretended uncle.
7. Millamant and Mirabell put forth their conditions before Lady. Beneath the apparent frivolity there is a terrible seriousness, a telling comment on the society.
8. The love between Mirabell and Millamant is the theme of the drama.
9. Complications lead to confusion. The love between Mirabell and Millamant is fruitful at the end.
10. Lady Wishfort and her daughter are depicted as immoral and unscrupulous. Mrs. Marwood is a thoroughly bred adulteress. They are more than heartless.
11. Congreve possesses a sparkle of dialogue, elegant exactness and firm rhyme and a general harmony.



CHAPTER : 5

SHERIDAN: THE SCHOOL FOR SCANDAL

- 5.1 Objectives
- 5.2 Introduction
- 5.3 Life and works
- 5.4 Analysis
- 5.5 Theme
- 5.6 Plot
- 5.7 Characterization
- 5.8 Language & style
- 5.9 Check your progress
- 5.10 Summary
- 5.11 Conclusion
 - Check your progress - Answers

5.1 OBJECTIVES

We shall discuss intellectual, social and political factors that influenced R.B. Sheridan and his work. After reading this chapter, you will be able to:

- a) Outline the main characteristics of his age
- b) Describe the main aspects of drama
- c) Discuss the theme of 'The School for Scandal'
- d) Discuss the plot of the play
- e) Discuss the different dramatic techniques used by Sheridan
- f) Outline Sheridan's use of language and style
- g) Outline the relevance of the characters in the overall scheme of the play
- h) Describe the historical background of the play and
- i) Outline the life and works of Sheridan

5.2 INTRODUCTION

The comedy of manners was the natural product of a sophisticated section of London society; it assumed its distinctive features in the period of Charles II (1600-1683), produced its master piece after the glorious revolution (1688), and the convention continued in the plays of Vanbrugh (pron. Vanbroo) and Farquhar (pron. Far-Kaer) till about 1710. Its naked immorality had called down the greatest censure from a clergyman called Jeremy Collier about two years before Congreve produced his most brilliant play, the way of the world. Jeremy Collier's attack on the immorality and profaneness of the restoration drama was at once a reflection of gradually changing age and a death-knell to an artificial convention. The rising middle class and the flourishing mercantile community were in no mood to tolerate a practice which represented them as fit only to be cuckolded or ridiculed as fools and gulls. The theatre-going public was no longer restricted to the beaux and belles of the court circle.

The first writer to take a note of this change was the versatile dramatist-actor-manager, Colley Cibber. He had his hand always on the pulse of the audience, which secretly delighted in scenes of immorality; he had also to satisfy the critics. So he ingeniously hit upon a trick of running his hero through all the profligacy of the town for the first four acts of the drama and then taking him through a last-act repentance and reformation. These moral-immoral plays of Cibber held the stage in the opening decade of the eighteenth century. By this time a wave of sentimentalism was sweeping over England and Western Europe and affected all forms of literature. Richard Steele wrote a series of sentimental comedies in which he sought to teach people moral lessons and so rouse the sympathy of the audience by presenting touching scenes of virtue. Steel's sentimentalism was shipped across the channel to France and in the second half of the century it returned to England with all its characteristics accentuated. Sentimentality deepened and broadened in humanism of the mid-century; the tendency of social reform, preaching and sermonizing assumed fanatical dimension; 'the essential goodness of a human soul' and 'the perfectibility of human being' were two doctrines widely held by religious reformers and their followers. Those social types whom dramatist and novelist had invariably held up to contempt and ridicule were now treated with

sympathy and admired as undeservedly despised creatures. Drama was no longer a mirror to nature but a medium for social propaganda and reformation. Instead of the give-and-take of dramatic dialogue we find a stilted and sententious style calculated to emphasize the serious purpose. Laughter was replaced by tears in comedy. The success of the comedy was gauged on the basis of frequency with which the audience applied their handkerchief to their eyes. This new sentimental comedy which replaced the comedy of manners, found its popular exponents in Hugh Kelly and Richard Cumberland.

Sentimental comedy provoked violent reaction during the very hay day of its. It is this context that we have to understand the work of Oliver Goldsmith and R.B. Sheridan. Goldsmith opposed it strongly both by percept and by example. In his 'enquiry into the present state of learning' he condemned this lachrymose deity who had usurped the place of laughing comedy, and later followed it with two comedies by which he drove tears out of the comic stage and restored humour and laughter as legitimate objects of comedy. His she stoops to conquer, staged in 1773, and revived the healthy Elizabethan tradition.

5.3 LIFE AND WORKS OF DRAMATIST

Sheridan had theater in his blood. Theater was financially rewarding. His rise to literary fame and material affluence was almost meteoric. He was the most successful playwright of the day and the owner and the manager of the London Play House. However, there was a tragic side to his astonishing story. The bailiffs were actually in house stripping it off its belongings at the time of his death. Characters and tests of Restoration patrons of the theater were quite different than the great age of Elizabeth I. The play owes its great success largely to the brilliance of its dialogue which is super.

5.4 ANALYSIS

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was gauged on the basis of the frequency with which the audience applied their handkerchief to their eyes. This new sentimental comedy which replaced the comedy of manners, found its popular exponents in Hugh Kelly and Richard Cumberland.

Sentimental comedy provoked violent reaction during the very heyday of its splendour in the second half of the century. It is in this context that we have to understand the work of Oliver Goldsmith and Richard Brinsley Sheridan. Goldsmith opposed it strongly both by precept and by example. In his "enquiry into the present state of learning", he condemned this Jachrymose deity who had usurped the place of laughing comedy, and later followed it with two comedies by which he drove tears out of the comic stage and restored humour and laughter as the legitimate objects of comedy. His *She Stoops to Conquer*, staged in 1773, revived the healthy Elizabeth tradition of comedy and stemmed the powerful tide of the fashionable sentimental attitude Goldsmith was followed in the same decade by Sheridan. In the prologue to his first comedy *The Rivals* Sheridan poured ridicule.

The Goddess of the woeful countenance

The sentimental muse;

He revived the Restoration comedy of manners, purged of its grossness and immorality. The main story revolving round Captain Absolute, Lydia Languish and Mrs. Malaprop is anti-sentimental, but the subplot is clearly a concession to the prevailing deity. Sheridan's objection to the 'sentimental music' is that it replaced laughter by tears and indulged in sermonizing, which was nothing but hypocritical.

She'll snatch the dagger from her sister's hand

And having made her votaries weep a flood,

Good Heaven! She'll end her comedies in blood,

As, for the legitimate comic muse, she will abjure

'Solemn sentiments' and will not 'preach'.

The Rivals is a brilliant farce; it scintillates and sparkles; the author generously endows his servants as well as masters with wit. We may admit that the characters do not often speak in character, but this is a complaint which can be levelled against all comedies-of,

manners. The rivals of the title are one and the same person. Captain Absolute, the son and heir of a wealthy baronet impersonates as an impecunious ensign Beverly and makes love to Lydia Languish, a veritable Don Quixote in petticoat, who had been fed on the sentimental trash that gushed out of the popular press. Her aunt and guardian Mrs. Malaprop, like Lady Wishfort in *The Way of the World*, is a widow longing for a young lover. She prides herself in being 'the queen of the Dictionary.' The humour in the portrayal of this comic character is that she uses pompous words which are misapplied in their context. For example, she prides herself in her 'nice derangement of epitaphs' (arrangement of epithets) ; she would teach girls geometry, "the science of contiguous countries" (She means geography) ; she would command a person ; "your physiognomy is so grammatical" (she means phraseology), and expatiate upon 'the allegories on the banks of the Nile' (she means alligators). Malapropism is older than Mrs. Malaprop, but it was she who bequeathed the word to the English Dictionary. Lydia Languish is so romantic and sentimental that she has been dreaming of a rope-and-ladder escape, elopement, love in cottage and eating moonshine. But when she knows that her Beverley is a trick man she is terribly disappointed and it calls for all the ingenuity of the Captain to cajole her into marriage. The play was good theatre; fun and laughter again took their place on the comic stage.

Sheridan's inventive powers were not very remarkable. Apart from the *Rivals* and *The School for Scandal* his works are mainly translations and adaptations. He borrowed freely from his own romantic life and made free use of an unpolished work of his mother for the two plays which have any claim to originality. There was a romantic haze about his youth: he had eloped with Elizabeth Linley the most glamorous beauty-queen of the times, and fought two duels, one of which was very nearly fatal. This was the autobiographical stuff which he transmuted into excellent theatre in the *Rivals*. Rather he succeeded the celebrated actor-manager-dramatist, David Garrick, as the manager of the famous Drury Lane theatre a acrimonious slander pursued him; his own father was antagonistic while his hypocritical elder brother was a favourite. Sheridan did not have to go anywhere else than his own family for the contrasted bothers in *The School for Scandal*, which was acted in Drury Lane in

1777 with thunderous applause.

The School for Scandal, as it appears in its final form, is a marvel of plot construction. It was conceived and executed as two different comic pieces at two different times. The story of the Scandal Club and episode of ill matched husband and wife were not born under the same inspiration, but they were later put together with such skill that it has become an example of 'art concealing art.' The main plot of the misfitted husband and wife and the contrasted brothers is laid in the enveloping action of the Scandal Club. Though Dr. Johnson had laid the ghost of the dramatic unities and there was no more talk about their tyranny, it may be interesting to observe here that the scenes of the play are almost the same and the action develops so rapidly that it gives us the impression of one day. The characters are labelled off in the Johnsonian manner so that they tend to be types rather than individuals. Lady Sneerwell is a frustrated middle aged widow who presides over the scandal club and directs its activities to murder reputations and promote intrigues; we are reminded of Lady Wishfort and her cable nights in the Way of the World. Lady Sneerwell and her colleagues are more malicious, and her ladyship has her own ambitions also to serve. Her principal agent is Snake; the name at once suggests that he is unreliable, and by the end of the play we find him deserting Lady Sneerwell and changing his colour with the alchemic influence of gold from the opposite camp. Snake wonders why Lady Sneerwell takes so much interest in slandering others. She admits "wounded myself in the early part of my life by the envenomed tongue of slander I confess I have since known no pleasure equal to the reducing others to the level of my own injured reputation". The main plot now unfolds itself naturally. Sir Peter has married a beautiful girl from the country side and Lady Sneerwell has inducted the young wife into the scandal club, making the simple woman believe that it is part of the fashionable way of life. Sir Peter is the guardian of two young men, Joseph Surface and Charles Surface, "the eldest (Snake reports) possessing the most amiable character, and universally well spoken of the youngest, the most dissipated and extravagant young fellow in the kingdom, without friends or character; the former an avowed admirer of your ladyship's and apparently your favourite; the latter attached to Maria, Sir Peter's ward, and confessedly beloved by her." Snake is puzzled why, then,

Lady Sneerwell should be so uncommonly earnest to destroy the mutual attachment subsisting between Charles and Maria. Lady Sneerwell now explains to Snake (and to the audience) that Joseph Surface's real attachment is to Maria, or her fortune" and that he is masking his pretensions and profiting by Lady Sneerwell's assistance. Joseph and Lady Sneerwell are hand-in-glove with each other in this game of destroying the reputation of Charles so that Maria might be worn over to Joseph and Charles might be deceived into love for Lady Sneerwell, who confesses, "Charles, that libertine, that extravagant that bankrupt in fortune and reputation" is the one "to gain whom I would sacrifice everything". Thus Sheridan gets through the expository part of the action without much ado, and we are ready for the entrance of Joseph Surface. Joseph, you know, is the name of a young man in the Bible, the very embodiment of male chastity. The irony becomes clear. When Joseph Surface passes for a paragon of virtue and attempts to seduce his guardian's young wife. Joseph pretends to be sorry for his brother Charles. "His dissipation and extravagance exceed anything I have ever heard of, but he is secretly happy at the prospect of Maria rejecting the ruined. The Baconian stimulation and dissimulation have become second nature with him, and even to those who know him intimately he falls into this usual vein of hypocrisy "poor Charles! I'm sure I wish it were in my power to be of any essential service to him ; for the man who does not share in the distress of a brother, even though merited by his own misconduct, deserves.... "Lady Sneerwell cut him short and exposes him at once both to himself and to the audience"; O Lord! You are going to be moral, and forget that you are among friends. We now see the kind of hypocritical "sentiments" with which he has been able to deceive the world and, in particular, his guardian Sir Peter Teazle. Before Joseph leaves the scene he cautions Lady Sneerwell about her assistant Snake: "Take my word for it. Lady Sneerwell that fellow hasn't enough virtue to be faithful even to his own villainy". This links the exposition to the denouement where Snake actually goes over to the victims of Lady Sneerwell's malicious propaganda, not because he is essentially good-natured but because he is promised more material reward.

The next visitor at Lady Sneerwell's house is the heroine Maria. She is not impressive enough to be a heroine: she is a passive doll moved

about by other characters. She is harassed by two members of the scandal club, uncle and nephew, Crabtree and Sir Benjamin Backbite. The Johnsonian Labe names at once reveal the nature of those who bear them. Sir Benjamin is a stock character a poetaster who composes execrable verses mostly plagiarized Maria has virtually run away from the pestering advances of Sir Benjamin. She confesses, "wit loses its respect with me when I see it in company with malice" Joseph Surface's ready rejoinder is one of his hypocritical 'sentiments' : "certainly, madam ; to smile as the jest which plants to thorn in another's breast is to become a principal in the mischief's". Before the sense comes to its close the other members of the scandal club are also casually introduced to us. Mrs. Candour as her name ironically suggests appears to sympathise with a victim, but her brand to sympathy does* the deadliest butchery. Crabtree and Backbite also give us a foretaste of what they are capable of doing. Before curtain comes down on this important expository scene, we see Lady Sneerwell and Joseph Surface together. They know each other perfectly well. Lady Sneerwell's parting words ring in our ears: "I'll go and plot mischief and you shall study sentiment."

The scene now shifts from Lady Sneerwell's house to the house of Sir Peter almost immediately after the meeting between the principal villains, Lady Sneerwell and Joseph Surface. Sir Peter has been married only six months when he realizes that he has committed the greatest blunder of his life. He has been scoffing at matrimony for long and he now suspects that he has become the laughing stock of the entire world. "When an old bachelor marries a young wife what (else) is he to expect? "Lady Teazle, a girl bred wholly in the country," now "plays her part in all the extravagant fopperies of the fashion and the town:" "She dissipates all my fortune and contradicts all my humours," and yet his tragedy is that he cannot help loving her; His vexations are further heightened by the conduct of his ward Maria, who, he thinks, has turned rebel and "absolutely refuses the man of his choice (viz Joseph Surface), meaning: To bestow herself on his profligate brother. "Charles has one ally advocate in his father's old servant Rowley. He is sure that .the young scapegrace" will retrieve his errors yet," for he has taken after his father who was "nearly as wild a spark; yet when he died, he

did not leave a more benevolent, heart to lament his loss". The theme of the contrasted brothers-one hypocritical and universally acclaimed as a paragon of virtue and the other branded as a liberation but having a heart in its right place---is a common place of eighteenth century literature. If you have read Fielding's *Tom Jones* you will remember the hypocritical Bilfil and the reckless but good natured Tom Jones. In fact, Sheridan had a living example of such a contrast between himself and his elder brother. The Surface brothers had lost their father, but "their uncle Sir Oliver's liberality gave them an early independence". Sir Peter says that as guardian, no person could have more opportunities of judging of their hearts and I was never mistaken in my life. Joseph is indeed a model for the young men of the age. He is a man of sentiment, and acts up to the sentiments he professes." He is severe in his denunciation of his other ward Charles "If he had any grain of virtue by descent he has dissipated it with the rest of his inheritance." The old man's disapproval is further aggravated by his belief in the stories circulated by Lady Sneerwell about Charles's love affair with Lady Teazle. Rowley announces that Sir Oliver, after an absence of fifteen years, is returning to London and that he means to make some trial of the disposition of his nephews. The Act comes to its close with the comic lamentation of Sir Peter, "Ah! Master Rowley, when an old bachelor marries a young wife, he deserves no punishment, the crime carries its punishment along with it.

Act II Sc.I introduces to us one of the frequent quarrels between Sir Peter Teazle and his young wife. He is exasperated by her extravagance but Lady Teazle is determined to swim daily with the current to fashion. At the end Lady Teazle ingenuously asks "But now, Sir Peter, if we have finished our daily jungle, I presume I may go to my engagement at Lady Sneerwell's. This is another reason for Sir Peter's annoyance for he knows that Lady Sneerwell and her friends are "utters of forged tales, carries of scandal and clippers of reputation." In spite of all her extravagance and bad company Sir Peter cannot help loving his enchanting wife.

The next scene takes us back to Lady Sneerwell's where the club has its full quorum. The visit of Lady Teazle and Maria at once sets Lady Sneerwell's mischievous plot on its foot. Maria is asked to play piquet (a card game) with Joseph Surface, and Lady Teazle is

surprised that her beau should not take this opportunity to speak to her before Sir Peter arrives. Sir Peter himself plays his visit lest he might be an object of their slander. He knows, however that in the hands of the scandal mongers, a character dies at every word: their work is to "kill character and run down reputations" When he leaves he remarks with cynical satisfaction "But I leave my character behind me". The conversation between Maria and Joseph surface reveals with a hypocritical scoundrel the man is; his sententious and pompous words are intended to wheedle the young lady from "that profligate Charles". His advances to Maria are interrupted by the unexpected entry of Lady Teazle from another room. It must be remembered that Lady Teazle is essentially good-hearted and chaste ; she is allowing Surface to play the gallant only because of her mistaken sense of fashion; as she says, "you know I admit you as lover no further than fashion sanctions. "The hypocrite gives a cock-and-bull story to explain his conduct to Maria and reminds Lady Teazle of her promise to give me your judgement on my library."

Sir Oliver Surface, the wealthy uncle of Joseph and Charles, has just arrived from India. He is amused to hear about the marriage of his friend Sir Peter. He discusses the two nephews with Rowley. The shrewd man of the world suspects Joseph's universal reputation with the high and the low but he will test them both in disguise before he will form his own judgement about them. Sir Peter waxes eloquent on Joseph, his edification to hear him converse: he professes the noblest sentiments but as for Charles, he gives him up as a wild fellow.

Till now we have had a remarkable dramatic situation likely to ensure the success of the play but as we approach the dramatic centre of the play is gathers momentum. Charles has been borrowing money from an old Jew called Premium (Whom he has never met personally) through a broker. Sir Oliver now decides to visit Charles impersonating Premium and then call upon Joseph in the name of a poor relation called Stanley. Meanwhile Sir Peter makes further efforts to persuade Maria to transfer her love from Charles to that amiable young man, "Joseph". Lady Teazle tries to cajole her fond old husband, to be in a charming sweet temper so that he might give her a hundred pounds. The scene of quarrel that follows is extremely amusing: each accuses the other of being the first to lose temper and

ultimately they rise to a crescendo of passion. At last Sir Peter hints at her secret love affair with Charles: the poor man has swallowed the story that Lady Sneerwell has circulated. At last Lady Teazle cajoles him into a state of reconciliation once again before she leaves the scene.

The next scene brings us to Charles's house where Sir Oliver is surprised to find the servants aping the manners of aristocracy. Witty himself Sheridan bestows upon the servants also the witty and allusive style of which he is a master. You will remember that this is a characteristic of the comedy of manners and it persisted right on to Oscar Wilde and Bernard Shaw. Sir Oliver exclaims in amazement: "If the man is a shadow of the master, this is the temple of dissipation indeed". Next we see Charles himself coming out of the house and talking to Premium (Sir Oliver in disguise) about his plans for the future. The audience will be hugely amused when Charles confidentially tells the supposed merchant: "The moment Sir Oliver dies,you would come on me for the money...he breaks apace, I am told, he is so much altered latterly that his nearest relations don't know him,". The irony of the situation becomes clear to us when we remember that he is talking to Sir Oliver, himself.

Thematically there is no break between the last scene of the Third Act and the next scene which comes with IV Act. But the theatrical performance requires a difference setting and hence calls for an interval the action shifts from the drawing room to the portrait-gallery upstairs without an interval of time or change of place. But here a new Act begins merely to enable the producer to arrange for the changed scene setting. One of Charles's friends as "auctioneer ascends "an old gouty chair of my father's as a pulpit and with a parchment as hammer, he knocks down portrait after portrait, all done in the expensive old style, "when beaux wore wigs, and ladies their own hair." Sir Oliver observes that Charles has been "passing over" one portrait whom the auctioneer describes as "that ill-looking fellow over the setter. As stern-looking a rogue as ever I saw, an unforgiving eye, and a damned disinheriting countenance, an inveterate knave". But Charles obstinately refuses to part with the portrait of his uncle, and the old man is so pleased as to-exclaim to himself, "The rogue is my nephew after all..... I forgive him everything". The humour of the situation lies in the fact that Charles sells his family portraits to

premium without suspecting that he is his own uncle and that the auctioneer makes all sorts of uncomplimentary references to him. At the end of the auction Charles is certainly distressed, but he cannot afford to part with his spirits. His laughter suppresses his tears and he claims, "I find one's ancestors are more valuable relations than I took them for". The first thing he does is to send "a hundred pounds" to his poor relation Stanley. He would not listen to Rowley's advice: "Be just before you are generous, "for Justice is, an old lame hobbling bedlam, and I can't get her to keep pace with Generosity."

Sir Oliver is now satisfied that the young scapegrace, his nephew, is reckless but he has his heart in its right place. Now he proposes to test his other nephew disguised as Stanley, whom neither of the nephews has seen. But before this the greatest scene as it is called intervenes. In fact, this scene comes so close upon the auction scene that the cumulative impact on the audience is tremendous. Lady Teazle pays a visit to Joseph. Surface in this library and the hypocritical scoundrel advises the simple minded woman that the best way of curing Sir Peter's Jealousy is to give him reason for it. Lady Teazle has enough common sense to understand his insinuation that he expects her to "sin in her own defence, and part with my virtue to secure my reputation." But though she plays the role of the woman of fashion, she is essentially good natured and virtuous. Her thoughtless indiscretion has placed her in a compromising situation when Sir Peter himself arrives. Joseph Surface's guilty mind conceives the idea of hiding the lady behind a screen in the library and he pretends to be busy poring over a book. Sir Peter is easily deceived into the belief that his young friend is "ever improving himself and Joseph agrees: "Books, you know, are the only things in which I am coxcomb". Seeing maps hung upon the screen, Sir Peter observes with satisfaction, "you can make even your screen a source of knowledge", and when Joseph exclaims, "I find great use in that screen" the audience will certainly catch the irony of the situation. The foolish old husband-complains to Joseph that Charles is ungrateful enough to be in secret liaison with his wife: "your brother has no sentiment". Joseph is ready with his 'sentiments' when ingratitude bars the dart of injury, the world has double danger in it". He would disclaim kindred with his brother for the man who can break the laws of hospitality, and tempt the wife of his friend,

deserves to be branded as the pest of society. Sir Peter is annoyed with his wife, but he is so deeply in love with his wife that he confides to Joseph (and Lady Teazle listens to it from behind the screen) that he has already prepared drafts of two deeds : "By one she will enjoy eight hundred a year independent while I live ; and by the other, the bulk of my fortune at my death". It is at this juncture that Charles's arrival is announced by a servant. Though Joseph wants to avoid his brother Sir Peter wants him to be interrogated about his relation with Lady Teazle. In his anxiety to hide himself he sees a petticoat behind the screen, and the resourceful Joseph laughingly admits that it is a little French milliner, silly rouge that plagues me". Sir Peter is satisfied and he hides himself in a cupboard before Charles makes his boisterous entry into the room. From the talk between Charles and Joseph Sir Peter is convinced that there is no substance in the rumour connecting him with Lady Teazle. Charles in his irrepressible manner drags Sir Peter out of the cupboard and all of them have a hearty laugh provoking the audience also into burst of laughter. At this stage Joseph is forced to leave the room to dispose of an unwelcome visitor. Sir Peter cannot help making use of this opportunity to commend Joseph as a model to Charles: "Ah! Charles, if you associated more with your brother one might indeed hope for your reformation. He is a man of sentiment; there is nothing in the world as noble as a man of sentiment". But the old man can hardly suppress Joseph Surface's affair with the French Milliner. To Sir Peter this is only a pardonable and natural adventure on the part of a young man. It can easily be imagined that Charles immediately thrown down the screen, revealing Lady Teazle where Sir Peter expected to see the "little French milliner". The disclosure is the most unexpected blow to Sir Peter. Charles, with good humoured irony, exclaims, "Sir Peter, this is one of the smartest French milliners I ever saw". He remembers Sir Peter's encomiums upon Joseph and he jeers them at him with mischievous pleasure: "Sir Peter, there is nothing in the world as noble as a man of sentiment". Lady Teazle is a bashed but she is also disillusioned about the hypocritical Joseph. She tells him to his face that he is nothing but "a smooth tongued hypocrite, who would have seduced the wife of his too credulous friend". Sir Peter with anger calls him a villain and the curtain falls on the great scene in the midst of Joseph's attempts to expostulate with his erstwhile

guardian.

The screen scene has very few parallels in English drama for the skill with which its suspense is kept up and the final resolution effected. This scene following close upon 'the auction scene' takes us in a crescendo of theatrical delight towards the end of the Forth Act. The dramatist is now confronted with the difficult task of keeping up without allowing it to flag in the last Act. The problem is how to avoid an anti-climax. The excellent craftsmanship of Sheridan does not fail him. He has developed the story of the miss-matched couple and the contrasted brothers in the enveloping action of the scandal club. He must bring in the enveloping action once again to wind up the plot. So after a brief scene where Sir Oliver tests the elder disguised as a poor relation and discovers his meanness and hypocritical protestations of nobility, we move to the house of Sir Peter. Here the scandal-mongers arrive one after another. Apparently with the object of commiserating with Sir Peter, who has been reportedly wounded in a duel with one of the brothers, one asserting that it was a wound with the sword and another vehemently swearing it was a bullet-wound in the thorax. We are fully aware of what happened in the screen scene and the humour of the situation mounts as we listen to the ridiculous distortions and the circumstantial details invented by Lady Sneerwell and her colleagues. The screen scene is projected to us once again through the grossly refractory and colouring medium of the speakers. We wonder with amusement at Crabtree's circumstantial details about the duel between Sir Peter and Charles: "The ball struck a little bronze Shakespeare that stood over the fireplace; grazed out of the window at a right angle, and wounded the postman, who was just coming to the door with a double letter from Northamptonshire". The scandal-mongers mistake Sir Oliver for the doctor supposedly called in to attend on the wounded Sir Peter, and enquires him of his patient's condition! Sir Peter himself walks in, hale and hearty, clear out of his house. Lady Sneerwell, the president of the scandal club is discomfited and her club faces utter dissolution. Joseph Surface's villainy and hypocrisy are exposed to the silvery laughter of the comic muse to the silvery laughter of the comic muse the forgiveness of the prodigal merely because he refuses to sell his uncle's portrait is a little too easy. But Sheridan had learnt from the initial failure of 'The Rivals' that his audience must not be shocked

and he went as far as he dared in his portrayal of Joseph, whose moral sentiments are represented as a cover for his hypocrisy, but almost as a sign of it. This had the effect of undercutting the lofty remarks of many heroes of sentimental comedy... The play has a succession of theatrically effective scenes. Sheridan writes straight forward colloquial dialogue, not particularly polished, but for that very reason preferred by most audiences to that of Congreve.

Act III. There is no deep unity in the tendencies of his theatre; and unity is not either the forte of his plays. They combine with skill diverse elements, plots and themes; they are amalgams of successful, sometimes, admirable scene, rather than organic masterpieces. Sheridan is not a psychologist, but a shrewd penetrating observer; he is more able to perceive the secret movement of vanity or envy, than to construct characters. He knows how to create the ridiculous from the mechanisms which are-built in us by the prejudices of the mind and the distortions of judgement; but the province of comedy in which he most readily moves is that of situations and verbal virtuosity. Here at least he moves with astonishing mastery.

5.5 THEME

Though the satire on contemporary journalism was an important theme in his play modern reader is likely to miss the finer points of satire because of the topicality.

5.6 PLOT AND STRUCTURE

The School for Scandal is not wholly free from the stock in trade devices of Sentimental drama. The last minute conversion of the rake Charles to become a worthy mate for the virtuous Maria, Sir Oliver's partiality for a young man basically sound of heart but reckless, the obstacles in the path of true love of Maria for Charles, the intransigence of elders through misunderstandings which are finally overcome by the power of love. We find adherence of poetic justice. These are all too well known features of Sentimental comedy.

Two different stories are woven into a single play. One of them Sentimental melodrama dealing with the activities of scandal mongers lady Sneerwell. Old merchant Solomon Teazle, who in old

age is married to a young wife, Sheridan mixed these stories, using technique of its dissemination, the characters and motives of people. They pursue it to the victim who is a connecting thread. The main plot deals with the relation between Sir Peter and Lady Teazle who constantly quarrel and disagree. Sir Peter is a victim of scandal monger. Lady Teazle wants to join fashionable society. She is an instrument of the game. The complications follow which are finally resolved.

Sheridan shows mastery on scenes for theatrical effect. Screen scene is indeed a master piece of scene construction. In Auction scene- the improbability is extended to hilarious comedy.

German critic Gustav Freytag has described the typical plot of five act plays as a pyramidal shape consisting of rising action, climax, and falling action. After climax comes turning point for protagonist. This opens the falling action to culminate into catastrophe the precipitating scene. A frequently used term is resolution. Carefully note the Anticlimax of the play in Act V Scene III.

Avoidance of Anti-climax

In Act V scene III, the way is clear for Maria and Charles to come together. Lady Teazle brings up the subject. Maria surprises everyone declaring that Charles loves Lady Sneerwell. Lady Sneerwell astonishes Charles by breaking faith with her. But situation is cleared by Rowley. He produces Snake who finally exposes the plot and schemes in which he has only assisted Lady Sneerwell. Lady Sneerwell has to depart disgracefully. She abuses all. While thanking Lady Teazle and her friends she exposes Scandal College. Lady Teazle leaves returning her diploma and declaring she will no longer practice character killing. Joseph follows, perhaps hoping to marry Lady Sneerwell. Nothing now stands between Charles and Maria. All thank Rowley for his service to family; for his loyalty to Charles. Everyone is pleased.

Prologue and epilogue

A portrait is a verse and follows tradition of dedicating function. Dramatist here has drawn a true portrait. The muse is Goddess of poetry and other arts. Apollo was the Greek God of poetry. Prologue is usually spoken by the leading actor or actress in an address to the audience introducing the author and play (compare 'sutradhar' of

Sanskrit drama). During Restoration, prologues and epilogues (bharat vakya) were regarded as indispensable supports. All through 18th Century, they were in vogue. They were often contributed by men of established reputation. The Prologue gives a lively representation of the content (recall 'sutradhar nati pravesh of Sanskrit drama). Prologue often points out to the title of the drama. Epilogue was spoken by a leading actor. In this case it is odd to see Epilogue is not in tune with the spirit of the play. In play, lady Teazle finally realizes the worthlessness of word of fashion. She has no regret and intention to be a devoted wife remains unexpressed.

There is no deep unity in the tendencies of his theatre; and unity is not either the forte of his plays. They combine with skill diverse elements, plots and themes; they are amalgams of successful, sometimes, admirable scene, rather than organic masterpieces. Sheridan is not a psychologist, but a shrewd penetrating observer; he is more able to perceive the secret movement of vanity or envy, than to construct characters. He knows how to create the ridiculous from the mechanisms which are-built in us by the prejudices of the mind and the distortions of judgment; but the province of comedy in which he most readily moves is that of situations and verbal virtuosity. Here at least he moves with astonishing mastery.

5.7 CHARACTERIZATION

Sheridan was famous for theatrically effective situations and witty dialogues than his true to life characters. He lacked subtlety of characterization. He often exaggerated so that his characters turned into caricatures. His men and women lacked flesh and blood, in short he underplayed character drawing to other elements of theater, though he did not altogether neglect it. In naming characters, he uses tag word, a device as old as Homer. Names often indicate dominant trait or bias of nature of the character. This is a simple method of directing audience response. We do find some interest in the character of Sir Peter and Lady Teazle for example.

Sir Peter Teazle is a conventional and fallible man of sentiment. His blindness is cured by a rude shock (screen scene). Finally his eyes are opened. He is not despicable but human and he is an enemy of scandal.

Lady Teazle is more complex, wittiest, intelligent country ingenious girl. She is dazzled by glitter and glamour. She has no malice against the people she abuses. She acts out of good humour. Motive of other members are slanderous and animal.

Charles Surface is a young extravagant rascal but has potentiality to convert to virtue and honour. A striking contrast to his elder brother Joseph, there is no malice, meanness or hypocrisy about him.

Joseph Surface gains importance as he is assigned more than one role by Sheridan. A chief villain, he places himself into good books of Sir Peter who is guardian of Maria a wealthy lass. He invokes Lady Teazle's interest. He seduces her. His humiliation and exposure is evident in Screen scene. He is repulsive, inhuman and mean. Sheridan uses Joseph a main instrument to attack sentimental comedy. He wants to show that the noblest sentiments can flow from the vilest villains posing hypocrisy ingratitude, and meanness.

5.8 LANGUAGE AND STYLE

Where is the merit of a Sheridan, whose have held the stage successfully for over two centuries? How do we explain the continued popularity of the play?

A glimpse at the scene where Charles surface auctions away his ancestors with a carefree and boisterous hilarity, the screen scene and the refraction of it in the last act, reveals to us what W.A. Darlington calls Sheridan's 'superb sense of situation'. He works his way from situation to situation without complicating the plot or entangling too much the various threads of the story. Sheridan was a man of the theatre: he had an unerring grip of the requirements on the stage unlike Congreve; he does not mystify the audience, but keeps them informed of turns and twists of the story in advance while the characters in the dramatic action are ignorant of them. This is exactly what Hitchcock did in his films and Congreve did not do in the way of the world. The scene is probably the most famous single scene in English drama except for the balcony scene in Romeo and Juliet. It is said that drama is most effective when the audience is in possession of the facts which are unknown to the characters on the stage, and if this is true, the screen scene from the point where lady

Teazle hides until the moment when sir peter and Charles surface, in carefree search of the 'little French milliner' find her, is a perfect example of dramatic tension and surprise'. (W.A. Darlington).

Even though he was an original genius, in the school for scandal he could not entirely break away from eighteenth century tradition. Charles surface is the prodigal but warm-hearted libertine, Maria is the heiress who loves him and is won by him, but who has to defy the advances of suitors preferred by her guardian. Joseph surface is the contemporary man of sentiment, with an admixture of restoration rake. Sir Oliver surface is the wealthy relative who conceals his identity so that he may be a better judge of the character. Rowley is the typical devoted family entertainer.

It was Sheridan's triumph that on this conventional frame work he grafted a novel developments and additions which result in a masterpiece of stage-craft. Comedy has always been a vehicle for slanderous tongue, that 'scandalous college' of which lady Sneerwell is the president, and which includes Mrs. Candour hiding her malice under an affectation of good nature, the scurrilous Mr. Crabtree with his poetaster nephew Sir Benjamin backbite who specializes in satires and lampoons on particular people; and for a time lady Teazle, till she hands back her diploma for killing characters. It may be doubted, however, whether much has been gained by making lady Sneerwell secretly in love with Charles, and therefore making trouble between him by bringing snake to forge love letters from lady Teazle to Charles and answering them herself, till snake finally confesses.

Many comedy libertines have, under attest shown their better side, but none stands out like Charles surface, auctioning the family portraits to the pretended 'Mr. Premium' supported by Moses, refusing at any price to part with that of his uncle Oliver, and thus winning Joseph (always punctually called Mr. Surface'). Through him Sheridan delivered the blow in campaign against moralizing sentimental comedy in which goldsmith had been his forerunner. When Josephine mock pity for Charles proclaims 'the man, who does not share in the distress of a brother, even though mended by his own misconduct, deserves--', lady Sneerwell sees through him, cuts him short with 'o lord, you are going to be moral and forget that you are among friends'. Yet soon after he assures Maria that to smile at the jest which plants a thorn in another's breast is to become a principal

mischief. 'the person who is most taken in by such utterances is sir peter Teazle, who declares that 'there is nothing, in the world so noble as a man of sentiment'.

Yet at this very time Joseph is the treacherous enemy of his household happiness. The relation between an elderly husband and a young wife...a constant subject of satire...never has it been handed with finer art than in the case of sir peter and his seven months bride... there follows one of the classical episodes of the British stage..., a theatrical climax of the first order but for sheer technical virtuosity it is challenged by the exploitation of it in the college of slander...

5.9 Check Your Progress.

- 1) Why did Goldsmith and Sheridan oppose sentimental comedy?
- 2) Describe the nature of new sentimental comedy of Sheridan
- 3) Who were the other dramatists of new sentimental comedy?
- 4) What is the single most important factor which caused the drama its success?
- 5) Who were the theatre going people of Restoration period?
- 6) State Colley Giber's contribution to restoration drama.
- 7) Name Sheridan's first comedy.
- 8) How does Sheridan treat exposition in The School for Scandal?
- 9) Explain the popular theme of contrasted brothers as illustrated in the drama.
- 10) Where the dramatic centre of the play?
- 11) What necessitated break between the last scene of the third act and first scene of the fourth act?
- 12) Is the drama free from stock in trade devices?
- 13) What does the main plot deal with?
- 14) What is prologue?
- 15) What is epilogue?
- 16) What does Sheridan lack?
- 17) What is the difference between Sheridan and famous film director Alfred Hitchcock in the field of treatment of mystery?

5.10 SUMMARY

What is the nature of this play? It is very much unlike the sentimental comedy then enjoying hay-day. Nor has it similarity with Goldsmith's *She Stoops to Conquer* with its scenes of low comedy, its humour and humanity. *The School for Scandal* is witty rather than humorous; it floats on the surface of sophisticated society without any attempt to fathom psychological or spiritual depths of the individual. The polished prose and sparkle of wit at once recall to you the comedy of manners of which Congreve's *The Way of the World*, written about three quarters of a century before is the best example. The characters including servants get a generous share of wit and they don't seem to be always speaking in character. Many of the characters like Sneerwell and Backbite bear label names which at once suggest to you their dominant nature. This reminds you of the Johnsonian comedy of humours. But the comedy of manners had assimilated many characteristics from the comedy of humours. So we may confidently assert *The School for Scandal* is a comedy of manners but differs from its prototype of the restoration in that it is free from the taint of immorality. It borrows the conventions but rejects the licentiousness. We have already seen how Sheridan stemmed the tide of sentimental comedy with its tearful situations and snivelling sermonizing which smacked of hypocrisy. The laughter was restored its legitimate position in comedy and sentimentalism was ridiculed out of court by equating it with hypocritical platitude. Therefore the play is anti-sentimental in its attitude and it is happy revival of the comedy of manners purged of its immorality.

5.11 CONCLUSION

The School for Scandal is a great comedy-one of the greatest in the language. It is regarded by most critics as one of the best comedies (the other being Goldsmith's *She Stoops to Conquer*) to be written in English. But the basic pattern is that of a Restoration Comedy of Manners washed clean of its coarseness and immorality. Like Restoration comedies this play is preoccupied with amorous pursuits and intrigues. It is artistic relying on the brilliance of its wit, scintillating repartee and comic situation rather than on the strength of its message. On this basic pattern is overlaid a dextrous and satiric

attack on the Sentimental Comedy. Hence was classified as Anti-sentimental comedy.

In the next chapter we take up Goldsmith's work-She stoops to conquer; Goldsmith ridiculed the Sentimental comedy of his day. He does this with a detestable character.

Check Your Progress - Answers

5.9

1. The commo1. Goldsmith and Sheridan opposed by percept and by example. They drove tears out of comedy and restored humour and laughter.
2. In short, hero running through profligacy through four acts and then last act repentance and reformation.
3. Vanbrugh, Farquhar and Congreve were noteworthy names.
4. The play owes its great success largely to the brilliance of superb dialogues.
5. Theatre going was not restricted to young ladies and men of court. Rising middle class and mercantile community visited theatre during restoration period.
6. Colley Giber knew audience taste and delighted in scenes of immorality. He indulged in last act reformation of hero.
7. The Rivals was his first comedy.
8. The exposition goes without much ado, introduces hypocrisy and sets action.
9. We find theme has autobiographic element in Sheridan and his brother. In Henry Fielding's Tom Jones the same is observed. Here, Sentimental Joseph, a role model for youth is pitted against his brother who has not a grain of virtue.
10. In Act II, scene II Charles is impersonating as a Jew money lender. In the next scene we find Sir Oliver is surprised. This is rightfully the centre of the play.
11. Theatrical performance requires a different setting. Action moves from drawing room to portrait gallery upstairs.
12. We find victims of scandal, improbability of auction scene to hilarious comedy and avoidance of anticlimax used as devices.

Hence we cannot say the drama is free from stock in trade devices.

13. Theme is power of love. Dramatist adheres to poetic justice.
14. Prologue is generally spoken by the leading actor of the play introducing author and play. This is similar to Sutradhar nati pravesh in Sanskrit drama.
15. Epilogue is spoken by a leading actor in the spirit of drama as a sort of concluding remark.
16. Sheridan is no doubt a master of construction. However, there is no deep unity in the tendencies of his theatre.
17. When we see tension in his work, he exhibits superb mastery in handling mystery. He reveals secret at long last. Hitchcock and Congreve on the other hand share the secret with audience but keep it hidden from characters.

□ □ □

CHAPTER : 6

OLIVER GOLDSMITH: SHE STOOPS TO CONQUER

- 6.1 Objectives
- 6.2 Introduction
- 6.3 Life and works
- 6.4 Analysis
- 6.5 Theme
- 6.6 Plot
- 6.7 Characterization
- 6.8 Language & style
- 6.9 Check your progress
- 6.10 Summary
- 6.11 Conclusion
 - Check your progress - Answers

6.1 OBJECTIVES

We shall discuss intellectual, social and political factors that influenced Oliver Goldsmith and his work. After reading this chapter, you will be able to:

- a) Outline the main characteristics of his age
- b) Describe the main aspects of drama
- c) Discuss the theme of 'She Stoops to Conquer'
- d) Discuss the plot of the play
- e) Discuss the different dramatic techniques used by Goldsmith
- f) Outline Goldsmith's use of language and style
- g) Outline the relevance of the characters in the overall scheme of the play
- h) Describe the historical background of the play and
- i) Outline the life and works of Oliver Goldsmith

6.2 INTRODUCTION

"She Stoops to Conquer" is a comedy with peculiar and interesting fusion. It derives inspiration from Comedy of Manners, but is nearer to Shakespeare's Romantic comedy. It does not carry an intellectual witty approach but the humour it takes in its stride. For Tony Lumpkin is inheritance of Falstaff. He is a fool but has a wit. Goldsmith's plot is improbable but story is at once natural romantic geniality and warmth. His characterization is strong unmistakable in the round characters, never subtle but solid.

Both Goldsmith and Sheridan restored Comedy of Manners to its glory and pulled down Sentimental Comedy to ground. Goldsmith showed his own way how genuine comedy is written, and how aim of true comedy is achieved. The virtues of private are exhibited rather than the vices exposed. The true function of comedy is to give a humorous exhibition of the follies and vices of men and women, and rectify them by exiting laughter.

6.3 LIFE AND WORKS

He was born at Pallas in Ireland. His father was a clergyman, a man of small means. He was brought in poverty and was poor at study while at school. An attack of small-pox disfigured his face. Once while at school he had little money with him and enquired for an inn where to pass the night. He was sent by a mischievous person to a gentleman's house as to an inn. This incident afterward formed the basis of the plot of she stoops to conquer.

He entered Trinity college on reduced fees. He was not a disciplined student and was about to be removed. Somehow he managed to obtain his B.A. Degree. He tried his hand as an assistant in book-shop. He started his journalistic career in monthly review. He wrote articles for periodicals including the bee, the busybody, the lady's magazine, the public ledger. These writings were later published in the form of a book titled the citizen of the world. It raised his reputation. His financial position improved. His acquaintance with Dr. Johnson proved to be a great help. He was one of the original nine members of the Johnson club. In 1764 five editions of his poetry were published. By virtue of the invariable charm of his style he

offered the good-natured man to Garrick. The next was the deserted village. He had another big success on the stage in 1770. Johnson said it answered the great end of comedy, that of making an audience merry. A monument with an inscription by Dr. Johnson was erected in Westminster abbey. His statue was erected in 1864 in front of the trinity college, Dublin.

Goldsmith's poetry anticipates romanticism but his diction is artificial and pompous in pseudo-classical style. It is interesting to study Goldsmith, a contemporary of Dr. Samuel Johnson. Goldsmith holds high place in the history of English novel by virtue of a single novel - "The Vicar of Weikfield". Goldsmith introduced the portraiture of the domestic middle class life into English fiction. His humour mingles with pathos. In grace, charm and amiable good humour, he is one of the greatest. Goldsmith and Sheridan did much to bring about a revival of the comedy of manners.

6.4 ANALYSIS

In Act I we are introduced to an old-fashioned country house and the owners Mr & Mrs Hardcastle. Mr Hardcastle likes old friends, old stories and his country house. Mrs. Hardcastle doesn't like them. She complains that her house looks like an inn and their servants need training in receiving visitors.

She has a son, Tony, by former marriage. She cannot think of sending him to school. Tony frequents ale-house and is now on his way. We understand their daughter Kate has spent a year or so in town and is infected with fashion and frivolities of town. She is allowed in the morning to receive and pay visits and dress herself up. In the evening she wears simple housewife's dress to please her father. Thus we are prepared for her subsequently being mistaken for a bar maid. Father informs her that he is expecting a young gentleman whom he has chosen to be her husband. The visitor is known to Mr. Hardcastle to be a young scholar, generous, brave and handsome. Father assures her that she is free to choose. She is sensible and practical-minded girl.

Mrs. Hardcastle's niece Ms. Constance Neville arrives. She has her own love affair but her aunt wants her to marry Tony. The characters are clearly depicted. The dialogue is quite fresh, witty and

lively. Two elements of comedy - intrigue and contrasting characters are present right at the beginning. In second scene, we see Tony singing a song defying school masters and welcoming good life and wine. Character of Tony develops with it. Goldsmith's humour and love of one. Two visitors Marlowe and Hastings arrive. They are easily deceived by what Tony tells them. Thus a trick is played on them. Goldsmith was once a victim of such a trick. The play takes its own roots in reality.

In act ii we see the following actions:

Mr. Hardcastle instructs his servants about manners. He receives Marlowe and Hastings. Hastings and Ms. Neville meet and discuss a plan. Marlowe meets Kate. Hastings meets Mrs. Hardcastle, Tony offers to help Hastings.

We understand the circumstances under which the play opens. Visitors are misdirected and take the house to be an inn and the master as inn keeper. The main story develops in act ii. Hastings and Neville love each other and plan to elope with her jewels. Tony assures them help. Marlowe is kept in dark. His introduction to Kate is quite amusing. Marlowe and Mrs. Hardcastle both take each other to be impudent. Hastings obviously flatters Mrs. Hardcastle.

Tony and Ms. Neville both pretend to love each other to deceive Mrs. Hardcastle. Marlowe is bold with Kate but on the other hand he is nervous and shy while talking to her.

In act III, Mr. Hardcastle wonders how Kate is affected by Marlowe's impudence. Both are surprised for different reasons. However, father is glad at her obedience. They continue to talk at cross purpose. It is clear to him that his daughter is attracted towards Marlowe.

As planned by Hastings, Tony has got hold of a case containing jewels. Hastings joins him but they are afraid of the situation. Ms Neville is independently trying to procure her jewels from her aunt at the same time. Both Mrs. Hardcastle and Ms Neville now face each other. Aunt is pressed by niece for jewels. Aunt advises her that her beauty is so great that she does not need any jewels. Finally, Mrs. Hardcastle has to concede the theft. Tony tells the jewels are missing and not lost.

There is not even one moment throughout this act, plot and

subplot develop. Complications arise in scenes between Kate and Marlowe is one of the finest examples of dramatic irony.

Thinking of her to be barmaid, he is bold. She has "stooped" or assumed the humble role to please herself and her father. The sub plot has a peculiar interest of its own. Hastings is ever eager to run away. Ms. Neville wants her jewels, but cannot persuade her aunt. Tony wants to get rid himself of Ms. Neville. He steals and completes the arrangement for elopement.

In act IV, Sir Charles Marlowe is to arrive. Hastings wants to run away before the arrival as Sir Charles is bound to find out their design. Ms. Neville asks Hastings about safety of jewels. He tells they are with Marlowe. Marlowe has sent casket of jewels to landlady for safekeeping. He understands now that it is not an inn. Kate arrives and he is undeceived. Sensitive Marlowe cannot bear scorn and laughter. He is aware he has exposed himself by his silly and wild conduct. He decides to leave at once, despite the fact that he has been conquered by the pretty barmaid.

Mrs. Hardcastle comes to know the whole plot. She at once decides to take her niece to her old aunt pedigree. She wants tony to ride the horse carriage. Marlowe meets them. He blames Hastings for keeping him in dark. The friends are about to quarrel but Ms. Neville saves the grace. She blames tony for it. The act ends on an act of hope.

The first scene of act v is concerned largely with the main plot. The trick of Kate playing the role of barmaid and now it is consummated by another trick. Sir Charles has to be convinced of his son's affection for her. Kate resorts to another trick. She could allure and fascinate Marlowe as a barmaid and as such she was able to cure him of his shyness. She will again play that role, with Hardcastle and sir Charles as witness.

In the second scene, sub plot is nearing its denouncement. When they set out on the journey to aunt pedigree's house it seems everything is over. Tony in fact is happy and audience enjoys the fun immensely. Mrs. Hardcastle really needs a thorough shaking so that she may realize her own mistake. The audience enjoys the fun of it. Mrs. Hardcastle is within 40 yards of her house. But she imagines that she is 40 miles away. Tony continues to play upon her fears.

When she realizes how she has been mistaken she gets angry. Tony meets her anger with retort. Poetic justice has been meted out to her. Dramatist does not censure Tony for the trick he plays upon his mother.

The last scene takes place inside the house. Sir Charles calls Hardcastle and they hide behind the curtain. Marlowe has come to take leave of Ms. Hardcastle, still under the impression that she is a poor relation of the family. He feels pained in parting. He declares he is prepared to disregard the difference of education and fortune, the anger of his father and the contempt of his equals. Ms. Hardcastle replies that her family is as good as hers whom he came down to visit. She is contented with the good opinion. Marlowe swears that fortune does not enter at all in his consideration. Sir Charles is amazed at this declaration of his son and of his bold forwardness. Marlowe now goes down on his knees and humbly entreats her for her hand in marriage.

Mrs. Hardcastle and Tony enter. She is told that Ms. Neville has gone off with her lover. When Sir Charles hears of Hastings, he praises him and says that no girl could have made a better choice. Hardcastle is also much pleased. Hastings and Ms. Neville arrive on the scene. Mrs. Hardcastle is not little surprised to see them back soon. In a moment of weakness she was prepared to give up her fortune but now she appeals to Mr. Hardcastle to do justice to her. In order to settle the matter, Hardcastle turns to Tony. He asks Tony whether he refuses to marry her. Tony says that his refusing her can mean nothing for he is not of age. Hastings entreats Kate to be kind to his friend. Hardcastle joins their hands and wishes that he may make as good a wife to him as she has been a daughter to him. He also prays that as he has been mistaken in the mistress, he may never be mistaken in the wife.

The subplot is also brought to a happy conclusion. The lovers come to Mr. Hardcastle for justice. Sir Charles speaks highly of them. He discloses he and his wife had been concealing Tony's age with a view to improve his fortune. Tony is happy with joy to hear that he is a free man. He rejects Ms. Neville's hand and leaves her free to marry anybody she chooses. Tony who was responsible for complication, now sets matters right. Everybody is happy.

6.5 THEME

Humorous view of life

There were two schools, one that of Congreve and Wycherley with sarcastic and satirical approach and sentimental one with tears and reforms. Goldsmith is free from both. His comedy is not "high comedy" nor is it "low comedy" with obvious excitement of laughter. The main action and many incidents are farcical and Tony is a triumph of "low" comedy, yet both naturalness and consistency of the characters and the freedom from buffoonery are far above the requirements of farce. Laughter is unrestrained, yet tenderness is not lost sight of. In the nature of Shakespeare ancient Greek tragedy is disobeyed completely. The purpose of comedy is not satire or ridicule. Its objects are neither contemptuous nor ugly. On the one hand nothing is idealized or moralized, there is no glamour of romance and no tears are shed nor any one converted.

6.6 PLOT

There are three elements in plot. Let us consider them.

Main plot is Marlow Kate love story

Sub-plot is Hasting-Constance love story

Intrigue of Tony

Goldsmith has woven these separate elements into one organic whole. It is full of suspense and humour. Role of Tony is interlinking is obvious. The whole story builds and ends through mistakes. Tony carries the burden of this. Role of Tony in sub-plot is more crucial. His intrigue introduces the sub-plot, develops and successfully concludes. The Casket containing Miss Neville's jewels forms an integral part of story and a source of complication that turns on humour. Mrs. Hardcastle wants to marry her son Tony for the sake of fortune which belongs to Miss Neville. Neither of them is interested in this forced relationship. Tony's love is elsewhere. He does not want to deprive her of her belongings. She is more earthly and not interested in eloping without Casket. Tony steals the jewels, hands them over to Hastings. Through Marlow's mishandling they again fall in the hands of Mrs. Hardcastle. It's high time for elopement of Hastings when discovery of it through a letter of Hastings written to Tony is brought to light. Tony is accused of bungling and is called

"booby and insensible cub". However, Tony takes it in the right spirit and promises help. As a punishment Neville is taken to her aunt, at distance. Tony plays smart. His trick sets matter right. Thus Tony is the central figure of the sub-plot.

The two love stories have parallelism and contrast. Both deal with same theme, winning a husband. But in main plot woman chases, in the sub-plot the man chases. This is the distinction and contrast. All this is rapidly achieved. Our interest is captured and retained till end.

The Garden Scene:

Location is the garden of Mr. Hardcastle's residence. Hastings is waiting for Tony. Hastings is tired of waiting. Tony is seen with muddy clothes. Tony is indeed a good friend to Hastings. Tony brings his love affair to conclusion. Tony explains how in the pretence of driving his mother and Miss Neville towards Aunt's house he drove them round and round the house. He created an impression, it was dark outside and they have travelled forty miles. The fact is they were at the back of house in their garden. Hastings goes out to meet Neville. Mrs. Hardcastle is covered with mud. She is tired, frightened, nervous and confused. She cannot recognize her own house or her own husband. Tony explains they have lost the way. He increases her fright by referring to Crackskull common a notorious robber. The man approaching them is Mr. Hardcastle. He is not satisfied nor has he understood. He explains to her it is their garden and Tony has deceived her in a shameless manner.

Thus we find a poetic justice at the end. Readers have no sympathy for Mrs. Hardcastle who has spoiled her own son. She also wanted to deprive Neville of her fortune and wanted Tony to marry for the sake of jewellery. We conclude the appearances are often deceptive. Subtle dramatic irony prevails in the scene. The whole truth is known to audience but not to Mrs. Hardcastle.

Without Hastings-Constance love story, the main plot would have been too narrow a playground. The sub-plot imports variety and solidity to the story.

6.7 CHARACTERIZATION

Goldsmith is a master of art of characterization. His characters are living breathing human beings and not caricatures or flat two dimensional abstractions. He had a wide experience of nature of life and literature. He had a deep understanding of secrets of human behaviour that's why his characters are credible. Methods by which a dramatist puts life into a character are;-by the choice of words he puts their mouth, by the actions they perform and what he makes other characters say about them. Goldsmith makes admirable use of all of these techniques. We see Tony is an outstanding example often compared with Shakespeare's Falstaff. The other characters are also far from being types.

Robert Herring says "Goldsmith may not reach subtlety of a Millamant, but his characters are by no means as "simple" as those of more artificial pretentious writers. They put into their puppets mouth epigram which the puppets would never have had the brain to invent. Some dramatist leave the strings of characterization showing, you see them being pulled, to jerk the puppets into movement. But Goldsmith weaves the threads, as in life.

Characters

Mr. Hardcastle: An old fashioned country squire, kind, jovial, good natured. He loves his old stories. He is affectionate not only to his daughter but to his servants also. He is friendly and hospitable. He has a fine sense of humour and wit. Occasionally, his wit turns sarcastic, and then an expression of his deep annoyance and his resentment is vented out. He is the conventional father of classical comedy, forgiving even when deceived.

Mrs. Hardcastle: She is sharply contrasted with her husband who is perfectly satisfied with life and everything that is old. She is crazy for London fashions and manners. She is greedy and self-centred. Blinded by her greed she is determined to retain jewellery in her family. Her love for Tony is redeeming factor. At once she is extravagantly dotting mother of son and would be lady of fashion. She is an oppressive aunt. She shows plenty of spirit of action.

Marlow

He is a handsome young man of well-to-do family. He has a strong duality, reserve and shy with ladies of rank and status on one

hand but quite bold and forward in the company of women of easy virtue. His apparent rudeness lies in this duality. As soon as he is told that Miss Hardcastle is a poor relative of family though he was eager to seduce her, but now he behaves like an honourable man. He falls in love begs for her love. His sense of pride gives way to his passionate regard for the poor relative. He praises her grace, beauty, refined simplicity, courageous innocence. He is sure his father will approve of her.

Tony Lumpkin

He is a spoiled son. The actions in drama suggest he is not a fool at all, but a young man with fertile inventive brain. He indulges in pranks and practical jokes. He has unsophisticated wickedness and "his sense of humour". His mischief makes us laugh at him. His pretention of love making to his cousin throws dust in his mama's eyes. He is kind, generous helpful and determined. It is the best example of a "round" character-perhaps Goldsmith has put most of himself in Tony than any other characters.

Minor characters

George Hastings is a smart, well dressed young man, honest and upright, a true sincere deep lover. A romantic, wit and humour make him important. Hastings has been conceived as a foil, reference point to Marlow. Without Hastings-Constance love story, the main plot would have been too narrow a playground. The sub-plot imports variety and solidity to the story.

Constance Neville is a charming girl. She provides a foil to Kate Hardcastle. She acts well her part in pretending to love Tony. She is a nice girl of spirit willing to elope with lover, deceive her caretaker aunt, but equally straightforward and to repent of her secrecy.

Catherine/Kate Hardcastle is the apple of the eye of her father. Her physical charm is considerable. She is an obedient daughter. She is young vivacious. It is she who thinks of "Stooping to conquer young Marlow. She is intelligent enough to provide nervous Marlow complete his sentences. She wins heart of Marlow. She chases and courts, instead of being chased and courted. (Do we anticipate Show here?)

6.8 LANGUAGE AND STYLE

Aptness of the title

The main title "She stoops to conquer" refers to the device of its heroine to win her object of love, Marlow, by stooping to play the role of a barmaid, and then of a poor relation. The sub-title "The Mistakes of Night" refers to the series of mistakes Marlow committed during the course of night. His first mistake is to take the residence of Mr. Hardcastle to be an inn. Secondly he mistakes Mr. Hardcastle to be innkeeper. Thirdly he mistakes Kate Hardcastle to be a barmaid. The subsequent unfoldment of plot of comedy is packed with hilarious fun and laughter. There is not a single moment of dullness.

In merchandise the good label suggest the product. In drama the title should attract the audience and indicate its theme. Oliver Goldsmith considered many suggestions before naming the play. Two names considered were "The old House a New Inn", "The Belle's Stratagem". Both were rejected. The former ignores human element and the latter though more suggestive had a close resemblance to the title of another popular play "A Beau's Stratagem" by Farquhar. Goldsmith picked up a line from Dryden's "The Hind and the Panther, but kneels to conquer but stoops to rise. He found it apt and attractive. Thus original title "The Mistakes of the Night" was retained as subtitle and new name given.

The main title is appropriate in Miss Hard castle's action of pretending to be the barmaid but rising triumphantly. Other stooping is that of Miss Neville, one may say a moral stooping. Marlow stoops physically; he kneels before a poor girl socially, to win her heart .

The sub-title refers to mistakes of Marlow and Hastings, mistaking places, mistaking role of Mr Hardcastle, Kate. Mistakes of Mrs. Hardcastle are the ride and supposing she is forty miles away when she is just near her own house, and her husband to be a highwayman (robber). She also mistook Tony and Neville's pretensions. She made a mistake of judging Tony. All these mistakes are humanly possible. They add to fun and laughter.

Falstaff in Henry IV of Shakespeare may be compared to Tony. Favourites of their authors they contribute to the play. Stooping is a key word of the story and so are mistakes.

Dramatic Irony

A device in which presentation on the stage of certain situation and incidence the real significance of which is known to the audience but not to the characters of the play is known as dramatic irony. Thus audience is at the higher level of awareness. Audience is in position to enjoy fun but not the characters on stage. Unknowingly characters become objects of laughter. Let us take example of Marlow who considers Mr. Hardcastle as unknown innkeeper at the gate. Hardcastle does not know the friends are misdirected. In another example Mrs. Hardcastle is robbed, Tony knows because he himself has robbed her. Her fury outcry and intentions are genuine. Son Tony is feigning. Audience enjoys the fun.

Wit and humour

Presently both "wit" and "humour" designate species of comic. The elements of a work of literature, whether character, even utterance, used to amuse or excite. Earlier critics used these terms with different shades of meaning. The term "wit" implied human faculty of intelligence and inventiveness especially in paradoxical figure of speech. In old sense and up to Elizabethan period "humour" was comic appearance or utterance. Humour sometimes evokes sympathetic laughter.

Goldsmith was quite witty when occasion demanded. When Marlow begs barmaid for a taste of the "nectar of her lips" she wittily replies "Nectar! Nectar! That's a liquor there is no call for in these parts, French, I suppose. We keep no French wines here Sir". Wit is saying of fine, sparkling things, and as such are scattered all over. Humour of character, ironical humour, dramatic irony, and wit; Goldsmith has all at his command. He is equally at ease on farcical humour, the lowest kind of humour. Farcical humour is largely situational, arising from situation, incident or intrigue.. It is in exaggeration.

6.9 Check Your Progress.

- 1) How does Goldsmith treat virtues and vices in his comedy?
- 2) What is the true function of a comedy according to Goldsmith?
- 3) What does Goldsmith's poetry anticipate?
- 4) Where do we find the roots of the play? 

- 5) How do sub-plots end in last act?
- 6) What is the purpose of comedy for Congreve and Wycherley?
- 7) What is the purpose of comedy for Goldsmith?
- 8) How does Goldsmith weave sub-plot of intrigue of Tony?
- 9) To what extent do the two love stories differ? What is the similarity in them?
- 10) What purpose does Hastings-Constance story serve?
- 11) What methods are employed by Goldsmith in characterization?
- 12) Do you consider the title as apt?
- 13) Why was sub-title given to the drama?
- 14) What is dramatic irony in case of this drama?
- 15) What does the term 'wit' mean?
- 16) What does the term 'humour' mean?

6.10 SUMMARY

Goldsmith's poetry anticipates romanticism but his diction is artificial and pompous in pseudo-classical style. It is interesting to study Goldsmith, a contemporary of Dr. Samuel Johnson. Goldsmith holds high place in the history of English novel by virtue of a single novel - "the vicar of Wakefield". Goldsmith introduced the portraiture of the domestic middle class life into English fiction. His humour mingles with pathos. In grace, charm and amiable good humour, he is one of the greatest. Goldsmith and Sheridan did much to bring about a revival of the comedy of manners.

6.11 Conclusion

This work deserved fame. It presented a peculiar and interesting fusion of different forces. It owes much to the comedy of manners, but in essence it approaches more nearly the spirit of Shakespeare's romantic comedy. For long years it has given pleasure, has survived and yields a new vitality. It is full of dramatic situations. The characterization is strong and unmistakable. In grace, charm and amiable good humour, he is one of the greatest dramatists.

Check Your Progress - Answers

6.9

1. Goldsmith held that virtues of a private person should be exhibited and vices exposed.
2. Function of a comedy according to Goldsmith is to give a humorous exhibition of follies and vices of men to rectify them by exciting laughter.
3. Goldsmith's poetry was pompous and pseudo classical. We anticipate Romanticism in his poetry.
4. In his childhood he was sent to a gentleman's house as to an inn. This experience may be the root of the drama.
5. Tony, who was responsible for complication, sets the matter right. Everybody is happy. Sub-plot imports variety and solidity.
6. Congreve school goes with sarcasm and satire. Wycherley goes with tears and reformation. Goldsmith follows independent course, nothing is idealised or moralised or reformed. There is laughter.
7. For Goldsmith purpose of comedy is neither satire nor ridicule but laughter.
8. Without sub-plot of Hastings Constance love story, the main-plot would have been narrow.
9. The two love stories have similarity and contrast. In main --story woman chases man. In sub-plot man chases woman.
10. The Hastings Constance story lends support to main plot
11. Goldsmith is a master of characterisation. By choice of words they use, the action they perform and what other characters say about them he delineates them
12. Main title is appropriate as Miss Hardcastle pretends to be a barmaid but wins husband. Sub-title refers to mistakes which are humanly possible.
- 13 Picking up a line from Dryden's poem, he found these words apt and used.
14. Significance of situations and incidents is known to audience but not to characters. Unknowingly characters become objects of laughter. This is dramatic irony.

15 Wit implies intelligence and inventiveness.

16. In Elizabethan times 'humour' meant comic appearance or utterance. Humour evokes laughter. Besides there is humour of character, irony, dramatic irony.



SECTION - A

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SECTION - A

QUESTION BANK

- 1) Explain Drama as a genre (form) of literature?
 - 2) Write a note on characteristics of drama in Elizabethan Age.
 - 3) Write a note on achievements of Elizabethan Drama.
 - 4) Explain the term Restoration Drama.
 - 5) Write a note on Comedy of Manners. Give examples.
 - 6) Write short notes:
 - Explain the term 'Catharsis'.
 - Explain the term 'Plot'.
 - Explain the term 'Soliloquy'.
 - Explain the term 'Hamertia'.
 - Explain the term 'Poetic Justice'.
 - 7) Jonson's dramatis personae are caricatures rather than characters. Do you agree?
 - 8) Jonson declared that the object of comedy is to 'sport with human follies not with crimes'. Explain this claim with reference to Volpone.
 - 9) What features of the comedy of humours are exemplified in Volpone?
 - 10) All the characters in Volpone, except for two minor ones, are villains and criminals. Discuss.
 - 11) Discuss the relevance of the sub-plot in Volpone.
 - 12) 'From no needful rule he swerveth'. Is Jonson's claim borne out by the play Volpone?
 - 13) Illustrate by an analysis of the play Volpone, Jonson's mastery in plot construction.
- 14) Write a short note on the following:**
- Volpone's disguises
 - The catastrophe of Volpone
 - Corvino's jealousy
 - The names of the characters in Volpone
 - The mountebank scene in Volpone
 - The attempted seduction of Celia
 - Mosca's lies.

- 15) Dr Faustus is the tragedy of human aspirations gone awry. Do you agree?
- 16) Bring out the biblical reference in Marlowe's Dr. Faustus.
- 17) Critically analyze the end of Dr. Faustus.
- 18) Discuss various theme of in Dr. Faustus.
- 19) Marlowe's concept of tragic hero differs from classical. Discuss.
- 20) Explain how Dr. Faustus reflects the spirit of the Renaissance in Europe.
- 21) What features in the drama, Dr Faustus, have made it a classic?
- 22) Do you agree with the view that Dr Faustus is limited as a tragedy because it is too far removed from the normal concerns of humanity?
- 23) Show that Dr Faustus is a drama of a Christian who runs afoul of God's Law.
- 24) 'The play is conceived on noble lines, and the beginning and the end are worthily executed, but between them there is a yawning gap'. Critically examine the propriety of this statement.

25) Write short notes on:

Marlowe is greater as a poet than as a dramatist.

Dr Faustus is more a poem than a drama.

Summarise the scene -Dr Faustus and Helen of Troy.

Comic scenes in Dr Faustus

Dr Faustus as a morality play

The Faustus legend

- 26) In what sense can you call The School for Scandal an anti-sentimental comedy?
- 27) The School for Scandal is a typical comedy of manners purged of its immorality. Discuss.
- 28) Compare The School for scandal with The Way of the World as comedies of manners.
- 29) How does Sheridan avoid an anticlimax after the successful auction scene and the screen scene?
- 30) Evaluate 'The School for Scandals' as a comedy of Manners. Explain the significance of the title 'The School for Scandals'.
- 31) explain the significance of the title 'The School for Scandal'.
- 32) discuss the characterisation in Sheridan's 'The School for Scandal'.
- 33) discuss the functions and roles of Charles Surface and Joseph Surface in 'The School for Scandal.'
- 34) Estimate 'The Way of the World' as a comedy of contemporary manners.

- 35) In 'The Way of the World' Congreve is at his best in characterisation. Substantiate.
- 36) Write a critical note on Restoration comedy, illustrating some of your points from The Way of the World.
- 37) The plot of 'The Way of the World' is over-ingenious. Discuss.
- 38) How far do you agree with the view that The Way of the world is a serious play?
- 39) Write short notes on the following:
The proviso scene between Mirabelle and Millamant
Sex in Congreve's The Way of the world is a battle of wits. Discuss.
Bargaining scene between Mirabel and Millamant and Congreve's philosophy of love
- 40) She Stoops to conquer is a great comedy of Intrigue.
- 41) Why do you think She Stoops to Conquer is described as the enduring and universal popular play?
- 42) Goldsmith's originality lies in the novelty of incidents and situations. Substantiate.
- 43) We observe immense variety of humour in She Stoops to Conquer. Illustrate.
- 44) Compare and contrast characters of Marlow and Hastings in She Stoops to Conquer.
- 45) Write short notes on:
1.The Casket scene in She Stoops to Conquer
2.The Garden scene in She Stoops to Conquer
3.First impression as a source of error in She Stoops to Conquer
4.A note on aptness of the title She Stoops to Conquer
5. A note on aptness of the sub-title The Mistakes of the Night
6. Tony is a 'round' character



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SECTION - B

CHAPTER : 7

SHAW: CANDIDA

- 7.1 Objectives
- 7.2 Introduction
- 7.3 Life and works of dramatist
- 7.4 Themes
- 7.5 Plot
- 7.6 Characterization/ characters
- 7.7 structure, Language and style
- 7.8 Check your progress
- 7.9 Summary
- 7.10 Conclusion
 - Check your progress - Answers

7.1 OBJECTIVES

We will be presenting to you work of Shaw which has won success. His knowledge of contemporary economic and political matters turned him to Public speaker. He tried his hand as a novelist. Finally he turned to drama as his medium of Expression. With the publication of Man and the Superman in 1903, Shaw attained his stature as a dramatist. From there onwards he came to be recognized as veteran dramatist of the highest order. The great dramatist dominated literary scene for over half a century. He won the Noble prize for literature in 1925.

- a) After reading this chapter you will be able to:
- b) Become familiar with Shaw's wit and expression of his philosophy
- c) Appreciate the fundamental role that dramatic art plays within wide range of historical social conditions
- d) Discuss the importance of Shaw's prefaces.
- e) Describe the characters in the play.

- f) Outline the relevance of characters in the overall scheme of the drama.
- g) Describe the theme of play.

7.2 INTRODUCTION

Towards the middle of the century there was a tendency of development from romantic and historical themes to more realistic themes. T.W. Robertson a writer of comedies introduced in plays the idea of a serious theme underlying the humour, and characters and dialogues of a more natural kind. Dramatists of this period are also associated with the rise of the new comedy of manners, a genre which had fallen into decay since the days of Sheridan. It was not until the last decade of the 19th century, when the influence of Ibsen was making itself strongly felt. Shaw produced first plays to use the serious drama for a consideration of social, domestic, or personal problems. New psychological investigations increased the interest in character as distinct from plot, and the realistic drama aimed more and more at the presentation of real life. The weakness of the new realistic drama, the drama of ideas was its lack of anything to fire the imagination. It lacked the poetry in the true sense. Shaw and Galsworthy could rise above these limitations. It was Ibsen's influence which established the drama of ideas as the popular drama of the early twentieth century. Future lay with this type of drama.

Shaw appeared on the English theatrical scene at a time when there was hardly any serious play writing. The better known playwrights of the period were mere craftsmen with no claims as artists. Shaw was impatient with them because their plays presented, in Eric Bentley's words, "not life but day dreams, not thought but sentiment." There was no tradition in England for a playwright to fall back on. Inspiration was to come from the Continent. Thus Ibsen the Ibsen of problem plays and not the later Ibsen who wrote poetic-symbolic plays exerted considerable influence on Shaw. Shaw speaks with enthusiasm about the new drama (introduced by Ibsen) in *Quintessence of Ibsenism*: "In the new plays the drama arises through a conflict of unsettled ideals rather than through vulgar attachments, rapacity, generosities, resentments, ambitions, misunderstandings; oddities and so forth as to which no moral

question is raised. The conflict is not between clear right and wrong, the villain is as conscientious as the hero if not more so; in fact, the question which is the villain and which the hero. Or to put it another way "there are no villains and no heroes. This sticks the critics mainly as a departure from dramatic art; but it is really the inevitable return to nature which ends all the merely technical fashions." Here Shaw is critical of playwrights, who, instead of reflecting life, merely followed certain conventions handed down to them.

7.3 LIFE AND WORKS OF SHAW

Shaw George Bernard (1856-1950) Anglo Irish playwright, dramatic critic and socialist. He was born at Dublin; educated at Wesleyan conational School and the Model Boys' School, Dublin. He worked with a firm of estate agents; wrote unsuccessful novels in succession 1879-83. He was elected member of the Fabien society, 1884; made a mark as a public speaker on subjects of topical interest; reviewed books, plays and music for periodicals. Quintessence of Ibsen 1890; Under the influence of Ibsen wrote plays of ideas; first play *The Widowers' House* produced, 1892; *Mrs. Warren's Profession* written 1893 not produced till 1902; *Arms and The Man* and *Superman* 1901-1903; *Major Barbara* 1905; *Pygmalion* 1912; *Back to Methuselah* 1921; *Saint John* 1923; Nobel Prize for Literature, 1925; his plays are characterized by wit, brilliance and vigorous intellect ; they have the stamp of a powerful personality ; quite a few of his plays have a permanent place in the repertory ; his major plays still continue to be revived. Shaw's personality was very complex and many sided often contradictory and opposite. He built his position by debates, lectures, writings, etc. He created the Shaw legend. He was a unique combination of the gay and serious. His interests changed with age. He exposed social abuse with solemnity. Shaw was a tireless crusader for social justice. One may even call him a propagandist for the intellectual cause. He tried to liberate his age from superstition, sentimentalism, and sloth. He put them to the tests of real life and honest thought.

Shaw's dramatic career may be divided into phases. In early phase we include *Widower's House*. Here Shaw dealt with slum landlordism; in *Mrs. Warren's Profession* with prostitution and in *Arms and the Man* with the romantic conception of soldier. He had an

ear for all the rhythm of speech, and he studied with great diligence the ways in which dialogues could be made as natural in movement as it was in content. In the middle phase *The Man of Destiny* he presented a satirical portrait of the young Bonaparte. In *The Devil's Disciple*, he showed how melodrama could be made use of for discussion of ideas. In his play *Antony and Cleopatra* he gave a conception of Caesar which is impressive and yet full, at the same time, of comedy. His Philosophical plays explore ideas of man and his destiny. *Man and Superman* is one of the most brilliant of all his plays showing his deeper vision which appeared after the First World War. We see Dramatic effective presentation in *The Showing-up of Blanco Posén*. It had a touch of sentimentality and gives a human quality to the action. His dramatic output forms a coherent whole.

7.4 THEMES: THE ETERNAL TRIANGLE

Shaw uses a common story called as eternal triangle. In a customary treatment the woman, already married to one of them becomes involved with the second man and for a while the husband is unsuspecting. Husband at length discovers the intrigue. There is a highly dramatic and emotional scene in which erring either repents and parts from her love, or is cast off by her husband and left to continue the illicit relationship. The moral or the immoral, key to that type of the play is in the sexual intrigue, the deception of the honest husband by the unfaithful wife. *Candida* too loves her husband, provides him with all necessary comforts and keeps all vulgar cares away from him so that he may compose his summons undisturbed. Their married life is a happy one, and one feels that they are an ideal couple. All goes well till Morell finds Eugene sleeping on the embankment of the Thames. Eugene is merely a boy. *Candida* is a matured woman of thirty. Still he falls passionately in love with her. One fine morning he tells Morell that he is in love with wife who despises him as David's wife despised him when she saw him dancing outside among the people. There is a violent quarrel. Morell asks *Candida* to choose between him and Mabank as she can belong only to one of them and not both of them at a time. *Candida* takes the situation in her hands. This brings an end to the dispute. She asks them what have they to offer at the auction. Morell offers his strength, his industry and his social status and prestige. Eugene on the other

hand, offers his weakness, his desolation and heart's need. Candida says that she will give herself over to the weaker of the two. Morell feels that he has lost. But it soon becomes clear that Morell is the weaker of the two. He is emotionally dependent, for love and for security, on his wife and cannot stand on his own feet. He must be mothered and taken care of. He is shattered. Eugene on the other hand, has the courage to face it alone. The result is that he goes alone in the dark. And Candida stays with her husband, and soon they are locked in embrace.

Shattering of illusions and attainment of self-knowledge

Shaw called himself a rationalist, a realist, and an anti-romantic. He was against everything that is not based on fact and reality. He carried on a crusade all his life against a host of romantic illusions, against all beliefs and ideals which had no basis in fact and which could not be justified rationally. In *Candida* he blasts the myth that the man is superior to woman, and that he provides her with security, dignity, and means of livelihood. Morell had an air of superiority of man, and about the good that his sermons are doing. He is under illusion that his talks are doing any service to the society. Eugene frankly tells him that he is merely a windbag. His faith in himself is shattered. Candida frankly tells him that his speeches are perfectly true, but they are no good to people. They come to the Church to buy respectability. His preaching is an entertainment of the sort. There is also some truth in Burgess' view that it is useless to give workers higher wages as they are sure to drink more if they earn more. Illusion regarding his strength and superiority is cleared when Eugene leaves him speechless when he tells him, 'I am not afraid of your ideas. I will fight your ideas. Later in the play he is found to acknowledge Eugene's intellectual superiority and his own loss of confidence. The mere boy of eighteen comes out as the stronger one through the encounter. Candida makes him realize how dependent he is on her. After marriage she has been both sister and mother to him the result is that he is forced to accept his weakness and his dependence.

Eugene's illusion: His feelings are in excess of what is right and proper. His expressions of love are excessive and show an utter disregard of fact and reality. The scrubbing brush, boots and filling lamps with paraffin are symbols of mundane. He has total disregard

for them. Domestic chores got to be done and all must share it. His illusion was she will choose him and not her husband. As the result he attains self-knowledge and maturity.

7.5 PLOT

He deliberately chose a familiar plot. He wanted to use it in a new way. He wanted to encourage men and women to break away from worn-out conventions, from the opinions and ideas which they had not thought out for themselves. They had accepted those without question as a matter of social custom.

Shaw did not attempt to upset the beliefs and ideas of others as earlier in Athenian time Euripides did. He not only wanted to upset them but nor did he want his own views to be accepted without examination. Think. He threw new light on old. Obsolete must be rejected, what needed change may be modified, and what was found still valid might be retained. The name Candida is used to suggest frank truthful way in which heroin deals with her husband. The eternal triangle-a three sided affair in which two men are in love with the same woman, one of them is married to her. Usually the husband at length discovers the intrigue, a highly dramatic and emotional scene in which the erring wife repents and parts from the lover, or is cast away. The moral, or immoral, key to that type of play is in a sexual intrigue, the deception of the honest husband by the unfaithful wife.

For Shaw primary important things for women are marriage and motherhood. Human beings are created for divine purpose. Common conventional belief is that the man seeks and pursues and masters the woman. In Shaw's play it is the woman who seeks out and masters the man she has selected to be the father of her children. Women are, he believed, unconsciously controlled by the life force- the divine spirit working in us. Shaw turned the eternal triangle upside down. He made woman strong enough to sustain the two men instead of being upheld by them.

7.6 CHARACTERIZATION / CHARACTERS

A new incisiveness of utterance, and given what is virtually a new dramatic dialogue, but Shaw has provide a fresh principle of

characterization. Instead of timid heroines, we find intellectually daring women, instead of strong heroes, men lacking power and self-will; instead of fantastically model clergymen, ministers who feel more at ease in bluff coat and jack boots; instead of impossible villains, men who are themselves the tools of society.(A.Nicoll)

Candida: She is a woman of great charm and fascination. She is a woman of early thirty, affectionate, frank, and courageous. An amused maternal indulgence is her characteristic expression. This is stressed throughout the plot. She herself tells us that she has been wife, sister and mother to Morell. She has mothered not only his children but also Morell himself. She is devoted wife and takes care of their home. She is a practical genius and can easily explore all romantic nonsense. It enables her to handle both Morell and Eugene in such a masterly manner. They are both like grown-up babies in her hands. She has a shrewd and practical penetrating intellect. She knows his sermons send congregation refreshed to make them work harder to earn more money. It is his manner of preaching that they like. **Beatrice Webb** calls her a sentimental prostitute. As a matter of fact there is nothing wrong in Candida's attitude towards Eugene, as it is one of amused tolerance. The basis of Candida's frankness is her innocence and her awareness of her heart's integrity. A woman with guilty conscience would never have talked so frankly. She is conscious of her own individuality.. She is not to be disposed of by any man. She knows that Morell is the weaker of the two, he cannot without her, and Eugene is emotionally independent and self-reliant. She allows Eugene to go out in the night and turns to her husband like a ministering angel. She thus asserts herself and displays her superiority both over Morell and Eugene.

Morell: Rev. Morell is a young clergy of Church of England. He is robust, full of energy, with pleasant hearty and considerate manners. He is a first rate clergyman. His interests include religion, literature and Socialism. Morell practices what he preaches. He is loving, sympathetic and considerate and true Christian and a Socialist. He is angry with his father-in law because he knows that he overworks and underpays his workmen. Evening after evening he goes out lecturing and is never tired of working. He hopes to change the hearts of the people and establish the kingdom of Heaven on earth. This shows that he is a devout Christian with a full faith in

religion. He fails to understand that all his preaching is making no real difference in the world. Many listen to him but none follows him. It is Candida who has to explain it to him. All this comes as a shock to him. He considers her remarks as cynical. He was spoiled by his parents from childhood onwards, pampered and protected from the harsh realities of the world, and so, when grown up, he is still a baby, and has to be mothered by Candida. Intellectually he is inferior to both Candida and Eugene. He fails to understand that is Candida who provides him security and comfort. He cuts a sorry figure when he offers her his strength for her defence. His work, his authority and his position cannot provide her dignity. In the end Candida says that she would give herself over to the weaker of the two and so Candida will choose him. He does not understand that Eugene is the stronger of the two that he is self-reliant and can stand on his own feet. He himself is weaker one, emotionally dependent on his wife, despite his superior physical strength, and so he is her choice. We observe greater temperamental compatibility between Candida and Marchbank than between Candida and Morell. His jealousy is a clear sign of a lack of mutual trust and understanding.

Morell is a socialist. He claims he is progressive and enlightened in his views. The poor workers must be given adequate wages and they must not be over-worked. Women and children must not be exploited by contractors like Burgess. He is conservative. He has taught Candida to think for herself and to speak out her thoughts fearlessly. All goes well as long her views are same as his. But as soon as her views differ he is offended. The moment she asks him to put his faith in her love of him, and suggest that she can offer her purity and goodness to Eugene he is so annoyed that he does not allow her even to touch him. It is his encounter with Eugene that shatters his illusion. It makes him realize how dependent he is on his wife. By the end of the play; he has attained a measure of self-knowledge and is a sadder but wiser man.

Eugene Marchbank: He is a man of poetic temperament, irresolute, so uncommon as to be unearthly. He wears commonplace garments and unclean appearance. His family has neglected him since childhood. He led life without comfort or welcome always lonely and always disliked. As he appears first on scene he cannot face Miss Prossy and Burgess. Morell praises his inexperience as the

generous over-paying instincts. He himself calls it incompetence and cowardice. He is a born poet who lives in the world of his own. There is shyness and he cannot speak unless he is spoken to. He looks sad when Candida' frank talk makes Morell unhappy. He is ethereal and innocent like an angel. Physically he is weak, nervous, and fearful, but is endowed with great moral and intellectual strength.

In the auction scene Morell is on the verge of tears, breaks down and thus appeals to Candida's help. But Eugene never does so. Morell is a moral coward, he is the weaker of the two and so Candida chooses him. Intellectually also he is more powerful. He understands Candida's true nature and knows she does not belong to neither of them but she belongs to herself. She does not need protection but can provide protection. Eugene matures rapidly during the course of the play. Eugene who has learnt to live without happiness, is quite different from the nervous and timid one whom we met earlier. Eugene is the most interesting character in the play.

Burgess: He is a minor character in the play. He is father of Candida. He provides a comic relief when the play becomes too serious. He enables Morell to air his socialistic views. He is a coarse, vulgar and unrefined trader and a petty contractor, a guzzling man. He is mean, selfish, greedy and vulgar. Morell used to call him a scoundrel and Burgess in turn calls Morell a fool. The contrast between the extravaganza at the time of meeting the Chairman and his usual niggardliness is highly noteworthy. It is impossible to believe he is father of an educated daughter like Candida. Burgess belongs to that radically Cockney Company.

7.7 LANGUAGE AND STYLE

Shaw's work is characterized by superb craftsmanship, brilliance, a fine comic sense, social awareness and a serious moral purpose.

The Epilogue, according to some critics, is "a disconcerting, inartistic mixture of farce, satire and didactic explanation." It is also praised as a stroke of genius. It seems possible, if we will not demand an Aristotelian hero, and if we view the area of tragedy as a sort of scale of spectrum ranging between the two poles of doubt and affirmation: or, to put it more precisely, between the pole of fruitless suffering and the pole of universal cause. Not a scale of value, but a

spectrum of various qualities, with a Farewell to Arms making one extreme, outside the area of tragedy, and Shakespeare's Tempest, marking the other extreme. In between, within the area of tragedy, would like an enormous variety of works that would defy any rigorous attempt at definition, except that all would show in some degree a mingled atmosphere of doubt and affirmation, of human suffering and secret cause. Far over toward the side of fruitless suffering we might find the plays of Ibsen or Othello; somewhere in the middle Hamlet of Oedipus Rex; and far over toward the other side we might find a triad a strongly affirmative tragedies: Oedipus at Colonus, Samson Agonistes and Murder r in the Cathedral; and still farther over, perhaps hanging on by his hands to the very rim of tragedy - we might even find a place for Bernard Shaw. (Louis Martz: 'The Saint as Tragic Hero' From Tragic Themes in Western Literature, edited by Cleanthes Brooks)

7.8 Check Your Progress.

- 1) How did Shaw build his position as a dramatist?
- 2) Name the most brilliant play of Shaw.
- 3) What do you mean by an eternal triangle?
- 4) What was Morell's illusion?
- 5) What was Eugene's illusion?
- 6) What type of heroin we find in Candida?

7.9 SUMMARY

Playwriting, for Shaw, was not an end in itself; it was a means to putting across his ideas-social, moral and political. "For art's sake alone," he writes in the preface to Man and Superman "I would not fact the toil of writing a single sentence." The fact that drama for him was a vehicle of ideas does not mean that his plays should be read as treaties. Eric Bentley rightly says, "It was clear from the start that Bernard Shaw was a man of ideal.He was a fabulous entertainer. But few have granted that the two Shaw's were one." Like Brecht whom he influenced he believed that the theatre should combine instruction with delight. "He furnishes the theatre with as much fun as it can take." Writes Brecht, "And it can take a lot.

What draws people to the theatre is, strictly speaking, so much influence, which constitutes a tremendous buoyancy for those problems which really interest the progressive dramatic writer and which are the real value of his pieces. It follows that his problems must be so pertinent that he can be as buoyant about them as he wishes to be, for the buoyancy is what people want."R. J. Kaufman rightly says that like Brecht Shaw "devised a dramatic art that utilized parable to please and to teach simultaneously. His drama is committed to "higher didacticism."Shaw was an unconventional thinker and looked upon popular notions with suspicion. This sceptical attitude is reflected in his treatment of social and moral questions. What are his concerns as a playwright? The Widowers' Houses a play about slum-landlordism, exposes the hypocrisy of the so-called pleasant people and their ruthless exploitation of the poor. Mrs. Warren's profession treats the same theme through an examination of the problem of prostitution. Arms and men ridicules the glamour of the and heroism. Man and superman subtitled 'A Comedy and a Philosophy' presents a relational view of man-woman relationship, the social aspect of marriage and the idea of Life-Force-Nature working he purpose through woman. Pygmalion deals with the related questions of education and class-distinctions. Major Barbara is an indictment of capitalist economy.

7.10 CONCLUSION

Shaw objects to the marriage and family because these institutions are based on false economics and false biology. As for biology, he thinks that procreation is the most sacred work of all, and as a socialist he demands that all work should be paid for. The institution of family rests on fraud. The husband thinks that he provides security, defence, and livelihood, honour and dignity to wife. The family is a fact even when it is not an agreeable fact.

In this play Shaw has attacked society's most ancient and respectable institution of marriage. He shows that domestic life is ignoble as it is based on the exploitation of women, and that doctrine of male superiority is a mere myth. It condemns the fair- sex to a life of economic slavery. This problem has not only been talked about and discussed in the play but it is also shown to be a real problem facing the characters. It is indeed a drama of passion and action.

Indeed contrasts and contradictions run through the play and are a source of its artistic greatness.

Check Your Progress - Answers

7.8

1. Under the influence of Ibsen, he wrote dramas of ideas and created a position.
2. St. Joan is considered to be his most brilliant play.
3. In a woman's life there is already a man, second man enters and disturbing everyone. This story is called eternal triangle.
4. His faith in himself is shattered.
5. His feelings in excess of what is right and proper, utter disregard for reality.
6. Candida is a woman of charm, intelligence, frankness and courage.



CHAPTER : 8

T.S.ELIOT: MURDER IN THE CATHEDRAL

- 8.1 Objectives
 - 8.2 Introduction
 - 8.3 Life and works
 - 8.4 Themes
 - 8.5 Plot
 - 8.6 Characterization/characters
 - 8.7 Language and style
 - 8.8 Check your progress
 - 8.9 Summary
 - 8.10 Conclusion
- Check your progress - Answers

8.1 OBJECTIVES

Murder in Cathedral is one of the greatest classical dramas of the 20th century. It marks an epoch in the history of drama in England. It was addressed to solve many complex and intricate problems of poetic drama, and demonstrated that successful verse-plays are possible in modern day. He is often considered complex and difficult poets and a source of much obscurity and ambiguity. Fresh reading of his work will be rewarding and enlightening. It will result into an insight and a clear perception. It is hoped that greater clarity will be the end result.

After reading this chapter you will be able to describe the theme, discuss the plot and Characters in this play.

8.2 INTRODUCTION

The story is well documented, but all documents are from the supporters of Becket. There exist at least eleven eye-witness

accounts, written down immediately after the event, by monks of Canterbury for the most part and these are the sources on which Eliot rests upon for the facts. The assassins were four knights. When they had murdered Becket, they left the cathedral church premises shouting that they were the king's men, and indeed in fairness to their bloody-minded and reckless feudality it must be said they probably believed themselves to be acting in consonance with a half expressed wish of his in this matter. It was a long drawn out and not a straight fight between Crown and Church on certain constitutional issues. To them Becket appeared as an arrogant and turbulent priest, a traitor whittling away the rightful and reasonable powers of their supreme overlord, Henry II, and his successors. To Becket and his fellow monks it was a spiritual fight, an incident in the eternal struggle of God and Evil in which they happen to be all-importantly involved; to monks. To the entire Christian world, Becket was God's champion; it had a stark and naked war between Black and White, each side believing itself to be the latter.

Eliot has followed history until the martyrdom is over; after that he abandons it and brings forward the murderer knights to speak their apologies, whereas in history they stamped out of the cathedral church shouting that they were king's men. They speak prose, to address a twentieth-century audience in the language of political expediency of our own times.

Plays of Shakespeare give delight in excitement of narrative. Eliot's play is about situation not story. Murder in the Cathedral is about a situation and a way of life; the situation is perpetual and the quality eternal.

8.3 LIFE AND WORKS OF DRAMATIST

He was at St. Louis, Missouri and attended day school there. He was considered a brilliant student, and won a gold medal for Latin at school. He went to Harvard University. He pursued a wide ranging course of studies in language and literature; the classics, and German, French and English literature. He toured in Europe extensively and became familiar with the French symbolism. He returned to Harvard and studied Philosophy, especially Indian Philosophy and Sanskrit literature. He went to England and continued

his studied at Oxford. Though born an American, Eliot came to be a naturalised citizen of England. He had to abandon his study tour of Germany due to war. As a correspondent of Lloyd's Bank he covered European affairs. But his Journalistic career proved to be short lived. He joined the British Church and became citizen in 1927. The event was an epoch in his poetic career.

The most important poems of his life time are: The Love -song of J. Alfred Prufrock, Portrait of a Lady, The Preludes, The Waste Land, and The Hollow Man. His important books are The Use of Poetry and the Use of Criticism, Selected Essays, On Poetry and Poets, and To Criticise the Critic. His dramatic production includes: The Family Reunion, The Cocktail Party, and The Confidential Clerk. He had a long life span of more than seventy five years.

8.4 THEME

Even the of academic subjects indicates the concerns and interests of Eliot. He saw the spiritual apathy of the modern man world, and the problem of salvation. In his earlier poetic works, The Waste Land and The Hollow men, there is a sense of debasement and disillusionment. Later, he turns to religious conviction. There is gradual emergence and advance towards the will of God. Eliot writes out of an inner urge. The themes of his poetry find extension in drama; most obvious is pre-occupation with the nature of sainthood, the ability of saint's sacrifice to enlighten others. We affirm he did study his Philosophy of Indian Saints well though he picks up an example near home. His subject is historical; the drama deals with neither with personal conflict between the King and the Archbishop, nor with the historical struggle between the church and the state, a conflict which was of such a great significance in the Middle age. It is about Thomas Becket and his sainthood, it is for this reason that the dramatist has cut out historical and political material to a minimum, and confined the action of the play to the last days of Beckett's life.

The struggle within comes out in the form of his talks with the Tempters and that why the scene with Tempters is the focal point of the play. By pointing the reactions of the chorus of Canterbury he shows the relationship of sainthood and martyrdom to the ordinary men and women of to-day. Murder in the Cathedral is not just

dramatization of death of Becket. The clash of character and personal animosity is deliberately avoided. The king does not appear. The knights are at the first not presented as individual characters but act as a group. It is sensed that they have no personal motive.

The central theme is martyrdom and Eliot uses the term in the original ancient sense. In original sense it means witness. Becket is a witness to the reality of God's powers. The actual deed by which Thomas is struck down is not important as dramatic climax. The audience is warned again and again that it is not watching a sequence of events that contains the normal dramatic logic of motive, act and result, but an action that depends on God's will and not on human behaviour. There comes a crucial scene in which Thomas struggles with temptations within him. And at the last in agony Thomas acknowledges the spiritual pride within him and humbles his will. Self knowledge results in self-conquest. In losing his will is the will of God, and Becket reconciles. Eliot sees Becket's martyrdom as an action out of time, an action which has its full significance or eternal insignificance. (We are reminded of J. Krishnamurti's sense of timeless time). Finally, there is inner purgation and reconciliation to the will of God. Thus in Becket, a right attitude to martyrdom is developed. A Christ is crucified in every age, so that the mass of men may be roused out of their spiritual waste land. Hence the death of Becket to the modern age becomes significant.

8.5 PLOT

The play is a tragedy in two parts with an interlude in the form of the sermons of the Archbishop in between. The scene of action is the Cathedral at Canterbury. There are no stage directions. The construction is simple and straight-forward. The organic unity arises out of inevitability of action. The historical background is provided.

The exposition concentrates on present. Eliot manages to convey the necessary information without delay.

The conflict in this play is between worldly values and spiritual values. It is amply clear right from the first speech of Becket. The priests and Chorus form the second party to the arguments. At once this is seen clear the denouncement, the acceptance by the

Priests and the chorus. The complications, leading up to the crisis, are the encounters with the Tempters. The encounters with the tempters may be taken as one major complication or dealt with as several, each leading to its own crisis. The temptations grow progressively more difficult to resist, so that there is increasing intensity as we move on. This is the focal point of the play.

A possible weakness in the structure of the play is that the next principal complication. We take it for granted that they have been sent by the King to carry out his orders. There is a lack of logical development. Too much of knowledge of history is assumed. The central conflict is handled with a great skill. In spite of certain weakness; play does achieve an overall unity. A careful reading of interlude is absolutely necessary to form a judgement on its significance; the interlude is an integral part of the play the meaning or martyrdom is explained here. It is an expression of self-knowledge which Thomas has attained. Speeches of Knights explain the worldly side. On the whole it turns out to be a well-made play.

8.6 CHARACTERIZATION / CHARACTERS

Eliot was the first to reintroduce ritual element into the theatre. It plays a prominent part in *The Rock*, *Murder in the Cathedral*, *The Family Reunion* and *The Cocktail Party*. The ritual elements of Greek era were rediscovered and greatly influenced Eliot's thought and attitude to drama, as well as his dramatic technique. The jazz-rhythm and use of chorus were the first signs of Eliot's effort to break up the sham-Shakespeare log-jam that had immobilised poetic drama for some hundred years. It was Eliot who saw clearly that other models must be sought, if poetry was ever to regain the stage. His choice was Aristophanes.

The return of poetry to stage is a revolution Eliot performed single-handed. It not only brought back Shakespeare but the very roots of dramatic imagination-religion, ritual, purgation and renewal. It meant both structural as well as verbal poetry, a concentration upon theme that is mirrored in the intensity of situation itself. It displayed the human part in sainthood. A vision of this kind, seen working itself out through the actualities of the history, is what makes *Murder in the Cathedral* poetry; the ritualised form, the verbal

imagery, the varying flow of metrical rhythm, all issue from this creative or poetic concentration upon a theme seen in singleness. It comprehends and answers the problem of present time.

There is very little room for effective characterization. Becket is less a man and more an attitude. His role is certainly passive. The action in drama is confined to the last few days of his life. From Tempters and Chorus we hear something about his earlier days. Perhaps difficulty arises out of the fact that there is no wide gap between sainthood he tries to achieve and real man. His past indulgence in sensual pleasures and his lure of temporal power which he is enjoying as Chancellor, and which he can achieve by reaching a compromise with Barons, are all human weakness, which are brought about in dialogue with Tempters. He is not free from faults of character when the play opens. Spiritual pride and aching desire for the glory of martyrdom is notable. Thomas realises his fault, and so ultimately overcomes it.

Thomas has to choose. His choice determines his future fate and suffering. First he decides not to return to France, second he decides to affirm his rights of the church and this choice leads to martyrdom. His choice his level of spiritual awareness is higher than that of the priests and knights. It may be a personal tragedy. But the Canterbury women are transformed and reconciled to his martyrdom. The tragedy of Becket is a continuing tragedy, for in every age a Christ must be crucified to atone to God for the sins of humanity.

The four Knights are at once agents of the King and agents of will of God. They are not individualised, but they differ from each other in different aspects of secularism they represent. The Knights are the representatives of the representatives of evil and this is symbolically shown.

The introduction of the Tempters has helped the dramatist to develop the action of the play. There is no action in the play in the traditional sense, and no external conflict. The conflict is internal and the real sense of action is the soul of the Archbishop. The conflict has been dramatized with great skill through dialogue of the Bishop with the tempters. In this way struggle of Bishop at self-purification has been brought about home to the readers and audience.

The Chorus are the wistful, leaderless women of Canterbury

calling for spiritual guidance. They inhabit the gloomy cycle of time; death-bringing winter, ruinous spring, disastrous summer and barren autumn make sombre their opening lament, which looks to a December happy only because in December the Son of Man was born. The Chorus provides both background and counter-point to the action. It is through its reaction to the event of the martyrdom of Thomas, through its opposition and final reconciliation, that tension and powerful emotional atmosphere is created and maintained. Its use provides the evidence of skill of dramatist. Lamentations of Chorus are the best pieces of dramatic poetry ever written.

8.7 LANGUAGE AND STYLE

Eliot was a theorist. In his essay Poetry and Drama he asserted that poetry must not be used as a mere decoration. No play should be written in verse for which prose is adequate. Prose is adequate for plays dealing with social and economic problems. Verse should be used for plays which have to deal with emotions and passions of men. Murder in Cathedral is fit enough for verification.

He emphasizes the importance of the medium of communication for a dramatist. The dramatist writes for an unknown audience. Dramatist must exercise self-control in his expression. Eliot's style and versification are tribute to his technical skill. His subject was medieval and significance contemporary. There are old archaic words, as well as words from contemporary speech. He modulated speech to harmony.

It is the power of dramatic verse that gives play its unique quality of unity and intensity. There is free verse for dialogues with the priests and chorus. It is with the Chorus that Eliot is most successful. He did not try to imitate Shakespeare. He used a combination of long lines and short lines which he combined with any number of unstressed syllables, though they are generally three or four. He used alliteration with great skill.

Eliot's use of images is functional. Images are drawn from nature and from the life of poor. The destructive and repellent features of nature are emphasized. Evil is symbolized for animal life. In moments of intensity man expresses in poetry. But everyone is not a poet, and so every one cannot make use of poetry as a cry of heart.

Eliot provides references to Greek pattern. His work has symmetry, simplicity, and austerity of a Greek drama. The classical unities of Time, Place and action have been closely observed. In keeping with traditions, he uses a minimum of characters. He uses Christian ideas of sin and atonement. Like Greek drama his work is religious and moral in tone. Here is use of Chorus performing all the functions and in addition take part in central action.

In conclusion we may say that Murder in Cathedral is classical both in form and content.

8.8 Check Your Progress.

- 1) Name a few of his poetical works.
- 2) Name his best known essay on criticism.
- 3) Suggest the theme in one world.
- 4) Whom does Chorus represent?

8.9 SUMMARY

Murder in the Cathedral is the first crest of Eliot's dramatic achievements and it is interesting to stand on the crest and look back over the paths by which he seems to have reached it, and see the pattern of growing design furthered by accident, a design that began in a sad, liberal agnosticism and steadily strengthened into the positive grief-in-joy and joy-in-grief of Christianity. It includes tragedy and goes beyond it.

8.10 CONCLUSION

T. S. Eliot presents to us feeling of terror in queer visions. Versification. Speaking of chorus, he approved of occasionally dividing them, by giving paragraphs or even sentences to smaller groups or to individual speaker. Eliot has followed history until the martyrdom is over.

Check Your Progress - Answers

8.8

1. Under the 1. The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock, Portrait of a Lady, The Prelude, The Waste Land and The Holloman.
2. It is very difficult to name one work. List reads as: Use of Criticism, Selected Essays, On Poetry and Poets, To Criticise the Critic.
3. Martyrdom
- 4 The Chorus are the wistful, leaderless women of Canterbury calling for spiritual guidance.



CHAPTER : 9

SAMUEL BECKETT: WAITING FOR GODOT

- 9.1 Objectives
- 9.2 Introduction
- 9.3 Life and works of dramatist Becket
- 9.4 Themes
- 9.5 Plot
- 9.6 Structure
- 9.7 Characterization/Characters
- 9.8 Language and style
- 9.9 Check your progress
- 9.10 Summary
- 9.11 Conclusion
 - Check your progress - Answers

9.1 OBJECTIVES

We wish to introduce Samuel Beckett and the theatre of the absurd. Art of drama has gone hand in hand with isms much beyond the field of realism and naturalism. Dramatic experiments have manifested themselves in Expressionism, Impressionism, Theatricalism, Symbolism, Fauvism, Mechanism, Dadaism, Formalism, and Constructivism and so on. One is at a loss to notice this development within a span of less than half a century. Initially most of these experiments were received with suspicion and madness. But a student of drama must remember Aristotle who said 'No great genius was ever without some mixture of madness, nor can anything grand or superior to the voice of common mortal be spoken except by the agitated soul.'

- a) On reading this chapter you will be able to:
- b) Appreciate the effect of Existentialism on form and content of dramatic art

- c) Discuss the reasons for the birth and existence and importance of Absurd Theatre.
- d) Describe the themes of the play.
- e) Describe the characters of the play.

9.2 INTRODUCTION

Each age has its own tempo and ethos. The breakdown of the economic system has much to do with the breakdown of social and moral values. The world was in the state of chaos and disintegrating. Pessimism, frustration, and a sense of alienation pervade everywhere. The dramatists epitomize the sufferings of the modern age. Hermann Hesse rightly points out that the mode of our present day life has become far more cruel and horrible than ever before. Literature is the transcript of that horror.

Luigi Pirandello may be regarded as the pioneer of this school of dramatists. The term 'Grotesque' is usually applied to the tragic-comic that brings into sharp focus the glaring contradictions of the society. Defeatist metaphysics joins hands with a sad belief in the few human realities that are left when God and an intelligible universe are torn away- such realities are compassion and pity. Giraudoux is essentially an idealist. But he does not believe that ills and baffling problems of life can be resolved by miracles. He is confident that man can attain salvation, but that he will have to for himself through arguments and an appeal to the intellect. Evils, he knows, cannot be completely eradicated, because something contrary to good must always remain against which man is pitted. Bertolt Brecht is credited with having a new theatre. In the traditional theatre the playwright makes the audience think. For Brecht true identification of audience and the character is completely ruled out. He was an innovator. He brought out a new principle into dramaturgy itself: his characters often break out of a scene and address the audience. Of the dramatists, influenced by Existentialism, Jean Paul Sartre occupies an important place. Man is obviously free, but the state of being free does not bring him a note of joy. He has to accept the entire responsibility of his life and action. Tennessee Williams and Arthur Miller have consistently struck a note of despair. It is, however, difficult to ascertain if they suffer from existential pessimism. Eugene

O'Neil is also a pessimist. In none of his plays do we come across the faintest ray of sunshine.

The theatre of the Absurd describes a mood, a tone towards life, where man's existence is a dilemma of purposeless, meaningless, and pointless activity. In absurd drama there is no scope for a hero, instead there is anti-hero who is completely alienated from society and government. Man cannot turn to God, or Providence or religion, which has been the prop of mankind ever since the dawn of the civilization. The Universe he is forced to live in has no interest in him

Thus Absurd Drama is complete denial of age-old values. It has no plot no characterization, no logical sequence and no culmination. In absurd drama man has lost his well-knit system. The dramatists of the Absurd tradition have a system of their own. They have formed a school. Strangely enough, certain playwrights of different countries, unknowingly though, have written their plays, which present a horrible picture of the world as a bundle of absurdity. They have eschewed conventional plot, story, character, and created a dramaturgy that reflected their anguished vision of the universal reality, though apparently meaningless, illogical, unrelated, and unsequential dialogue and action. If at all there is a story, it is as incoherent as a nightmare. It is like the search of a blind man for a non-existing black cat in a dark room on a dark night.

The characters are all lonely figures-in a wide sea of life. The world of the absurd drama is a vast vacuum without hope or light. Man is a stranger, an outsider, an exile. He has no promised land. He is divorced from purpose and life.

9.3 LIFE AND WORKS OF DRAMATIST

Born on 13th April 1906 in Dublin, Samuel Beckett was the younger of the two sons in a Protestant family. He was an average student and displayed academic brilliance only during his college days, when he wrote fiction as well as non - fiction. He was befriended by James Joyce who had a tremendous influence on him. He wrote poems, short stories, novels and plays including Murphy, Molloy, Endgame and Waiting for Godot, many of which were written in French. Biographers say that he chose to write in French because he thought that writing in a foreign language would impose some

discipline on him and make him write with clarity and economy of expression. He was awarded the Nobel Prize for literature in 1969, and became a recognized world figure.

His important dramatic works include *Hamm* and *Clov*, *Endgame* and *Krapp's Last Tape*. Beckett has also contributed to other fields of literature-Poetry, fiction, and criticism.

9.4 THEME

The themes of Beckett's works usually involve the problems facing modern man, the search for the self, the hollowness of Western culture, the absurdity of man in the world, etc. What is remarkable is, that though his themes are serious, Beckett's works always have plenty of humour, as is seen his best-known work, 'Waiting For Godot.' The play is usually regarded as a good example of "drama of the absurd." The phrase "absurd drama" or the "theatre of the absurd" gained recognition through Martin Esslin's book The Theatre Of The Absurd published in 1961. The dictionary meaning of "absurd" is "ridiculous", "opposed to reason", while Eugene Ionesco says that the absurd is that which is devoid of purpose. According to him, man is cut off from his religious metaphysical and transcendental roots and therefore is lost - all his actions become senseless, absurd, useless. This is because modern man is sceptical and questions all the beliefs and basic assumptions of former ages, which have been tested and found wanting. The senselessness of life and loss of ideals is reflected in the works of dramatists like Beckett, Adamov, Ionesco and Genet, who are the major dramatists of the absurd theatre. These exponents violate all dramatic conventions and their plays do not have the characteristics of successful plays, e.g. an interesting story, a well-constructed plot, good characterization, a proper theme, etc. They make use of devices like clowning, nonsensical dialogues and such absurdities which have earned it the title of Absurd Theatre. These dramatists appear to suffer from a sense of metaphysical anguish due to being cut off from religious, transcendental and social roots and are anguished at the senselessness of life which makes man's existence absurd. Esslin says that they do not argue about the absurdity of the human condition, but merely present it in terms of concrete stage images. No doubt they play a satirical role when they criticize a society that is

petty and dishonest, but what is more important, they present a picture of a world that has lost its meaning and its

Purpose: Some of the themes common to these plays are life, death, communication, alienation, disintegration, etc. Though they contain slapstick humour, the plays are pessimistic and complex, made more so because the minimum of plot and characterization and repetitive dialogue.

In a conventional sense there is no theme. However we shall explore if theme of Habit, the suffering of Being, and How to get through Life could serve some purpose. Beckett had written 'Habit is a compromise effected between the individual and his environment, or between the individual and his own organic eccentricities, the guarantee of dull inviolability, the lightning conductor of his experience.' Dramatic Personae have shifted from sanity to madness, for no human mind can face squarely the terrible condition of the human predicament. They have shed their human quality and live in the meaningless emptiness of nothingness. Such men are not at all particular about time.

This explains why first Act of the drama is repeated in the Second. Nothing is changed, nothing new happens, characters forget what they have said or heard in the earlier scene. The language is repeated. If told that they have said the same thing or done the same thing, they seem to have forgotten it, they seem to have a blissful ignorance. Naturally for such persons time does not exist. As the play progresses the time moves fast and the development of the characters along with unfolds. Vladimir and Estragon still device ways and means to kill the time, so that the wait may be less dull and monotonous. They therefore indulge in idle talks, they play at being Pozzo and Lucky; they do the tree; they resort to antics and take physical exercise. But since everything is repeated, we feel that time is not moving.

The two tramps think that they are keeping up some action. But it is not action worth the name. Vladimir and Estragon are the representatives of the modern age, who move about talk a lot and feel that they have some activities, but critically examined they are nothing. They improvise pastimes, which are purely mechanical.

Pozzo and Lucky are, however conscious of time. Pozzo loses

his watch and they all search fanatically about lost watch. They even search if it has slipped into Pozzo's tummy. Pozzo later remembers that he has left it in his manor, but he has lost his memory, for only a few minutes ago he did consult his watch to observe his schedule. Life is static from womb to tomb.

Greek Philosopher Heraclitus said 'you cannot enter the same river twice for there is a ceaseless flow of water. So also there is ceaseless flow of time. Here the flow of time has stopped. The play is static, the characters are static in fact everything about the play has stopped. We also stop our discussion, hic.

The play is a direct presentation of waiting, which is made visible and audible to the audience. We can discover a common ground between ourselves and the two tramps who are waiting for Godot because the experience of waiting is common to all. Though they say they are waiting for Godot, they cannot say who or what Godot is, nor can they be sure that they are waiting at the right place or on the right day, or what would happen when Godot comes, or what would happen if they stopped waiting. They have no watches, no time-tables, and there is no one from whom they can get much information. They cannot get the essential knowledge, and they are ignorant. Without the essential knowledge they cannot act, and so they are impotent. They produce in us a sense of baffled helplessness which we experience when forced to remain in a situation which we do not understand and over which we have no control. All that they do is seek ways to pass the time in the situation in which they find themselves. They tell stories, sing songs, play verbal games, and pretend to be Pozzo and Lucky, do physical exercises. But all these activities are mere stop-gaps serving only to pass the time. They understand this perfectly. It is in the act of waiting that- we experience the flow of time in its purest, most evident form. When we are active, we tend to forget the passage of time; but if we are waiting passively, we are confronted with the action of time itself. Being subject to the flux of time, human beings are, at no single moment, identical with themselves. We can never be sure that the human beings we meet are the same today as they were yesterday. When Pozzo and Lucky first appear, neither Vladimir nor Estragon seems to recognize them; Estragon even takes Pozzo for Godot. But after they have gone, Vladimir comments that they have changed

since their last appearance. Estragon insists that he did not know them while Vladimir insists: "We know them. I tell you. You forget everything" In Act II, when Pozzo and Lucky re-appear, cruelly deformed by the action of time, the tramps again have their doubts whether these are the same people whom they met on the previous day. Nor does Pozzo remember them. Here, then, is another aspect of "waiting*" which is conveyed to us: the act of waiting makes us experience the flow of time. To wait means to experience the action of time, the change this is constant. And yet, as nothing real ever happens, that change itself is an illusion. The more things change, the more they are the same. That is the terrible stability of the world.

9.5 PLOT

Nothingness can obviously not have a plot.

9.6 STRUCTURE

It is not possible to divide the play into beginning middle and end. But it has a firm structure based on repetition and symmetry. In both Act I and Act II Pozzo's arrival is foreshadowed by one of the men imagining he can hear the sound of people approaching. The ending of the two acts has identical wording. The names Vladimir -Estragon and Pozzo and Lucky are made up of the same number of letters. But they are more contrasting than similar. Vladimir is the neurotic intellectual type, Estragon the placid intuitive type; Pozzo is the bullying extrovert, lucky the timid introvert. Vladimir instinctively sympathises with Lucky, while Estragon experiences a degree of fellow-feeling for Pozzo. The two acts are also symmetrically constructed-the Pozzo-Lucky incident in each precedes the appearance of the boy who brings the news that Godot will not come that day but the next day. In Act I, Lucky makes a long speech but in Act II, he is completely silent. Repetition and symmetry in dialogue are also very effective. For example In Act I:-

Estragon: His friends.

Vladimir: His agents.

Estragon: His correspondents.

Vladimir: His books.

Or in Act II:-

Estragon: Like leaves.

Vladimir: Like sand.

9.7 CHARACTERIZATION / CHARACTERS

Of the five characters in the play Vladimir and Estragon appear first. They compliment and supplement each other. Estragon is preoccupied with his boots, while Vladimir is preoccupied with his hat. Vladimir is the more intellectual and cultured of the two and therefore always looks for more appropriate words to express him; sometimes even Latin. Vladimir is more sensitive, emotional, affectionate and demonstrative than Estragon. He wants to hug Estragon, feels lonely etc. But when they discuss the idea of hanging themselves, Estragon sees at once that Vladimir, who is the heavier of the two, may break the branch of the tree, but Vladimir needs to have this explained to him. Vladimir always peers into his hat as if looking for something -maybe ideas. When Lucky leaves his hat behind, Vladimir exchanges it for his, perhaps preferring other men's ideas to his own. Vladimir sings a lullaby to Estragon and covers him with a coat when he falls asleep. He is also capable of thinking of others and sympathising with them. He is shocked to see the sores on Lucky' neck and protests to Pozzo, who wants to sell him.

On the other hand, Estragon is concerned more with his own self. He does not bother to think much and is content the first word that comes to his mind. He is irritable, obstinate and more selfish than Vladimir and is more interested in Pozzo ' s discarded chicken bones than his or Lucky 's pain. He has a fit of bad temper like a child; sitting passively on the mound while Vladimir walk restlessly about with his eyes searching the horizon as if the answer to his agony might be found there . Estragon's imagination is spontaneous, and he habitually personalizes the universe; thus when he talks of Christ it is not surprising to find him identifying himself with Him or that he claims, looking at his rags to have been a poet. When Pozzo asks his name, he replies 'Adam'. Estragon is also more naturally a victim- he is the one who is kicked by Lucky and beaten by the unknown persons who are referred to as 'they'. In Act I he struggles to get his feet into his boots: After the interval they are

replaced by a pair a little too large. Finally, Estragon is closer to timelessness than Vladimir. All landscapes are now the same to him and his memory is incapable of reaching back even to the previous day.

The two tramps are two distinct individuals and are similar as well as contrasts to each other. Vladimir's preoccupation is mental while Estragon's is physical. Vladimir is more practical of the two, and Estragon claims to have been a poet. In eating his carrot, Estragon finds that the more he eats of it the less he likes it, while Vladimir reacts the opposite way-he likes things as he gets used to them. Vladimir remembers past events, Estragon tends to forget them as soon as they have happened. Estragon likes telling funny stories, Vladimir is upset by them. It is mainly Vladimir who voices the hope that Godot will come and that his coming will change their situation, while Estragon remains sceptical throughout and at times even forgets the name of Godot. It is Vladimir who conducts the conversation with the boy who is Godot's messenger and to whom the boy's messages are addressed. Estragon is the weaker of the two; he is beaten up by mysterious strangers every night. Vladimir at times acts as his protector, sings him to sleep with a lullaby, and covers him with coat. The opposition of the temperament is the cause of endless bickering between them and often leads to the suggestion that they should part. Yet, being complementary natures, they also are dependent on each other and have to stay together. They have been together for many years and they attract and repel each other. They feel a profound need for each other and this need sometimes transforms their hatred into tenderness.

Pozzo is a master and Lucky his slave pair, the latter being driven by the former by means of a rope tied round his neck. More like a dog than human, he responds to the cracking of a whip he himself carries between his teeth till his master has the need of it. He also has to carry upon his shoulders the weight of Pozzo's belongings. Bent under the weight of his burden, Lucky resembles a mule or an ass. Pozzo is cut off from the past because he cannot remember having met Vladimir and Estragon before. He is an egoist who loves the sound of his own voice and is convinced that he owns the road, the land around it and the people on it. Lucky carries a stool for him, on which he sits, as if it were a portable throne. Once he has risen from

it, he does not stay unless begged to do so. He eats the chicken, and condescendingly, throws the bones to Lucky whom he calls 'pig'; and who is too weak to eat them. Lucky is the puppet who obeys the commands. He dances, recites and thinks for Pozzo and is like an animal who can only cry and kick when beaten. His long speech terrifies his listeners because it foretells the extinction of the world. Vladimir seizes Lucky's hat, flings it on the ground and tramples on it, shouting that he has put an end to Lucky's thinking. The audience is given the impression that tyranny has won. Pozzo does not carry out his intention to sell Lucky. When we see Lucky again he still carries the burden, but is dumb, and Pozzo has lost his sight and strength. The rope linking them is short, symbolising the increased dependence of the master on the slave.

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Godot

The identity of the mysterious Godot is the most baffling aspect of the play. This mysterious character is the saviour for whom the two tramps wait because he will solve their problems. But instead of Godot, at the end of each day, a messenger boy arrives with the message that Godot will come the next day. At the end of Act II, we come to know that Godot does nothing and that he has a white beard. Godot has often been regarded as the age-old image of God as the Father.

Apparently once, Vladimir and Estragon had seen Godot. But they do not remember him quite clearly, and the vague promises he seems to have given them are treated with a light-heartedness born of doubt. In fact, it seems to them as if God, Godot, and Pozzo were sometimes merging into one blurred picture. When, in Act II, they talk of God, Pozzo appears and is mistaken by Estragon for Godot. Godot is vague, merely an empty promise, and waiting for Godot has become a habit with them. Although the name Godot undoubtedly includes the word 'God,' the play deals with merely with the concept of God, and therefore God's image is left vague. It

appears that Godot does nothing at all, and the only information given by the messenger boy is that Godot will not be coming today but tomorrow. Beckett clearly indicates that it precisely Godot's non-arrival which keeps the two tramps waiting for him and their faith in him alive. Godot is the external figure who can bring a change in the immobility of the two tramps for which he certainly exists, and waiting for him is likely to be rewarded. At the same time, there is doubt about the nature of his offer, and if it is not advantageous, they are afraid they will not be able to leave it. Whoever Godot maybe, he is a powerful person having some hold over the tramps which prevents them from cancelling their appointment with him. It appears that Godot does nothing at all, and only information given by the boy is that Godot will not be coming today but tomorrow. Beckett clearly indicates that it precisely Godot's non-arrival which keeps the two tramps waiting for him and their faith in him is alive. Godot fails to appear in the play, yet he is as real as the other characters. The tramps need him to give meaning to their universe and since they depend on his arrival, until he arrives, everything that happens is provisional. Godot's very absence demonstrates his presence, and he dominates the play in which he fails to appear.

9.8 LANGUAGE AND STYLE

Waiting for Godot was first published in U.S.A. in 1954 and performed in London in 1955. The Times Literary Supplement described it as "a prolonged and sustained metaphor about the nature of human life." The play is divided into two acts - in both the action takes place on a country road under a tree, and the time is evening. The characters are - two elderly tramps - Vladimir ("Didi") and Estragon ("Gogo"), a local land owner - Pozzo, his slave - Lucky and a small messenger boy. When the play opens, the scene is a country road. It is evening and Estragon, sitting on a low mound near a tree, is trying to take off his boot. He pulls at it with both hands, panting, and gives up the effort. Exhausted, he rests for a while, tries again, and fails. Vladimir enters and Estragon says, "Nothing to be done." Vladimir replies that he too is coming round to that opinion. The two men are waiting for someone of the name of Godot, who, they hope, will do something for them. They are not sure exactly what Godot will do for them, any more than they know for certain whether

they have to come to the right place on the appointed day. They occupy the time as best they can until the arrival of Pozzo, a local land owner, on his way to the fair to sell his slave Lucky. Pozzo halts a while with Estragon and Vladimir, eats a meal in their presence, even granting them the bones which his slave rejects, and then in gratitude for their society makes Lucky dance and next think aloud for their entertainment. The three become so agitated by Lucky's intellectual performance that they all set upon him and silence him. Estragon and Vladimir have not been alone many moments together before a small boy appears with the news that Mr. Godot will not come this evening but would come tomorrow. The boy departs; night falls abruptly; and after briefly contemplating suicide by hanging themselves from the tree, the two men decide to leave but, despite their decision to go, do not move as the curtain falls.

In Act II, the curtain rises the next day on a scene identical except for the fact that the tree has put forth a few leaves. Vladimir is joined on the stage by Estragon and much the same things happen, except that when Pozzo and Lucky appear (from the side they made their exit in Act I), Pozzo happens to have gone blind and Lucky dumb. All four collapse on top of one another and then somehow manage to get up again. Pozzo becomes exasperated at Vladimir's questions about time, saying furiously that life itself is only a brief instance. Pozzo leaves, driving Lucky before him, from the side he had entered in Act. I. After another brief interval the boy comes again and delivers the same message as before. The sun sets; the moon rises abruptly; the two men again contemplate suicide; and then, despite their agreement to leave, make no movement as the curtain falls. So ends the play in which, as one critic has wittily put it, nothing happens, twice.

Words, as conventional symbol, have failed to express the thoughts and ideas. Orthodox language has no use for the absurd dramatist. They evolve a new pattern of language, by putting the language of scene in contrast to the action, by reducing it into a meaningless pattern, or by abandoning discursive logic for the poetic logic of association and assertions. Without the use of language the theatre has opened up a new dimension on stage. Beckett's language has disintegrated in diverse ways, monologues, telegraphic style, repetitions of synonyms, violation of grammar, clichés and

platitudes etc. Language is non-verbal, breaks down logic falters. Often we come across excellent drama, but bad grammar. Bedlam has been let loose on the stage. Characters talk not to express their thoughts but only to kill time. We must not expect articulate, smart, polished or ornate as we do in the writings of Shaw or Oscar Wild.

9.9 Check Your Progress.

- 1) Name the pioneer of the Theatre of Absurd
- 2) Whom will you consider the innovator of the theatre of absurd?
- 3) Who is Didi?
- 4) Who is Gogo?
- 5) Where was the drama first published?

9.10 SUMMARY

The play tells us about the futility and meaninglessness of life. The characters in this play have been pulled out of the world, and they no longer have anything to do with it. The world has become empty for them. The two heroes, or anti-heroes, are merely alive, but no longer living in a world. And this concept is carried through with a merciless consequence. The tramps are waiting for nothing in particular. They even have to remind each other of the very fact that they are waiting and of what they are waiting for. Thus, actually they are not waiting for anything. But, exposed as they are to the daily continuation of their existence, they cannot help concluding that they must be waiting. And, exposed to their continued waiting, they cannot help assuming that they are waiting for something. It is meaningless to ask who or what the expected Godot is. Godot is nothing but the name for the fact that the life which goes on pointlessly is wrongly interpreted to mean waiting, or as waiting for something. The physical and mental state of these four characters also hints at the disintegration of man which is perhaps the result of the realization of the aimlessness and futility of his existence.

Waiting for Godot has evoked a lot of favourable as well as unfavourable comments. Much of the negative criticism says that Beckett denies the existence of God and his vision of man is as an alienated being whose life is meaningless and futile. Martin Esslin in

his book The Theatre of the Absurd says that this is because man finds himself in a universe deprived of illusions and of light, and feels lost because he is cut off from his religious, metaphysical and transcendental roots. Critics like G. S. Fraser and others have interpreted it as a morality play and as a religious allegory, while others like Ruby Conn have said that Beckett has mocked the Christian tradition. The word "Godot" in the title has aroused much controversy because some, like Eric Bentley say that it is derived from Balzac, and others say that Beckett derived it from Simone Weil's play Waiting For God or from Tom Kromers book Waiting For Nothing. The play has also been much discussed as a tragic-comedy since the tragic as well as comic elements have been traced in it. The humour in the play has often invited the comment that the slapstick humour brings it close to a music hall comedy. Both the elements can be traced in instances like Lucky's monologue, which has tragic implications but also has a comic effect due to the manner of its delivery. Critics have also commented on the characters - Vladimir and Estragon - being interpreted as the mental and physical aspects of man, and Pozzo and Lucky as the master and slave. One can only conclude that this play is not a conventional play but a complex and rich work of art that is open to various interpretations.

9.11 CONCLUSION

An absurd drama is not professedly a problem play. Waiting for Godot should not, therefore, be regarded as a problem play. It presents bleak picture of life. It does give rise to certain problem. Man is pitted against ruthless forces of existence. Modern man is alienated from life, love and the society. He is doomed to solitude. He has no freedom of movement, freedom of expression. He is hanging out in empty space. This is the situation of an absurd play. The play sets man in a hurry to pause and think for a while.

Check Your Progress - Answers

9.9

1. Luigi Pirandello
2. Bertolt Brecht
3. Vladimir is sensitive, affectionate and intellectual character.
4. Estrogen is more concerned with himself, imitable, obstinate and selfish.



CHAPTER : 10

HAROLD PINTER: THE HOMECOMING

- 10.1 Objectives
 - 10.2 Introduction
 - 10.3 Life and works of dramatist
 - 10.4 Summary of the play
 - 10.5 Theme
 - 10.6 Characterization
 - 10.7 Language and style
 - 10.8 Check your progress
 - 10.9 Summary
 - 10.10 Conclusion
- Check your progress - Answers

10.1 OBJECTIVES

After reading this chapter you will be able to -

- a) Become familiar with the reason for continued appeal in the style and subject matter of plays
- b) Appreciate difference from the typical theatre of the time.
- c) Discuss the theme
- d) Describe the process of characterization
- e) Discuss the major changes in approach to drama after the political upheaval in post cold-war days.

10.2 INTRODUCTION

Harold Pinter won Noble Prize for literature in the year 2005. Delivering the Noble Lecture he said most of his plays were engendered by a line, a word or an image. The given word is often shortly followed by the image. He cites as an example his play The

Home-coming. The first line is 'What have you done with the scissors?'. He had no further information. In this case someone was obviously looking for a pair of scissors and was demanding their whereabouts of someone else he suspected had probably stolen them. But the person addressed didn't give a damn about the scissors or about the questioner either. But the search for the truth can never stop. It is quite enlightening to know how the dramatist explored with the firm conviction; it cannot be adjourned, it cannot be postponed. The truth had to be faced, right there, on the spot. Out of such quagmire emerged the lotus.

10.3 LIFE AND WORK OF DRAMATIST

The first performance of Harold Pinter's *The Room* took place in 1957. But the three plays which brought him critical acclaim were *The Birthday Party* (1958), *The Caretaker* (1960), and *The Homecoming* (1964). These plays, as well as his other works, reflect the influences of his childhood, and later, of the Second World War. Born (1930) and brought up in London, he was the only child of Jewish tailor. At an early age, he displayed excellence in acting, and after completing his school education, he attended the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art, and later, also acted in several plays. His experience as an actor enabled him to absorb all the factors that hold an audience in the theatre viz structure, performance, speech etc.

Being born Jewish and having experienced World War II at close hand in London, was to have life-long consequences. The threat and actuality of bombing attacks and violence symbolised by the German Gestapo left a permanent scar on his mind. Pinter's beginning as a dramatist coincided with other dramatists appearing on the scene at the same time. Pinter was included with some of these in the group of Absurdist's because their plays depicted the unspecified 'menace' associated with the world outside, the mixing of the comic and the serious, and the seeming 'absurdity' of some of his dramatic situations. Pinter's plays were regarded as mere realistic and as dealing seriously with the working class, e.g. all the characters in *The Caretaker* are the victims of an uncaring society.

10.4 SUMMARY OF THE PLAY

The play is divided into two acts and the action takes place in a large room of an old house in North London. When the curtain opens, we see Lenny sitting on a sofa ticking off horses in a newspaper. Max enters looking for a pair of scissors and they have an acrimonious exchange. Max remembers when he and a friend called MacGregor used to make a big impression in the West End of London as hard men, and he recalls his days on the racecourse when he used to have a gift for recognising the best horses. Lenny changes the subject by complaining about Max's poor cooking. Sam enters in his chauffeur's uniform. He has driven a wealthy American to Heathrow Airport and been given a box of cigars. He claims to be the most popular of the firm's chauffeurs. Max responds by asking why he never got married. Sam says there is still time, and recalls how he used to escort Jessie, Max's wife, in the old days when Max was busy. Joey enters. He has been training as a boxer in the gym. He and Sam say they are hungry, expecting Max to provide dinner. He reacts furiously. Sam reminds Max that he was trusted in the past with escorting Jessie - something Max would never have allowed Macgregor (now dead) to do. Max threatens Sam with eviction when he stops working. The scene ends in blackout.

When the lights come up it is night. Teddy and Ruth are standing at the threshold of the room with suitcases. Teddy has brought his wife of six years to meet his family. They have come from America where Teddy is a professor of philosophy. Teddy is anxious not to wake the sleeping family. He encourages Ruth to go to bed, saying that she needs some rest. She asks of he really wants to stay and suddenly says she wants to go for a walk to 'have a breath of air.' Teddy is left standing alone when Lenny enters from his downstairs room. Lenny complains of not being able to sleep. Teddy goes upstairs to bed. Lenny lights a cigarette and sits, waiting. Ruth returns and Lenny begins to questions her. She explains that she is Teddy's wife and that are on a visit to Europe and have been to Italy. Lenny engages in a series of speeches designed to impress Ruth, including two long stories where he describes his violent assault on women who have been unreasonable to him. Finally he approaches Ruth and attempts to remove her glass of water. Ruth is unmoved by any of Lenny's tactics and reverses the proceedings, saying. 'If you

take the glass...I'll take you.' Lenny is unnerved and accuses her of making some kind of proposal. She leaves him and goes upstairs. Max is awakened by Lenny's shouting and comes downstairs asking what the matter is. Lenny refuses to answer and, when Max persists, he demands to know the details of his own conception. Max spits at him and leaves. The scene ends in blackout.

In the morning Joey is seen shadow-boxing in front of a mirror. Max enters complaining that he has been driven out of the kitchen by the noise of Sam washing up the breakfast dishes. He calls Sam into the room and accuses Teddy of being resentful. Teddy and Ruth come downstairs wearing dressing-gowns. When Max sees them for the first time he accuses Teddy of bringing a whore into the house and demands that Joey chuck them out. Joey calls him 'an old man.' Max hits Joey with all his might and begins to collapse with the effort; he then sits Sam with his stick when Sam comes to help him. Getting to his feet, Max asks Ruth how many children she has (three), and, turning to Teddy, he asks for a cuddle and kiss. Teddy faces him and responds, 'Come on, Dad. I'm ready for the cuddle.'

When Act II begins, it is afternoon and the family is having a coffee after lunch. Max says that his wife Jessie had been 'the backbone to this family,' who had 'a will of iron, a heart of gold and a mind.' He is then irritated by Sam's not going to work, and says he has had to work hard to bring up his family. He regrets not having been to Teddy's wedding and expresses his delight at the success of the married couple. Lenny begins to question Teddy on matters of philosophy, but Teddy refuses to be drawn. Ruth diverts attention to herself and her physical presence. She says that she was born nearby, but left for America, which she describes as 'All rock and sand.' Max, Lenny and Joey exit. Teddy is left alone with Ruth. He is anxious to return to America but she shows no enthusiasm. Teddy leaves to pack. Lenny enters and sits by Ruth. She tells him of her when she was 'a photographic model for the body.' Teddy returns with the suitcases expecting to leave with Ruth but Lenny puts on a record of slow jazz and asks for a slow dance. When Max and Joey return, Lenny is kissing Ruth - while Teddy stands by with Ruth's coat. Joey takes Ruth from Lenny, sits with her on the sofa and embraces her. Max notices that Teddy is ready to leave and wishes him well. Ruth suddenly pushes Joey away, stands up and demands something to

eat from Joey and something to drink from Lenny. Lenny pours drinks all around. Ruth asks Teddy if the family have read his critical works and he replies that they wouldn't understand them because the family lacks 'intellectual equilibrium.' The scene ends in blackout.

In the evening Teddy is sitting with Sam, who confides that he was always his favourite, and his mother's favourite, of all sons. Lenny enters, goes to the sideboard and discovers that a cheese roll that he has made has disappeared. Teddy says that he has eaten it. This provokes a lengthy accusation from Lenny that Teddy has let the family down by withdrawing to America and becoming 'A bit sulky. A bit inner.' Joey comes downstairs and Lenny asks him how he has got on with Ruth. Joey says that he didn't get 'all the way.' Lenny tells Teddy that his wife is a tease. Max and Sam enter and hear what's been going on between Joey and Ruth. Max suggests that the family asks Ruth to stay with them and each contribute to her upkeep. Lenny argues that it would be less expensive if he set her up as a prostitute: Teddy could act as their representative in America, supplying clients. When Ruth comes downstairs Teddy puts the family's proposition to her. She makes stringent demands as to the conditions she would expect if she were to agree the offer, which Max and Lenny accept. Sam steps forward and declares "MacGregor had Jessie in the back of my cab as I drove them along' and then collapses. The family is unconcerned about this collapse. Teddy takes his leave. Ruth sits, relaxed. Joey kneels before her and puts his head in her lap. Max falls on his knees by the side of her chair and Lenny stands, watching.

10.5 THEME

Naturalism is often said to be the extreme form of Realism. A number of writers, while evolving Naturalism, had in their mind a philosophical concept. It is a sort of sequel to Post-Darwinism. Its thesis is that man is a part of nature. All creatures including man conform to common principles and patterns. Man's culture and religion cannot keep him away from nature. The naturalist, however, conceded that man is an animal of higher order, and is guided by heredity and environment. Hunger and sex are instinctive, and man shares these instincts with the animals of lower order. But he is subject to forces in the family, the class, and the institutions of his

own creation in which he is born. Emil Zola popularised this theory.

Brutal frank manners mark the naturalistic literature. Yet we must see that the line separating Realism and Naturalism is very thin, and it is so difficult if not impossible to ascertain what is what.

10.6 CHARACTERIZATION / CHARACTERS

Pinter has explained his theory of characterization as follows. According to him it is a strange moment, the moment of creating characters that up to that time have had no existences. What follows is fitful, uncertain, even hallucinatory, although sometimes it can be an unstoppable avalanche. The author's position is an odd one. In a sense he is not welcomed by the characters. The characters resist him; they are not easy to live with, they are impossible to define that mane. One certainly dictates them. To a certain extent author plays a never ending game with them, cat and mouse, blind man's buff, hide and seek. But finally author finds people of flesh and blood on his hands, people with will and individual sensibility of their own, made of components and parts author is unable to change, manipulate, or distort.

From a psychoanalytical point of view, Pinter is an acute observer of human behaviour and is well aware that the individual psyche is very complex and does not always operate according to reason. The individual in the present is affected by his experiences in the past, which cannot easily be defined with certainty. Good and bad experiences can be remembered, more or less vaguely, which leaves us in the present in a state of insecurity. Pinter does not begin the play with any exposition or prolonged introduction to the characters and the setting.

The Homecoming presents us with a family, and a very particular family. All the characters of the play belong to one family and we are not concerned with anybody else except Jessie, the dead mother, and Macgregor - also dead, but uncomfortably close to this family. Max is a commanding presence throughout the play, made so by his ferocious verbal aggression which is directed at everybody in turn. Violent fury derives from the fact of his growing old, and he represents those characters that undergo the frustrating experience of ageing. Max hates growing old and the key to his character is

resentment. He resents the memory of Jessie because she has died and left him to run the house. He resents Sam because he has to cook for him. Most of all he resents his sons, because they are in the process of replacing him, and they are an ever-present reminder of what he has lost. Lenny is smart and independent; Joey is virile and goes training to box, while Max is consigned to the kitchen. His bitterness erupts whenever he is reminded of his own decline, mostly in vicious verbal assaults, but also physically. His furious reaction on seeing Teddy and Ruth for the first time is the result of complex emotions. Teddy is his eldest son who, as such, holds an immeasurable attachment. However Teddy has abandoned his family for six years, so causing an immeasurable disappointment. Stuck in the house all day, with everyday's routine the same, Max is obsessed with reviving the past when he believes he was impressive. Yet despite the frustrations of becoming old, Max remains a formidable figure because of his mental vitality and verbal energy.

Lenny is the most provocative character in the play, initiating the direction of the dialogue in most of his scenes. However, his motives remain inscrutable: he never says and does. His 'occupation' remains uncertain. There can be no doubt about Max and the butcher's shop or Sam and his cars or Joey in demolition: they talk about their jobs and nobody questions what they say. Lenny admits that he has an occupation, and eventually claims to have 'a number of flats' in the area of Greek Street, by which it is suggested that he is running prostitutes as a pimp. This comes as a surprise to Max, so the matter is at the very least questionable; we don't in the end need to know - our lack of certainty is part of the intrigue of the play. What holds our interest and what matters is how Lenny behaves on stage. Generally he reacts to rather than create a situation: he reacts to Max at the beginning of the play, to Sam when he enters and then to the arrival of Teddy and Ruth. Firstly, he encourages Teddy to go to bed and then awaits the return of Ruth from her walk. The scene is a remarkable conflict. Lenny's two long monologues fail to impress Ruth in any way.

Sam is regarded as the conscience of the family, the sweet old uncle who does his best to keep the peace and who finally blurts out his guilty only to stop what the family are doing to Ruth. But this is surely not the case. He may be the weakest and the most sexless,

but he knows how to survive and when he can he is quite prepared to irritate and annoy - Max especially. It is second nature in this family to exploit weaknesses in the others, but in the niggling banter Sam only goes so far. He is shrewd enough to know the limits. If the older generation is under constant threat from the younger, then the two older members - Max and Sam - can also be a constant challenge to each other. Max was tough and has brought up a family, so he can always score against Sam. Sam, however, still has a job and supplies an income, so he can expect Max to cook him a meal - thus emphasising Max's decline in status. His behaviour in the kitchen, noisily washing dishes and cleaning up, is certainly a deliberate irritant. The smallest detail can be telling, such as when he first comes in and talks to Lenny. His ignoring Max is a deliberate ploy which hits its mark - Max is forced to proclaim, 'I'm here too, you know.'

Commentators on *The Homecoming* are divided about Teddy. Is he the victim or the villain of the play? Does he win or lose? Pinter's objectivity, his intense concern to let his characters speak for themselves allows us to sit on the fence and say 'both.' On the surface he appears to do badly - he loses his wife to the family, and he suffers a large amount of criticism from Lenny throughout the play. On the other hand it could be argued that Ruth is a wife well worth losing. Of dubious background, mentally unstable and amoral, Ruth might have become an embarrassment to Teddy. Questions are also asked about who the real outsider is in the play, and whose 'homecoming' we see. Again the argument is unclear. On balance, however, if the family has any value at all, then Teddy is the one who opts out. He is the one who proposes to Ruth that she stays and pays her way, while he returns to the arid world of American academics.

Ruth is the one and only woman in *The Homecoming*. It makes her pivotal and a touchstone by which we can assess all the men in the play. Furthermore, the archetypal family relationships that are presented allowed her to be seen in symbolic terms as a representative woman: she is regarded by the men in all the variety of roles that a woman can fulfil. However, she is also a character and a personality in her own right, and a complex enigmatic figure whose motives are uncertain. More than any of the characters in the play, Ruth commands attention on the stage by the force of her physical

presence. Lastly, when she comes downstairs and receives the family's proposition, she is seated throughout until the end; acting as a magnet, until the final tableau shows her in the dominant position, centre stage.

Joey is almost peripheral in the personality conflicts that occur within the family because he has no interest in them and because he is pretty dim-witted. He has none of the brilliance, fluency or cunning that is evident in the others. This leads to a perfectly likely conclusion that he isn't quite part of the same family. His physical strength is evident in this job as a labourer and his ambitions as a boxer (not a very promising prospect), and this presents us with an unsophisticated hefty lump ('that big slag,' Max cruelly calls him). He can, therefore, be readily accepted as the son of Jessie. But he is so different from Max, Lenny, Teddy and Sam that circumstantial evidence implies that he could well be the son of Macgregor, the old heavyweight friend of Max who, according to Sam, 'had Jessie in the back of my cab as I drove them along.' It is significant that he is treated almost with affection by the family, probably because he is liked and because he offers no threat to anybody. He is bowled over by Ruth, utterly captured by her. Clearly he lived without a mother from an early age and Ruth is something quite different from his usual pick-ups. She opens up a complex and frustrated emotional life which is vividly depicted in the final stage image, of his lying peacefully in Ruth's lap.

10.7 STRUCTURE, LANGUAGE AND STYLE

Let us have a quick view of Pinter on use of language in drama. We quote 'so language in art remains a highly ambiguous transaction, a quicksand, a trampoline, a frozen pool which might give way under you, the author, at any time.

In *The Homecoming* there is a central event, which is the return of Teddy with his wife, but the rhythm of the play, which is the vital element in any production, is created by the totality of the structure. The play has a linear structure, in that one thing leads to another over a two-day time-span. Characters generally act in accordance with what has just happened to him. A series of dialogues moves towards an emotional climax in a very focused speech followed by a lighting

blackout. When the lights come up Teddy and Ruth are standing, silent, at night, looking around the room. The mood is changed, and with it the rhythm of the play. The dialogue, filled with pauses, reflects an emotionally estranged couple and a radical intrusion into the house. The linear structure continues with Lenny's reaction to their arrival. The action in Act Two is very ambiguous. It can be taken entirely realistically and naturalistically, i.e. everything happens exactly as we see it. In the theatre, however, the language and movement of Ruth during the second act creates a complexity of responses. The structure of the play is determined partly by psychological realism and by elements of ritual, but the play is also held together, poetically, by its verbal echoes. Ideas and phrases reverberate and are repeated tantalizingly throughout. The play begins and ends with Max referring to animals - 'I had an instinctive understanding of animals,' and then, about Ruth, 'She'll make us all animals;' these and other verbal echoes provide a structural thread, holding the events in a tight, concentrated symmetry.

Language is fundamental to The Homecoming. It is the basis of structure, every scene being determined by how the characters talk and how they use language. The rhythm of the play is controlled by the type of speech patterns employed. Language and speech patterns are also the defining measure of each character. This involves abusive, obscene language; monologues that have different impacts and purposes; language games where personal attacks are couched in the strategic use of spurious enquiries - seemingly polite and genuine but really destructive and malicious; cryptic exchanges, where a subtext is at work and a mystery what is happening on stage; repetitive imagery which adds a poetic dimension to the play.

The play examines family relationships with ruthless objectivity, devoid of any moral agenda. Some of early reviewers of the play dismissed the characters as an ugly, brutal, foul-mouthed bunch living in a slum. However, as the play proceeds, it is evident that the family live in a well-regulated household which is nothing like a slum. In spite of the abuse, they stay together because they are a family and need each other. Teddy is the eldest son of the family and has betrayed them in the most appalling manner. His disappearance to America and abandonment of the family, must, during his six years

of absence, have caused the deepest resentment to boil and fester. This alone would make his surprise appearance the cause of passionate and complex emotions. The appearance of Ruth merely compounds his offence. Max doesn't know who she is, and doesn't in the least care. All his fury and frustration is directed at Teddy. If Max recovers enough to 'let bygones be bygones' and cook the family a very good lunch, Lenny is not so forgiving. He is going to make Teddy answer for his betrayal, and Ruth provides the most convenient opportunity.

Ruth is more than a match for all of the men in the play, so we may conclude she decides to stay in this home of her own free will. She says when Lenny and Max agree to her demands, 'Yes, it sounds a very attractive idea.' This could be her way of rejecting and putting-down Teddy who has, outrageously, put the proposition to her in the first place. However, all her speeches and actions during Act I indicate her rejection of her American home and her willingness to engage sexually with Joey and Lenny. There is nothing to stop her returning to America with Teddy, so why does she choose to stay? Of all the characters in the play, Ruth is by far the most enigmatic and she is, of course, the only woman. Her position as the one woman makes her the centre of attention in all the scenes. However, as a dramatic character she takes on an increasingly symbolic status, embodying various male perceptions of 'woman,' seen variously as a wife, a mother, a sister, a daughter and a whore. These roles are united in the final stunning image of her, seated and relaxed, in control of the family and the room. So Ruth is both a psychologically realised personality and a symbol of a poetic vision - a representative of 'woman' and a dream-image of male wish-fulfilment.

Ruth is, essentially, the wife brought back to England by her husband to visit his family, and thus may be regarded as the conventional Pinter intruder, whose arrival disturbs the inhabitants of the room and creates the action of the play. This marriage has certainly upset the family because they were excluded from it and Teddy has left the family home. So Ruth becomes a means whereby the family can get back at the eldest son for his betrayal. She is central to the 'game' that is intended to belittle Teddy. However, Ruth has her own agenda, which on one level is quite straightforward - she prefers what the family has to offer to what America and Teddy have

to offer.

On her arrival in the house with Teddy, after the family has gone to bed, it is evident that the two are estranged. Teddy appears anxious that Ruth be at ease and not nervous, but it is Teddy who is anxious and Ruth who seems perfectly 'at home.' Her question, 'Do you want to stay?' indicates her intuition that this is not a good place for them both to be. Her decision to go for a walk alone (in a London suburb, at night) is very telling. It shows her independence and it also indicates that she knows her way about - later she says, 'I was born quite near here.' It soon emerges that she has absolutely no regard for her life in America. Whenever Teddy tries to impress the family with his success she says nothing. Her life in America, and her life with Teddy, has all meaning and appeal. Her self-confidence and sexual confidence are demonstrated in her response to Lenny's violent and threatening speeches in Act I. and in her cool reaction to Max's filthy assault on her when he first sees her the morning after her arrival. Ruth does not need a guardian. She is able to look after herself simply by exercising her sexuality. In a play that piles shock upon shock, one of the most shattering events is the proposition by Lenny that they put Ruth on the game- make a prostitute of her-to save on the expense of keeping her in the house.

10.8 Check Your Progress.

- 1) Name three major dramatic works of Harold Pinter
- 2) Describe in short Pinter's theory of characterization proposed by Pinter.
- 3) Who is the most provocative character in the play?
- 4) Who is the conscience of the family?
- 5) Who is the touch stone by which we may judge other characters in this play?
- 6) What is the central event of the play?

10.9 SUMMARY

The Homecoming has retained its power to shock by its apparent assault on respectable family values. The aggression and violence shown between the generations, the hatred of women

displayed by the disaffected male family, and the ruthless assault on the returning son and his wife are all provocative, disturbing and unpleasant. However, the play also has a powerful, theoretical impact, and despite the most obvious complaints that maybe levelled at the characters for their language and behaviour, it is possible to find a more positive and hopeful scenario being explored. The action revolves around the male family and Ruth. They are all frustrated and in need. The behaviour between them might just as reasonably be related to a concept of love as hate. The family - except for Teddy - has stayed together and they acknowledge that they are a unit. The absent mother, Jessie, for all her reputed faults, has left a vacuum. In America, Ruth has been driven to despair by the life that has been imposed on her. The family needs a woman, and the woman wants to be needed. The play moves to a logical conclusion. Because of the apparent immorality that is displayed during the play and the revelation of what might be called 'basic instincts,' the play is bound to disturb and upset. However the main focus is on basic human needs: the need to be recognised, appreciated, wanted. All the characters, apart from Teddy, reveal their insecurity and expose their emotional weakness, while Teddy, who claims to be in control of his life and emotions, is rejected. Teddy is a complete outsider, while Ruth is the play's pivot. The play's title refers to her, and not to Teddy. It is no homecoming for him, whereas she is instantly on home ground. Ruth's relations with the family consist of extended bargaining: she has sex to offer, they have the territory, and in the end they strike a deal. She retains the whip hand -a point which Pinter emphasizes in the last scene when the apparently victorious Max falls on his knees begging for attention from her. Her tactics are absolutely clear. She wants to translate sexual power into real estate, and she does so by specifying precisely the property she desires- the number of rooms, services, domestic assistance, wardrobe-and putting the whole thing in contractual terms. The absence of a mother, and the personality of the dead mother, Jessie, pervades the play. At the same time, Ruth is a mother-figure; she is the reincarnation of Jessie. At the end of the play, Ruth again rules the household. This is 'the Homecoming' of the title. It is not Teddy who has come back home, but the mother who has returned.

We conclude this chapter with the concluding remarks of hi Noble

Lecture as follows: When we look into a mirror we think the image that confronts us is accurate. But move a millimetre and the image changes. We are actually looking at a never-ending range of reflections. But sometimes a writer has to smash the mirror- for it is on the other side of that mirror that the truth stares at us.

I believe that despite the enormous odds which exist, unflinching, unswerving, fierce intellectual determination, as citizens, to define the realtruth of our lives and our societies is a crucial obligation which develops upon us all. It is in fact mandatory.

If such a determination is not embodied in our political vision we have no hope of resorting what is so nearly lost to us- the dignity of man.

10.10 CONCLUSION

The following quotation from dramatist's Noble Lecture explains the rationale vividly. Truth in drama is forever elusive. You never quite find it but the search for it is compulsive. The search is clearly what drives the endeavour. The search is your task. More often than not you stumble upon the truth in the dark, colliding with it or just glimpsing an image or a shape which seems to correspond to the truth, often without realizing that you have done so. But the real truth is that there is never any such thing as one truth to be found in dramatic art. There are many. These truths challenge each other, reconcile from each other, reflect each other, ignore each other, tease each other, and are blind to each other. Sometimes you feel you have the truth of a moment in your hand, and then it slips through your fingers and is lost.

Check Your Progress - Answers

10.8

1. The Birthday Party, The Caretaker and The Homecoming.
2. Up to a strange moment the character has no existence. Some event occurs uncertain but unstoppable event, whence the character comes into being.
3. Lenny is the most provocative character of the play.
4. Sam is the conscience of the family.
- 5 Ruth
6. Return of Teddy with his wife is the central event of the play.



CHAPTER : 11

JOHN OSBORNE: LOOK BACK IN ANGER

- 11.1 Objectives
 - 11.2 Introduction
 - 11.3 Life and works of dramatist
 - 11.4 Story
 - 11.5 Theme
 - 11.6 Characterization/ characters
 - 11.7 Language and style
 - 11.8 Check your progress
 - 11.9 Summary
 - 11.10 Conclusion
- Check your progress - Answers

11.1 OBJECTIVES

We wish to introduce, John Osborne, the spokesman of a new generation of writers known as angry. We have been using this term for quite some time with reference to Hindi/Indian Film Industry. The Post-War generation throughout Europe and America experienced the terrible shock of disillusion. The world was in a state of chaos and disintegration. In such a stifling atmosphere many new labels in the sphere of drama came into being; The theatre of Grotesque, Existentialism,, the theatre of Cruelty, the theatre of Embarrassment, and anti- theatre to name only a few. Initially most experiments were received with suspicion and scepticism. Each one had its own tempo and ethos. The dramatist of this school had recourse to irony and laughter while displaying the conflict between the mask and the face, the illusion and reality. Sometimes suffering brings people together.

After reading this chapter you will be able to -

- a) Appreciate the contribution made by dramatist in post-war social realism
- b) Identify the limitations of class and relationship

- c) Develop an overview of the way relationship between members of family
- d) Appreciate the role that dramatic art plays in modern stressful life
- e) Describe the plot; discuss the theme, discuss the type of drama.

11.2 INTRODUCTION

Osborne's Look Back In Anger was regarded as a revolutionary play which led to the coining of the term 'anger in the context of the new wave of dramatists who were regarded as 'angry young men'. This was not a well-defined school of thought but the work of these dramatists reflected certain shared attitudes to social and political changes in post-war British society. These writers not only exposed the hypocrisies of upper-class ethos and lifestyles but also portrayed the lack of direction of those not privileged by birth and traditional social power. So when Jimmy Porter made his appearance on stage, he was easily recognised as part of the existing tradition of the post-war young rebel hero. The success of Look Back in Anger opened up new avenues for various other representations of contemporary life by new playwrights and gave a new lease of life and energy to the theatre.

11.3 LIFE AND WORKS OF DRAMATIST

The play has a strong autobiographical flavour, and this makes it necessary to know a little about Osborne's background. His father was a white-collar, middle-class man who married a barmaid. Born in 1929, John Osborne's upbringing was suburban, which hints at a struggle at maintaining a shabby respectability. He was sent to a third -rate public school, where he declares he was very unhappy. Some of the feelings of dislocation and confusion that we feel in characters like Jimmy could be a reflection of this. His background enabled him to understand the sense of drifting and uncertainty which characterized the period of the early fifties, and drew him into sympathy with the characters in his plays. He left school early and worked as a journalist for a couple of years. Later he spent a number of years as an unsuccessful actor in obscure theatre companies. This

experience of the stage as a craft may have been part of the reason for the success his plays enjoyed.

His first mentionable play was *The Devil Inside* him. This was written in collaboration with Stella Linden. With his *Look Back in Anger* he shot into fame. *George Dillon*, *the World of Paul Slickey*, *A Bond Honoured*, *the Charge of Light Brigade* and screen play *Tom Jones*; *The Hotel in Amsterdam* appeared in rapid succession to be acclaimed. Osborne has amply demonstrated his talent as an eminent social satirist.

11.4 STORY

Look Back In Anger is about a group of young people living in England in the mid-1950s. The husband Jimmy Porter is an ex-undergraduate who has married a wife from a class higher than his own. They share a flat with a young, uneducated friend, Cliff, who helps Jimmy run a sweet-stall. Act I, which is long and undivided, introduces all the major characters either on stage or by description. We meet Jimmy, Alison and Cliff, and are shown the uneasy but functioning relationship they have established. We are introduced to Helena, and are shown the disruptive effect her entrance is likely to produce. We are given lengthy descriptions of all the other characters whose relationships with the main figures in the play shape their present responses.

Primarily these are Alison's father and mother; Hugh's mother, who has set Jimmy up with his sweet-stall; Hugh himself; Webster, the only one of Alison's friends whom Jimmy can tolerate, and so on, right down to minor characters, rapidly sketched in the dialogue, such as Alison's brother Nigel. We learn about Alison's pregnancy, the factor that will come up again in a more complex way in Act II and which provides a sort of resolution when she loses her child in Act III. We are introduced to the game of bears and squirrels, the full explanation of the significance of which is held over until Act II Scene I, when Alison tells Helena how it became 'the one way of escaping from everything' for both of them. Finally, the act ends with Jimmy's receiving the news of the death of Hugh's mother, providing an effective climax and allowing the complication of Act II, Alison's resolution to go home, to occur in the period of his absence.

Act II is divided into two scenes. The first scene is concerned primarily with the effect on the existing situation of the arrival of Alison's friend, Helena. Helena is puzzled, appalled and yet intrigued by the situation she finds. At first she functions as a device to allow Alison to tell the audience in greater depth about the early days with Jimmy. In Act I Alison has had to be a silent character. Now for the first time we see the events of the past from her point of view.

Act II Scene One also begins with the process of complicating the action by introducing the potential for future dramatic ironies, for instance, Jimmy's hope that Alison will learn to suffer, to understand the meaning of pain, sets up the potential for the response to the loss of their child in Act Three.

Act II Scene II introduces the new figure of Alison's father, an ex-Indian army colonel. The character serves to complicate the action further by failing to behave in the stereotypical way we might expect. His sympathy for his daughter's plight is modified by his sense of how she may have been partly to blame for estrangement between herself and Jimmy. A sense of continuity if not similarity between the colonel and Jimmy complicates any simple decision we might be tempted to make in favour of one or other of the characters who have been introduced.

When Helena tells Jimmy at the end of the act that Alison is to have a baby, and he reacts in a violent and bitter outburst, she reveals as the climax of Act II the attraction she has felt for him and which has emerged only obliquely up until this point. The act ends with their passionate embrace. The complications established in Acts I and II are now fully wound up and Act III must resolve them. The time passage between Act II Scene II and Act III Scene I is the longest in the play ('several months later'). At first nothing appears to have changed except that Helena is substituted for Alison as the main target of Jimmy's abuse. Her reactions are less profound, his abuse, as a result, less intense.

The first scene of this final act ends with the return of Alison. Helena seems almost relieved and resolves the situation by asserting her intention of leaving. Jimmy and Alison are left alone to renew their struggle. But there has been a change. Alison, through the loss of the baby, has arrived at the point of desolation which Jimmy wished for her and she capitulates in the longest and the most agonized speech

she has in the whole play. At the end, Jimmy and she can only retreat again to the temporary refuge of bears and squirrels, leaving any future open and in doubt.

11.5 THEME

Osborne himself characterized it as a formal, rather old-fashioned play, even though John Russell Taylor called it a real breakthrough in 'New Drama'. It was a representation of complex human beings, and one that offered rallying point for a number of people from the post-war generation who felt that they were ill-treated.

The movement of the play is conventional enough neatly divide into acts and scenes. The end of the play with Jimmy and Alison playing their bears-and-squirrels game is also conventional. Certain important symbols impose dramatic coherence, though not moral finally, on what happens. The construction is tight, and exciting; the ideas are stimulating, and the final effect is realistic and challenging enigma.

The action of the play takes place in a logical and consistent manner. In Act I we are introduced to Jimmy and his wife. We find Alison and Cliff chafing and feeling uncomfortable under censorious and contemptuous remarks. The subdued wife never protests or retaliates against brutal treatment. Helena is determined to retaliate.

Like typical plays of Ibsen and Chekhov we see absentee character in Mrs Redfern and Nigel Redfern, and Miss Drury and landlady. These characters are absent partly because it is not realistic to have all of them at the same place on the stage in just a few scenes and partly because of the financial problem of production. In addition their absence adds to the compactness of the play. It creates a sort of mystery

Two views are held by critics on ending. The reconciliation between Jimmy and Alison has a strong psychological basis suggesting it is not only natural but inevitable. The symbolism of the bears-and squirrels game also has its share in bringing about reconciliation.

The play sets up a wailing wall for the post-war generation of

under-thirties and it aims at being a despairing cry against injustice in society. While considering the cause of their anger we see a world of the aggressively young where it is no bad manners to be outrageous and where ideas are loud rather than deep. Fed up with the complacency and resignation the protagonist is constantly lashing himself into frenzy against their smugness. The play is much about the sense of frustration and bitterness induced by intangible emotional loss than about the anger induced by the loss of any good brave cause.

As a basis there is the psychology of the modern romantic, of building idealized images of people and things, which they are unable to live up to and which then turn to bitterness with them. And this situation is made worse by the fact that in present day world, there is no cause to which one can give himself wholeheartedly, no centre on which one can concentrate his adolescent dreams. This is the second theme. It is the immaturity that is troublesome. Emerging from extreme youth, most people accept the world and a few can transcend it. Jimmy did neither. It is this sense that the play is a tragedy. Osborne has made a powerful and sombre play, relived every now and by the flashes of humour.

11.6 CHARACTERIZATION / CHARACTERS

The play became a kind of folklore and a centre of lot of serious discussion and theorizing about the angry young man and his place in the society. Jimmy Porter became the spokesperson of his generation discontented restless, bitter, and frustrated. As rightly pointed out by Simon Trussler, the play is autobiographical. Jimmy's denunciation of class distinctions; he, like Osborne, is self-consciously proletarian, having his origins in the working class, and he is proud of being so. The kind of Puritanism which such a background often gives rise to-a social rather than a sexual Puritanism-is at the core of Jimmy's character. Criticism of the play has been largely preoccupied with the play's protagonist. Jimmy Porter embodies some attitudes and traits of his age-group and some of his class, and many facets of his life and personality parallel Osborne's, but his psycho-neurotic problems and idiosyncrasy mark him out as a unique individual who cannot be equated with either his creator or his generation or his social class.

To most readers Jimmy is a rebel against the debased values of modern life. He is waging a class war with his wife. He is sick of absurdities of the English class. An iconoclast, he is worried about the lack of enthusiasm, which affects the entire human society. He is one to whom miseries of the world are misery, and will not let him rest. He is capable of vicarious suffering, of living in other people's lives. He recalls his boyhood when he suffered for his father on death-bed, practically forsaken by his mother. All he could feel was the despair and the bitterness, the sweet, sticky smell of a dying man.

Some critics have described Jimmy as a frustrated idealist, crying in the night for light. He is socially adrift, in rebellion, or at least reaction, against the social and educational system which has helped to shape him and determined, whatever he does, not to act in the way 'they ' expect him to. However we cannot reduce him to a formula. He is a disconcerting mixture of sincerity and cheerful malice, of tenderness and freebooting cruelty; restless, importunate, full of pride, a combination which alienates the sensitive and insensitive alike. To many he may seem sensitive to others a loudmouth.

Jimmy is critical of everything, but most critical of his wife. Jimmy once laughed at her for her virginity. He looks upon the members of her family as his enemies, and makes no secret of it. Jimmy has the indecent habit of rummaging. But to call Jimmy a heartless barbarian would be a travesty. Osborne has created an excellent, minutely accurate character. Jimmy at last finds in his wife his long-cherished love and companionship. He has an expansive heart and is capable of love. Love and friendship have humanised him.

Alison is an attractive woman. Jimmy and Alison are a study in contrast. Jimmy is an extrovert, airing his views loudly and blatantly. Alison is an introvert and had not even the guts to tell him that she has conceived. She belongs to the upper middle class, and fondly hugs the respectability and tradition of her set. She believes in Orthodox morality. There was a conflict between two traditions, and two patterns of morality. Alison is a shrewd observer of Jimmy's character. She is so afraid of Jimmy that she never tells him that she has received any letters from her parents or has any contacts with them. This insistence is a part of the unwritten contract of allegiance.

Jimmy's hatred for the upper middle class is so deep-rooted that

he finds no virtue in her, although she has many. He feels that she is always taut and rigid. A woman who can remain a symbol of relaxation with her husband always in a violent mood is, indeed, a rarity. And yet Alison is undoubtedly more tolerant and forgiving. She has tried to adopt herself to her untoward circumstances. She is neither dominating nor ambitious. But poverty would have been bearable were Jimmy a fairly reasonable man and could understand the suffering that she is being constantly subjected to. Her antipathy to Hugh is understandable. Barring her negligent view on Mrs. Tanner, her relationship with others is exemplary. Her love for Jimmy is beyond doubt. After the death of her baby, she has come to realise that the spectre of loneliness is sitting on her breast. She needs company. They have reached their heaven.

11.7 LANGUAGE AND STYLE

The play can be called Naturalistic not for its style and language alone. It is because of its authenticity. It is a photographic play. There is no idealism, no glamour or romance. In fifties, Jimmy is an ideal hero, fuming, raging, and fulminating, representing the frustration and despair of millions clamouring for light.

11.8 Check Your Progress.

- 1) Name Osborne's first play
- 2) What do you mean by absentee character?
- 3) Which generation did Osborne represent?
- 4) Can we consider Jimmy and Alison as complimentary characters?

11.9 SUMMARY

The atmosphere of the opening helps to establish some legitimacy to Jimmy's claim that the other two are stifling him, and themselves. The slow opening, with only the occasional sound of Alison's iron, the rustling of papers, the long, boring emptiness of a chilly, spring evening captures the mood in a small Midland town where there is nothing to do, and nowhere to go, except the pictures or the pub.

In addition, despite Jimmy's nagging aggression, there are subtle indications to the audience that Jimmy's cruelty is part of a complex defence mechanism which hides his own basic insecurity. Notice how careful he is to sprinkle to his attacks on the 'posh Sundays' with enough intellectual references and word games to prove his right and ability to be critical of them: 'the English Novel;' 'the White Woman's Burden;' and, in an ironic allusion to T.S. Eliot's Mrs. Porter (in *The Waste Land* 'And Mrs. Porter gets them all going with the first yawn.'

On the surface Cliff's tenderness towards Alison may appear to emphasize Jimmy's aggression and cruelty. But Cliff shows affection and understanding towards Jimmy too, and the audience is required to notice his tone, and modify their response as a result. Thus, when Cliff kicks out Jimmy in Alison's defence, there is instantly a note of comic tenderness in his following comment, as if trying to tell Jimmy that he understands and that he is buffer for them both, not just for one alone. Jimmy is not a self-indulgent young man who doesn't know what he wants and screams and shouts because he can't get it. Much of his behaviour conforms to this childish pattern, for instance his screaming at Alison to make tea and then his sudden announcement that he does not want any. So through much of the opening act, Jimmy behaves like a spoilt child, but this is a symptom rather than the root of his character. Restless, selfish and egoistic as his responses are, they are nevertheless rooted in a legitimate anger against a world where people make no demands, but are content to accept what they are offered. His anger is directed at those who come close enough to be struck, but his dissatisfaction is with himself, and with his inability to change the world. It is to find what it is that Jimmy wants because the fact is that he himself has no clear idea of what that is. In fact he has no positive future aim at all. He feels that happiness, love, certitude and moral security are unattainable, and settles for opposition, argument, hatred and mutual destruction. Overcome by the boredom and frustration he feels at his own existence, and significantly stressed by the atmosphere of the small, dull, Midland flat, Jimmy turns to one small event after another, seeking any outlet for the obscure sense of purposeless which haunts him.

The world of squirrels and bears has been the only refuge to which Jimmy and Alison have been able to retreat. The world of

imaginary furry little animals is also an expression of mutual dependence. Jimmy's aggression towards the women in the play reveals his refusal to allow Alison or anyone else to discover his need for them. Jimmy's father was betrayed by his mother and he fears that the same process of betrayal must occur as a part of all relationships. In this sense, as well as in a social and political sense, he looks back in anger to the past and it is this which effectually bars him from any possibility of a future. Because Jimmy's character is so complex, it is insufficient to dismiss him as a merely a spokesman for his generation. There is certainly a strong connection between the individual and psychological problems he faces, and the problems of a whole generation of people in the 1950s. On the surface the spread of educational opportunity might have been seen as only desirable, but it had an unfortunate side-effect. Jimmy is an example of those people who, born into the working class, were educated out of it, but were unable to find an acceptable role in the complexities of the English class system. In the flawed world of post-war England, these people had no place to go. As a result, Jimmy Porter sentimentalizes the working class because he is no longer part of it. Jimmy belongs to no world. There is no route back for him into the working-class world of his childhood, and he thinks even this is suspect since his father and mother are clearly working-class elite. The alternative, the world of the upper / middle classes, is also impossible; that world can provide no refuge for him either. It can produce enemies, and so a struggle, but he cannot belong here, since to do so he would have to betray his past. To love Alison and her mother, he would have to reject his father and Mrs. Tanner, and he can do neither. He is trapped in the limbo of no class and no loyalty. Hence Alison notices his tendency and comments on to Helen, to create a personal myth about those people to whom he can be loyal. The attempt to forge a link between the two worlds, which Jimmy's speech reveals, is doomed to failure and the only possible solution is a retreat into fantasy. In *Look Back in Anger*, Osborne proffers no solutions for the situation he has recorded. At the end of the play Jimmy is left in despair, needing Alison's love but unable to accept it. Alison finally accepts his terms, but can buy them only a temporary respite. Their only refuge - the world of squirrels and bears - is a world that Jimmy knows will be invaded soon. The ending of the play is a way of stating

what the whole play has made clear. For Jimmy and Alison the process of destruction is inevitable, for it is a process whose root is in the malaise of the time.

A well made play features brings out the most minor problems and complications facing major characters and hopefully resolution of all the problems. A rising action, in which the incidents lead to a definite conclusion, is followed by the climax, peripety or a turning point, and a falling action, where the implications of the climax are explored and brought to conclusion. The rising action is divided into an exposition and a complication. Exposition provides the reader with the necessary background regarding setting, characters and important events. The complication shows how the hero is pitted against a variety of forces. Crisis is the moment when the action is most intense. The falling action includes the denouncement or resolution and the end.

'No conflict, no drama', and hence conflict the tension are an integral part of a well-made play.

11.10 CONCLUSION

People are bemused, dismayed or exhilarated by drama and driven to laughter. There is authenticity in the manner in which Cliff's casually comfortable place in the household is accepted, and in Jimmy's feeling that sexual fidelity is infinitely less important to him than the moral and spiritual fidelity which he fails to find in Alison. In this play, Jimmy, Alison and Cliff take their relationship in this respect for granted. In Jimmy, one is confronted with a man whose anger undoubtedly starts in human idealism, and the desire that men should be more honest, more alive, and more human than they normally are. Very soon, however corruption creeps in. He becomes convinced that he is the only one who really knows what suffering is, and that he has the right to scourge those less agitated than himself.

Check Your Progress - Answers

11.8

1. The Devil inside Him
2. In order to keep cost of production low, sometimes it is not realistic to have them on stage and sometimes to add mystery characters are not present. These are termed as absentee characters.
3. Post war generation who felt they were ill treated.
4. Jimmy and Alison are study in contrast, however we may look at them a whole.



SECTION - B

REFERENCE BOOKS

1. Bernard Shaw: Candida
2. Bernard Shaw-Major Barbara, Pygmalion Arms and the Man, Man and Superman, The Devil's Disciple.
3. C. Ward- Bernard Shaw.
4. R. J. Kaufman (Ed) - G.B. Shaw (twentieth Century Views)
5. Eric Bentley- Bernard Shaw
6. A.M. Gibes -Shaw.
7. Raymond Williams- Drama from Ibsen to Brecht.
8. British Drama: A. Nicoll
9. A Readers Guide to T. S. Eliot: George Williamson
10. Drama from Ibsen to Eliot: Raymond Wilson
11. Samuel Beckett-Waiting for Godot
12. Cohn Ruby.Samuel Beckett: Waiting For Godot. A Casebook.London: Macmillan, 1987.
13. Esslin Martin. The Theatre Of The Absurd.Harmondsworth. Middlesex: Penguin, 1961.
14. Esslin Martin. Pinter: The Playwright. London: Methuen, 1982.
15. Scott Michael. Harold Pinter: The Birthday Party, The Caretaker, and The Homecoming, A Casebook. London: Macmillan, 1986.
16. Hayman, Ronald. John Osborne. London: Heinemann. 1968.
17. Russel Taylor, John. John Qsborne: Look Back In Anger. A Casebook. London: Macmillan, 1968.



SECTION - B

QUESTION BANK

- 1) Discuss 'Candida' as a Problem play.
- 2) Is it correct to describe Candida a drama of ideas?
- 3) Bring out the role of Morell, Candida and Marchbank in Candida.
- 4) Discuss various themes of 'Candida'.
- 5) Discuss 'Candida' as expression of views of Shaw on Love and marriage.
- 6) How far may 'Candida' be regarded as a characteristic Shavian play?
- 7) 'Murder in Cathedral' has all the elements of a classical play. Discuss.
- 8) 'Murder in Cathedral' is a study in spiritual progress and enlightenment. Discuss.
- 9) Write a critical note on the chorus in 'Murder in Cathedral'.
- 10) Trace the analogy between Thomas and Christ as presented in 'Murder in Cathedral'.
- 11) Write an essay on Versification, Imagery and Language of Eliot with reference to 'Murder in Cathedral'.
- 12) Write an essay on T. S. Eliot's skill in the play you have studied.
- 13) Discuss the characterization in Samuel Becket's 'Waiting for Godot'.
- 14) Discuss the theme of Time in 'Waiting for Godot'.
- 15) Who is Godot.
- 16) Discuss the structure of 'Waiting for Godoy'.
- 17) Discuss various themes of 'Waiting for Godot'.
- 18) Do you think that Waiting for Godot has any religious implications?
- 19) Write a note on the Vladimir-Estrgon relationship, bringing out points of comparison and contrast.
- 20) What do you think, is the symbolic significance of the Pozzo-Lucky relationship?
- 21) Bring out the humour of the play, 'Waiting for Godot'.
- 22) Write a note on the comic and farcical elements in 'Waiting for Godot'.
- 23) Harold Pinter's 'The Homecoming' examines family relations with ruthless objectivity. Discuss.
- 24) Writer a character appraisals of Lenny and Ruth.
- 25) Comment on the aptness or otherwise of the title of Harold Pinter's 'The Homecoming'.

- 26) Discuss the causes of popularity and universal appeal of Harold Pinter's 'The Homecoming'.
- 27) In What way does 'The Homecoming' reflect the mood and temper of post-war generation England?
- 28) Critically analyse Harold Pinter's 'The Homecoming'.
- 29) Discuss the characters Jimmy and Alison in John Osborne's 'Look Back in Anger'.
- 30) Critically analyse the end of Osborne's 'Look Back in Anger'.
- 31) What are the themes of Look Back in Anger?
- 32) Why is Jimmy Porter angry?
- 33) Comment on aptness or otherwise of the title of John Osborne's play 'Look Back in Anger'.
- 34) Discuss 'Look Back in Anger@ as a psychological play.
- 35) Write short notes on the following;
 - 1.G.B. Shaw's stage directions
 2. Shaw and his Prefaces
 3. Shaw as social reformer
 4. Shaw as an anti-romantic
 5. The auction scene in Candida
 6. Paucity of incidents in 'Waiting for Godot'.
 7. Tragic elements in 'Waiting for Godot'.
 8. Significance of two tramps
 9. Significance of rope tying Pozzo-Lucky
 10. Role played by the boy in 'Waiting for Godot'.
 11. The Temptation episode in 'Murder in the Cathedral'.
 12. Imagery of T. S. Eliot in 'Murder in the Cathedral'.
 13. Historical background of Thomas Beckett.
 14. Jimmy the post-war youth
 15. Jimmy the angry young man
 16. Jimmy's approach to sex and marriage
 17. A note on similarity between Jimmy Porter and John Osborne
 18. Helena Charles in 'Look Back in Anger'.



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