



SHIVAJI UNIVERSITY, KOLHAPUR

CENTRE FOR DISTANCE EDUCATION

Understanding Drama

(Special English)

B. A. Part-III

**(Semester-V Paper-IX
Semester-VI Paper-XIV)**

(Academic Year 2015-16 onwards)

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Shivaji University,
Kolhapur. (Maharashtra)
First Edition 2015

Prescribed for **B. A. Part-III**

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Copies : 3000

Published by:
Dr. V. N. Shinde
Ag. Registrar,
Shivaji University,
Kolhapur-416 004.

Printed by :
Shri. B. P. Patil
Superintendent,
Shivaji University Press,
Kolhapur-416 004

ISBN-978-81-8486-600-1

- ★ Further information about the Centre for Distance Education & Shivaji University may be obtained from the University Office at Vidyanagar, Kolhapur-416 004, India.
- ★ This material has been produced out of the Developmental Grant from UGC, Distance Education Bureau, New Delhi.

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Introduction

It gives us immense pleasure in presenting the SIM of Understanding Drama to the students of B. A. III Special English.

The objectives behind introducing this paper are to familiarize you with the form of Drama. The purpose of this study is to provide more wider perspective of the form by making it available some classical texts of British, American and Indian English Drama. It is well supported by conceptual framework. This whole attempt on the part of BoS and Unit Writers is to orient the students for detailed study of the form and to create interest amongst them.

In the preparation of this SIM, eight unit writers have contributed on various aspects of drama. They have taken sincere efforts to make the subject matter more lucid. For Semester-V, Units 1 and 2 deal with theoretical perspective while Unit No. 3 & 3 devoted to the study of classical texts - *The Tempest* by William Shakespeare. Semester VI deals with the study of two classical Texts - *The Glass Menagerie* and **Bravely Fought the Queen**. At the end of each unit feedback is taken to strengthen the learning process. List of further reading is given properly for extensive reading in this domain.

We thank all the teachers of English who contributed their views in the selection of texts. We hope that this book will help to serve our purpose.

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Each Unit begins with the Objectives of the Section -

Objectives are directive and indicative of :

1. what has been presented in the Unit and
2. what is expected from you
3. what you are expected to know pertaining to the specific Unit once you have completed working on the Unit.

The self check exercises with possible answers will help you to understand the Unit in the right perspective. Go through the possible answer only after you write your own answers. These exercises are not to be submitted to us for evaluation. They have been provided to you as Study Tools to help keep you on the right track as you study the Unit.

Unit-1

A) Definition and Elements of Drama

Contents

- 1.0 Objectives
- 1.1 Introduction
- 1.2 Presentation of Subject Matter
 - 1.2.1 Definition of Drama
 - 1.2.2 The Origins of Drama
 - 1.2.3 Elements of Drama
 - 1.2.4 Conclusion
- 1.3 Summary
- 1.4 Glossary and Notes
- 1.5 Check Your Progress
- 1.6 Exercises
- 1.7 Answers to check your progress

1.0 Objectives

After studying this Unit you will be able :

- To Understand and identify drama as a genre of literature.
- To learn the definitions of drama
 - To explain the difference between drama and other forms of literature
- To explain the basic elements of drama
- To understand the types of drama

1.1 Introduction:

In this unit, you will learn some definitions of drama. You will understand that all actions are not drama. You will be able to distinguish between drama and ordinary activity. Most of you relax with dramatic presentations either in the theatre or in your houses as you watch home videos, operas or films. Drama is regarded as the mother of all arts, as it is used to inform, educate and entertain the people. The form of composition designed for performance in the theater, in which actors take the roles of the characters, perform the indicated action, and utter the written dialogue.

The word drama comes from the Greek meaning “to act, do or perform”, and it is in the several subtle and diverse meanings of “to perform” that drama can be said to have begun. Drama is one of the major forms of literature. As a literary form, it is designed for the theatre because characters are assigned role and they act out their roles as the action is enacted on stage. It is difficult to separate drama from performance because during the stage performance of a play, drama brings life experiences realistically to audience. Drama is therefore presented in dialogue.

What is drama? Drama is an imitation of life. Drama is different from other forms of literature because of its unique characteristics. It is read, but basically, it is composed to be performed, so the ultimate aim of dramatic composition is for it to be presented on stage before an audience. This implies that it is a medium of communication. It has a message to communicate to the audience. It uses actors to convey this message.

Drama like other forms of literature, imitates life. It is the form of composition designed for performance in the theater, in which actors take the roles of the characters, perform the indicated action, and utter the written dialogue. It is designed for representation on the stage by actors who act the parts of the characters of its story, and among whom the narrative and the dialogue are distributed. It is a form of expression which depends largely upon communication from a playwright to an audience through the medium of actor. Drama generally takes the form of the theater performance. But it can as easily be transferred broadcasting to a home television screen, or to the printed page. The word drama comes from the Greek and means to do or act. The drama has mirrored the life, customs, manner and general living habits of the people.

A drama must create a desired effect in very short period of time. This necessitates various elements such as a very tight plot, precise delineation of character, conflict, setting, dialogue etc. Aristotle's treatise 'Poetics' is especially written on tragedy. It deals with the principles that contribute to the composition of elements in his treatise. Aristotle defined tragedy and analyzed its constituent elements in his treatise. Aristotle was not primarily thinking of drama as a book to be read but as a text to be acted on the stage with people, the audience, and so he considered following elements of drama especially.

1.2 Presentation of Subject Matter

1.2.1 Definition of Drama

What is drama? .

To define any form of literature is very difficult. Literature is like a living thing that grows and even decay and therefore every form of literature has undergone considerable changes. Drama form is not exception to this. Many critics made attempts to define drama in the following manner.

"A play is a just and lively image of human nature, representing its passions and hum-ours and the changes of fortune to which it is subject for the delight and instruction of mankind". - John Dryden

"Drama is a composition in verse or prose intended to portray life or character or tell a story usually involving conflicts and emotions through action and dialogue and typically designed for theatrical performance".

- Webster's English Dictionary

"Drama is a composition in verse or prose and verse, adapted to be acted on the stage, in which a story is related by means of dialogue and action and is represented with accompanying gesture, costume and scenery as in real life".

- Shorter Oxford Dictionary

"Drama is a composition designed for performance in the theatre, in which actors take the roles of the characters, perform the indicated action and utter the written dialogue".

- A Glossary of Literary Terms by M. H. Abrams

“A composition, in prose or poetry, accommodated to action and intended to exhibit a picture of human life, or to depict a series of grave or humorous actions of more than ordinary interest, tending towards some striking result. It is commonly designed to be spoken and represented by actors on the stage”.

- A drama is a story enacted on stage for a live audience.

1.2.2 The Origins of Drama:

The word drama comes from the Greek meaning “to act, do or perform”, and it is in the several subtle and diverse meanings of “to perform” that drama can be said to have begun. All communities accept that their later drama has roots in pre-history. Anthropologists have shown that primitive societies used (and in certain cases still use) role-playing in teaching the codes and behavior required to live and survive in that society; for example, to teach the skills needed in knowing what and how to hunt, the making and use of weapons and the rules of warfare. Performance could be involved in oral repetition to teach the laws and social customs, while enactment of mythical or historical episodes perpetuates and transmits what is thought important to maintain in the race-memory of the tribe. Most early societies lived by a seasonal cycle, a regular pattern allied to the movements of the sun or moon, and perhaps related to the movement of prey, or to seed time and harvest, and drama was especially important in devising rituals to deal with the inexplicable, the changing seasons, the natural phenomena of night and day, or the waxing and waning of the moon. Without propitiation with certain symbolic ceremonial safeguards or sacrifices, the sun might not rise again, the crops might fail. All humankind has, and had, concerns with life and death and has evolved ceremonies and rituals to help deal with the perennial questions of “where did I come from?” and “where do I go after death?” These were usually answered by some kind of belief in an outside power, an almighty being or beings, to give the hope of an after-life, to avoid extinction at death. Thus the invention of gods happened to provide a liaison between this world and the next and societal rituals would encompass joy, hope, and renewal, or death, despair and foreboding. Omens became important and had to be interpreted by wise men, perhaps involving impersonation, and disguise, in punctiliously performed ceremonies to appease or placate the gods. Rules for communal living would gradually be agreed: incest might be banned, but witchcraft allowed within given limits; murder be condoned for some offences but avenged for others. Most societies

would include rituals of purification, perhaps for menstruating women or after childbirth, and ordeals for children to undergo in order to attain adulthood and acceptance into full membership of the community. And all this would be taught and learnt through oral tradition, through story-telling and through performances and enactments passed down from generation to generation. All societies seem to have had these ritual traditions in one form or another from which spoken drama often, but not always, emerged. It is these ritual and community roots that later dramatists have drawn on in trying to express humanity's concern with life and death in both tragedy and comedy. In the early communities everyone was involved in the drama of a ceremonial ritual, perhaps with impersonation and identification with priestly roles, or as characters depicted in enactments, or simply as celebrants but it was not theatre. Theatre requires a separate audience of spectators which happened when the occasion became a performance by some in front of others as an entertainment. However since the sixteenth century, the two terms have become synonymous with both words loosely understood as meaning the representation of a story enacted by actors in front of an audience. Most communities have some mention of folk drama derived from oral storytelling becoming a narrative in dialogue, but by its nature oral storytelling is mostly unrecorded, and histories are sparse and fragmentary. It is thought that music and dance associated with death and rejuvenation? is represented in ancient Egyptian hieroglyphs from around 2500BCE but little more is known about Egyptian practices. Although Herodotus wrote about an Egyptian temple ceremony involving a mock battle, and implied this was an annual event, nothing is known about any spoken drama. In China music is believed to have existed in 5400BCE, scribes wrote of rituals and religious worship accompanied by music and dance from 2200BCE, and of emperors who were reprovved for enjoying theatrical performances by actors. However, written classical Chinese poetic drama is only recorded from the 700s BCE. In India the beginnings of spoken drama are uncertain but it is also thought to have derived from earlier dramatic dances and mimes related to ancient rituals and seasonal celebrations, and to have appeared about the same time as the Greeks began writing their plays. Some authorities suggest Indian dramatic writings were influenced by the influx of Greek culture after the invasion by Alexander the Great in 327BCE. For Greece, and in particular Athens, is credited with the beginnings of performing plays in front of an audience as we understand them today.

The English drama at its initial stage developed from religious rituals, commemorating the birth and resurrection of Jesus Christ. It grew out of the liturgy of the church. In order to amuse the congregation, and make the people familiar with the Bible, the bishops in the church began to dramatize some of the incidents from the life of Christ and other saints, out of this the English drama was born. In the 13th and 14th centuries, some plays, describing the life of Christ and other saints, were called Morality and Miracle plays. At the end of 15th century, the play called ‘The Morality Play’ took birth. The morality play mark the next stage in the growth of the drama in England. These plays were didactic and religious in nature. The characters were no longer Biblical figures but personified virtues and vices. Everyman(1490) is the finest of this type of play. Sackville and Norton’s, “Gorboduc” (1561) was the first regular English Tragedy. Udall’s, “Ralph Roister Doister” (1566) was the first English regular comedy. The Elizabethan Drama reached its highest point in the works of Willian Shakespeare and Marlowe. After the Restoration period drama restored and in modern age various types of drama are developed. In modern age G. B. Shaw and Galsworthy were the great dramatists.

1.2.3 Elements of drama

The elements of drama include plot, character, dialogue, staging, and theme. Our discussions of each of these elements individually allow us to highlight the characteristic features of drama in a convenient way. We should remember, however, that analysis of any single element of drama should not blind us to its function in conjunction with other dialogue; character is expressed through dialogue and staging; and so on. A drama, like the novel, has plot, character, dialogue, setting, and it also expresses an outlook on life, but in the handling of these essential features the dramatic art is different from the art of the novelist. The elements of drama include plot, character, dialogue, staging, theme, etc.

■ **Plot:**

Plot means the arrangement of the events in a story, including the sequence in which they are told, the relative emphasis they are given, and the causal connections between events. Plot is the series of events that take place in a play. There are six stages in a plot structure: Initial incident, Preliminary event, Rising action, Climax, Falling action and Denouement or Conclusion. For the dramatic purpose plot means plan, scheme or pattern. It may be defined as a pattern of events- the way in which

events are organized. It has to do with internal relation of events or the way incidents are combined or unified to produce an 'organic whole'. The events have to be formed into a plot. It is also narrative of events, the emphases on causality. Plots could be infinite or limitless, but their significance have no limits and that's why Aristotle said that plot is the soul of tragedy. According to Aristotle action in drama is complete in itself. It has a beginning, a middle and an end. At some points action begins, then complications enter, which gradually reaches a peak point, technically called the climax, followed by a crisis or the turning point what Aristotle termed as peripety, this leads to the failure of the central character; the catastrophe depends on discovery or anagnorsis.

In his Poetics, Aristotle considered plot (mythos) the most important element of drama-more important than character. A plot must have a beginning, middle and end. For the sake of unified plot, Aristotle pointed out, is a continuous sequence of beginning, middle, and end. The beginning initiates the main action in a way which makes us look forward to something more; the middle presumes what has gone before and requires something to follow; and the end follows from what has gone before but requires nothing more; we are satisfied that the plot is complete. Aristotle divided plot into two kinds: the simple and the complex plot.

There are several forms or kinds of drama. Tragedy and Comedy are the two broad divisions. There is also a third one called Tragic-comedy. Comedies are further divided as Romantic Comedy, Sentimental Comedy, Classical Comedy, Comedy of Humour, Comedy of Manners, and Farical Comedy.

Comedies have been written since times immemorial. Among the ancients, Aristophanes, Plautus and Terence were great writers of comedy whose comedies have been a source of inspiration to subsequent practitioners of the art. Meander, Moliere, Shakespeare and Ben Jonson are some modern writers of comedy.

■ Characters:

Character is the next important element of the drama. We can't imagine the drama without characters. Characters are persons like the men and women we see around us but sometimes unreal and supernatural types of characters are also present. Plot and characters are inseparable part because when we read plays for their plots-to find out what happens- we also read them to discover the fates of their characters. We become interested in dramatic characters for varying, even contradictory,

reasons. Characters bring play to life. First and last we attend to characters: to how they look and what their appearance tells us about them; to what they say and what their manner of saying it expresses; to what they do and how their action reveal who they are and what they stand for.

While discussing about the tragedy Aristotle pointed out that there is a central character the protagonist or the hero or heroine. He need not to be a paragon or virtues or qualities. Since tragedy excites pity and fear, the tragic hero is projected that his misfortune is caused by his innate error; technically called, 'Hamartia', a tragic fault. Very often an equally strong character may stand in opposition to a protagonist which is called the antagonist (villain). The protagonist is the main character in a play. Generally introduced to the audience very early, this is the character that the author expects should more engage our interest and sympathies. The antagonist is the character or force against which the protagonist struggles. The antagonist may be another character, a culture and its laws or traditions, natural elements, or the protagonist divided against himself.

Characters in drama can be classified as a major, minor, static and dynamic, flat and round. A major character is an important figure at the center of the play's action and meaning. Supporting the major character are one or more secondary or minor characters, whose function is partly to illuminate the major characters. Minor characters are often static or unchanging; they remain essentially the same throughout the play. Dynamic characters, on the other hand, exhibit some kind of change-of attitude, of purpose, of behavior. Flat characters reveal only a single dimension, and their behavior and speech are predictable; round characters are more individualized, reveal more than one aspect of their human nature, and are not predictable in behavior or speech.

■ **Dialogue:**

In its widest sense, dialogue is simply conversation between people in literary work; in its most restricted sense, it refers specifically to the speech of characters in a drama. As a specific literary genre, a 'dialogue' is a composition in which characters debate and issue or idea. The dictionary tells us that; "dialogue is a conversation between two or more persons real or imaginary". According to the critics of drama reading drama means reading dialogue.

Our discussion of character and conflict brings us to a critical aspect of dramatic characters-their speech, or dialogue. Dialogue involves two speakers and monologue to the speech of one. An important dramatic convention of dialogue is the use of a soliloquy to express a character's state of mind. A soliloquy represent a character's thoughts so the audience can know what he or she is thinking at a given moment. Soliloquies should be distinguished from asides, which are comments made directly to the audience in the presence of other characters, but without those characters hearing what is said. Unlike a soliloquy, an aside is usually a brief remark.

Dialogue is a very significant element. Dialogue reveals the nature of character and also gives us information about his relations with the person spoken or of the person not present when the conversation takes place. Dialogue contributes to forward the action of the drama. J. L. Styan rightly describes 'dialogue as dramatic speech'.

■ **Action:**

Drama is different from other genres of literature. It has unique characteristics that have come about in response to its peculiar nature. Really, it is difficult to separate drama from performance because during the stage performance of a play, drama brings life experiences realistically to the audience. It is the most concrete of all genres of literature. When you are reading a novel, you read a compact form or in a condensed language. The playwright does not tell the story instead you get the story as the characters interact and live out their experiences on stage. In drama, the characters/actors talk to themselves and react to issues according to the impulse of the moment. Drama is therefore presented in dialogue.

■ **Conflict:**

The conflict can be the protagonist's struggle against fate, nature, society, or another person. Conflict is not compulsory but necessary element of the drama. Conflict brings interest in the story. Conflict means some kind of struggle of competition. It is the conflict that makes the drama appealing. Without it the drama becomes monotonous, not interesting at all. Conflicts are of two types i. e. internal conflict and external conflict. Internal conflict deals with man verses self it is also called as a psychological conflict. External conflict deals with following three types man vs man, man vs society, man vs nature, man vs supernatural-God, ghost,

monsters, spirits, aliens etc, man vs fate- fight for choice, fight against destiny., man vs Technology- computer, machines, etc.

Conflict is the very essence of drama. It enlightens life and grants dignity and worth to human life. In modern drama the conflict centers round the philosophical beliefs that life is meaningful and the experience that such meaning does not really exist. Thus the practices lead us to consider various conflicts which are handled by dramatists such as philosophical or ideological, the old and the new, the religious and the secular, the doctrinaire and the progressive, the dogmatic and the radical etc.

■ **Staging / Stage Directions:**

Drama is distinct from other literature because it is performed in front of an audience by actors to tell a story, along with the use of a set, lighting, music, and costumes. Stage Directions are guidelines, suggestions, given by the dramatist in the script of the play. They are the guidelines for the producer and the author wishes to be. Stage directions in earlier drama were pure and simple. They gave the outline of the scenery of the play and broad directions to the actors. Stage directions establish a link between the reader and the dramatist. In the dramatic literature of the past the chorus took care of these functions. In modern drama through the medium of the stage directions the dramatist attempts to exercise his control on the production. Theater artists bring the playwright's vision to life on the stage. The audience responds to the play and shares the experience.

■ **Theme:**

From experiencing a play and examining the various elements of a play we derive a sense of its significance and meaning. We use the word theme to designate the main idea or point of a play stated as a generalization. Because formulating the theme of a play involves abstracting from it a generalizable idea, the notion of the theme inevitably moves away from the very details of character and action that give the play its life. This is not to suggest that it is not rewarding or useful to attempt to identify a central idea or set of ideas from plays, but only that we should be aware of the limitations of our doing so.

1.2.4 Conclusion:

Drama is an imitation of an action. It is a branch of literature which is both literary art and representational art. As a literary art, it deals with fiction or an

imaginary story that is presented through characters and dialogue. However, it is a special kind of fiction because it is designed to be acted out rather than narrated. When we read a novel or a short story, we understand and appreciate the story, through the narrator or author but in drama the characters live out the story for us. The playwright does not comment or explain anything. So, drama gives us a direct presentation of life experiences. That is why we say that it is a representational art. Drama, therefore, uses language in the form of gesture or dialogue to present or to represent an action. Characters are used to present the story. These characters are called actors.

1.3 Summary

In this unit, we have tried to explain the meaning of drama. We have also tried to distinguish it from other forms of literature. By now you must have been familiar with the basic elements of drama which make drama unique. You have seen also that the term drama is used at three different levels now. It is a performance, it is a composition to be read or performed and it is a branch of literature.

1.4 Glossary and Notes

- **Protagonist:** The leading character in a drama, an important person in a real situation.
- **Plot:** the arrangement of the events in a story, including the sequence in which they are told, the relative emphasis they are given, and the causal connections between events.
- **Chaos:** total disorder
- **Perpetuates:** never ending or changing/ very frequent
- **Hamartia:** misfortune, a tragic fault
- **Liturgy:** a set form of public Christian worship
- **Omens:** an event seen as a sign of future good or bad luck
- **Antagonist:** an opponent or enemy/ character in conflict with the main character
- **Constituent:** being a part of whole, component part.
- **Monologue:** a long speech
- **Soliloquy:** a speech in a play made by a character while alone

1.5 Check your progress

A) Fill in the blanks

1. Aristotle divided plots into two kinds namelyand
2. The characters are generally of two types and.....
3. is a conversation between two or more persons real or imaginary.
4. means the arrangement of the events in a story.
5. J. L. Styan rightly describes dialogue as

1.6 Exercises

A) Answer the following questions in 250 words.

- I) Trace the development of English drama.
- II) Write a detail note on the origin of drama.

B) Write short note on the following (150 words)

- I) Various definitions of Drama.
- II) The importance of dialogue in drama.
- III) Plot in the drama
- IV) Characters in drama

1.7 Answers to check your progress

- 1 Simple and complex
- 2 dynamic and static
- 3 dialogue
- 4 Plot
- 5 as a dramatic speech



Unit-1

B) Comedy as a Form

Contents

- 1.1 Introduction
- 1.2 Presentation of Subject Matter
 - 1.2.1 History
 - 1.2.2 Definition of Comedy
 - 1.2.3 Type of Comedy
- 1.3 Glossary and Notes
- 1.4 Check Your Progress
- 1.5 Exercises
- 1.6 Answers to check your progress
- 1.7 Further Reading

1.1 Introduction:

Comedy is one of the oldest forms of drama. Comedy highlights that human beings are in fact ridiculous and cannot change.

In ordinary conversational English the words comedy and comic are used for anything that is funny or laughable. When we speak of a comedy we generally mean a play which has a pleasant atmosphere and a happy ending.

According to Aristotle (who speculates on the matter in his *Poetics*), ancient comedy originated with the *komos*, a curious and improbable spectacle in which a company of festive males apparently sang, danced, and cavorted rollickingly around the image of a large phallus. (If this theory is true, by the way, it gives a whole new meaning to the phrase "stand-up routine.")

The linking of the origins of comedy to some sort of phallic ritual or festival of mirth seems both plausible and appropriate, since for most of its history--from

Aristophanes to Seinfeld--comedy has involved a high-spirited celebration of human sexuality and the triumph of eros. As a rule, tragedies occur on the battlefield or in a palace's great hall; a more likely setting for comedy is the bedroom or bathroom.

On the other hand, it's not true that a film or literary work must involve sexual humor or even be funny in order to qualify as a comedy. A happy ending is all that's required. In fact, since at least as far back as Aristotle, the basic formula for comedy has had more to do with conventions and expectations of plot and character than with a requirement for lewd jokes or cartoonish pratfalls. In essence; a comedy is a story of the rise in fortune of a sympathetic central character.

The term “comedy” is customarily applied only to the plays for the stage or the motion pictures. The first true comedy was *Grammer Gurton's Needle* by John Still-but the comedy with a regular plot, divided into acts and scenes is *Ralph Royster Doyster* produced by Nicholas Udall. Like Tragedy, comedy may also be either classical or romantic in form and design. The comedies which observe the classical rules are called classical comedies and those which ignore the classical rules are called romantic. The classical form was adopted by Ben Jonson and the Restoration playwrights; and the Romantic by Shakespeare and the “University Wits”.

1.2 Presentation of Subject Matter

1.2.1 History:

Starting from 425 BCE, Astophanes, comic playwright and satirical author of the Ancient Greek Theater wrote 40 comedies, 11 of which survive. Aristophanes developed his type of comedy from the earlier satyr plays, which were often highly obscene. Of the satyr plays the only surviving examples are by Euripides which are much later examples and not representative of the genre. In ancient Greece, comedy originated in bawdy and ribald songs or recitations apropos of phallic processions and fertility festivals or gatherings.

Around 335 BCE, Aristotle, in his work *Poetics*, stated that comedy originated in Phallic processions and the light treatment of the otherwise base and ugly. He also adds that the origins of comedy are obscure because it was not treated seriously from its inception.

Aristotle taught that comedy was generally a positive for society, since it brings forth happiness, which for Aristotle was the ideal state, the final goal in any activity.

For Aristotle, a comedy did not need to involve sexual humor. A comedy is about the fortunate rise of a sympathetic character. Aristotle divides comedy into three categories or subgenres: farce, romantic comedy, and satire. On the contrary, Plato taught that comedy is destruction to the self. He believed that it produces an emotion that overrides rational self-control and learning. In *The Republic* (Plato), he says that the Guardians of the state should avoid laughter, "for ordinarily when one abandons himself to violent laughter, his condition provokes a violent reaction." "Plato says comedy should be tightly controlled if one wants to achieve the ideal state.

Also in *Poetics*, Aristotle defined Comedy as one of the original four genres of literature. The other three genres are tragedy, epic poetry, and lyric poetry. Literature in general is defined by Aristotle as a mimesis, or imitation of life. Comedy is the third form of literature, being the most divorced from a true mimesis. Tragedy is the truest mimesis, followed by epic poetry, comedy and lyric poetry. The genre of comedy is defined by a certain pattern according to Aristotle's definition. Comedies begin with low or base characters seeking insignificant aims, and end with some accomplishment of the aims which either lightens the initial baseness or reveals the insignificance of the aims.

1.2.2 Definition of Comedy:

When we speak of a comedy we generally mean a play which has a pleasant atmosphere and a happy ending. In the most common literary application, a comedy is a work in which the material are selected and managed primarily in order to interest, involve, and amuse us: the characters and their discomfitures engage our pleasurable attention rather than our profound concern, we are made to feel confident that no great disaster will occur, and usually the action turns out happily for the chief characters.

“Comedy is a drama in which the characters are placed in more or less humorous situation, the movement is light and often mirthful, and the play ends in general good will and happiness”. W. T. Young

1.2.3 Types of Comedy:

English comedy can be classified into the following types namely- 1) Romantic Comedy 2) Comedy of Manners 3) Satiric Comedy 4) Farce 5) Comedy of Humours 6) Sentimental Comedy 7) Tragic-Comedy or Dark Comedy

■ Romantic Comedy

The term romantic comedy is a somewhat vague appellation, which denotes a form of drama in which love is the main theme and love leads to happy ending.

Perhaps the most popular of all comic forms--both on stage and on screen--is the romantic comedy. The term romantic comedy is somewhat vague appellation, which denotes a form of drama in which love is the main theme and love leads to a happy ending. Romantic comedy was developed by Shakespeare on the model of contemporary prose romances such as Thomas Lodge's *Rosalynde* (1590) , the source of Shakespeare's *As You Like It* (1599). Such comedy represents a love affair that involves a beautiful and engaging heroine (sometimes disguised as a man); the course of this love does not run smooth, yet overcomes all difficulties to end in a happy union. These plays are generally concerned with love affairs that involve a beautiful and idealized heroine; the course of this love does not run smooth, but ultimately overcomes all difficulties to end in a happy union. In this genre the primary distinguishing feature is a love plot in which two sympathetic and well-matched lovers are united or reconciled. In a typical romantic comedy the two lovers tend to be young, likeable, and apparently meant for each other, yet they are kept apart by some complicating circumstance (e.g., class differences, parental interference; a previous girlfriend or boyfriend) until, surmounting all obstacles, they are finally wedded. A wedding-bells, fairy-tale-style happy ending is practically mandatory. Examples: *Much Ado about Nothing*, Walt Disney's *Cinderella*, *Guys and Dolls*, *Sleepless in Seattle*.

■ Comedy of Manners:

The phrase comedy of manners is particularly applied in English to the plays of the Restoration dramatists, and especially to Congreve and Wycherley, but is a type of comedy which can flourish in any civilized urban society and we see it again in Sheridan and Oscar Wilde. The English comedy of manners was early exemplified by Shakespeare's *Love's Labour's Lost* and *Much Ado about Nothing*, and was given

a high polish in Restoration comedy (1660-1700). The Restoration form owes much to the brilliant dramas of the French writer Moliere, 1622-73. It deals with the relations and intrigues of men and women living in a sophisticated upper-class society, and relies for comic effect in large part on the wit and sparkle of the dialogue—often in the form of repartee, a witty conversational give-and-take which constitutes a kind of verbal fencing match—and to a lesser degree, on the violations of social conventions and decorum by would-be wits, jealous husbands, conniving rivals, and foppish dandies. This form deals with the relations and intrigues of gentlemen and ladies living in a sophisticated society. It relies upon comic effect in great part on the wit and sparkle of the dialogues, and to a certain degree, on the ridiculous violations of social conventions and decorum by stupid characters such as would be wives, jealous husbands, foppish dandies. Excellent examples are Congreve's *The Way of The World* Wycherley's *The Country Wife*. The main thrust in The 'comedy of Manners' is to make fun not so much of individual human being as of social groups and their fashionable manner.

■ Satirical Comedy.

Satirical Comedy ridicules political or philosophical doctrines, or else attacks deviations from the social order by making ridiculous the violators of its standards of morals or manners. The early master of satiric comedy was the Greek Aristophanes, c.450-c.-385 B.C., whose plays mocked political, philosophical, and literary matters of his age. The subject of satire is human vice and folly. Its characters include con-artists, criminals, tricksters, deceivers, wheeler-dealers, two-timers, hypocrites, and fortune-seekers and the gullible dupes, knaves, goofs, and cuckolds who serve as their all-too-willing victims. Satirical comedies resemble other types of comedy in that they trace the rising fortune of a central character. However, in this case, the central character (like virtually everybody else in the play or story) is likely to be cynical, foolish, or morally corrupt. Examples: Aristophanes's *The Birds*, Ben Jonson's *Volpone*. In its most extreme forms (e.g., the movies *Fargo* and *Pulp Fiction*), satirical comedy spills over into so-called Black comedy--where we're invited to laugh at events that are mortifying or grotesque.

■ Farce

Farce is a type of comedy designed to provoke the audience to simple, hearty laughter- "belly laughs", in the parlance of the theater. To do so it commonly

employs highly exaggerated or caricatured types of characters, puts them into improbable and **ludicrous** situations, and makes free use of sexual mix-ups, broad verbal humor, and physical bustle and horseplay. The identifying features of farce are zaniness, slapstick humor, and hilarious improbability. The characters of farce are typically fantastic or absurd and usually far more ridiculous than those in other forms of comedy. At the same time, farcical plots are often full of wild coincidences and seemingly endless twists and complications. Elaborate comic intrigues involving deception, disguise, and mistaken identity are the rule. Examples of the genre include Shakespeare's *Comedy of Errors*, the "Pink Panther" movies, and the films of the Marx Brothers and Three Stooges.

■ **Comedy of Humours:**

Another important type of English comedy, conceived and popularised by Ben Jonson, is the 'comedy of Humours'. The word 'humours' refers to bodily fluids to which medieval medicine attributed to the various types of human temperament according to the predominance of each within the body. Thus a preponderance of blood would make a person 'sanguine', while excess of phlegm would make him or her 'plegmatic', too much choler (yellow bile) would produce a melancholy one. In Jonson's 'Comedy of Humours' each of the major characters instead of being a well balanced individual, has preponderant humour that gives him a characteristic distortion or eccentricity of disposition. Jonson expounds in his theory in the 'Introduction' to the play *Every Man In his Humour* (1598) and **exemplifies** the mode in his later comedies as well.

■ **Sentimental Comedy:**

The sentimental comedy of the 18th century was actually a reaction against Comedy of Manners of the Restoration period. In the sentimental comedy we find characters belonging to the middle class and possessing all sorts of human virtues who are made to suffer in their life and consequently pitied or sympathized by other who do not possess such virtue. The aim of the writers of sentimental comedies was to condemn human vices and flatter human virtues. In this way these comedies are more or less nothing but moral comedies. For example Oliver Goldsmith's long poem '*Retaliation*'.

Jeremy Collier (1650-1726) protested against the permissiveness of the 'comedy of manners' specially those of Congreve and Vanbrugh, and wrote his treatise

entitled *Short View of The Immortality and Profaneness of The English Stage*. One result of this was the appearance of the new ‘sentimental comedy’. This form achieved some popularity with respectable middle-class audiences of the 18th century. It showed virtue rewarded by domestic bliss; its plots usually involved unbelievably good middle-class couple and emphasized pathos rather than humour. **Pioneered** by Richard Steele in *The Funeral* (1710) and more fully in *The Conscious Lovers* (1722), it flourished in the mid-century with the French *comedia larmoyonete* (Tearful comedy) and in such plays as Hume Kelly’s *False Delicacy* (1768). The pious moralizing of this tradition also involved an element of preaching as a result of which the entertainment values of these plays was reduced.

■ **Tragic-Comedy:**

There are many plays which do not totally subscribe to the spirit of comedy, nor do they embody the tragic emotions. In parts, they may be cheerful but they point to some darker aspects of life as well. But generally these plays are also classified as comedies. Shakespeare’s *Measure for Measure* and Eliot’s *The Cocktail Party*, for example, might both be called comedies but they have very little in common with the main stream of the English comedies. To these plays, the term ‘tragi-comedy’ or ‘black comedy’ or ‘dark comedy’ have been applied. Shakespeare’s later plays like *The Winter’s Tale* and *Cymbeline* are ‘tragi-comedies’ with the pattern of sudden release from delay danger involved in the plots. In modern drama, the term black comedy is often used to describe a kind of drama in which disturbing or sinister subjects like death, disease, or warfare are treated with bitter amusements usually in a manner calculated to offend and shock. Prominent in the ‘Theatre of The Absurd’, ‘black comedy’ is represented in Beckett’s *Happu Daus* and Joe Orton’s *The Loot*.

1.3 Glossary and Notes

- **University wits:** dramatists of Renaissance age, Lily, Marlowe, Peele, Nash and Kyd
- **Protagonist:** the main character around whom the story revolves/ central character
- **Antagonist:** the entity that acts to frustrate the goals of the protagonist.
- **Plot:** the arrangement of the events in a story

- **Conflict:** the central struggle that moves the plot forward. The conflict can be the protagonist's struggle against fate, nature, society, or another person
- **Climax:** action comes to its highest point of conflict
- **Monologue:** long speech by one person in conversation, dramatic composition for one performer
- **Setting:** tells the readers where and when the story takes place.
- **Point o view:** the position of the nattator of the story and what the writer sees from that point.
- **Fiction:** imaginary characters and events. Fiction can be entirely imaginary of based on teal events and people.
- **Symbol:** something that has a literal meaning but also stands for or represents an abstract ideas.
- **Theme:** main idea of the story. The message the writer intends to communicate by telling the story.
- **Point of view:** the position of the narrator of the story and what the writer sees from that point.
- **intrigues:** secret plans to harm or cheat someone
- **cynic:** a person who believes that people's motives are always selfish
- **deception:** the act of deceiving/ a thing that deceives
- **amuse:** cause to laugh/ make time pass pleasantly
- **decorum :** polite and socially acceptable behavior
- **grotesque:** ugly or distorted
- **Pioneer:** a person who explores or settles in new region/ a person who develops a new ideas or techniques

1.4 Check Your Progress

Fill in the blanks

1. Shakespeare's *As You Like It* is an example ofcomedy.
2. The function of tragedy according to Aristotle is.....

3. Shakespeare's later plays like *The Winter's Tale* and *Cymbeline* are the example of comedy.
4. The sentimental comedy of the 18th century was actually a reaction against Comedy of
5. The phrase comedy of manners is particularly applied in English to the plays of the.....

1.5 Exercises

A) Answer the following questions in 250 words.

- i) Comedy as a form of drama
- ii) Write a note on historical development of comedy
- iii) Write a note on types of comedy.

B) Write short notes on the following (150 words)

- i) Tragic-Comedy:
- ii) Romantic comdey
- iii) Sentimental comedy
- iv) Farce

1.6 Answers to check your progress

1. romantic
2. Cathersis
3. tragi-comedies
4. Manners of the Restoration period.
5. Restoration dramatist

1.7 Further Reading

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Unit-2

A) Tragedy as a Form

Contents

- 2.0 Objectives
- 2.1 Introduction
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- 2.7 Suggested Reading

2.0 Objectives:

- To learn the history of Tragedy
- To understand the definition and constituents of Tragedy
- To know the different types of Tragedy

2.1 Introduction:

In the previous unit you are introduced to the concept of drama, its definition and its elements. You know that drama probably gets most of its effectiveness from

its ability to give order and clarity to human experience. The basic elements of drama- feelings, desires, conflicts and reconciliations- are the major ingredients of human experience. The playwright can organize these experiences into understandable patterns, in a meaningful manner. The unimportant is omitted and the significant is emphasized.

Tragedy is an important form of western drama. It creates a mood that emphasizes the serious intention. There may or may not be some moments of comic relief. In a tragedy, the hero, an exceptional yet flawed individual faces disaster and usually death. This presentation raises questions about the meaning of existence, the nature of fate, morality and social or psychological relationship.

2.2 Presentation of Subject Matter

2.2.1 Origin of Tragedy

There are references of Greek dramas performed as early as seventh century B.C. The dramas were in the form of choral performances, which included dancing and singing at the festivals of Dionysus, the Greek God of wine and fertility. Drama contests were organized from 534 B.C. The first such contest for tragedy was won by Thespis. The most important period of ancient Greek drama was the fifth century B.C. Tragedies were performed in festivals which lasted for several days as part of the annual religious and civic celebrations. The best tragedies got prizes in various forms including goats. The word tragedy is derived from the Greek word ‘tragoidia’ which means ‘goat song’ (tragos = goat, aeidein = song). Tragedy was usually solemn, poetic and philosophic. Of the hundreds of tragedies written, only about 35 have survived. These tragedies were based on myths. Usually the main character was admirable, but not perfect and was confronted with a difficult moral choice. The character struggled against hostile forces but faced defeat and the tragedy usually ended with his death. The tragedies were performed in the form of episodes separated by choral odes wherein the chorus danced to music in leftward, rightward and central movements. The actors wore masks to indicate the nature of the character. Aeschylus, Sophocles and Euripides were eminent Greek tragedians. Usually these playwrights wrote trilogies, a group of three plays. *Oresteia* of Aeschylus, *Oedipus Rex* of Sophocles and *Medea* of Euripides are three important Greek tragedies. From the third century B.C. Greek drama declined. Tragedy was introduced in Rome by Livius Andronicus in 240 B.C. But today only the tragedies

of Lucius Annaeus Seneca survive. In Rome, tragedy was less popular than comedy. Seneca's plays were very influential in the Renaissance period. Later western dramatists borrowed a number of techniques from Seneca like division into five acts, elaborate, flowery language, the theme of revenge, magic, ghosts etc.

Drama in England is an independent development according to Nicoll. But it passed through similar stages as did the Greek drama. It has its origin in the liturgical services. Initially, dramas were in the form of Mysteries and Miracle plays. Later on came the Morality plays. These were followed by the Interludes. Finally, the drama proper emerged in England in the sixteenth century. The first English tragedy was *Gorboduc* (1562) written by Thomas Norton and Thomas Sackville. Drama flourished in England from 1580 to 1642. Elizabethan drama spans from 1580 to 1603 and Jacobean drama from 1603 to 1625 and Caroline drama from 1625 to 1649. William Shakespeare (1564-1616), one of the greatest English dramatists belonged to the Elizabethan- Jacobean period. Thomas Kyd and Christopher Marlowe paved the way for Shakespeare, Webster etc.

Aristotle wrote the Poetics in fourth century B.C. which is the earliest and the most influential essay on drama. The essay was a result of close study of the Greek plays of his time. He has discussed the nature and function of tragedy in particular and poetry in general in this essay.

★ **Check your progress-I**

A) Complete the following choosing the correct alternative:

- i) Western drama was born in _____.
- | | |
|------------|-----------|
| a) Rome | c) Greece |
| b) England | d) France |
- ii) The tragedies were performed at the festival of _____.
- | | |
|-------------|-----------|
| a) Zeus | c) Vulcan |
| b) Dionysus | d) Here |
- iii) The word tragedy is derived from the Greek word 'tragos' which means a _____.
- | | |
|---------|--------|
| a) goat | c) cat |
|---------|--------|

audience and thereafter bring about their catharsis which means purgation or cleansing. The aim of tragic representation on the stage is to leave an audience relieved and not depressed and give what is termed as “tragic pleasure” by bringing about a catharsis of pity and fear. Aristotle tells that certain emotions like pity and fear do not get used enough in civilized life. So tragedy attempts to evoke these emotions and let them flow in order to establish calm of mind. This is the guiding principle in the choice of the tragic hero.

The Constituents of Tragedy:

The constituents or elements of tragedy include plot, character, thought, diction, spectacle and song. In modern times stage directions and setting are also included as elements of a tragedy. These elements are also common to the novel but there is some difference in the way these elements are seen in the two. While the novel is in the narrative form, tragedy is in the form of action. The novel usually does not have any limit of length. A tragedy or any drama for that matter has to deliver its message in the span of a few hours. Aristotle speaks of the “Three Unities” to be followed in a tragedy. First is the “Unity of Time” whereby a tragedy should incorporate a complete action as will be presented in “one revolution of the Sun or slightly more” i.e. the events presented should not require more than a day to occur. This naturally introduced the “Unity of Place” whereby the actions occurred in more or less a single place. This was inevitable, taking into consideration the means of transportation existing in those days. The “Unity of Action” is by far the most important of all the Unities. It refers to the presentation of a single, complete action which becomes easy for the human mind to grasp. All these result in a great economy in the handling of plot and delineation of character in a tragedy. The novelist does not depend on anyone else for the final effect of his work, but a dramatist has to depend on the actor, stage manager and many others for the effect. The dramatist does not directly address his audience like a novelist but can only do so through the medium of the character that becomes his mouthpiece.

- 1) **Plot:** A plot is the organization of event and incidents, episodes and situations into a coherent, convincing structure and it is rendered towards the achieving of particular emotional and artistic effects i.e. a plot takes into account the nature of characters, the way in which the events are related to one another, and their dramatic effect. In fact, plot is more than a sequence of events. The insignificant

is omitted and the significant is retained and forcefully conveyed to us by the use of realistic dialogue and action on the stage.

Gustav Freytag in his book *Technique of the Drama* (1863) has given the basic structure of drama. It has a pyramidal shape. Like all plays, tragedy also partakes of the above structure. All plays set forth a problem or a conflict. In tragedy the theme is dark or serious. It requires an exposition to explain the circumstances or situation from which the action is to take course; a complication (or Rising Action) during which it progresses or grows more involved; a climax (or Crisis) when it takes a turn for the worse; a denouement (or Falling Action) which unravels the complication and catastrophe that decides the fate of its character. In a five-act tragedy the exposition occupies the first Act or so. The second Act and a part of the third show the rising action, the climax a part of the third Act, the denouement the rest of the third, the fourth and a part of the fifth Act; and the final catastrophe, the rest of the fifth Act. In shorter tragedies each phase is proportionately reduced. According to Aristotle, plot is the soul of a tragedy. There are two types of plot- simple and complex. In a simple plot the action proceeds as a continuous whole and the change in fortune of the protagonist takes place without peripetia (reversal of situation) or Anagnorisis (recognition or discovery). But a complex plot is one in which the change is accompanied by reversal of situation or recognition or both. The reversal of situation and recognition are based on surprise. However, plots based on scenes of suffering, violence, torture are rated very low by Aristotle as they indicate deficiency in the art of the poet. Aristotle does not favour the use of sub plots either. Usually whenever sub plots are used they are intended to illuminate the main plot. Aristotle believed sub plots to be proper only in comedy. But Shakespeare uses sub plots effectively in his tragedies also. Sometimes comic sub plots used in tragedies suggest an alternative way of looking at the predicament.

- 2. Characters:** The agents that carry forward the plot are called characters. Characterization is an important constituent of a play after the plot. Aristotle calls it “ethos”, a set of moral qualities. We assess characters on the basis of what they say and do, and what other characters say about them. We understand them in the real sense when we relate them to the broader theme of the play. Aristotle’s concept and the modern concept of the character are two different

things. Aristotle, who belonged to the classical tradition regarded community and not the individual as the centre. But today, a character is seen not only as a distinct personality but as a man with psychological depth, motivation, attitudes and a general emotional disposition. The main character is called protagonist or hero. In Shakespeare, we sometimes have an anti-hero in addition or a hero and a heroine. In Greek tragedy, the tragic hero was a person of high social position like a king, a prince etc. He was a good man but not perfectly good. During the course of the tragedy he passes from prosperity to adversity because of some “hamartia” (a miscalculation or an error in judgment). He commits series of such errors which is with the best intention though. It is also called tragic flaw. The unjustified downfall of such a tragic hero alone arouses the feelings of pity and fear. Thus, an exceptionally good infallible person or an utter villain cannot be a tragic hero according to Aristotle. However, Shakespeare’s *Macbeth*, in spite of being a villain wins our sympathy.

3. **Diction:** It means the expression of the meaning in words. It is the exchange of words between the characters in a tragedy. Commonly known as dialogue, it carries the action forward in the form of verse or prose and holds a mirror up to what the dramatist attempts to express. It unfolds the relations between characters. Soliloquies and asides also form an important part of dramatic speech and help in understanding of the characters.
4. **Setting:** It is the general locale and the historical time in which the action occurs. The setting of an episode or scene within a work is the particular physical location in which it takes place. e.g. The general setting in *Macbeth* is medieval Scotland and the setting of Macbeth’s encounter with the witches is a blasted heath. The physical setting is an important element which generates the atmosphere of a work. When applied to theatrical production, setting also means the properties or the movable pieces of furniture on the stage. Sometimes it even includes the positioning of the actors in a particular scene.
5. **Stage directions:** They are guidelines, suggestions given by the dramatist usually to the producer, in the script of the play. In earlier drama, they were simple and few in number. They establish a link between the reader and the dramatist. Usually this function was performed by the Chorus in the Greek drama. In modern plays the stage directions are many, complex and given in detail. They help the dramatist to create the exact atmosphere.

was a strong religious and moral element in the plays. Fate (nemesis) was supreme. The Greek tragedy, as far as possible, avoided scenes of brutal violence on the stage, though the subjects were often shocking and terrible. There were as few as five to six characters in the play. Such incidents were narrated by the chorus which was fifty men strong. The characters, usually the protagonist belonged to a high social order; a man with exceptional character but with a flaw which led to his downfall. Women and slaves were not considered fit subjects for a tragedy. The tragedies were 'pure tragedies' and there was no mixing of the comic with the tragic, thus following the Unity of Action. Greek tragedies were performed as trilogies; a series of three plays. But after serious plays usually there would be a 'Satyr play' which was separate from the tragedy and often crudely comic in nature.

- 2. Renaissance/ Elizabethan Tragedy:** Renaissance or revival of art came to England in the middle of the sixteenth century which is slightly late than in other European countries. Due to Renaissance, there was an increase in classical translations which along with the English medieval tradition of Mysteries and Morality plays fired the imagination of English dramatists. The influence of the Roman dramatist Seneca is most important in the field of tragedy. The Senecan techniques like division into five acts, elaborate, flowery language, the theme of revenge, magic, ghosts etc. were freely borrowed by the Renaissance dramatists. Thomas Kyd and Christopher Marlowe among the University Wits paved the way for Shakespeare, Webster, Tourneur and others in the field of tragedy. Unlike the Greeks, the Renaissance dramatists did show violent scenes on the stage. Shakespeare is the most prominent dramatist of this period. Though Shakespeare conformed to the substance of the Greek tragedy, he did make changes in the form and characterization. The tragic hero has a driving passion or obsession which becomes his tragic flaw in the peculiar circumstances. Instead of destiny having the upper hand, Character is destined in Shakespeare though there is some role for destiny in the form of co-incidences, chance in his ultimate fall. Whereas external conflict and horror became popular due to Senecan influence, the conflict in Shakespeare was much internalized. Webster included both, internal as well as external conflict in his plays. Tragedies of the period were written in blank verse and on persons of eminence, historical figures etc. Ghosts, witches, murders were frequently used in the horror tragedies of

Thomas Kyd (*Hieronemo, The Spanish Tragedy*) and Webster (*The Duchess of Malfi, The White Devil*) under Senecan influence.

3. **The Restoration Tragedy/ The Heroic Play:** The Heroic play is a peculiar product of the Restoration period (1660-1700). It was often criticized as unnatural, artificial and alien. It came into existence in response to the spiritual needs of a tired, disillusioned and decadent aristocracy. It created a dream-world with love, virtue and greatness in contrast to the debased life in reality of the times. It dealt with the themes of love and honour or duty. It is an artificial world which can be best termed as 'heroic' for the protagonist and his belief in his absolute power over his actions and surroundings. The Heroic play shows more affinity with the epic with its character, with its style, especially the use of heroic metre. The plot, the characters, the wit, the passions, the descriptions are all exalted and epical in style. Love and valour are the themes of a heroic play. The audience is amazed by the superhuman devotion and loyalty shown by the hero. To this love is linked the theme of honour, which includes all spiritual and moral qualities and the hero strives to possess them to be worthy of his beloved. The Heroic play shows complications such as two men loving the same woman, or two brothers or two friends. These lead to sudden turns in the fortune of the hero. The Heroic play usually ended on a happy note as the aim of the dramatist was to present the hero as a model to be emulated. Hence, he was rewarded in the end. Thus, there is poetic justice in the tragedy unlike the Greek or Shakespearean tragedy. Another version of such a play is the blank verse tragedy which uses the blank verse instead of the heroic couplet as the metre. John Dryden wrote such Heroic plays His *All for Love* based on Shakespeare's *Antony and Cleopatra* is a famous Heroic play.
4. **Domestic Tragedy:** This type of tragedy existed in the eighteenth century. It deals with the domestic day to day life of average middle class citizens and shows that family life and happiness are destroyed if the husband or the wife strays from the path of virtue. This type of tragedy flourished due to the rise in sentimentalism. There is a conscious attempt to make it ordinary, commonplace by doing away with the rhetorical style of the Heroic play. Fate had an important role in this type of tragedy as the authors felt that such situations gave a chance for the display of sentiments. George Lillo was the most important writer of domestic tragedy. His *The London Merchant* or *The History of George Barnwell*

(1973) is the best example of a domestic tragedy. The play is full of artificiality and is in prose. The domestic tragedy paved the way for the modern theatre.

★ **Check your Progress-III**

A) Complete the following choosing the correct alternative:

- i) The Greek tragedy is also called _____ tragedy.
a) Renaissance b) classical
c) Neo-classical d) romantic
- ii) _____ is one of the greatest tragedians of the Elizabethan –Jacobean Age.
a) Shakespeare b) T.S.Eliot
c) Ben Jonson d) John Milton
- iii) Horror tragedy is inspired by the works of the Roman dramatist _____.
a) Plautus b) Terence
c) Sophocles d) Seneca
- iv) The Heroic play is written in the _____ metre.
a) Spenserian stanza b) ballad
c) heroic couplet d) blank verse
- v) *All for Love* was written by _____.
a) John Dryden b) John Milton
c) Prof. Dowden d) Ben Jonson

2.3 Glossary and Notes:

- reconciliation (n): the process of making two or more ideas agree with each other when they actually seem to be in opposition
- ingredients (n): things or qualities of which something is made
- episode (n): an event or a situation occurring as part of a long series of events

- ode (n): a poem addressed to a thing or person, or celebrating some special event
- liturgical (adj.): about a fixed form of public worship used in churches
- Mysteries and Miracle plays (n): a medieval drama based on events in the Bible or the lives of Christian saints
- interlude (n): a piece performed during an interval separating the parts of a play
- incorporate (v): to include
- embellish (v): decorate
- delineation (n): the process of showing something by describing it in detail
- illuminate (v): to make something clear, explain
- predicament (n): difficult or uneasy situation
- infallible (adj.) perfect
- grandeur (n): the quality of being great, impressive
- pertinent (adj.): relevant to something
- flaw (n): a fault
- emulate (v): follow, imitate

2.4 Key to check your progress:

- I** **A.** i) Greece ii) Dionysus iii) goat iv) Oedipus Rex v) 1562
- B.** i) Thespis
- ii) a series of three plays
- iii) Livius Andronicus in 240 B.C.
- iv) Seneca
- v) Poetics- an essay on the nature and function of tragedy
- II** **A** i) action
- ii) catharsis
- iii) complex

- iv) pyramidal
- v) plot
- B.**
 - i) to leave an audience relieved through tragic pleasure
 - ii) Unity of Action
 - iii) to lend economy in handling of plot and delineation of character in a tragedy
 - iv) a set of moral qualities
 - v) an error in judgment, a miscalculation on the part of the tragic hero
 - vi) Setting is the general locale and the historical time in which the action occurs.
 - vii) narrator, commentator and interpreter of actions on the stage

III i) classical ii) Shakespeare iii) Seneca iv) heroic couplet v) John Dryden

2.5 Exercises:

1. Answer the following in about 200-250 words each:

- i) Give an account of the origin of tragedy.
- ii) Write a detailed note on the constituents of tragedy.
- iii) Explain the various types of tragedy.

2. Write short notes on following in about 100-150 words each:

- i) Definition of tragedy
- ii) Plot in tragedy
- iii) Characterization in tragedy
- iv) Chorus in tragedy
- v) Domestic tragedy
- vi) Heroic play
- vii) Renaissance tragedy

2.6 Activities:

- i) Study the evolution of the tragic hero from the Greek to the modern drama.
- ii) Find out information about the theatre of the Absurd.

2.7 Suggested Reading:

- i) Nicoll, Allardyce. *British Drama*. Delhi: Doaba House, 1963. Print.
- ii) Rees, R. J. *English Literature*. New Delhi: Macmillan India Ltd, 2008. Print.
- iii) Abrams, M.H. *A Glossary of Literary Terms*. Bangalore: Thomson Heinle, 2005. Print.
- iv) The World Book Encyclopedia



Unit-2

B) Problem Play as a Form

Contents

- 2.0 Objectives
- 2.1 Introduction
- 2.2 Presentation of Subject Matter
 - 2.2.1 Background
 - 2.2.2 Features of a Problem Play
 - 2.2.3 Important Dramatists
- 2.3 Glossary and Notes
- 2.4 Key to check your progress
- 2.5 Exercises
- 2.6 Activities
- 2.7 Suggested Reading

2.0 Objectives:

- To understand the concept of the Problem play
- To get acquainted with the contribution of major dramatists writing problem plays

2.1 Introduction:

In the previous units you have studied about the beginning of drama, tragedy, comedy and also about the various types of plays. In this unit you will get acquainted with the Problem play. Problem play is a term used for the type of drama that began in the last quarter of the nineteenth century in England. It was written under inspiration from the Norwegian playwright Henrik Ibsen. In Problem plays the situation faced by the protagonist is put forth by the author as a representative presentation of a contemporary social problem. The problem is presented either by

the character who speaks for the author or by the evolution of the plot or both. An attempt to put forth a solution to the problem is made. The problems could be wide ranging- social, economic or psychological. T. W. Robertson and Arthur W. Pinero prepared the ground for G.B. Shaw, Galsworthy and H. Granville-Barker who wrote Problem plays in English. Robertson and Pinero were instrumental in introducing the realist mode in English drama and also a new vitality into it. Another important dramatist in this regard is Henry Arthur Jones who discussed problems of man's religious faith and spiritual life in his Problem plays. According to Albert Guerard, "The problem play is the presentation of a contemporary question through realistic technique". The realistic movement was supported by the growth of the scientific attitude, which created an urge for facts and dispassionate observation and analysis of a social problem. The naturalistic influence of Henrik Ibsen and Emile Zola was clearly felt on English drama. By giving a vivid and faithful impression of the banality of everyday life, these dramatists tried to make the theatre modern and realistic.

2.2 Presentation of Subject Matter

2.2.1 Background:

In the 1880s men like Ibsen began to see the potential of tragedy and comedy in the lives of common men. This was an important deviation from the traditional concept of dealing with the lives of upper class men. The English translations of the works of the Norwegian dramatist Henrik Ibsen (1828-1906) showed that the theatre could be used for discussing the social and moral problems of real life in a modern setting. In the initial stages Ibsen and Zola were considered obscene and vulgar in England and were greatly criticized. However, the hostility to realism subsided during 1890s and the plays of Ibsen like *The Doll's House*, *Ghosts* and the novels of Zola were widely read. Due to their influence, English drama did away with the worn out conventions of the theatre and prescribed "truth to life" as an important attitude. The serious drama with its remote, far-off setting and the romantic excesses were replaced by a sincere and realistic treatment of actual English life.

The term "Problem play" was coined by Sidney Grundy who used it in disparaging sense for the intellectual drama of the nineties. G.B. Shaw defined it as "the presentation in parable of the conflict between man's will and his environment". The play usually ends with a question mark as the dramatist aims at presenting the

problem clearly and effectively rather than suggesting a specific remedy. The problem play is also called “the drama of ideas” because it deals with themes like the problems of religion, of youth and age, of labour and capital and sex. These ideas were for the most part revolutionary, so that the drama came to form an advanced battleground for a rising school of young thinkers. Revolt took the form of reaction to the past literary models, to current social conventions, and to the prevailing morality of Victorian England. The spirit of youth inspires many of these plays. The characters of these plays seem constantly questing, constantly restless and dissatisfied as compared to the characters of the romantic drama. The Problem play continued to dominate in the early years of the twentieth century also. Some writers like G.B. Shaw, Granville-Barker and the like have made significant contributions to the Problem play.

2.2.2 Features of the Problem play:

1. More Interest in Characterization: New psychological investigations increased the interest in character as distinct from plot. e.g. in *Bravely Fought the Queen*, very little happens in the play. We find Alka dancing in the rain or drinking rum, Dolly having a heated argument with Jiten, Jiten’s relationship with prostitutes in office and his final killing of the old beggar woman. Rest of the play is in the form of mere discussions and flashbacks. The author seems to give more importance to the depiction of individual characters of Jiten, Nitin, Dolly, Alka, Praful, Lalitha and Baa. Similarly, in *The Glass Menagerie* also the characters of Laura, Amanda and Tom are depicted in great details.

2. Contemporary Life: The realistic drama of the period aimed at impartial presentation of contemporary real life rather than historical. In *Bravely Fought the Queen* and *The Glass Menagerie* we see the presentation of the actual problems faced by the modern urban families.

3. New Themes: The concern of the Problem play was primarily the upper class and its problems to begin with. But later on it embraced the questions of the middle and the lower classes also. Problems of religion, of youth and of age, of labour and capital, and of sex began to be discussed. In *Bravely Fought the Queen*, the author has discussed new themes like the problems of alternate sex and the stigma attached to it, the typical mother-in-law and daughter-in-law relationship in

the modern Indian middle class, and also the problems faced by the joint family system in the modern times.

4. Scientific treatment of love and sex: With new investigations in the field of science and psychology the traditional views about romantic love, of Victorian prudery were done away with Shaw for instance, came out with the concept of “Life Force”.

5. Treatment of Class-war: The desire for liberty in domestic and moral circles was paralleled by the desire for liberty in social life. The squalor and misery of the cities, the terror of modern civilization, the class-war actually witnessed in life were freely dealt with by dramatists of this school, especially by writers like G.B. Shaw and John Galsworthy. Dattani has also dealt with the problems of the modern upper middle class in urban India in his play.

6. Lack of Action (Inwardness): Being drama of ideas, the modern plays tended to become more static. Inner conflict was substituted for outer conflict and the drama became much quieter. The inner quality of the modern theatre was intensified greatly by the recent investigations of psychologists. Many dramatists like Jones took interest in the study of the soul and tried to subtly and delicately depict the most intricate aspects of the human spirit. Discussions, debates replaced much of the action on the stage, so much so that Shaw’s plays came to be termed as “discussion plays” owing to the long debates between the characters. In *Bravely Fought the Queen* also there are long discussions on the process of making bonsais or the masked ball that is going to be held as part of the advertisement campaign. In *The Glass Menagerie* Amanda and Laura and Amanda and Tom engage themselves in long discussions regarding the arrangements to be made to receive the gentleman caller.

7. Symbolism: With increased inwardness it became very difficult to express the almost inexpressible ideas, emotions, instincts defined by the psychologists in ordinary direct words. As a result we find excessive use of symbolism in modern drama. In *Bravely Fought the Queen* there are many symbols like Kanhaiya, bonsai, rain dance, mask and the strong black arms. Each of these has its own significance. In *The Glass menagerie* too, we have the unicorn and also the world of little glass animals is a symbol in itself.

8. Social forces as dramatic personages: With the increasing inwardness in drama, the tendency to make unseen forces especially social forces the personages of their plays increased. This helped in widening the scope of drama. With increased urbanization, the city life had become quite artificial and men became emotionally and morally cut-off from elemental conditions and impulses. This led the modern drama to be satiric of this over civilized life.

9. Element of Propaganda: The problem play is sometimes called “the propaganda play” for the obvious reason that its intent is overtly didactic and propagandist. Ibsen, Shaw, Galsworthy have written plays to direct attention of the public to social evils and wrong attitudes. The Problem play not only presented the problems but also suggested remedies for the problems. Dattani discusses various problems of the modern urban middle class like disturbed family relations, homosexuality, business problems etc. in his *Bravely Fought the Queen*, but nowhere does he suggest any answers to them.

2.2.3 Important Dramatists and their Works:

1. **T.W. Robertson:** Robertson showed the necessity of binding the words and actions in a realistic play and the inability of ordinary words in conveying the intended meaning. So he strengthened the habit of detailed stage directions begun in the Restoration period. He can also be considered the main inspiration to a host of new dramatists in the field of themes for the drama of ideas.

2. **Sir Arthur W Pinero:** Pinero’s reputation rests on plays like

Mrs. Ebbsmith

Iris

Mid Channel

He is known for the construction of his plays. He made great improvement in the development of realistic dialogues that provided theatrical excitement. Though he tried to deal with the tragic form, he did not succeed.

3. **Henry Arthur Jones:** In his Problem plays he deals with the problems of man’s spiritual life. His masterpieces in this regard are

The Triumph of the Philistines

Michael and His Lost Angel

He was a master craftsman and made advance in the field of dialogues.

4. **John Galsworthy:** He was a prominent artist who discussed the various problems of modern life in his works.

Justice

Strife

Silver Box

Loyalties

The Mob

The Eldest Son

These plays focus attention one problem or the other of contemporary life. The problems of marriage, sex-relationships, labour disputes, law and administration, solitary confinement, caste or class prejudices are related in the context of society and social relationship. He presents the problems of the commonplace in a penetrating and realistic manner. He arouses sympathy for the downtrodden but does not suggest any solutions.

5. **George Bernard Shaw:** He is regarded as the greatest English dramatist after Shakespeare. Though he is regarded as a great dramatist, his plays are highly argumentative. There are long debates on socially relevant issues. He was an iconoclast and the spirit of revolt is very conspicuous. His plays are propagandist and truly reflect his preoccupation with the problems of life. His characters are the vehicles for his ideas. He fused fantasy and reality and constantly experimented with fresh dramatic devices. His famous plays are:

Arms and the Man

Man and Superman

Saint Joan

Candida

The Apple Cart

Widower's House

Mrs. Warren's Profession

Heartbreak House

Major Barbara

Getting Married

6. Harley Granville-Barker: He wrote many significant naturalistic prose plays.

The Marrying of Ann Leete

The Voysey Inheritance

Waste

The Madras House

The Secret Life

These are among his greatest plays. Each of these deals with a dominant social problem. He analyses the passions and sentiments of his characters. He always displays an interest in the inner life of his characters.

2.3 Glossary and Notes:

- evolution (n): the process of gradual development
- instrumental (adj.): being a means of making something happen.
- naturalism (n): a school of thought which believes that a human being's behaviour is determined only by heredity and environment and that he does not possess a soul
- dispassionate (adj.): not influenced by emotions
- banality (n): the quality of being ordinary
- obscene (adj.): offensive or disgusting by accepted moral standards
- hostility (n): aggressive feeling or behavior
- parable (n): a story told to illustrate a moral or spiritual truth
- prudery (n): the attitude to be easily shocked by anything indecent; especially things connected with sex
- squalor (n): dirty or unpleasant conditions
- propaganda (n): ideas or statements intended as publicity

- iconoclast (n): a person who attacks popular beliefs or established customs
- conspicuous (adj.): easily seen, noticeable

Check your progress-I

I. Complete the following sentences choosing the correct alternative:

- The Problem play developed in England in the _____ quarter of the nineteenth century.
 - first
 - second
 - third
 - fourth
- The Problem play presents a contemporary problem in a _____ way.
 - realistic
 - romantic
 - abstract
 - classical
- Ibsen's play _____ is regarded as the pioneer Problem play.
 - Strife
 - Justice
 - The Doll's House
 - Heartbreak House
- The term Problem play was coined by _____.
 - G. B. Shaw
 - H. Granville-Barker
 - Henrik Ibsen
 - Sidney Grundy
- The Problem play prescribed the "Truth to _____" attitude.
 - dream
 - life
- The Problem play gives more importance to _____.
 - diction
 - song
 - plot
 - character

2.4 Key to check your progress:

- I i) fourth, ii) realistic, iii) The Doll's House, iv) Sidney Grundy,
v) life, vi) character

2.5 Exercises:

A. Write short notes on the following in about 150-200 words each:

- i) The contribution of G.B. Shaw to the Problem play
- ii) The themes of Problem plays

B. Answer the following questions in about 200-250 words each:

- i) Emergence of the Problem play
- ii) Features of the Problem play
- iii) Contribution of some important dramatists to the Problem play

2.6 Activities:

1. Read *The Doll's House* by Henrik Ibsen.
2. Read the Marathi plays by Vijay Tendulkar and evaluate them as Problem plays.

2.7 Suggested reading:

- 1) Abrams, M.H. *A Glossary of Literary Terms*. Bangalore: Thomson Heinle, 2005. Print.
- 2) Rees, R.J. *English Literature*. New Delhi: Macmillan India ltd, 2008. Print.



Unit-3

The Tempest

- William Shakespeare

(Part-I)

Contents

- 3.1 Objectives
- 3.2 Introduction
- 3.3 Biographical Information
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- 3.6 List of characters
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- 3.8 Glossary & Notes
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 - Check your progress
 - Key to check your progress
- 3.10 Activities
- 3.11 Suggested Reading

3.1 Objectives

- To understand the concept of tragi-comedy
- To know colonizer's view about colonized
- To understand the themes, motifs and symbols of the play *The Tempest*

3.2 Introduction

The play *'The Tempest'* is believed to have been published in 1610-11. It is considered that it is Shakespeare's last play. It is a *tragi-comedy*; even it can be called *romance* due to its romantic mode, chivalrous life and a love affair between newly blossomed Ferdinand and Miranda. It is set on a remote island. Prospero is a protagonist of the play. He is the rightful Duke of Milan. He plots to restore his daughter Miranda to her rightful place. He raises a storm to lure his usurping brother Antonio and the king Alonso of Naps of island. The criminals who had planned kill Prospero are forgiven at the end of the play and the marriage of Miranda is proposed.

3.3 Biographical Information:

William Shakespeare (1564-1616) was born and brought up in Stratford-upon-Avon. He was the son of John Shakespeare, and Mary Arden. He was the third child of eight and the eldest surviving son. He was probably educated at the King's New School in Stratford about a quarter-mile from his home. At the age of 18, Shakespeare married the 26-year-old Anne Hathaway and six months after the marriage Anne gave birth to a daughter, Susanna. Twins, son Hamnet and daughter Judith, followed almost two years later. Hamnet died of unknown causes at the age of 11. After the birth of the twins, Shakespeare left few historical traces until he is mentioned as part of the London theatre scene in 1592. The exception is the appearance of his name in the 'complaints bill' of a law case before the Queen's Bench court at Westminster dated Michaelmas Term 1588 and 9 October 1589. Scholars refer to the years between 1585 and 1592 as Shakespeare's "lost years".

He was an English poet, playwright, and actor. He is often called England's national poet. His extant works, including some collaborations, consist of about 38 plays, 154 sonnets, two long narrative poems, and a few other verses. His plays have been translated into every major living language. Shakespeare produced most of his known work between 1589 and 1613. His early plays were mainly comedies and histories. He then wrote mainly tragedies until about 1608, including Hamlet, Othello, King Lear, and Macbeth. The works have been considered some of the finest works in the English language. In his last phase, he wrote tragicomedies, also known as romances.

In 1623, John Heminges and Henry Condell, two friends and fellow actors of Shakespeare, published the First Folio, a collected edition of his dramatic works that included all but two of the plays now recognised as Shakespeare's. It was prefaced with a poem by Ben Jonson, in which Shakespeare is hailed, presciently, as "not of an age, but for all time".

By then, he was sufficiently well known in London to be attacked in print by the playwright Robert Greene in his *Groats-Worth of Wit*:

...there is an upstart Crow, beautified with our feathers, that with his Tiger's heart wrapped in a Player's hide, supposes he is as well able to bombast out a blank verse as the best of you: and being an absolute Johannes factotum, is in his own conceit the only Shake-scene in a country.

From 1594, Shakespeare's plays were performed by only the Lord Chamberlain's Men, a company owned by a group of players, including Shakespeare, that soon became the leading playing company in London. After the death of Queen Elizabeth in 1603, the company was awarded a royal patent by the new king, James I, and changed its name to the King's Men. In 1599, a partnership of company members built their own theatre on the south bank of the River Thames, which they called the Globe. In 1608, the partnership also took over the Blackfriars indoor theatre. Records of Shakespeare's property purchases and investments indicate that the company made him a wealthy man. In 1597, he bought the second-largest house in Stratford, New Place, and in 1605, he invested in a share of the parish tithes in Stratford.

Shakespeare continued to act in his own and other plays after his success as a playwright. The 1616 edition of Ben Jonson's *Works* names him on the cast lists for *Every Man in His Humour* (1598) and *Sejanus His Fall* (1603). The First Folio of 1623, however, lists Shakespeare as one of "the Principal Actors in all these Plays", some of which were first staged after *Volpone*, although we cannot know for certain which roles he played. In 1709, Rowe passed down a tradition that Shakespeare played the ghost of Hamlet's father. Later traditions maintain that he also played Adam in *As You Like It* and the Chorus in *Henry V*.

Shakespeare divided his time between London and Stratford during his career. In 1596, the year before he bought New Place as his family home in Stratford, Shakespeare was living in the parish of St. Helen's, Bishopsgate, north of the River

Thames. He moved across the river to Southwark by 1599, the year his company constructed the Globe Theatre there. By 1604, he had moved north of the river again, to an area north of St Paul's Cathedral with many fine houses. There he rented rooms from a French Huguenot named Christopher Mountjoy, a maker of ladies' wigs and other headgear.

Shakespeare died on 23 April 1616, at the age of 52. He died within a month of signing his will. He was survived by his wife and two daughters. Susanna had married a physician, John Hall, in 1607, and Judith had married Thomas Quiney, a vintner, two months before Shakespeare's death. In his will, Shakespeare left the bulk of his large estate to his elder daughter Susanna. The terms instructed that she pass it down intact to "the first son of her body". The Quineys had three children, all of whom died without marrying. The Halls had one child, Elizabeth, who married twice but died without children in 1670, ending Shakespeare's direct line. Shakespeare's will scarcely mentions his wife, Anne, who was probably entitled to one third of his estate automatically. He did make a point, however, of leaving her "my second best bed", a bequest that has led to much speculation. He was buried in the chancel of the Holy Trinity Church two days after his death. Shakespeare's grave, sitting next to Anne Shakespeare, his wife, and to Thomas Nash, the husband of his granddaughter.

Good friend, for Jesus' sake forbear,
To dig the dust enclosed here.
Blessed be the man that spares these stones,
And cursed be he that moves my bones.

Check your Progress

A) Complete the following choosing the correct alternative:

- i) William Shakespeare was born in-----
a) 1560 b) 1564 c) 1570 d) 1616
- ii) Shakespeare wrote ----- sonnets.
a) 150 b) 154 c) 164 d) 180
- iii) At the age of 18, Shakespeare married a lady of 26 years old. Her name is--

- a) Ann Hathaway
- b) Mary Fit ton
- c) Elizabeth Boyle
- d) Helen of Troy
- iv) The Globe theatre was built on the south bank of the river -----
 - a) Amazon
 - b) Nile
 - c) Mississippi
 - d) Thames
- v) In 1597, Shakespeare bought big house in ----- named New place.
 - a) London
 - b) Stratford
 - c) Paris
 - d) Oxford

B) Answer the following in one word, phrase or sentence

- 1) When was First Folio of Shakespeare's plays published?
- 2) When did Queen Elizabeth die?
- 3) How many daughters Shakespeare had?
- 4) Who were John Heminges and Henry Condell?
- 5) Who changed the name of Lord Chamberlain's Men as King's Men?

3.4 Plot Overview:

Prospero is a protagonist of the play. He is a magician too. He was the rightful Duke of Milan. His brother Antonio managed to kill Prospero by stranding him for twelve years on an island with his daughter Miranda. She was then three years old. Gonzalo was a king's counselor. He secretly supplied Prospero's boat with plenty of food, water, clothes and the valuable books from Prospero's library. His ship reaches to a lonely island. Before his arrival on this lonely island, a witch Sycorax and her son Caliban were living there. She had trapped a spirit, Ariel and tied it to a tree because he had refused to obey her. She had been exiled here from Algiers for damaging the peace of Algerians by her magic. She died leaving her son alone on the island before the arrival of Prospero.

When Prospero arrives on the island, he rescues Ariel from a tree. He repeatedly promises to release the airy spirit from servitude and maintains Ariel's loyalty. Caliban was a deformed monster and only non-spiritual inhabitant. Prospero adopts him. He and his daughter Miranda teach him religion and their language. Caliban teaches them how to survive on the island. Unfortunately Caliban attempts to rape Miranda. So Prospero compels him to serve as his slave. Caliban becomes conscious about Prospero's tyrannical treatment to him and his usurper's view. On the other

hand, Prospero and Miranda look at Caliban with contempt and disgust. Actually Prospero doesn't use any magic on the island; he just manipulates others by his oratory power and makes them believe in his power.

The play opens with a storm. Prospero comes to know by divine that his brother Antonio is on a ship. He is passing close by the island. Prospero raises a tempest by his magic that causes the ship to run around. There is another conspirator on the ship, King Alonso of Naples who had helped Antonio to exile Prospero. Alonso's brother Sebastian and son Ferdinand are also in the ship. Alonso's adviser Gonzalo is also with them. All these passengers are returning from the marriage of Alonso's daughter Claribel with the king of Tunis. Prospero manages by his magic to separate the shipwreck survivors into three groups. So Alonso thinks that his son Ferdinand died and Ferdinand thinks that his father died in the shipwreck. All these groups reach at the island.

The play deals with three different plots. In first plot Caliban meets two drunkards, Stephano and Trinculo. He believes that they have come from the moon. The three attempt to rebel against Prospero, but they do not succeed in it. In second plot, the romantic relationship between Ferdinand and Miranda has been focused. First of all, Prospero encourages this relationship but later on, he compels Ferdinand to become his servant. He pretends that he regards him as a spy. Actually he worries that "too light winning make the prize light". The third sub-plot deals with Antonio and Sebastian's plan to kill Alonso and Gonzalo, because Sebastian wanted to be king and Antonio wanted to destroy the moral burden of Gonzalo. Prospero sends Ariel to fail the plan of Antonio and Sebastian. Even Ariel by Prospero's command, appears to the three men of sin Alonso, Antonio and Sebastian as a harpy. He disapproves them for their betrayal of Prospero. Prospero brings his enemies closer to him.

At the end of the play, all main characters are brought together before Prospero. He forgives his brother Antonio. He also forgives King Alonso and his brother Sebastian. He charges Ariel to prepare the proper sailing weather to guide Alonso and his colleagues back to Milan and then to Naples, where Ferdinand and Miranda will be married. After completing this task, Ariel will be free. Prospero pardons Caliban and asks him to prepare his cell. He invites Alonso and his colleagues for a last night before their departure. Prospero intends to tell the story of his life on the

island. He burns his magic staff and drowns his book of magic. In his epilogue, he invites the audience to free him from the island.

3.5 Sources of the play:

1. Erasmus's book *Naufragium*
2. Peter Martyr's book *De orbe novo*
3. Eyewitness reports by William Strachey and Sylvester Jordain of the real-life shipwreck of the *Sea Venture* on the islands of Bermuda, and the subsequent conflict between Sir Thomas Gates and Sir George Somers.
4. Montaigne's essay *Of the Canibales*,
5. Ovid's poem *Metamorphoses*.

3.6 List of Characters:

Prospero: The rightful duke of Milan. After his brother, Antonio, seized his title and property, Prospero was exiled with his daughter and eventually found refuge on an island.

Miranda: Prospero's daughter. She has been on the island with her father for 12 years since she was 3 years old.

Antonio: Prospero's younger brother, who is now the duke of Milan. He had plotted against Prospero years earlier and now convinces Sebastian to murder his brother, the king of Naples.

Ariel: A spirit of the air, he assists Prospero in seeking retribution over his enemies.

Caliban: The offspring of the witch Sycorax and the devil. Prospero has made Caliban his servant or slave, and in response, Caliban plots to murder Prospero.

Ferdinand: The son of the king of Naples. During the storm, he was separated from the rest of the king's party, met Miranda, and fell in love with her.

Alonso: The king of Naples. He believes his son has died and is overjoyed to later find him. Alonso is repentant for the pain he caused Prospero in the past.

Sebastian: Alonso's brother. He is easily led into planning his own brother's (the king's) murder.

Gonzalo: An elderly counselor who saves Prospero's and Miranda's lives when they are exiled. He provides a sense of hope and optimism when Ferdinand is lost.

Stefano: The king's butler. He arrives on the island drunk and quickly becomes involved in a plot to murder Prospero.

Trinculo: The king's jester. When Stefano arrives with wine, Trinculo joins him in drinking and then agrees to a plot to murder Prospero.

Francisco and Adrian: Two of the king's lords. They try to offer hope and protection to Alonso.

Boatswain: The ship's petty officer. He is in charge of the deck crew, the rigging, and the anchor. He must try to keep the boat afloat during the storm, even when the king's party makes demands upon his time.

3.7 Act-wise Summary

Act I

The play *The Tempest* opens with a violent storm. The ship of Alonso and his royal party is at the sea. The storm rages around their ship at sea. The master of the ship calls for his boatswain to rouse the mariners to action. The ship was moving aground itself by the tempest. The Boatswain wants to prevent it from the destruction. Some mariners enter. They are followed by a group of nobles like King of Naples, Sebastian, his brother, Antonio, Gonzalo, and others. The dramatist does not disclose these men's names in this scene. Even the audiences don't understand that they have just come from Tunis, in Africa, where Alonso's daughter, Claribel, has been married to the prince. As the Boatswain and his crew take in the topsail and the topmast, Alonso and his party are merely underfoot. The Boatswain tells them to get below-decks. Gonzalo reminds the Boatswain that one of the passengers is of some importance, but the Boatswain is unmoved. He wants to do what he has to in order to save the ship. The lords go below decks. Three of them, Sebastian, Antonio, and Gonzalo enter again. Sebastian and Antonio curse the Boatswain in his labors, masking their fear with profanity. Some mariners enter wet and crying. At this point

the audience learns the identity of the passengers on-board. Gonzalo orders the mariners to pray for the king and the prince. There are various strange noises like the sound of thunder, splitting wood or roaring water and the cry of mariners. Antonio, Sebastian, and Gonzalo, prepare to sink to a watery grave. They go in search of the king.

Scene II of this Act deals with Prospero and Miranda who stand on the shore of the island. They witnessed the shipwreck. Miranda pleads her father to see that no one on-board comes to any harm. Prospero assures her that no one was harmed. He tells her that it's time to know who she is and where she comes from. Miranda seems curious. She notices that Prospero has often started to tell her about herself but always stopped. However, once Prospero begins telling his tale, he asks her three times if she is listening to him. He tells her that he was once Duke of Milan and famous for his great intelligence.

Prospero explains that he gradually grew uninterested in politics. He turned his attention more and more to his studies. He neglected his duties as duke. His brother Antonio got an opportunity to act on his dream. Antonio usurped Prospero of his dukedom with the help of the king of Naples. Antonio arranged for the King of Naples to pay him an annual tribute and do him homage as duke. Later, the King of Naples helped Antonio raise an army to march on Milan. They drove Prospero out. Prospero tells how he and Miranda escaped from death at the hands of the army in a barely-seaworthy boat. This boat was prepared for them by his loyal subjects. Gonzalo, an honest Neapolitan, provided them with food and clothing, as well as books from Prospero's library.

Prospero tells her everything about their arrival at the lonely island. He explains that the good luck has brought his former enemies to the island. Then, Prospero charms Miranda with his magic and she suddenly grows very sleepy. When she is asleep, Prospero calls forth his spirit, Ariel. In his conversation with Ariel, the audience comes to know that Prospero and the spirit were responsible for the storm. Ariel acted as the wind, the thunder, and the lightning to bring their ship in trouble. When everyone except the crew had abandoned the ship, Ariel made sure that all were brought safely to shore. Prospero suggested him that they should disperse around the island. Ariel reports that the king's son is alone. He also tells Prospero that the mariners and Boatswain have been charmed to sleep in the ship. The ship has

been brought safely to harbour. The rest of the fleet that was with the ship has headed safely back to Naples.

Prospero thanks Ariel for his service. Ariel takes this moment to remind Prospero of his promise to take one year off of his agreed time of servitude if Ariel performs his services without complaint. Prospero pretends that he does not remind any of his promises. He rebukes Ariel for his audacity. He reminds Ariel of where he came from and how Prospero rescued him. Ariel had been a servant of Sycorax, a witch banished from Algeria. Sycorax was sent to the island long ago. Ariel was too delicate a spirit to perform her horrible commands. So she imprisoned him in a cloven pine. She did not free him before she died. He might have remained imprisoned forever unless Prospero had arrived and rescued him. He reminds Ariel all this and threatens to imprison him for twelve years if he does not stop complaining. Ariel promises to be more polite. Prospero then gives him a new command. He must turn himself into a nymph of the sea and be invisible to all but Prospero. Ariel goes to do so, and Prospero, turn to Miranda's sleeping form. He calls upon his daughter to awaken. She opens her eyes. She does not realize that she has been enchanted. She says that the strangeness of her father's story caused her to fall asleep.

Miranda is fully awakened. Prospero suggests that they converse with their servant Caliban, the son of Sycorax. Caliban appears at Prospero's call and begins cursing. Prospero assures to punish him by giving him cramps at night. Caliban responds by chiding Prospero for imprisoning him on the island that once belonged to him alone. He reminds Prospero that he showed him this island when he first arrived. Prospero accuses Caliban for his ungratefulness for all that he has taught and given him. He calls him a lying slave. He reminds him of the effort he made to educate him. Prospero blames him that Caliban's hereditary nature makes him unfit to live among civilized people. Being uncivilized he likes his isolation on the island. Caliban knows how to curse only because Prospero and Miranda taught him to speak. Prospero tells him to fetch more firewood and threatens him with more cramps and aches if he refuses. Caliban obeys him.

Ariel enters and leads in Ferdinand with playing music and singing. Prospero tells Miranda to look upon Ferdinand. Miranda has seen no humans in her life other than Prospero and Caliban. So she falls in love. Ferdinand is similarly fanatical and reveals his identity as the prince of Naples. Prospero is pleased that they are so taken

with each other. But he decides that the two must not fall in love too quickly. So he accuses Ferdinand of simply pretending to be the prince of Naples. When he tells Ferdinand he is going to imprison him, Ferdinand draws his sword. Prospero charms him so that he cannot move. Miranda attempts to convince her father to have mercy, but he quiets her ruthlessly. He tells her that this man is like Caliban. He explains that she simply doesn't know any better because she has never seen any others. Prospero escorts the charmed and helpless Ferdinand to his imprisonment. Secretly, he thanks the invisible Ariel for his help. He sends him on another mysterious errand, and promises to free him soon.

Act II

This scene opens with all the passengers from the ship, except Ferdinand, gathered on stage. Gonzalo begins with a speech celebrating their survival of the storm and their relative safety on the island, but King Alonso cannot be cheered because he is sure that his missing son, Ferdinand, has drowned. In the meantime, Antonio and Sebastian whisper among themselves and belittle both Alonso's grief and Gonzalo's cheer.

When Antonio and Sebastian join the general conversation around the king, they make no attempt to soothe him. Instead, they tell Alonso that he should not have permitted his daughter to marry the African. Sebastian tells Alonso that, had he not permitted the marriage, the royal party would not have been at sea and, thus, never in the storm. In short, Ferdinand would still be alive if Alonso had acted properly. These are harsh words to the grieving father, and Gonzalo gently chastises Sebastian for his insensitivity.

Ariel now enters, unseen by the group on stage, and puts all of them to sleep, except for Sebastian and Antonio. Left awake, Antonio and Sebastian devise a plot in which Sebastian will seize his brother's crown, much as Antonio had years earlier seized his brother's title and property. Although Sebastian has some concerns of conscience, Antonio dismisses such worries and urges action while everyone is asleep. Sebastian needs little convincing, and with Antonio, the two draw their swords and advance on the sleeping king and his party.

At this moment, Ariel takes action. He awakens Gonzalo in time to prevent the murders. Antonio and Sebastian quickly make a story to explain their drawn swords, warning of great noise, as if from bulls or lions. Alonso is easily convinced of his

brother's sincerity, and the scene ends with the royal party leaving the stage in search of Ferdinand.

In scene II of this Act, Caliban has just finished chopping wood when he hears loud claps of thunder. This prompts him to soliloquize on his hatred of Prospero:

“All the infections that the sun sucks up
From bogs, fens, flats on Prospero fall,
and make him by inchmeal a disease!”

He feels that Prospero has filled the island with spirits to torment him for being late with the firewood. Trinculo, the court jester who has been travelling with the King, approaches, and Caliban naturally assumes he is one of Prospero's spying spirits. Caliban falls to the ground, hoping that it will somehow help him go unnoticed. Trinculo is looking for shelter, worried about the coming storm. He sees Caliban, lying flat on his face, and finds him very interesting. He wishes he were in England so that he could put the monster he has discovered on display as a freak of nature. The thunder grows closer and Trinculo finds it necessary, albeit unappealing, to crawl under Caliban's cloak for protection. In his now famous words, “Misery acquaints a man with strange bedfellows!”. Another survivor of the shipwreck, a butler to the King named Stephano, appears. He washed ashore on a barrel of wine and has since ingested its contents and is very drunk indeed. Seeing Trinculo and Caliban lying on the ground, he thinks that they are a two-headed monster with four legs, indigenous to the island. Stephano gives Caliban the bit of wine he has left, hoping to appease the horrid creature. Caliban cries out, “Do not torment me, prithee” because he still believes the men are spirits sent by his master. Trinculo gets up and is relieved to see his friend. The two dance to celebrate their reunion while Caliban, now drunk from his first taste of wine, decides that Stephano will be his new master: “I'll kiss thy foot. I'll swear myself thy subject”. Stephano gladly accepts Caliban's offer and they head off to see all the wonders of the island.

Act III

Act Three opens with Ferdinand performing tasks against his will by his captor, Prospero. He tells himself that, although he is not use to such hard labour, he actually likes the work because he knows that Miranda “weeps” when she sees him suffer. Miranda appears, followed by Prospero who hides from their site. She offers to carry the logs for him but he refuses her help, insisting that he would rather break his back

than see her undergo “such dishonor”. They declare their love for one another and agree to be wed as soon as possible. Prospero is delighted by what he is hearing and, now sure that Ferdinand is worthy of his daughter, he returns to his books and to his other pressing business with Antonio and the King.

This scene returns to Stefano, Trinculo, and Caliban — all of whom are now very drunk. Caliban has a plan to kill Prospero and elicits help from his new friends. As Caliban explains that he is the rightful owner of the island, Ariel arrives and listens attentively. Caliban explains that they must burn Prospero’s books, and after Prospero is dead, Stefano can marry Miranda, which will make her his queen of the island. Trinculo agrees to the plot. Ariel resolves to tell Prospero of the plot against him. When the drunken men begin singing, Ariel accompanies them on a tabor and pipe. The men hear the music and are afraid, but Caliban reassures them that such sounds are frequently heard on the island. Stefano finds the idea of free music a strong promise of his success on the island, and three drunken conspirators follow the sounds of the music offstage.

Alonso, Sebastian, Antonio, Gonzalo, and their companion lords become exhausted, and Alonso gives up all hope of finding his son. Antonio, still hoping to kill Alonso, whispers to Sebastian that Alonso’s exhaustion and desperation will provide them with the perfect opportunity to kill the king later that evening. At this point “solemn and strange music” fills the stage and a procession of spirits in “several strange shapes” enters, bringing a banquet of food. The spirits dance about the table, invite the king and his party to eat, and then dance away. Prospero enters at this time as well, having rendered himself magically invisible to everyone but the audience. The men disagree at first about whether to eat, but Gonzalo persuades them it will be all right, noting that travelers are returning every day with stories of unbelievable but true events. This, he says, might be just such an event.

Just as the men are about to eat, however, a noise of thunder erupts, and Ariel enters in the shape of a harpy. He claps his wings upon the table and the banquet vanishes. Ariel mocks the men for attempting to draw their swords, which magically have been made to feel heavy. Calling himself an instrument of Fate and Destiny, he goes on to accuse Alonso, Sebastian, and Antonio of driving Prospero from Milan and leaving him and his child at the mercy of the sea. For this sin, he tells them, the powers of nature and the sea have exacted revenge on Alonso by taking Ferdinand. He vanishes, and the procession of spirits enters again and removes the banquet

table. Prospero, still invisible, applauds the work of his spirit and announces with satisfaction that his enemies are now in his control. He leaves them in their distracted state and goes to visit with Ferdinand and his daughter.

Alonso, meanwhile, is quite desperate. He has heard the name of Prospero once more, and it has signaled the death of his own son. He runs to drown himself. Sebastian and Antonio, meanwhile, decide to pursue and fight with the spirits. Gonzalo, ever the voice of reason, tells the other, younger lords to run after Antonio, Sebastian, and Alonso and to make sure that none of the three does anything rash.

Act IV

Prospero has consented to the union of Miranda and Ferdinand and now prepares a wedding masque for the two lovers. He cautions Ferdinand not to “break her virgin knot” (15) until they are legitimately married. Soft music fills the air and three sprites pretending to be the goddesses, Iris, Ceres, and Juno, descend to participate in the celebration. Other nymphs appear and they all dance and make merry. But the festivities are cut short when they hear a “hollow and confused” noise coming from outside Prospero’s dwelling. It is the sound of Caliban, Stephano, and Trinculo, still drunk and ready to kill Prospero. Prospero dismisses the sprites and tells Ferdinand and Miranda: “Our revels are now ended. These our actors,

As I foretold you, were all spirits and
Are melted into air, into thin air:
And, like the baseless fabric of this vision,
The cloud-capp’d towers, the gorgeous palaces,
The solemn temples, the great globe itself,
Ye all which it inherit, shall dissolve
And, like this insubstantial pageant faded,
Leave not a rack behind. We are such stuff
As dreams are made on, and our little life
Is rounded with a sleep. Sir, I am vex’d;
Bear with my weakness; my brain is troubled:
Be not disturb’d with my infirmity:
If you be pleased, retire into my cell

And there repose: a turn or two I'll walk,
To still my beating mind. (163-77)

Prospero orders Ariel to bring out all his goods because he knows that Stephano and Trinculo will be enticed by the finery. Ariel enters once again, his arms loaded with beautiful apparel. Prospero and Ariel watch in the shadows as Caliban, Stephano, and Trinculo enter Prospero's cell, and sure enough, they are distracted by the fine clothes. Stephano and Trinculo try them on, despite the pleading of Caliban who knows that Prospero will catch them. From outside a noise of wild dogs are heard. Prospero has summoned the spirits of the island to take the shape of fierce hunting hounds to chase the villains out of Prospero's cell. Comically the three men run screaming from the cell, and Prospero and Ariel remain. Prospero tells Ariel that his enemies are now all at his mercy and that he will soon have freedom from the island.

Act V

This scene opens with Ariel revealing to Prospero that Alonso, Sebastian, and Antonio are remorseful, worried, and desperate. Gonzalo is worried and grief-stricken at his king's pain. Prospero reassures Ariel that he will be compassionate in dealing with his enemies and asks that Ariel bring the group to him. While he is waiting for the king and his party to appear, Prospero soliloquizes about what he has accomplished with magic and, at the soliloquy's end, promises that he will now give up his magic, bury his magic staff, and drown his magic book at sea.

Almost immediately, Ariel enters with the royal party, who appear to be in a trance, and places them within the magic circle that Prospero had earlier drawn. With a few chanted words, the spell is removed. Prospero, clothed in the garments of the duke of Milan — his rightful position — appears before them. In a gesture of reconciliation, Prospero embraces Alonso, who is filled with remorse and immediately gives up Prospero's dukedom. Gonzalo is also embraced in turn, and then Prospero turns to Sebastian and Antonio. Prospero tells them that he will not charge them as traitors, at this time. Antonio is forgiven and required to renounce his claims on Prospero's dukedom.

While Alonso continues to mourn the loss of his son, Prospero relates that he too has lost his child, his daughter. But he means that he has lost her in marriage and pulls back a curtain to reveal Ferdinand and Miranda playing chess. Ferdinand

explains to his father that he is betrothed to Miranda and that this event occurred while he thought his father dead. Alonso quickly welcomes Miranda and says he will be a second father to his son's affianced. At the sight of the couple, Gonzalo begins to cry and thanks God for having worked such a miracle.

Ariel enters with the master of the boat and boatswain. Although the ship lay in harbor and in perfect shape, the puzzled men cannot explain how any of this has occurred. Alonso is also mystified, but Prospero tells him not to trouble his mind with such concerns. Next, Ariel leads in Caliban, Stefano, and Trinculo, who are still drunk. Prospero explains that these men have robbed him and plotted to murder him. Caliban immediately repents and promises to seek grace. The three conspirators, who have sobered somewhat since confronted with Prospero and the king, are sent to decorate Prospero's cell. Prospero invites his guests to spend the night with him, where he will tell them of his adventures and of his life during these past 12 years. Ariel's last duty to Prospero is to provide calm seas when they sail the next morning.

Epilogue

Prospero is now alone on stage. He requests to the audience to free him from this island. He states that he has thrown away his magic. He forgave those who have injured him. Now he requires that the audience release him from the island, which has been his prison so that he might return to Naples. The audience's approval will be the signal that he is freed. Prospero indicates that his forgiveness of his former enemies is what all men desire. With the audience's appreciation, Prospero leaves the stage.

3.8 Glossary & Notes

- **abstemious** moderate, especially in eating and drinking; temperate. Prospero is warning Ferdinand once again about resisting lust before the wedding occurs.
- **amain** at or with great speed; here, Miranda's peacocks fly quickly.
- **bark** any boat, but especially a small sailing ship.
- **bass my trespass** Here, meaning that the condemnation (my trespass) was uttered in a deep bass voice. The thunder proclaimed his sin, according to Alonso, like a noise from the heavens.

- **Bermoothes** refer to the Bermudas, a common word to describe tempests and enchantments.
- **betid** happened or befell; here, it means that nothing has happened to the boat's inhabitants.
- **boatswain** the ship's petty officer, in charge of the deck crew, the rigging, anchors, boats, and so on.
- **bombard** a large leather container meant to hold liquor.
- **bourn** a limit; boundary. Here used to mean that no land would be divided among landowners.
- **bring a corollary** here, meaning to bring too many spirits rather than not enough.
- **Br'r lakin** "By your ladykin"; a reference to the Virgin Mary.
- **case** here, prepared.
- **chaps** jaws. Stefano is telling Caliban to open his jaws and drink more.
- **coragio** take courage (Italian).
- **dowle** small feather.
- **dropsy** a disease characterized by the accumulation of fluid in the connective tissues, resulting in swelling.
- **drowning mark** refers to a mole, located on the boatswain's face, the appearance of which was thought to portend a person's manner of death. In this case, the boatswain's mole appears to be the type that predicts a death by hanging.
- **extirpate** to pull up by the roots. The reference here is to Prospero and Miranda's being forced from their home and country.
- **feater** more graceful. Here, Antonio's new rank — and clothes that befit it — looks graceful on him.
- **foil** to keep from being successful; thwart; frustrate.
- **foison** plenty; here, specifically, an abundance of produce.
- **frippery** here, an old clothing shop.
- **furtherer** an accomplice.

- **genius** either of two spirits, one good and one evil, supposed to influence one's destiny.
- **hereditary sloth** the natural inclination of a younger brother to be lazy, according to Sebastian, who sees the lack of a hereditary title as a reason to achieve nothing on his own.
- **hest** [Archaic] a behest; a bidding; an order. Miranda was commanded not to reveal her name.
- **hollowly** here, insincerely.
- **inch-meal** inch by inch. Here, Caliban hopes for Prospero's fall.
- **inveterate** firmly established over a long period.
- **jerkin** a short, closefitting jacket, often sleeveless.
- **kibe** a chapped or ulcerated sore, esp. on the heel. If Antonio's conscience were a sore on his foot, Antonio might put on a slipper.
- **a living drollery** probably a puppet-show with live actors.
- **long spoon** alluding to an old proverb that a man must have a very long spoon to eat with the devil. Stefano thinks that Trinculo is a ghost.
- **maid** here, handmaiden, a woman or girl servant or attendant.
- **mantle** to enclose or envelop.
- **merely** [Obs.] absolutely; altogether; here, it means that they are completely cheated of their lives by drunkards.
- **moon-calf** [Obs.] a monstrosity; a misshapen creature born under the moon's influence.
- **murrain** a disease of cattle.
- **patch** [Archaic] a court jester; any clown or fool
- **Phoebus' steeds** the mythological horses that drew the chariot of the sun. Here, the suggestion is that they are lame from the long day and overriding.
- **pie'd ninny** a fool.
- **rapier** a slender two-edged sword used chiefly in thrusting.
- **rate** opinion.
- **requite** to make return or repayment to for a benefit, injury, and so on; reward.

- **roarers** noisy and unruly waves; here so called because they care little for royal rank.
- **Scamels** The meaning is uncertain but thought to be either shellfish or rock-inhabiting birds.
- **sickle** reference to nymphs disguised as harvesters.
- **Signories** domains or city-states in Northern Italy, subject to the rule of a lord or signior.
- **subtleties** here, the illusions.
- **surety** a person who takes responsibility for another. Miranda will be Ferdinand's guarantee.
- **swabber** the sailor who washes the ship and keeps the decks clean.
- **tawny** brownish-yellow; here used to mean that the sun has turned the ground a parched brown color.
- **teen** injury or harm. Prospero worries about the trouble that he has created for Miranda.
- **tight and yare** sound and ready. The ship is ready to sail.
- **too massy** unable to move. Here, through magic, the men are paralyzed.
- **trident** a three-pronged spear used by a gladiator in ancient Roman gladiatorial combats and by the Greek god of the sea, Neptune.
- **troll the catch** to sing the round lustily or in a full, rolling voice
- **trumpery** something showy but worthless; here, the gaudy clothing designated as bait for the three conspirators.
- **twain** two. Ferdinand refers to himself and his father as but two of the victims of the storm.
- **unbacked** not broken to the saddle: said of a horse.
- **vanity** reference to an illusion or trick that Prospero has created.
- **Wallets** here, meaning wattle, the fleshy, wrinkled, often brightly colored piece of skin that hangs from throat of a turkey.
- **wezand** windpipe.
- **wooden slavery** being compelled to carry wood.

- **yarely** briskly or smartly. Here the boatswain is instructing the sailors to move quickly or the ship will be pushed around by the storm.

3.9 Characterization:

Prospero

Prospero is the rightful duke of Milan. Twelve years earlier, he found refuge on this island after his younger brother, Antonio, seized Prospero's title and property. Prospero functions as a god on the island, manipulating everyone within his reach. He is helpless against his enemies until they appear on a ship nearby; but when they are close enough, he can use his magic to create a storm and bring them under his control.

Prospero's magic is the white magic of nature, not the black magic of evil men. This former duke of Milan is a complex personality. Although he refuses to free Ariel and enslaves Caliban, Prospero is really a beneficent ruler, never intending to injure even his enemies. Early in the play, Prospero appears heartless and cruel, especially in his treatment of Ariel and Caliban. He is also oppressive in his treatment of Ferdinand, but Prospero realizes that Ferdinand and Miranda will value one another more if there are a few impediments to their courtship.

Prospero's humanity is clearly obvious in his treatment of Antonio, whom he calls traitor but whom he declines to treat as a traitor. Another example of Prospero's goodness is when he stops Alonso from apologizing to Miranda, telling him that there is no need for more amends. By the play's conclusion, it is clear that Prospero is just and fair, in addition to intelligent.

Prospero is one of Shakespeare's more enigmatic protagonists. He is a sympathetic character in that he was wronged by his usurping brother, but his absolute power over the other characters and his overwrought speeches make him difficult to like. In our first glimpse of him, he appears puffed up and self-important, and his repeated insistence that Miranda pay attention suggest that his story is boring her. Once Prospero moves on to a subject other than his inclusion in the pursuit of knowledge, Miranda's attention is engrossed.

The pursuit of knowledge gets Prospero into trouble in the first place. By neglecting everyday matters when he was duke, he gave his brother a chance to rise

up against him. His possession and use of magical knowledge renders him extremely powerful and not entirely sympathetic. His punishments of Caliban are petty and vindictive, as he calls upon his spirits to pinch Caliban when he curses. He is defensively autocratic with Ariel. For example, when Ariel reminds his master of his promise to relieve him of his duties early if he performs them willingly, Prospero bursts into fury and threatens to return him to his former imprisonment and torment. He is similarly unpleasant in his treatment of Ferdinand, leading him to his daughter and then imprisoning and enslaving him.

Despite his shortcomings as a man, however, Prospero is central to *The Tempest's* narrative. Prospero generates the plot of the play almost single-handedly, as his various schemes, spells, and manipulations all work as part of his grand design to achieve the play's happy ending. Watching Prospero work through *The Tempest* is like watching a dramatist create a play, building a story from material at hand and developing his plot so that the resolution brings the world into line with his idea of goodness and justice. Many critics and readers of the play have interpreted Prospero as a surrogate for Shakespeare, enabling the audience to explore firsthand the ambiguities and ultimate wonder of the creative endeavor.

Prospero's final speech, in which he likens himself to a playwright by asking the audience for applause, strengthens this reading of the play, and makes the play's final scene function as a moving celebration of creativity, humanity, and art. Prospero emerges as a more likable and sympathetic figure in the final two acts of the play. In these acts, his love for Miranda, his forgiveness of his enemies, and the legitimately happy ending his scheme creates all work to mitigate some of the undesirable means he has used to achieve his happy ending. If Prospero sometimes seems autocratic, he ultimately manages to persuade the audience to share his understanding of the world—an achievement that is, after all, the final goal of every author and every play.

Miranda

Just under fifteen years old, Miranda is a gentle and compassionate, but also relatively passive, heroine. From her very first lines she displays a meek and emotional nature:

“O, I have suffered

With those that I saw suffer!”

She says of the shipwreck and hearing Prospero's tale of their narrow escape from Milan, she says:

“I, not rememb'ring how I cried out then,
Will cry it o'er again”

Miranda does not choose her own husband. Instead, while she sleeps, Prospero sends Ariel to fetch Ferdinand, and arranges things so that the two will come to love one another. After Prospero has given the lovers his blessing, he and Ferdinand talk with surprising frankness about her virginity and the pleasures of the marriage bed while she stands quietly by. Prospero tells Ferdinand to be sure not to “break her virgin-knot” before the wedding night, and Ferdinand replies with no small anticipation that lust shall never take away “the edge of that day's celebration”. In the play's final scene, Miranda is presented, with Ferdinand, almost as a prop or piece of the scenery as Prospero draws aside a curtain to reveal the pair playing chess.

But while Miranda is passive in many ways, she has at least two moments of surprising forthrightness and strength that complicate the reader's impressions of her as a naïve young girl. The first such moment is in Act I, scene ii, in which she and Prospero converse with Caliban. Prospero alludes to the fact that Caliban once tried to rape Miranda. When Caliban rudely agrees that he intended to violate her, Miranda responds with impressive vehemence, clearly appalled at Caliban's light attitude toward his attempted rape. She goes on to scold him for being ungrateful for her attempts to educate him:

“When thou didst not, savage,
Know thine own meaning, but wouldst gabble like
A thing most brutish, I endowed thy purposes
With words that made them known”

These lines are so surprising coming from the mouth of Miranda that many editors have amended the text and given it to Prospero. This reattribution seems to give Miranda too little credit. In Act III, scene i comes the second surprising moment—Miranda's marriage proposal to Ferdinand:

“I am your wife, if you will marry me;

If not, I'll die your maid"

Her proposal comes shortly after Miranda has told herself to remember her "father's precepts forbidding conversation with Ferdinand. As the reader can see in her speech to Caliban in Act I, scene ii, Miranda is willing to speak up for herself about her sexuality.

Caliban

Prospero's dark, earthy slave, frequently referred to as a monster by the other characters, Caliban is the son of a witch-hag and the only real native of the island to appear in the play. He is an extremely complex figure, and he mirrors or parodies several other characters in the play. In his first speech to Prospero, Caliban insists that Prospero stole the island from him. Through this speech, Caliban suggests that his situation is much the same as Prospero's, whose brother usurped his dukedom. On the other hand, Caliban's desire for sovereignty of the island mirrors the lust for power that led Antonio to overthrow Prospero. Caliban's conspiracy with Stephano and Trinculo to murder Prospero mirrors Antonio and Sebastian's plot against Alonso, as well as Antonio and Alonso's original conspiracy against Prospero.

Caliban both mirrors and contrasts with Prospero's other servant, Ariel. While Ariel is "an airy spirit," Caliban is of the earth, his speeches turning to "springs, brine pits", "bogs, fens, flats" or crabapples and pignuts. While Ariel maintains his dignity and his freedom by serving Prospero willingly, Caliban achieves a different kind of dignity by refusing, if only sporadically, to bow before Prospero's intimidation.

Surprisingly, Caliban also mirrors and contrasts with Ferdinand in certain ways. In Act II, scene ii Caliban enters "with a burden of wood," and Ferdinand enters in Act III, scene i "bearing a log." Both Caliban and Ferdinand profess an interest in untying Miranda's "virgin knot." Ferdinand plans to marry her, while Caliban has attempted to rape her. The glorified, romantic, almost ethereal love of Ferdinand for Miranda starkly contrasts with Caliban's desire to impregnate Miranda and people the island with Caliban.

Finally, and most tragically, Caliban becomes a parody of himself. In his first speech to Prospero, he regretfully reminds the magician of how he showed him all the ins and outs of the island when Prospero first arrived. Only a few scenes later, however, we see Caliban drunk and fawning before a new magical being in his life:

Stephano and his bottle of liquor. Soon, Caliban begs to show Stephano the island and even asks to lick his shoe. Caliban repeats the mistakes he claims to curse. In his final act of rebellion, he is once more entirely subdued by Prospero in the most petty way—he is dunked in a stinking bog and ordered to clean up Prospero’s cell in preparation for dinner.

Despite his savage demeanor and grotesque appearance, however, Caliban has a nobler, more sensitive side that the audience is only allowed to glimpse briefly, and which Prospero and Miranda do not acknowledge at all. His beautiful speeches about his island home provide some of the most affecting imagery in the play, reminding the audience that Caliban really did occupy the island before Prospero came, and that he may be right in thinking his enslavement to be monstrously unjust. Caliban’s swarthy appearance, his forced servitude, and his native status on the island have led many readers to interpret him as a symbol of the native cultures occupied and suppressed by European colonial societies, which are represented by the power of Prospero. Whether or not one accepts this allegory, Caliban remains one of the most intriguing and ambiguous minor characters in all of Shakespeare, a sensitive monster who allows himself to be transformed into a fool.

Ariel

Ariel is a spirit of the air who, because he refused to serve the witch, Sycorax, was imprisoned in a tree until rescued by Prospero. Ariel willingly carries out Prospero’s wishes because he is eager to be free. Although he wants his freedom in exchange, Ariel approaches his tasks with enthusiasm, quickly doing what is asked and promptly reporting any activities that he observes. Early in the play, Ariel reports the plot to murder Prospero, and later, he assists in punishing Prospero’s enemies. Ariel’s obedience is an important symbol of Prospero’s humanity, because he ameliorates Prospero’s role on the island and humanizes the action that Prospero takes against his old adversaries. Finally, Ariel’s willing obedience of Prospero’s wishes stands in stark contrast to Caliban’s cursing and plotting against the same master.

Ferdinand

Ferdinand is the son of the king of Naples. During the storm, he is separated from the rest of the king’s party. Once ashore, he meets Miranda and falls in love with her. Like Miranda, Ferdinand is honest and kind, a loving son, who will make a

loving husband to Miranda. He easily reassures Prospero that he will respect Miranda's chastity and not violate the trust he has been given. Ferdinand also respects and loves his father. He makes a commitment to marry Miranda while thinking that his father is dead. When he finds that his father is alive, Ferdinand immediately acknowledges his father's authority and informs his father of his obligation to Miranda. Ferdinand is an honorable match for Miranda, sharing many of the same qualities that his innocent bride displays.

Alonso

Alonso is the king of Naples. When he believes that his son has died, Alonso is grief-stricken. Later, he is overjoyed to find Ferdinand still alive. Alonso bears some responsibility for the events in Prospero's life, because Antonio would not have acted without Alonso's agreement. However, when confronted with his responsibility, Alonso is genuinely repentant for the pain he caused Prospero in the past. Alonso's concern for his son's safety and his deep grief when he thinks his son is dead help to construct an image of Alonso as a good and loving father who has made mistakes in the past. The quickness with which he accepts Miranda as his daughter, as well as his attempts to apologize her, also reinforce the image of Alonso as a good and just king.

Antonio

As Prospero's younger brother, Antonio is annoyed by envy and by a desire to create dilemma. He is now the fake duke of Milan and is still actively busy in plotting revolt. His actions against Prospero were not enough to satisfy his ambitions, and now, Antonio convinces Sebastian to murder his brother. Although he may be scared when confronted with the spirits and later Prospero, Antonio reveals no sign of repentance for the actions he has committed.

★ Check your progress

Choose the correct option given below:

1. Caliban mistakes for one of Prospero's spirits sent to torment him to...
(A) Stephano (B) Ferdinand (C) Miranda (D) Trinculo
2. Prospero's title before his position was usurped and he was forced to flee Italy, is...
(A) Duke of Milan (B) King of Naples

- (C) Duke of Naples (D) Pope of Rome
3. Alonso's ship was returning from.....when it is caught in the tempest?
(A) Naples (B) England (C) Tunis (D) Bermudas
4. Prospero and Miranda had been on their island for ...
(A) Ten years (B) Fifteen years (C) Twelve years (D) One day
5. The name of Caliban's mother was...
(A) Ariel (B) Claribel (C) Sycorax (D) Setebos
6. The action of *The Tempest* takes place in....
(A) Two days (B) One day (C) Three days (D) Four days
7. The mythical figures.... appear in the wedding masque Prospero stages for Miranda and Ferdinand.
(A) Cupid, Venus, and Mars (B) Jupiter and Saturn
(C) Ceres, Iris, and Juno (D) Isis and Osiris
8. What is the name of Prospero's brother?
(A) Alonso (B) Sebastian (C) Gonzalo (D) Antonio
9. Who of the following is Sebastian's brother?
(A) Prospero (B) Antonio (C) Gonzalo (D) Alonso
10. At the end of the play, Miranda and Ferdinand are....
(A) Playing cards (B) Carrying wood
(C) Playing chess (D) Playing tag
11. Ariel assumes..... at the magical banquet in Act III, scene iii.
(A) Harpy (B) Eagle (C) Sea-nymph (D) Hound
12. The name of Alonso's daughter is...
(A) Claribel (B) Miranda (C) Sycorax (D) Alonsa
13. ...helped Prospero and Miranda to flee Italy.
(A) Antonio (B) Gonzalo (C) Trinculo (D) Claribel

14. Ariel puts the mariners and Boatswain after the tempest...
- (A) In a thicket (B) Under Caliban's cloak
(C) Asleep in the ship in the harbor (D) In Prospero's cell
15. Sycorax imprisons Ariel...
- (A) On another island (B) In a cloven pine
(C) In a lion's den (D) Inside a stone
16. ... persuades Sebastian to try to kill Alonso.
- (A) Antonio (B) Gonzalo (C) Ariel (D) Alonso
17. Prospero intends to drown ...after he has reconciled with his enemies.
- (A) His magic garments (B) His book
(C) His staff (D) Caliban
18. The final task Prospero orders Ariel to perform is...
- (A) To release Sycorax (B) To haul a load of wood
(C) To give the fleet calm seas on its return to Italy
(D) To take charge of Caliban

Key to check your progress:

- A)** I) 1564, II) 154, III) Ann Hathaway IV) Thames V) Stratford
- B)** 1) 1623 2) 1603 3) Two
- 4) John Heminges and Henry Condell were friends of Shakespeare who published the First Folio of Shakespeare's plays.
5. James I
- C)** 1. Trinculo 2. Duke of Milan 3. Tunis 4. Twelve years
5. Sycorax 6. One day 7. Ceres, Iris, and Juno
8. Antonio 9. Alonso 10. Playing chess 11. Harpy
12. Claribel 13. Gonzalo 14. Asleep in the ship in the harbor
15. In a cloven pine 16. Antonio 17. His book

18. To give the fleet calm seas on its return to Italy

3.10 Activities

1. Try to collect romantic sea stories.
2. Find out any other work which deals with supernatural elements.
3. Simplify the major dialogues and try to perform them on the stage.

3.11 Suggested Reading

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Unit-4

The Tempest

- William Shakespeare

(Part-II)

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Objectives

After studying this unit you will be able

- To view the play with different interpretations
- To discuss themes in the play
- To understand the style and symbols used in the play

Introduction

William Shakespeare's play *The Tempest* is a tragic-comedy. It is also grouped with his last romance i.e. *Pericles*, *Cymbeline* and *The Winter's Tale*. The play has been interpreted by many critics from different points of view. It is appreciated for its style and use of symbols. Miranda and Ariel are all time favourite characters that Shakespeare has created in this play.

4.1 *The Tempest* as a Political Romance

In the seventeenth century England, there was a new talk on the general state of women in society. The talk was about giving the greater equality to women. However, there were also attempts made by king, clergy and male writers to check this talk. Even in church sermons delivered by the clergy and directed towards women, the patriarchal concerns were expressed vehemently. The women were captive audience during such church services. The possible social changes and the serious concern for patriarchy were expressed in many debates on this issue.

After the improvement in printing, there was explosion of low-priced books and how-to pamphlets. They were offering additional instructions to men on how to control their wives and daughters. Besides, the Anglican Church and Catholic Church advocated gender inequality as divinely ordained. The biblical scriptures were interpreted to show that women are inferior to men. The church blamed Eve, and through her all women, for Man's fall from grace. Hence, Eve's story was used to advise the necessity of the control on women. This control was especially beneficial in a society in which women served as political currency. Women were the brides of kings and the mothers of future kings. Controlling their behavior and their sexuality was particularly important to the royal society which the play deals with. Thus *The Tempest* has many references to Miranda's virginity.

On an island peopled with men, Miranda is the only female character physically present in *The Tempest*. Her presence serves single important purpose – to provide a virgin bride to Ferdinand future king of Naples since her marriage is planned to bring reconciliation and redemption. Miranda's virginity determines her worth in the marriage market. So upon seeing Miranda, Ferdinand quickly asks, "if you be maid or no?" (I.ii.431). His immediate concern is to her chastity. They fall in love instantly; however, if she is virgin, she has value because Ferdinand can only marry a virgin. Virginity is a matter of politics. A man of property, especially a king or his son, must be assured that his offspring are truly his. A woman's virginity, which implies her chastity, is promise that husband's line of paternity will never be doubted.

Like her mother, Miranda is a commodity. Her value like goods in barter is in her nobility and purity. Prospero tells her of her mother's nobility:

Thy mother was a piece of virtue, and
She said thou wast my daughter; and thy father
Was Duke of Milan, and his only heir
And princess, - no worse issued. (I. ii. 56-59)

Virtue is a characteristic of nobility. Prospero emphasizes that their offspring is noble in all way. Miranda is told little about her mother except her chastity as it is the most important trait about her character. The purpose is clear. Her value, too, is defined by her chastity. It is an interesting to know that Miranda's virginity serves as bait to entice Ferdinand; while, on the other hand, he is warned by Prospero not to touch the bait (IV. i.4-23).

People are always interested in fairy tales. In them, usually, a captive princess is rescued by a valiant prince. In case of Miranda and Ferdinand, it seems that they rescue each other. Ferdinand rescues her from isolation on the island. He offers her his love and crown. Miranda relieves him from the hardships put at by her father. She offers her love and help to carry logs. In reality, the couple is a part of larger scheme set by Prospero. He loves her daughter; still he also needs her to make his entire plan successful. At the end of the play, Prospero's highest achievement is Ferdinand marrying Miranda. Certainly, the regaining his position as Duke of Milan is as important as the redemption of Alonso. Nevertheless, these two events are tied to their marriage. Clearly, the union brings a bloodless victory for Prospero.

The play has also an indication to the contemporary political event. The masque scene being performed on the stage is said to be specially arranged to celebrate the nuptial of Prince Palatine Elector and Elizabeth of Bohemia. Thus it further reinforces the fairy tale elements, in which the princess is rescued by marriage, taken to a new land, and lives happily ever after. This was after all generally the plight of princesses who were little more than political pawns in a bigger game of diplomacy.

The union of Miranda and Ferdinand is a political marriage. Such marriages were normal part of Elizabethan life. There is also reference to another political marriage in Act II. Claribel, the daughter of Alonso, has been married to the King of Tunis. She is married against her wish as Sebastian, her uncle, informs:

the fair soul herself
Weigh'd between loathness and obedience, at
Which end o'th' beam should blow. (II.i.129-131)

Obviously, although Claribel loathes marrying an African king her father's choice, her obedience to her father weighed more heavily than her own desire. In a way, it supports the point that a woman's primary value as a chattel to be bartered on the marriage market for her husband is what her father desires most.

Miranda is hardly aware that she is a political pawn in Prospero's scheme. Her understanding that it is a "brave new world" (V. i. 186) reflects her innocence both of her role and of the life she will soon be leading, both as the wife to a king and later, perhaps, as the mother to a princess. Should Miranda eventually have a daughter? The daughter will also someday be bartered for a foothold in a kingdom or as an alliance to end a conflict. It was expected from the daughters.

If *The Tempest* is examined from this political perspective, what Shakespeare suggesting is the political use of women in contracting marriage Shakespeare often used social issues to explore the society and its function. Drama was a safe mode to explore the political and social issues of the period. Shakespeare used the stage to present a microcosm that represented the larger macrocosm of the universe.

4.2 *The Tempest*: Post-colonial implication

The post-colonial approach to *The Tempest* emphasizes that the play is about colonization of the island. Basically, the island belongs to Caliban. He is the native of the island, while Prospero is foreigner. Prospero represents the colonial ruler, who has occupied the island. He has reduced the native, Caliban, to the status of a slave. This view is voiced by Caliban when he says:

This island's mine, by Sycorax my mother,
Which thou takest from me. (I. ii. 333-4)

Caliban also claims that Prospero cheated him through magic and robbed him of his island. Caliban complaint points towards the history of the western colonization. The western colonizers forcibly occupied many countries across the world and exploited the native people by making use of powerful weapons.

This approach raises certain questions. Does Shakespeare really want to focus on the oppression by Prospero? Is the play about colonization? The post-colonial critics emphasizes that there is tension between the oppressive colonial power and the rightful claim of the native people in the play. These critics also stress that this tension also has effect on the relation between the colonizers and colonized. For

instance the relationship between Prospero and Ariel is also almost similar to that of Prospero and Caliban. Caliban is unskilled native while Ariel belongs to the class of skilled native. Ariel is forced to work for Prospero, through with a promise of freedom.

There are other critics like Geoffrey Bullough, who flatly deny the post-colonial view of the play. They argue that the play is not about colonization. There is no mention to the new world (America or Virginia,etc), or colonies or colonizing Indians. Prospero did not go to island to colonize it. He and his daughter were forcibly left there and had no choice. Besides, he tried to educate Caliban, and Caliban was treated as a member of his small group. He was reduced to the status of a slave as a punishment for his attempt to rape Miranda. If he had intention to colonize the island, Prospero would not have left it in the end.

When Shakespeare wrote the play, there was no knowledge of the New World inhabitants. Shakespeare was perhaps prophetic about future colonization. In that sense, he is unique. Yet, Caliban's outrages against Prospero could be the feeling of the native Red Indians in America. Thus his exploitation can render to colonial interpretation. But was Caliban himself the native of the island? His mother Sycorax was banished from Argier and brought here as Prospero tells "This blue-ey'd hag was hither brought with child,/ And here was left by the sailors" (I. ii. 272-4), until then the island was uninhabited. When Prospero came to the island, Caliban was a child just like Miranda. The colonial critics argue that Prospero creates a binary division between the children. Miranda can be taught but Caliban cannot be taught and improved. The colonialist critics argue that this is the main policy of the colonization. The natives are incapable of learning and being reformed. So, they are reduced to slavery.

4.3 Themes

Themes are the fundamental and often universal ideas explored in a literary work.

4.3.1 The Illusion of Justice

Justice simply means doing right to what is wrong. *The Tempest* tells a fairly straightforward story involving an unjust act. The story is the usurpation of Prospero's throne by his brother Antonio and Prospero's quest to seek justice by

restoring himself to power. However, the idea of justice in the play seems highly subjective. It represents the view of one character who controls the fate of all the other characters. No doubt, Prospero is a victim of injustice, but his idea of justice and injustice is somewhat hypocritical. Though he is sufferer, he has no right to enslave Ariel and Caliban in order to achieve his goal. At many occasions in the play, Prospero's sense of justice seems extremely one-sided and mainly involves what is good to Prospero. Besides, the play is morally ambiguous, because it offers no notion of higher order or justice to replace Prospero's view.

As the play goes on, Prospero becomes a maker of the world. Like an author, he creates a story around him. In this metaphoric sense, if Prospero is accepted as a surrogate for Shakespeare himself, his idea of justice appears, if not perfect, least sympathetic. Moreover, the means he uses to achieve his idea of justice mirror the machinations of the artist. Playwrights arrange their stories in such a way that their own idea of justice is convincingly imposed upon events. By using magical tricks that echo the special effects and spectacles of the theatre, Prospero slowly persuades the other characters and the audience of the righteousness of his case. As he does so, the ambiguities surrounding his methods slowly resolve themselves.

Prospero forgives his enemies, releases his slaves, and gives up his magic power. So, at the end, the illusion is made that he is only an old man whose work is responsible for all the audience's pleasure. The establishment of Prospero's idea of justice becomes a commentary less on justice in life than on the nature of morality in art. Happy endings are possible, Shakespeare seems to say, because the creativity of an artist can create them, even if the moral values that establish the happy ending originate from nowhere but the imagination of the artist.

4.3.2 The Difficulty of Distinguishing “Men” from “Monsters”

When Miranda sees Ferdinand first time, she says that he is “the third man that e'er I saw” (I. ii. 449). The other two are, most likely, Prospero and Caliban. However, in their first conversation with Caliban, Miranda and Prospero say very little that shows they consider him to be human. Language is human. So, Prospero reminds Caliban that he gabbled “like / A thing most brutish” (I. ii. 359-60) before he taught him language. He gave him “human care” (I. ii. 349). It implies that this was something Caliban ultimately did not deserve. The exact nature of Caliban continues to be slightly unclear later in the play. Miranda and Prospero both have contradictory

views of his humanity. On the one hand, they think that their education has lifted him from his early brutishness. On the other hand, they seem to see him as inherently brutish. His devilish nature can never be overcome by nurture in Prospero's view. He says, "thy vile race, / Though thou didst learn, had that in't which good natures / Could not abide to be with" (I. ii. 361- 363). The "good natures" imposed on him is driven out by the inhuman part in Caliban.

Interestingly, Caliban claims that he was kind to Prospero, and that his kindness is repaid unkindly by Prospero who imprisoned him. In contrast, Prospero claims that he stopped being kind to Caliban when once he tried to rape Miranda (I. ii. 347-351). To believe in whose claim depends on to view Caliban as inherently brutish, or as made brutish by oppression. The play does not make the matter clear. Treatment Caliban receives is not less little than monstrous.

Caliban's balances his speeches such as his curses (I. ii.) and his speeches about the isle's "noises" (III. ii.) with the most degrading kind of drunken, servile behavior, whereas, Trinculo's speech upon first seeing Caliban presents a ruthless view of Caliban (II. ii. 18-38). In England, which he visited once, Trinculo says that Caliban could be shown off for money. He further says "there would this monster make a man; any strange beast there makes a man: when they will not give a doit to relieve a lame beggar, they will lay out ten to see a dead Indian" (II. ii. 28-31). It refers to the cruel voyeurism of those who capture and gape at them. This appears most monstrous in these sentences not the "dead Indian" or "any strange beast".

4.3.3 The attraction to Rule a Colony

The island on which the characters land in the play is nearly inhabited. Thus it presents the countless possibilities to almost everyone. Prospero has found it, in its isolation, an ideal place to school his daughter. Sycorax, Caliban's mother, worked her magic there after she was exiled from Algeria. Caliban laments that he had been his own king (I. ii. 344-5) and now he is slave to Prospero. To comfort Alonso, Gonzalo imagines a utopian society on the island, over which he can rule (II. i. 148-56). When Caliban suggests that Stephano should kill Prospero, immediately Stephano fancies his own reign on the island: "I will this man: his daughter and I will be king and queen, - save our graces! -and Trinculo and thyself shall be viceroys" (III. iii. 101-103). All these characters foresee the island as a space of freedom and unrealized potential.

The hopeful tone of these would-be colonizers is downsized at best in the play. For instance, Gonzalo's utopian vision is undercut by a sharp retort from Sebastian and Antonio. When Gonzalo says that there would be no commerce or work or "sovereignty" in his society, Sebastian replies, "yet he would be king on't," and Antonia adds, "the latter end of his commonwealth forgets the beginning" (II. i. 156-7). Gonzalo's fantasy thus involves him ruling the island while seeming not to rule it. In this way he becomes a kind of parody of Prospero's supremacy on the island.

The attraction of ruling a colony is found in many characters. The colonial impulse is represented by many characters in the play. The colonized have only one representative: Caliban. He is abused by Prospero and tormented by spirits. He might be sympathized for his state at first. Yet, this sympathy is thinned to his willingness to abase himself before Stephano in Act II, scene ii. Even he plots to kill one colonial ruler (Prospero), he sets up another (Stephano). Thus the urge to rule and to be ruled appears to be intermingled inseparably.

4.3.4 Forgiveness and Reconciliation

The major theme in the play, as many scholars argue, is that the play is about reconciliation, forgiveness, and faith in the future generation to hold the reconciliation eternally. In that sense, the play is in line of Shakespeare's other late romances i.e. *Pericles*, *Cymbeline* and *The Winter's Tale*. The play is drama of reconciliation between estranged kinsmen; of wrongs righted through repentance, not revenge; of pardon and peace. The point to discuss is to what extent the author has realized this forgiveness in the play. An examination of the attitudes and actions of the major characters in the play, specifically Prospero, illustrates that there is little, if any, true forgiveness and reconciliation

To judge the trueness of forgiveness, a standard must be set before. The most important Christian lesson on the true nature of forgiveness can be found in Christ's *Sermon on the Mount*:

But I say to unto you which hear, love your
enemies, do good to them which hate
you
Bless them that curse you, and pray for them
which despiseth you... For if ye love them
which love you, what thank have ye? For

sinners also do even the same. But love
your enemies, and do good, and lend,
hoping for nothing again... (Luke 6:27-35)

The sermon gives the basic tenets of the idea of forgiveness. However, Prospero's behaviour seems to contradict the tenets from the beginning of the play. The misfortune of his enemies has brought them within his grasp and he seizes the opportunity for revenge. "Desire for vengeance has apparently lain dormant in Prospero through the years of banishment, and now, with the sudden advent of his foes, the great wrong of twelve years before is stirring present again, arousing the passions and stimulating the will to action" (Davidson 225).

Prospero does not intend to harm anyone on the ship. Still he puts the men through the agony of what they believe as a horrible disaster. What grieves them most is the possible death of Prince Ferdinand. Prospero insists that those who wronged him suffer for their deeds, before he offers them his forgiveness, even if it means innocent and noble men like Gonzalo. Moreover, it is Ariel's request that convinces Prospero to end their misery "if you now beheld them, your affections / would become tender" (V. i. 19-20).

Prospero feels free to forgive only after he becomes triumphant and has seen the men mournful and "penitent", a pay for their wrong deeds. Prospero's quality of mercy is strained, and that a truly sincere reconciliation fails to develop. More evidence to support this argument that comes when he finally confronts King Alonso, Sebastian, and Antonio and announces, "Behold, sir king, / The wronged Duke of Milan, Prospero" (V. i. 111-2). Prospero hopes that his plan of the shipwreck will have two effects. These are their ultimate acceptance of him as right Duke of Milan and their deep apologies for wronging him. However, Alonso's initial reaction seeing Prospero is profound relief that someone, be the real or no, on the island, bids him "heartily welcome" (V. i. 89). His reaction is not of profound regret for doing wrong to Prospero. It seems that Alonso's only true regret is that his betrayal of Prospero has resulted in the loss of his son. Nevertheless, Alonso's short and softening words "pardon me" are sufficient to please Prospero, "First, noble friend, / Let me embrace thine age, whose honour cannot / be measur'd or confin'd" (V. i. 124-6). This

exchange of pleasant remarks confirms Prospero's intention for forgiveness and reconciliation, but only in the most superficial sense.

Does Prospero truly forgive those who "hate" him? His pronouncement to Antonio speaks volumes:

For you, most wicked sir, whom to call brother
Would even infect my mouth, I do forgive
Thy rankest fault; all of them; and require
My dukedom of thee, which perforce, I know,
Thou must restore. (V. i. 130-4)

Prospero goes through the motions of forgiveness, but his sincerity is lost. Besides, there is no clearly no reconciliation among Prospero, Sebastian and Antonio. There are no apparent signs of acknowledgement of the reconciliation on Antonio's part.

There is another edge to the theme. It lies in Prospero's treatment to Caliban which does not have even a faint taint of forgiveness. The relation between Caliban and Prospero are heated after Caliban's attempt to rape Miranda. It is an atrocious act, but to Caliban, it is a basic biological urge. It sprang from no premeditation but from his natural desire to procreate. Caliban is, in fact, "the bestial man [with] no sense of right or wrong and therefore sees no difference between good and evil. His state is less guilty" (Kermode, xlii). While Prospero should have taken steps to prevent such an incident from ever happening, again he goes further to ensure that Caliban pay dearly for his actions. He threatens continually to "rack [him] with old cramps" (I. ii. 371), and confines him "in this hard rock" (I. ii. 345). For Caliban, Prospero feel no mercy or forgiveness.

It is also important to note that Shakespeare, being an adept dramatist, arranges the union of Miranda and Ferdinand to lessen the effect of the sour meeting of the kinsmen at the end. He also crafts the words of hope in the speech of Gonzalo (V. i. 204-12) the most virtuous character. Despite all this, the feeling of true forgiveness and reconciliation is not realized completely.

4.3.5 Revenge versus Reconciliation

Nearly all the tragedies written during the reigns of Queen Elizabeth and King James I were plays about revenge. The greatest among them are by Shakespeare,

who examined the theme dramatically, and the idea itself in nuanced soliloquies and conversations in his most complex tragedies. In *The Tempest*, he took a situation that the dramatists of his age were accustomed to present in a revenge tragedy and used it to fashion a reconciliation comedy. The first act of *The Tempest* actually comes after the events of a tragedy—the usurper brother overthrows the righteous ruler. Instead of killing Prospero, however, Antonio sets him adrift on the sea. And instead of seeking revenge, Prospero, the righteous ruler, forgives his brother, seeks reconciliation, and sets reason above passion.

4.3.6 Art, Magic, and Illusion

The Tempest is a play about art, magic, and illusion, and it depends upon illusion for its effect. The art that Prospero has mastered, and Shakespeare’s art as a dramatist, reflect each other. Both can make unreal things seem real and both can influence, by their art, how others will feel. [And as any playwright may fear might happen among his audience or his readers, Prospero occasionally puts people to sleep.] Shakespeare’s audience would have been aware of two types of magic, the white (good) and the black (evil). Prospero is a theurgist. He practices white magic—a force derived from divine sources and used for the control of natural elements. This form of magic has affinities with the natural sciences, as in the study of alchemy (the forerunner of modern chemistry). The other form of magic, black magic, is tangentially related to the action of *The Tempest*. Black magicians, like Caliban’s mother, the witch Sycorax, derive their power from demonic forces.

4.4 Style:

4.4.1 Blank Verse

While parts of *The Tempest* are written in prose, most of it, except for Ariel’s songs and the verse in Prospero’s wedding masque, is written in blank verse. Blank verse is composed of unrhymed pentameter lines usually written in iambics. A pentameter line is a line composed of five feet. A foot is made up of two syllables. In iambic pentameter, the first syllable of each foot is unstressed and the second is stressed. Look, for example, at line 303 in act 1, scene 2: “To every eyeball else. Go take this shape.” “To” is unstressed. “Ev” of “every” is stressed, while the second syllable of “every” is unstressed, but “eye” of “eyeball” is. Thus: “to EV/’ry EYE/ball ELSE.” (The verse in the masque is generally composed of rhymed couplets, which are lines in pairs rhyming with each other. The continuous closure of the

rhyme on each second line makes this kind of verse good for didactic and ceremonial verses. Blank verse, because of the absence of rhyme, flows like unregulated speech.)

4.4.2 Epilogue

Like several of Shakespeare's comedies, *The Tempest* closes with an epilogue, a speech made by a leading character (in this case Prospero), who partially steps out of his role and speaks directly to the audience, often alluding to a theme of the play in his request for applause. Prospero speaks of being forgiven and released from the bonds of sin.

4.4.3 Music, Song, Spectacle

Music, song, dancing and stage machinery, like the throne on which Juno alights, are concentrated in the masque in *The Tempest* but are also structural parts of the entire play. Ariel actually sings three songs. Music sounds throughout the island and often is used to induce spells or to calm mental distress. Music also accompanies spectacular stage devices, as when Prospero appears "on the top," in act 3, scene 3 and watches "several strange Shapes, bringing in a banquet; and dance about it" and, soon after, when Ariel appears as a harpy and the table disappears.

Musical harmonies, in the Renaissance, were believed to have magical powers themselves; the nearer music in its harmonies approached the absolute music of the heavens, the greater the power. It was believed that the celestial frames that were thought to hold the heavenly bodies in their movements moved all the planets and the stars. The sound made by the harmonious motions of these spheres was called the music of the spheres.

4.4.4 The Unities

The classical unities of time, place, and action, which Aristotle describes as being among the characteristics of a drama, were often ignored by playwrights writing during the reigns of Elizabeth I and James I. Shakespeare seldom followed the unities. Most of his plays sprawl, in the words of the chorus in *Henry V* "jumping o'er times, / Turning th' accomplishment of many years / Into an hour glass." In *The Tempest*, however, Shakespeare adhered strictly to the unities, so much so that Prospero even asks Ariel, at the beginning of act 5, "How's the day?" and Ariel answers, "On the sixth hour, at which time, my lord, / You said our work should

cease.” Everything happens in a single day. All the strands of the plot are woven together into the single action of reconciliation. The action occurs in a single place, on Prospero’s island.

4.4.5 The scene of Masque

Shakespeare has introduced the masque scene in the act IV of the play. The Greek Goddess Iris appears in the scene. She is goddess of the rainbow and the messenger of the gods. She introduces Juno, the queen of gods and then there is Ceres, the goddess of fertility and of harvest. The scene is introduced here to bless Ferdinand and Miranda.

Generally, the characters in the Masque are gods and nymphs or personified qualities such as Love, Justice, Laughter, etc. In the Elizabethan period the Masques were developed by rich lords and courtiers for performance at the court, with lot of scenery and stage-machinery. The Masque was mainly arranged for celebration of the happy moments like marriage. It assumed the form of a musical play with the use of splendid scenery. Gradually it developed into an opera with poetic dialogue or speeches by divine characters.

It was on the occasion of the wedding of the princess Elizabeth of Bohemia to Prince Palatine Elector that *The Tempest* was presented. Shakespeare introduced the masque scene to compliment the royal couple. As the royal couple watch the masque they hear the following blessing pronounced by Juno on the betrothed couple on the stage, who are counterparts of themselves:

Honour, riches, marriage-blessings,
Long continuance, and increasing,
Hourly joys be still upon you!
Juno sings her blessing on you.

The characters in the masque are from classical mythology. The lyrics are sung by Ariel. The speeches of the goddesses express the joy of marriage. Iris summons the spirit of water, the naiads to come and bless the couple. They are followed by a group of reapers. They dance together and go away. Thus some critics say that the masque is an addition to the play while some like Morton Luce think that the Masque is vital to the play, being “an organic growth of the supernatural motive”.

4.5 Symbols

Symbols are objects, characters, figures, and colours used to represent abstract ideas or concepts.

4.5.1 The Tempest

The tempest is most important symbol in the play. The tempest that begins the play, and which puts all of Prospero's enemies at his disposal, symbolizes the suffering Prospero endured, and which he wants to inflict on others. All of those shipwrecked are put at the mercy of the sea, just as Prospero and his infant daughter were put twelve years ago, when some loyal friends helped them out to sea in a ragged little boat (see I.ii.144–151). Prospero must make his enemies suffer as he has suffered so that they will learn from their suffering, as he has from his. The tempest is also a symbol of Prospero's magic, and of the frightening, potentially malevolent side of his power.

4.5.2 The Game of Chess

The final goal in the game of chess is to checkmate the king. That, at the simplest level, is the symbolic significance of Prospero revealing Ferdinand and Miranda playing chess in the final scene. Prospero has caught the king—Alonso—and reproached him for his treachery. In doing so, Prospero has made Alonso's son marry his own daughter without the king's knowledge, a deft political scheme that assures Alonso's support because Alonso will have no interest in upsetting a dukedom to which his own son is heir. This is the final move in Prospero's plot, which began with the tempest. He has plotted to land the different passengers of Alonso's ship on and around the island with the skill of a great chess player.

Caught up in their game, Miranda and Ferdinand also symbolize something ominous about Prospero's power. They do not even notice the others staring at them for a few lines. "Sweet lord, you play me false," Miranda says, and Ferdinand assures her that he "would not for the world" do so (V.i.174–176). The theatrical tableau is almost too perfect: Ferdinand and Miranda, suddenly and unexpectedly revealed behind a curtain, playing chess and talking gently of love and faith, seem entirely removed from the world around them. Though he has promised to give up his magic, Prospero still seems to see his daughter as a mere pawn in his game.

4.5.3 Prospero's Books

Like the tempest, Prospero's books are a symbol of his power. "Remember / First to possess his books," Caliban says to Stephano and Trinculo, "for without them / He's but a sot" (III.ii.86–88). The books are also, however, a symbol of Prospero's dangerous desire to withdraw entirely from the world. It was his devotion to study that put him at the mercy of his ambitious brother, and it is this same devotion to study that has made him content to raise Miranda in isolation. Yet, Miranda's isolation has made her ignorant of where she came from (see I.ii.33–36), and Prospero's own isolation provides him with little company. In order to return to the world where his knowledge means something more than power, Prospero must let go of his magic.

4.6 Check your progress

Choose the correct option given below:

1. The..... critics view that *The Tempest* is about the colonization of the island.
(A) Elizabethan (B) Shakespearean (C) Postcolonial (D) Modern
2. Prospero's books are symbol of.....
(A) Loneliness (B) Power (C) Poverty (D) Love
3. In the play *The Tempest*, the reconciliation is achieved through.....
(A) Revenge (B) Love (C) Magic (D) Forgiveness
4. Generally, the characters in the Masque are.....
(A) gods and nymphs (B) villains (C) humans (D) Animals
5. is emphasized as a highest quality in Miranda.
(A) Virginitv (B) Beauty (C) Obedience (D) Serenity
6. Sycorax was banished from
(A) Algeria (B) Italy (C) England (D) Virginia
7. is the goddess of fertility and of harvest.
(A) Iris (B) Juno (C) Ceres (D) Ariel

8. In view of the postcolonial critics, is the native of the island.
(A) Miranda (B) Prospero (C) Antonio (D) Caliban
9. *The Tempest* is grouped with *Pericles*, *Cymbeline* and as “romances”.
(A) *The Winter’s Tale* (B) *Hamlet* (C) *King Lear* (D) *Othello*

4.7 Key

- 1) Post-colonial
- 2) Power
- 3) Forgiveness
- 4) Gods and nymphs
- 5) Virginitv
- 6) Algeria
- 7) Ceres
- 8) Caliban
- 9) *The Winter's Tale*

4.8 Exercises

1. Comment on the play *The Tempest* as a Political Romance.
2. Discuss various themes of the play *The Tempest*.
3. What is Motif? Which motifs have been used in the play *The Tempest*?
4. Comment on the Symbols used in the play *The Tempest*.
5. Write Short notes on the following.
 - a) Prospero
 - b) Miranda
 - c) Caliban
 - d) Ariel
 - e) Forgiveness and Reconciliation in *The Tempest*
 - f) The attraction of Ruling a Colony in *The Tempest*

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Unit-5

The Glass Menagerie : General Introduction Tennessee Williams

(Part-I)

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5.0 Objectives:

After studying this unit you will be able to :

- Understand the type of the play
- Understand Tennessee Williams' contribution to drama
- Understand the psychological aspect Tennessee Williams deals with
- Study the characters in the play and the problems they confront
- Study the sources, setting and structure of the play

5.1 Introduction to the Dramatist:

A) Tennessee Williams' life:

It is very much important to study the life of Tennessee Williams because more than with most authors, Tennessee Williams' personal life and experiences have been the direct subject matter for his dramas. He uses his experiences so as to universalize them through the means of the stage. Thus, his life is utilized over and over again in the creation of his dramas.

Tennessee Williams was born Thomas Lanier Williams in Columbus, Mississippi in 1911. Because his father was a traveling salesman and was often away from home, he lived the first ten years of his life in his maternal grandfather, an Episcopal rector's home. His father was a loud, outgoing, hard-drinking, and boisterous man who bordered on the vulgar, at least as far as the young, sensitive Tennessee Williams was concerned. In contrast to his father, his mother seemed to be rather quiet and possessive, demonstrating a tremendous attachment to her children. Tennessee was himself a rather delicate child who was plagued with several serious childhood diseases which kept him from attending regular school. Instead, he read profusely in his grandfather's library.

An average student and social outcast in high school, Williams turned to the movies and writing for solace. At sixteen, Williams won five dollars in a national competition for his answer to the question "Can a good wife be a good sport?"; his answer was published in *Smart Set* magazine. The next year, he published a horror story in a magazine called *Weird Tales*, and the year after that he entered the University of Missouri as journalism major. While there, he wrote his first plays. Before Williams could receive his degree, however, his father, outraged because Williams had failed a required ROTC (Reserve Officers' Training Corps) program course, forced him to withdraw from school and go to work at the same shoe company where he himself worked.

Williams worked at the shoe factory for three years, a job that culminated in a minor nervous breakdown. After that, he returned to college, this time at Washington University in St. Louis. While he was studying there, a St. Louis theater group produced his plays *The Fugitive Kind* and *Candles to the Sun*. Personal problems led Williams to drop out of Washington University and enroll in the University of Iowa. While he was in Iowa, his sister, Rose, underwent a lobotomy, which left her

institutionalized for the rest of her life. Despite this trauma, Williams finally graduated in 1938. In the years that followed, he lived a bohemian life, working menial jobs and wandering from city to city. He continued to work on drama, however, receiving a Rockefeller grant and studying playwriting at the New School in New York. During the early years of World War II, Williams worked in Hollywood as a scriptwriter.

Around 1941, Williams began the work that would become *The Glass Menagerie*. The play evolved from a short story entitled “Portrait of a Girl in Glass,” which focused more completely on Laura than the play does. In December of 1944, *The Glass Menagerie* was staged in Chicago, with the collaboration of a number of well-known theatrical figures. When the play first opened, the audience was sparse, but the Chicago critics raved about it, and eventually it was playing to full houses. In March of 1945, the play moved to Broadway, where it won the prestigious New York Drama Critics’ Circle Award. This highly personal, explicitly autobiographical play earned Williams fame, fortune, and critical respect, and it marked the beginning of a successful run that would last for another ten years. Two years after *The Glass Menagerie*, Williams won another Drama Critics’ Circle Award and a Pulitzer Prize for *A Streetcar Named Desire*. Williams won the same two prizes again in 1955, for *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*.

The impact of success on Williams’ life was colossal and, in his estimation, far from positive. In an essay entitled “The Catastrophe of Success,” he outlines, with both light humor and a heavy sense of loss, the dangers that fame poses for an artist. For years after he became a household name, Williams continued to mine his own experiences to create pathos-laden works. Alcoholism, depression, thwarted desire, loneliness in search of purpose, and insanity were all part of Williams’ world. Since the early 1940s, he had been a known homosexual, and his experiences in an era and culture unfriendly to homosexuality certainly affected his work. After 1955, Williams began using drugs, and he would later refer to the 1960s as his “stoned age.” He suffered a period of intense depression after the death of his longtime partner in 1961 and, six years later, entered a psychiatric hospital in St. Louis. He continued to write nonetheless, though most critics agree that the quality of his work diminished in his later life. His life’s work adds up to twenty-five full-length plays, five screenplays, over seventy one-act plays, hundreds of short stories, two novels,

poetry, and a memoir; five of his plays were also made into movies. Williams died from choking in a drug-related incident in 1983.

B) Williams' Dramatic Career:

After Eugene O'Neill, Tennessee Williams' has emerged as the most outstanding playwright in the American theatre. He has portrayed with great truth the plight of the sensitive and delicate individuals who cannot stand the shattering touch of reality. The world outside is dedicated to the myth of hard work, money and success. The individuals, who cannot fall in the line with the gigantic business machine of America, find themselves as outsiders. In a sense, they are failures. They withdraw themselves into the world of their own, a world of fantasy and illusion which is a law of their being. The typical Williams' characters have been called "fugitives". But reality makes its own severe demands, and the fragile and beautiful world of his characters is broken and they are left in a helpless pitiable state. Yet they have a tragic dignity and beauty.

Along with Arthur Miller, Williams is universally acknowledged as one of the two greatest American dramatists of the post-World War II era. His stature is based almost entirely upon works he completed during the first half of his career. He earned Pulitzer Prizes for *A Streetcar Named Desire* (1947) and *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* (1955) and New York Drama Critics Circle Awards for *The Glass Menagerie* (1945), *Streetcar*, *Cat*, and *The Night of the Iguana* (1961). His later plays are considered by critics to be derivative of and less successful than his earlier works. Williams's lyrical style and his thematic concerns are distinctive in American theater; his material came almost exclusively from his inner life and was little influenced by other dramatists or by contemporary events. One critic noted, "Williams has remained aloof from trends in American drama, continuing to create plays out of the same basic neurotic conflicts in his own personality."

Recurrent in Williams's work is the conflict between reality and illusion, which Williams sometimes equates with a conflict between truth and beauty. A whole range of thematic concerns center around human sexuality: sex as life-affirming, contrasted with death and decay; sex as redemptive, contrasted with sex as sin; sex as an escape from the world, and sex as a way of being at one with the world. Williams followed D. H. Lawrence in attaching a cosmic significance to sex, and audiences and critics initially saw his "preoccupation" with sex and violence as perversion. Williams's

protagonists are usually lonely, vulnerable dreamers and misfits who confront stronger, more worldly characters. Williams shows the attractive and unattractive qualities of both types of people, but critics agree that he identifies more with the "lost souls," exemplified by Blanche DuBois of *Streetcar*. While the vision of human nature and the world usually presented in Williams's plays ranges from bleak to sordid, in some he offers comfort in the form of a transitory moment of human communication—the type which Blanche ironically refers to in *Streetcar* as "the kindness of strangers."

Williams once told an interviewer, "My work is *emotionally* autobiographical. It has no relationship to the actual events of my life, but it reflects the emotional currents of my life." Critics and biographers have made much use of Williams's family background as a means of analyzing his plays. Williams's father, Cornelius, was a coarse businessman from a prominent Tennessee family who traveled constantly and moved his family several times during the first decade of Williams's life. Biographers say that Cornelius called his son "Miss Nancy" because the child preferred books to sports. His mother, Edwina, was a southern belle and the daughter of a clergyman; Williams portrays her in his plays as domineering and possessive. Williams was very close to his older sister, Rose, who was institutionalized for schizophrenia for much of her life. His insight into lonely, outcast characters, as well as the warring inclinations towards Puritanism and liberality demonstrated in his plays, is often traced to his family life.

Williams's most explicit dramatic portrayal of his family occurs in *The Glass Menagerie*. The play is set in St. Louis, where the Williams family lived after 1918. Tom, the narrator of the play, dreams of being a writer and represents Williams. Tom's sister, Laura, is crippled both physically and socially. His mother, Amanda, is a fading southern belle who lives in the past. The action of the play concerns Amanda persuading Tom to bring to the house a "gentleman caller," whom they hope will marry Laura and provide for her future. Tom brings a man who is already engaged, upsetting his mother and causing Laura to retreat more deeply into her fantasy world of records and her glass animal collection. Tom then leaves his family, following in his father's footsteps. The simplicity of *Menagerie's* plot is counterbalanced by lyrical language and profuse symbolism, which some critics consider overwhelming. However, this emotionally compelling play was extremely popular, and Williams followed its formula in his later work. Laura is a typical

Williams heroine in that she is too fragile to live in the real world. Laura's and Amanda's escapes from the world through fantasy and living in the past, respectively, foreshadow later plays where the characters escape through alcohol and sex.

Williams established an international reputation with his next play, *A Streetcar Named Desire*, which many critics consider his best work. The play begins with the arrival of Blanche at the home of her sister, Stella, and her brother-in-law, Stanley, a lusty, crude, working-class man. Blanche has presided over the decay and loss of her family's estate and has witnessed the suicide of her young husband. She comes to Stella and Stanley seeking comfort and security, but clashes with Stanley. While Stella is in the hospital giving birth, Stanley rapes Blanche, causing her to lose what little is left of her sanity. At the end, Blanche is committed to a sanitarium. In *Streetcar*, Williams uses Blanche and Stanley to illustrate dichotomies and conflicts, several of which recur in his plays: illusion vs. truth, weakness vs. strength, and the power of sexuality to both destroy and redeem. But he does not allow either character to become one-dimensional or to dominate the audience's sympathies. Stanley's brutishness is balanced by his love for Stella, his dislike of hypocrisy, and his justifiable anger at Blanche's mockery of him and her intrusion on his home. Blanche's hypocrisy—her pretentious refinement despite her promiscuity—is balanced by the audience's knowledge of the ordeals she has endured and by her gentleness and capacity for love. Williams's skillful balancing of Stanley and Blanche and the qualities each represents, both in *Streetcar*'s dialogue and plot and on a symbolic level, has provided subject matter for many scholarly essays and has earned the admiration of critics. Some find that Williams's portrayal of strengths and weaknesses in both characters is ambiguous and detracts from the play, but most contend that his thorough character development heightens dramatic interest in the conflicts they represent.

Although none of Williams's later plays attained the universal critical and popular acclaim of the first two, several works from the 1940s and 1950s are considered significant achievements in American drama. In *Summer and Smoke* (1948), Williams continues his exploration of the tension between the spirit and the flesh begun in *Streetcar*, and in *The Rose Tattoo* (1951), one of his most lighthearted plays, he celebrates the life-affirming power of sexuality. *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* is mainly concerned with questions of truth, lies, and self-deception, and contains some of Williams's most memorable characters: Brick, a weak man who drinks to forget

guilt; Maggie, his strong wife who is determined to save them both; and Big Daddy, whom critics see as a dramatization of Williams's own father. *The Night of the Iguana*, which Williams said is about "how to get beyond despair and still live," was his last play to win a major prize and heralded the end of Williams's period of critical and popular favor.

Later in his career the "emotional currents" of Williams's life were at a low ebb. Such plays as *Suddenly Last Summer* (1958) and *Sweet Bird of Youth* (1959), which are filled with violence, grotesquerie, and black comedy, reflected Williams's traumatic emotional state. In his *Memoirs* (1975), Williams referred to the 1960s as his "Stoned Age," and he explained in an interview that "after 1955, specifically after *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* ... I needed [drugs, caffeine, and alcohol] to give me the physical energy to work.... But I am a compulsive writer. I have tried to stop working and I am bored to death." Williams continued to produce plays until his death, but critical reception became increasingly negative. Much of Williams's later work consisted of rewriting his earlier plays and stories, and his new material showed little artistic development, according to critics. Gore Vidal said in 1976, "Tennessee is the sort of writer who does not develop; he simply continues. By the time he was an adolescent he had his themes.... I am not aware that any new information (or feeling?) has got through to him in the [past] twenty-eight years." It was not only a lack of new themes which caused critics to denounce Williams's late work, but the absence of freshness and dramatic soundness in his treatment of these themes. Gerald Weales, a noted Williams scholar, voiced the critical consensus when he said, "Audiences have withdrawn from Williams—I suspect, not because his style has changed or his concerns altered, but because in his desperate need to cry out he has turned away from the sturdy dramatic containers which once gave the cry resonance and has settled for pale imitations of familiar stage images ... and has substituted lyric argument for dramatic language."

Williams was subject to much negative and even hostile criticism for a writer of his stature. Many of the qualities for which he is faulted in his less successful works are directly related to those for which he is praised in his earlier successes. His lyricism and use of symbols are hallmarks of such plays as *Streetcar*, but in other plays critics accuse him of being overly sentimental or heavy-handed when he allows symbols to take the place of characterization through dialogue. Williams is lauded for his compassionate understanding of the spiritually downtrodden, but he has

sometimes been accused of crossing the line between sympathetic interest and perverse sensationalism in his portrayal of these characters. Although critics are nearly unanimous in expressing their disappointment and sadness that the mastery of Williams's early work was not continued in his later plays, they were quick to point out upon Williams's death that his contributions to American theater had been remarkable. This opinion was expressed in an editorial in *The Nation*: "The plays for which Williams will be remembered ... are not the 'first act of some mysteriously unfinished life in art—they *are* that life. They transformed the American stage, they purified our language, they changed the way we see ourselves. None of his later plays, however erratic they may have been, diminish that accomplishment by so much as a hair."

5.2 The Glass Menagerie

5.2.1 The Sequence of Time in the Play

The Glass Menagerie produced in 1944, indicates Time as follows. "Now and the Past" the past refers to the 1930's when the U.S.A. was passing through economic depression. The scenes take place from the middle of February to the end May, a period of three months and a half in the following manner:

- Scene One : Evening in the middle of February.
- Scene Second : Afternoon in the same time.
- Scene Three : Evening in the late winter and early spring.
- Scene Four : Morning ---5to 7 o'clock
- Scene Five : Evening -- early dusk-spring.
- Scene Six : Evening – Friday- 5 o'clock – late spring (before the end of May)
- Scene Seven : Half an hour later than Scene Six.

5.2.2 Plot Overview

"Yes, I have tricks in my pocket; I have things up my sleeve. But I am the opposite of a stage magician. He gives you illusion that has the appearance of truth. I give you truth in the pleasant disguise of illusion."

The beginning of Tom's opening soliloquy.

The Glass Menagerie is a *memory play*. It is introduced to the audience by Tom, the narrator and protagonist of the play. As a memory play, it is based on his recollection of his mother Amanda and his sister Laura. Because the play is based on memory, Tom cautions the audience that what they see may not be precisely what happened. Tom is set in St. Louis in 1937. He is an aspiring poet who toils in a shoe warehouse to support his mother, Amanda, and sister, Laura. Mr. Wingfield, Tom and Laura's father, ran off years ago and, except for one postcard, has not been heard from since.

Amanda, originally from a genteel Southern family, regales her children frequently with tales of her idyllic youth and the scores of suitors who once pursued her. She is disappointed that Laura, who wears a brace on her leg and is painfully shy, does not attract any gentlemen callers. She enrolls Laura in a business college, hoping that she will make her own and the family's fortune through a business career. Weeks later, however, Amanda discovers that Laura's crippling shyness has led her to drop out of the class secretly and spend her days wandering the city alone. Amanda then decides that Laura's last hope must lie in marriage and begins selling magazine subscriptions to earn the extra money she believes will help to attract suitors for Laura. Meanwhile, Tom, who loathes his warehouse job, finds escape in liquor, movies, and literature, much to his mother's chagrin. During one of the frequent arguments between mother and son, Tom accidentally breaks several of the glass animal figurines that are Laura's most prized possessions.

Amanda and Tom discuss Laura's prospects, and Amanda asks Tom to keep an eye out for potential suitors at the warehouse. Tom selects Jim O'Connor, a casual friend, and invites him to dinner. Amanda quizzes Tom about Jim and is delighted to learn that he is a driven young man with his mind set on career advancement. She prepares an elaborate dinner and insists that Laura wear a new dress. At the last minute, Laura learns the name of her caller; as it turns out, she had a devastating crush on Jim in high school. When Jim arrives, Laura answers the door, on Amanda's orders, and then quickly disappears, leaving Tom and Jim alone. Tom confides to Jim that he has used the money for his family's electric bill to join the merchant marine and plans to leave his job and family in search of adventure. Laura refuses to eat dinner with the others, feigning illness. Amanda, wearing an ostentatious dress from her glamorous youth, talks vivaciously with Jim throughout the meal.

As dinner is ending, the lights go out as a consequence of the unpaid electric bill. The characters light candles, and Amanda encourages Jim to entertain Laura in the living room while she and Tom clean up. Laura is at first paralyzed by Jim's presence, but his warm and open behavior soon draws her out of her shell. She confesses that she knew and liked him in high school but was too shy to approach him. They continue talking, and Laura reminds him of the nickname he had given her: "Blue Roses," an accidental corruption of pleurosis, an illness Laura had in high school. He reproaches her for her shyness and low self-esteem but praises her uniqueness. Laura then ventures to show him her favorite glass animal, a unicorn. Jim dances with her, but in the process, he accidentally knocks over the unicorn, breaking off its horn. Laura is forgiving, noting that now the unicorn is a normal horse. Jim then kisses her, but he quickly draws back and apologizes, explaining that he was carried away by the moment and that he actually has a serious girlfriend. Resigned, Laura offers him the broken unicorn as a souvenir.

Amanda enters the living room, full of good cheer. Jim hastily explains that he must leave because of an appointment with his fiancée. Amanda sees him off warmly but, after he is gone, turns on Tom, who had not known that Jim was engaged. Amanda accuses Tom of being an inattentive, selfish dreamer and then throws herself into comforting Laura. From the fire escape outside of their apartment, Tom watches the two women and explains that, not long after Jim's visit, he gets fired from his job and leaves Amanda and Laura behind. Years later, though he travels far, he finds that he is unable to leave behind guilty memories of Laura.

5.2.3 Structure of the Play

The structure of the play involves the presentation of the scenes through the memory of one of the characters. Tom Wingfield is both the narrator and a character in the play. The separate scenes, then, should be seen as part of Tom's memory of a crucial time in his life. The scenes do not function to give us a traditional plot or story-line, but, instead, they are selected to give the audience a slice of life that the author once lived through. In his own world, he wants to present truth through illusion; that is, he wants to try to say something about his life by recalling certain scenes of his past life. Thus the play is structured upon the principle of presenting a series of episodes which should accumulate to make a total comment about a specific life.

This type of structure forces Tom to be both a narrator and a character in the play. He must let the audience know that these are scenes from memory and that he is both the person remembering them and the person centrally involved in the scenes. Some critics have objected to this structure because, as they point out, Tom could not possibly know what happened in the scene between Laura and the gentleman caller. But as Tom suggests, he takes the license of a poet and projects himself into scenes in order to present poetic truths.

The stage directions call for the use of several technical devices in order to convey the idea that this is a memory play. For example, some of the scenes should be presented with some type of net or gauze between the audience and the actors, or in many places, Williams suggests the use of titles and images to be projected on a scene in order to force or reinforce the idea of memory and to recall certain events that occurred during the time of the play. Others are supposed to be used to suggest some symbolic aspect of the play. But when the play is produced, they are virtually never used. Most directors feel that the play is sufficient without the extra use of images. In fact, most directors feel that the use of these images would detract from the central action of the play. But the point is that Williams included them so as to help with the structure of the play as a memory play.

5.2.4 Autobiographical Elements

The characters and story mimic Williams's own life more closely than any of his other works. Williams (whose real name was Thomas) would be Tom, his mother, Amanda. His sickly and mentally unstable older sister Rose provides the basis for the fragile Laura (whose nickname in the play is "Blue Roses", a result of a bout of pleurosis as a high school student), though it has also been suggested that Laura may incorporate aspects of Williams himself, referencing his introverted nature and obsessive focus on a part of life (writing for Williams and glass animals in Laura's case). Williams, who was close to Rose growing up, learnt to his horror that in 1943 in his absence his sister had been subjected to a botched lobotomy. Rose was left incapacitated (and institutionalized) for the rest of her life. With the success of *The Glass Menagerie*, Williams was to give half of the royalties from the play to his mother. He later designated half of the royalties from his play *Summer and Smoke* to provide for Rose's care, arranging for her move from the state hospital to a private

sanitarium. Eventually he was to leave the bulk of his estate to ensure Rose's continuing care. Rose died in 1996.

5.2.5 Summary

Scene 1

At the rise of the curtain, we see an old-fashioned tenement apartment. We can also see the narrow alleyways which surround the apartment. Tom Wingfield, the narrator, enters and addresses the audience. Tom explains that the play is a memory play and that he is one of the characters in the play. The other characters are his mother Amanda, his sister Laura, and a gentleman caller. There is another character that never appears. This is his father who deserted the family some long years ago — "He was a telephone man who fell in love with long distances!"

As the action begins, Amanda is instructing Tom about how to eat every bite of his food until Tom yells at her that he can't enjoy a bite of his food because of her constant nagging. Amanda then tells Laura to stay fresh and pretty for the gentlemen callers. Laura tells her she isn't expecting any, and Amanda tells how one Sunday afternoon in Blue Mountain, Mississippi, she had seventeen gentlemen callers all on one afternoon. Tom and Laura have heard this story many times but listen patiently to it again. Amanda then sends Laura into the living room to practice her shorthand or typing and to stay pretty for the gentlemen callers in spite of Laura's reassertion that there will be none.

Scene 2

Laura is sitting alone playing with her glass collection. When she hears Amanda ascending the stairs, she immediately hides the collection and sits before the typing chart pretending to study it. Amanda comes in and theatrically drops her gloves on the floor. When Laura asks her what is wrong, Amanda accuses her of deception. Amanda tells Laura that she was by the business school in order to inquire about Laura's progress. It was then that she found out that Laura had not been attending school. Amanda is depressed about losing the fifty dollars tuition and about Laura's future. Laura explains that on the day she was supposed to take her first speed test in typing, she became sick and threw up on the floor. Since then she has been pretending to go to school, but instead she has been going to the museums and to the

bird houses in the zoo and to a big glass house where they “raise the tropical flowers.”

Amanda wonders what will then happen to a girl who can't work and who has no gentlemen callers. She then wonders if Laura has ever liked a boy. Laura tells about a boy in high school named Jim with whom she was infatuated. He used to call her "blue roses" because she had had pleurosis, which he thought sounded like "blue roses." Amanda then decides that Laura must get married. Laura protests that she is a cripple, but Amanda refuses to allow Laura to use that word and insists that all Laura needs to do is to develop charm.

Scene 3

Tom explains how his mother, once she had decided that a gentleman caller was necessary, set all her energy to preparing for one. She began a campaign on the telephone to recruit subscribers for a popular woman's magazine.

When the scene opens, Tom and his mother are arguing about a book by D. H. Lawrence that she took back to the library because she refuses to have such a hideous book in her house. Tom reminds her that he pays the rent on the house. Tom then prepares to leave to go to the movies. Amanda screams at him that he can't stay out late at night and still do a good day's work. Tom reminds her how much he hates his job at the warehouse. When Amanda accuses Tom of doing something he is ashamed of every night and accuses him of lying about going every night to the movies, Tom becomes infuriated and tells his mother a fantastic tale and ends by calling her an "ugly — babbling — witch." Tom tries to get his coat on and in his rapid struggle to leave, he throws his coat against the wall and shatters some of Laura's glass menagerie.

Scene 4

At the beginning of the scene, Tom is just returning from the movies. He explains to Laura, who is awake, that the movie was very long, and there was a magician who could perform tricks such as escaping from a coffin which had been nailed shut. The scene fades out and comes in again with Amanda calling for Tom to "rise and shine!" Laura asks Tom to apologize to Amanda for their argument of the preceding evening. Amanda sends Laura to the store for butter and tells her to charge it even though Laura has qualms about charging anything else. As Laura leaves, she trips on the fire escape and Tom rushes to help her. After she is gone, Tom slowly

and reluctantly apologizes to Amanda. Then almost immediately, Amanda begins to tell Tom how and what to eat for his breakfast. But mainly, she wants to talk about Laura. Amanda feels that Laura broods about Tom's unhappiness. She then inquires as to why Tom goes so often to the movies. Tom explains that he likes adventure. Amanda maintains that a man finds adventure in his work or else he does without it. When Tom attempts to explain that man is, by instinct, a lover, hunter, and so forth, Amanda recoils and will not listen to talk about instinct.

Amanda tells Tom that they must be making plans for Laura. She has seen the letter that Tom has received from the Merchant Marine and knows that he is planning to leave them, but she tells Tom that he must first see to it that Laura is provided for, because Laura can't spend her life playing old phonograph records and fooling with "those pieces of glass." Amanda then asks Tom to see if he can find some nice young man at the warehouse and bring him home for dinner in order to meet Laura. Tom promises to try to find someone and immediately Amanda renews her campaign to get more subscribers for her magazine.

Scene 5

The scene opens with Amanda instructing Tom to comb his hair and not to smoke so much. Tom turns to the audience and tells about the Paradise Dance Hall across the alley and how adventure was to be found in other parts of the world. When Amanda sees the new moon, she makes a wish; this reminds Tom of Amanda's constant wish for a gentleman caller for Laura. He tells her that the gentleman caller is coming tomorrow. Amanda protests that she doesn't have time to get ready, but Tom tells her she shouldn't make a fuss over this boy. After Amanda finds out that his name is O'Connor, she decides to have a salmon loaf. She then inquires if Mr. O'Connor drinks because "old maids are better off than wives of drunkards!" Amanda asks how much money Mr. O'Connor makes a month and decides that eighty-five dollars is just enough for a family man. She is very pleased to find out that he goes to night school and is trying to improve himself.

Tom finally warns Amanda that Mr. O'Connor doesn't yet know about Laura. Amanda thinks he will be glad he was invited to dinner when he sees how pretty and lovely Laura is. Tom tries to make Amanda see that Laura is different from other people. He doesn't want Amanda to expect too much from Laura. When he refers to her as crippled, Amanda reminds him that he is never to use that word. But Tom also

means that Laura is different in other ways because "she lives in a world of her own — a world of — little glass ornaments" and old phonograph records. He then leaves to go to the movies. Amanda immediately calls Laura to come wish upon the moon and tells her to wish for "happiness" and "good fortune!"

Scene 6

Tom explains about Jim O'Connor. In high school, he had been the outstanding boy who had won basketball games and the silver cup in debating. But apparently his speed slowed down after graduation because he was holding a job not much better than Tom's. But Tom explains that Jim was his only friend at the warehouse because Tom was valuable to Jim's ego as a person who could remember his greatness in high school.

The scene then opens on Amanda and Laura as they are preparing for the arrival of the gentleman caller. Laura complains that her mother is making her nervous, but Amanda continues to fuss over Laura and even uses two powder puffs to pad Laura's breasts. Amanda goes away to dress herself and appears a little later wearing a very girlish frock held over from her youth and carrying a bunch of jonquils — "the legend of her youth." Amanda tells Laura that she is to open the door when Mr. O'Connor comes. Laura is taken aback by this name and when she hears that the first name is Jim, she tells Amanda that she won't be able to come to the dinner table. Since this would destroy all of Amanda's plans, she will not abide Laura's "silliness." Amanda disappears into the kitchen, and, when the doorbell rings, she calls merrily to Laura to answer the door. Laura begs her mother to open the door and tells her that she is sick. Amanda forces Laura to open the door. After she has let them in, Laura retreats as quickly as possible into the other room. Tom and Jim talk about the warehouse. Jim warns Tom that he is on the verge of losing his job, but Tom replies that his future plans don't include working at the warehouse. He has used the money for the last light bill to pay his dues at the Merchant Seaman's Union. But he warns Jim not to mention it because his mother doesn't yet know of his plans.

Amanda comes in and meets Jim O'Connor. She immediately bombards him with a long talk about weather, her gentlemen callers, and her past life. When Tom comes back from checking on the supper, he says that supper is already on the table and that Laura is not feeling well but Amanda refuses to begin supper until Laura comes. Laura enters and stumbles over a chair. Finally, Amanda notices that Laura is

actually sick and tells Tom to help her to the living room. Laura lies shuddering on the couch while the others begin the evening meal.

Scene 7

As the curtain rises, we see Laura still lying huddled on the sofa. Just as the others are finishing dinner, the lights go out, but Amanda calmly lights the candles and asks Jim if he would check on the fuses. She realizes that Tom probably didn't pay the light bill, so as punishment she makes him help with the dishes while Mr. O'Connor keeps Laura company. She asks him to take Laura a little wine to drink.

As Jim O'Connor approaches Laura, she sits up nervously. But Jim casually sits on the floor and asks Laura if she doesn't like to sit on the floor. He then chews some gum and offers her some. He asks her frankly why she is shy and refers to her as "an old-fashioned type of girl." When Laura asks him if he has kept up with his singing, Jim then remembers that they knew each other in high school. When Laura mentions that she was always late for their singing class because she was crippled and her brace clumped so loudly, Jim maintains that he never noticed it. He thinks that Laura was too self-conscious.

Laura brings out the high school year book which has pictures of Jim singing the lead role in an operetta. Laura tells Jim that she always wanted to ask him to autograph her book, but he was so terribly popular. Jim gallantly signs it for her now. When Laura asks Jim about his high school girl friend, he tells her that it was just rumor. Jim wonders what Laura has done since high school. She tells him about the business college and begins to tell about her glass collection; then Jim interrupts her and explains how she has an inferiority complex. When he finishes, Laura shows him her glass collection. Even though Jim is afraid that he will break one, Laura tells him that he can handle them. She even shows him her prize — her glass unicorn which is thirteen years old. Jim wonders if the unicorn doesn't feel strange since it is so different. Laura tells him that the unicorn doesn't complain and seems to get along nicely with the other animals.

Jim hears some music from the neighboring dance hall and asks Laura to dance. Even though she protests that she can't, Jim insists and during the dance, they stumble against the table and they break the horn off the unicorn. Laura maintains now that it is like the other horses. Jim tries to tell Laura how different she is — that she has a charm that is as different as "blue roses." He then says that someone should

kiss Laura, and he leans over and kisses her. Almost immediately he knows that he has done the wrong thing, and he tells her that he shouldn't have kissed her because he is engaged to be married in the next month. After he finishes with his explanation, Laura gives him the broken unicorn. At this point Amanda enters with a pitcher of lemonade. After flitting about and chattering, she is about to leave when Jim explains that he has to go because he is engaged. Amanda is surprised and says that Tom didn't tell them that Jim was engaged. Jim explains that no one knows it yet, and then he leaves.

Amanda then calls Tom and accuses him of playing a joke on them by bringing home an engaged man. Even though Tom protests that he didn't know Jim was engaged, Amanda refuses to believe him. She holds Tom responsible for all of the expense involved in entertaining the gentleman caller and tells Tom that he is a selfish dreamer who never thinks about his "mother deserted and an unmarried sister who's crippled and has no job." So Tom does leave. But as the scene closes, Tom says that even though he left, he could never forget his sister. Wherever he goes, he still thinks about her.

5.3 Key Facts

Full title · *The Glass Menagerie*

Author · Tennessee Williams (born Thomas Lanier Williams III)

Type of work · Play

Genre · Tragedy; family drama

Language · English

Time and place written · 1941–1943; a number of American cities, including New York, St. Louis, and Los Angeles

Date of first publication · 1945

Publisher · Random House

Narrator · Tom Wingfield

Point of View · Tom both narrates and participates in the play. The older Tom remembers his youth and then becomes a younger Tom who participates in the action as scenes from his youth play out. The point of view of the older

Tom is reflective, and he warns us that his memory distorts the past. The younger Tom is impulsive and angry. The action sometimes consists of events that Tom does not witness; at these points, the play goes beyond simply describing events from Tom's own memory.

Tone · Tragic; sarcastic; bleak

Tense · The play uses both the present and past tenses. The older Tom speaks in the past tense about his recollections, and the younger Tom takes part in a play that occurs in the present tense.

Setting (time) · Tom, from an indefinite point in the future, remembers the winter and spring of 1937.

Setting (place) · An apartment in St. Louis

Protagonist · Tom Wingfield

Major Conflict · In their own ways, each of the Wingfields struggles against the hopelessness that threatens their lives. Tom's fear of working in a dead-end job for decades drives him to work hard creating poetry, which he finds more fulfilling. Amanda's disappointment at the fading of her glory motivates her attempts to make her daughter, Laura, more popular and social. Laura's extreme fear of seeing Jim O'Connor reveals her underlying concern about her physical appearance and about her inability to integrate herself successfully into society.

Rising Action · After Laura admits to leaving a business course that would have allowed her to get a job, her mother, Amanda, decides that Laura must get married; Tom tells Amanda that he is going to bring Jim O'Connor to dinner; Amanda prepares extensively, hoping that Jim will become Laura's suitor.

Climax · Each character's struggle comes to a climax at different points. Tom's decision not to pay the electric bill and to use the money instead to leave his family in search of adventure reveals his initial, decisive break from his family struggles. When Jim breaks the horn from Laura's glass unicorn and announces that he is engaged, the possibility that he will help her overcome her self-doubt and shyness is also destroyed. When Amanda discovers that

Jim is engaged, she loses her hope that Laura will attain the popularity and social standing that Amanda herself has lost.

Falling Action · Laura gives Jim the broken unicorn as a souvenir; Jim leaves the house to pick up his girlfriend; Amanda accuses Tom of not having revealed that Jim was engaged. Addressing the audience, Tom explains that not long after that incident he left his family but was never able to emotionally leave Laura behind—in his later travels, he frequently felt a connection to her.

Themes · The difficulty of accepting reality; the impossibility of true escape; the unrelenting power of memory

Motifs · Abandonment; the words and images on the screen; music

Symbols · Laura’s glass menagerie; the glass unicorn; “Blue Roses”; the fire escape

Foreshadowing · Tom’s departure is foreshadowed by his frequent retreats to the fire escape and the image of a sailing vessel on the screen; the music from the Paradise Dance Hall across the street foreshadows Laura and Jim’s dancing; Jim’s breaking of the unicorn foreshadows his breaking of her heart.

5.4 Check your progress

- i) There are scene in the The Glass Menagerie.
- ii) The first production of the play took place on in
- iii) the scenes take place from the middle of to the end
- iv) The Glass Menagerie is a
- v) The First publication of the play
- vi) The tone of the play
- vii) The setting (place) of the play.
- viii) is a protagonist of play.

5.5 Keys

- i) Seven
- ii) December, 26, 1944 Chicago
- iii) February May
- iv) tragedy , Family drama
- v) 1945
- vi) Tragic: sarcastic
- vii) An apartment in St. Louis
- viii) Tom Wing field.



Unit-6

The Glass Menagerie

(Part-II)

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6.0 Objectives

After studying this unit you will be able

- i) To discuss the characters of the play in detail.
- ii) To discuss theme in the play.
- iii) To discuss plot, symbol, diction etc.

The Glass Menagerie

6.1 Introduction

Tennessee Williams was a true artist. The play of William could only have been his – they all projected his artistic identity. They left behind the naturalism of his

contemporaries and edged towards fantasy. Williams' love for the south and its tradition was as much due to his affinity for its romance as it was to his upbringing there.

Narrative Device

The Glass Menagerie begins as the narrator son steps out to deliver the first of a playful of poetry. The narrative device, an old one, is also an awkward one, introducing on a plays magic. Tom's periodic speeches to the audience interrupt the flowing mood more than one, and what he has to say is usually unnecessary.

Mother's Love

Amanda is not just a mother – her reluctance to let her chicks go. She is not just a frustrated woman abandoned by her husband to a hopeless present. She is all the good and bad of mother love, bewildered by the escape that each member of his family has found for himself.

Fugitives from Reality

For as Amanda has fled into past that she imagines as lushly belle of the ball, so her daughter Laura has moved into her collection of glass animals and a life of withdrawal. And so the son Tom has fled to the Merchant Marine.

Symbolism

Laura is everybody who is left behind. If her lame fool is quietly symbolic of the emotional lameness in all of us, her one chance to be loved is everybody's. And the Gentleman Caller in his warmth and unavailability, is the worst pain life can inflict. The pain of betrayal by somebody who has really done nothing wrong and so can't be hated the Prince Charming who is already spoken for.

Value of Love

The Glass Menagerie is not built to carry a story line by line. It floats. It has no "message" – it is beyond time and into human emotion. And while its point is love, It isn't concerned with a boy – girl romance, sex or general love need but the quality of love that goes past the do – you – love – me and into the human heart.

Amanda's Romanticism

The action of the drama, involving only four characters, is build around Amanda and her effect upon her son and daughter. Amanda, an incurable romantic, lives by for the illusion of her youth. She has been deserted by her husband. She lives only for her children.

Laura's Fragile World

Laura, the daughter is the most pitiable of the three members of the family. A cripple and so abnormally shy that she cannot have even the most ordinary relationships with people, she takes refuge in her "glass menagerie", a collection of small glass animal figurines that symbolizes the fragility of her life and her retreat from reality.

The Gentleman Caller

After the dinner that Amanda has produced in a desperate effort to impress him, Jim, in his awkward fashion, does give Laura a flash of self – confidence, enough to enable us to see what she might become if she could ever break out of her shell. It is the final irony of the play that Amanda who blames the entire catastrophe on her son, drives him from her in their final quarrel with the accusation that he is a dreamer who lives in a world of illusion.

Failure of Tom

Tom, the frustrated son, is the least successful of the characters, for he is the familiar type of the young man with literary ambitious imprisoned in the deadly monotony of a job in a warehouse. Indeed, with his anguished revolt against his family, his furious outcries against his fate.

Stage Directions

Williams uses the long and involved stage directions, plus a very elaborate and complicated set of stage devices.

Not a Genuine Tragedy

Although in a pantomime scene at the end of the play, Amanda achieves sometimes like dignity as she comforts Laura, it cannot be said that the play reaches the heights of genuine tragedy. The characters, pathetic though they may be, are too trivial, to have in them the qualities of tragic greatness. The mood of the play is

pathetic, not tragic and that Williams has created a drama of gentle pathos rather than one of high tragedy.

6.2 Characterization

The Glass Menagerie has a small number of characters, and Williams explores the involutions of their mind in terms of their major preoccupations which may be expressed by recurrent speeches, action, or images in varying degrees and combinations. *The Glass Menagerie* has four characters. Williams presents not only their individual psychology but the complex pattern of tensions that exists among them.

I) MR. WINGFIELD

Mr. Wingfield, the father, does not appear on the stage, but he is very much present throughout the play. In the words of Tom : "He was a telephone man who fell in love with long distances ; he gave up his job with the telephone company and skipped the light fantastic out of town." It appears he sent home a picture postcard from Mazal-ton, on the pacific coast of Mexico with the message of two words : "Hellow-Good-bye ! " and no address. Williams writes in the stage direction of Scene One : "A blown-up photograph of the father hangs on the wall of the living-room,...It is the face of a very handsome young man in a doughboy's First World War cap. He is gallantly smiling, as if to say 'I will be smiling for ever'." Not only his photograph is in the Wingfield apartment, but Tom and Amanda refer to him on various occasions, and are conscious of what he did when he was with them. It is only Laura who does not mention him at all. He appears to be the silent commentator of what happens in the play.

Amanda's attitude to Wingfield is ambiguous. She was drawn to him in her Blue Mountain days by his charm. In Scene Two when Amanda has learnt that Laura has dropped out of the Business College, she advises her to develop charm and find a husband. Looking up at Wingfield's photograph, she tells Laura : "One thing your father had *plenty of*—was *charm I*" After all those gentlemen callers—planters and sons of planters—she had loved and married Wingfield, a telephone man. He was the pride of her life. But in Scene Six when she is entertaining Jim with the stories of the Old South, she is uncomfortable about Wingfield's picture for it reminds her failure to keep a husband and would she able to find one for Laura. In Scene Four she refers to Wingfield when she finds Tom living an irregular life, "I

see you taking after his ways!" Finally her fears come true when Tom abandons the family like Wingfield did a long time ago.

Equally ambiguous is Tom's attitude to his father. The opening soliloquy seems to express a flippant attitude : "There is a fifth character in the play who doesn't appear except in this larger-than-life-size photograph over the mantel." But it seems to hide a deeper admiration for the old man. In Scene Four Tom refers to his father when he wonders how a man could get out of a nailed-up coffin. The stage direction is : "As if in answer, the father's grinning photograph lights up." Of course, ultimately Tom follows in the footsteps of his father. Tom's love of Amanda and Laura holds him from deserting them, but he has to escape from the domestic trap in order to seek his fulfilment. In this Mr. Wingfield is the pathfinder.

II) AMANDA WINGFIELD

Amanda Wingfield is a Janus-faced character who looks two-ways—at the past and the present, and is not able to reconcile them. In the Production Notes to the play, Williams has pointed out the main features of her character as follows : "A little woman of great but confused vitality clinging frantically to another time and place... She is not paranoiac, but her life is paranoia. There is much to admire in Amanda, and as much to love and pity as there is to laugh at. Certainly she has endurance and a kind of heroism."

Amanda's preoccupation with past—her life in the American South —is the basic fact her being. She is a member of the 'Daughters of the Ammerican Revolution'. It the opening scene itself she is found recalling her life in Blue Moutain, Mississippi, when she was a young and beautiful woman much sought after by young men. Girls in the American South needed not only "a pretty face and a graceful figure but a nimble wit and a tongue to meet all occasions." In scene six she recalls how she had all these virtues in abundant measure, had led the cotillion, own the cakewalk twice at Sunset Hill, danced in the Governor's ball at Jackson, filled her house with, jonquil flowers —a kind of narcissus flower here symbolic of self love—and to crown all this she had entertained one Sunday afternoon no less than seventeen gentlemen callers—all rich planters and sons of planters She was supposed to marry one of the and raise her family on a large plantation with plenty of black servants. This is the dream of the Old south that Amanda repeats to Tom, Laura, and

Jim, and poetically to everyone she meets like the Ancient Mariner his tale in Coleridge's poem.

Amanda in Latin means "worthy of being loved," and throughout her life she has struggled to be loved. Her Blue Mountain life and the large number of gentlemen callers she had entertained show only this aspect of her nature. When the gentleman caller Jim O' Connor visits the Wingfield home and Laura is unable to entertain him, Amanda rises to the occasion and re-enacts an experience so dear to her. She has already added the new floor lamp and curtains to give a touch of elegance to the shabby surroundings for her apartment, and dressed herself in a girlish frock of yellowed voile of her bygone days, and now carries a bunch of jonquils. "Her youth is nearly revived," and she does what remains for her—to entertain the gentleman caller. She talks of her Blue Mountain days and plays the role of the Southern belle with such a gusto, such "gay laughter and chatter," Williams writes in the stage direction, that "Tom is embarrassed but after the first shock Jim reacts very warmly. Grins and chuckles, is altogether won over." She overplays her part with the gentleman caller of her daughter.

The tragedy of Amanda's life is that she married Mr. Wingfield, a telephone man, and not one of those rich plantation owners. This is symptomatic of what happened to the South—its decadence in the 1930's. Later most of her gentlemen callers had come to a sad end—either they had committed suicide or died in violent fights. She had married Mr. Wingfield because of his infinite charm, but as misfortune would have it he had disappeared after a few years of drunken and bohemian married life, leaving Amanda with the tough job of raising Tom and Laura, with the meagre income of Tom, living in the two room apartment in St. Louis is a struggle for survival. In order to make a little more money she tries to sell women magazine subscription to her friends. Thus the happy life she had hoped for has turned out to be the most frustrating, as she has to cope with the demands of life in an industrial city like St. Louis.

Amanda is a very dominating mother and wants total submission from her children. She does not understand that Tom wants to be a poet and that the warehouse is the last place on earth he loves. When Tom speaks of how man is ruled by instincts and of how man wants, to be a lover, a hunter, a fighter, she opposes him by arguing that instincts belong to animals, and that Christian adults look to "Superior things ! Things of the mind and the spirit !" But apart from such

ideological differences, what are more irritating to Tom are her lectures at the dining table about eating, rising early and such details. These have turned home life into a prison, a coffin-like existence from which he wants to escape.

While Tom can fight with Amanda and get away, Laura is in a pitiable state. Amanda's dominating spirit has a crippling effect on her. The critic Nancy Tischler observes that Laura's crippled state has a psychological basis : "It is Amanda's forcefulness that allows Laura to walk at all, but it is also Amanda's example that discourages Laura from walking naturally." Laura, is literally afraid of her mother when she has to explain her failure at Rubicam's Business College, or later when she is not willing to meet Jim O'Connor. Instead of trying to understand Laura's difficulties and encourage her, she scolds her and Laura becomes sick.

In spite of Amanda's ridiculous regressions to her past, and her domineering nature, there is a certain tragic dignity about her. As failure upon failure is heaped around her, she displays strength of mind to fight for her portion of life. Towards the end the play outlines the gradual destruction of Amanda's family as her attempt to find a husband for Laura ends in a fiasco, and Tom decides to follow the footsteps of his father. In the face of Buch a disaster Amanda displays tremendous endurance. Williams has written about this quality of Amanda in his Production Notes : "Certainly she (Amanda) has endurance and a kind of heroism..." That Laura should go to Rubicam's Business College and become self-supporting, is her plan. When Laura drop out of that, she immediately perceives that the only future for her is to secure a husband, and to this end all actions are turned especially after she learns Tom's intention of joining the Merchant Marine. In all this she displays a sure grasp of reality, but things go wrong and she is disappointed again. There ia a great deal of pathos and restraint in her statement after Jim's departure : "Our gentleman caller was engaged to be married !" Williams focuses upon her spirit of endurance once again as Tom utters the last soliloquy and a pantomime of Amanda and Laura is enacted : "Amanda appears to be making a comforting speech to Laura who is huddled upon the sofa. Now that we cannot hear the mother's speech, her silliness is gone and she has dignity and tragic beauty." One is reminded of the portrait of another heroic mother. Amanda has the heroic quality of endurance which alone can enable her to survive the test of life.

III) TOM WINGFIELD

Tom is the narrator-artist-participant in the play. He sets the mood of nostalgia with his soliloquies, and his relationships with his mother and sister form the substance of the play. The opening soliloquy in Scene One not only provides the necessary social background but performs a piece of exposition regarding the Wingfield family in St. Louis. The second soliloquy in Scene Three highlights Amanda's preoccupation with the image of the gentleman caller for that is the only salvation for Laura. The third soliloquy in Scene Five turns on the incongruity between the drabness of the domestic life and the adventure of the outside world. Scene Six opens with Tom's soliloquy which explains the nature of Jim O' Connor, the gentleman caller before he arrives on the scene. The play ends with Tom's final soliloquy of how he abandoned Amanda and Laura to join the Merchant Marine and sailed across the seas but carried the memory of his mother and sister throughout. Thus the five soliloquies in *The Glass Menagerie* lay open the innermost thoughts and feelings of Tom, and dramatise in a microcosm the agony of the Wingfield family. Another aspect of the soliloquies is their irony and distance which give a perspective for the reader/audience to examine the highly sentimental life of the Wingfield family.

Tom loves to be a poet he was “a poet’s weakness for symbols” and employees even Jim, the gentleman caller as “an emissary for a world of reality.” Jim call him Shakespear. In the Production notes, William describes him: “A poet with a job in the warehouse. His nature is not remorseless, but to escape from a trap he has to act without pity “ A part of his poetic nature is his perception that “Man is by instinct a lover, a hunter, a fighter and none of those instincts are given much play at the Wingerfield apartment and work in the shoe company are traps from which he has to escape, but he is not clear as to when and how to escape. His nightly visits to movies and magic shows are only an escape, activity from the boredom and tyranny of ordinary existence. But then this cannot go one for long. Tom realizes that he has to seek adventure and fulfillment of his instincts in real life. He cannot be like Jim, who would seek satisfaction in hard work and success the twin pillars of the American Dream. To Amanda’s call “Rise and shine !” his answer is : “I’ll rise – but I won’t shine.”

Tom loves his sister deeply for it is the one cord that attaches him to his family wherever he may go. “In Scene four when Tom comes homes at five o’clock in the

morning, it is Laura who lets him in and he tells her the story of movies and magic he saw that night. When he learns that the Jim is already engaged to be married, and Amanda accuses him of selfishness, he goes away like his father to join the Merchant Marine. What happens to Tom after that is endless travel and nostalgia. The anguished cry of Tom is: "Oh, Laura Laura, I tried to leave you behind me, but I am more faithful than I intended to be!"

Tom in the end does not undertake anything positive or creative. He is like Odysseus, the Greek hero, gone wrong and sour.

IV) LAURA WINGFIELD

She is a delicate, fragile, alienated person. Though a clear pool of light is thrown on her in the quarrel scene between Amanda and Tom, she lives in a world of shadows and recedes deeper into this dark world as the play proceeds. "Blue Roses!" the nickname for Laura focuses on her delicate beauty. In the second scene she is the very picture of prettiness and shyness. As Amanda tells her later, Laura has plenty of her father's charm. But it is not easy for her to survive in the world.

Laura realised early in life that she is one of the most vulnerable persons. Williams comments on her as follows : "A childhood illness has left her crippled, one leg slightly shorter than the other, and held in a brace." This is only an outward sign of her inferiority complex which probably developed because of her mother's absolutely dominating personality. While Tom fights with his mother as that is the only way of asserting his individuality, Laura merely submits to the supreme will of her mother. But she does not have the strength to play that role. Her extreme shyness caused by the crippled condition showed itself in Soldan high school, and she dropped out. Her failure at Rubicam's Business College is another episode that drives her to the life of an introvert. Even buying butter in the delicatessen is a problem to Laura.

Laura has taken refuge in the two-room-apartment life, with her mother as the guardian angel and her brother as the breadwinner. While the home is a prison to Tom, it is a haven of peace to Laura. Time does not lie heavy on her hand as phonograph music of the 1920's absorbs her. These are sentimental melodies of a bygone era as against the hot swing music and staccato rhythms of the Paradise Dance Hall which is opposite to the Wingfield apartment. In addition, these tunes are

recorded on "those worn-out phonograph records her father left as a painful reminder of him."

Laura's world is not only of sound but of glass, revolving, round her favorite collection of the glass menagerie. Williams has written of how she has "the lovely fragility of glass which is her image...Laura's separation (from life) increases till she is like a piece of her own glass collection, too exquisitely fragile to move from the shelf." Like glass, Laura is beautiful and fragile. In the opening of Scene Two she is seen in the most serene condition—seated on a delicate ivory chair at a clawfoot table, dressed in a violet kimono, washing and polishing her collection of glass animals to the sound of music. She proudly displays the glass menagerie to Jim, especially the thirteen-year-old unicorn. Jim awakens Laura but accidentally breaks the horn of the unicorn, symbolically indicating the fate of Laura towards the end of the play.

Laura's brief encounter with Jim O' Connor turns out to be climactic. She moves out of her world of music and glass, and imagines that she may love and be loved and marry Jim, her school-day hero. She reminisces of how he had called her 'Blue Roses', of how he had played the lead role in the school opera *The Pirates of Penzance*, and of how he had written a wonderful article in the magazine *The Torch*. Jim encourages her to shed her inferiority complex and think of herself as superior in some way. In fact, she is so charming. But the revelation of Jim's engagement to another girl brings Laura down from her hope of a bright married love and life to the stark reality of her alienation. She gives Jim the broken unicorn—a symbol of her own condition—as a souvenir. Nothing can alter Laura's loneliness, and she recedes into the broken world of music and glass figurines.

V) JIM O'CONNOR

Jim O'Connor, the gentleman caller, is described briefly by Williams as "a nice, ordinary young man." Tom in the opening soliloquy of the play comments: "He (Jim) is the most realistic character in the play, being an emissary from a world of reality that we were somehow *net* apart from...he is (also) the long delayed but always expected something that we lived for." But to Laura for whose sake he is invited, he turns out to be an intruder who awakens her but leaves her in a broken state.

The name of Jim D. O'Connor (the *D* is for Delaney) establishes him as an Irishman. Amanda exclaims that he is "Irish on both sides ! Gracious ! And doesn't

drink ?" Her fear that Laura should not be married to a drunkard as she was is understandable. That he has a sense of humour is revealed in the scene with Laura when he chews gum and declares that he is "comfortable as a cow". Tom speaks of him as a clean and robust young man : "He had tremendous Irish good nature and vitality -with the scrubbed and polished look of white Chinaware." In Soldan high school, Tom had known him as a hero: "He seemed to move in a continual spotlight. He was a star in basket-ball, captain of the debating club, president of the senior class and the glee club and he sang the male lead in the annual light operas." Laura later recalls how Jim had played the lead role in the school opera *The Pirates of Penzance*, and written a wonderful article in the school magazine *The Torch*. He was the most sought after young man in the school. All this had naturally built up a tremendous self-confidence in Jim, but something had gone wrong, for six years after he had left school, he -was only a clerk like Tom with the Continental Shoemakers.

Jim is an ardent advocate of the American Dream which believes in the myth of hard work and success. Through Jim, Williams satirizes this popular belief. With his job in the warehouse, Jim has taken evening courses in public speaking and electro-dynamics hoping to get a break as a public executive or as a radio engineer, for they are the things of the future. He has seen the exhibition Century of Progress in Chicago in which all the machines of modern science and technology had been displayed. He believes that the U.S.A. is on the road to knowledge, and power, and if a young man has the right connections he will be able to go up in life.

There is another aspect in Jim's character which is revealed in his meeting with Laura. Just as he awakens Laura's hopes of a normal life, she opens the dark abyss in his professional career. In trying to encourage Laura to be self-confident and optimistic, he stumbles on the facts of his own failure. He tells her : "But just look around you will see lots of people as disappointed as you are. For instance, I hoped when I was going to high school that I would be further along at this time, six years than I am now—". His words of encouragement do not seem that convincing. Though he tells Laura : "I am disappointed but I am not discouraged," and signs up her school-dance-programme card as his signature may be worth something some day, he is aware of his failure and is trying to cover it up, or he is uttering another glib statement and indulging in an act of self-assurance. The fact is six years have passed after he left school and still he is "planning to get in on the ground floor" of the mighty mansion of the U.S.A. Gilbert Debusscher has made a perceptive

observation that Jim is as much a dreamer as Amanda for he talks of the glories of his school days with as much ecstasy and gusto as she talks of her Blue Mountain days. It is this brave talk that cheers him up and keeps him moving on the metalled paths of his daily life.

6.3 PLOT STRUCTURE OF THE PLAY

The Glass Menagerie is a "memory play", and the person who recalls his past is Tom, a Merchant Marine. In his voyage of the high seas, the one thing he has not been able to forget is his life back home—in St. Louis, Missouri. What is enacted is the painful memory of Tom—the helplessness of his mother Amanda, his sister Laura, and that of his own. The frantic attempts of the family to find a suitable bachelor to marry Laura fail and with that Tom leaves the family to join the Merchant Navy. Not much happens for it is a lyric play, and this enables Williams to focus on the tortured, nostalgic mind of Tom.

Scene One presents Tom in the uniform of a Merchant Seaman as the narrator of the play, and he describes the social background—the economic Depression of the 1930's that rocked the U.S.A. while a Civil War raged in Spain. Turning to his family, he introduces his mother Amanda, his sister Laura, and the gentleman caller who is the most realistic character in the play. The fifth character is his father Mr. Wingfield, whose portrait hangs on the wall of the Wingfield apartment, but he does not appear in the play as he had abandoned the family long ago. Tom emphasizes that it is a "memory play", so music plays a dominant part in it : "In memory everything seems to happen to music." Now Tom "withdraws and enters the Wingfield apartment that was in the background. With the meagre income of Tom as a clerk in a shoe company, the family managed its life in a two-room apartment in a multi-storied building in the lower middle class area of St. Louis, Missouri. It is evening in the middle of February and Amanda and Laura are waiting for Tom to join them for dinner. Amanda gives Tom detailed instructions as to how to eat, and this effectively drives him away from the table. Amanda indulges in a reverie of her youth in Blue Mountain, Mississippi, when she had seventeen gentlemen callers—all planters and sons of planters of the American South, but she married Mr. Wingfield for he had 'charm'. The scene ends with the sad reminder that Laura does not have even one gentleman caller.

Scene Two takes place on an afternoon in the same period as the earlier scene, and Laura is the centre of attention. As the curtain rises, she is seen polishing her favourite collection of glass animals. But at the sound of her mother's coming, she keeps *The Glass Menagerie* away, and turns to the chart of the typewriter keyboard. Instead of going to the meeting of the 'Daughters of the American Revolution', Amanda comes home in a state of shock as she has learnt that Laura had dropped out of the secretarial course at Rubi-cam's Business College. Laura has become a problem as she cannot cope with the outside world, and lives totally absorbed in the dream world of her phonograph music and *The Glass Menagerie*. And as her efforts to make Laura self-reliant had failed, the only course that Amanda could think of for her is marriage. Laura recalls how she had loved Jim O'Connor, the high school-hero. But she is a cripple and who would marry her. Amanda encourages her to cultivate "charm", the one quality her father had plenty of.

The plot gets complicated in the third scene with the quarrel between Amanda and Tom, and Laura stands shocked by the event. The time is an evening in late winter and early spring. Amanda objects to his coming home late in the night, and she is not prepared to believe that he goes to the movies every night. Tom grows violent and tells her that he does not *love* his job at the Continental Shoemakers. It is a negation of all his dreams. If she is not prepared to believe that he goes to the movies, then he may be going to the dens of criminals, and Amanda is "the ugly witch". In an accidental gesture he shatters some of Laura's glass animals, as both Laura and Amanda stand stunned and stupefied.

Scene Four marks a reconciliation between Amanda and Tom, and she persuades him to bring home a gentleman caller for Laura. The scene begins at five o'clock in the morning, and moves on to seven. After a night of movies and magic, Tom comes home and Laura lets him in. At six the alarm clock rings, and Amanda asks Laura to tell her brother to rise and shine. It is almost seven, when Tom enters for breakfast, and as Laura goes out to buy butter, he apologizes to his mother which she readily accepts. She declares that her fault is she is so devoted to her children. Tom speaks of his love of adventure, but Amanda makes it clear that she knows of his attempts to enlist himself in the Merchant Marine. But the more important thing is he should bring home some gentleman caller for Laura which might open the prospect of her marriage. Tom agrees.

Scene Five takes place in the early dusk on a spring evening. Tom announces that Jim O'Connor, his colleague from the warehouse, is the gentleman visiting the Wing field home the next day for dinner. This news sends Amanda into an excitement. She wants to give the house a face-lift, and asks Laura to wish from the moon happiness and good fortune. With Scene Five ends the first part of the play, "Preparation for a Gentleman Caller"

Scenes Six and Seven constitute the second part of the play, "The Gentleman Calls". The climax is reached when Jim O'Connor reveals that he is already engaged to marry another girl, and the short-lived happiness of Laura oomes to a sudden end, like the shattering of glass.

Scene Six takes place around five o'clock on a late spring Friday evening. The scene begins with Tom's soliloquy which explains that Jim was the high school hero : "a star in basket-ball, captain of the debating club, president of the senior class and the glee club and... the male lead in the annual light operas." If he had gone on he should have ended up in the White House by the time he was thirty. But something went wrong after he left Soldan high school and he has become a clerk in the shoe company where Tom works. Jim called him 'Shakespeare' for he knew Tom's love for writing poems. Tom had invited Jim knowing that he was Laura's high school hero. Tom's soliloquy ends. Amanda has worked like a Turk, given the house a new look, wears the yellowed dress of a Southern aristocratic woman and carries a bunch of jonquils. Laura is also in her best clothes, but when she learns that the gentleman caller is her old schoolmate Jim O'Connor, she is not prepared to receive him. When Jim and Tom enter, and Laura is introduced to Jim, she becomes sick and withdraws to the other room. Conversation picks up. While Jim talks of the goodness of the course in public speaking that he is taking, Tom talks of movies but he is planning to seek real adventure as a Merchant Seaman. Soon Amanda joins them and plays the role of a Southern lady in the presence of the gentleman caller. When Amanda calls Laura for dinner, she comes in but becomes sick as she is frightened of Jim.

Scene Seven, which takes place half an hour later than Scene Six, presents the rise and fall of Laura's hopes of love and marriage. After the curtain rises, the lights go out in both rooms and candles are lit. Tom has used the money meant for the electricity bill to pay his dues to the Union of Merchant Seamen. On the pretext of taking the dishes out from the table, Amanda takes Tom to the kitchenette. Left alone with Laura, Jim is patronising. He recognizes Laura as the girl whom he had called

"Blue Roses" in school and wonders why she is so shy. People are not so dreadful as she imagines them. Laura remembers how Jim had acted in the operatta *The Pirates of Penzance* and she takes out the school magazine in which his article had appeared. In the last six years she had taken a course at a business college and left it in the middle. What she does most of the time is to sit at home and polish *The Glass Menagerie*. Jim tells her of how she should overcome her inferiority complex. The best thing is to think of herself as *superior* in some way. For instance, he has taken to public speaking and electro-dynamics for they belong to the future of the growing America and all the young should join the magnificent American dream of hard work and success. He encourages her to dance, but accidentally breaks the glass unicorn, presaging of what is to happen to Laura shortly. Finally, he calls Laura pretty and bestows a kiss on her, but soon regrets that he should not have done that as he is engaged to marry a girl called Betty. This revelation jolts Laura into a storm of emotions and it is with great restraint that she gives him the broken glass unicorn as a souvenir. Soon Amanda comes in and learns of Jim's situation. Jim departs, leaving Laura and Amanda in a broken state, and a whole world of pathos is implied in Amanda's faint utterance : ".Our gentleman caller was engaged to be married." She is furious with Tom : "Go to the movies, go ! Don't think about us, a mother deserted, an unmarried sister who's crippled and has no job !" And Tom leaves his home to join the Merchant Marine. The scene ends with Tom's soliloquy of how he followed in the footsteps of his father, but always remembers Laura. Tom's speech is dominated by the feeling of nostalgia.

As the first five scenes cohere into one unit, "Preparation for a Gentleman Caller", scenes six and seven into another unit, "The Gentleman Calls", the two parts unite into a unified dramatic experience. *The Glass Menagerie* displays great skill in the management of plot as it has a clear exposition of the characters in the first two scenes, a complication is shown in third scene and it B resolution in the fourth, while the fifth scene ends with the news that the gentleman caller will arrive the next day. The sixth scene presents the gentleman caller but Laura is sick. The last scene brings up Laura but fortune frowns upon her. Each scene stands as a separate unit, with a dominant idea that controls it. It is a static play as there is no action as such. The scenes come together by *montage* technique—a process of juxtaposition and flow—that is used in the cinema. In each scene as the curtain rises and the lights flash on the Wingfield apartment, the characters wake up to life, play their assigned parts with a

rare dignity and charm, and after some time the lights dim out, and the scene dissolves, Even within a scene the lights dim out to indicate the ending of an incident or part, and come up again to begin another part. There is a cinematic structure in the play which enables Tennessee Williams to telescope events and to map out the major preoccupations of Tom, Amanda, and Laura.

6.4 THE THEMES OF THE PLAY

The theme of *The Glass Menagerie* may be analysed on two levels : the sociological, and the psychological. The sociological pertains to the decline of the American South, a myth that appears repeatedly in Southern writers like William Faulkner. The main ideas of the myth are that the South had an aristocratic and noble way of life which was challenged and destroyed by the Civil War of 1861-65, and the damage done could never be set right by the Reconstruction. The curse of the South was the wrong done to the black people. Another factor which complicated the situation was the rapid progress made by science and technology, and the demand made on the predominantly agricultural South to industrialize itself and fall in line with the rest of America. The land-owning aristocratic families had declined as cotton plantations began to shrink, and there was a move towards urbanization.

In Tennessee Williams's play *The Glass Menagerie* there is ample description of life in Blue Mountain, Mississippi where Amanda had seventeen gentlemen callers, planters and sons of planters. But all that spacious life was lost when Amanda married Mr. Wingfield, a telephone man. Now she is a deserted woman struggling' to survive in a two-room tenement **in a multi-stored building in a metropolitan city, St. Louis, Missouri. The Wingfield family is typical as it illustrates what happened to many families in the American South.** Life in the Old South was a thing to reminisce and nothing more.

The economic Depression of the 1930's when the Stock market crashed, prices fell, millions were jobless, families were bankrupt, is the period of the play. The poverty of the Wingfield family is an integral part of the social scene. In fact, it is fortunate that Tom has a job, though he does not love it. The plight of the family would have been miserable without this job.

Another sociological dimension of the play is Williams's criticism of the American Dream, which is based on the American idea of hard work and success. If one is a little lucky, one can acquire millions of acres and dollars.. The gentleman

caller Jim O'Connor represents the majority of the young people in America who subscribe to this vision of life. Of course, Williams along with his protagonist Tom rejects this idea. This is obvious from the manner in which Jim is portrayed—ironic, sometimes satiric. But Williams's attitude to the Dream and to Jim is ambiguous, it is not one of total rejection, as he calls Jim the only character from the world of reality.

Williams is not basically concerned with society and its ills, but with individuals who are caught in a web woven by themselves. His characters live in a world of illusions from which they are not able to get away, though they very much want to. He tries to convey the truth about life as he apprehends it in the light of his imagination. Williams's use of a nonrealistic theatre, which enabled him to present the agonised mind the inner landscape of his characters, rather than their outer occupations.

The major theme in *The Glass Menagerie* is the conflict between illusion and reality. Each of the characters is caught in a world of illusion which he loves, and he is jolted out of it by reality. Though Amanda is aware of her miserable life in St. Louis, and tries hard to find a husband for Laura, and to train Tom to live according to the American Dream, she has an obsession to return to her golden days in Blue Mountain, Mississippi, how one afternoon she entertained seventeen gentlemen callers. When Jim O'Connor comes to the Wingfield home and Laura is extremely nervous to receive him, Amanda puts up a brave show. Dressed in her old gown, holding a bunch of jonquils (a kind of narcissus **flower** symbolic of self-love), she plays the heroic role of the aristocratic Southern lady—talks of the cake-walk in Mississippi. She is brought down to the world of reality when she learns that Jim is already engaged to be married.

Laura lives in a world of illusion created by the phonograph music and the glass menagerie. Having failed in her attempts to relate herself to the outside world in the high school and later in a business college, she has withdrawn into a world of her own. Her crippled condition is symbolic of her isolation. It is only Jim who encourages her to think of love and marriage, but the revelation of the truth about him sends her back to the world of illusion which is broken—the unicorn is symbolic of this condition.

Tom also lives in a world of illusion formed by movies and magic show. His job in the warehouse of the Continental Shoemakers is so frustrating that movies become

the only meaningful activity for him. His desire to be a poet has not found the right moment or milieu. Ultimately when he finds life at home intolerable, like life in a coffin— "a two by four situation"—and the gentleman caller turns out to be the wrong man, he leaves home to join the Merchant Marine and seek adventure on the high seas and new cities. But even this turns out to be an illusion as he moves from one place to another and turns back to his life in St. Louis with nostalgia. Reality hardly seems to make a dent in the mind of this poet—"Shakespeare" as Jim calls him.

Williams mentions that Jim O'Connor is a character from the world of reality. But a closer look at his nature reveals his participation in the prevailing idea of the American Dream. The success he achieved in school promised a bright future, but six years have passed and he has not progressed much—just a job in the Continental Shoemakers. Though he is sour about this, he has taken evening courses in public speaking and radio engineering in the hope of a bright future. Thus Jim also comes within the prevailing theme of the conflict between illusion and reality, though in a different way from Amanda, Laura, and Tom.

This conflict alienates. Williams's characters, and each is imprisoned in a world of illusion from which he or she cannot escape. Other thematic strands like Laura's love of beauty as symbolized in *The Glass Menagerie*, Tom's love of poetry and adventure, and the destruction wrought by time on the dreams of human beings are carefully woven into *The Glass Menagerie* to make it a rich and memorable work of dramatic art.

6.5 SYMBOLISM IN THE PLAY

Illusion as Symbol

"Illusion" is the most important word in the thematic and symbolic organization of the play, *The Glass Menagerie*. In its most general sense, an illusion is simply a deception – usually a harmless one. In more specific terms, it is a misinterpretation of the facts – an opinion based on what we think is true or should be, rather than on what actually is true or will be. An illusion is pretense, not reality; it plays with the actual, and often mocks it.

While an illusion may be a symbol and often is, a symbol is not necessarily an illusion. People, places, and objects endowed with wider and deeper meaning than

themselves are symbols, and Tom tells the audience that he has “a poetic weakness for symbols”. Tom states that Jim O’Connor is, for example, “the long delayed but always expected something we live for”.

Jim, the nice young man from the warehouse, represents to Amanda her chance to recapture the ways of Southern graciousness and respectability and to relive the pleasant memories of her own girlhood courtships as Jim. She hopes, becomes Laura’s beau. He is a symbol as well as an illusion of her daughter’s chance to be saved from unnatural loneliness and spinsterhood. To Laura in high school, Jim had been a symbol of worldly happiness and success; thereafter, he becomes a symbol of confirming her inability to respond to the world on its terms. To Tom, Jim is the symbol of his own desire to break with the past and the present, to change the pattern and direction of his life. Jim’s making such a break symbolizes to Tom what he and other young people should do.

6.6 THE GLASS MENAGERIE AS AN AUTOBIOGRAPHY

The Glass Menagerie has a close relationship with Williams's personal life. Like the Wingfield family in the play, Williams's parents moved from Mississippi to live in an apartment in the modern, industrial city of St. Louis, Missouri. Williams has recorded how "It was a tragic move, Neither my sister nor I could adjust ourselves to life in a Midwestern city". He writes of the "perpetually dim little apartment in a wilderness of identical brick and concrete structures with no grass and no trees nearer than the park"

Williams's father, Cornelius Coffin Williams was a travelling salesman of a firm called International Shoe Company. He was promoted as sales manager and transferred to St. Louis. Though C.C. did not abandon the family, he did not give them enough money and they were forced to live in a state of poverty. In *The Glass Menagerie* Williams does not dramatize his father except in the larger-than-life photograph.

Amanda Wingfield is modelled on Williams's mother, Edwina Dakin Williams, who was "the high-strung, prudish daughter of an Episcopalian rector, used to social deference and a life of conscious refinement. There were frequent quarrels between C.C. and Edwina for they were badly matched. As C.C. was in a travelling job, Edwina raised the children, and both Thomas Lanier (Williams), born in 1911, and Rose, two years his elder, felt close to their mother. Mrs. Williams was a regent of

the D.A.R. and maintained genteel manners and behaviour at home and was always conscious of her Southern heritage. As in the play, she encouraged Williams to bring in his friends to know his sister, and these turned into embarrassing situations as the mother overplayed her part.

Laura Wingfield is more closely modelled on Williams's sister Rose, except that Laura's condition is not so horrible as Rose's. Also Laura's nickname is "Blue Roses". Another detail is Laura's crippled condition which was something that Williams himself suffered in boyhood, and this disability may be physical as well as psychological. The relationship between brother and sister was very intimate. Williams has written : "We were exclusive, so close to each other we had no need of others". In their childhood days in the St. Louis apartment, Rose's bedroom became their special refuge from the brutality of the city symbolised by the neighbouring alley in which dogs would corner and kill cats. To relieve the darkness of the room the children painted the walls and furniture white and hung white curtains, and placed on the shelves Rose's collections of glass ornaments, mostly little animals. Williams has written how "those little glass animals came to represent in my memory all the softest emotions that belong to the recollection of things past. They stood for all the small and tender things that relieve the austere pattern of life and make it endurable to the sensitive". These glass animals were also associated with a woman called Laura Young, one of the parishioners of his grandfather in Mississippi.

She was dressed in checkered silk. She had a high, clear voice ; a cataract of water. Something about her made me think of cherries and she was very beautiful. She was something cool and green in a sulphurous landscape. But there was a shadow upon her. There was something the matter with her. For that reason we called upon her more frequently than anyone else. She loved me. I adored her. She lived in a white house near an orchard and in an arch between two rooms were hung some pendants of glass that were a thousand colors. "This is a prism," she said. She lifted me and told me to shake them. When I did, they made a delicate music.

The relationship between Williams and Rose altered with puberty. Rose began to show signs of mental disturbance and began to withdraw into a private world of her own. Williams claims in his *Memoirs* (1975) that his mother's puritanism destroyed the normal but highly sexed Rose. In 1937 when Williams was undergoing a playwriting course at the University of Iowa for his B.A., Rose underwent a mental

crisis. Mrs. Williams's attempts to develop a normal life for Rose failed as Rose could not complete a secretarial course or befriend the young men whom Williams brought home. Williams writes in *Memoirs* about his callousness for his sister : "It's not pleasant to look back on that year (1937) and to know that Rose knew she was going mad and to know, also, that I wasn't too kind to my sister." Later in that year when Williams was away with his new friends, Rose was put in an institution and a brain operation was performed which rendered her harmless but childish. Throughout his life Williams had a sense of regret for his neglect of his sister and tried to make amends, and the brother-sister relationship is a recurrent theme in his plays.

The identity of Tom Wingfield with the author is so close that they have the same initials : "T.W." When Williams did not make the grades in the University of Missouri in 1929, C.C. withdrew him and put him in the International Shoe Company where he was the manager. Williams changes the name of the company to "Continental Shoemakers", but retains the detail of the monthly salary of sixty-five dollars he drew. Of this period Williams writes : "The two years I spent were indescribable to me as an individual but of immense value to me as a writer for they gave me firsthand knowledge of what it means to be a small wage-earner in a hopelessly routine job." With hard work in the day as a clerk, he would come home and withdraw to his room with black coffee and cigarettes and try to write poems and short stories during the evening and night. It appears that like Tom, Williams too retired" to the lavatory in the warehouse to work on his poems. What both Tom and his author seem to share is a feeling that the warehouse and the home formed a kind of prison from which they should escape.

As the theme of brother-sister relationship, the similarity of Tom's and William's relationships with their parents may be taken up. As in the play, Williams found his mother's house-keeping was too regular, elegant, and "Southern" for his bohemian temperament but he had to put up with her manners. It was a kind of love-hate relationship from which he could not get away. Williams seems to be more sympathetic to his father than to his mother, though he received from him harsh treatment. He holds his mother and himself responsible for Rose's failure. Also he blames his mother's puritanism for driving C.C. from home. In a biography-in-progress by his brother Dakin Williams there is a comment that "According to Tom, Dad would have been completely justified in doing to Edwina exactly what the father has done to the mother in *The Glass Menagerie*." As Tom abandoned Amanda and

Laura and followed in the footsteps of his father, Williams left home in the winter of 1938-39 and lived as a confirmed bohemian for the rest of his life, carrying wherever he went a portable typewriter, a wind-up phonograph, the collected poems of Hart Crane and very few personal belongings. About C.C, Williams has written : "May be I hated my father once but I certainly don't any more. He gave me some valuable things. He gave me fighting blood, which I needed, and now he has given me, through the revelation of my psychoanalysis, a sense of the necessity to forgive your father in order to forgive the world that he brought you into." Tom "fell in love with long distances" like his father. Williams too shed "Thomas Lanier" part of his name and took on "Tennessee" as his first name, for he was adventuring into the realm of creative writing like his father's ancestors who had pioneered to settle the state of Tennessee. Williams acknowledges his father for his creative career.

6.7 AN EXPRESSIONISTIC-POETIC PLAY

The Glass Menagerie is a good instance of the expressionist theatre. In the Production Notes to *The Glass Menagerie* Williams writes about "the conception of a new, plastic theatre which must take the place of the exhausted theatre of realistic conventions if the theatre is to resume vitality as a part of our culture." The aim of the dramatist is to present 'truth', and in this attempt he has to adapt the literary and non-literary elements to evolve a new form. Williams states that

Being a 'memory play', *The Glass Menagerie* can be presented with unusual freedom of convention. Because of its considerably delicate or tenuous material, atmospheric touches and subtleties of direction play a particularly important part... truth, life, or reality is an organic thing which the poetic imagination can represent or suggest, in essence, only through transformation, through changing into other forms than those which were merely present in appearance.

It is through the mind of Tom, the narrator-poet-participant, that the beautiful but broken life of the Wingfield family is revealed. The particular 'truth' that the play communicates relates to the alienation that each human being undergoes in the process of living and there seems to be no escape from this fact.

The characters are few in number — Amanda, Laura, Tom, and Jim—enabling the author to explore their psychology, and the entire dramatic experience comes to the audience/reader through the memory of Tom. Not much happens, though the play has seven scenes. Williams has observed how "Each scene contains a particular point

(or several) which is structurally most important. In an episodic play, such as this, the basic structure of narrative line may be obscured from the audience, : the effect may seem fragmentary rather than architectural." What the author uses is the *montage* technique that is used in the cinema. Scenes come together by a process of juxtaposition and flow. Further the language of Williams has an intensity at once colloquial and rhetorical to probe the depths of human psychology. Critics have noted the stylized rendering of Southern diction that is more imaginative than other speeches.

The transformation of non-literary elements in the production of *The Glass Menagerie* gave Williams all the means necessary to create what he called "Plastic theatre." The music composed by Paul Bowles called "*The Glass Menagerie*" begins and ends each scene, thereby linking all the scenes together. Also it links the narrator with the story he is recalling. Williams writes : "Between each episode it returns as reference to the emotion, nostalgia, which is the first condition of the play." It is both gay and sad. Williams calls it primarily Laura's music, so it has the beauty and fragility that are associated with glass.

Williams makes it explicit that lighting in the play is not realistic: "In keeping with the atmosphere of memory, the stage is dim. Shafts of light are focused on selected areas of actors, sometimes in contradistinction to what is the apparent center." In the quarrel scene between Amanda and Tom a shaft of light is thrown on the stunned figure of Laura. In the supper scene the suffering Laura on the sofa is the visual centre.

The stage setting is another important means of communication. The action of *The Glass Menagerie* takes place in a two-room apartment in a huge building in the city of St. Louis, Missouri. Williams has written in the stage direction : "The Wingfield apartment is in the rear of the building, one of those vast hive-like conglomerations of cellular living-units that...are symptomatic of the impulse of this largest and fundamentally enslaved section of American society (the lower middle class) to avoid fluidity and differentiation and to exist and function as one interfused mass of of automatism." Williams has focused on the dull and drab uniformity of living in an urban centre. The apartment overlooks an alley, and is flanked on both sides by dark alleys. The only approach to the apartment is through the fire-escape, the landing of which is visible on the stage along with a few steps. The apartment and the fire-escape function as a symbol of "the slow and implacable fires of human

desperation." It is also a prison. Later the fire-escape serves as a route of Tom's escape from this prison into a life of aimless wandering. Further, the screen device which Williams employed in the first production was to project images and words in the course of the play. The screen was placed between the two rooms on the stage. This was a device he borrowed from the repertoire of the Epic theatre of Bertolt Brecht, but it does not function effectively as Williams's theatre is one of empathy, and not of *alienation*. Williams encourages the audience to identify themselves with the stage action. Hence, he dispensed with the screen device in his later productions. The apartment consists of a living room (downstage), "which also serves as a sleeping-room for Laura, the sofa unfolding to make her bed," and there is a dining room (upstage), separated by a second proscenium arch. Though the scene appears to be a part of Naturalistic theatre, Williams makes it clear that "The scene is memory and is therefore non-realistic. Memory takes a lot of poetic license. It omits some details; others are exaggerated, according to the emotional value of the articles it touches, for memory is seated predominantly in the heart. The interior is therefore rather dim and poetic." Thus sound, light and setting fuse with the various literary elements to achieve a unique expressionistic play in *The Glass Menagerie*.

Expressionism and poetic drama are allied theatre, movements in the twentieth century in as much as both explore the unconscious more than the conscious mind of man. While expressionism was confined to Germany and America, poetic drama is revived in Ireland and England in the works of Yeats, Synge, Eliot, and Fry. Poetic drama aimed at achieving an organic unity of verse and various literary and non-literary elements of the theatre.

The Glass Menagerie is often called a "lyric play" for it arrests a particular moment in Tom's consciousness and presents his memory and nostalgia for his mother and sister. In his departure from his home he was re-enacting what his father had done earlier. Tom, the narrator-poet-participant uses metaphors and symbols like the two-room apartment, the fire escape, music, lighting, stylized colloquial speech, and the more important glass animals to convey his vision of the beautiful but broken state of man.

6.8 THE GLASS MENAGERIE AS A TRAGEDY

Most of the critics have denied the status of tragedy to *The Glass Menagerie*, at the most it is pathetic but not tragic.

The situation is tragic, the characters have a sense of the tragic, yet the play is not a tragedy. The difficulty seems to be that the characters are caught in a determined universe and they do nothing. So the play is pathetic.

Williams has chosen to present the plight of Amanda, Laura, Tom, and Jim, members of the lower middle class in an urban centre, who are trying to wrest a meaning out of their existence. True they inhabit a determined universe. But they do not go down passively, on the other hand, they try to come out of their world of illusion and come to terms with reality. Though they are alienated, they seek relationships and meet with failure. The family is still the viable context in which they seek their meanings. To say that they are doomed from their birth is to force an interpretation, for there are facts in the play which point in the opposite direction. The characters have choices and they opt for lines of action which lead them ironically to the wrong end, and when they discover their mistakes, it is too late for them to change the course of their lives.

The force of Amanda's character ensues for her strong desire to find for Tom and Laura, if not superlative, at least average positions in life. She wants Tom to settle down to his job in the warehouse and come up in life. She tells him that "life's not easy, it calls for Spartan endurance !" and later that "the future becomes the present, the present the past and the past turns into everlasting regret if you don't plan for it !" Though Tom has called her a 'witch', she forgives him like any mother, for she wants him to make something out of his life. In the case of Laura, when Amanda's plan of secretarial course for her fails, she knows her daughter should seek refuge in matrimony. Things seem to move happily when Tom 'brings in Jim, the gentleman caller, and Laura emerges out of her initial unwillingness to meet Jim and be hopeful of a better life. But Williams has already hinted at what is to happen to Laura in the accidental mutilation of the glass unicorn. The catastrophe occurs with the revelation of Jim's engagement to marry another girl. It is as if Laura is pushed down from the top of a mountain. After giving Jim the broken unicorn as a souvenir, she withdraws into a world of silence. Amanda displays tremendous restraint as she accepts the inevitable, and her statement : "Our gentleman caller was

engaged to be married !" is a masterpiece of tragic irony. What comes through in the end is Amanda's endurance, dignity, and tragic beauty as she tries to console her daughter. That Tom abandons the family is unfortunate for he escapes from responsibility, but this brings out the strength of Amanda's character even better. Amanda in her fight for her children reminds one of other great tragic characters. Though **The Glass-Menagerie** may not be as great as a -Brecht's play, it is difficult to deny it the status of a modern tragedy, for it appeals not only to our emotions of pity and terror but evokes our "compassionate understanding."

6.9 CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Fill in the blanks

- 1) Amanda is aware of her miserable life in _____
- 2) Laura lives in a world of _____
- 3) _____ is a telephone man.
- 4) Amanda in Latin means _____
- 5) _____ is the narrator and artist in the play.
- 6) _____ is the nickname of Laura.
- 7) Jim D. O'Connor is an _____.

6.10 KEYS

- 1) St. Louis.
- 2) Illusion.
- 3) Mr. Wingfield.
- 4) Worthy of being loved.
- 5) Tom Wingfield.
- 6) Blue Roses.
- 7) Irishman.



Unit-7

Bravely Fought the Queen

(Part I)

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7.0 Objectives

After studying this unit you will be able to:

- Understand Mahesh Dattani and his life.
- Know Mahesh Dattani as a Dramatist/ Playwright.
- Understand the summary of the play.
- Identify the major and minor characters in the play

7.1 Introduction

In unit 1 & 2 you have read about definition and elements of drama and also about comedy, tragedy and problem play as a form. The unit 5 & 6 have given you information about the play *The Tempest* by William Shakespeare. Unit 7 & 8 have given you information about the play *The Glass Menagerie* by Tennessee Williams. Now in this unit you are going to study the personal life & the dramatic career of Mahesh Dattani and also act wise summary and characterization of the play *Bravely Fought the Queen*.

7.2 Presentation of Subject Matter

7.2.1 Mahesh Dattani's Life & Works

Life:

Mahesh Dattani universally acclaimed as one of the best playwrights in the modern India, is born on 7th August 1958 in Bangalore. He studied in Baldwin's high school and St. Joseph's College of Arts & Science, Bangalore. He is a graduate in History, Economics & Political Science. He did his post-graduation in Marketing and Advertising Management. He worked as a copy writer in an advertising firm and later on with his father in the family business. Still in College, in the early 1980s, Dattani joined Bangalore Little Theatre and participated in workshops, acting and directing plays. He has keen interest in drama. In an interview 'Personal Agenda' published in "Brunch" on 21st March 2004, Dattani says, "The love of my life is drama and I want to write more plays". That shows the true devotion of this playwright for drama and theatre. He underwent Western ballet training under Molley Andre at Alliance Francaise de Bangalore from 1984 to 1987. He also underwent Bharat-natyam training under Chandrabhaga Devi and Krishna Rao at Bangalore from 1986 to 1990. It is interesting that he has never studied abroad.

Works:

Dattani's theatre group 'Play Pen' was formed in 1984. He made his directional debut with 'Mango Souffle'. He is the director par excellence who has directed many plays and his plays also have been aired on BBC radio which made him worldwide popular Indian playwright. Nevertheless, he is not only a good director but also a good actor, dancer, teacher, playwright and more importantly a good writer. He is India's first English playwright who received the prestigious Sahitya Akademi award

for his contribution to Indian drama in 1998. The award is awarded him for his book of plays 'Final Solution and Other Plays' (1993) published by East-West books, Chennai. His plays have been directed by eminent directors like Arvind Gaur, Alyque Padamsee and Lillete Dubey.

There are number of plays on account of Mahesh Dattani with few screenplays. They include

- 1) *Where There's a Will* (1988)
- 2) *Dance Like a Man* (1989)
- 3) *Tara*(1990)
- 4) *Bravely Fought the Queen*(1991)
- 5) *Final Solutions* (1992-93)
- 6) *Night Queen*(Short Play) (1996)
- 7) *Do the Needful* (Radio Play for BBC), (1997)
- 8) *On a Muggy Night in Mumbai*(1998)
- 9) *Seven Steps Around the Fire*(Radio Play for BBC), (1998)
- 10) *30 Days in September*(2001)
- 11) *Brief Candle* (2009)
- 12) *Where Did Leave My Purda* (2012)
- 13) *The Big Fat City* (2012)

7.2.2 Mahesh Dattani as a Playwright:

In plays of Mahesh Dattani and particularly in the play *Bravely Fought the Queen* you will notice the following important features of Mahesh Dattani as a playwright. Mahesh Dattani's plays are the mirror of contemporary in Indian society. Thematically, therefore, his plays reveal a density of issues and meanings that attempt to reassess stereotypes existing within the family and macrocosmic social spaces. He chooses vibrant, colourful and remarkably recognizable 'Indian English'. His writing is reflective of the latest modern contemporary Urban India. His themes reflect and comment on the ordinary and everyday conflicts of so many urban

people. In a way, Dattani represents the essence of contemporary urban life of so many middle and upper middle class Indians.

Looking at the history of Indian drama in English, Dattani stands out as perhaps one of the very few & certainly one of the most commercially successful Indian English playwrights. Widely varied in thematic and stylistic content. Dattani's plays transformed the face of urban theatre in India and abroad. Dattani handled different kinds of themes and subject matters in his plays which are both topical as well as appealing. Alyque Padamsee aptly says, "At last we have a playwright who gives a sixty million English speaking Indians an identity". (Mahesh Dattani, Collected Plays, New Delhi: Penguin, India, 2000, cover page). He tackled issues like sexuality, religious tension, human relationships, that afflict societies the world over. Like Bernard Shaw and William Shakespeare he exposes the evil prevalent in the society. He uses the world of comic theatre as a powerful tool for bringing about the necessary social change. His plays have purely performance-oriented scripts that draw out from the audience an emotional as well as strongly intellectual response. His plays are universal in taste and flavor, appealing to all sections of society, never bound to any caste, class and creed. Due to these unique features of his writing, Dattani has achieved national as well as international reputation as one of the exponents of modern Indian English drama.

★ Check Your Progress-I

Q.1 Fill in the blanks.

- 1) Mahesh Dattani is born in
- 2) Mahesh Dattani's theatre group.....was formed in 1984.
- 3) Dattani received the prestigious Sahitya Akademi Award in
- 4) Dattani made his directional debut with
- 5) Like &....., Dattani exposes the evil prevalent in the society.

7.2.3 Act wise Summary of the Play

A) Introduction of the Play:

A completely different kind of play, *Bravely Fought the Queen* was first performed at the Sophia Bhabha Hall, Mumbai on 2nd August 1991. The play was subsequently performed by Border Crossings UK in 1996 and was directed by

Michael Walling and Mahesh Dattani himself. It is Dattani's fourth play, rather disturbing picture of the relations between men & women in a wealthy isolated suburb of Bangalore. The play traces the lives of two sisters. It was partly inspired by Dattani's observation while visiting the home of Gujarati family that the women of the house were always dressed up but had nowhere to go. Dattani has dealt with the status of women in the present Indian society and thereby depicting the victimization of women as they had been in the past. It is a domestic tragedy dealing with the odds & sufferings of particular imposition and domination over women. As a lively and provocative play, it charts through the emotional, financial and sexual intricacies of a modern-day Indian family. The play is a cry for the acceptance of shifting Indian values and it portrays the clash between the traditional and contemporary cultures that has created a new social scenario.

B) Act wise summary of the Play

The three Acts in the play are divided as "The Women", "The Men" and "Free for All". Every act is named as per the gender of the characters present therein. The act one is named as "The Women". It speaks volume of women. It presents the emptiness and trauma in the lives of women of the Trivedi house hold and others. The act two is entitled as "The Men". The two things that remains unchanged in the act two are- Baa's room and well stocked bar Jiten and Nitin runs advertising agency. There are two large desks with executives' chairs for Trivedi Brothers and a smaller desk for Shridhar who is working in their office. There is a comfortable couch next to Jiten's desk. They are working for ReVa Tee campaign.

The third act is named as "Free for All". The setting is same as in act one. *Thumri* also continues to play in the third act as is very symbolic and suggestive. There are a free flow emotions and passion, anger and hatred, blaming and counter blaming. The women express, assert and move freely in this act. Dattani presents a kind of familial court in which contention and counter contention takes place till the truth is revealed. The Trivedi brothers are dismissed as the scheming and gay, violent and unfaithful. The dramatist disproves the idea of varied spaces for man and woman showing them human being equal in all respects.

Act I (The Women)

At the opening of the play, Lalitha comes to Dolly's house as suggested by latter's husband. Dolly has awful memory. She has forgotten whose wife Lalitha was. She met her at the parties. But she didn't remember that her husband's name is Shridhar who works for Dolly's husband and handles ReVa Tee account. After sometime, we come to know about 'Baa', Dolly's mother-in-law and mother of Jiten and Nitin. Her room is upstairs. She calls Dolly by pressing the bell again and again. Her presence is felt throughout the play. It reminds us the past cruelty of Jiten with his wife Dolly.

Thereafter, Alka enters into Dolly's house. She is both sister and sister-in-law to Dolly as both have married in the same family – the Trivedis. Dolly has married to Jiten Trivedi and her sister Alka has married to Jiten's brother Nitin. Alka is few years younger to her sister. Trivedi brothers have twin houses side by side-one for each brother in a posh suburb of Bangalore. Thus both sisters live right next door. Dolly's daughter Daksha is a school going girl. She goes to a school in Ooty. The close look at the house will reveal that living room is face and kitchen and Baa's bedroom etc. are the back or inwards reality. The spectators are curious to peep inside the kitchen and inner rooms where real incidents take place. The playing of *thumri* of Naina Devi pervades right from the beginning to the end of the play. Dolly also wants to be dressed in whore at the ball like Naina Devi, a paradigm of heroism. Through the inset story, the dramatist focuses women's craving for love and freedom and the struggle they underwent in the play.

Lalitha suggests Dolly to dress up herself as the Rani of Jhansi, a brave queen. But Alka is more inclined at this suggestion and wants to join dressing herself as a brave queen. Baa, who has the stroke, is in her late sixties. She is bed-ridden. She wears white sari. Her husband was very violent person. The memory of violent husband is still alive. Two things are harassing to Alka and Dolly –the bell and Baa's loud mouth.

The play seeks to presents women's exploitation by the male. Alka is ill-treated by her husband and by her own brother, Praful. Alka narrates past painful treatment meted out to her by Praful. Once, Alka came home on scooter of a neighbor's son. Annoyed by this, Praful dragged her into kitchen without saying a word. He pushed her face in front of burning stove and burnt her hair. Despite his brutality, Dolly

considers Praful as a very ideal person. It is learnt that Praful and Nitin were close friends since college days. Nitin also treated her badly by driving out of house for some time. There is a mystery regarding an old woman. There are many references of coming old woman again and again. Whenever she comes, they talk to wake up the watchman; the watchman is so sleepy that he wakes only when he hears horns of his sahib's car.

The Play also highlights romantic story of Dolly and Kanhaiya, a teenager. Alka, in the presence of Lalitha, narrates the love-scene between Dolly and Kanhaiya in association with Naina Devi's *thumri*. Alka and Lalitha have drunk excessively. Alka keeps on speaking under the influence of intoxication. Act one ends in tension able calling of Baa for Dolly and Dolly's joyous calling for Kanhaiya.

Act II (The Men)

Act II (The Men) presents men's business and world outside. The Trivedi brothers are having financial agency and Shridhar is working with them. There is a discussion on market survey for ReVa Tee advertisement made by Shridhar. The model is alright, but they have failed to understand women's desire. The failure of ReVa Tee advertisement symbolizes that the men have failed to understand and recognize the feminine self and equity as human being. Shridhar wants to make another presentation, but Jiten opposes the idea, calling it a great campaign. He says that they are of the women's opinions. They have little weight in the marketing world as they don't have buying power. Thus, Jiten doesn't respect views and opinions of women considering them as secondary human being or merely subordinate to their male counter parts.

The play is portrait of sexual, moral and financial depreciation in the lives of the Trivedi brothers residing in a posh suburb of Bangalore. Jiten and Shridhar are the pleasure seekers in prostitutions. They bring the outside women even at their office for gratifying the carnival desires. As a result of this, their wives feel boredom and unhappiness in their marital lives. The play presents the shifting Indian values and dramatizes conflict between traditional and contemporary cultures.

Act III (Free for All)

The third act brings all men and women face to face. The men come home along with Shridhar. The 'Free for All' is the interactive presentation of the juxtapositions of Act II. The first two acts gradually prepare the audience for the events in Act III.

They are confronted and exposed to reality. In the third act, Jiten and Nitin come home to find Alka all wet and muddy as she has just danced in the rain and injured herself. Both are shocked to see her in an indecent look. Jiten stares at Alka and tells Nitin to ask her what she was doing outside in the rain. Jiten is furious and expresses his anger by abusing Lalitha. Shridhar protests & throws wine on his face. Jiten grabs & overpowers him. Shridhar decides to walk away with the ReVa Tee accounts. Baa is now, aged and invalid. But the past ill memory of her husband is still fresh with her. She was brutally beaten up by her husband. He was a demon like person in both appearance and intention. Jiten is like his father, violent and drunkard. He is very violent with his wife Dolly as his father was with his wife Baa. He hit badly even when Dolly was pregnant.

But Jiten blames Baa. He bit her at Baa's provocation. She denied Daksha was their blood. She called Dolly a whore and Jitu believed her words. Baa puts blame on Praful. He lied to her. Dolly gives expressions to her pent up pain and anguish at the end of the play to Jiten. Neither of the brothers is willing to admit the guilt. They blame other. Jiten blames Baa. Baa blames Praful and other and Nitin blames upon Praful.

Baa and Dolly are the worst victims of the conventional and cruel attitude of their husbands. In Dattani's play, battle is fought in the house. In this play, the house of Trevedi brothers seems to be the arena. The play also depicts the issue of homosexuality in a very bold manner. The play also throws light on the suffering of the wife due to her husband turning out to be a guy. Alka's anguish and agony is aggravated when she comes to know that Nitin, her husband, has homosexual relationship with her own brother, Praful. She has become the victim of her own brother's gay relationship. Her brother was having homosexual relationship with Nitin. Hence, he gets her sister married with his partner to continue his relationship in a smoother and longer way. Alka retorts and pours her anger against her brother for making her scapegoat. The play *Bravely Fought the Queen* encompasses issue of gayism along with the main theme of exploitation of educated women in urban society. On account of dry marital life, Alka has become a boozier. She has drunk heavily and lied on the sofa.

Thus, the play ends with Nitin's confessional soliloquy. He is anxious to meet dark auto driver. Dattani detects virgin issues and presents through his theatrical mechanism in an innovation fashion. The transexuality can be viewed in two ways.

(i) Excluded (ii) not integrated. Gayism/lesbian is not integrated in the main course of our life. The eunuch is excluded from the man's stream of our society. All the members of the Trivedi family are forms of the bonsai. They are artistic representations of the effect of materialism & selfishness; empty rudderless creatures floating aimlessly in the vast ocean of life in search of fulfillment. The final act brings this before the audience with all the action packed into it. 'The Women' merges with 'The Men' since the apparently separate worlds impinge upon each other. The play is 'Free for All' from the beginning till the end.

At the end, the women of the play become assertive and attempt to create their own spaces against the confined domestic space offered to them. Of course, they articulate their own spaces in different ways to discard their deplorable condition. Eventually, all men are unmasked and their real faces are brought before the audience. There is revolutionary change in the character of Dolly. Dolly of the first part of the play is quite submissive, meek and shy, but she emerges as an assertive and potent character who breaks through silence and burst out her anger against the ill-treatment and injustice done to her at the end. Alka also makes shocking rather disgusting revelation of hidden motives of her brother Praful who got her married with Nitin for continuing his gay relationship with Nitin.

★ **Check Your Progress-II**

Q. Fill in the blanks.

- 1) Trivedi brothers have twin houses side by side - one for each brother in a posh suburb of
- 2) Naina Devi is recognized as the queen of
- 3) pushed Alka's face in front of burning stove and burnt her hair.
- 4) The play ends with confessional soliloquy.
- 5) The play BFQ was 1st performed at the Sophia Bhava Hall, Mumbai on 2nd August.....

7.2.4 Characterization:

The play presents the hypocritical nature of the characters. All the characters of the play are very lively & true to life. There are four female characters who are physically present in the play. Again there are two other female characters whose

presence is highlighted but not physically present however they have the same own story of oppression. Then we have six male characters of which two are not physically present. All of them except Shridhar exploit women. The women of physical presence in the play are Baa, the mother of the two brothers, Jiten Trivedy and Nitin Trivedy, the two sisters of Praful-Dolly and Alka, who are the wives of Jiten and Nitin respectively and Lalitha, wife of Shridhar. Shridhar is an employee in the company of Jiten and Nitin. Daksha, the daughter of Jiten, Dolly and the unnamed mother of Praful and the two sisters are mentioned but they are not physically present. The male characters who are physically present in the play are Jiten, Nitin, Shridhar and Praful. The play deals with three couples, each existing in a hierarchical relation with others.

***Baa:**

When the play opens, we find Baa as the ailing mother of Jiten and Nitin with white hair and in a white sari. Baa represents many Indian mothers in law, who set up their sons against their wives. This is an act of vindictiveness because of her angry and sad past, she is embittered. She has two sons, Jiten & Nitin. L. Amritashwari Devi remarks, “Baa’s husband was a dominating and violent man. He had not only prevented her from singing but also used to beat her up time & again. He also ill-treated their sons was so rude and brutal that she becomes affected even after the death of her husband whenever she recalls him of making her unable to live in the present” (Amritashwari 190). Baa met him before her marriage and came to know about his dominating nature, “You want me to sing only for you? I will sing for everyone! why are you so angry”(288). She had to face humiliation physically as well as psychologically at his hands. Even she is tortured by her husband in front of their own sons: “You hit me? I only speak the truth and you hit me? Go on, Hit me again. The children should see what a demon you are. Aah! Jiten! Nitin! Are you waiting? See your father! (Act II 57).

Baa sees the picture of her husband in her elder son, Jiten and thus automatically develops an inclination towards her younger son, Nitin who resembles her a lot. The mother-son intimacy comes out in the following lines: “Nitin! You don’t like your father, no? he’s not niceTell me you hate him! He hit me! Nitin tell me you hate him! Say it. (Act III 86) Her obsession with Nitin, and her craving for love from her son alienate her and arouse Oedipus complex in Nitin turning him into a homosexual so that his love for his mother remains the same.

Her obsession with her sons turn into the privacy of her daughters-in-law. She encouraged her sons again & again to throw their wives out of house. She calls Dolly 'whore'. She lets Jiten to beat up his wife. She calls Dolly 'whore'. Dolly even at the advanced stage of pregnancy the result is that their daughter, Daksha is born prematurely at seventh month. In Nitin's case, she is stopping him from having children. Her hold over not only on her sons but also on her daughters-in-law is only an effort to get herself secured and loved by her sons. Her overpowering attitude makes her a patriarch to her daughters-in-law. Baa is bed-ridden but even in this situation she tries her best to torture her daughters-in-law. She keeps on ringing the bell time and again sometimes even without any reason. In the words of Alka, "Two things she fights us all with, that bell and her loud mouth" (249). She doesn't like her daughters-in-law going out with her sons. In her eyes, they waste money by going out.

***Dolly:**

Dolly is the elder of the two sisters of Praful and wife of Jiten. She is the victim of patriarchy. Jiten marries Dolly not because of any attraction or love for her but only for the sake of societal norm of marriage. He is neither loyal to her nor he tries to understand her; he gets his satisfaction of sexual desire from whore instead. In his sixteen years of married life, he has taken Dolly out only once.

Her mother-in-law, Baa, induces Jiten to beat her up in the advanced stage of pregnancy of seven months in the thought that the child is not of her son's for the too is being taken as a whore. As a result, Daksha is born prematurely at seventh month. She is mentally retarded. Thus Daksha too, is victimized. The real plight of Dolly is revealed by Alka in the play, "Having leach for a husband" (300). Her husband has no time for her. In her loneliness, Dolly takes interest in listening Naina Devi's *thumari*. She and Alka also create an imaginary character, Kanahiya as her lover. Dolly by listening her daughter's name always remembers how she was tortured during pregnancy when a letter arrived insinuating that Dolly, Alka and Praful's father was not legally married to their mother & that he lived elsewhere with his family and four children. This is also one of the reasons for their husband's torture on them.

Alka gives Dolly two options on which they can talk before Lalitha. One is Kanahiya and other is Daksha. Dolly prefers to talk about Kanahiya. But the story of

Kanahiya told by Dolly and Alka to Lalitha was not the real truth. Dolly herself says, “She knows about Kanahiya. That’s all. So let’s keep it that way . . . The half truth and nothing but the half truth” (293). Dolly suffers not for her own fault but for Praful. She suffers because she is a woman.

***Alka:**

Alka is the younger sister of Dolly and wife of Nitin. She is a spirited young woman in her early thirties and also suffers from the same predicament. She is the victim of patriarchal society. First, she suffers at the hands of her brother, Praful and then her husband and mother-in-law’s hands. Praful is very cruel to her. He burnt her hair for returning from school with the neighbour’s son on his scooter instead of walking with Dolly. “He lit the stove and pushed my face in front of it! I thought he was going to burn my face! He burnt my hair. I can still smell my hair on fire”(257). Her husband has homosexual relations with her brother Praful even before his marriage to her. In this way, her life is devoid of any love. It makes Alka to drink in a big way to get over her homosexual husband’s neglect and apathy. She dilutes herself in wine to get rid of her loneliness. In this state, once at the dinner time, Baa insulted Alka’s family before Praful, at this she remarks, “Your sons are so different from one another. They are both petty like you, but otherwise...Do they have different fathers” (256). She has been thrown out from the house by her husband for these remarks. She drinks heavily. There is no happiness in the married life of Alka. But she is blamed for being childless that she is not perfect as a woman. Alka laments, “You (Baa) know why I can’t have children. You won’t let me. That’s why” (284). She suffers severely. She is childless; she lacks decency & qualities of an ideal wife. She is victimized up to the extent that she is turned into a totally different facet from herself.

***Lalitha:**

Lalitha visits the Trivedi house in connection with her husband’s job. Lalitha, the wife of Shridhar, an employee in Jiten and Nitin’s office is very fond of making bonsai & taking care of them. She is the outsider & different from the three Trivedi women. She represents a kind of normality which the three Trivedi women do not possess. She is in a place a bit safer & better than that of Trivedi women. She has a room in the outside world where men run their life. She has her part to decide whether they (she & her husband) should have children or not. She does not suffer in

the hands of Shridhar but suffers in the hands of society. Once Lalitha & Shridhar won raffle at one of those made-for-each-other contests. The prize for it was two free tickets for Goa or cash. She rejected the idea to go to Goa & had some fun because of her bonsais. She tells Dolly, “Shridhar wanted Goa & I wanted cash. I just couldn’t imagine leaving my bonsais with the neighbour, worry whether she had remembered to water them” (252). Shridhar says to Lalitha, “It’s a typical of women to do exactly opposite of what their husbands want, just to prove they are independent” (252). Her obsession with bonsai presents her imaginative world where she can design everything according to her own will.

She too has something in her as the Trivedi women do. She too longs for something the society does not give. Her passion for growing bonsais symbolically reflects her own mindset. She is not suffered in the hands of Shridhar but there is the society, which doesn’t even allow her to return home by herself from Dolly’s house.

***Daksha:**

Daksha, the third generation of the Trivedi family, is the victim of patriarchy. Her mother, Dolly was kicked by her husband in her pregnancy. The result of it is the premature birth of Daksha with a deformed body. Her father even doesn’t mention her name before anyone. When, Lalitha comes to Dolly for discussing about the costume for a ball, then at the name of Daksha Lalitha asks about her. Dolly is shocked as Jiten has not mention Daksha before Lalitha & says to herself, “He doesn’t mention Daksha, but he mentions my tailoring” (239). Dolly even doesn’t want to mention her daughter to anyone. Daksha is under physiotherapy. She, in the play, is never on the stage but Dolly shows Jiten by dancing how Daksha, a disabled child would dance.

***Jiten:**

Jiten is the elder son of Baa. He resembles his father in his colour and even cruelty. By recalling her past, Baa says, “He is dark! Dark! And I am so fair .My children will be dark, like him! He always treats his wife Dolly as slave. Dolly has been married for fifteen years to Jiten who has always ill-treated & beaten her up. This shows his hatred for her as he considered only a puppet that must follow and not to demand and command.

Jiten is a womanizer and plays with all girls who work as a model in his company. In the words of Jiten, “It is a regular thing for Nitin & me. Driving out.

Picking a couple up” (287). Dolly never asks him about it and remains silent. Dolly reminds Jiten that she won an argument with him only once and that too when she became pregnant, otherwise it is he who always has his own way. Jiten wants Lalitha to get out of the house before they can argue any further. At the end of the play the old beggar woman is crushed by Jiten’s scar which is the symbol of the coming out of all hidden secrets, as Jiten accepts that he was responsible for Daksha’s premature birth. It is Jiten whose hands & feet made Daksha like this that’s why he loves her more than anybody else. But now his love can’t make up the loss of Daksha’s life That’s why Baa has given all the property to Daksha. Both brothers are obviously no respecters of women; they neglect their wives and have been beating them up and driving them out of the house. In the eyes of Jiten & Nitin, a woman is a commodity and an enjoyable thing.

***Nitin:**

Nitin is the younger son of Baa & husband of Alka. He has fair colour like his mother and he is not cruel like his father. By recalling her past Baa says, “Two sons . . . The younger one is beautiful, like my father! He has my blood!” (288). Nitin is fair by colour but he has many weaknesses. He has homosexual relations with Praful and marries his sister Alka to continue it after marriage. But when he comes to know that in her will, Baa has given all the property to Daksha & made Praful as the trustee of the property till the maturity of Daksha, he wants to get the property at any cost. He even gets ready to leave his wife, Alka to get the property. He says to Baa, “Will you give me the house if I send her back for good this time?” (302). In the eyes of Nitin, Praful is more unbearable for him than Alka. He says to Baa, “All My Life I have listened to you & obeyed you. Only once have I gone against your wishes, and you punish me for that? . . . Alka can stay her, or go away, or drink herself, to death, I don’t care. It doesn’t make a difference to me! But get him out of my life!” (305). He smokes and drinks in moderation. He is a committed homo sexual who prefers huge, big-built & rough auto-drivers of lovers-both in the office & the house. At the end of the play, Nitin accepts his homosexual relation with Praful.

Nitin is convinced that he has been tricked into marrying Alka by Praful and he had driven her out of the house earlier when a drunk Alka created an ugly scene at a family gathering in Praful’s presence. He is more subdued and sympathetic character. The mother-son intimacy comes out in the following lines:

Baa: “Nitin! You don’t like your father, no? he’s not nice... Tell me you hate him! Hehit me!...say it!”.

Nitin: “Yes! I hate him” (Act III 86).

At last Nitin realizes how unfair he has been to Alka and he feels that in order to hide his homosexuality he has been neglecting Alka for a long time. He accepts Alka as she is, with her drunkenness and promiscuity.

***Shridhar:**

Shridhar is Lalitha’s husband. On the one hand he presents himself a reputed person and faithful to his wife. When Jiten asks him to bring a whore for him then he says, “ I- I’ve got a reputation to . . . I mean what if someone sees me and tells my wife?” (287). But on the other hand, he himself indulge in adultery. When Jiten asks him about the status of the whore, he says in a very low voice which can’t be heard by Jiten, “She is great. I had her on the back seat. You can have my left overs”(291). But a man can’t digest if his wife has her own choice & not to follow the choice of the husband, Shridhar is no different from these traditional men. Dattani has many characters in the play who are present in their absence like Daksha, Praful, the society woman, the beggar woman, the auto rickshaw driver and of course, the enigmatic Kanahaiya. All the characters speak the urban English with local inflections. Likewise, every character in the play is seeking hide. They are performing acting & showing themselves as they actually are not. Jiten is seeking to hide his weaknesses and cruelty in his blood behind violent aggression. Nitin is concealing his homosexuality behind his marriage, Praful deceives his sister Alka by giving her to Nitin who has homosexual relations with him. He does so to hide his gayness behind Alka’s innocence. But when the two words ‘women’ and ‘men’ tend to centre violently in the last Act, all the characters stand exposed. Dolly emerges as the strongest character like the fighting queen of Jhansi. Jiten, the aggressive is driven to guilty tears. Nitin reveals his ‘gay’ relationship with Praful. Thus, Dattani brings on stage the performance taking place in every house in the middle class Indian family. Women, in Dattani’s plays are not victims. They are marginalized but they fight back. The play presents the plight of women in the society. Namrata Pathak points out about the characters of Mahesh Dattani’s plays in her article titled “The Self in Drama: creating/ constructing spaces in Mahesh Dattani’s *Bravely Fought the Queen*”, “Succinctly enough, instead of portraying traditional avatars in

his plays, he chooses to give birth to characters that are dynamic, very much living, animating, breathing, making choices in every juncture of their life, and accepting myrial influences on their inner and outer worlds. Such characters are not ashamed of being a homosexual transgender, eunuch or being a part of the third gender”. In a nutshell, this play which consciously uses the metaphor of the bonsai to connect its characters with it at ever believes and expose their role in relation to it.

★ **Check Your Progress-III**

A) Fill in the blanks.

- 1) represents many Indian mothers-in-law who set up their sons against their wives.
- 2) Dolly is the elder of the two sisters of and wife of Jiten.
- 3) Dolly takes interest in listening..... thumari.
- 4) is born prematurely at seventh month.
- 5) is the wife of Shridhar.

B) Choose the correct alternative.

- 1) is the younger sister of Dolly.
a) Daksha b) Alka c) Lalitha d) Sarita
- 2)represents the third generation of the Trivedi family.
a) Dolly b) Lalitha c) Alka d) Daksha
- 3) In the eyes of, a woman is a commodity and an enjoyable thing.
a) Shridhar & Lalitha b) Jiten & Nitin
c) Dolly & Alka d) Bipin &Shrin
- 4) is an employee in the company of Jiten and Nitin.
a) Praful b) Shridhar c) Daksha d) Suresh
- 5) Dolly &Alka also create an imaginary character,as her lover.
a) Kanahiya b) Daksha c) Sarita d) Gopi

7.3 Glossary

acclaim (v.)- Praise enthusiastically, and publicly.

hierarchical (adj) of nature of a hierarchy, arranged in order of rank.

vindictiveness(n.)-having or showing a strong or unreasoning desire for revenge.

humiliation (n.)- make (some) feel ashamed and foolish by injuring their dignity and pride.

craving (n.)-powerful desire for something.

induce(v.)- succeed in persuading or leading (someone) to do something.

mentally retarded (adj.) (of a person) having very limited intellectual functions.

whore (n.)- a prostitute, a promiscuous woman.

patriarchal (adj.) -relating to a patriarch, relating to or denoting a system of society.

predicament (n.)-a difficult unpleasant or embarrassing situation.

victim (n.)- a person harmed, injured or killed as a result of a crime, accident or other event or action.

bonsai (n.)-the art of growing ornamental, artificially dwarfed varieties of trees & shrubs in pots.

adultery (n.)-voluntary sexual intercourse between a married person & a person who is not their spouse.

gay (adj.) (especially of a man) homosexual.

exponents (n.) -person who promotes an idea or theory

suburb (n.) -an outlying residential district or city.

subsequently(adv.)-follow after

scenario (n.)- a possible sequence of future event

sympathetic(adj.)- showing kindness or understanding.

homosexual(adj.)-feeling or involving sexual attraction to people of your own sex.

indulge(v.) -allow yourself to enjoy the pleasure of something

puppet(n.)- a model of a person or animal which can be moved either by strings or by a hand inside it.

lament(n.)- a passionate expression of grief or mourn a person's death.

prematurely(adv.)- very early or occurring or done before the proper time.

embitter(v.)- make bitter or resentful

ailing(adj.) –in bad health or condition.

soliloquy (n.) -a speech in a play in which a character speaks their thoughts aloud when alone.

contemporary (adj.)-living or occurring at the same time.

intricacy (n.) -the quality of being very complicated or detailed.

provocative (adj.) -deliberately causing annoyance or anger.

shift (v.) – move or change from one position to another.

imposition(n.) –the action of introducing something that must be done.

promiscuity(n.) –indiscriminate.

7.4 Summing up:

In this unit, you have studied Dattani's Life & works, his dramatic career and act wise summary of the play. This unit has also given you information about the major and minor characters in the play.

7.5 Exercises:

A) Answer the following questions in about 250 words each.

- 1) Critically sketch the character of Baa.
- 2) Illustrate the female characters in the play & how they are victimized in the hands of their male-counterparts.
- 3) Evaluate three couples in the play & their relation with others.
- 4) Compare & contrast Jiten & Nitin as brothers in the play.

B) Write short notes

- 1) Daksha
- 2) Lalitha
- 3) Dattani's art of characterization
- 4) Dolly
- 5) Alka

7.6 Key to Check Your Progress

★ **Check your progress-I**

- 1) Bangalore 2) Play Pen 3) 1998 4) Mango Souffle 5) Bernard Shaw & William Shakespeare

★ **Check your progress-II**

- 1) Bangalore 2) *thumri* 3) Praful 4) Nitin's 5) 1991

★ **Check your progress-III**

- A) 1) Baa 2) Praful 3) Naina Devi 4) Daksha 5) Lalitha
- B) 1) b-Alka 2) d-Daksha 3) b-Jiten&Nitin 4) b-Shridhar
- 5) a- Kanahiya/Kanhaiya

7.7 Reference for the Further Study

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Unit-8

Bravely Fought the Queen

(Part-II)

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- 8.0 Objectives
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8.0 Objectives:

- To get acquainted with the themes of the play
- To explain the significance of the title and the end of the play
- To understand the various motifs and symbols in the play

8.1 Introduction:

In the previous unit you have learnt about the life and works of Mahesh Dattani and also become acquainted with the plot, characters as well as the act-wise summary of the play, *Bravely Fought the Queen*. Let us now some of the critical

aspects of the play like themes, symbols, motifs, the significance of the title and the ending of the play.

8.2 Presentation of Subject Matter

8.2.1 Themes in *Bravely Fought the Queen*:

General comments on the themes of Dattani's plays: Dattani's plays are about the vast and disparate Indian middle class. It is this class which once represented the Indian values of family, hierarchy, co-existence, education, sacrifice and duty, austerity, integrity and humility. Today it displays the so-called negative aspects by being oppressive, oppressed, exploitative self-absorbed, consumerist and materialistic. These negative aspects unfortunately subsume the traditional middle class values. The themes of Dattani's plays focus on the issues and problems faced by the newly ambitious and upwardly mobile middle class which hides its unpleasant and ugly experiences instead of facing them bravely. Dattani persistently critiques the oppressive grid of patriarchy and gender stereotypes. His plots present violence-physical, emotional and psychological. The destruction of the beliefs of the family institution is also an important feature of Dattani's plays. His plays are actually "discussion plays" reminding us of the impact of Ibsenian or Shavian plays. They are discourses on hegemony, power inequalities and open up 'taboo' subjects such as child molestation, incest, homosexuality, lesbianism, communal riots etc. Dattani's plays are path breaking in the sense that the issues which were not discussed openly in Indian society are treated in a realistic manner.

Themes in *Bravely Fought the Queen*:

1. **Repression:** Repression comes out as an important theme in the play. The natural, normal behaviour is repressed in the play which leads to stress among the characters. Almost all characters repress or are made to repress their true self and take on a false exterior or a mask. Repression is physical, emotional as well as sexual in nature. Dolly wants to lead a social life but is confined to the home to take care of the ailing Baa and her spastic daughter, Daksha. She is also starved of love by her husband. She then takes recourse to listening thumris- love songs and also fantasizes a relationship with the handsome cook, Kanhaiya. She is not allowed to transcend her domestic space and enter into her husband's business world. Alka has been tricked into a loveless marriage with a homosexual partner of her brother. She wants a child which is not allowed by her mother-in-law, Baa. She feels suffocated in the

repressive atmosphere at home. Hence, she has to take recourse to drinking. Nitin who is a homosexual cannot openly profess it as it is not socially acceptable in India. He has secret relations with Praful and with the auto driver in order to deal with his repression. Even Baa had to face repression at the hands of her husband. She was not allowed to make a career in singing. While Praful had homosexual relations with Nitin, he represses Alka by burning her hair on a stove when she comes home on the bike with the neighbour's son. This is an example of repression caused by the stereotyping of characters. Similarly, Baa, the matriarch of the Trivedi family, who has received abuse at the hands of her husband, replicates the same when she dominates the two daughters-in-law or even instigates her sons to ill-treat their wives. By dealing with the theme of repression, Dattani critiques the stereotypical power structures operating within the family and society.

2. Violence: It is seen that the play enacts the culture of violence- physical and emotional. This violence emerges out of the grappling for power within the domestic space. The gender-based power distribution in the family shows that the privileged are empowered, who then shape and govern the disempowered according to their whims and arrogance. The play is replete with examples of violence of all kinds. Baa recounts being beaten up by her husband, who is a dark, strong person. She in turn assumes power as the matriarch and instigates Jiten to hit the pregnant Dolly and Nitin to drive out Alka and also does not allow her to have a child. Similarly, Praful burns Alka's hair on the stove for coming on the bike with the neighbour's son. Jiten hits his pregnant wife Dolly resulting in her premature delivery and birth of the spastic daughter, Daksha. Further, Jiten also insults and fights with Sridhar, who happens to be in an inferior position to him. Moreover, in the final scene, we have Jiten rushing out of the house and running his car over the old beggar woman. Along with violence there is mental torture as well in the play. Baa needlessly calls out to her daughters-in-law to avoid falling asleep or to rub her back. She even threatens Alka that she would vomit and make Alka clean the mess if she refuses to obey her.

3. Forced harmony: It means holding together the family unit at whatever cost. This is also one of the themes that underlie Dattani's plays. Forced normalcy implies making an appearance of normalcy when the reality is otherwise. The characters feign normalcy and at the most enact their desires in a covert form so that they do not disturb the apparent normal picture. In the play, the family comprises of the paralyzed Baa, Her sons Jiten and Nitin and their wives Dolly and Alka, who are also

sisters. The joint family is set in an urban lifestyle, with all the modern comforts that create an illusion of wellbeing. But with the unwinding of the personal narratives of the characters, it becomes clear that this normalcy is deceptive. Dolly, on learning about attending a party starts applying a mud mask to her face and is anxious and careful lest her mask should crack. But even when the visit is cancelled, she tries to take care of her makeup to keep the appearance of normalcy. She seems to be taking care of her mother-in-law. She maintains that her daughter is attending dance classes, a sign of normalcy when actually she is undergoing physiotherapy and being spastic cannot even stand properly. With all the amenities of an urban life in the house, she tries to give an impression of well being. Nitin appears to be a much civilized, considerate husband because he does not beat his wife like Jiten nor does he keep relations with whores. But the final act tears the mask of his apparently good behavior when it is revealed that he is a homosexual and has relations with his brother-in-law Praful. He allows Alka to remain in the house only to help him continue his relation with Praful and display to the world that he is happily married. Similarly in the field of business too, the Trivedis are about to introduce a new range of women's undergarments and launch an advertising campaign for the same when they are actually facing a great financial crisis.

8.2.2 Title of the play:

The title of the play is an English translation of a famous Hindi poem by Subhadra Kumari Chauhan about Rani Laxmibai of Jhansi entitled "Kya khoob ladi mardani, woh to Jhansi wali Rani thi". The song invokes the iconic and brave figure of struggle- Rani Laxmibai. It underlines the struggle undertaken by her against the repressive British. It naturally implies that there must be some context of struggle against repression in the play. Sometimes it is argued that the play is about victimization of women. However, Dattani has ruled out the idea in an interview that he does not see the women as victims but men as victims of their own rage. This notion is further strengthened by the reference to the struggle of Naina Devi, the legendary thumri singer. When we consider the women characters that wage a strong resilient battle in the play, we have to grant Dolly's claim to be the brave queen. Alka is repressed first by her brother, deceived into a loveless marriage with her brother's partner and even ill-treated by her brother-in-law. Alka resorts to dancing in the rain and drinking rum. These actions may appear as a revolt but are actually escapist measures. Hence, she fails to qualify as the bravely fighting queen. Lalitha

struggles to have a well settled happy life but instead of fighting she resorts to 'trimming and pruning' like her bonsais and leads a life of adjustments. Finally we can say that it is Dolly who wages a strong fight with the circumstances. Dattani, in the Preface to the first volume of his Collected Plays says, "Dolly, the strong, beautiful and sensitive woman who fights her battles one evening in front of a complete stranger". This indicates that Dattani envisioned Dolly as the bravely fighting queen. When the play opens Lalitha visits the Trivedi women, especially tries to speak to Dolly who is not ready to open up before a stranger and also prevents Alka from doing so. But the same Dolly argues with Jiten in front of Lalitha and castigates him for his evil deeds despite his protests. She wants to expose Jiten and thus revolt against him. Perhaps her obsession with Naina Devi's thumris inspires her to undertake a revolt. Her fantasized relation with Kanhiya is also a way of avenging her husband's callous and infidel behavior. She sees Daksha, her spastic child as an image of her victory over Jiten. She can use her as a means to remind Jiten of his guilt and can shame him. In the final scene too, she makes Jiten aware of his misdeeds and when tries to lay the blame on Baa, she argues that it was he who had kicked and beat her in her pregnancy. She remarks that though usually Jiten is the winner with his brutal force, Dolly is victorious in becoming a mother. So initially, Dolly appears to be a shy, docile person but her fortitude, her valour are revealed in the way she deals with a spastic daughter, a hell of a husband and a dominating mother-in-law. Hence, she lays claim to the title of the bravely fighting queen.

8.2.3 Ending of the play:

The final act entitled "Free for All" has a very apt title. The mask or the façade breaks off in this act and the grotesque reality is 'free for all' to see. The final scene is a proper in the denouement with all the complications being resolved in it. The setting is the Trivedi house and all the characters are present. In the final act we find a heated exchange between Jiten and Dolly wherein Dolly exposes Jiten in front of a stranger, Lalitha. She wants Lalitha, (in fact the outside world) to know the grim reality about Praful's cheating, Baa's behavior but most of all Jiten's inhuman action of hitting her in pregnancy and leading to the premature delivery and birth of a spastic child Daksha. She humiliates Jiten, makes him aware of his guilt, who tries to blame it all on Baa. Dolly emerges as the brave queen, who dares to challenge the repressive men but at the same time comforts Alka, takes care of Daksha and also

promises to look after Baa for an extra day. Thus, she faces the situation bravely. The end shows Alka asleep on the sofa in a drunken state and Nitin uttering a soliloquy. Nitin pours out his mind before the audience. He knows that Praful had tricked him into marriage with Alka in order to continue their relationship secretly. But he realizes that Praful had tricked Alka too by not informing her about Nitin's homosexuality and his relation with Nitin. Presently, he has the auto driver waiting inside to have the homosexual relation. In a way he is relieved to see Alka sleeping because he is afraid of being exposed before her. The end thus sheds light on the predicament of the homosexuals- of not being able to profess their identity openly. The stigma attached to it compels them to keep their relations secretive.

8.2.4 Motifs in the play:

A motif is a theme or idea that is repeated and developed in a work of music or literature. In *Bravely Fought the Queen*, Dattani has used such motifs which pivot the plot. They are symbolic and constantly draw the attention of the audience to the themes of the play. For instance, in this play we have the constant presence of the bonsai, the thumris of Naina Devi and the masks.

Bonsai: The constant presence of bonsai stresses the oppression, control and distorted growth of the individual that increasingly closes in on them. Lalitha has a passion for preparing bonsais of various plants. She presents a bonsai with tiny fruits to Dolly and also describes the process of making bonsai-“You stunt their growth. You keep trimming the roots and bind the branches with wire and...stunt them”. She further adds: “I guess you can't really call them fully grown- but when they've reached their dwarfed maturity, they really look bizarre with pea-sized mangoes or oranges”. This sums up the condition of the women, men, in fact, all the characters in the play- each truncated, suppressed, suffocated. Dolly is presented with such a bonsai that has attained dwarfed maturity. She is blessed with a complete family, yet how incomplete; with a spastic (abnormal) daughter, a perverted husband and a marriage without love, respect, power and trust. Another bonsai is presented by Sridhar to Nitin in the office. When Nitin looks at the bonsai, he calls it 'grotesque' and is reminded of his father who loved trees with large branches. So the truncated version makes it look grotesque. In a way the bonsais serve to describe the condition of almost all the characters in the play and is a symbol of repression, control and perversion though superficially it looks a wonderfully decorative piece. Daksha

being spastic is not of normal growth and is therefore a bonsai. Nitin with his repressed sexual identity, Baa with a thwarted career as a singer and Lalitha and Sridhar with their limited dreams are all bonsais. Jiten's married life is thwarted with his guilt and subsequent relations with prostitutes and is also a bonsai. Alka longs to have children, mix in the society but because of her homosexual husband her wishes are stifled. Thus, she is also a bonsai. Thus, Dattani has beautifully used the motif of the bonsai to display the incompleteness and repression in the characters in the play.

Thumris of Naina Devi: In the play we see that Dolly is obsessed with the thumris of Naina Devi and they are often played in the background. The thumris have a very powerful symbolic meaning. Thumris are composed in the 'braj' language and express a yearning for Krishna, the divine lover. They were usually sung by the tawaifs or courtesans. Dolly deprived of sensual relationship with her husband Jiten is repulsed by his insensitivity which perhaps springs from his guilt. So Dolly takes recourse to listening to Naina Devi's thumris. Dolly also fantasizes the fond embraces of Kanhaiya while she listens to them. Again the legend of Naina Devi is also described in the course of the play. This great singer of thumris had to wage a relentless battle to pursue her passion for music in a male-dominated society. Born in a royal family, he was not permitted to sing thumris. But with the support of her husband, she fought against the male power structure and became the queen of thumris. She thus becomes an icon of resistance and struggle for women wishing to establish their identity. The thumris become a symbol of unfulfilled love, a yearning for love and therefore in the play sums up the character of Dolly. Dolly identifies herself with Naina Devi and towards the end of the play wages a strong fight against all repressive forces.

Masks: The play opens with Dolly applying a mud mask on her face in preparation for some social function. The mask is a symbol of a façade, a garb to hide the reality underlying it. It is a very potent device suggesting the 'mask' of a complacent affluence that hides the painful reality of her life- the unhappy marriage, her spastic child and the meaninglessness of her very existence. As the mask cracks, with increasing familiarity with Lalitha, her fragmented self is exposed with its unequal fight in the male-dominated world. There is also a reference to a 'masked ball' in the play which is meant as a part of a campaign to promote a range of women's undergarments brand ReVaTee. According to the plan stated by Lalitha, the participants were to wear masks and costumes and present a personality that they

were not. Thus a mask is also a pretext to hide their reality. Alka who is an escapist wishes to be the Rani of Jhansi- a heroic figure that she is not. Initially Dolly claims that Daksha is out to learn her dancing lessons. But once the mask falls apart, it is revealed that what is termed as dance is actually physiotherapy which she undergoes because as a spastic child she cannot even stand on her own, let alone dancing.

Besides, the play has other symbols like Kanhaiya who represents divine love. The old beggar woman is an extension of Baa because she is shown as a nagging old woman shuttling between the two houses, those of Alka and Dolly and finally she is run over by Jiten's car after he is reminded of his guilt by Dolly. However, he considers Baa responsible for the assault on Dolly. When Dolly refuses to accept his stand and blames him, he wishes to get rid of Baa and therefore he symbolically kills Baa. Alka's rain dance and the reference to the strong black arms are both suggestive of strong physical desires.

8.2.5 Structure, Technique and language in *Bravely Fought the Queen*:

Structure: The subtitle of the play reads, "A Stage Play in Three Acts". So the play is divided into three acts which are named 'The Women', 'The Men' and 'Free for All'. These names are very significant. In the first act, we find the women characters-Dolly, Alka, Lalitha and Baa. This act is set in the Trivedi house at Koramangala, Bangalore. There is a lot of suspense about Daksha, Alka's alcoholism, Dolly's obsession for Thumris of Naina Devi, the identity of Praful etc. The second act is set in the office of Jiten and Nitin and is an advertising agency. Here we find all the male characters involved in action- Jiten, Nitin, Sridhar and Praful. The action mainly comprises of the discussions regarding the business problems and various strategies to be undertaken. The advertisement campaign for the new range of women's nightwear and under garments is presented in detail. The author takes a chance to demonstrate the attitude towards women, especially their commodification in modern times. The world of dark commercial dealings is also exposed in the second act. The third being 'Free for All' features all the characters. It acts as a fitting resolution for the complications in the play. We become aware of Praful's cheating, Daksha's birth and disability, Jiten's violence, Baa's role in Jiten's violence and finally Nitin's homosexuality and his relationship with Praful. The family disputes, subjugation and ill-treatment of women, sexual relationships etc. are all put forth before Lalitha, the stranger and thereby the outside world. All

throughout the play we have Baa, who is lost in the past. The author has mingled dialogues with flashbacks especially in the third act which resolves the complications.

Technique: The three-act structure used is very compact and the author has maintained continuity in the development of plot by using motifs. The recurrent use of the bonsai and thumri motifs helps in linking the episodes. It also helps in unfolding the theme of repression. Besides, the use of symbols like Kanhaiya- divine love, mask- an attempt to hide the reality also help in revealing the other themes like unfulfilled love and hypocrisy of the urban middle class.

Language: The language used in the play is Indian English. There are examples of words from the regional language, especially when Jiten speaks to Praful on phone like, “Hanh bol”, “Pukka” etc. Dattani makes use of very short, pointed dialogues, technically called ‘stichomythia’. But, even if the sentences are incomplete, the flow of the dialogues remains unaffected.

8.3 Glossary:

Patriarchy (n): a society country etc. controlled by men

Stereotype (n): a fixed idea, image etc. that many people have of a particular type of person or thing, but which is often not true in reality

Taboo (n): a general agreement not to discuss or to do something

Repression(n): restraining or stopping an impulse

Matriarch(n): the female head of a family

bonsai(n): a Japanese art of growing miniature plants or trees in plants and prevented from reaching its normal size

resilient (adj.): quickly recovering from shock, injury etc.

obsession (n): a fixed idea that fills the mind so that a person is unable to think of anything else

stigma(n): a bad reputation that something has because many people disapprove of it

B) Write notes on the following in about 150-200 words each:

1. Dolly
2. Bonsai
3. Lalitha
4. The ending of the play
5. The title of the play
6. Masks in the play
7. Thumris of Naina Devi

8.6 Suggested reading:

Lakhotia, Smita R. *'Care and Cure' relationships in Dattani's Plays*, Kanpur: Shubham Publication, 2011. Print

Mukherjee, Tutun. *The Plays of Mahesh Dattani*, New Delhi: Pencraft International, 2012. Print.

