DRAMA- II (SHAKESPEARE)

M.A. ENGLISH

M.A. (ENGLISH), Semester II, Paper- III

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FOREWORD

Since its establishment in 1976, Acharya Nagarjuna University has been forging ahead in the path of progress and dynamism, offering a variety of courses and research contributions. I am extremely happy that by gaining 'A' grade from the NAAC in the year 2016, Acharya Nagarjuna University is offering educational opportunities at the UG, PG levels apart from research degrees to students from over 443 affiliated colleges spread over the two districts of Guntur and Prakasam.

The University has also started the Centre for Distance Education in 2003-04 with the aim of taking higher education to the door step of all the sectors of the society. The centre will be a great help to those who cannot join in colleges, those who cannot afford the exorbitant fees as regular students, and even to housewives desirous of pursuing higher studies. Acharya Nagarjuna Universityhas started offering B.A., and B.Com courses at the Degree level and M.A., M.Com., M.Sc., M.B.A., and L.L.M., courses at the PG level from the academic year 2003-2004 onwards.

To facilitate easier understanding by students studying through the distance mode, these self-instruction materials have been prepared by eminent and experienced teachers. The lessons have been drafted with great care and expertise in the stipulated time by these teachers. Constructive ideas and scholarly suggestions are welcome from students and teachers involved respectively. Such ideas will be incorporated for the greater efficacy of this distance mode of education. For clarification of doubts and feedback, weekly classes and contact classes will be arranged at the UG and PG levels respectively.

It is my aim that students getting higher education through the Centre for Distance Education should improve their qualification, have better employment opportunities and in turn be part of country's progress. It is my fond desire that in the years to come, the Centre for Distance Education will go from strength to strength in the form of new courses and by catering to larger number of people. My congratulations to all the Directors, Academic Coordinators, Editors and Lesson- writers of the Centre who have helped in these endeavors.

Prof. P. Raja Sekhar

Vice-Chancellor (FAC)
Acharya Nagarjuna University

203EG21: DRAMA-II (Shakespeare)

Unit -I Elizabethan World View, Elizabethan Theatre, Revenge play, Greek Tragedy, Shakespearean Tragedy, Comedy, Chronicle Plays, Romance

Unit -II

Twelfth Night

Unit –III

Julius Caesar

Unit –IV

Hamlet

Unit –V

The Tempest

SUGGESTED READINGS:

1. Cambridge School: Shakespeare, Cambridge University Press
2. The Oxford Shakespeare, The Oxford University Press, 2008
3. William Shakespeare Twelfth Night – A critical evaluation, Unique Publisher, 2014
4. S. Sen, William Shakespeare, Julius Caesar, Unique Publisher, 2014

CONTENT

LESSON-1

ELIZABETHAN DRAMA

Objectives of the Lesson

- To sensitise the students to learn Elizabethan world view.
- To develop the awareness of the students about the British Drama of those times.
- To make the students to be aware of the stage conditions of the day
- To encourage the students to learn Elizabethan Tragedy.
- To familiarize the students how Elizabethan dramatists were influenced by Seneca
- To make the students to be aware of the importance of University Wits.
- To make the students to learn how Renaissance played a prominent role in developing Elizabethan Drama.

Structure of the Lesson

1.1 GREEK TRAGEDY

The word tragedy refers primarily to tragic drama. It is a literary composition written to be performed by actors in which the central character is called a tragic hero. Tragedy was a public genre from its earliest beginning at Athens in Greek. It was intended to be presented in a theatre before an audience. Homer, a great Greek poet composed Iliad and Odyssey to the accompaniment of an instrument called *Kithara* before an audience. The epic continued to be recited by rhapsodies at the festival Panathenaia, but it became gradually a private genre to be read from a manuscript at one's leisure. This thing happened in part also to tragedy. In the fourth century Aristotle in his *Poetics* points out that it is possible to experience the effect of tragedy without public performance. Tragedy was still being written and produced in the Athenian theater in Aristotle's days, but the plays of the three great writers Aeschylus, Sophocles and Euripides were read privately. Reading of course is the primary means of access to ancient tragedy except for occasional modern products, which help us to a certain degree to appreciate it theatrically, but for the most part provide quite a different theatrical experience from that offered by the ancient production.

1.2 ELIZABETHAN DRAMA-INTRODUCTION

From the Elizabethan Age come some of the most highly-respected plays in Western drama. Although it is generally agreed that the period began at the commencement of Queen Elizabeth I's reign in 1558, the end date is as definitive. Some consider the age to have ended at the queen's death in 1603, while others place the end of Elizabethan drama at the closing of the theatres in 1642. Elizabeth I was a strong, resolute monarch who re-turned England to Protestantism, quelled a great deal of internal turmoil, and unified the nation. She was also a strong supporter of the arts, and this sparked a surge of activity in the theatre. During her reign some playwrights were able to make a comfortable living by receiving royal patronage. There was a great deal of theatrical activity at the Court, and many public theatres were also built on the outskirts of London. Theatre was a popular pastime, and people from all walks of life attended theatres. Although women were not allowed onstage, they did attend performances and often made a substantial part of the audience. The theatre also drew many unsavory characters, including pickpockets, cutpurses, and prostitutes. Because of the perceived bad influence of the theatres, the Puritans were vocally opposed to them and succeeded shutting them down in 1642. Some of the most important playwrights come from the Elizabethan era, including William Shakespeare, Ben Johnson, and Christopher Marlow. These playwrights wrote plays that were patterned on numerous previous sources including the great tragedy, Seneca's plays, Attic drama, English miracle plays, morality plays and interludes. Elizabethan tragedy dealt with heroic themes, centering on a great personality who is destroyed by his own passion and ambition. The comedies often satirized the fops and gallants of society.

1.3 ELIZABETHAN STAGE

The first regular theatres of Queen Elizabeth's time, though a decided improvement on the inn yards fell far short of what a modern playgoer would expect. The main stage being open merely a platform jutting out into the floor shape the front curtain was unknown, which made it necessary for every actor to 'enter' instead of being 'discovered' on the stage. Theatrical scenery was unknown, and a card, usually hung on the pillars supporting the upper stage, indicated the scene of action. A change of scene was quickly brought about by putting up another card. 'A tree in a tub' might symbolize a forest, 'a bed wheeled' it might suggest a chamber, 'a flaring of touch might suggest in the warmth of a June sun.

Elizabeth audience loved brisk action, stirring declamation, the tragic and horrific and the broadly comic. They enjoyed violent stage effects: thunder and lightning, drums and trumpets, alarms and battle cries and demonstrations of physical skills like wrestling bouts and sword play, which are performed by experts. Money was spent lavishly on the costumes. There were no woman players. The female parts were all acted by boys or clean shaven men, who were better paid than the rest of their more difficult task.

1.4 ELIZABETHAN TRAGEDY

The earliest inspiration for the **Elizabethan tragedy** was the Latin plays of Seneca. Stage declamation and sociology of the Seneca plays made the plays of Thomas Kyd, Christopher Marlow and William Shakespeare extremely popular with the **Elizabethan** audience. The Greek tragic theory and vision helped Marlow and Shakespeare enormously in achieving great complexity and depth in their dramas. The original Greek word, tragedy comes from another word meaning a goat singer was, possibly this ritual song and dance, attended by the sacrifice of a goat.

Aristotle the Greek philosopher in the fourth century BC after examining Greek drama of his time offers a definition of tragedy and its constant elements in his theatre or drama called Poetics. The elements of tragedy according to Aristotle are plot character, diction, ideas, music and spectacle. The plot must have a beginning, middle and end. While the significance of the Aristotle's formulation of the tragedy is immense for the **Elizabethan,** the immediate fascination for the Elizabethans may have been the Roman models of the tragedy, like those of Ovid, Plutarch and Seneca. The **Elizabethan** fascination for the tragic form as it comes to them through Greek and Roman is on account of their love for the regenerative force of life.

If we look at the dominative motive of Elizabethan drama and the revenge motive, modelled after Senecan plays, running through *Thomas Kyd's The Spanish Tragedy*,Christopher Marlow's *The Jew of Malta,* Shakespeare's *Hamlet*and John Webster's *The Duchess of Malfi the* tragic form in the Elizabethan plays present the apotheosis of the growth of the complex and sophisticated Elizabethan world view. The **Elizabethans** made the dramatic art of tragedy, a key to understanding the rich complexity of the Elizabethan mind and life. The dramatic unities are followed to move in their branch by the Elizabethans who try to compass a larger and larger frame work of time and place.

1.5 SENECAN TRAGEDY

Senecan tragedy, body of nine closet dramas (i.e., plays intended to be read rather than performed), written in roman verse by the Roman Stoic philosopher Seneca in the 1st century AD. Rediscovered by the Italian humanists in the mid-16th century, they became models for the revival of tragedy on the Renaissance stage. The two great but very different, dramatic traditions of the age-French Neoclassical tragedy and Elizabethan tragedy- both drew inspiration from Seneca.

Seneca's plays were reworking chiefly of Euripides' dramas and also the works of Aeschylus and Sophocles. Probably meant to be recited at elite gatherings, they differ from their originals in their long declamatory, narrative accounts of action, their obtrusive moralizing, and their bombastic rhetoric. They dwell on their detailed accounts of horrible deeds and contain long reflective soliloquies. Though the gods rarely appear in their plays, ghosts and witches abound. In an age when the Greek originals were scarcely known, Seneca plays were mistaken for high classical drama. Senecan tragedies tended to include ideas of revenge, the occult, the supernatural, suicide, blood and gore. The Renaissance scholar Julius Caesar Scaliger (1484-1558), who knew both Latin and Greek, preferred Seneca to Euripides.

French Neo-classical dramatic tradition, which reached its highest expression in the 17th-century tragedies of Pierre Corneille and Jean Racine, drew on Seneca for form and grandeur of style. These Neoclassicists adopted Seneca's innovation of the confidant (usually a servant), his substitution of speech for action, and his moral hairsplitting. The Elizabethan dramatists found Seneca's themes of bloodthirsty revenge more congenial to English taste, than they did his form. The first English tragedy, Gorboduc(1561), by **Thomas** Sackville and Thomas Norton, is a chain of slaughter and revenge written in direct imitation of Seneca. (As it happens, Gorboduc has followed the form as well as subject matter of Senecan tragedy: but only very few other English plays-e.g. The Misfortunes of Arthur – followed its lead in this.) Senecan influence is also evident in Thomas Kyd's *The Spanish Tragedy* and Shakespeare's *Hamlet*: both share a revenge theme, a corpse-strewn climax, and ghosts among the cast, which can all be traced back to the Senecan model.

1.6 UNIVERSITY WITS

The pre-Shakespearean dramatists John Lyly, Robert Greene, George Peele, Thomas Kyd, Christopher Marlow etc., are known as the 'University Wits' for they were all university educated men. Their careers have striking similarities. They were all actors as well as dramatists. They begin as actors, revised old plays and then become independent writers. They had common stroke of material – mythology, legend and history.

The national English drama developed out of the classical, the courtly and popular traditions and the way to this fusion was first shown by the University Wits. They were all humanists, men of new learning. They were all that familiar with the classical rules of dramatic composition and the grace and refinement of courtly drama. They disregarded the unities, took into account the popular love for action and tried to present the whole life as it is. Hudson says that ''in this way they ensued, the triumph of that free and flexile form of drama which Shakespeare was afterwards to make his own''.

The contribution of University Wits to the art of characterization is also significant. They also made definite improvement in art of plot construction. 'The university Wits' more especially Marlow brought about a change in medieval concept of tragedy. Marlow introduced the elements of struggle and conflict in English tragedy. The university Wits imparted poetic grace and refinement to English drama. Each of the University Wits, in his own way, carried the English drama further.

1.7 RENAISSANCE IN ENGLAND

Renaissance considered being the period of European history after the end of middle ages. It was in the age of the Renaissance that the great revival of learning, which started in Italy in the 13^{th} century, came to England in the second half of 14^{th} century. European civilization soared high in 15^{th} and 16^{th} centuries on the wings of the muse of the architecture, painting, sculpture and literature. The Elizabethan reign and Shakespearean drama mark the high points of English Renaissance which continued till Milton who is often described the last renaissance poet. Spencer, Bacon, Donne, Johnson and Marlow himself represent the full flowering of the Renaissance in English Literature. It is the Renaissance which makes the age of Marlow wonderfully fertile, productive and splendid. The English drama was nourished and inspired by the tales of love, pleasure, lust, violence and bloodshed of such Italian masters as Boccacio, Petrach, Cinthio, etc. The poetic output of this period is second only to that of the drama. Freedom of thought and freedom of the action were the dominant passions of the age. Old traditions and conventions lost their hold on the minds of the people, authority was rejected and all sorts of questions were asked. The rules and regulations of traditional writing were openly flouted and the writers of his period took freedom with grammar and syntax.

The shackles of medievalism started in the age of Chaucer and it reached its consummation in the age of Marlow was an age of materialism and frank enjoyment of life. Marlow's heroes are all ambitious for worldly glory, power and beauty of woman as well as of nature. The Elizabethans, like Marlow's heroes, were for seeking for something new and their thought and action were free and unfettered. The conditions of life were fast changing, though much barbarity and backwardness of the middle ages still persisted. So it was the age of wisdom, the age of foolishness, the age of light and darkness, the age of reason and unreason, the age of hope as well as of despair. The renaissance does mark a break with the so called dark ages; it marks the beginning of modern thought and modern age: It witnessed an increased in man's urge to discover himself and his world.

The new learning actually a revival of the Greek language and discovery of the Greek and Roman manuscripts by classical scholars. The revival of the classical erupted into a large scale mutation of ideas, literary forms and materials. The new religious reforms of the reformation movement by Martin Luther against the Roman Catholic Church and the Protestants emphasized the importance of the individual's direct, inner spiritual experience rather than seeking America, the hemispheres, India and the wealth of nations.

1.8 MIRACLES AND MYSTERY PLAYS

Drama in England began with religious teaching. The early religious plays were of two types: *The Mysteries* based upon subjects taken from the Bible and *The Miracles* dealing with the lives of saints. *Abraham and Isaac* is a remarkable example of Miracle and Mystery plays during the 15th century. The early drama was didactic in nature, its purpose being to instruct the people the facts of the Holy Scriptures or in the events of the lives of the saints. The script, the actors and the language Latin were completely under the control of the clergy.

In the course of the plays developed a secular tendency. As more characters were introduced, the performances become more elaborate, and more space was required for them, and soon they had to move out of the church in to the church yard and so in to streets. Those plays were shown in separate "stations" in the town, on wheeled theatres, drawn by horses. All the plays comprising the cycle began simultaneously in different locations and then move on to other places. Spectacular effects were not demonstrated: thunder was imitated by the beating of drums and the dragon's mouth represented Hell.

There religious performances were, of course, crude and poor in literary quality. Those plays were acted all over England in the thirteenth, fourteenth and Fifteenth centuries. The earliest religious play is *Adam* which described the fall of a man. All most all the best features of the religious drama appear in the early Mystery plays.

1.9 THE MORALITIES AND INTERLUDES

About the middle of the fifteenth century, the drama broke fresh ground substituting moral teaching or purely religious instruction. The morality plays were the next stage in the growth of the drama on England. These plays were also didactic and religious in nature but there were no longer biblical figures but personified virtues and vices, with a stoke figure known as vice who represented Satan. Thus a devil was also given chance to perform on the stage. The best known of these plays or moralities, as they were called is *Everyman* the late fifteenth century works of an anonymous writer.

Towards the close of the fifteenth century another type of the play arose called the interlude. It means a play in the midst of other festivals on business. Moralities and Interludes were not sufficiently distinguished, and we may perhaps regard the interlude as a transitional form between the Morality and the Elizabethan drama. The character vice, the humourous incarnation of Evil is the direct forerunner of Shakespearean clown. John Heywood's *The Four P's* is a well-known specimen of an Interlude.

1.10 SUMMARY

The word tragedy refers primarily to tragic drama. It is a literary composition written to be performed by actors in which the central character called a tragic hero. Tragedy was a public genre from its earliest beginning at Athens in Greek.

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1.11 GLOSSARY

Protestantism: is a form of Christian faith and practice which originated with the Protestant Reformation a movement against Roman Catholic Church. .

Attic drama: The ancient Athenian drama like any kind of dramatic performance that we are accustomed to in modern times.

Morality plays: Morality plays are a type of allegory in which the protagonist is met by personifications of various moral attributes.

Costumes: Costumes is the distinctive style of a particular people or class or period.

Seneca: Seneca was a Roman Stoic Philosopher, Statesman, dramatist of the Silver Age of Roman Literature.

Inn yard: theater is a common inn that provided a venue for the presentation of plays.

Ovid: Ovid was a Roman poet best known for metamorphoses.

The Renaissance: The Renaissance is a period from the 14th century to the 17th century, considered the bridge between the Middle Ages and Modern history.

Neoclassicism: Neoclassicism is the name given to Western Movement in the decorative and visual arts, literature, theater and music.

A legend: A legend is a narrative of human actions that are perceived by teller and listeners to take place within human history and to possess certain qualities that give the tale verisimilitude.

Dark Ages: The concept of the period of intellectual darkness and economic regression that occurred in Europe following the collapse of the Western Roman Empire.

Syntax: Syntax is linguistic structure above the world level most commonly dealing with sentences formed. It refers both to particular sets of rules, and also to the academic field that studies those rules.

1.12 SELF-ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

1.Write a note on the origin and development of Elizabethan Drama.

2. What are the stage conditions of Elizabethan drama?

3. Write a note on the influence of Senecan on Elizabethan Drama.

4. Explain the contribution of University Wits to Elizabethan Drama.

5.Write a note on the Renaissance influence on Elizabethan Drama.

1.13 REFERENCE BOOKS

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LESSON-2

SHAKESPEREAN TRAGEDY, COMEDY AND CHRONICLE PLAYS

Objectives of the Lesson

- To sensitise the students to learn Shakespearean Drama
- To develop the awareness of the students about Shakespearean Tragedies
- To make the students to be aware of Shakespearean Comedies
- To encourage the students to learn Historical Plays of Shakespeare
- To familiarize the students with the language of Shakespeare

Structure of the Lesson

2.1 SHAKESPEARE'S TRAGEDIES

''Shakespearean tragedy is a five act play ending in death of many of the major characters.'' This statement with others of its kind may accurately describe many of Shakespeare's plays, but if we are looking for the essence of Shakespearean tragedy we must look in an entirely different realm. We cannot list the literary devices used, find the ones common to all of Shakespeare's tragedies, and call this collection their essence. We recognize tragedy in literature because we that it corresponds to a sense of the tragic within us.

The essence of Shakespeare's tragedies is the expression of one of the great paradoxes of life. We might call it the paradox of disappointment. Defeat, shattered hopes, and ultimately death face us all as human beings. They are very real, but somehow we have the intuitive feeling that they are out of place. They seem to be intruders into life. Tragic literature confronts us afresh with this paradox and we become fascinated by it.

From this viewpoint we must look at the literary techniques in the plays not as definite elements of tragedy but as expressions of it. Thus hypothetically, someone could discover a long lost Shakespearean play that could truly be considered a tragedy yet lack any or all of the tragic devices common to Shakespearean's existing tragedies. The fact is, though, that certain literary devices recur regularly. Hence we may infer that these are

particularly useful devices for expressing tragedy, or at least that they were particularly useful to Shakespeare.

Let us consider several characteristics common to Shakespeare's four great tragedies. Each play is especially concerned with one central figure or tragic protagonist. *Hamlet, King Lear, Othello* and *Macbeth* are the protagonists of their respective plays. It is significant that each is the story of a man because the paradox of tragedy in real life is experienced mostly by individual man. Thus as we identify ourselves with the protagonist the sense of tragedy is aroused in us. The protagonist is therefore portrayed vividly as a believable human being. Traits may include strength of characters as in *Othello,* intelligence and cleverness as in *Hamlet,* foolish vanity in as in *King Lear,* and even treachery as in *Macbeth*. We are led to identify ourselves with the protagonist as in Hamlet's soliloquies, we share the thoughts that only Hamlet knows. Similarly in *Macbeth* we find ourselves let in on the plot to murder Duncan and we hear the prophecies that motivate *Macbeth.* Such characterization of the central figures is well suited to expressing tragedy.

Each play contains an element of hope that is disappointed or ambition that is frustrated. Here is the acting out of the disappointment paradox. Macbeth murders Duncan with the assurance of good reward. He then enters battle what again seems to be positive assurance. Only when it is too late does he realize that he is being led to his destruction.

Hamlet also has a central, well considered ambition, but its result is straightforward. Hamlet wants to avenge his father's murder, but the whole matter is entangled with everything from petty court rivalries to national politics that his success is accompanied by disaster.

And let me speak to the yet unknowing world

How these things came about. So shall you hear

Of carnal, bloody, and unnatural acts,

Of accidental judgments, casual slaughters,

Of deaths put on by cunning and forced cause,

And, in this upshot, purposes mistook

Fall'n on the inventors' heads.

Finally, we should consider a very prominent part of all four tragedies. Death is important in expressing tragedy because it is the very art of the paradox of disappointment. The secular man and even for many religious men death brings final conclusive disillusionment to every meaningful hope. It is the embodiment of defeat. In the tragedy under consideration, death is not used as an extreme of human suffering. Rather it is used symbolically to emphasize the disappointment and defeat that accompany it. The symbolic character of death is especially notified in Othello's suicide. Lago's treachery caused several other deaths but not Othello's. Othello's suicide is response to his despair. The tragedy Hamlet is not especially Hamlet's death, but the overall miscalculation and unnecessary bloodshed. Hamlet's own death nearly confirms the disaster.

We have said that tragedy deals with one of the greatest paradoxes of life. It does not propose solution to the paradox. It does not tell us that life is meaningful in spite of defeat

and disappointment, nor does it point out to despair and proclaim the worthlessness of our hopes. Rather it affirms the paradox and challenges us with it.

2.2 THE FOLLOWING ARE THE TRAGEDIES WRITTEN BY SHAKESPEARE

1. ***Troilus and Cressida.***
2. ***Coriolanus***
3. ***Titus Andronicus***
4. ***Romeo and Juliet***
5. ***Timon of Athens***
6. ***Julius Caesar***
7. ***Macbeth***
8. ***Hamlet***
9. ***King Lear***
10. ***Othello***
11. ***Antony and Cleopatra***
12. ***Cymbeline***

2.3 SHAKESPEARE'S COMEDIES

The first collected edition of Shakespeare's plays, the First Folio of 1623, subdivided them into Comedies, Histories and Tragedies, of which comfortably the largest section contained Comedies. Originally, fourteen plays were placed in that category: in alphabetical order they are *All's Well That Ends Well, As You Like It, The Comedy of Errors, Love's Labor's Lost, Measure for Measure, The Merchant of Venice, A Midsummer Night's Dream, Much Ado About Nothing, The Taming of the Shrew, The Tempest, The Merry Wives of Windsor, Twelfth Night, The Gentlemen of Verona* and *The Winter's Tale.* Pericles was not included in the first Folio at all, and *Cymbeline* was then regarded as a tragedy, but both would be considered comedies today.

More recently, it has become common practice to present the so-called 'problem plays' and the four late 'romances' in separate lists, and this convention will be followed here, partly for convenience, and partly because that groupings help shed greater light onto Shakespeare's creative development. It is certain that most of the early comedies were written before 1600, and very likely that they all were which places them firmly in the first half of Shakespeare's career-and it has been argued on varies occasions that either *The Comedy of Errors, The Taming of the Shrew or The Two Gentlemen of Verona* may be his very first play.

One thing immediately needs clarifying is that the term 'Comedy' would have made a different impression on Shakespeare's contemporaries than it would make on present-day audiences: his aim was not primarily to make them laugh. While the comedies are certainly more light hearted than the tragedies, they still probe dark emotional depths: witness Shylock's notorious ''pound of flesh'' bargain in *The Merchant of Venice,* or the soul-searching in *Much Ado About Nothing* when Claudio is confronted with the news that he may have caused the death of his innocent bride-to-be, or the fact that one of The Gentlemen of Verona ends up attempting to rape the other's betrothed.

That said, they can be hilarious in the right hands: witness john Laurie and Ronnie Barker's Quince and Bottom in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (1971), Michael Elphick and Clive Dunn's Dogberry and Verges in *Much Ado About Nothing (1984),* John Cleese's Petruchio in *The Taming of the Shrew (1980),* and Prunella Scales' Mistress Page in *The Merry Wives of Windsor (1982)*: the nods to Basil and Sybil Fawlty were almost certainly

intentional. Both *Love's Labor's Lost* and *A Midsummer Night's Dream* culminate in deliberately disastrous stage productions, while *The Comedy of Errors* is based around the age=old plot device of mistaken identity, rendered doubly confusing by the 1983BBC versions use of special effects to allow Michael Kitchen and Roger Daltrey to play two roles onscreen simultaneously.

Unsurprisingly, it's the major masterpieces that have proven most popular in terms of British film and television adaptation. Twelfth night is the winner in terms of numbers, followed closely by a *Midsummer Night's Dream*, though *As YouLike It* holds the record for the number of big-screen films (three, with a fourth in production as of mid-2005), through the BBC Television Shakespeare's completist remit has ensured that even the *Two Gentlemen of Verona* has had one complete production. Much Ado About Nothing has been the biggest international hit, courtesy Kenneth Branagh's star-studded 1993 film, and Franco Zeffirelli's The taming of the Shrew (1967) shrewdly capitalized on the popularity and off-screen reputation of its stars Richard Burton and Elizabeth Taylor.

While most productions have been set in Shakespeare's own era, exceptions include eighteenth-century (1985) and pre-WWII (2000) updates Love's Labor's Lost, and As You Like It (1992) set on the East London housing estate, Merchant of Venice (2001) set in the notoriously anti-Semantic 1930s, and Twelfth Night (2003) that reflects contemporary multicultural issues, notably that of illegal asylum seekers. The Taming of the Shrew also inspired 1930s comedies (You Made Me Love You, 1933; Second Best Bed, 1938) and a blank-verse sequel (The Tamer Tamed, 1956).

Romantic Comedy

The Shakespearean Comedy, on the other hand is Romantic Comedy. It grew out of national tastes and traditions. The dramatist does not care for any rules of literary creation but writes according to the dictates of his fancy. Three unities are carelessly thrown to the wind. There is a free gay; for Shakespeare instinctively raised the life that is mingled yarn of joys and sorrows, and it would be unnatural to separate them. Its aim is not corrective, nor satiric but innocent and good natured laughter. Follies are no doubt exposed and ridiculed, but the laughter is gentle and sympathetic and there is moral indignation, or zeal of a reformer. The dramatist sympathizes even when he laughs and we laugh with people, not at them. The settings are all imaginative. Shakespeare transports his readers and audience on the viewless wings of poetry to an unhistorical France, pastoral surroundings of Arden, to the enchanted stories of Illyria to ancient Venice or to ancient forest of Greece. According to Raleigh the Shakespearean comedy is "rainbow world of love in idleness".

2.4 THE FOLLOWING ARE THE COMEDIES WRITTEN BY SHAKESPEARE

1. ***The Tempest***
2. ***The Two Gentle Men Of Verona***
3. ***The Merry Wives of Windsor***
4. ***Measure for Measure***
5. ***The Comedy of Errors***
6. ***Much Ado About Nothing***
7. ***Loves Labour Lost***
8. ***A Mid-Summer Night's Dream***
9. ***The Merchant of Venice***
10. ***As You Like It***
11. ***The Taming of the Shrew***

12. All's Well That Ends Well
13. Twelfth Night
14. The Winter's Tale
15. Pericles
16. The Two Noble Kinsmen

2.5 SHAKESPEARE'S HISTORIES

The historical plays of Shakespeare covering a wide range are faithful chronicles of English history and they truly present the long history of England covering over a period of about 350 years. The historical plays of Shakespeare can be divided into three groups. The first group of it is devoted to the reign of Henry I; secondly three such as Richard II, Richard III and King John bring before us studies in kings and kinship. Thirdly plays like Henry IV and Henry V represent Shakespeare's ideals of kingship.

The historical plays of Shakespeare are a link between the process of the development of comedy and tragedy. They provide a vigorous plea for national unity. Each historical play conveys a moral lesson. The idea of scholarship and horsemanship is also vividly idealized in his historical plays. These plays leave a powerful impression of kingly glory and kingly responsibility.

Although there has been disagreement about the precise definition of a Shakespeare 'history play' (Macbeth, Julius Caesar and Cleopatra were undoubtedly real historical figures, yet the plays bearing their names are not generally included in the canon), the term is usually applied to the ten plays that cover English history from the twelfth to the sixteenth centuries, and the 1399-1485 period in particular, each named after and focusing on the reigning monarch at the time.

In chronological order of setting, there are King Lear, Richard II, Henry IV Parts I and II, Henry V, Henry VI Parts I, II and III, Richard III and Henry VIII. An additional historical play, Edward III, increasingly accepted being Shakespeare's work, has not yet been filmed, though the others boast at least two screen adaptations with Richard III's approaching double figures.

It is easy to see the appeal. The plays, singly or grouped, offer a panoramic survey of a notably turbulent period of English history- and not just the expected battles and behind the screens political machination: Shakespeare depicts the life from top to bottom, from the king's court to East cheap taverns and bawdy-houses. The history plays feature arguably the noblest hero (Henry V), the most gleefully twisted villain (Richard III) and the best-loved comic character (Sir John Falstaff) in Shakespeare's entire output, alongside some of his most memorable set-pieces and soliloquies.

However, their thematic, narrative and linguistic opulence has posed numerous challenges for those adapting them for the cinema or television. This is true of Shakespeare's work in general, but the history plays pose particular difficulties given both their assumptions about the audience's familiarity with what to an Elizabethan audience would have been relatively recent history (very recent in the case of Henry VIII), and the fact that most of the individual plays are part of a much longer sequence.

For instance, Henry V and Richard III, the two most popular (and most-filmed) historical plays, is each the culmination of a four-part history cycle, whose characters and events the text often alludes to. This can be solved by editing and reshaping, but at the risk of

oversimplifying the material-Laurence Olivier's Henry V- is a far less complex character than Shakespeare's original, partly through cuts to the text of Henry V itself in order to beef up the patriotism for wartime propaganda purposes, but mostly through the elimination of his coming of age, a key narrative strand of the preceding Henry IV plays, and most one-off adaptations tone these down considerably in favour of focusing on the title character; only the BBC television Shakespeare production comes anywhere close to presenting the full text.

But it has challenges that have resulted in such a wide range to choose from, starting with the world's first Shakespeare's film, the 1899 King John. If you want chronological survey, the BBC's An Age of Kings (1960) adapts the 1399-1485 plays into a stylistically coherent fifteen-part series. If you want conservative treatments of more or less the full text, the BBC Television Shakespeare (1978-1985) should more than suffice though the Henry VI/Richard III tetralogy was one of the cycle's more imaginative and adventurous achievements.

If you want brainstorming lead performances, you can't go far wrong with Olivier (Henry V,1944; Richard III, 1995), Kenneth Branagh (Henry V, 1989) or Ian McKellen (Richard III, 1995), while the last of these shows how historically-specific material thrives in a completely different setting (an imaginary 1930s Fascist London). Finally, John Caird's reinvention of the Henry IV plays (BBC, 1995) offer one of the most convincing examples to date of how they can be turned into a television drama as gripping as any contemporary thriller.

2.6 THE FOLLOWING ARE THE COMEDIES WRITTEN BY SHAKESPEARE

1. ***King John***
2. ***Richard II***
3. ***Henry IV, Part-1***
4. ***Henry IV, Part-2***
5. ***Henry V***
6. ***Henry VI, Part-1***
7. ***Henry VI, Part-2***
8. ***Henry VI, Part-3***
9. ***Richard III***
10. ***Henry VIII***

2.7 THE LANGUAGE OF SHAKESPEARE

A. The two greatest trends to have influenced and marked the English language after the Norman invasion of 1066 have been:

1. The Bible in its different versions; not only for all of the religious allusions which have entered into common usage but above all for the simplicity and flexibility of the language used in these versions. Everybody reads the Bible in the English speaking world and its language underpins every form of linguistic expression. Biblical references are without doubt more numerous in Anglophone literatures than in any other Western literature.
2. Shakespeare (and to a lesser extent, Chaucer before him). It could even be argued that he invented a large part of the English language, and helped to amplify and develop its major qualities: its flexibility and potential for concrete imagery. There are innumerable expressions which passed directly from Shakespeare's plays into everyday language. Here are just few examples drawn from Hamlet.
   There's something rotten in the state of Denmark

Not a mouse stirring
Frailty, thy name is woman
More matter, with less art

Hold the mirror up to nature

1. **S**hakespeare breaks with all of the rigid principles of the past; for him the world is not fixed, it changes constantly and language can only be the faithful reflection of all these transformations. His language is therefore characterized above all by its flexibility; it adapts itself to every circumstance and reflects every thought and emotion of the characters, from an ultra-literary language to one of the greatest vulgarity, often within the language of a single character and even within the same speech. This is particularly true of Hamlet: see for example the soliloquies and the sexual wordplay, puns innuendos.
2. Shakespeare's inventiveness: of all the authors in the English language he is without any doubt, the one with the most extensive and richest vocabulary. He draws from all areas of language and from all registers.
3. Nevertheless his language always has the tone and pace of the spoken word. Shakespeare never forgot that he was first of all a man of the theatre and that what he wrote on paper was to be spoken. From this arise unforgettable sound combinations; they are in the soliloquies of Hamlet passages which delight the ear. There are also miracles of simplicity and power: Descartes' 'I think, therefore I am' convinces us; 'To be or not to be, that is the question' moves us.
4. The word of Shakespeare is the world transformed into images and metaphors; an object becomes a word which turns it into an idea or an emotion. There are also double meanings, puns and world play, at times ironic, often obscene, and always witty, even in the greatest tragedies.

Shakespeare has survived all the ages; rooted in the Renaissance he survived the Enlightenment, Romanticism, realism, the Industrial Revolution; he has adapted to the computer age and he is spreading throughout the Web. He endures, he is intractable. He speaks to everyone; for some he is Marxist, for others a misogynist; some say he is close to what we would nowadays call the far right, etc. perhaps he is none of these characteristics, perhaps he is all these things at once, as we all are. He has wonderfully anticipated all the schools of psychology of the 19th centuries. He knows human nature, consequently he knows us, and consequently we recognize ourselves in his characters.

2.8 SUMMARY

The essence of Shakespeare's tragedies is the expression of one of the great paradoxes of life. Defeat, shattered hopes, and ultimately death face us all as human beings. They are very real, but somehow we have the intuitive feeling that they are out of place.

Each play contains an element of hope that is disappointed or ambition that is frustrated.

One thing immediately needs clarifying is that the term 'Comedy' would have made a different impression on Shakespeare's contemporaries than it would make on present-day audiences

The Shakespearean Comedy, on the other hand is Romantic Comedy. It grew out of national tastes and traditions. The dramatist does not care for any rules of literary creation but writes according to the dictates of his fancy.

Its aim is not corrective, or satiric but innocent and good natured laughter. Follies are no doubt exposed and ridiculed, but the laughter is gentle and sympathetic and there is moral indignation, or zeal of a reformer.

The historical plays of Shakespeare covering a wide range are faithful chronicles of English history and they truly present the long history of England covering over a period of about 350 years.

The historical plays of Shakespeare are a link between the process of the development of comedy and tragedy. They provide a vigorous plea for national unity.

There are innumerable expressions which passed directly from Shakespeare's plays into everyday language.

The word of Shakespeare is the world transformed into images and metaphors.

2.9 GLOSSARY

Anglophone literatures: Literaturewritten English outside of Britain and America.

Paradox: Paradox is a statement that apparently contradicts itself and yet might be true.

Protagonist: Protagonist is a chief actor in a play or main character or primary central figure, who comes in to conflict with an opposing major character.

Problem plays: In Shakespeareanstudies, the term problem plays primarily refers to three plays that Shakespeare wrote between the late 1950s and the first years of the 17th century**.**

ShakespeareanFolio: From the earliest days of printing, folios were often used for expensive, prestigious volumes. Thirty-six of Shakespeare's plays, for example,were included in the First Folio collected edition of 1623, which was followed by additional followed editions, referred to as The Second Folio.

2.10 SELF-ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

1. What are the common features in Shakespearean tragedies?
2. What are the Senecan elements in Shakespearean tragedy?
3. Shakespeare has no heroes only heroines with reference to his comedies. Explain.
4. Write a note on the language of Shakespeare in his plays.
5. Write a note on the classification of Shakespearean dramas.
6. Write a note on the historical plays of William Shakespeare.

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LESSON-3

DEFINING AND EXEMPLIFYING ELIZABETHAN WORLD VIEW, ELIZABETHAN THEATRE AND SHAKESPEAREAN TRAGEDY

Objectives of the Lesson:

1. To understand and be familiarized with the Elizabethan World View, and thereby to understand Elizabethan Art and Literature.
2. To understand Elizabethan Theatre and its Salient Features, and thereby to comprehend Shakespearean Theatre
3. To have a comprehensive understanding of Shakespearean Tragedy and to make an appreciation of the same

Structure of the Lesson:

3.1 WORLD VIEW

Worldview is just a term meaning how we interpret reality, or what we believe to be true.

It may be assumed that each of us have one, and though it has been vastly influenced by the thoughts of those we read, watch or associate with, we each actually have a unique perspective on what is going on.

Worldviews can and do change. In general, worldview has been most influenced by religion and science. If science teaches us that the planet is part of a closed system and the Earth is winding down, with limited resources and in time will simply use itself up, then a worldview of scarcity is likely to result. If science were to teach that the Universe is alive, and this planet is part of a living infinitely abundant universe –and that the energy winding down is matched by energy winding up, in a dynamic of expansion and contraction, that can be tapped in to cleanly and harmoniously to provide for all people everywhere, we are likely to believe that evolution is ongoing and there is plenty to go around.

The key is that our belief system determines what we think is possible, and what we think is possible influences the results we create or allow in life. The interactions of all our individual worldviews shapes the condition of humanity and therefore, given our technologies, of planet Earth.

Art and World View:

Philosophy, science and art differ principally according to their subject-matter and also the means by which they reflect, transform and express it. In a certain sense, art, like philosophy, reflects reality in its relation to man, and depicts man, his spiritual world, and the relations between individuals in their interaction with the world.

We live not in a primevally pure world, but in a world that is known and has been transformed, a world where everything has, as it were, been given a "human angle", a world permeated with our attitudes towards it, our needs, ideas, aims, ideals, joys and sufferings, a world that is part of the vortex of our existence. If we were to remove this "human factor" from the world, its sometimes inexpressible, profoundly intimate relationship with man, we should be confronted by a desert of grey infinity, where everything was indifferent to everything else. Nature, considered in isolation from man, is for man simply nothing, an empty abstraction existing in the shadowy world of dehumanised thought. The whole infinite range of our relationships to the world stems from the sum-total of our interactions with it. We are able to consider our environment rationally through the gigantic historical prism of science, philosophy and art, which are capable of expressing life as a tempestuous flood of contradictions that come into being, develop, are resolved and negated in order to generate new contradictions.

Life is so structured that for a man to be fully conscious of it he needs all these forms of intellectual activity, which complement each other and build up an integral perception of the world and versatile orientation in it.

In short, the great men of theory were by no means dry rationalists. They were gifted with an aesthetic appreciation of the world. And no wonder, for art is a powerful catalyst for such abilities as power of imagination, keen intuition and the knack of association, abilities needed by both scientists and philosophers.

If we take the history of Oriental culture, we find that its characteristic feature is the organic synthesis of an artistic comprehension of the world with its philosophical and scientific perception. This blending of the philosophical and the artistic is inherent in all peoples, as can be seen from their sayings, proverbs, aphorisms, tales and legends, which abound in vividly expressed wisdom.

Can one imagine our culture without the jewels of philosophical thought that were contributed to it by human genius? Or without its artistic values? Can one conceive of the development of contemporary culture without the life-giving rays of meditative art embodied in the works of such people as Dante, Goethe, Leo Tolstoy, Balzac, Pushkin, Lermontov, Dostoyevsky, Tchaikovsky, and Beethoven? Culture would have had a very different history but for the brilliant minds that gave us their masterpieces of painting, music, poetry and prose. The whole world of our thoughts and feelings would have been different, and incomparably poorer. And we, as individuals, would also have been flawed. The intellectual atmosphere that surrounds us from childhood, the style of thinking that permeates folk sayings, tales and songs, the books we have read, the paintings and sculptures we have admired, the music we have heard, the view of the world and humanity that we have absorbed thanks to our contact with the treasures of art, has not all this contributed to the formation of our individual self? Did it not teach us to think philosophically and perceive and transform the world aesthetically?

The work of the artist is not spontaneous. It always follows some kind of plan and it is most effective when talent is guided by a world-view, when the artist has something to tell people, much more rarely is it effective when it comes about as a result of the accidental associative play of the imagination, and never is it effective when it is a result of blind instinct. The keen attention that is given to the problems of method is a sign of progress in both modern science and art, a sign of the increasing interaction of all aspects of intellectual life—science, philosophy, and art.

3.2 **ELIZABETHAN WORLD VIEW AND ITS PROMINENT FEATURES**

The Elizabethan world was in a state of flux and people were confused, frightened, excited at traditional beliefs challenged by scientific discovery, and exploration. The Roman Catholic Church was under attack. The movement which agitated against the Catholic Church was labeled the Reformation. The translation of the Bible into English meant many ordinary people had access to it for the first time.

Science and Astronomy: new discoveries were being made all the time. Galileo was the first man to study the stars through a telescope, and people learned for the first time that the world was round, not flat. It was also discovered that the sun, not the earth, was the centre of the solar system.

Exploration: Queen Elizabeth encouraged adventurous men like Sir Francis Drake and Sir Walter Raleigh to sail in search of wealth and undiscovered lands. Drake was knighted when he became the first man to circumnavigate the world, and Raleigh sailed to the Americas.

New discoveries meant that discourses arose. Montaigne, for instance, offered the notion that there were two kinds of 'savages' --the noble savage, and the ignoble savage. Debates raged as to whether humans were inherently good or bad.

The Great Chain of Being: people believed that everyone and everything was arranged in a specific order, and that this order was divinely preordained. God was the head of all things; the king,his representative on Earth, was the head of the State, and the Pope the head of the Church. Everything was allocated a place on the great chain including animals, plants and minerals. Within each tier, there was also a hierarchy. For instance, the oak tree and the rose bush were decreed the higher plants, the lion the highest animal. All other plants and animals came below.
Any break in the chain, such as killing the king, or a king abdicating, or marriage across the social spheres, pretty much ensured pre- ordained chaos.

Queen Elizabeth had long occupied the throne, but had no heirs of her body. This created a very tense latter part of her reign, as the succession was not assured. It may be argued that the last part of the Elizabethan reign was obsessed with this issue. The Music of the Spheres: another popular belief, that related to the Divine Chain of Being, was that the Universe was made up of a number of spheres contained within one another.
It is thought by some scholars that the belief in the turning wheel of fortune had its beginnings in early seasonal rituals. The decline into misfortune or death was seen to be linked to the beginnings of autumn and the approach of winter; improvements in one's fortunes were linked to the renewal of life in spring and the fruitfulness of summer. This belief, like the belief in the Zodiac and the humours, tends to be in opposition to the more humanistic beliefs that man could control his own destiny (fortune).

Humanism in Shakespeare's time a movement known as "Humanism" had a great influence on men and their philosophy of life. Humanists had great faith in man's ability to shape his own future. They tended to shift the emphasis from life after death to life on earth.
The term "Humanism" refers to thoughts and actions which are directed at improving society.The Renaissance: the term Renaissance means "rebirth" or "revival". During the Middle Ages (roughly 1100 - 1400) the civilizations of ancient Greece and Rome had, to a large extent, "died out" in Western Europe. But starting in Italy in the middle of the 14th Century and spreading throughout Western Europe during the next centuries, a revival of interest in Greek and Roman civilizations took place: a "Renaissance".
In England and for English Literature, the Renaissance meant more than an involvement in a rebirth of interest in ancient civilizations and cultures. The Renaissance also meant an exposure to the continental developments from the 14th to 16th centuries. It also meant an awakening of Englishmen to their ability for using the heritage of the past and combining it with their own native gifts to produce a great new literary movement.

Perhaps more than any other Renaissance figure, Shakespeare revealed an ability to use the past and shape it for his own dramatic needs.

3.3 ELIZABETHAN THEATRE AND ITS PROMINENT FEATURES

In the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, English theater blossomed in London. Elizabethan theater – or more properly, English Renaissance theater – flourished between the years of 1562 and 1642. (This spanned the reign of three monarchs, in fact, and not just that of Queen Elizabeth the First – hence the broader term is more accurate.) This is the time when William Shakespeare was writing and performing, along with other legendary playwrights of the era.

The era of early modern theater begins with "Gorboduc," a play about civil war and succession to the throne of a kingdom. (These were topical and sensitive issues at the time, coming on the heels of the English Reformation brought about by Elizabeth's father, Henry VIII.) "Gorboduc", which was written by both Thomas Norton and Thomas Sackville, is significant for being the first dramatic work to be written in blank verse. Blank verse is metric poetry that uses unrhymed iambic pentameter. An iamb is a chunk of a line that contains an unstressed syllable followed by a stressed syllable. There are five of them in each line of iambic pentameter blank verse. (The meter gives it poetic structure and makes it easier to memorize, as well.) As a natural extension of this writing, playwrights like Christopher Marlowe and William Shakespeare were also known for writing poetry, such as their well-known sonnets.

Within the early modern era when drama flourished, there are three periods named after each of the monarchs at the time. Elizabethan Theater only spans, properly, from 1562 to 1603. Jacobean Theater runs from 1603 to 1625. And Caroline Theater extends from 1625 to 1642.

The English Renaissance theatrical era came to an end in 1642, with the Puritanical parliament banned the performance of plays. During the interregnum, or this period between kings, public theater was not allowed by law. When Charles II returned to the throne, theater flourished in a new era dubbed the Restoration.

The first plays of this era were not performed in permanent theaters – there were none at that time. Instead, shows were put on in the courtyards of inns by traveling troupes of actors. A permanent theater, The Red Lion, opened in 1567. It was on the outskirts of the city of London, and only hosted troupes of actors as they were passing through. Unfortunately, it did not succeed due to its remote location. It took until 1576 and the establishment of The Theatre in Shoreditch for the building boom to blossom. The Theatre would host a company of actors on a more permanent basis, as they performed different shows in repertory in the same location. Other theaters soon followed, such as The Rose, The Swan, The Fortune, The Red Bull, and most famously, The Globe. All were located outside the city limits due to laws that restricted congregations and establishments like theaters in order to prevent the spread of the plague.

All the theaters had certain attributes in common. They were three stories tall and tended to be roughly circular. These buildings had an open space in the center, and the stage extended out into this area. Thus, three sides of the stage were open to view by the audience, and only the rear was used for entrances and exits. There were no roofs and plays were performed during the day so lights were not needed. The first theater with a roof was the Blackfriars Theatre. As such, it was among the first theaters to use artificial lighting during productions. These many different theaters offered thousands of Londoners each day the opportunity to see plays for sometimes as little as a penny.

Three main genres dominated the English Renaissance stage. These were comedy, tragedy, and history. (These can be facetiously categorized as plays where everybody gets married at the end, everybody dies at the end, and everybody already knows how it ends, respectively.)

3.4. ELIZABETHAN WORLD VIEW AND ELIZABETHAN THEATRE

Beliefs

1. Great Chain of Being
   Another common belief was the “Great Chain of Being”. It says that every being on earth has its place in the world’s hierarchy. God à Angels à Humans à Animals à Plants à Stones. Therefore every human has also a place in the hierarchy. King à Aristocrats à subjects…
   In Shakespeare’s plays the order is often messed up through murder and revolution, but at the end of those plays there’s the restoration of the order (e.g. Julius Caesar, Hamlet, Macbeth). Since the order is believed to be given by nature (and God), someone who produces disorder (e.g. a subject who rebels against his king) acts unnaturally or against God’s laws of the world.

2. Witchcraft

A real witch-mania characterised the reign of Elizabeth I. Persecution reached terrifying proportions, so between 1560 and 1603 hundreds of women were convicted as witches and executed. Most people believed in witches, though some people recognized it as superstition Witches were credited with diabolic powers: fly, predict the future, cause fog or tempests, sail in sieves, curse their enemies, cause diseases, nightmares and sterility, have sex with the devil and take demonic possession of someone.

They were said to raise evil spirits by brewing disgusting potions with macabre ingredients. It was also believed that the devil sucked the witches' blood in exchange for a "familiar", a reptile, bird or beast as an evil servant. (Like the spirits in Macbeth I,1: *Paddock, Greymalkin*)
King James was as fascinated by witchcraft as his subjects. He himself investigated some witchcraft cases. Mostly the "witches" would confess anything and everything under torture. In 1597 he published the book *Demonology* about witchcraft, which was printed when he became King in 1603. Literature about witchcraft and witch trials was very famous.

The fear of witchcraft came from the Christian belief in Heaven and Hell. People lived in fear of eternal damnation, which they saw as a consequence of witchcraft. Shakespeare's audience must have seen signs of a man and a woman seized by demonic possession in the play *Macbeth*. The religious imagery in the play would remind the audience of damnation that awaited those who challenged Christian beliefs (e.g. through murder). The Weird Sisters are a typical image of witches as they were believed in at Shakespeare's time. They brew disgusting potions, use magic spells, tell the future, sail in a sieve, have spirits, etc.

3.5 THE SHAKESPEAREAN/ ELIZABETHAN THEATRE

PlaysandPlaywright

- Variety of plays: comedies, tragedies, history plays, romances, sometimes a mixture.
- **The Theatre** was built in 1576, rapidly followed by the nearby **Curtain Theatre** (1577), **the Rose** (1587), **the Swan** (1595), **the Globe** (1599), **the Fortune** (1600), and **the Red Bull** (1604).
- **The Black friars Theatre**, which came into regular use on a long term basis in 1599 was small in comparison to the earlier theatres and roofed rather than open to the sky; it resembled a modern theatre in ways that its predecessors did not. It was followed by other roofed theatres.
- Some of the men (no women were professional dramatists in this era) who wrote these plays were educated at either Oxford or Cambridge, but many were not. Although **William Shakespeare** and **Ben Jonson** were actors, the majority don't seem to have been performers.
- Playwrights were normally paid partly during the writing process, and if their play was accepted, they would also receive the proceeds from one day's performance. However, they had no ownership of the plays they wrote. Once a play was sold to a company, the company owned it, and the playwright had no control over casting, performance, revision or publication.
- Other Playwrights at Shakespeare's time: Ben Johnson, Christopher Marlowe, Richard **Brome, Francis Beaumont, Robert Green, Edward de Vere.**

The Actors

- Actors produced and directed the plays themselves.
- They had a repertoire of 50 plays which they could play at any time.
- They dresses lavishly and wore second-hand clothes.
- Scripts were changed very often and often the plays required improvisation.
- Women were played by boys till the age of 19 since only male actors were allowed.
- The actors had to be very good sportsmen and good movers.

Conditions during the Performance

- The conditions for the actors would be unacceptable today.

 The audience in the pit had no seats
 The actors had to shout since there wasn't something like a microphone.
 Since the plays took place in the afternoon there were no light effects and the actors had to give signs to the audience to tell them what time of day it was in the play.
 The actors had no limit on their playtime and there were no breaks during the performance.
 People ate and talked during the performances so there was always a lot of noise in the theatre.

TheGlobe

 It was built in 1599 and belonged to Shakespeare's theatre company.
 There were 3 Galleries, a machine room (for effects like thunder), the stage was/is jetting out in the audience. You could also stand on the ground surrounding the stage, called the pit. The people there were called "the groundlings". Very rich people could afford sitting directly on the stage.
 At Shakespeare's time 3000 visitors fitted into The Globe, today only 1500 fit into the theatre.
 There were no curtains, but two doors through which actors could go in and out.

Costumes and Props

 Costumes and properties were kept backstage in the "tiring house"
 Actors dressed lavishly and wore Elizabethan second-hand clothes, so the costumes didn't correspond to the period of the play
 The symbolic use of colours, but especially black and white, was important: Black mourning or funeral. White innocence and purity, often worn by angels or good spirits. Leather or armour costumes for ghosts.
 Stage properties were necessary to define location or time of day of the play: Chairs, stools indoor scenes, a watchman carrying a lantern streets of a city at night, king wearing his armour battle field, riding boots Messenger

The Audience

 The audience consisted of several hundred to thousands of people
 It was a cross-section of the English population since all classes and professions were represented.
 There were more young people than older ones and more male than female.
 Prices: 1 penny pit (standing), 2 penny back lines (sitting), 3 penny gallery (best view)
 There was always a lot of illness and since people stood so close (especially in the pit) the theatres had to be closed sometimes, especially in summer, because of the plague forexample.
 The audience didn't listen in hushed silence. They talked to each other, bought fruits or sausages, from hawkers walking around.

3.6 SHAKESPEAREAN TRAGEDY:

Unity, Time, and Place

The dramatic form of classical tragedy derives from the tragic plays of ancient Athens, which depicted the downfall of a hero or famous character of Greek legend. The hero would struggle against overwhelming fate, and his defeat would be so noble that he wins the moral

victory over the forces that destroy him. A tragedy evoked pity and terror in the audience; it was a catharsis, or washing clean of the soul, which left the spectator trembling but purified.

Aristotle proposed the tragic unities of Place, Time, and Action, that is, the whole tragedy would take place in a single location, for example a house or a city square (this included messengers who came in from elsewhere), it would happen during the course of one day (including speeches about events which had happened in the past), and it would be a single story, without sub- plots.

Compared with these strict rules, Shakespeare's tragedy is a more relaxed genre, but *Othello* much more than, for example, the sprawling *Hamlet,* observes the spirit of Aristotle. Othello, apart from Act I in Venice, is located entirely within the fortress at Cyprus. Although logically the play covers an unspecified time lapse of, we presume, two or three weeks, it proceeds, more or less, by major scenes through the hours of the day, starting in Venice with the elopement after midnight, the Senate meeting at dawn, then at Cyprus with the morning storm and afternoon landings and developments, the fateful drinking party in the early evening and the murder at bed time. This is not to say that everything happens in the same day; it obviously cannot, but the impression is of an abstract day unfolding.

The plot is fairly unified, focusing on Othello and his fate, and dealing with other people and events only in so far as they are relevant to this focus. Othello is about as near as Shakespeare gets to classical tragedy.

The Tragic Flaw

A. C. Bradley saw Shakespearean tragedy characterized by the "tragic flaw," the internal imperfection in the hero that brings him down. His downfall becomes his own doing, and he is no longer, as in classical tragedy, the helpless victim of fate. Some say that Othello's tragic flaw was jealousy which flared at suspicion and rushed into action unchecked by calm common sense. A more modern interpretation would say that Othello's tragic flaw was that he had internalized, that is taken into himself, the prejudices of those who surrounded him. In his heart he had come to believe what they believed: that a black man is an unattractive creature, not quite human, unworthy of love. Thinking this, he could not believe that Desdemona could truly love him for himself. Her love must be a pretense, or a flawed and corrupted emotion. Iago hinted at these ideas, and Othello rushed to accept them, because they echoed his deepest fears and insecurities.

The Play's Structure

Shakespearean tragedy usually works on a five-part structure, corresponding to the five acts: Part One, the exposition, outlines the situation, introduces the main characters, and begins the action. Part Two, the development, continues the action and introduces complications. Part Three, the crisis (or climax), brings everything to a head. In this part, a change of direction occurs or understanding is precipitated. Part Four includes further developments leading inevitably to Part Five, in which the final crisis of action or revelation and resolution are explained. Othello follows this pattern.

3.7 SELF-ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

1. What is a world view and how it is connected to art?

2. What are the features of Elizabethan World View and how they are reflected in the theatre?
3. What are the features of Shakespearean Theatre?
4. What are the characteristics of Shakespearean Tragedy?

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LESSON-4

DEFINING AND EXEMPLIFYING ELIZABETHAN WORLD VIEW, ELIZABETHAN THEATRE AND SHAKESPEAREAN TRAGEDY

Objectives of the Lesson:

1. To understand and be familiarized with Greek Tragedy which remains a source of classical force for Elizabethan Tragedy
2. To be familiarized with Comedy and Its Prominence.
3. To have a comprehensive understanding of Chronicle Plays and their Significance.
4. To comprehend Romance and its Literary Significance.

Structure of the Lesson:

4.1 GREEK TRAGEDY AND ITS PROMINENT FEATURES

Greek tragedy was a popular and influential form of drama performed in theatres across ancient Greece from the late 6th century BCE. The most famous playwrights of the genre were Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides and many of their works were still performed centuries after their initial premiere. Greek tragedy led to Greek comedy and, together, these genres formed the foundation upon which all modern theatre is based.

The Origins of Tragedy

The exact origins of tragedy (*tragōida*) are debated amongst scholars. Some have linked the rise of the genre, which began in Athens, to the earlier art form, the lyrical performance of epic poetry. Others suggest a strong link with the rituals performed in the worship of Dionysos such as the sacrifice of goats - a song ritual called *trag-ōdia* - and the wearing of masks. Indeed, Dionysos became known as the god of theatre and perhaps there is another connection - the drinking rites which resulted in the worshipper losing full control of their emotions and in effect becoming another person, much as actors (*hupokritai*) hope to do when performing. The music and dance of Dionysiac ritual was most evident in the role of the chorus and the music provided by an aulos player, but rhythmic elements were also

preserved in the use of first, trochaic tetrameter and then iambic trimeter in the delivery of the spoken words.

A Tragedy Play

Performed in an open-air theatre (*theatron*) such as that of Dionysos in Athens and seemingly open to all of the male populace (the presence of women is contested), the plot of a tragedy was almost always inspired by episodes from Greek mythology, which we must remember were often a part of Greek religion. As a consequence of this serious subject matter, which often dealt with moral right and wrongs, no violence was permitted on the stage and the death of a character had to be heard from offstage and not seen. Similarly, at least in the early stages of the genre, the poet could not make comments or political statements through the play, and the more direct treatment of contemporary events had to wait for the arrival of the less austere and conventional genre, Greek comedy.

The early tragedies had only one actor who would perform in costume and wear a mask, allowing him the presumption of impersonating a god. Here we can see perhaps the link to earlier religious ritual where proceedings might have been carried out by a priest. Later, the actor would often speak to the leader of the chorus, a group of up to 15 actors who sang and danced but did not speak. This innovation is credited to Thespis in c. 520 BCE. The actor also changed costumes during the performance (using a small tent behind the stage, the *skēne*, which would later develop into a monumental façade) and so break the play into distinct episodes. Phrynichos is credited with the idea of splitting the chorus into different groups to represent men, women, elders, etc. (although all actors on the stage were in fact male). Eventually, three actors were permitted on stage - a limitation which allowed for equality between poets in competition. However, a play could have as many non-speaking performers as required, so, no doubt, plays with greater financial backing could put on a more spectacular production with finer costumes and sets. Finally, Agathon is credited with adding musical interludes unconnected with the story itself.

Tragedy in Competition

Besides performance in competition, many plays were copied into scripts for publication and posterity.

The most famous competition for the performance of tragedy was as part of the spring festival of Dionysos Eleuthereus or the City Dionysia in Athens, but there were many others. Those plays which sought to be performed in the competitions of a religious festival (*agōn*) had to go through an audition process judged by the *archon*. Only those deemed worthy of the festival would be given the financial backing necessary to procure a costly chorus and rehearsal time. The *archon* would also nominate the three *chorēgoi*, the citizens who would each be expected to fund the chorus for one of the chosen plays (the state paid the poet and lead actors). The plays of the three selected poets were judged on the day by a panel and the prize for the winner of such competitions, besides honour and prestige, was often a bronze tripod cauldron. From 449 BCE there were also prizes for the leading actors (*prōtagōnistēs*).

The Writers of Tragedy

The first of the great tragedian poets was Aeschylus (c. 525 - c. 456 BCE). Innovative, he added a second actor for minor parts and by including more dialogue into his plays, he

squeezed more drama from the age-old stories so familiar to his audience. As plays were submitted for competition in groups of four (three tragedies and a satyr-play), Aeschylus often carried on a theme between plays, creating sequels. One such trilogy is *Agamemnon*, *The Libation Bearers* (or *Cheoephori*), and *The Furies* (or *Eumenides*) known collectively as the *Oresteia*. Aeschylus is said to have described his work, consisting of at least 70 plays of which six or seven survive, as 'morsels from the feast of Homer' (Burn 206).

The second great poet of the genre was Sophocles (c. 496-406 BCE). Tremendously popular, he added a third actor to the proceedings and employed painted scenery, sometimes even changes of scenery within the play. Three actors now permitted much more sophistication in terms of plot. One of his most famous works is *Antigone* (c. 442 BCE) in which the lead character pays the ultimate price for burying her brother Polynices against the wishes of King Kreon of Thebes. It is a classic situation of tragedy - the political right of having the traitor Polynices denied burial rites is contrasted against the moral right of a sister seeking to lay to rest her brother. Other works include *Oedipus the King* and *The Women of Trāchis*, but he in fact wrote more than 100 plays, of which seven survive.

The last of the classic tragedy poets was Euripides (c. 484-407 BCE), known for his clever dialogues, fine choral lyrics and a certain realism in his text and stage presentation. He liked to pose awkward questions and unsettle the audience with his thought-provoking treatment of common themes. This is probably why, although he was popular with the public, he won only a few festival competitions. Of around 90 plays, 19 survive, amongst the most famous being *Medeia* - where Jason, of the Golden Fleece fame, abandons the title character for the daughter of the King of Corinth with the consequence that Medeia kills her own children in revenge.

The Legacy of Tragedy

Although plays were specifically commissioned for competition during religious and other types of festivals, many were re-performed and copied into scripts for 'mass' publication. Those scripts regarded as classics, particularly by the three great Tragedians, were even kept by the state as official and unalterable state documents. Also, the study of the 'classic' plays became an important part of the school curriculum.

There were, however, new plays continuously being written and performed, and with the formation of actors' guilds in the 3rd century BCE and the mobility of professional troupes, the genre continued to spread across the Greek world with theatres becoming a common feature of the urban landscape from Magna Graecia to Asia Minor.

In the Roman world, tragedy plays were translated and imitated in Latin, and the genre gave rise to a new art form from the 1st century BCE, pantomime, which drew inspiration from the presentation and subject matter of Greek tragedy.

4.2 THE IMPACT OF GREEK TRAGEDY ON ELIZABETHAN THEATRE

The classic stage and Shakespeare's theatre have, at first sight, nothing in common; for the first was dedicated to unity, the second to variety. The great size of the antique stage made unity essential. A play had but three or four characters and involved but one or two ideas, which were hammered upon during the entire performance. When the heroes ceased

speaking, the Chorus took up the thread of the argument. A Greek tragedy, moreover, was of national origin and of religious import. The plot was always taken from a familiar myth; and only great personages, heroes, kings and princes were allowed upon the stage.

A play of Shakespeare's, on the other hand, was acted in a small space, and involved twenty or thirty characters. It took place amid hurried shifting of scene (imaginary scene, for there was next to no real scenery). The plot was any story under the sun. Tragedy and comedy were mixed. It had no public or religious significance. In fact, it was always on the verge of being taboo, and was constantly told by the police to move on. As for unity and the Unities, the fixed and stationary character of the staging itself was about the only unity in many Elizabethan plays.

In spite of these vast differences between the Greek stage and Shakespeare's stage, there are certain resemblances between the greatest of Shakespeare's tragedies and the greatest Greek tragedies. There is, in a few of Shakespeare's plays, as in *Othello* and *King Lear* a unity of theme, a single moving column of idea, which makes them analogous to Greek plays, though all the machinery is different. Then the language of Shakespeare's loftiest tragic vein has many turns of thought and metaphor which are surprisingly like the Greek. Then, too, both theatres are intellectual -- that is to say, the appeal is an intellectual appeal, done through the presentation of ideas in the text, not through melodrama or pantomime. Every idea is articulated into words. If a person has a pain or sees someone coming he says: "I have a pain," "I see someone coming." The thoughts and purpose of the characters are thus metaphysically presented, and are often expounded with a rhetorical power which the stage functions of the characters do not suggest. Both on the Greek and on the English stage each character has, as it were, the privilege of becoming the poet; and it is the unspoken convention that no one shall notice the excursion. There is a danger connected with this privilege; for when the poet gets on his own hobby he is apt to make the little fishes talk like whales. For instance, it is natural that an old nurse should talk about death and the next world; but it is not natural that an old nurse should betray the peculiar cast of thought of a philosophic scholar, which Euripidus throws over Phaedra's attendant. The old woman closes a philosophic speech as follows: "And so we show our mad love of this life because its light is shed on earth, and because we know no other, and have naught revealed to us of all our Earth may hide; and trusting to fables, we drift at random."

So also Shakespeare, in *As You Like It*, suddenly endows Phoebe the shepherdess with a "discourse of reason" much resembling Hamlet's, because a subject has come up that interests the poet -- namely, the difference between physical injury and mental distress.

"Lean but upon a rush," says Phoebe,
"The cicatrice and capable impressure
Thy palm some moment keeps, but now mine eyes,
Which I have darted at thee, hurt thee not."

It is the blank verse that gives the nurse and Phoebe this enlargement of their powers. In fact, both Greek tragedy and Shakespearian tragedy are in their poetic march a sort of great Gargantuan discourse issuing from the mouth of the poet, the stage being his jaws.

There is yet another resemblance between Shakespre and the Greeks. Both the Greek tragedies and Shakespeare's best plays have been written with supreme facility. They

have fallen from the pen. They exist in a region of artistic fulfilment. I suspect that it is this latter element of perfection that links Shakespeare and the Greeks in our thought, rather than all the rest of their scanty resemblances. So far as perfection of form goes, the Greek plays are infinitely superior to Shakespeare's. So far as native talent goes, there is no Greek dramatist who stands anywhere near Shakespeare, though Aristophanes suggests him. In each case perfection reaches a climax. With the Greeks it is the perfection of massive racial power; with Shakespeare, the perfection of modern romantic sentiment.

4.3 COMEDY AND ITS LITERARY PROMINENCE

What exactly is comedy?

- Is it primarily a matter of the presence or absence of humor? Are there different kinds of humor that make something a comedy? Are satire and comedy the same thing?
- Is comedy a matter of plot? Dante, for instance, argued that "A tragedy is a story that begins in joy but ends in pain. A comedy is a story that begins in pain, but ends in joy." Many comedies end happily often with a wedding or reconciliation of all sides, but this isn't always the case.
- Do comedies make certain assumptions about the world, society, behavior? Why do so many comedies seem to stress scatology or sex? Do comedies seek to conserve a society's norms or reform them?
- What attitude does the audience have towards the characters and actions on the stage? Do they feel sympathy, superiority, disdain?
- How have historical periods differed in their conceptions of comedy?

What shapes a dramatic performance? How are each of these involved in shaping and presenting a comic vision?

- Staging
- Blocking
- Costumes
- Props and Lighting
- Delivery
- Dance and music
- Shape of the theatre

What shapes a dramatic reading of a play? How do the following shape the effectiveness of a comedy?

- Tone
- Pacing
- Inflection
- Body Language
- Facial Expression
- Context

Comedy, type of drama or other art form the chief object of which, according to modern notions, is to amuse. It is contrasted on the one hand with tragedy and on the other with farce, burlesque, and other forms of humorous amusement.

The classic conception of comedy, which began with Aristotle in ancient Greece of the 4th century bce and persists through the present, holds that it is primarily concerned with humans as social beings, rather than as private persons, and that its function is frankly corrective. The comic artist's purpose is to hold a mirror up to society to reflect its follies and vices, in the hope that they will, as a result, be mended. The 20th-century French philosopher Henri Bergson shared this view of the corrective purpose of laughter; specifically, he felt, laughter is intended to bring the comic character back into conformity with his society, whose logic and conventions he abandons when "he slackens in the attention that is due to life."

4.4 CHRONICLE PLAY, DEFINITION(S) AND PROMINENT FEATURES

"noun
1.
a drama based on historical material, usually consisting of a series of short episodes or scenes arranged chronologically."

IN England, the chronicle play seems suddenly to have risen into vogue during the last decade of the sixteenth century. At first it was more like an epic poem than a dramatic composition, loosely constructed, covering the entire life of a king or hero, with not even a long distance acquaintance with the unities. Minor events were often invented, but in the more important happenings the authors usually made an attempt to follow history. Three plays on the subject of King John illustrate the three stages of its development: the morality *King John*, by John Bale, written sometime before the accession of Mary in 1553; a second play called *The Troublesome Reign of King John*, written between 1587 and 1591; and a third completely developed tragedy in the romantic style, the *King John* of Shakespeare. The second of these pieces is a genuine example of the chronicle play. It is written in crude blank verse and contains a satirical episode concerning the monastic system of the period. There is also an early *True Tragedie of Richard Third* which contains allegorical figures representing Truth and Poetry, is written mostly in rhymed couplets, cn has the pseudo-classic Induction in which the ghost of Clarence walks up and down the stage crying "Vindicta!" Another play on the same subject, *Ricardus Tertius*, was written in Latin by a certain Dr. Legge. Two dramas of this earlier time, *The Famous Victories of Henry Fifth* and *The Contention of the Two Famous Houses of York and Lancaster*, formed the basis of Shakespeare's *Henry V,* and the second and third parts of *Henry VI* respectively. An early play called *Edward III* was ascribed to Shakespeare by Edward Capell more than a century and a half after Shakespeare's death, though critical judgment of today has not endorsed his judgment.

In the midst of these efforts, while the chronicle play was still in its inferior stage, it was suddenly lifted into a position of distinction by the production of Marlowe's *Edward II*. Its appearance was an epoch-making event. For the first time the English history play was pulled up into the tenseness of true drama. The characters are bold and vivid, conceived amply as taking part in the sweep of history. Here too is something of the power of Marlowe's "mighty line," and the skill which can portray a great figure overborne by the consequences of his own

folly. *Edward II* is the first fine historical drama in the English language, and aside from the Shakespearean tragedies, the best in existence.

A long list of historical plays can be made, showing how great was the interest of the public in the presentation of drama dealing with the national chronicles. If the plays mentioned, together with the English historical plays of Shakespeare, *Edward I* by Peele, *Edward IV* by Heywood, and perhaps a half dozen others which were popular in their time -- if these plays be taken in the chronological order of their subjects, the reader will have an almost continuous story of England's rulers, with the wars in which the country was engaged, the plots which threatened the safety of the sovereigns, the parasites, women, generals, royal children and court jesters who made up the pageant of four centuries, from the reign of "Kynge Johan" to the time of Elizabeth herself.

4.5. EXEMPLIFICATION OF CHRONICLE PLAYS

The chronicle plays, *King John*, *Richard II* and *III* and *Henry IV*, which are certainly early because mentioned by Meres, introduce a new division of Shakespeare's work, to which we shall take the liberty of adding *Henry VI pro tanto.* In the opinion of the present writer, the *tantum* is considerable; but something has already been said in the preceding chapter 2 as to the authorship of *The Contention* and *The True Tragedie*, on which *Parts II and III of Henry VI* were based. In the case of all these plays, with the possible exception of *Richard II* (both the *Richards* were actually published in 1597), there were previously existing pieces on the subject; whether in all cases these were the actual pieces that we have is another question. But in no kind of drama would the specially Shakespearean method find better exercise than in the chronicle history. That remarkable species, though it was to receive its perfect development only in England, and (in absolute perfection) only at the hands of Shakespeare himself, had, as has been seen, made its appearance as a modernised and practicalised development of the mystery and morality, much earlier in the sixteenth century. The advantages of the species, when it discards allegory altogether and at least affects to be frankly historical, are obvious: subjects that "come home," copiousness and variety of interest, given outlines of striking figures, and the like. Its dangers—hardly less obvious—are those of the prosaic and the promiscuous; of a mere decoction of chronicle facts and speeches, fortified by bombast and frothed with stock horseplay. And those are abundantly exemplified in the earliest Elizabethan specimens, while they are by no means absent from the curious later attempts of Dekker, Middleton and others to combine a more or less historical mainplot with a purely fictitious underplot, romantic or classical. Now, Shakespeare's two greatest gifts, that of sheer poetic expression and that of character creation, were exactly what was needed to turn these "formless agglomerations" into real organisms, possessing life and beauty. If *Richard II* be quite original (which, as has been hinted, it would not be wise to assume too absolutely) it must be a good deal earlier than its publication, but later than *Titus Andronicus*, with which, however, it may be classed as exhibiting the Marlowe influence more strongly than anything else, save some parts of *Henry VI*, which one would be inclined to place between them. In yet other respects, *Richard II* makes a very fair pair with *Romeo and Juliet* in its far different division. The curious immature splendour of the conception of the title part is like nothing else in Shakespeare. The parallel with, and the suggestion given by, Marlowe's *Edward II* are, of course, unmistakable. But, where Marlowe has given three Edwards, not perhaps irreconcilable with each other but not actually reconciled, Shakespeare's Richard *sibi constat* throughout, in weakness as in strength—he is sincere in his insincerity. Still, the part is not well supported—even of "time-honoured Lancaster" it may be said that he rather

makes great speeches than is a great character; and so of others. The chronicle sequence, encroaching rather on dramatic connection, is also noticeable; as is the fact (especially to be considered in view of *Titus Andronicus* and Marlowe) that there is practically no comic element whatever. Of the extreme beauty of the poetry (almost always, however, of the "purple patch" or "fringe" kind and, it would seem, purposely so) in the king's part, it is almost unnecessary to speak.

King John and *Richard III,* on the other hand, are examples—documented, as we may say, and almost acknowledged—of adaptation, of the working up of existing materials. But not many impartial and competent critics will adopt Greene's very unkind simile of the crow and the feathers. It is much rather a case of grafting the fairest and most luscious fruit on a crab-tree or a sloe, though no metaphor of the kind can be satisfactory. The processes and results of the adaptation, however, are rather different in the two cases. In *King John,* Shakespeare took and kept more of the original; but he heightened the presentation incomparably. The famous part of Constance is almost wholly his own; he has done much to the king, not a little to the bastard, hardly less to Arthur and Hubert. Above all, he has (to quote an absurd boast of another person a century later) "made it a play"—a piece of life and not a sample of chronicling. Hardly anywhere will the student find better examples of Shakespeare's craftsmanship in verse and phrase—of the way in which, by slightly adding, cancelling, smoothing, inspiriting, he turns a lame line or passage into a beautiful one—than in *King John,* compared with its original.

Richard III, on the other hand, bears very much less resemblance to its predecessor, *The True Tragedie of Richard III,* and some have regarded it as almost an independent following of Marlowe's *Edward II.* It certainly resembles that play in bursts of poetry of a somewhat rhetorical kind, in the absence of purely comic episodes or scenes and in the concentration of character interest on the hero. Not quite, however, in this latter point. For the character of Margaret (which seems to the present writer to be definitely connected with the Angevin princess's part in *Henry VI,* and Shakespearean throughout) is greater than any secondary part in *Edward II. Richard III,* too, in the famous wooing scene, has a scene of character, as distinguished from a mere display of it, which is unmatched elsewhere. And, perhaps, as a whole, the play has been too much and too commonly regarded as a mere melodrama or popular blood-and-thunder piece, with Clarence's dream and some other *placebos* thrown in. It is, at any rate, full of life—with nothing in it either of the peculiar dream quality of Marlowe or of the woodenness of certain other early playwrights.

4.6. ROMANCE: DEFINITION AND SOME EXEMPLIFICATIONS

The Old French word *romanz* originally meant "the speech of the people," or "the vulgar tongue," from a popular Latin word, *Romanice,* meaning written in the vernacular, in contrast with the written form of literary Latin. Its meaning then shifted from the language in which the work was written to the work itself. Thus, an adaptation of Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Historia regum Britanniae* (1135–38), made by Wace of Jersey in 1155, was known as *Li Romanz de Brut*, while an anonymous adaptation (of slightly later date) of Virgil's *Aeneid* was known as *Li Romanz d'Enéas*; it is difficult to tell whether in such cases *li romanz* still meant "the French version" or had already come to mean "the story." It soon specialized in the latter sense, however, and was applied to narrative compositions similar in character to those imitated from Latin sources but totally different in origin; and, as the nature of these compositions changed, the word itself acquired an increasingly wide spectrum of meanings. In modern French a *roman* is just a novel, whatever its content and structure; while in modern English the word "romance" (derived from Old French *romanz*) can mean either a medieval

narrative composition or a love affair, or, again, a story about a love affair, generally one of a rather idyllic or idealized type, sometimes marked by strange or unexpected incidents and developments; and "to romance" has come to mean "to make up a story that has no connection with reality."

For a proper understanding of these changes it is essential to know something of the history of the literary form to which, since the Middle Ages, the term has been applied. The account that follows is intended to elucidate historically some of the ways in which the word is used in English and in other European languages.

4.7 SELF-ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

1. What is Greek Tragedy? Evaluate its impact on Elizabethan Tragedy.
2. What is the generic significance of Comedy?
3. Evaluate the importance of chronicle plays.
4. What is the meaning of Romance as a literary genre?

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LESSON - 5

TWELFTH NIGHT: AN INTRODUCTION LESSON

Objectives of the Lesson:

1. To be familiarized with the backdrop of the play.
2. To understand the place and significance of the play.

Structure of the Lesson

5.1 TWELFTH NIGHT: IT'S BACKDROP

Twelfth Night is a romantic comedy to begin with. However, like any Shakespeare's plays, it goes beyond, and creates a world wherein illusions and imaginations alone matter. The play is progressive in its outlook and remains energetic in view of its youthful characters. The ambience, the focus and the pursuit of the play is enchanting as it deals with the ever-enchanting and seminal aspect of human life—Love.

*Twelfth Night***,** in full Twelfth Night; or, What You Will, comedy in five acts by William Shakespeare, written about 1600–02 and printed in the First Folio of 1623 from a transcript of an authorial draft or possibly a playbook. One of Shakespeare's finest comedies, *Twelfth Night* precedes the great tragedies and problem plays in order of composition. The original source appears to have been the story *Apollonius and Silla* in Barnabe Riche's *Riche His Farewell to Military Profession* (1581), based in turn on a number of Continental versions that included an Italian comedy called *Gl'ingannati* (1531; "The Deceived"), published anonymously, and a story in Matteo Bandello's *Novelle* (1554–73).

The most influential writer in all of English literature, William Shakespeare was born in 1564 to a -successful middle-class glove-maker in Stratford-upon-Avon, England. Shakespeare attended grammar school, but his formal education proceeded no further. In 1582 he married an older woman, Anne Hathaway, and had three children with her. Around 1590 he left his family behind and traveled to London to work as an actor and playwright. Public and critical acclaim quickly followed, and Shakespeare eventually became the most popular playwright in England and part-owner of the Globe Theater. His career bridged the reigns of Elizabeth I (ruled 1558–1603) and James I (ruled 1603–1625), and he was a favorite of both monarchs. Indeed, James granted his company the greatest possible compliment by bestowing upon its members the title of King's Men. Wealthy and renowned, Shakespeare retired to Stratford and died in 1616 at age fifty-two. At the time of his death, literary luminaries such as Ben Jonson hailed his works as timeless.

Shakespeare's works were collected and printed in various editions in the century following his death, and by the early eighteenth century his reputation as the greatest poet ever to write in English was well established. The unprecedented admiration garnered by his works led to a fierce curiosity about Shakespeare's life, but the dearth of biographical information has left many details of Shakespeare's personal history shrouded in mystery. Some people have concluded from this fact and from Shakespeare's modest education that Shakespeare's plays were actually written by someone else—Francis Bacon and the Earl of Oxford are the two most popular candidates—but the support for this claim is overwhelmingly circumstantial, and the theory is not taken seriously by many scholars.

In the absence of credible evidence to the contrary, Shakespeare must be viewed as the author of the thirty-seven plays and 154 sonnets that bear his name. The legacy of this body of work is immense. A number of Shakespeare's plays seem to have transcended even the category of brilliance, becoming so influential as to affect profoundly the course of Western literature and culture ever after.

Shakespeare wrote *Twelfth Night* near the middle of his career, probably in the year 1601. Most critics consider it one of his greatest comedies, along with plays such as *As You Like It*, *Much Ado About Nothing,* and *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. *Twelfth Night* is about illusion, deception, disguises, madness, and the extraordinary things that love will cause us to do—and to see.

Twelfth Night is the only one of Shakespeare's plays to have an alternative title: the play is actually called *Twelfth Night, or What You Will.* Critics are divided over what the two titles mean, but "Twelfth Night" is usually considered to be a reference to Epiphany, or the twelfth night of the Christmas celebration (January 6). In Shakespeare's day, this holiday was celebrated as a festival in which everything was turned upside down—much like the upside-down, chaotic world of Illyria in the play.

Twelfth Night is one of Shakespeare's so-called transvestite comedies, a category that also includes *As You Like It* and *The Merchant of Venice.* These plays feature female protagonists who, for one reason or another, have to disguise themselves as young men. It is important to remember that in Shakespeare's day, *all* of the parts were played by men, so Viola would actually have been a male pretending to be a female pretending to be a male. Contemporary critics have found a great deal of interest in the homoerotic implications of these plays.

As is the case with most of Shakespeare's plays, the story of *Twelfth Night* is derived from other sources. In particular, Shakespeare seems to have consulted an Italian play from the 1530s entitled *Gl'Ingannati,* which features twins who are mistaken for each other and contains a version of the Viola-Olivia-Orsino love triangle in *Twelfth Night.* He also seems to have used a 1581 English story entitled "Apollonius and Silla," by Barnabe Riche, which mirrors the plot of *Twelfth Night* up to a point, with a shipwreck, a pair of twins, and a woman disguised as a man. A number of sources have been suggested for the Malvolio subplot, but none of them is very convincing. Sir Toby, Maria, and the luckless steward seem to have sprung largely from Shakespeare's own imagination.

5.2. TITLE SIGNIFICANCE OF TWELFTH NIGHT OR WHAT YOU WILL

For a literary text or any piece of art, title matters. But at times, with Shakespeare he seems to have taken it lightly or leaving the privilege of titling to audience/readers themselves. However, notwithstanding the seemingly casual approach on the part of the dramatist with regard to his titles, the play does seem to have a rationale for the title, it acquires.

The 12th night from Christmas was a festive holiday where everything was reversed. Servants took the role of masters and masters acted as servants . a common way of understanding it would be to think of it as saturnalia. As the main title suggests the idea of a time of misrulegives the underlying constructive principle of the whole play. The festive spirit characterizes the whole play. In the main plot a sister is mistaken for her brother and the brother for the sister. Viola tells Olivia that you do not think you are not what you are and admits the same is true of herself also. The women take initiative in wooing , both in appearance and in fact. The duke makes his young servant “your masters mistress” and the lady who has with drawn from the sight of men embraces a stranger. The subplot also depicts a prolonged season o misrule, uncivil rule , in Olivia’s house hold , with Sir Toby turning night into day. There is singing , dancing, drinking, scenes of mock wooing , a mock sword fight and the gulling of an unpopular member of the household, with Feste playing the part of a priest and attempting s mock exorcism in the manner of the feast of fools.

What is the "twelfth night" of this play's title? In Shakespeare's time this was an unambiguous reference to January 6th, the final night of January the twelve-day-long Christmas season (a tradition that survives in the well-known carol). More particularly, the "twelfth night" was seen as a time of general revelry and mild mayhem, a time when social and sexual mores could be freely flouted. Whether this play was written for performance at just such a Christmas season festival, or whether Shakespeare intended into to have a winter-time setting at all, are matters of scholarly debate. What is more certain, and more important, is that this play draws its inspiration from this tradition, dating from medieval times, of temporary sexual freedom and social release.

This Christmas tradition was threatened in Shakespeare's time by a more recent religious phenomenon. After the Reformation was brought to England in 1534, a number of figures in the new Anglican Church sought to purify England of the religious ceremonies that lingered from Catholicism. Beginning in the 1570's and 1580's, the English "Puritans," as they were called, sought to purify England of the artistry and amoralism which they felt was incompatible with a properly Reformed Christianity. "Twelfth night" ceremonies were, obviously, a prime target. The cruel treatment of Malvolio puts off many readers - and indeed it is probably excessive if we think of Malvolio merely as a boring servant. But Malvolio unambiguously embodies Puritanism - he is frequently called a "puritan" by the other characters - and so the characters' pranks at his expense are more political than their playfulness suggests. At root, these constitute a rebellion against the encroaching forces of Puritanism. This might be dismissed as an insignificant political rivalry of Shakespeare's day were it not for what followed in the years following Shakespeare's death. In the 1640's, Puritan forces were the driving force behind a civil war against the monarchy; in 1649, they beheaded King Charles I, and Puritan Thomas Cromwell became the ruler of England. The Puritans, as promised, stripped England of the vestiges of Catholicism, and, most significantly from our point of view, shut down the theaters. The hatred directed towards

Puritans, in the guise of Malvolio, in Twelfth Night, is, more than anything, disturbingly prescient.

Many readers find it strange that Shakespeare probably wrote Twelfth Night, immediately before or after he wrote Hamlet (both in 1601). How, some wonder, could Hamlet, a play of profound religious and political themes, stand back-to-back with the light revelry of Twelfth Night? There are surely a number of misleading assumptions that go into that question, but the relevance of Twelfth Night to the controversy over Puritanism dispels at least one of them. Even at its funniest and bawdiest, this play is deadly serious about a political and religious movement that threatened to go after the soul of England. It was a movement that would eventually cause a civil war, one which would destroy the social institutions - the monarchy, the theater - that were the foundations of Shakespeare's art.

5.3. ROMANTIC COMEDY AND SHAKESPEAREAN COMEDY: ITS CHARACTERISTICS

Romantic Comedy: A Definition

noun

1.
a light and humorous movie, play, etc., whose central plot is a happy love story.
2.
a genre of comedy represented by such works.
Dictionary.com Unabridged

"His tragedy seems to be skill, his comedy to be instinct" – **Dr. Johnson**

His comedies are just intermingling of romance with the hard actualities of life, passion trembling on the verge of tragedy and comedy charmingly triumphant after all. By the end of comedy something has been achieved, not its moral purpose or its commercial value but its philosophical and psychological character. Shakespeare communicates his comedy through language. The romantic comedies of Shakespeare can be otherwise called as "comedies of incidents" or "comedies of mistaken identity". The plot is often driven by mistaken identity. Characters play scenes in disguise and its common for female characters to disguise themselves as male characters.

Unique Shakespearean Comedy

The Shakespearean comedy is Romantic not only in the sense that it does not observe the classical rules of dramatic composition, but also in the sense that it provides an escape from the sordid realities of life. Shakespeare's romantic comedies are all conceived in an imaginative setting far away from the dull and dreary world of everyday life. Their characters are also different from us as they are inhabitants of not our humdrum world but the imaginary, colourful world of their own. **Allardyce Nicoll** well observes in his British Drama: "Characters and scenes alike are viewed through magic casements which transform reality." The world of Shakespearean comedy says Raleigh is a "rainbow world of love in idleness". The action takes place is some distant far off land and not in the familiar everyday England. The dramatic transport on the wings of his imagination in the Forest of Arden, to the stories of Illyria to an ancient forest in Greece can be found. In this land of romance and

enchantment, the inhabitants have no other work but that of love-making. *"A Midsummer Night's Dream"* reaches the very height of romanticism due to the presence of the fairies, bright, beautiful idealized beings of Shakespeare's poetic fancy.

Let us quote Thorndike here: "There are only three industries in this land [that of Shakespearean comedy], making love, making songs, and making jests. And they make them all to perfection. It is well to interrupt the love-making with a little joking and the joking with a little music and perchance some cakes and ale, and then back to love again."

There is a mingling of romance and realism or confrontation of romance and realism which is identified as the salient features of Shakespearean comedy. The characterization is realistic. His characters are ordinary beings and incidents are possible in common everyday life. There is a confrontation of the Romantic main plot with a realistic subplot. In *"As You like It",* there is a realistic Jacques to remind us of the ingratitude of man which is more painful than the winter wind or the frozen sky. In *"A Midsummer Night's Dream*" the homely 'Bottom' and his companions are constant reminders of the reality of life. In "Twelfth Night", the Malvalio episode and the wise comments of the fool serve the same purpose. The setting is poetic and romantic but related with life. Let us quote **Allardyce Nicoll** in this connexion: "There are contemporary figures and contemporary fashions in Love's Labour Lost; Bottom and his companions mingle with the fairies; Sir Toby Belch and Sir Andrew Aguecheek are companions of Viola'and Olivia, Dogberry and Verges of Hero and Beatrice. This is the cardinal characteristic of Shakespeare's romantic world-the union of realism and fantasy."

Comical Significant

The clown or fools have significant roles to act in the play (at least two characters can be found in each play, omnipresent). The fool's function is not only to initiate laughter in the play in addition; they reveal fundamental truths often overlooked by others; 1) that the deepest and greatest things in one's life may be hidden from the wise and prudent and revealed unto children and fools 2) that no matter how certain people laughed at by the world, they ultimately have access to higher court for judgments 3) that what wins our affection is not wealth, power, or intellect, but is instead humanity, native and unassuming. The fools give insight on these.To summarize, the words of fools appeal not to the mind but to the heart. They give wise comments at times.

"Friendship is constant in all other things

Save in the offices and affairs of love" (Much Ado.. 2.1-175-6)

Love and Friendship among persons of high rank can be found in the comedies of Shakespeare. The basic pattern involves a quartet (group of four) of characters, two men and two women, aroused by the rival claims of love and friendship. The most salient feature of a romantic comedy is "the theme of faithful love subjected to some grievous and abnormal strain".

"the course of true love n'er did run smooth" (AMND 1.1-134)

5.4 THE PLACE OF TWELFTH NIGHT IN SHAKESPEAREAN OEUVRE

William Shakespeare has written a number of romantic comedies. *Twelfth Night* is one of the finest comedies of the author. We know that a romantic comedy is a play in which the romantic elements are mingled with comic elements. It is a form of comedy which deals with love. Love at first sight is often its main theme. Generally, a romantic comedy starts with some problems that make the union of the lover difficult. But it ends with their happy union. Twelfth Night is a typical romantic play of Shakespeare. It has some elements which give the play a romantic air. It is romantic in its setting and theme. Love at first sight, music, improbabilities and the violation of the classical rules have lent weight to the view that Twelfth Night is a romantic comedy.

Love is the very essence of romance. *Twelfth Night* is a romantic play. Because the passion of love dominates it, it is the tale of love ending with the ringing of marriage bells. It is also a tale of love at first sight. The Duke, Orsino falls in love with Olivia as soon as he has seen her. Viola falls in love with the Duke immediately. Olivia falls in love with Cesario in the course of her very first interview with him. As soon as Cesario has left, she says to herself-

"Even so quickly may one catch the plague."

This love is romantic, intense and passionate. It has nothing to do with reason. It is not directed and run with argument.

A Shakespearean comedy is a romantic comedy. In Twelfth Night, Shakespeare has treated love as main theme. All the principal characters in the play are passionately in love. They have no other business but that of love-making. The play opens on a note of love. At the very beginning of the play and in the starting dialogue, Orsino says-

"If music be the food of love, play on;
Give me excess of it, the surfeiting,
The appetite may sicken, and so die."

Thus the Duke is love-sick. Passionate love expressed in poetical language. Love also dominates the hearts of Sir Andrew and Malvolio. They both love Lady Olivia and want to marry her. In this way, the treatment of this theme makes the play even more romantic.

It is well-known that the setting of a Shakespearean comedy is romantic. It is generally, unfamiliar, remote and distance. It exists only in the imagination of the dramatist. The scene of action is not laid in familiar and realistic London. But it occurs in Venice or in the Forest of Arden. The scene of action of Twelfth Night is Illyria. Actually, Illyria is a country having no reality. But it exists only in the imagination of the playwright. It is in such a romantic setting that the characters dance the merry dance of love whereas by the end, they are happily united with their lovers.

We have already tried to catch the attention that love is the dominating theme in Twelfth Night. But music comes next in importance. Love of music is also a romantic quality. Most of the songs in the play are provided by the Clown or the fool. Thus the play opens with music. We find that the Duke feeds his love with music. He is a man of a genuine musical taste. He likes sentimental melodies which deal with the subject of love and death. Even Sir

Toby and Sir Andrew are fond of music. Thus music does much to heighten the romantic atmosphere of the comedy.

Twelfth Night is also romantic in the sense that it does not follow the classical unities of time, place and action. Here the unity of place has only been observed. There is no unity of time or action. There is no one plot in the play but two plots. The tragic and the comic scenes are also mingled. The main plot is serious and tragic in tone. On the other hand, the sub-plot is entirely comic. Thus there is no unity of action in the play. There is no unity of time because the action of the play is spread over many days and is not limited only to twenty-four hours.

Confrontation of realism and romance is another quality of twelfth Night. It makes the play romantic. Moreover, several situations in this play are highly improbable. A romantic play is generally unrealistic; improbabilities enter a romantic play for the power of imagination. A dramatist's imagination creates situations which may not occur in real life. In this play Sebastian and Viola are separated from each other for a ship-wreck. A ship-wreck is a distinct possibility. But brother and sister land safely in the same sea-coast, the coast of Illyria. They go to the same place, Duke Orsino's court, to try their luck. This is certainly improbable.

In estimation, we may say that the important characteristics or features of a romantic comedy are presented in Twelfth Night. The treatment of love, the setting, the ignorance of the classical rules of drama and improbable activities are unmistakable in the play. They have made the drama romantic. Like As you Like It, this play bears these romantic elements. So the play, *Twelfth Night, must be regarded as a* romantic comedy.

5.5 SELF-ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

1. Comment on the significance of the title, *Twelfth Night* and the sub-title, *What You Will.*
2. What are the salient features of a Romantic Comedy?
3. Treat *Twelfth Night* as a typical Shakespearean Romantic Comedy.
4. Evaluate the significance of *Twelfth Night* in Shakespeare's literary canon.

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LESSON - 6

TWELFTH NIGHT: THE PLOT, THE THEMES, THE STRUCTURE AND CHAPTER-WISE SUMMARY

Objectives of the Lesson:

1. To be familiarized with the structure of the play.
2. To have a brief understanding of the content of the play.

Structure of the Lesson

6.1 TWELFTH NIGHT*:* THE PLOT AND THE SUB-PLOT: THEIR SIGNIFICANCE

Definition for Plot: Plot metaphorically may be called as skeleton of a literary text since every event hinges on it. To put it briefly plot is the sequence of events.

"The main events of a play, novel, film, or similar work, devised and presented by the writer as an interrelated sequence.

synonyms: storyline, story, chain of events, scenario, action, thread;"

The Plot of *Twelfth Night*

In the kingdom of Illyria, a nobleman named Orsino lies around listening to music, pining away for the love of Lady Olivia. He cannot have her because she is in mourning for her dead brother and refuses to entertain any proposals of marriage. Meanwhile, off the coast, a storm has caused a terrible shipwreck. A young, aristocratic-born woman named Viola is swept onto the Illyrian shore. Finding herself alone in a strange land, she assumes that her twin brother, Sebastian, has been drowned in the wreck, and tries to figure out what sort of work she can do. A friendly sea captain tells her about Orsino's courtship of Olivia, and Viola says that she wishes she could go to work in Olivia's home. But since Lady Olivia refuses to talk with any strangers, Viola decides that she cannot look for work with her. Instead, she decides to disguise herself as a man, taking on the name of Cesario, and goes to work in the household of Duke Orsino.

Viola (disguised as Cesario) quickly becomes a favorite of Orsino, who makes Cesario his page. Viola finds herself falling in love with Orsino—a difficult love to pursue, as Orsino believes her to be a man. But when Orsino sends Cesario to deliver Orsino's love messages to the disdainful Olivia, Olivia herself falls for the beautiful young Cesario, believing her to be a man. The love triangle is complete: Viola loves Orsino, Orsino loves Olivia, and Olivia loves Cesario—and everyone is miserable.

Meanwhile, we meet the other members of Olivia's household: her rowdy drunkard of an uncle, Sir Toby; his foolish friend, Sir Andrew Aguecheek, who is trying in his hopeless way to court Olivia; Olivia's witty and pretty waiting-gentlewoman, Maria; Feste, the clever clown of the house; and Malvolio, the dour, prudish steward of Olivia's household. When Sir Toby and the others take offense at Malvolio's constant efforts to spoil their fun, Maria engineers a practical joke to make Malvolio think that Olivia is in love with him. She forges a letter, supposedly from Olivia, addressed to her beloved (whose name is signified by the letters M.O.A.I.), telling him that if he wants to earn her favor, he should dress in yellow stockings and crossed garters, act haughtily, smile constantly, and refuse to explain himself to anyone. Malvolio finds the letter, assumes that it is addressed to him, and, filled with dreams of marrying Olivia and becoming noble himself, happily follows its commands. He behaves so strangely that Olivia comes to think that he is mad.

Meanwhile, Sebastian, who is still alive after all but believes his sister Viola to be dead, arrives in Illyria along with his friend and protector, Antonio. Antonio has cared for Sebastian since the shipwreck and is passionately (and perhaps sexually) attached to the young man—so much so that he follows him to Orsino's domain, in spite of the fact that he and Orsino are old enemies.

Sir Andrew, observing Olivia's attraction to Cesario (still Viola in disguise), challenges Cesario to a duel. Sir Toby, who sees the prospective duel as entertaining fun, eggs Sir Andrew on. However, when Sebastian—who looks just like the disguised Viola—appears on the scene, Sir Andrew and Sir Toby end up coming to blows with Sebastian, thinking that he is Cesario. Olivia enters amid the confusion. Encountering Sebastian and thinking that he is Cesario, she asks him to marry her. He is baffled, since he has never seen her before. He sees, however, that she is wealthy and beautiful, and he is therefore more than willing to go along with her. Meanwhile, Antonio has been arrested by Orsino's officers and now begs Cesario for help, mistaking him for Sebastian. Viola denies knowing Antonio, and Antonio is dragged off, crying out that Sebastian has betrayed him. Suddenly, Viola has newfound hope that her brother may be alive.

Malvolio's supposed madness has allowed the gleeful Maria, Toby, and the rest to lock Malvolio into a small, dark room for his treatment, and they torment him at will. Feste dresses up as "Sir Topas," a priest, and pretends to examine Malvolio, declaring him definitely insane in spite of his protests. However, Sir Toby begins to think better of the joke, and they allow Malvolio to send a letter to Olivia, in which he asks to be released.

Eventually, Viola (still disguised as Cesario) and Orsino make their way to Olivia's house, where Olivia welcomes Cesario as her new husband, thinking him to be Sebastian, whom she has just married. Orsino is furious, but then Sebastian himself appears on the scene, and all is revealed. The siblings are joyfully reunited, and Orsino realizes that he loves Viola, now that he knows she is a woman, and asks her to marry him. We discover that Sir Toby and Maria have also been married privately. Finally, someone remembers Malvolio and lets him out of

the dark room. The trick is revealed in full, and the embittered Malvolio storms off, leaving the happy couples to their celebration.

The Sub-plot of *Twelfth Night*

In English Renaissance drama, the relation between plot and subplot is often complementary. The main action can be explained, emphasized, or contrasted by the subplot. William Shakespeare used this device well in his comedy on merriment, love, and mistaken identity, *Twelfth Night*. The main plot follows the love triangle of Olivia, Orsino, and Viola, while the subplot follows the hilarious Sir Toby, Sir Andrew, and Maria in addition to their misadventures with Malvolio, Sebastian, and eventually the love triangle of the main plot. Shakespeare uses this mirror-like main-plot-to-subplot relationship to enlarge the main points of his play, and develop the thematic and dramatic significance of the subplot.

Twelfth Night consists of many love triangles, however many of the characters who are tangled up in the web of love are blind to see that their emotions and feelings towards other characters are untrue. They are being deceived by themselves and/or the others around them. There are certain instances in the play where the emotion of love is true, and the two people involved feel very strongly toward one another. Viola's love for Orsino is a great example of true love.

In the subplot, the gulling of Malvolio is linked to the main plot thematically in the obvious sense that it deals with a variety of love, namely self-love, a general preoccupation with self-interest, and a refusal to see anyone as important other than oneself. Such preoccupation, as in the case of Malvolio, leads to a misconception of the world and a total vulnerability to being manipulated into betraying oneself, as Malvolio does, by trusting that one's desires match the reality of the situation. Malvolio is punished—and is relatively easy to punish—because he is so wrapped up in his own importance that he sees no value in anything else or anyone other than himself, and his conceit about himself, along with his secret desire for social advancement and power, make him easy to tempt into ridiculous behaviour (Johnston n.pag).

Malvolio suffers from self-deception, he feels that Olivia loves him and that is why she agrees with him in everything he does including insulting not only the other servants but also even her relative Sir Toby and his guest Sir Andrew. According to Malvolio, it is love that makes his commands as if they were her own and his opinions taken into consideration. But according to reality, this is the position that was always given to any household steward in the Elizabethan period and not only to Malvolio, as it is pointed by Clare Byrne: "an Elizabethan household steward was a gentleman of considerable importance, occupying a very responsible position, which gave him the exercise of very considerable power" (204). As a result, the audience is made aware of the theme of appearance and reality.

Malvolio, in other words, is a kill-joy, a person with no sense of humour and with no place in his scheme of things for anything other than what he thinks is important. Everyone (other than Malvolio) recognizes this. Olivia tells him he is "sick of self-love" (I.v.1089), and Sir Toby famously roars at him later, "Dost thou think, because thou art virtuous, there shall be no more cakes and ale?" (II.iii.1098). This quality makes Malvolio the character most at odds with the comic nature of the play.

6.2 TWELFTH NIGHT OR WHAT YOU WILL: THE THEMES

Theme: Definition

The **theme** in a story is its underlying message, or 'big idea.' In other words, what critical belief about life is the author trying to convey in the writing of a novel, play, short story or poem? This belief, or idea, transcends cultural barriers. It is usually universal in nature. When a theme is universal, it touches on the human experience, regardless of race or language. It is what the story means. Often, a piece of writing will have more than one theme.

Major and Minor Themes in *Twelfth Night*

Major Themes

Identity

Most of the characters in *Twelfth Night* are in a state of identity confusion. Thematically, Shakespeare sets up the plays to actions to reinforce that identity will always be fragmentary and incomplete until one is able to love, regardless of whether one is loved in return.

Mistaken Gender Identity

One level of identity confusion in *Twelfth Night* is gender identity. Viola embodies this confusion when she assumes the identity of a boy, Cesario. Of course, in Shakespeare's time, all female roles were played by boys, so in this case a boy actor plays a woman character (Viola) who dissembles herself as a boy (Cesario). In a patriarchal culture, sexual difference is held to be an immutable law; traditional gender role behavior was based on a natural biological fact rather than social convention.

The indeterminacy of Viola/Cesario's sexual identity would show that maleness and femaleness were just aspects of a role, qualities that are learned, not immutable physical traits. When Cesario and Sir Andrew face each other in a duel, it is revealed that both are acting the role of being a man. The biological fact of Sir Andrew's maleness is obsolete. Both characters are pretending.

Love and the Self

Shakespeare, especially through Olivia, gets to the heart of the relationship between self and love. When we fall in love, we almost necessarily lose our self-composure, cease to be able to see our actions with our own eyes. Yet even though Olivia fears that her attraction to Viola will come to naught, she is willing to risk it, because love, or at least intense attraction, allows her to leave her “mind” behind and give herself up to fate.

The Danger of Love

In *Twelfth Night*, love is seen as similar to death, because both prose a threat, or at the very least, a challenge to the singular self that is afraid of change. To be able to love another requires that one must accept change, to accept that one cannot entirely control one's fate, or even one's will. The very language that one uses to communicate with another may end up demanding more, or at least differently, than what one intended.

The characters in the play that cling to a singular sense of self that does not allow for change are often the ones for whom change happens most violently. Malvolio is the most notable example of this, but Orsino, too, although he claims to be open to love, is, beneath all his high rhetoric, deeply afraid of any mutual love relationship. In some ways, it's much easier for him to pine for Olivia and send middlemen to woo her, precisely because it flatters his ego to feel he loves more than she loves him back.

The Folly of Ambition

The problem of social ambition works itself out largely through the character of Malvolio, the steward, who seems to be a competent servant, if prudish and dour, but proves to be, in fact, a supreme egotist, with tremendous ambitions to rise out of his social class. Maria plays on these ambitions when she forges a letter from Olivia that makes Malvolio believe that Olivia is in love with him and wishes to marry him. Sir Toby and the others find this fantasy hysterically funny, of course—not only because of Malvolio's unattractive personality but also because Malvolio is not of noble blood. In the class system of Shakespeare's time, a noblewoman would generally not sully her reputation by marrying a man of lower social status.

Yet the atmosphere of the play may render Malvolio's aspirations less unreasonable than they initially seem. The feast of Twelfth Night, from which the play takes its name, was a time when social hierarchies were turned upside down. That same spirit is alive in Illyria: indeed, Malvolio's antagonist, Maria, is able to increase her social standing by marrying Sir Toby. But it seems that Maria's success may be due to her willingness to accept and promote the anarchy that Sir Toby and the others embrace. This Twelfth Night spirit, then, seems to pass by Malvolio, who doesn't wholeheartedly embrace the upending of order and decorum but rather wants to blur class lines for himself alone.

Minor Theme

The subplot deals with the minor theme of self-love-- the comic element in the play, and the humor that is a result of the gulling of Malvolio. The minor characters plan to humiliate and ridicule Malvolio because of his pompous and conceited attitude. Malvolio believes himself to be superior to the other minor characters in every respect and it is this quality which makes him vulnerable to being duped. He does not hesitate to reprimand even Sir Toby, who is superior to him in rank and social status and has the audacity to think someone as beautiful and gracious as Olivia would be interested in him. It is Sir Toby and Maria who desire to take revenge for his snide comments, and Maria who provides the plan. This acts as a catalyst to the developing romance between Maria and Sir Toby as well. Their wits are matched in this particular ploy. Maria's letter and Malvolio's compliance with the instructions in the letter provide the humor and comic element of the play. The duel between Viola and Sir Andrew is also linked to the minor theme as they are supposedly battling over Olivia's love yet the duel has been conjured up by Sir Toby's desire to have some fun and make a fool of Sir Andrew at the same time. Sir Andrew is gulled as well as he thinks he too is good enough for Olivia, not realizing that he is a dried up, sickly and cowardly man.

Although the two subplots evolve separately at times, they do meet in Act IV. The duel between Viola and Sir Andrew combines the major and the minor Themes by bringing together the characters of each theme --Viola, Olivia, and Sebastian from the major theme, and Sir Toby, Sir Andrew, and Fabian from the minor theme. The resolution of the

complications present in the two Themes at the end of the play again links them together. Throughout the play, Shakespeare skillfully interweaves the action of the major and minor Themes to provide a sense of totality and completeness to the play.

6.3 THE THEMES OF THE PLAY: THEIR UNIQUENESS

The themes of the play are significant as they deal with the seminal aspects of human life, like, identity, love and misunderstanding. In fact, the theme of love and the accidents happen therein naturally shows the role of chance in such a serious matter. On the whole, the themes attempt to highlight the role of chance and misunderstanding in human life notwithstanding our will and the consequent planning and scheming.

At one level, the play is celebrating the crucial aspects of human life like romance and love put together at the same time it underlines how our egos and pride and misunderstanding spoil the game. However, the play endorses the fact that playful youthfulness and the consequent follies are part of the life and they pave the path of 'growing up.'

Hence it may be concluded that through this Romantic Comedy and through other comedies of this ilk, Shakespeare in principle is celebrating youthfulness and its vigor, wit and pride and love.

6.4 & 6.5. TWELFTH NIGHT: THE STRUCTURE OF THE PLAY & IT SIGNIFICANCE

Shakespeare's plays were written to be performed to an audience from different social classes and of varying levels of intellect. Thus they contain down-to-earth characters who appeal to the working classes, side-by-side with complexities of plot which would satisfy the appetites of the aristocrats among the audience. His contemporary status is different, and Shakespeare's plays have become a symbol of culture and education, being widely used as a subject for academic study and literary criticism. A close critical analysis of *Twelfth Night* can reveal how Shakespeare manipulates the form, structure, and language to contribute to the meaning of his plays.

Form

Through the form of dialogue Shakespeare conveys the relationship between characters. For example, the friendship and understanding between Olivia, and her servant Feste, the clown, is shown in their dialogue in Act 1, Scene 5. In this scene Shakespeare shows that both characters are intellectuals by constructing their colloquy in prose.

Characterising Feste, Shakespeare gives him the aphorism,

Better a witty fool than a foolish wit. [Feste. Act 1, scene 5]

This line illustrates the clown's acumen; and is a delightful example of the way in which he uses language, as well as form to manifest Feste's character. Far from being a fool, the clown is erudite and sagely and able to present the audience with a higher knowledge of the plot than that presented by the other characters in the play. This witty remark is a clear indication of his aloofness from the events of the play. He can look upon the unfolding scenario with the

detachment of an outsider due to his minimal involvement with the action. Feste is a roaming entertainer who has the advantage of not having to take sides; he is an observer not a participant.

Another illustration of the way in which Shakespeare uses form to give meaning is in the dialogue between Viola and the Duke Orsino in Act 2 scene 4, where one line of iambic pentameter is frequently shared by the two characters. For example:

Viola: I should your Lordship.
Orsino: And what's her history?

. . .

Viola: Sir, shall I to this lady?
Orsino: Ay, that's the theme.

The merging of the characters' half-lines into one whole line is cleverly used by Shakespeare to show that the two characters are destined to be together. This technique of linking lines, which Shakespeare uses elsewhere, for example in *Romeo and Juliet*, shows the balance that the two characters provide for each other. This is an example of how he uses the form of language to aid the actors in portraying the characters in the way he intends.

Structure

The structure of a Shakespeare play also contributes to its meaning. In most of his plays there is a pattern consisting of three main sections:

Exposition - establishing the main character relationships in a situation involving a conflict.

Development - building up the dramatic tension and moving the conflict established to its climax. (In *Twelfth Night*, increasing complications resulting from love, and mistaken identity.)

Denouement - resolution of the conflict and re-establishing some form of equilibrium. (In *Twelfth Night*, the realisation of the disguises and the pairing up of the characters.)

The scenes of *Twelfth Night* are carefully woven together in order to create tension and humour, and to prepare us, almost subconsciously, for what is going to happen. We are given fragments of manageable information throughout the play so that when the complex plot unfolds we understand it by piecing together all the information given to us in previous scenes. For example, to return to the Duke and Viola, the audience is aware of the fact that she is disguised as a man, so understands more than the Duke himself does as he struggles with his feelings, believing he is falling in love with a man.

The audience is fed important information in Act 2 Scene 1 when Antonio and Sebastian meet and converse:

Sebastian: . . . some hour before you took me from the breach of the sea was my sister drowned.

Antonio: Alas the day!

Sebastian: A lady, sir, though it was said she much resembled me, was yet of many accounted beautiful. [Act 2, Scene 1]

Through these lines Shakespeare lets the audience in on the fact that Sebastian is alive, and that he believes his sister Viola to be dead, and that the two resemble one another in appearance. We also see how Sebastian feels for his sister as he talks about her so passionately. This is an important part of the development stage of the play as it prepares us for the role which mistaken identity will play in the plot, and sets up the potential for dramatic irony.

Another scene which prepares us for dramatic irony is when Maria, Sir Andrew, and Sir Toby write the letter to Malvolio, under the pretence that it is from Olivia. As we the audience are aware of this deception it sets up the dramatic irony, because Malvolio himself is not aware of it when he finds and reads the letter during Act 2, Scene 5. Presuming the letter is for him, and from Olivia, he proceeds to embarrass himself.

The structure in which many subplots run through the play can be described as 'River Action'; actions not closely linked are moving in parallel to be integrated at the end of the play. This contrasts to the single or episodic action in *Macbeth*, or the mirror action in *King Lear* where there is both a main and a sub-plot present. Shakespeare has used this structural technique to create both humour and tension. The subplots also pick up on the themes of love and mistaken identities, preparing us for the part those themes will play in the main plot.

Language

Shakespeare also supports the events and actions in the play through language, using it to convey to the audience the feelings and thoughts of the characters as they respond to events.

Language is used first and foremost for the purpose of conveying a difference in feelings or attitudes in different situations. For example Malvolio speaks in prose at the beginning of the play, showing intelligence, but near the end he speaks in verse;

Lady, you have. Pray you, pursue that letter.
You must not now deny that it is in your hand:
Write from it, if you can, in hand or phrase,
Or say 'tis not your seal, not your invention. [Act 5, Scene 1]

Here Shakespeare has distorted the rhythm so that it cannot fit the rule of iambic pentameter, thus showing that Malvolio is feeling strong emotion. His confusion and humiliation becomes apparent through the breathless manner in which he speaks.

In contrast, we have these smoothly-flowing lines from Orsino:

If music be the food of love, play on,
Give me excess of it, that, surfeiting,
The appetite may sicken, and so die. [Act 1, Scene 1]

By using iambic pentameter here Shakespeare defines Orsino's character to a certain degree. Iambic pentameter shows control and yet the emphasis here is on the instability and the intensity of his love for Olivia. The audience cannot help but feel pity towards his self-induced love sickness, but at the same time the situation provokes hilarity, as he has never actually met Olivia. This leads us to believe he is 'in love with being in love'.

Characters are there to instigate an emotional reaction from the audience, and when considering the characters of a Shakespeare play we may find as much characterisation as in a novel, but we must also consider that the characters have a mechanical function in the scheme of the play as a whole. It can help to think of them as vehicles to carry ideas or themes; for example Orsino introduces the theme of love.

The diction Shakespeare gives to his characters contributes to their characterisation. He gives characters with more intelligence a large vocabulary, where feeble-minded characters are more limited. Evidence of this in *Twelfth Night* is perhaps not as obvious as in other plays such as *The Tempest*, where Caliban has a very limited vocabulary, and struggles to find words. But characteristics of language such as imagery, metaphors, vocabulary and syntax used by Malvolio contrast for example with those used by the Clown. Although both characters are of a higher intelligence, the language chosen for each is very different;

Feste, the Clown, often plays with words, uses puns and aphorisms.

Wit, and't be thy will, put me into good fooling! Those wits that think they have thee do very oft prove fools; and I that am sure I lack thee may pass for a wise man. For what says Quinapalus? 'Better a witty fool than a foolish wit.' God bless thee, lady! [Act 1, Scene 5]

He proves to be intelligent in that he is witty and wise. He also proves to be quite mysterious, seeming to know more than most, but still being observant and quiet.

Malvolio is more well-spoken than witty, but he is more pompous and arrogant.

I'll be reveng'd on the whole pack of you! [Act 5, Scene 1]

That final line from Malvolio's is there to make the audience pity him. By using the metaphor of 'the whole pack of you' an image is immediately created of a group surrounding him. The metaphor describes how he has been made a fool of by all of them, and also signifies his isolation from the rest of the cast and how he has become a loose end of the play, as everybody else has found love or companionship with another person in the play.

After analysing the way in which Shakespeare uses form, structure and language to shape meaning I have come to the conclusion that we are not consciously aware of these techniques when we are the audience. Directors and actors may take these factors into consideration when performing a play, to assist in conveying meaning to the audience. Different directors may interpret the text in different ways, but the play should be performed in such a way that subtle clues help the audience receive messages and understand the complexity of the developing plot, so that we are not obliged to be continually struggling to interpret the text for ourselves.

6.6 SELF-ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

1. Evaluate the major themes of the play, and comment on their significance to human life.
2. Comment on the intricacies of the plot and the sub-plot of the play, *Twelfth Night.*
3. Discuss the significance of the structure of the play.

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LESSON - 7

TWELFTH NIGHT: THE CHARACTERS& THE WOMEN CHARACTERS& THE GENDER-BENDER—GENDER CONFUSION

Objectives of the Lesson:

1. To be familiarized with the nature of the characters
2. To have a brief understanding of the crux of the play—the gender confusion

Structure of the Lesson

7.1. TWELFTH NIGHT: CHARACTERS AND CHARACTERIZATION & 7.2 THE MAJOR CHARACTERS AND THEIR SIGNIFICANCE

Characters in *Twelfth Night*

A Definition: "the mental and moral qualities distinctive to an individual."

Characters:

Viola :

Like most of Shakespeare's heroines, Viola is a tremendously likable figure. She has no serious faults, and we can easily discount the peculiarity of her decision to dress as a man, since it sets the entire plot in motion. She is the character whose love seems the purest. The other characters' passions are fickle: Orsino jumps from Olivia to Viola, Olivia jumps from Viola to Sebastian, and Sir Toby and Maria's marriage seems more a matter of whim than an expression of deep and abiding passion. Only Viola seems to be truly, passionately *in love* as opposed to being self-indulgently lovesick. As she says to Orsino, describing herself and her love for him:

She pined in thought,
And with a green and yellow melancholy
She sat like patience on a monument,
Smiling at grief. Was not this love indeed?
(II.iv.111–114)

The audience, like Orsino, can only answer with an emphatic *yes.*

Viola's chief problem throughout the play is one of identity. Because of her disguise, she must be both herself and Cesario. This mounting identity crisis culminates in the final scene, when Viola finds herself surrounded by people who each have a different idea of who she is and are unaware of who she *actually* is. Were *Twelfth Night* not a comedy, this pressure might cause Viola to break down. Sebastian's appearance at this point, however, effectively saves Viola by allowing her to be herself again. Sebastian, who independent of his sister is not much of a character, takes over the aspects of Viola's disguise that she no longer wishes to maintain. Thus liberated by her brother, Viola is free to shed the roles that she has accumulated throughout the play, and she can return to being Viola, the woman who has loved and won Orsino.

Orsino and Olivia

Orsino and Olivia are worth discussing together, because they have similar personalities. Both claim to be buffeted by strong emotions, but both ultimately seem to be self-indulgent individuals who enjoy melodrama and self-involvement more than anything. When we first meet them, Orsino is pining away for love of Olivia, while Olivia pines away for her dead brother. They show no interest in relating to the outside world, preferring to lock themselves up with their sorrows and mope around their homes.

Viola's arrival begins to break both characters out of their self-involved shells, but neither undergoes a clear-cut change. Orsino relates to Viola in a way that he never has to Olivia, diminishing his self-involvement and making him more likable. Yet he persists in his belief that he is in love with Olivia until the final scene, in spite of the fact that he never once speaks to her during the course of the play. Olivia, meanwhile, sets aside her grief when Viola (disguised as Cesario) comes to see her. But Olivia takes up her own fantasy of lovesickness, in which she pines away—with a self-indulgence that mirrors Orsino's—for a man who is really a woman. Ultimately, Orsino and Olivia seem to be out of touch with real emotion, as demonstrated by the ease with which they shift their affections in the final scene—Orsino from Olivia to Viola, and Olivia from Cesario to Sebastian. The similarity between Orsino and Olivia does not diminish with the end of the play, since the audience realizes that by marrying Viola and Sebastian, respectively, Orsino and Olivia are essentially marrying female and male versions of the same person.

Malvolio

Malvolio initially seems to be a minor character, and his humiliation seems little more than an amusing subplot to the Viola-Olivia-Orsino- love triangle. But he becomes more interesting as the play progresses, and most critics have judged him one of the most complex and fascinating characters in *Twelfth Night.* When we first meet Malvolio, he seems to be a simple type—a puritan, a stiff and proper servant who likes nothing better than to spoil other people's fun. It is this dour, fun-despising side that earns him the enmity of the zany, drunken Sir Toby and the clever Maria, who together engineer his downfall. But they do so by playing on a side of Malvolio that might have otherwise remained hidden—his self-regard and his remarkable ambitions, which extend to marrying Olivia and becoming, as he puts it, "Count Malvolio" (II.v.30).

When he finds the forged letter from Olivia (actually penned by Maria) that seems to offer hope to his ambitions, Malvolio undergoes his first transformation—from a stiff and wooden embodiment of priggish propriety into an personification of the power of self--delusion. He is

ridiculous in these scenes, as he capers around in the yellow stockings and crossed garters that he thinks will please Olivia, but he also becomes pitiable. He may deserve his come-uppance, but there is an uncomfortable universality to his experience. Malvolio's misfortune is a cautionary tale of ambition overcoming good sense, and the audience winces at the way he adapts every event—including Olivia's confused assumption that he must be mad—to fit his rosy picture of his glorious future as a nobleman. Earlier, he embodies stiff joylessness; now he is joyful, but in pursuit of a dream that everyone, except him, knows is false.

Our pity for Malvolio only increases when the vindictive Maria and Toby confine him to a dark room in Act IV. As he desperately protests that he is *not* mad, Malvolio begins to seem more of a victim than a victimizer. It is as if the unfortunate steward, as the embodiment of order and sobriety, must be sacrificed so that the rest of the characters can indulge in the hearty spirit that suffuses *Twelfth Night.* As he is sacrificed, Malvolio begins to earn our respect. It is too much to call him a tragic figure, however—after all, he is only being asked to endure a single night in darkness, hardly a fate comparable to the sufferings of King Lear or Hamlet. But there is a kind of nobility, however limited, in the way that the deluded steward stubbornly clings to his sanity, even in the face of Feste's insistence that he is mad. Malvolio remains true to himself, despite everything: he *knows* that he is sane, and he will not allow anything to destroy this knowledge.

Malvolio (and the audience) must be content with this self-knowledge, because the play allows Malvolio no real recompense for his sufferings. At the close of the play, he is brought out of the darkness into a celebration in which he has no part, and where no one seems willing to offer him a real apology. "I'll be revenged on the whole pack of you," he snarls, stalking out of the festivities (V.i.365). His exit strikes a jarring note in an otherwise joyful comedy. Malvolio has no real place in the anarchic world of *Twelfth Night,* except to suggest that, even in the best of worlds, someone must suffer while everyone else is happy.

Sebastian - Viola's lost twin brother. When he arrives in Illyria, traveling with Antonio, his close friend and protector, Sebastian discovers that many people think that they know him. Furthermore, the beautiful Lady Olivia, whom he has never met, wants to marry him. Sebastian is not as well rounded a character as his sister. He seems to exist to take on the role that Viola fills while disguised as Cesario—namely, the mate for Olivia.

Malvolio - The straitlaced steward—or head servant—in the household of Lady Olivia. Malvolio is very efficient but also very self-righteous, and he has a poor opinion of drinking, singing, and fun. His priggishness and haughty attitude earn him the enmity of Sir Toby, Sir Andrew, and Maria, who play a cruel trick on him, making him believe that Olivia is in love with him. In his fantasies about marrying his mistress, he reveals a powerful ambition to rise above his social class.

Feste - The clown, or fool, of Olivia's household, Feste moves between Olivia's and Orsino's homes. He earns his living by making pointed jokes, singing old songs, being generally witty, and offering good advice cloaked under a layer of foolishness. In spite of being a professional fool, Feste often seems the wisest character in the play.

Sir Toby - Olivia's uncle. Olivia lets Sir Toby Belch live with her, but she does not approve of his rowdy behavior, practical jokes, heavy drinking, late-night carousing, or friends (specifically the idiotic Sir Andrew). Sir Toby also earns the ire of Malvolio. But Sir Toby has an ally, and eventually a mate, in Olivia's sharp-witted waiting-gentlewoman, Maria.

Together they bring about the triumph of chaotic spirit, which Sir Toby embodies, and the ruin of the controlling, self-righteous Malvolio.

Maria - Olivia's clever, daring young waiting-gentlewoman. Maria is remarkably similar to her antagonist, Malvolio, who harbors aspirations of rising in the world through marriage. But Maria succeeds where Malvolio fails—perhaps because she is a woman, but, more likely, because she is more in tune than Malvolio with the anarchic, topsy-turvy spirit that animates the play.

Sir Andrew Aguecheek - A friend of Sir Toby's. Sir Andrew Aguecheek attempts to court Olivia, but he doesn't stand a chance. He thinks that he is witty, brave, young, and good at languages and dancing, but he is actually an idiot.

Antonio - A man who rescues Sebastian after his shipwreck. Antonio has become very fond of Sebastian, caring for him, accompanying him to Illyria, and furnishing him with money—all because of a love so strong that it seems to be romantic in nature. Antonio's attraction to Sebastian, however, never bears fruit. Despite the ambiguous and shifting gender roles in the play, Twelfth Night remains a romantic comedy in which the characters are destined for marriage. In such a world, homoerotic attraction cannot be fulfilled.

7.3 & 7.4. *Twelfth NIGHT* OR *WHAT YOU WILL*: THE WOMEN CHARACTERS AND THEIR SIGNIFICANCE & THE GENDER-BENDER OR GENDER CONFUSION IN *TWELFTH NIGHT*

Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night* examines patterns of love and courtship through a twisting of gender roles. In Act 3, scene 1, Olivia displays the confusion created for both characters and audience as she takes on the traditionally male role of wooer in an attempt to win the disguised Viola, or Cesario. Olivia praises Cesario's beauty and then addresses him with the belief that his "scorn" (3.1.134) only reveals his hidden love. However, Olivia's mistaken interpretation of Cesario's manner is only the surface problem presented by her speech. The reality of Cesario's gender, the active role Olivia takes in pursuing him/her, and the duality of word meanings in this passage threaten to turn the traditional patriarchal concept of courtship upside down, or as Olivia says turn "night to noon" (139).

Perhaps the biggest upset to the traditional structure is the possibility that Olivia may be in love with a woman. Shakespeare allows his audience to excuse this by having Olivia be unaware that Cesario is actually female. Yet, Olivia's attraction seems to stem exactly from the more feminine characteristics like Cesario's "beautiful scorn" and "angry lip" (136-137). Olivia's words allow an audience, particularly a modern one, to perhaps read her as suspecting or even knowing that Cesario is female, yet choosing to love him/her anyway.

Olivia's description of Cesario's beauty, both here and upon their first encounter, praises typically feminine qualities, but curiously doesn't question Cesario's gender. The comparison of love to guilt tempts the readers mind to wonder if Olivia is guilty about her love for such female attributes. Olivia's oath on maidenhood also tempts the reader toward a lesbian reading by hinting that Cesario would also understand maidenhood (141). When Olivia declares that not even "wit nor reason"(143) can hide her passion, she suggests that she would love Cesario even if it were against logic, as a same sex couple would be. Despite the unacceptability of a same sex romance in Shakespeare's time, the hints toward this reading seem visible enough to have been thought of then as well as today. Although probably not intended to the extent of a lesbian courtship, the situation of a woman wooing another woman

presents a comical picture for the audience, perhaps even more so in the Elizabethan era with two male actors wooing each other as women. Shakespeare is able to pose the question of homosexual love by using "Cesario" as a shield to protect both the characters within the play and the audience from having to deal with the question directly.

Although he avoids denying the Elizabethan romantic conventions with an openly homosexual plot, Shakespeare does upset the norm by having Olivia act as suitor and having the "man" act as the object of desire. This role reversal is not hidden since Olivia plainly says "I woo"(145) as she addresses Cesario. The way in which she speaks to Cesario mimics the contemporary traditions perfectly. Cesario's refusal sets up the classic situation of the beloved as an object of unattainable perfection for the lover to praise. Olivia's speech is in rhymed couplets separating it, along with Viola's response, from the typical blank verse of the rest of the play as if they were intended to be poems standing on their own. Olivia swears by "everything" (141) that her passion cannot be restrained even by reason while simultaneously admiring Cesario's resistance (143). She follows the patriarchal formula perfectly, the only exception being her gender. Olivia's absurd situation of wooing a disguised woman makes her doomed to fail despite her ability to replicate the correct discourse.

On the contrary, perhaps Shakespeare's intention is to show that it is the very discourse which causes the failure. The foolishness of the scene; a male actor playing a woman, wooing another man playing a woman, who is playing a man, appears to poke fun at the entire convention. By swearing on "everything" Olivia devalues the things that she swore upon before and suddenly seems rather supercilious. The repeated use of the word "reason" and the ambiguous structure of the last line muddle Olivia's meaning to the point where it would be difficult for Cesario to choose whether or to not to comply and to what he would be complying to. Read in this manner, the passage becomes a satirical enactment of a traditional courtship. The gender switch serves to emphasize the impossibility of love within a structure which demands that the object of desire must refuse in order to remain desirable.

To cushion the mockery of the traditional discourse, an additional message can be extracted from Olivia's speech. The unhappiness of Olivia's impossible situation could be seen as a lesson for taking on the wrong role. By leaving her place as object and becoming the actor Olivia is unknowingly chasing after someone she can never have. When Sebastian appears, a male replication of Viola, then all the problems seem to evaporate because the proper gender roles have been restored. Yet without Sebastian, without the true male, chaos reigns and reason breaksdown. As if following the loss of order in the situation, the word "reason" seems to lose power within Olivia's speech. First "reason" (143) is not strong enough to contain her passion. Then she urges Cesario not to take his "reasons from this clause" (144), presumably indicating he should not base his decisions on her revealed passion, but should instead "reason thus with reason fetter" (146). Cesario should "fetter" the logic of not returning her love with the "reason", the explanation, she offers. By having "reason" fetter itself, it becomes helpless. The "fettering" of the word "reason" parallels the loss of reason, of logic, within the action of the play. It is Olivia's speech, her attempt to take the active "male" role which "fetters" reason. When she upsets the convention of female passivity, chaos is the result until Sebastian comes and saves the day. It is unclear whether Shakespeare is mocking the structure of the traditional courtship, reaffirming it with the message that when women step out of their proper

roles that chaos results, or quite possibly proposing both.

Rather than resolving anything, the last line of the passage continues the ambiguity found throughout. "Love sought is good, but given unsought, is better" (147). Olivia could be saying that it is good for her to give love, but even better that she is giving it without reciprocation. This meaning would coincide with her weariness of suitors and with the standard of unfulfilled worship of the beloved. However, she may be asking the opposite, saying that she is happy to seek love, but would be even happier if it were given to her without her having to go after it. This would support the interpretation that she is not in her proper role, and will be happier if she returns to the traditional state of passivity.

The last line also returns to the problem of Cesario/Viola as both man and woman. One could read that it is better to love a member of the same sex and not have the love returned than to be hounded by suitors. The line might be read as the concluding lesson to a sarcastic representation of courtship; to follow the conventions is good, but to have love returned is much better. The opposite lesson, to follow the tradition of unreturned love, is equally plausible. Perhaps the line sends and follows both messages. Love is sought from Viola and never received, but "given unsought" by Sebastian who is truly unsought because he doesn't even exist for Olivia until the end of the play. By having Viola and Sebastian be virtually interchangeable, both variations can be enacted. Interestingly, neither option is faithful to the lover/beloved doctrine. Giving love without reciprocation would follow the doctrine, but in this case it is between two women. When Sebastian arrives the norm seems to be restored, but love is fulfilled when Sebastian consents to be ruled by Olivia. Even with all the problems supposedly solved, the gender role question is still present for Olivia seems never to have entirely relinquished her active "male" role. *Twelfth Night* tackles many uncomfortable issues regarding love and gender which Shakespeare never truly resolves for his audience. Instead he leaves the questions open, but contains the discomfort with humor, disguise, chaos and a happy ending.

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7.5 TWELFTH NIGHT: A ‘YOUTHFUL’ COMEDY

"Twelfth Night", behind all the humor, both the jester and the play tell a truth that is at once happy and sad. Life is full of sadness. The best years of life are short. Events are cruel. And other people are cruel. In such a world, it is your DUTY to find and cherish whatever real happiness you can.

llyria is the setting of one of William Shakespeare's most popular comedies, 'Twelfth Night'. Illyria is not a typical place; it is a place where many unusual things happen. Learn more about Illyria and test your knowledge with a quiz.

When we think of stories involving mystery, adventure and romance, we often think of them taking place in far-off, exotic lands. *Twelfth Night* is a comedy written by William Shakespeare. It tells the story of the odd occurrences that take place in a woman's life after she is shipwrecked on one such exotic island.

The setting of *Twelfth Night* is in Illyria, an ancient region of land on the coast of the Adriatic Sea. Illyria is not exactly the place readers might expect it to be. The characters in the play are people of noble birth; however, they behave like commoners who only want to have a

good time. Critics believe Shakespeare set *Twelfth Night* in Illyria to convey that the world, along with the story's content, is unexpected and unusual.

Youthfulness and Viola: The heroine and central character. She and her twin brother Sebastian were orphaned on their thirteenth birthday. Her brother describes Viola as both beautiful ("in spite of the fact that they say she looked like me"), and being a genuinely nice person. ("She bore a mind that envy could not but call fair.") She is brave and stays as cheerful as she can be. In contrast to Olivia, she does not withdraw from the world to mourn. (Of course, unlike Olivia, Viola can't afford this luxury.) She loves Orsino unselfishly enough to woo another woman on his behalf. By the time the first act is over, we realize that Viola, unlike the two upper-class characters, won't be feeling sorry for herself.

Youthfulness and Orsino: who is Governor of Illyria, variously described as Duke or Count. He has a fine reputation internationally (I ii), and is known to be constant and fair (I iii). While he's in love, though, he's irritable and moody.

The Youthfulness Reflected in Olivia: who is a wealthy lady who is loved by Orsino. Her parents recently died, and then the brother who had been their heir died as well. Olivia seems capable and dignified, always serious but able to understand and enjoy a joke. When she falls in love for "Cesario", she is very concerned about losing her composure, but can't control herself.

The Youthfulness/ Vigor Reflected in Feste: who is Olivia's jester, a comedian-singer who used to entertain Olivia's father. Much of his humor is made-up aphorisms, parodies of what a wise person supposedly would say, but just as true... often darkly so. ("Many a good hanging prevents a bad marriage.") Behind the humor, Feste offers people good advice. (People may accept what they don't want to hear coming from a joker.) Notice how he stays detached, and uses opposites and paradoxes, and how most of his humor is at the expense of the hearers. (King Lear's jester will do the same, and even sing the same song.) But Feste is only unkind when he is taking revenge on Malvolio. Feste's part is written for a man but has been played just as well by women. Whoever plays Feste does need to be able to sing. (If this isn't possible, Fabian or Maria might do the song at Orsino's.) Of course, Feste's name means "celebration".

The Youthfulness/ Jest Reflected in oby Belch :who is Olivia's alcoholic uncle whose only interest is in partying and having fun at the expense of others. He talks in high language, variously parodying lawyer-talk and knight-talk.

The Youthfulness/ Vigor Reflected in Malvolio :who is Olivia's administrator. He is the only character who seems to be making a conscious effort to be "virtuous", and the only one who shows no warmth towards others. So people are going to dislike him and try to get back at him. Outwardly, he's the effective, devoted employee. As steward, it is his job to manage Olivia's household and affairs. Malvolio wants to run an orderly house and take good care of Olivia, out of common affection or a sense of duty or both. Even though he is pompous, he must be good at what he does. He must be frustrated when he cannot protect Olivia (as he sees it) from the alcoholics and the rude jester. Inwardly, Malvolio has an elaborate fantasy life in which he is independently wealthy and commands the obedience of the people who just ridicule him in real life. But his aspirations toward spirituality are probably real; he "thinks nobly of the soul". And by the end of the play, even audience-members who don't sympathize with him early-on will feel disturbed by the horrible way he gets treated by the

pranksters. "Malvolio"'s name means "evil-wisher". (In pre-Shakespearean morality plays, characters would be named for the virtues or vices they acted out.)

Illyria

Although *Twelfth Night* is entirely fictional, Illyria was actually a real place in classical antiquity. It was also one that many Europeans likely had no real knowledge of. It is possible that William Shakespeare chose Illyria as the setting for *Twelfth Night* for this reason, and because Illyria has a mild climate and was remote and exotic. Shakespeare also mentioned Illyria *Henry VI, Part II,* where he claimed it was known for piracy. Despite the fact that an actual Illyria once existed, the Illyria of Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night* is based in fiction.

7.6 SELF-ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

1. Comment on the characterization in *Twelfth Night*.
2. Compare and contrast men and women characters in *Twelfth Night.*
3. Gender-bender and/or Gender Confusion in Twelfth Night shows proto-feminist concerns in Shakespeare. Discuss.
4. Discuss how the locale and the young age of the characters enhance the romantic quality of the play.

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LESSON - 8

TWELFTH NIGHT: THE CONSUMMATE ARTISTRY OF SHAKESPEARE IN TWELFTH NIGHT: FROM SLAPSTICK COMEDY TO MATURE COMEDY

Objectives of the Lesson:

1. To be familiarized with the consummate artistry of Shakespeare as an author of Romantic Comedy
2. To have an understanding of the different nuances of the Romantic Comedy, *Twelfth Night.*

Structure of the Lesson

8.1 TWELFTH NIGHT*:* A COMBINATION OF SLAPSTICK COMEDY AND MATURE COMEDY

Twelfth Night offers a number of different kinds of visual humor. One is, of course, the physical slapstick we get between the drunken, bumptious Sir Toby Belch and his victim, the witless fop Sir Andrew Aguecheek -- complicated by the interventions of the clown, Feste[1], probably one of the play's most memorable inventions. Mike Parsons, as a lovely, fresh-faced, effeminate Aguecheek, and Nicholas Cole, as a wonderfully agile and insouciant clown, are particularly imaginative and strong here, and consistently got the laughs the play needed to keep us engaged. Equally effective was Simon Peter Duvall as Malvolio. Though he seemed less overbearingly pompous and insufferable than perhaps he might in his opening scenes, he made up for it in the wonderful way he fell for the others' ruse -- reading aloud the fake letter from his mistress while the others titter and hide, scowling round the garden at stray noises, delighting himself at his own perspicuity, and -- perhaps especially -- trying to contort his face into a smile, in response to what he thinks are his mistress' instructions.

Another form of physical humor arises from the mutual incomprehension of the characters -- when, for instance, the lovestruck Orsino is almost absentmindedly fondling the "eunuch" Caesario, who, as Caesario, wants to repel the touch but at the same time, as Viola, who has fallen in love with Orsino, wishing she were in a position to accept it. Jamie Mitchell, as Viola, was wonderfully torn and puzzled by her plight.

And, of course, there's the usual Shakespeare slapstick: the hopeless duel Aguecheek is incited to by Sir Toby with the profoundly unwilling Caesario; the Three Stooges slapstick among Toby, Aguecheek, Feste and Maria, the pulling and tugging between Orsino and Olivia as they fight over their now mutually beloved Caesario. All this happened often enough, and solidly enough, to generate the laughter needed to keep the production rolling.

Finally, though, as always, it's about ensemble -- and fairly often it felt, on Wednesday evening at least, as though the timing weren't quite on, the slapstick not quite worked out, the repartee not quite achieving the spark it should have. And there were more loose ends and unsolved problems in the production than we're used to from Falkenstein and Johnston. For instance, the convention about when our attention moved from one scene to another wasn't consistent: on at least one occasion characters came on stage, froze, and *then* the scene began; on another, a scene ended with a freeze. At another point, a scene at the Duke's chaise longue waited to start until scenery was cleared away. Those things are okay if you make them the convention, but in this production they felt like unsolved problems.

And there were other unsolved mechanical problems. Though the scenery wasn't particularly oppressive, moving the flower boxes and statuary into place for the garden scenes, then clearing them away and bringing on stools and a table for the indoor scenes with the servants, often seemed an encumbrance and raised questions about how much of it was actually necessary. At the end of the duel scene, Sir Toby was left to gather up three swords and carry them off -- not exactly in character, of course, and again leaving the audience with a sense that a problem was still awaiting solution..

Twelfth Night was written by William Shakespeare around 1600 as the last of his three "mature comedies" (the other two being *Much Ado About Nothing* and As You Like It). Like his early comedies, Twelfth Night is essentially a celebration of romantic love and can be seen as a traditional romantic comedy. The play has many of the elements common to Elizabethan romantic comedy, including the devices of mistaken identity, separated twins, and gender-crossing disguise, and its plot revolves around overcoming obstacles to "true" love. Like other representatives of the genre, *Twelfth Night* also features a sub-plot in which a self-inflated character, the steward Malvolio, is brought to his knees through a trick set up by the cunning Maria and drunkard, Sir Toby Belch. The humour in *Twelfth Night* is undertone. It is not uproariously funny but it consists of many other aspects of humour that the characters are not always aware of. The humour is aimed at the ludicrous and not the ridiculous. It makes us laugh at the follies of mankind, not despise them and even if they have flaws in their character you can still relate to them in a warm way. Shakespeare exaggerates the mannerisms and any slight peculiarity or defects in their character in a way that amuses the audience. Shakespeare¡¦s object is to turn the meanest or rudest incidences into a pleasant experience for the audience. The twisted plots and bizarre characters is one form of comedy displayed in Shakespeare¡¦s work. In Twelfth Night this would be the greatest aspect of humour. The plot thickens in surprise as the unexpected story lines build up. At the end the secrets that are displayed to the characters consist of, gender-crossing disguise and mistaken identity. The use of dramatic irony is also very important. .

8.2 TWELFTH NIGHT : SHAKESPEARE'S COMIC VISION

All these female characters were played by male actors in Shakespeare's plays. Preachers of the time thundered that 'all men are abominations that put on women's raiment' (JohnRainolds in 1599), and even suggested that cross-dressing undermined

genderboundaries: 'our apparel was given us as a sign distinctive to discern between sex and sex,and therefore one to wear the apparel of another sex is to participate with the same, andto adulterate the verity of his own kind' (Philip Stubbes in 1583). Part of what is worrying to these moralists is that the performance of gender on the stage shakes the very foundation of a social system that is based on the essential superiority of men over women. Shakespeare's comedies have great fun with cross-dressing and flirt with thehomosexual desirability of the transvestite actor: Orsino and Olivia are both drawn tothe androgynously sexy Viola in Twelfth Night , giving the play's subtitle, 'What you will', asaucy hint of 'anything goes'. Like other cross-dressed heroines, Viola never reappears inher female clothes and Orsino continues to address her as 'Cesario' even as heacknowledges his love for her: heterosexual gender norms are not reinstated. As inRosalind's teasingly flirtatious epilogue to As You Like It , the ending of Twelfth Night isreluctant to relinquish the erotic fun and possibility created by Viola's sexually ambiguous persona.

In terms of gender representation, therefore, Shakespeare's comedies seem to challenge conservative orthodoxies and present themselves as socially transgressive. But there is another side, too, in which comedies reveal themselves as socially conservative, reinforcing hierarchies and boundaries even as they seek to play with them. Class boundaries are firmly observed in Shakespeare's comedies (not for him Marlowe's interest in characters who transcend their humble origins). While Rosalind is disguised as Ganymede in the Forest of Arden in
As You Like It , she attracts the romantic interest of Phoebe. Although there is much teasing of the unwitting Phoebe, her mistake is not primarily that Ganymede is really female, rather that 'he' is her social superior. 'You are not for all markets', Rosalind tells her, urging her towards her shepherd suitor: 'love him, take his offer' (3.5.61-3). The servant Malvolio's fantasy of marrying his mistress Oliviain Twelfth Night results in his humiliating punishment. The twin servants Dromios in *The Comedy of Errors* are regularly beaten to make clear their inferior status.

Here comes the bride Shakespeare's comic heroines assert themselves, to be sure, but their spirited agency is directed towards the most normative of female destinies, marriage. We can be sure if any woman in a Shakespeare comedy asserts that she does not want a husband, the plot will contort itself to make sure she gets one: springing Isabella from the convent to plead for her brother Claudio's life in Measure for Measure , letting loose the twins amidst Olivia's excessive mourning in Twelfth Night , setting the elaborate hoax to persuade Beatrice who 'would rather hear my dog bark at a crow than a man swear he love me' (Much Ado About Nothing
1.1.125-6). Perhaps The Taming of the Shrew makes this tendency to enforced marriage clearest. Everyone in Padua – her suitor Petruchio, who desires to 'wive it wealthily' (1.2.74), Bianca, who cannot marry before her older sibling, and Baptista, burdened with an independent daughter – wants Katherina to marry, save Katherina herself. It's a matter of interpretation whether she is ultimately persuaded by the play's conclusion, in which she performs the role of obedient wife in front of her incredulous family. So marriage is the only possible outcome for women at the end of Shakespeare's comedies, and their freedom within their plays might be read merely as the liberty to insert themselves more totally in patriarchal structures. 'Peace, I'll stop your mouth', says Benedick to Beatrice at the end of the play (5.4.97): romantics might see this as the longed-for kiss between these two will-they-won't-they soul mates, but cynics might seethe emblematic silencing of the feisty female character in marriage (Beatrice never speaks again for the remainder of the play). And where comic women choose their own husbands free from paternal control, they seem to choose exactly

the husbands their fathers would have chosen, had they been able. Rosalind's Orlando is the son of her father's old ally, Viola's father knew Orsino, and even Perdita, in the comic second half of The Winter's Tale , has chosen a suitable partner: unbeknownst to her, she is a princess worthy of her disguised prince-lover, and Florizel is the son of her father's estranged best friend. Comic plots do not tend to endorse the idea of women's autonomy, nor to encourage them to rebel, except temporarily, about gender roles. Looked at from this perspective, comedies are ultimately conservative, indulging their protagonists in fleeting liberation but clanging the door of orthodoxy shut in conclusion.

8.3 TWELFTH NIGHT AND OTHER ROMANTIC COMEDIES: A COMPARISON AND CONTRAST

Twelfth Night is clearly part of the same tradition as *As You Like It*, and many of the dramatic elements are very similar. In both plays, the main plot features a young, intelligent female faced with the task of negotiating her way through a courtship with a man who needs to be educated into an understanding of what it means to love intelligently. To carry out this task, she adopts a disguise as a young man and improvises her way through a series of meetings and conversations with a wide variety of people (prominent among them the young man who is the object of her affections), until, through a series of circumstances the complexities are happily (and somewhat implausibly) resolved. Part of the plot clearly raises gender issues and explores homoerotic possibilities in much the same way.

All of this takes place in an environment far away from the realities of urban political life: in As You Like It the environment is the Forest, the nature, far away from urban political life. In Twelfth Night the country estate of Olivia and the court of Orsino are places almost exclusively devoted to leisure, music, love, and much fun. In that sense, they are removed from the realities of urban life and continue the pastoral tradition.

Another similarity between these two plays is the continuing attention in *As You Like It* and *Twelfth Night* to the language of love. The central issue in the courtship of Viola and Orsino, as in the courtship of Rosalind and Orlando, is the need to educate the man out of his excessively sentimental vision of love so that he reaches a more intelligent and aware vision of the reality of the experience. By the end of the process, the men (both, Orsino and Orlando) have learned to alter the language with which they express their feelings.

"The Merry Wives" leads our reader back to Shakespeare's early comedies of social life, of which, although he has read all of them once, he is supposed to have thus far studied only one, "The Two Gentlemen of Verona," its author's first attempt in this department of the drama. How rapidly Shakespeare's power developed, both as dramatist and poet, could not be more clearly apprehended than by the comparison of "The Two Gentlemen of Verona" with his next comedy of its kind, "The Merchant of Venice." At most only four or five years and there is some reason to believe even less elapsed between the composition of the former and that of the latter play. The former is, for Shakespeare, very weak; faulty in construction, crude in characterization, and, although it contains some charming passages which give promise of the coming man, notably Julia's third speech in Act II. Sc. 7, tame in its poetry. But it is to be observed that, although this is one of his earliest plays, his peculiar mastery of blank verse, in which the dialogue seems perfectly easy, and as natural as Monsieur Jourdain's prose, while its rhythm is as marked as that of a minuet, is shown, although with intervals, from the first scene to the last. Observe it in Valentine's and Proteus's first

speeches; and in the following passage, in which the "unstopped" lines and the occurrence in nine of three with double endings show us that we should not trust too much to such tokens as a test of the date of composition:

Ant. Why, what of him?
Panth. He wondered that your lordship
Would suffer him to spend his youth at home,
While other men, of slender reputation,
Put forth their sons to seek preferment out:
Some to the wars to try their fortune there;
Some to discover islands far away;
Some to the studious universities.
For any or for all these exercises
He said that Proteus, your son, was meet.
Act I. Sc. 3.

This comedy has been pronounced careless in its composition. I cannot so regard it; rather it seems to me labored and constrained. The reasons given are chiefly that Valentine is sent to Milan by sea, and that Verona twice occurs in the text where plainly Milan is required. But so did Shakespeare give Bohemia a seacoast in "The Winter's Tale," a play written in his maturity. About geography Shakespeare seems to have known little and cared less. And why should it have been otherwise? As it was, he knew more than was known to ninety-nine in a hundred of his audience. As to the writing twice of Verona instead of Milan, it seems plainly a mere case of heterophemy.

Careless or labored, however, "The Two Gentlemen of Verona" stands low in the list of Shakespeare's works, and he seems to have risen almost at a bound into the period when he produced the poetry of "The Merchant of Venice," of "Richard II," and of "Romeo and Juliet," which were written at about the same time. No more instructive study of Shakespeare could be undertaken than the comparison of "The Merchant of Venice " with "The Two Gentlemen of Verona." The differences most to be noted are in characterization and, as to poetry, sustained power. As to the former, compare Antonio with Valentine or Sir Thurio, Portia with Silvia, Nerissa with Lucetta, and see how much more clearly outlined are the former than the latter; how much more vital their fibre; how much more brain they have behind their eyes. Then look in vain in the earlier play for any figure with which to compare the fierce, fawning, crafty, eager, bloodthirsty Shylock. "The Two Gentlemen of Verona" is a love-play, pure and simple (for the friendly devotion of the two gentlemen, a common incident in the romances of Shakespeare's day, is plainly introduced merely for the purpose of the complications that it brings about); and yet compare any or all of it with Scene 2 of Act V., or with the whole fifth act of "The Merchant of Venice." The superior charm of the latter, the greater warmth and earnestness of its passion, must be at once apparent to the most superficial reader. But the author's advance is shown perhaps more than in any other point in the boldness and freedom with which he handles his material, and in the skill shown in the dramatic construction of his play. In humor the difference is not so greatly in favor of the later work. Launce and his dog are little, if at all, inferior to Launcelot Gobbo. In both this play and its predecessor there is a pair of friends; but beware of being led by that fact into the assumption that they are companion plays, having friendship for their central idea, and illustrating it by the opposite conduct of Proteus and Antonio. Shakespeare did not write plays with central ideas; and in all such incidents as those referred to he merely followed the course or the indications of the stories upon which he worked, as will appear in a very marked manner in the next play that we shall examine.

About the period of his life when "The Merchant of Venice" was produced Shakespeare's attention seems to have been chiefly given to Italian literature, then the first and almost the only national literature in the world, and the school and the storehouse of writers of other races. An Italian story of a pair of hapless lovers, which had been repeated in a long and tedious English ballad version, was taken by him as the plot and almost as the substance of his first tragedy. "Romeo and Juliet" was written very soon after "The Merchant of Venice;" within a year or a year and a half of it. It is in its spirit and sentiment the most youthful of all Shakespeare's plays, not to say of his tragedies. "Love's Labour 's Lost," his first play, is much older in its cast of thought, and although a comedy, much graver and more sententious in style than this tragedy. This appearance of greater youthfulness of feeling in his poetry is the result of a greater experience of life. It is a sign that the poet had grown a few years older. There is no gravity so grave, no sententiousness so sententious, no wisdom so didactic, as that of an intelligent young man whose twenty-one or twenty-two years weigh heavily upon his consciousness. About ten years afterward he begins to find out that he and life and the world are young. And so it was that at thirty-two Shakespeare gave the world in a tragedy, the freshest, sweetest breath of life's springtime that ever was uttered by a poet's lips. It is at least probable, however, that the play as we have it in the folio bears the marks of a revision of an earlier composition. The numerous rhymes and the occurrence of very young and extremely fanciful poetry such, for example, as Juliet's passage containing the request that Romeo should be cut up into little stars (Act III. Sc. 2) favor this inference.

Very many wise and subtle theories as to Shakespeare's purpose in this play have been set forth by critics who engage in the task of approfounding him. They have discovered that he wished to show in Romeo the ephemeral quality of one kind of love and the enduring quality of the other, and how the latter drives out the former; that the play was intended as a companion to "Troilus and Cressida," and that the faithful Juliet is presented as an instructive contrast to the faithless Cressida; and that the moral which the tragedy was written to enforce is, according to one view, the deference due to the wishes of parents; according to the others, the punishment which is sure to fall upon those who cherish family hatred. Ingenious and pretty, but vain fancies. All the incidents in the play Shakespeare found in the dreary old ballad, the course of events in which he merely adopted without change other than their adornment with the splendor of his thought. The Romeo of the old ballad loves and changes his love just as the Romeo of the tragedy does; Juliet is faithful there just as Cressida is faithless in Chaucer's poem, to which Shakespeare went for his "Troilus and Cressida;" and from the old story in the ballad, and not from Shakespeare's mind, came any lesson of the duty of filial deference; for there Juliet gives herself to the enemy of her family just as she does in the tragedy, and comes to the same end. Shakespeare merely dramatized the old ballad to make a play to please his audience, just as any hack playwright might today, who was engaged by a manager to do a like task. It merely happened that he was William Shakespeare, and had a peculiar way of doing such things. As to a moral, plainly nothing was further from Shakespeare's thought. The tragedy is hardly tragic, but rather a dramatic love-poem with a sad ending. There are few young men, and fewer young women, with a touch of sentiment, who do not lay down the tragedy after a first reading with the feeling that it would have been sweet to die like Romeo or like Juliet. Not so do we, young or old, read "Hamlet," "Macbeth," "Lear," "Othello."

To the second period of Shakespeare's dramatic life belong his most charming comedies, "Much Ado About Nothing," "Twelfth Night," and "As You Like It," which, with "The Merchant of Venice," are much better suited to representation than his later dramas which are ranged under this title. They may well be read in this order directly after "Romeo and Juliet;"

and although they are comedies and that is a tragedy, it will be found that they are more thoughtful, more solid, and graver. Shakespeare's growing mastery of his art may be justly estimated by the comparison of two personages in "Much Ado About Nothing," Benedick and Beatrice, with two of the same sort, having mentally and morally great likeness to them, Birone and Rosaline, in "Love's Labour 's Lost." The plays are separated in their production by about nine years. Benedick and Beatrice are known the whole world over as types of character, and their speeches are familiar to our ears and upon our lips. Birone and Rosaline are known only to students of Shakespeare, and they have contributed little or nothing to the world's common stock of pregnant phrases.

8.4 TWELFTH NIGHT AS A DARK COMEDY

What kind of play is *Twelfth Night?* This question has probably been raised by many readers of Shakespeare's play *Twelfth* Night and has moreover become a central aspect of discussion for numerous critics. Following this interpretation of *Twelfth Night* however, the reader will miss much of the content that lies behind the comic apparel. *Twelfth Night* is not *always enjoyable,* as it often manages to shift the attention from the light play of love and illusion towards the more serious and worrying fate of characters like Malvolio. At yet another point in his review Gibson offers a more suitable angle to *Twelfth Night:* "An upsetting play which seems light and amusing on the surface yet has dark and harsh depths. It is an uneasy play about outsiders who lose" (157). According to this quote, it can be argued that Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night* is more than just a pure comedy and even has tragic elements to it. Malvolio's function is not simply to serve as the embodiment of a self-centred and self-loving man, who needs to be taught a lesson, but he is the victim of a cruel prank, which eventually leads to his collapse in person as well as in reputation.

8.5 TWELFTH NIGHT AS PROGRESSIVE AND PROTO-FEMINIST

In Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night* it is seen again, a play about men, women, relationships, and disguises. A play in line with *The Taming of the Shrew* and *Much Ado About Nothing* in plot but, conversely, very different in theme. We seem to have moved from a world where women have no say in their destiny; to where they have little say as in *Much Ado About Nothing*; to a place where women are the prime decision makers and therefore, their characters drive the plot forward.

Take Viola, for instance. She is saved from a shipwreck and stranded in a strange land. She presumes her brother to be dead. With all this working against her she takes her fate into her own hands. She devises the plan to disguise herself to be received into the court of Orsino and, consequently, into favor with Olivia. Viola says in Act I, "Conceal me what I am, and be my aid for such disguise as haply shall become the form of my intent" (I.ii.56-58). She is so bold that her disguise is that of a gentleman. Not just any gentleman but the most perfect of all. One that would know exactly what to say to a woman and precisely how to woo her anything that a man can do, Viola as a man, seems to do better. This seems like quite a leap forward towards a more feminist protagonist from the "taming" of a shrewish woman.

The character of Olivia is also strong and determined. Although her character seems to me to play second fiddle to Viola's because she is the one deceived by Viola's disguise as cesario, it is nonetheless worth noting that she stands her ground concerning her lack of love for Orsino. She is constant throughout the play. Olivia does not let Orsino's status

sway her from her decision. She says, "Yet I suppose him virtuous, know him noble, of great estate, of fresh and stainless youth; In voices well divulged, free, learned, and valiant, And in dimension and the shape of nature a gracious person. But yet I cannot love him" (I.iv.260-264). Even Viola (disguised as Cesario) feels these qualities would be more than any woman would want in a husband. But Olivia stands strong. She will only have a man that she has fallen in love with; that supplies to her what she deems as qualities of a true husband. Unfortunately, she finds them in Viola.

Lastly, we have Maria the waiting gentlewoman of Olivia. Even her character seems stronger and more decisive than that of the men. Maria is the mastermind of the plot to deceive Malvolio into believing Olivia loves him. She explains, "If I do not gull him into a nayword and make him a common recreation, do not think I have wit enough to lie straight in my bed. I know I can do it" (II.iii.134-137). Maria and her strong personality is yet another female character driving the plot forward; a purposeful device, I think, on the part of Shakespeare in his most feminist play we have read thus far.

8.6 SELF-ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

1. Comment on the duality—Romantic and Dark—comedy in *Twelfth Night*.
2. Explain the comic vision of William Shakespeare with reference to *Twelfth Night.*
3. Compare and contrast any two Romantic Comedies of Shakespeare.
4. Briefly discuss progressive and/or proto-feminist elements in *Twelfth Night.*

8.7 REFERENCES

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LESSON-9

JULIUS CAESAR

Objectives of the Lesson

- To sensitise the students to be aware of the biography of Shakespeare.
- To develop the awareness of the students about the Tragic Plays of those times.
- To make the students appreciate the thematic innovation of the play.
- To encourage the students to learn the souece of the play.
- To make the students understand the importance of the synopsis of the play
- To make the students analyse and evaluate the play critically.

Structure of the Lesson

9.1 SHAKESPEARE : INTRODUCTION

William Shakespeare was the third child and first son of John Shakespeare. Shakespeare was baptized on 26th April, 1564 at Stratford- upon- Avon. There is no record of his date of birth. However conventionally it has been accepted as April 23rd 1564. Very little is known about his childhood. His father was a tradesman in Stratford. In all probability, he attended the Free Grammar School in Stratford and learned Greek and Latin. Wandering about the countryside, he must have learnt something related to fishing, farming and hunting. He must have witnessed theatrical performances of roving actors in his place. According to tradition, he was an apprentice for some time in his father's butchery.

The recorded history about his life is that at the age of 18 he married Anne Hathaway , a woman eight years senior to him on November 28, 1582, in Worcester, in Canterbury Province. According to tradition he was forced to marry her as by then she was pregnant due to him. On May 26, 1583 their first child, a daughter Susanna was born Two years later, on February 2, 1585, twins a son, Hamnet and a daughter Judith were born. Hamnet later died

of unknown causes at age 11. There is no recorded evidence aboit him till 1592. According to tradition he lived a life of poverty and was in troubled waters on poaching venison.

It is said that he left his home town to London because of fear of being prosecuted by Sir Thomas Lucy for robbing his park. In London it is believed he became a page in a nobleman's household. According to Dr Johnson's record, he used to attend on horses at the door of a playhouse. Another version says that he was a n attendant to a prompter. By 1594, he became a regular member of the Lord Chamberlin's Company. Within a few years he established himself as an important member of London society with his writings. By 1599, he built his own theater on the south bank of the Thames River, which was called the Globe along with some other partners. He returned to Stratford permanently in 1613. He celebrated the marriage of his younger daughter Judith with Thomas Quincey, the son of a friend and neighbor on 10th February 1616.

On March 25 the same year he wrote his will and on 23rd April, 1616 he died. He was buried in the chancel of Stratford.

9.2 SHAKESPEARE : DIVISION OF PLAYS

The works of Shakespeare can be divided into three broad categories , the plays, the sonnets, and the poems. The plays are further divided into three categories

The Comedies

The Histories and

The Tragedies

In total Shakespeare wrote 37 plays , two long poems and 154 sonnets.

The Comedies

All's Well That Ends Well, As You Like It, Comedy of Errors, Love's Labour's Lost, Measure for Measure, The Merchant of Venice, Merry Wives of Windsor, A Midsummer Night's Dream, Much Ado about Nothing, Taming of the Shrew, The Tempest, Twelfth Night, Two Gentlemen of Verona, and Winter's Tale.

The Histories and The Tragedies

Julius Caesar, Antony and Cleopatra, Coriolanus , King John, Richard II, Henry IV Parts Iand II, Henry V, Henry VI Parts I, II and III, Richard III and Henry VIII. Coriolanus, Hamlet, King Lear, Macbeth, Othello, Romeo and Juliet, Timon of Athens, and Titus Andronicus. The first recorded works of Shakespeare are Richard III and the three parts of Henry VI.

The two long poems are Venus and Adonis and The Rape of Lucrece, It is believed besides these he penned two other long poems, The Phoenix and the Turtle and A Lover's Complaint.

9.3 JULIUS CAESAR: INTRODUCTION

Julius Caesar is one of the very popular plays of Shakespeare . It is acted and filmed many a time in the modern period .

9.3.1 Sources of the play

Shakespeare mainly derives the plot of Julius Caesar from Sir Thomas North's translation of Plutarch's The Lives of the Noble Grecians and Romans.

9.3.2 Date of Composition

Shakespeare never worried about the preservation of his plays. As result today it is very difficult to give exact dates of composition and publication of his writings just like his date of birth. According to tradition Julius Caesar was first published in the First Folio edition of 1623 seven years after the death of Shakespeare. It was believed first staged in the Globe theatre in 1599. Swiss traveler Thomas Platter's account provides an evidence for this assumption.

9.4 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND FOR THE PLAY

Julius Caesar is a historical play. Julius Caesar is one of the greatest and fascinating figures of Europe. He was born probably in 102 B.C. in Rome. As young man he joined the party of a leader by name Marius during the civil war. But the party was defeated and Caesar was proscribed. But after some years he came back and ascertained his position as a popular and powerful leader. With two of his friends Pompey and Crassus, he enjoyed the power in Rome. He became Governor of Gaul he proved his mettle. His daughter, Julia was married to Pompey. Over the years Julius and Crassus died. Caesar and Pompey became rivals. Caesar defeated Pompey and entered Egypt where he had a love affair with Cleopatra. He returned to Rome and practically became a dictator. However he was an able administrator and reformer. He reformed the Roman calendar to the present day Georgian calendar. People admired him but his enemies conspired a plot against him under Junius Brutus , a Noble man of Rome.The conspirators stabbed him to death on 15th March, 44 B.C. in the Senate of Rome. In Shakespeare's play Junius Brutus is none other than MarcusBrutus.

This life of Caesar was taken by Shakespeare for his play making use of North's translation of Plutarch's The Lives of the Noble Grecians and Romans.

9.5 THE TITLE OF THE PLAY

The play is named after Julius Caesar. But surprisingly Caesar appears only in three scenes out of the eighteen scenes of the play. He is seen in the first half of the play. In the first scene of third act he was assassinated. But, Brutus the friend of Caesar and the chief of the conspirators present throughout the play. His character is complex and more struggling than Caesar. On watching or reading the play one gets the doubt why can't be the play named after Brutus. All through the play suffers , acts and evokes sympathy and pity from all. The play is not just a conflict between two men and the defeat of one of them.

Brutus himself says" we all stand up against the spirit of Caesar ". The Caesar who appears in the play is physically weak and arrogant. He has falling sickness and deaf ear. Of course these are the traits assigned to Caesar by Shakespeare .the Roman people worship him. But he stands for dictatorship. So the conflict in the play is not just between two individuals but two principles-democracy and dictatorship. But actually republicanism or democracy was dead in Rome as it was evident from the history. But the enemies of Caesar failed to notice the fact.

The conspirators under the leadership of Brutus assassinate Caesar but they only kill the body but not the spirit of Caesar. It is clear the very next moment of the killing of Caesar.

Antony announces the spirit of Caesar avenges the death. The whole Rome enters a civil war. The Ghost of Caesar appears to Brutus thus begins to avenge the death of Caesar. By the end of the play almost all conspirators realize that the spirit of Caesar took revenge on them. Thus the dead Caesar proves more powerful than Caesar alive. Through Roman mob, Antony and Octavius Caesar , Julius Caesar was alive all through the pay. Hence the play is named after is evident. Shakespeare's genius is once again has its true witness in giving the title Julius Caesar to the play.

9.6 CHARACTERS OF THE PLAY

Julius Caesar

He is the protagonist of the play. The character is of psychological interest. Caesar was a brave warrior and a skillful leader. As a general too he was great. His victories of Gaul and Spain won him the hearts of the Romans. It increased further with the defeat and death of Pompey. He does not treat even his wife Calphurnia . He is known for his ambition and arrogance.

Marcus Brutus

Brutus is the soul and spirit behind all the conspirators. He is a selfless soul. The most outstanding character of the play. He is equally respected by friends and foes. He is a very good friend of Caesar. He lived and died as a noble man. His soul aim is to make Romans lead a life of liberty. He is a voracious reader . He has all the noble qualities that can be expected of a gentle person. His treatment of his wife Portia is comparable with that of Caesar's treatment of Calphurnia.

Mark Antony

Antony is the friend of Julius Caesar who is ready to do anything if ordered by Caesar. He is the general of army. He is given to enjoyment .however when things demand he rises to the occasion. He is instrumental in diverting the attention of Roman mob towards dead Caesar. His oration in the forum scene is one of the remarkable speeches of the world. Historically too he is a great general of Caesar.

Octavius Caesar

He is the nephew of Julius Caesar .He appears in the play only after the death of Caesar. Actually he has been invited by Caesar to Rome before his death. He joins hands with Antony and Lepidus to avenge the death of Caesar and to rule the country thus becoming a member of the Triumvirs.

Lepidus

Lepidus is a triumvir. He comes to power after the death of Caesar along with Antony and Octavius. He prepares the list of persons to die during the war. Antony uses him as his property. According to Antony he has no ideas of his own.

Cassius

Cassius is one of the important characters in the play. He is jealous of Caesar and feels Caesar is inferior to him. He influences both Caesar and Brutus. He initiates the conspiracy. However he willingly takes the role of a follower when Brutus joins the conspirators. His aim

is to bring down Caesar and prepares to do anything for it. He ends the life in a tragic way because of his excessive love for Brutus.

Casca

Casca is one of the minor characters that interests the readers. He is one of the conspirators. He appears sour and cynical but he is loyal and and a man of strong feelings. Antony calls him envious Casca. He not a wicked man and at the same time not a good person.

Trebonius, Decius Brutus, Cimber and **Cinna**

They are all the conspirators against Caesar.

Ligarius

He is another conspirator against Caesar. Caesar rebukes him for praising Pompey. So he develops grudge against him. In spite of his ill health he attends the senate to exercise the conspiracy. He is a follower to Brutus just the Antony is to Caesar willing to do anything for Brutus.

Flavius and **Marullus**

These two are tribunes of Rome. They are the sympathizers of Pompey. They are seen in the first act .

Cinna, the Poet

Cinna , the poet is a poor and first victim of the stupid ferocity of the Roman mob after Antony's speech. He has had ominous dreams. He desires to stay at home. However unseen power forces him to come and meet his death.

Soothsayer

He warns Caesar to be aware of ides of March which Caesar considers as the words of a mad fellow.

Artemidorus

He is a man comes to know of the conspiracy. He tries to warn Caesar on the ides of March by giving a memorandum to Caesar .but Caesar postpones the reading of it and thus meets his death.

Lucilius, Titinius,Messala , Young Cato and **Voluminus**

They are all friends to Brutus and Cassius.

Varro, Clitus, Claudius, Strato, Lucius and **Dardanius**

All these are servants to Brutus.

Pindarus

He is a servant to Cassius.

Calphurnia

She is the wife of Caesar. Her relationship with Caesar is comparable with Portia relationship with Brutus. She is childless. Caesar want blame her for it publicly. So he asks Antony to touch her during the Lupercal festival. She is a devoted wife. The night before Caesar's assassination she sees strange and supernatural sights. So she tries to stop him from going to the senate.

Portia

Portia is a devoted wife of Brutus. As wife Brutus she feels it is her responsibility to share the pains of her husband. So when Brutus is in disturbed mind she tries to find out the reason for it . She is the daughter of Cato and assures Brutus that she can face any trouble boldly. To prove this , she even wounds herself at her thigh. After the failure of conspirators , she commits suicide unable to bear the separation from her husband. It's a death blow to Brutus.

9.7 SUMMARY

In this lesson biographical details of Shakespeare are known. North 's translation of Plutarch's Lives is the source for the play *Julius Caesar* . The play was first enacted in the Globe in 1599 and published in 1623 First Folio edition. The play is named after Julius Caesar though Caesar is seen in just three scenes. The dead Caesar is more powerful than the Caesar alive. Through Antony, Octavius and Roman mob Caesar alive all through the play. Thus the title is apt to the play.

9.8 SELF-ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

What are the biographical details of Shakespeare ?

What are the great tragedies of Shakespeare ?

Why does Shakespeare come away form Stratford upon Avon?

What are the sources of Julius Caesar?

Why is the play called *Julius Caesar*, though he has a small role in the play?

9.9 REFERENCE BOOKS

Twentieth Century Interpretations of Julius Caesar edited by Leonard F. Dean

Julius Caesar – A Case Book edited by Peter Ure

The Imperial Theme: Wilson Knight

Political Characters of Shakespeare : John Palmer

The Problem Plays of Shakespeare : Ernest Schanzer

Further Explorations : L.C. Knights

Discussion Shakespeare's Roman Plays edited by Maurice Charney

LESSON-10

JULIUS CAESAR

THE MAKING AND THE ARTISTIC BASICS OF JULIUS CAESAR

Objective of the Lesson

To familiarize students with the making and the artistic basics of *Julius Caesar*

Structure of the Lesson:

10.1 THE THEMES OF JULIUS CAESAR

Theme: Definition(s): "A central idea in a piece of writing or other work of art." A theme is comparable to 'heart' of the text since every incident more or less moves around it. In fact, the remains as a controlling factor for the text.

10.1.1.: **Destiny vs. Individual Volition**

Julius Caesar raises many questions about the force of fate in life versus the capacity for free will. Cassius refuses to accept Caesar's rising power and deems a belief in fate to be nothing more than a form of passivity or cowardice. He says to Brutus: "Men at sometime were masters of their fates. / The fault, dear Brutus, is not in our stars, / But in ourselves, that we are underlings" (I.ii.140–142). Cassius urges a return to a more noble, self-possessed attitude toward life, blaming his and Brutus's submissive stance not on a predestined plan but on their failure to assert themselves.

Ultimately, the play seems to support a philosophy in which fate and freedom maintain a delicate coexistence. Thus Caesar declares: "It seems to me most strange that men should fear, / Seeing that death, a necessary end, / Will come when it will come" (II.ii.35–37). In other words, Caesar recognizes that certain events lie beyond human control; to crouch in fear of them is to enter a paralysis equal to, if not worse than, death. It is to surrender any capacity for freedom and agency that one might actually possess. Indeed, perhaps to face death head-on, to die bravely and honorably, is Caesar's best course: in the end, Brutus interprets his and Cassius's defeat as the work of Caesar's ghost—not just his apparition, but

also the force of the people's devotion to him, the strong legacy of a man who refused any fear of fate and, in his disregard of fate, seems to have transcended it.

10.1.2. Collective Self vs Individual Self

Much of the play's tragedy stems from the characters' neglect of private feelings and loyalties in favor of what they believe to be the public good. Similarly, characters confuse their private selves with their public selves, hardening and dehumanizing themselves or transforming themselves into ruthless political machines. Brutus rebuffs his wife, Portia, when she pleads with him to confide in her; believing himself to be acting on the people's will, he forges ahead with the murder of Caesar, despite their close friendship. Brutus puts aside his personal loyalties and shuns thoughts of Caesar the man, his friend; instead, he acts on what he believes to be the public's wishes and kills Caesar the leader, the imminent dictator. Cassius can be seen as a man who has gone to the extreme in cultivating his public persona. Caesar, describing his distrust of Cassius, tells Antony that the problem with Cassius is his lack of a private life—his seeming refusal to acknowledge his own sensibilities or to nurture his own spirit. Such a man, Caesar fears, will let nothing interfere with his ambition. Indeed, Cassius lacks all sense of personal honor and shows himself to be a ruthless schemer.

Ultimately, neglecting private sentiments to follow public concerns brings Caesar to his death. Although Caesar does briefly agree to stay home from the Senate in order to please Calpurnia, who has dreamed of his murder, he gives way to ambition when Decius tells him that the senators plan to offer him the crown. -Caesar's public self again takes precedence. Tragically, he no longer sees the difference between his omnipotent, immortal public image and his vulnerable human body. Just preceding his death, Caesar refuses Artemidorus's pleas to speak with him, saying that he gives last priority to his most personal concerns. He thus endangers himself by believing that the strength of his public self will protect his private self.

10.1.3. Appearances vs. Self-delusions

Much of the play deals with the characters' failures to interpret correctly the omens that they encounter. As Cicero says, "Men may construe things after their fashion, / Clean from the purpose of the things themselves" (I.iii.34–35). Thus, the night preceding Caesar's appearance at the Senate is full of portents, but no one reads them accurately: Cassius takes them to signify the danger that Caesar's impending coronation would bring to the state, when, if anything, they warn of the destruction that Cassius himself threatens. There are calculated misreadings as well: Cassius manipulates Brutus into joining the conspiracy by means of forged letters, knowing that Brutus's trusting nature will cause him to accept the letters as authentic pleas from the Roman people.

The circumstances of Cassius's death represent another instance of misinterpretation. Pindarus's erroneous conclusion that Titinius has been captured by the enemy, when in fact Titinius has reunited with friendly forces, is the piece of misinformation that prompts Cassius to seek death. Thus, in the world of politics portrayed in *Julius Caesar,* the inability to read people and events leads to downfall; conversely, the ability to do so is the key to survival. With so much ambition and rivalry, the ability to gauge the public's opinion as well as the resentment or loyalty of one's fellow politicians can guide one to success. Antony proves masterful at recognizing his situation, and his accurate reading of the crowd's emotions during his funeral oration for Caesar allows him to win the masses over to his side.

10.1.4. Political Stubbornness vs Political Diplomacy

Both Brutus and Caesar are stubborn, rather inflexible people who ultimately suffer fatally for it. In the play's aggressive political landscape, individuals succeed through adaptability, bargaining, and compromise. Brutus's rigid though honorable ideals leave him open for manipulation by Cassius. He believes so thoroughly in the purpose of the assassination that he does not perceive the need for excessive political maneuvering to justify the murder. Equally resolute, Caesar prides himself on his steadfastness; yet this constancy helps bring about his death, as he refuses to heed ill omens and goes willingly to the Senate, into the hands of his murderers.

Antony proves perhaps the most adaptable of all of the politicians: while his speech to the Roman citizens centers on Caesar's generosity toward each citizen, he later searches for ways to turn these funds into cash in order to raise an army against Brutus and Cassius. Although he gains power by offering to honor Caesar's will and provide the citizens their rightful money, it becomes clear that ethical concerns will not prevent him from using the funds in a more politically expedient manner. Antony is a successful politician—yet the question of morality remains. There seems to be no way to reconcile firm moral principles with success in politics in Shakespeare's rendition of ancient Rome; thus each character struggles toward a different solution.

10.2 THE MOTIFS OF JULIUS CAESAR

Definition for Motif: "… a recurring subject, theme, idea, etc., especially in a literary, artistic, or musical work." A motif is used to reinforce unity in a literary text and/or any artistic piece.

Forecasting for Readers/Audiences through Omens and Portents

Throughout the play, omens and portents manifest themselves, each serving to crystallize the larger themes of fate and misinterpretation of signs. Until Caesar's death, each time an omen or nightmare is reported, the audience is reminded of Caesar's impending demise. The audience wonders whether these portents simply announce what is fated to occur or whether they serve as warnings for what might occur if the characters do not take active steps to change their behavior. Whether or not individuals can affect their destinies, characters repeatedly fail to interpret the omens correctly. In a larger sense, the omens in *Julius Caesar* thus imply the dangers of failing to perceive and analyze the details of one's world.

Letters

The motif of letters represents an interesting counterpart to the force of oral rhetoric in the play. Oral rhetoric depends upon a direct, dialogic interaction between speaker and audience: depending on how the listeners respond to a certain statement, the orator can alter his or her speech and intonations accordingly. In contrast, the power of a written letter depends more fully on the addressee; whereas an orator must read the emotions of the crowd, the act of reading is undertaken solely by the recipient of the letter. Thus, when Brutus receives the forged letter from Cassius in Act II, scene i, the letter has an effect because Brutus allows it to do so; it is he who grants it its full power. In contrast, Caesar refuses to read the letter that Artemidorus tries to hand him in Act III, scene i, as he is heading to the Senate. Predisposed

to ignore personal affairs, Caesar denies the letter any reading at all and thus negates the potential power of the words written inside.

10.3 THE PLOT OF JULIUS CAESAR

Plot: A Definition: "The main events of a play, novel, film, or similar work, devised and presented by the writer as an interrelated sequence."

Two tribunes, Flavius and Murellus, find scores of Roman citizens wandering the streets, neglecting their work in order to watch Julius Caesar's triumphal parade: Caesar has defeated the sons of the deceased Roman general Pompey, his archrival, in battle. The tribunes scold the citizens for abandoning their duties and remove decorations from Caesar's statues. Caesar enters with his entourage, including the military and political figures Brutus, Cassius, and Antony. A Soothsayer calls out to Caesar to "beware the Ides of March," but Caesar ignores him and proceeds with his victory celebration (I.ii.19, I.ii.25).

Cassius and Brutus, both longtime intimates of Caesar and each other, converse. Cassius tells Brutus that he has seemed distant lately; Brutus replies that he has been at war with himself. Cassius states that he wishes Brutus could see himself as others see him, for then Brutus would realize how honored and respected he is. Brutus says that he fears that the people want Caesar to become king, which would overturn the republic. Cassius concurs that Caesar is treated like a god though he is merely a man, no better than Brutus or Cassius. Cassius recalls incidents of Caesar's physical weakness and marvels that this fallible man has become so powerful. He blames his and Brutus's lack of will for allowing Caesar's rise to power: surely the rise of such a man cannot be the work of fate. Brutus considers Cassius's words as Caesar returns. Upon seeing Cassius, Caesar tells Antony that he deeply distrusts Cassius.

Caesar departs, and another politician, Casca, tells Brutus and Cassius that, during the celebration, Antony offered the crown to Caesar three times and the people cheered, but Caesar refused it each time. He reports that Caesar then fell to the ground and had some kind of seizure before the crowd; his demonstration of weakness, however, did not alter the plebeians' devotion to him. Brutus goes home to consider Cassius's words regarding Caesar's poor qualifications to rule, while Cassius hatches a plot to draw Brutus into a conspiracy against Caesar.

That night, Rome is plagued with violent weather and a variety of bad omens and portents. Brutus finds letters in his house apparently written by Roman citizens worried that Caesar has become too powerful. The letters have in fact been forged and planted by Cassius, who knows that if Brutus believes it is the people's will, he will support a plot to remove Caesar from power. A committed supporter of the republic, Brutus fears the possibility of a dictator-led empire, worrying that the populace would lose its voice. Cassius arrives at Brutus's home with his conspirators, and Brutus, who has already been won over by the letters, takes control of the meeting. The men agree to lure Caesar from his house and kill him. Cassius wants to kill Antony too, for Antony will surely try to hinder their plans, but Brutus disagrees, believing that too many deaths will render their plot too bloody and dishonor them. Having agreed to spare Antony, the conspirators depart. Portia, Brutus's wife, observes that Brutus appears preoccupied. She pleads with him to confide in her, but he rebuffs her.

Caesar prepares to go to the Senate. His wife, Calpurnia, begs him not to go, describing recent nightmares she has had in which a statue of Caesar streamed with blood and smiling men bathed their hands in the blood. Caesar refuses to yield to fear and insists on going about his daily business. Finally, Calpurnia convinces him to stay home—if not out of caution, then as a favor to her. But Decius, one of the conspirators, then arrives and convinces Caesar that Calpurnia has misinterpreted her dreams and the recent omens. Caesar departs for the Senate in the company of the conspirators.

As Caesar proceeds through the streets toward the Senate, the Soothsayer again tries but fails to get his attention. The citizen Artemidorus hands him a letter warning him about the conspirators, but Caesar refuses to read it, saying that his closest personal concerns are his last priority. At the Senate, the conspirators speak to Caesar, bowing at his feet and encircling him. One by one, they stab him to death. When Caesar sees his dear friend Brutus among his murderers, he gives up his struggle and dies.

The murderers bathe their hands and swords in Caesar's blood, thus bringing Calpurnia's premonition to fruition. Antony, having been led away on a false pretext, returns and pledges allegiance to Brutus but weeps over Caesar's body. He shakes hands with the conspirators, thus marking them all as guilty while appearing to make a gesture of conciliation. When Antony asks why they killed Caesar, Brutus replies that he will explain their purpose in a funeral oration. Antony asks to be allowed to speak over the body as well; Brutus grants his permission, though Cassius remains suspicious of Antony. The conspirators depart, and Antony, alone now, swears that Caesar's death shall be avenged.

Brutus and Cassius go to the Forum to speak to the public. Cassius exits to address another part of the crowd. Brutus declares to the masses that though he loved Caesar, he loves Rome more, and Caesar's ambition posed a danger to Roman liberty. The speech placates the crowd. Antony appears with Caesar's body, and Brutus departs after turning the pulpit over to Antony. Repeatedly referring to Brutus as "an honorable man," Antony's speech becomes increasingly sarcastic; questioning the claims that Brutus made in his speech that Caesar acted only out of ambition, Antony points out that Caesar brought much wealth and glory to Rome, and three times turned down offers of the crown. Antony then produces Caesar's will but announces that he will not read it for it would upset the people inordinately. The crowd nevertheless begs him to read the will, so he descends from the pulpit to stand next to Caesar's body. He describes Caesar's horrible death and shows Caesar's wounded body to the crowd. He then reads Caesar's will, which bequeaths a sum of money to every citizen and orders that his private gardens be made public. The crowd becomes enraged that this generous man lies dead; calling Brutus and Cassius traitors, the masses set off to drive them from the city.

Meanwhile, Caesar's adopted son and appointed successor, Octavius, arrives in Rome and forms a three-person coalition with Antony and Lepidus. They prepare to fight Cassius and Brutus, who have been driven into exile and are raising armies outside the city. At the conspirators' camp, Brutus and Cassius have a heated argument regarding matters of money and honor, but they ultimately reconcile. Brutus reveals that he is sick with grief, for in his absence Portia has killed herself. The two continue to prepare for battle with Antony and Octavius. That night, the Ghost of Caesar appears to Brutus, announcing that Brutus will meet him again on the battlefield.

Octavius and Antony march their army toward Brutus and Cassius. Antony tells Octavius where to attack, but Octavius says that he will make his own orders; he is already asserting his authority as the heir of Caesar and the next ruler of Rome. The opposing generals meet on the battlefield and exchange insults before beginning combat.
Cassius witnesses his own men fleeing and hears that Brutus's men are not performing effectively. Cassius sends one of his men, Pindarus, to see how matters are progressing. From afar, Pindarus sees one of their leaders, Cassius's best friend, Titinius, being surrounded by cheering troops and concludes that he has been captured. Cassius despairs and orders Pindarus to kill him with his own sword. He dies proclaiming that Caesar is avenged. Titinius himself then arrives—the men encircling him were actually his comrades, cheering a victory he had earned. Titinius sees Cassius's corpse and, mourning the death of his friend, kills himself.

Brutus learns of the deaths of Cassius and Titinius with a heavy heart, and prepares to take on the Romans again. When his army loses, doom appears imminent. Brutus asks one of his men to hold his sword while he impales himself on it. Finally, Caesar can rest satisfied, he says as he dies. Octavius and Antony arrive. Antony speaks over Brutus's body, calling him the noblest Roman of all. While the other conspirators acted out of envy and ambition, he observes, Brutus genuinely believed that he acted for the benefit of Rome. Octavius orders that Brutus be buried in the most honorable way. The men then depart to celebrate their victory.

10.4 THE USE OF RHETORIC FOR ARTISTIC-ENDS IN *JULIUS CAESAR:* SUMMARY OF A FEW IMPORTANT SCENES

Julius Caesar gives detailed consideration to the relationship between rhetoric and power. The ability to make things happen by words alone is the most powerful type of authority. Early in the play, it is established that Caesar has this type of absolute authority: "When Caesar says 'Do this,' it is performed," says Antony, who attaches a similar weight to Octavius's words toward the end of the play (I.ii.12). Words also serve to move hearts and minds, as Act III evidences. Antony cleverly convinces the conspirators of his desire to side with them: "Let each man render me with his bloody hand" (III.i.185). Under the guise of a gesture of friendship, Antony actually marks the conspirators for vengeance. In the Forum, Brutus speaks to the crowd and appeals to its love of liberty in order to justify the killing of Caesar. He also makes ample reference to the honor in which he is generally esteemed so as to validate further his explanation of the deed. Antony likewise wins the crowd's favor, using persuasive rhetoric to whip the masses into a frenzy so great that they don't even realize the fickleness of their favor.

Act-I and Scene-ii:

Caesar enters a public square with Antony, Calpurnia, Portia, Decius, Cicero, Brutus, Cassius, Casca, and a Soothsayer; he is followed by a throng of citizens and then by Flavius and Murellus. Antony, dressed to celebrate the feast day, readies himself for a ceremonial run through the city. Caesar urges him to touch Calpurnia, Caesar's wife, as he runs, since Roman superstition holds that the touch of a ceremonial runner will cure barrenness. Antony agrees, declaring that whatever Caesar says is certain to become fact.

The Soothsayer calls out from the crowd to Caesar, telling him to beware the Ides of March. (The "ides" refers to the fifteenth day of March, May, July, and October and the thirteenth day of the other months in the ancient Roman calendar.) Caesar pauses and asks the man to come forward; the Soothsayer repeats himself. Caesar ultimately dismisses the warning, and the procession departs. Brutus and Cassius remain. Cassius asks Brutus why he has not seemed himself lately. Brutus replies that he has been quiet because he has been plagued with conflicting thoughts. But he assures Cassius that even though his mind is at war with itself, he will not let his inner turmoil affect his friendships.

Cassius and Brutus speak together. Cassius asks Brutus if Brutus can see his own face; Brutus replies that he cannot. Cassius then declares that Brutus is unable to see what everyone else does, namely, that Brutus is widely respected. Noting that no mirror could reveal Brutus's worthiness to himself urges Antony to come to his right side—he is deaf in his left ear—and tell him what he thinks of Cassius. Shortly, Caesar and his train depart, Cassius offers to serve as a human mirror so that Brutus may discover himself and conceive of himself in new ways.

Brutus hears shouting and says that he fears that the people want to make Caesar their king. When Cassius asks, Brutus affirms that he would rather that Caesar not assume the position. Brutus adds that he loves Caesar but that he also loves honor, and that he loves honor even more than he fears death. Cassius replies that he, too, recoils at the thought of kneeling in awe before someone whom he does not consider his superior, and declares, "I was born as free as Caesar, so were you. / We both have fed as well, and we can both / Endure the winter's cold as well as he" (I.ii.99–101). Cassius recalls a windy day when he and Caesar stood on the banks of the Tiber River, and Caesar dared him to swim to a distant point. They raced through the water, but Caesar became weak and asked Cassius to save him. Cassius had to drag him from the water. Cassius also recounts an episode when Caesar had a fever in Spain and experienced a seizure. Cassius marvels to think that a man with such a feeble constitution should now stand at the head of the civilized world.

Caesar stands like a Colossus over the world, Cassius continues, while Cassius and Brutus creep about under his legs. He tells Brutus that they owe their underling status not to fate but to their own failure to take action. He questions the difference between the name "Caesar" and the name "Brutus": why should Caesar's name be more celebrated than Brutus's when, spoken together, the names sound equally pleasing and thus suggest that the men should hold equal power? He wonders in what sort of age they are living when one man can tower over the rest of the population. Brutus responds that he will consider Cassius's words. Although unwilling to be further persuaded, he admits that he would rather not be a citizen of Rome in such strange times as the present.

Meanwhile, Caesar and his train return. Caesar sees Cassius and comments to Antony that Cassius looks like a man who thinks too much; such men are dangerous, he adds. Antony tells Caesar not to worry, but Caesar replies that he prefers to avoid Cassius: Cassius reads too much and finds no enjoyment in plays or music—such men are never at ease while someone greater than themselves holds the reins of power. Caesar.

Act-III: Scene-i:

Artemidorus and the Soothsayer await Caesar in the street. Caesar enters with Brutus, Cassius, Casca, Decius, Metellus, Trebonius, Cinna, Ligarius, Antony, and other senators.

Artemidorus approaches with his letter, saying that its contents are a matter of closest concern for Caesar. Caesar responds, "What touches us ourself shall be last served"—that is, his personal concerns are his last priority (III.i.8). Artemidorus tells him to read it instantly, but Caesar dismisses him as crazy.

The group enters the Senate, and Cassius worries that the assassination plot has been discovered. Trebonius draws Antony away from the Senate room. Metellus approaches Caesar to request that his brother, Publius Cimber, who has been banished from Rome, be granted permission to return. Caesar answers that since Publius was banished by lawful decree, there is not just cause for absolving his guilt. Brutus and Cassius kneel at Caesar's feet and repeat Metellus's plea; Caesar answers that he will not change his mind now, declaring himself as "constant as the Northern Star" (III.i.60). When Cinna comes forward and kneels to plead further, Caesar adds another comparison, suggesting that they might as well hope to "lift up Olympus," the mountain where the gods were believed to dwell, as to sway Caesar in his convictions (III.i.74).

Decius and Ligarius, followed by Casca, come forward to kneel at Caesar's feet. Casca stabs Caesar first, and the others quickly follow, ending with Brutus. Recognizing that Brutus, too, has joined with the conspirators, Caesar speaks his last words: "*Et tu, Brute?*—Then fall Caesar" (III.i.76). He then yields and dies. The conspirators proclaim the triumph of liberty, and many exit in a tumult, including Lepidus and Artemidorus. Trebonius enters to announce that Antony has fled.

Brutus tells the conspirators that they have acted as friends to Caesar by shortening the time that he would have spent fearing death. He urges them to bend down and bathe their hands in Caesar's blood, then walk to the marketplace (the Roman Forum) with their bloodied swords to proclaim peace, freedom, and liberty. Cassius agrees, declaring that the scene they now enact will be repeated time and again in the ages to come as a commemorative ritual.

Antony's servant enters with a message: Antony, having learned of Caesar's death, sends word that he loved Caesar but will now vow to serve Brutus if Brutus promises not to punish him for his past allegiance. Brutus says that he will not harm Antony and sends the servant to bid him come. Brutus remarks to Cassius that Antony will surely be an ally now, but Cassius replies that he still has misgivings.

Antony enters and sees Caesar's corpse. He marvels how a man so great in deed and reputation could end as such a small and pathetic body. He tells the conspirators that if they mean to kill him as well, they should do it at once, for there would be no better place to die than beside Caesar. Brutus tells Antony not to beg for death, saying that although their hands appear bloody, their hearts have been, and continue to be, full of pity; although they must appear to him now as having acted in cruelty, their actual motives stemmed from sympathy and love for the Roman populace. Brutus tells Antony to wait until the conspirators have calmed the multitude; then they will explain fully why they have killed Caesar. Antony says he does not doubt their wisdom and shakes each of their bloody hands, staining the not-yet-bloodied hands of Trebonius, who has returned from leading Antony astray, in the process.

10.5 SELF-ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

1. What is a theme? Comment on the political significance of themes in Julius Caesar.
2. Explain the intricacies in the plot of *Julius Caesar.*
3. What is a motif? Identify and comment on the two major motifs of the play.

4. Elucidate the artistic use of rhetoric towards the political intrigues in the play.

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LESSON - 11

JULIUS CAESAR

SOCIO- CULTURAL HISTORICAL AND POLITICO-ETHICAL ASPECTS

Objective of the Lesson

To probe into the socio-historical and politico-ethical aspects in *Julius Caesar* in general

Structure of the Lesson:

11.1 THE HISTORICAL CONTEXT OF JULIUS CAESAR

Julius Caesar takes place in ancient Rome in 44 b.c., when Rome was the center of an empire stretching from Britain to North Africa and from Persia to Spain. Yet even as the empire grew stronger, so, too, did the force of the dangers threatening its existence: Rome suffered from constant infighting between ambitious military leaders and the far weaker senators to whom they supposedly owed allegiance. The empire also suffered from a sharp division between citizens, who were represented in the senate, and the increasingly underrepresented plebeian masses. A succession of men aspired to become the absolute ruler of Rome, but only Julius Caesar seemed likely to achieve this status. Those citizens who favored more democratic rule feared that Caesar's power would lead to the enslavement of Roman citizens by one of their own. Therefore, a group of conspirators came together and assassinated Caesar. The assassination, however, failed to put an end to the power struggles dividing the empire, and civil war erupted shortly thereafter. The plot of Shakespeare's play includes the events leading up to the assassination of Caesar as well as much of the subsequent war, in which the deaths of the leading conspirators constituted a sort of revenge for the assassination.

Shakespeare's contemporaries well versed in ancient Greek and Roman history, would very likely have detected parallels between *Julius Caesar'*s portrayal of the shift from republican to imperial Rome and the Elizabethan era's trend toward consolidated monarchal power. In 1599, when the play was first performed, Queen Elizabeth I had sat on the throne for nearly forty years, enlarging her power at the expense of the aristocracy and the House of

Commons. As she was then sixty-six years old, her reign seemed likely to end soon, yet she lacked any heirs (as did Julius Caesar). Many feared that her death would plunge England into the kind of chaos that had plagued England during the fifteenth-century Wars of the Roses. In an age when censorship would have limited direct commentary on these worries, Shakespeare could nevertheless use the story of Caesar to comment on the political situation of his day.

As his chief source in writing *Julius Caesar,* Shakespeare probably used Thomas North's translation of Plutarch's Lives of the Noble Greeks and Romans, written in the first century a.d. Plutarch, who believed that history was propelled by the achievements of great men, saw the role of the biographer as inseparable from the role of the historian. Shakespeare followed Plutarch's lead by emphasizing how the actions of the leaders of Roman society, rather than class conflicts or larger political movements, determined history. However, while Shakespeare does focus on these key political figures, he does not ignore that their power rests, to some degree, on the fickle favor of the populace.

Contemporary accounts tell us that *Julius Caesar,* Shakespeare's shortest play, was first performed in 1599. It was probably the first play performed in the Globe Theater, the playhouse that was erected around that time in order to accommodate Shakespeare's increasingly successful theater company. However, the first authoritative text of the play did not appear until the 1623 First Folio edition. The elaborate stage directions suggest that this text was derived from the company's promptbook rather than Shakespeare's manuscript.

11.2 THE POLITICAL SCENARIO OF *JULIUS CAESAR*: BRUTUS VS. ANTONY

In a classic Shakespeare play, Julius Caesar, Antony and Brutus go toe-to-toe at Caesar's funeral. Although, to Brutus's dismay, Antony's speech was better. To begin, Brutus's speech was formal and more directed to the Romans. In his introduction he starts with "Romans, countrymen, and lovers!" This was used to join everyone together and later help him justify Caesar's death. Throughout the text he describes Caesar as an "ambitious" man. Calling Caesar ambitious makes it seem that Caesar only thought about himself.

On the hand, Antony's speech was more personal and sarcastic. In contrary to Brutus he opens his speech with "Friends, Romans, countrymen…". This sets up his later statements of being Caesar's friend. Throughout his speech, he uses paralipsis and repetition to poke at Brutus but at the same time save Caesar's reputation.

Specifically, Antony repeatedly used the word "honorable" to describe Brutus. The effect of this was that he was contradicting Brutus's speech. A paralipsis is a device used to draw attention to something while claiming to pass it over. There are two examples of this one is "I come to bury Caesar, not to praise him." But throughout the speech he praises Caesar and what he as done. Another example is "I speak not to disprove what Brutus spoke, But here I am to speak what I do know.", although he talks good about Caesar and what he has done for Rome, in contrary to what Brutus said.

While comparing the two speeches I have found that Antony's speech was more persuasive. He made points to contrast what Brutus said in his speech about Caesar. He says that Brutus was wrong, and he put a new spin on it. For instance, Brutus says "Had you rather Caesar was living and die all slaves…" which was countered by Antony. It was countered by Antony saying that Caesar felt deeply for his people and that he was a very humble kindhearted person.

Throughout Antony's speech he uses devices, tactics, and his sympathy to his advantage. Brutus only had one point, which was that he killed Caesar for Rome, to stand on. All in all, Antony's speech was better and more persuasive than Brutus's.

In William Shakespeare's play, Julius Caesar, there is a major difference between two of the characters, Brutus and Mark Antony. Brutus was very honorable and Antony was very persuasive. When Brutus spoke at Caesar's funeral, he appealed to the people's logic and Antony spoke to the emotions of the people. Antony is very smart and uses his brain frequently during the play and Brutus is very naive about many of things. Brutus was very honorable and Antony was very persuasive. Brutus was very honorable in the way that he always told people the truth. Antony was persuasive in the way that he used people to get whatever he wanted. For example, Antony used Lepidus to seek revenge on all of the conspirators to take the blame for their deaths. In the speech at Caesar's funeral Brutus spoke to the people's logical mind and Antony spoke to the emotions of the people. Brutus' speech was very short and to the point and spoke to the logic of the people in the crowd. For example, Brutus spoke in a detached way about Caesar's death while Antony spoke to the emotions of the crowd by crying and talking about all the good things that Caesar did for Rome. Antony's intelligence was very apparent throughout the play and Brutus appeared to be naive about many things. Antony is smart in the way that he manipulates people to his own advantage. For example, Antony was manipulative in his emotional approach to persuade people to become outraged at Brutus. Brutus appears to be naive throughout the whole play because he believed everyone was as honorable as he. Brutus did not question what he was told, assuming it was always true. In conclusion, in William Shakespeare's play, Julius Caesar, there is a major difference between the two characters, Brutus and Mark Antony. The strongest contrast between the two characters appears to be their ability and inability to be both honorable and persuasive.

11.3 THE CLASS CONFLICT IN *JULIUS CAESAR*: THE NOBILITY VS. THE COMMONER

The play opens with a class conflict scene. Flavius and Murellus meet commoners walking the streets who are not working as they intend to watch Julius Caesar's parade. It furthermore presents the 'mob' and introduces the theme of not knowing one's right place. Flavius and Murellus, two tribunes, meet commoners in the streets of Rome. These common people, the cobbler and the carpenter, are celebrating Caesar's victory as well as the feast of Lupercal instead of working in their shops much to the discontent of Flavius and Murellus: " Hence: home you idle Creatures, get you home: Is this a holiday." 'Creatures' implies contempt as it can be understood as 'wretch'[5]. Flavius' contempt and negative attitude towards the commoners implies "their inferiority as base and vulgar." The tribunes demand to know why they are not working and why they are not wearing the sign of their profession which was a symbol of their trade. It was actually Elizabethan law to wear the clothes and carry the tools associated with the profession.

Flavius asks the carpenter to "Speake, what Trade art thou?" In order to understand why this is an insulting question and a contemptuous form of address, it is necessary to define 'thou' first. 'Thou' is a Pronoun of the second person, singular number, denoting the person spoken to; used in contrast with *you* to show variations in social or emotional status: (1) in addressing relatives or friends affectionately; (2) by masters or superiors when speaking good-humouredly or confidentially to servants or inferiors; (3) in contemptuous or angry speech; (4) in solemn style generally.

Caesar defeated the sons of his arch-rival Pompey and this is the reason for the celebration. Flavius and Murellus scold the commoners for neglecting their work and duties. Caesar enters with his entourage as well as Antony, Brutus and Cassius. Caesar was warned by a soothsayer to "beware the Ides of March" but Caesar celebrates his victory and pays no attention to the warning. Caesar's long-time friends, Brutus and Cassius, converse with each other. Brutus' mind has been unsettled as he is concerned and worried that the people of Rome want Caesar to become king as this would be the end of the republic. Cassius mentions Caesar's weak body. Caesar tells Antony about his distrust towards Cassius. When Caesar departs, Casca speaks to Brutus and Cassius and tells them that Caesar was offered the crown three times yet he refused it. Caesar had suffered a sudden feeling of faintness, which shows his weakness. Cassius plots to get Brutus to join his conspiracy against Caesar. Rome then experienced a change in weather as well as bad omens. Brutus finds a forged letter written by Cassius who hopes that it would persuade Brutus to support his plot as Brutus loves the people of Rome and its republic .Yet he fears that a dictator empire would not let the people voice anything. In this letter a fictitious Roman citizen is concerned that Caesar 's gain in power is dangerous. Cassius and his conspirators approach Brutus's house who is already won over by the forged letter. These conspirators then agree to kill Caesar. Cassius also plans to kill Antony, but Brutus disagrees and so he is spared. His death would have brought dishonour to them. Caesar prepares to go to the meeting at the senate, but his wife Calpurnia begs him not to attend the meeting. Nevertheless, he does not listen to her concerns, her nightmares and the bad omens. Calpurnia does succeed in convincing him to stay, but one of the conspirators appears and manages to persuade him to go. While they are on their way, the soothsayer again tries to talk to Caesar, but the attempt fails. A citizen hands Caesar a letter in which he warns him about the conspiracy, but Caesar does not read it. When he arrives at the senate, he is stabbed to death by each man present. As his close friend Brutus also stabbed Caesar he stops to struggle and dies. The conspirators bathe in his blood. Antony appears and weeps over his dead body, but pledges allegiance to Brutus. He shakes hands with the murderers and marks them as guilty. Being Caesar's true friend, he swears to take revenge. Brutus speaks to the crowd to explain Caesar's death. He states that he loved Caesar dearly, but his love for Rome was greater. The power of Caesar posed a threat to Rome and the liberty of its people. Antony enters with the dead body. His speech is sarcastic and questions Brutus' claims. He mentions that Caesar brought glory and wealth to Rome and was so humble to turn down the crown three times. Then he mentions the will, but refuses to read it out at first. After describing Caesar's cruel and malevolent death, he shows the wounds to the crowd and reads the will out. In this will, Caesar gives his money to the Roman people. The crowd is enraged about this murder of such a noble and great man and call Cassius and Brutus traitors. Octavius, Caesar's adopted son, arrives in Rome. Antony, Lepidus and Octavius prepare to fight Brutus and Cassius who are outside the city. The conspirators had been driven into exile and are getting their armies ready to attack. Brutus is mourning and in grief as his beloved wife Portia committed suicide during his absence. During the battle, Cassius's men flee and Brutus' men do not fight effectively. Pindarus is sent by Cassius to observe the progress. He observes how Cassius's best friend Titinus is surrounded by a cheering troop and jumps to the conclusion that he has been captured. Cassius orders Pindarus to kill him,Cassius, and so he dies without knowing that Titinus was actually surrounded by his own men, celebrating their victory. Titinus mourns his dead friend and also commits suicide. Brutus' army loses the battle and he kills himself. He was the only one of the conspirators who actually believed he was doing something good for the benefit of the empire and its people.

11.4 THE STATUS OF WOMEN IN ROMAN SOCIETY AS REVEALED THROUGH JULIUS CAESAR

The female characters of Shakespeare's Roman plays, in particular *Julius Caesar* exist in order to provide a contrast with his male characters, which represent Rome's values. Rome is constructed within the plays as a masculine society, ruled by all the traditional male values. In contrast, the women must submit to the patriarchal rules that confine them to the private or domestic sphere, denying them access to the public or political domain.

In Roman society, women 'held no public offices' (1) and were rarely permitted to speak in public, therefore they were only valued in the domestic sphere. Women's main function was as 'objects of exchange in marriage', which was crucial to the forming of political alliances and the continuity of families that 'formed the basis of the Roman power elite.' (2) Joplin described Roman women as having 'a double status as outsider within' because they were necessary for the continuity of public life despite their exclusion. (3) In *Julius Caesar*, unlike *Antony and Cleopatra*, there is no reference to the exchange of women, rather it is the men who 'engage each other's passions – as friends, as rivals, as Romans on the stage of history.' (4)

In *Julius Caesar*, the female characters of Calphurnia and Portia are vital to the play for their personal relationships with their husbands, Julius Caesar and Brutus. Despite their concern about their respective husbands' political careers, their opinions are ignored or rebelled against because they represent feminine values and are grounded in the domestic sphere. However, as well as their role in emphasising the gender differences, the women are also needed in order to provide further insight into the characters of Caesar and Brutus. Their interactions serve to emphasise the "feminine" traits of the men, and the ability of women to display "masculine" traits.

Brutus' interaction with Portia, in Act 2, Scene 1, illustrates that women are isolated from politics. Although Portia proves that she is perceptive and intelligent, Brutus is reluctant to confide in her about his deep-rooted fears. This is based on the widespread belief that women were 'untrained in reason' and had no control over their affections. (5) Portia is portrayed as the traditional nagging wife who worries about her husband, asking 'Is Brutus sick?' (6) Initially Brutus insists that he is 'not well in health, and that is all.' (7) However, Portia uses a convincing argument to persuade Brutus that she is worthy of his confidence. Portia uses emotional blackmail, begging Brutus to 'unfold to [her]' his secret because of his 'vows of love', (8) saying that if he refuses then 'Portia is Brutus' harlot, not his wife.' (9) Once Portia begins to sway Brutus, she uses a rational argument, pointing to her father, Cato, and her husband as proof of her strength and reputation. Portia challenges Brutus, asking him 'Think you I am no stronger than my sex, / Being so fathered, and so husbanded?' (10) However, she is merely defined in each instance by her relationship to a man. Finally, Portia provides 'strong proof' of her 'constancy', a typical masculine trait, in the 'voluntary wound' (11) in her thigh. The self-inflicted wound 'destabilizes the gendered concept of virtue' (12) – that Portia can perform such an act proves that it is learned behaviour, not a particular masculine trait. In response, Brutus promises that 'by and by thy bosom shall partake / The secrets of my heart.' (13)

In comparison, Brutus' meeting with Cassius, in Act 1, Scene 2, takes place in the public domain, 'within earshot of a huge crowd, preceded and followed by a public procession.' (14) Since it is a secretive conversation, this meeting lies on the 'border between public and private.' (15) Whereas Cassius encourages Brutus to act upon male values in order to achieve

political action, or a 'show / Of fire' (16), Portia represents Brutus' doubts or 'the "feminine" Other within him.' (17) In particular, it is Brutus' reluctance to murder Caesar that is evidence of his feminine side. In these two separate scenes, Shakespeare overtly contrasts male and female values. He deems female values as unreliability, 'associated with weakness, the non-rational and disorder.' (18) From this one can deduce that male values are reliability, strength (of mind and body), rationality and order.

If Act two, Scene one, provides evidence of Portia's constancy, this is reversed in Act two, Scene four:

O constancy, be strong upon my side, Set a huge mountain 'tween my heart and tongue! I have a man's mind, but a woman's might. How hard it is for women to keep counsel! (*Julius Caesar*, II, iv, ll.6-9)

This scene proves that the women in Rome cannot cope with political concerns. Shakespeare portrays Portia as weak and vulnerable, reinstating her 'into the category of woman.' (19) Unlike Brutus' heroic suicide, Shakespeare undermines Portia's death by attributing it to female insanity. In Shakespeare's account, Brutus states that 'she fell distract / And her attendants absent, swallowed fire', (20) thus depriving Portia of any dignity. In comparison, Plutarch's account, in his *Life of Marcus Brutus*, describes Portia's death as an honourable act. Although Portia attempts to enter the masculine, public world of Rome, her inability to cope leaves her firmly grounded within the feminine world.

11.5. THE MORAL INTRIGUES IN JULIUS CAESAR

In Julius Caesar not everything is made clear about the intentions and moral thoughts of each of the characters. Brutus's thoughts are the most clearly outlined; His thought process is made known through both monologues and discussions with other members of the play. For characters such as Cassius, Mark Antony, and Caesar Shakespeare only gives us glimpses of their reasoning and thought processes, leaving the audience to extrapolate based on their actions and previous character assumptions.

One of the most interesting cases of this is Cassius. Before Caesar is killed Cassius is portrayed as an almost malevolent character that, perhaps for the wrong reasons, is still pursuing an ultimately moral goal. After he plants the idea for the murder in Brutus's mind he soliloquizes, "Well, Brutus, thou art noble, yet I see/thy honourable mettle may be wrought/ from what it is disposed" (1.2.35-37). To a stoic the idea behind the pun on metal/mettle would be deeply disturbing. Cassius portrays Brutus's philosophy as so out of line with nature that it defies physics and can be transformed from one metal to another with limited meddling. Cassius is also culpable for changing a naturally noble metal (i.e. gold or silver) into one of less grandeur. His manipulation and unnaturalness would make any stoic shudder. Yet at the same time Cassius seems to have some good intent, "we will shake him [Caesar] or worse days endure" (1.2.319). He fails to use proper logic to reach his conclusions that he does, but he is still manipulating others to do what he thinks is right. In subsequent scenes Cassius is very reactionary, and quickly backs ideas with questionable logic. He proposes that, "it is not meet /Mark Antony, so well beloved of Caesar,/ Should outlive Caesar" (2.1.55-56). He claims that it is not fit that Antony should live after Caesar, yet what of Brutus, Caesar's angel? If this is not his true motive for wanting to kill Mark Antony then he is being quite manipulative amongst friends. In all, Cassius appears to be a stoic's nightmare.

As the play winds to a close however, Cassius and Brutus are portrayed as the closest of friends. Brutus, backed into a moral corner, needing funds but unwilling to take them from peasants, needs someone to do the necessary little evils that he isn't prepared to stoop to. Cassius and Brutus are portrayed quite differently in terms of their moral compasses: Brutus is depicted as extremely honourable, whereas Cassius's actions are manipulative and reactionary. How are these two minds vying for the same cause? Do Cassius's desires happen to align correctly with the correct and natural path that Brutus sought, or does Brutus's metal become tainted by Cassius's deception? These are some of the questions that arise from the ambiguity that Shakespeare has introduced, and represent the heart of the moral conflict of the play. Besides this soliloquy, Cassius's mind is hidden to the audience. As Cassius and Brutus face off in 4.2 their differences are startling:

B: I do not like your faults

C: A friendly eye could never see such faults

B: A flatterer would not, though they do appear

As huge and high as Olympus. (4.2.140-3)

While arguing in their tent, it seems that these two have finally faced the fact that they are incompatible, yet Cassius offers a monologue to Brutus stating how he is "aweary of the world" (4.2.146). This monologue is Cassius's redemption. He is so saddened that he could "weep/ [his] spirit from [his] eyes" (4.2.50-1). Of course we must take everything Cassius says with a grain of salt because of his deception, but we also cannot be dismissive of the fact that Brutus takes Cassius's offer to carve out his golden heart to heart. Brutus is no fool, and thus we must assume that Cassius's speech is heartfelt; this no longer appears to be the conniving, ambitious Cassius from before. Which of these two is the real Cassius? Does he put on a good show for Brutus, or does he truly believe that he is doing the right thing as is implied when he said earlier, "or worse days endure?" The brilliance of the thing is not that Cassius is good or bad, but, to put it simply, questionable. If we knew every thought that was going through his head we might be able to judge him more adequately, but, as in real life, we are only given snippets of his thoughts, and are able to observe his actions.

The result of this moral ambiguity is that Shakespeare is able to manipulate the audience into siding with different views as the play progresses. Towards the beginning Brutus is portrayed as a man worth following, whereas Mark Antony plays a sideline role. Brutus appears to be logical, upstanding, and have a firm grasp of the facts at hand concerning Caesar. Thus, I naturally gravitated toward believing that Caesar should die. After Mark Antony's speech however, I was more inclined to believe that killing Caesar was a bad idea, and that Brutus's logic was merely affected by Cassius's bad influence. Yet to me, the final turn comes toward the end of the play, when Cassius is portrayed in a much better and honourable light, and Mark Antony is shown picking which senators will be killed. What are we to believe now that both sides appear tainted?

Shakespeare, through Julius Caesar, shows us how actions looked at through different contexts can have different moral implications. From one point of view Brutus and Cassius committed murder, from another Mark Antony and the new triumvirate murdered many senators and by starting a civil war. Placing blame was never Shakespeare's goal. In fact, Shakespeare devised much of the characters thoughts for himself, and thus crafted the play to be morally ambiguous. What then are we to take from the play if not a better sense of right and wrong? The message lies less in right and wrong, and more in encouraging real world

ethical thought. How is one to balance what one believes with the beliefs of others? How does one balance being headstrong with being labeled a "flip-flopper?" Shakespeare does not seek to answer these questions through Julius Caesar, he seeks to poses them. In the arena of 16th century London, hangings were regular and actors were looked down upon as the scum of the earth. From Shakespeare's stand point, wouldn't it make sense to bring under scrutiny the ethics of the time? I just pose the question, I don't have the answer.

11.6. SELF-ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

1. Discuss the historical context of *Julius Caesar*.

2. Comment on the senatorial politics in *Julius Caesar*.

3. Explain the class conflict in *Julius Caesar*.

4. Elucidate the status of women in Roman times with reference to *Julius Caesar*.

5. Elaborate the moral intrigues of *Julius Caesar*.

11.7. REFERENCES

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LESSON - 12

THE ETERNAL AND THE CONTEMPORARY JULIUS CAESAR

Objective of the Lesson

To establish the Eternal and Contemporary Relevance of *Julius Caesar*

Structure of the Lesson:

12.1 THE CONTEMPORARY RELEVANCE OF JULIUS CAESAR

Julius Caesar takes place in Rome during around 100 BC. The question asked is how a play that takes place thousands of years relate to modern times. Although Julius Caesar and the other members of the play lived thousands of years ago, they still process the same human nature that we see today in our modern society. Each character in the play is symbolic to a type of person that is found competing for power. Many of the events that occurred in Julius Caesar have occurred throughout time, making many of the scenes and themes universal. The situation that Julius Caesar got himself into can still be a threat to people in power today.

Each of the four main characters, Brutus, Caesar, Antony, and Cassius all represented different personality types that can still be found on the campaign trail today. Caesar is shown as the popular man in power. The one that has the uneducated members of society backing him. There are many uneducated and easily swayed people in America, so he feels like he has tons of power and authority, but he is unable to fool the higher members, who will eventually ruin him one way or another. Brutus is the one that has been around for a long time, and has earned much respect from the people, but lacks the desire that Caesar has to try and receive all the power. His motives are more genuine, he is out there for the country's sake, and will go all out to try and protect it. His naive manner can also cause him to get in trouble just as Brutus did in Julius Caesar. Cassius is the model of the jealous man, who wants someone else's power. He will go to great lengths to rid the man of the highest power, which usually causes him to be the least successful due to his excessive greed and selfish intentions. Last of all Antony is like the vice president to Caesar. He is the one educated man that backs everything the man of power says. The followers can be in it for the ride, but also because they are very naive and truly believe everything the man in power is saying. The four men that starred in Julius Caesar represent the four different personalities that are not only found on the campaign trail, but in many situations that contain power struggles.

Brutus and Cassius wanted to take down Caesar because they thought that he was trying to turn the Roman Empire into a Monarchy. All throughout time people have being taking down empires and governments, which have caused our the government that we have now to be so successful. The play Julius Caesar was able to capture the build up of emotions before something drastic like an assassination occurs. Julius Ceasar tells us why these historical events happen, and the consequences that are followed after. It shows that even though the play is about something that happened in 100 BC, the modern society still has many of the same emotions and events that the Romans did.

Julius Caesar contained the type of people and emotions that can be found today in the modern society. Shakespeare used the four string personalities to show the corruption that not only ruined the Roman Empire, but governments throughout time, and even in the modern world. The play took us into the minds of the conspirators, and showed why the overtaking of a government could possibly occur. The corruption of politics still occurs in the modern world today, and Julius Caesar gives an insight to why there is corruption.

12.2 JULIUS CAESAR AS A TRAGEDY: ITS ETERNAL RELEVANCE

Shakespeare's Julius Caesar combines various genres, most importantly the historical and tragic genres. Although the play is structured like a classical tragedy and borrows its plot and themes from history, the blend of the two genres results in a play that is notable and unique for the Elizabethan period. Shakespeare's interest in creating a sort of hybrid between classical tragedy and history drama is evident in his borrowed plot and character elements and ideas from the historical genre while simultaneously creating a classical-tragic structure in five acts for Julius Caesar.

One of the most notable deviations from classical tragedy that Shakespeare made in Julius Caesar in order to accommodate his blend of classical tragedy with historical drama is in the use of two nearly equal primary characters: Julius Caesar and Brutus. Most classical tragedies focus on a single hero to the exclusion of the other characters, whereas Shakespeare in Julius Caesar blurs the line on exactly which character is the hero if the play.

Since Caesar is murdered in Act 3, he participates in the last two acts as a ghost and the bulk of the action is comprised with scenes involving Brutus. Meanwhile, in the first three acts, Brutus undergoes a tragic fall from trusted confidante to conspirator. His identification with Caesar in the following scene is shown to be dangerous - that his vision of himself as equal to Caesar is a narrow but possible avenue of approach for the other conspirators: "Into what dangers would you lead me, Cassius, That you would have me seek into myself, For that which is not in me? (Shakespeare 6); but the subtext of his words is that he actually does have it in him to murder Caesar and his fellow-conspirators to realize this.

If the plot and characterization of Julius Caesar provide a strong mix of historical and tragic genres, the appearance of Caesar in acts 4-5 as a ghost, with a vengeful agenda, borrows from a third theatrical genre: the revenge-play. Unlike classical tragedy and historical drama, revenge-play is considered a "lower" form of art and a less dignified genre than tragedy or history. By combining elements of classical drama with elements of populist drama, Shakespeare was able to give Julius Caesar a unique quality which still endures to this day.

Despite Shakespeare's innovative use of genre-bending in Julius Caesar, the play retains many traditional attributes. Line for line, the play's diction and dialogue are not as innovative as some of Shakespeare's other plays such as King Lear and Hamlet, but the dialogue fulfills the "classical" requirements of certain scenes, most obviously, Caesar's death scene:

Cæs. Et tu, Brute?--Then fall Cæsar! Dies.

Cin. Liberty! Freedom! Tyranny is dead! 85 Run hence, proclaim, cry it about the streets!

Cass. Some to the common pulpits and cry out "Liberty, freedom, and enfranchisement!"

Bru. People and Senators, be not affrighted.

Fly not; stand still. Ambition's debt is paid.

(Shakespeare 45)

In that scene, the dialogue compresses the historical and classical elements into a single entity. The audience expects some kind of classical "Roman" epitaph to be spoken by Caesar as he dies and Shakespeare, in fact, has Caesar deliver his dying lines in Latin. Similarly, when Caesar reappears as a ghost, his words: "Thy evil spirit, Brutus" (Shakespeare 79) reveal a distinct change in the elevated diction of the death-scene.

In conclusion, Shakespeare seems to have adopted a rather "free-wheeling" attitude towards the blending of classical and populist techniques and methods in his genre-mixing play Julius Caesar. The end result of his careful blending of useful elements from many various sources resulted in a play which is timeless, unique, and still commands critical and popular interest to this day.

Since Julius Caesar only appears in three scenes in Shakespeare's play, there is not enough development of this character for him to be the real tragic hero of the drama. Nevertheless, he does possess certain tragic characteristics:

1. **He is of noble stature**. Having patrician roots as the son of Aurelia and Gaius Julius Caesar has risen as a great general. As the play opens, Caesar has been named *dictator perpetuus,* but when Marc Antony offers him a crown, Caesar refuses it three times as the Romans watch.

2. **His downfall comes as a result of his *hamartia,* or act of injustice.** This act is committed prior to the action of the play as Caesar has defeated Pompey and then returns to Rome in the first scene. His celebration of triumph over Pompey arouses skepticism and uneasiness in the Romans because triumphs were reserved for foreign conquests, and because Caesar and Pompey were part of a triumvir at one time. This action and his apparent desire for absolute power are what cause Casca to say that the senators "

Mean to establish Caesar as a king
And he shall wear his crown by sea and land,
In every place save here in Italy (1.3.86-88)

Cassius, too, speaks of Caesar's desire for power,

Why, man, he doth bestride the narrow world
Like a Colossus, and we petty men
Walk under his huge legs and peep about
To find ourselves dishonorable graves. (1.2.141-144)

3. **The hero's fall is his fault.** Caesar's pride will not allow him to heed the warnings of the seer to "Beware the Ides of March," nor to comply with his wife's pleas to remain home because of her portentous dreams after Decius arrives and reinterprets Calpurnia's dreams and taunts Caesar by suggesting that the senators will say that he is afraid.

4. **The hero's misfortune is not completely deserved.** It becomes apparent that Cassius is envious of Caesar's power, as are others among the conspirators. Even Caesar himself recognizes Cassius as a threat,

Yond Cassius has a lean and hungry look;
He thinks too much: such men are dangerous. (1.2.200-201)

5. **The tragic fall is not complete loss.** When Caesar turns as Brutus stabs him and says, "Et tu, Brute?" he realizes that he has exceeded his reign for someone as noble as Brutus and as close to him to wish to assassinate him.

While the death of Julius Caesar arouses compassion for him, it does not produce the emotional release and sympathies at the end of the play as does the death of Brutus. Caesar's death leads to civil disorder, instead.

12.3 JULIUS CAESAR: THE ETERNAL AESTHETICS OF SHAKESPEARE

Julius Caesar" is among Shakespeare's most violent, and most political, plays. Its great themes—the wages of faction and conspiracy, the chaos that follows the downfall of a dictator—are as central to public life now as they were to Elizabethan England. Indeed, a good case can be made that we owe the Anglosphere's political decency and stability as much to Shakespeare's aesthetic vision as to John Locke's philosophy.

Certainly, much of the beauty of Shakespeare's plays comes from his masterful employment of literary techniques. Here are some examples:

1. Perhaps the most significant figure of speech is the metaphor from Act IV, Scene 3, in which Brutus refuses to listen to the advice of Cassius to not march to Philippi, but rather let the triumvirate's troops come to them:

There is **a tide in the affairs of men**

Which, taken at the flood, leads on to fortune;

Omitted all the voyage of their life

Is bound in shallows and in miseries. (4.3.217-220)

In this moment before Philippi, Brutus forgets that tides must also fall. Critic R. A. Yoder observes that the metaphor is appropriate for the play: Caesar as risen and fallen, and so, too, does Brutus, and ultimately does Antony.

That **lowliness is young ambition's ladder**,
Whereto the climber-upward turns his face;
But when he once attains the upmost round,
He then unto the ladder turns his back,(2.1.22-25)

2. In this passage from the soliloquy of Brutus, "ambition's ladder" is a metaphor for Caesar's desire for power which can lead to tyranny as expressed by "the ladder turns its back."

3. Further in this soliloquy, Brutus compares Caesar to "a serpent's egg" (l.32) in a simile.

Between the acting of a dreadful thing
And the first motion, **all the interim is**
Like a phantasma or a hideous dream (2.63-65)

4. In this passage, Brutus uses a simile to compare talking about an action and completing this action as disturbing, a "hideous dream."

5. Finally, there is much visual **imagery** back in Act I, Scene 3, as Casca relates what he has observed to Cassius. He reports having seen the heavens dropping fire, a hand ablaze, but not actually burning, a lion roaming through the streets, "blue lightning," an owl hooting in the marketplace, and men on fire.

I think you would find a lot of literary techniques in Mark Antony's funeral oration. He refers to Caesar's wounds as "poor, poor dumb mouths" and later says he would "put a tongue in every wound of Caesar that should bid the stones of Rome to rise and mutiny." He also says something very complicated about how if he were Brutus and Brutus were Antony, although he obviously doesn't really mean that he would like to be able to speak like Brutus when he is doing so much better speaking as himself.

At the beginning of his speech he says, "Lend me your ears." This is apparently intended to make his auditors laugh at him and think him an incompetent orator, while at the same time giving Brutus and anyone else of Brutus's faction the impression that they are not going to have to worry about Antony having any strong effect on the assembled mob. Then there is the simile about the blood of Caesar rushing out of doors to be resolved if Brutus so unkindly knocked or no. And Antony says that Brutus was Caesar's angel, a metaphor.

12.4 JULIUS CAESAR: THE ETERNAL AND CONTEMPORARY GOVERNANCE

Shakespeare wrote four plays about governance – *Coriolanus, Troilus and Cressida, Julius Caesar,* and *Measure for Measure*. In *Julius Caesar* a political and moral question is raised – should one eliminate a *potential* tyrant. Not an actual tyrant who must be deposed, but a political leader who shows signs and traits of nascent tyranny and who must be neutered

before he he can accede to power and cause the deaths of thousands. In *Measure for Measure*, the interim Duke of Vienna, Lord Angelo, institutes draconian rule whereby even the slightest infraction will incur severe punishment. He argues that while his rule may be arbitrary, it will certainly prevent thousands of crimes in the future. In *Troilus and Cressida*, Ulysses is the voice of reason, moderation, and good governance; and Shakespeare elaborates his and others' perspectives on rule. In *Coriolanus* he explores the many sides of democratic rule – the famous fickle mob, the arrogant patrician warrior and the debate about the degree to which popular representation should prevail – a debate which was renewed by Alexander Hamilton and Thomas Jefferson in the embryonic days of America.

In *Julius Caesar,s* he enters into the world of morality and ethics in politics and rule. Aside from the continuing and irreversible conflicts over power, what constitutes right action?

While there is no doubt that both Brutus is an ambitious man and ultimately fights Mark Antony for the right to rule Rome, he is – despite the sarcasm in Mark Antony's peroration over Caesar's body – a noble man. He wants to do the right thing. He is convinced that Caesar has the *potential* to become a tyrant. He has committed no crime against the state nor against any one noble or common; but his is showing some of the traits of his forbearers. Prior to Julius Caesar and the first Triumvirate, Rome had been a republic, but had suffered at the hands of tyrants such as Sulla:

During the era of the late Republic, Rome suffered through a reign of terror. Terror's tool was the proscription list, by which large numbers of important, wealthy people, and often senators, were killed; their property, confiscated. Sulla, Roman dictator at the time, instigated this carnage:

Sulla now busied himself with slaughter, and murders without number or limit filled the city. Many, too, were killed to gratify private hatreds, although they had no relations with Sulla, but he gave his consent in order to gratify his adherents. At last one of the younger men, Caius Metellus, made bold to ask Sulla in the senate what end there was to be of these evils, and how far he would proceed before they might expect such doings to cease. "We do not ask thee," he said, "to free from punishment those whom thou hast determined to slay, but to free from suspense those whom thou hast determined to save." Plutarch - Life of Sulla

Brutus knows this and like his fellow nobles is sensitive to the rise of one man in the political arena. Cassius, like Iago in *Othello*, quietly but persuasively plants seeds of doubts in Brutus' mind. While never specifying any crime – for Caesar has not committed any - he adds rumor to innuendo and gradually persuades Brutus that Caesar must be killed. There have been omens, Caesar has fits, he was a weak swimmer, his statues have become garlanded – all innocent observations that Cassius brilliantly uses to infect Brutus' mind. Brutus says:

It must be by his death: and for my part,
I know no personal cause to spurn at him,
But for the general. He would be crown'd:
How that might change his nature, there's the question.
It is the bright day that brings forth the adder;
And that craves wary walking. Crown him?--that;--
And then, I grant, we put a sting in him,
That at his will he may do danger with.

The abuse of greatness is, when it disjoins
Remorse from power: and, to speak truth of Caesar,
I have not known when his affections sway'd
More than his reason. But 'tis a common proof,
That lowliness is young ambition's ladder,
Whereto the climber-upward turns his face;
But when he once attains the upmost round.
He then unto the ladder turns his back,
Looks in the clouds, scorning the base degrees
By which he did ascend. So Caesar may.
Then, lest he may, prevent. And, since the quarrel
Will bear no colour for the thing he is,
Fashion it thus; that what he is, augmented,
Would run to these and these extremities:
And therefore think him as a serpent's egg
Which, hatch'd, would, as his kind, grow mischievous,
And kill him in the shell.

Brutus only concludes Caesar's guilt in the most indirect and circular way. It is commonly known, says Brutus above, that the very state of lowliness is the ladder to ambition and power, and few men can resist the climb. Worse, when the climber reaches the top, he never again looks down from whence he came or to those who assisted in his ascent. He continues to look upward, to even more power and glory. While this is certainly true of most tyrants, it may not be true at all for Caesar. In fact, in all of Caesar's few lines in the play, he says nothing to even suggest that he has such ambitions in mind. Brutus joins Cassius and other conspirators, and they murder Julius Caesar.

Was there anything right or noble about Brutus' actions? Was he acting properly, given recent history. Was it a moral failing to kill one man to avoid the slaughter of thousands – even though the killings were only possible, not even probable?

12.5 SELF-ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

1. Comment on the contemporary relevance of *Julius Caesar.*
2. Discuss *Julius Caesar* as an eternal tragedy.
3. Explain the aesthetics of Shakespeare with reference to *Julius Caesar.*
4. Consider *Julius Caesar* as a study in eternal governance.

12.6 REFERENCES

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LESSON-13

HAMLET: HISTORICAL SOURCES, ACTWISE SUMMARY AND SOLILOQUIES

Objectives of the Lesson

- To sensitise the students to the historical sources of the play.
- To develop the awareness of the students about the British Drama of those times.
- To make the students appreciate the thematic innovation of the play.
- To encourage the students to learn the story of the play act wise.
- To familiarise the students the importance of soliloquy in general and in *Hamlet* in particular.
- To make the students analyse and evaluate the play critically.

Structure of the Lesson

13.1 THE PLAY: HISTORICAL SOURCES

It is probable that Hamlet has its origins in a popular Icelandic saga mentioned for the first time by Snaebjorn, an Icelandic poet of the tenth century. The Danish historian and poet Saxo Grammaticus refers to it at the end of the twelfth century. In this Latin work recounting history of Denmark Shakespeare's future character appears under the name Amleth in a story probably influenced by the classical history of Lucius Junius Brutus.

However, there are controversies concerning the exact origins of Hamlet. Some see Hamlet as the product of Jutland's folklore, an interpretations supported by the possible etymology of the name of the protagonist as meaning mad Onela, suggesting some identification with the Swedish KingOnela mentioned in *Beowulf*. Others find Oriental or Celtic origins. Parallels can also be found in the English romances of Havelock, Horn and Bevis of Hampton.

Saxo's version was translated in the sixteenth century, with the horrific elements emphasized, by Francois de Belleforest in his collection HistoiresTragiques. An English version of this history was published in London in 1608 under the tittle The Historye of Hamblet. At the end of 1850s a revenge tragedy in the tradition of Seneca about Hamlet, Prince of Denmark, based on Belleforest, was already popular in London. This *Ur-Hamlet* is traditionally attributed to Thomas Kyd and was contemporaneous with Shakespeare's presence in London.

It has similarities with the other predecessors of the latter's play, which can be dated between 1599 and 1602, in that it is less psychologically complex concerning the central protagonist, whose prevarications are essentially due only to the practical problems of assassinating a King permanently surrendered by guards. This Ur-Hamlet has no soliloquies and no cemetery scene.

Another source, this time Italian, *The Murder of Gonzago*, which Hamlet mentions in act 2, scene 2 and act 3, scene 2, might have provided Shakespeare with the idea of murder by poison poured into the ears.

It is reasonable to believe that Shakespeare reshaped Kyd's play in the final years of the sixteenth century before writing up his work completely in 1601. *Hamlet* deposited in 1602 at the Registry of the Library and published in quarto form in 1603. The play was subsequently reworked, adapted and amended down the centuries according to prevailing sensibilities.

13.2 ACT-I

At the castle Elsinor in Denmark, the sentries have invited Horatio to join them and talk about a ghost which has appeared before them during the previous nights. For the sentries this is a sign of imminent danger, perhaps indicating an attack by Fortinbras, prince of Norway. Horatio refuses to believe them but then the ghost suddenly appears, and he recognizes it as the King of Denmark, who has recently died. It says nothing and disappears, almost immediately. It reappears shortly afterwards and seems on the point of speaking when the crowing of a cock, signaling down, obliges it to disappear. Horatio decides to warn prince Hamlet. In his castle Claudius is addressing his council and refers to accession to the throne, the death of Hamlet's father, his own marriage to Gertrude, the widowed queen, and announces that he has written to the old King of Norway, charging him with the task of reigning in the ambitions of his nephew, Fortinbras, who wants to reclaim land lost by his father to Hamlet's father. He then speaks to Laertes, the son of his adviser Polonius, giving him permission to return to Paris. Turning to Hamlet he questions him as to resources of his melancholy, urging him to put an end to his sadness, which he deems excessive, and asks him not to return to the University of Wittenberg. The queen adds her own pleas to those of the King and Hamlet promises to do his best to follow their wishes. After the departure of the Kingand his court Hamlet, alone, gives vent to his sadnessand expresses his disgust at his mother remarrying a month after the death of his father(First soliloquy: O that this too sullied flesh…")Horatio, Marcellus and Bernardo arrive. Horatio breaks the news of the ghost's appearances and Hamlet decides to keep watch with them that evening and to speak to the ghost. For the first time hamlet wonders about the circumstances of his father's death and suspects a crime.

Laertes is preparing to leave for France. He warns his sister Ophelia against Hamlet's declaration of love as, even if they are genuine, he is a prince and may not be able to marry whom he chooses. Polonius arrives and showers Laertes with advice before telling Opheliato avoid Hamlet. Ophelia promises to obey him.

Hamlet, Horatio and Marcellus are waiting for the ghost on the battlements. On hearing the sound of the merriment from the arranged by the new King Hamlet comments on the reputation for drunkenness acquired by the Danes, a tendency which in a people or an individual can often be ruinous: the ghost appears and Hamlet implores it to speak. The ghost makes a sign that Hamlet should follow it and he does, against the advice of his companions. The ghost declares itself to be the spirit of Hamlet's father, returns to earth to spur him to wreak vengeance. He tells Hamlet that he was murdered by his uncle Claudius who, taking

advantage of his being asleep, poured poison into his ears. Having achieved his dark mission Claudius persuaded everybody that the King had been bitten by a snake. Hamlet's father was killed before he had the opportunity to confess his sins, and is thus condemned to wander in purgatory. He orders Hamlet to kill the murderous and incestuous brother but not to harm his mother who will, in any case, be subjected to remorse by her conscience. The ghost disappears.

Horatio and Marcellus arrive. Hamlet feigns a light-hearted mood and makes them swear three times to say nothing concerning the ghost. Each time the ghost, from now on invisible, cries 'Swear!' they finally swear to reveal nothing, even though Hamlet warns them that his subsequent behavior may seem unusual or eccentric at times.

13.3 ACT-II

Polonius suspects that his son Laertes is living an immoral lifestyle and sends an envoy, Reynoldo, to Paris in order to spy on him. Ophelia arrives, bewildered by Hamlet's recent behavior. He comes to her, pale and shaking, his clothing in disarray, and did nothing holding her by the arms and stare at her for a long time,without saying a word. Polonius is sure that Hamlet's behavior is due to Ophelia's coldness towards him, and decides to speak of it to the King. Claudius asks to Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, childhood friends of Hamlet, to sound him out as to the reasons of the strange changes in his behavior. Polonius enters and announces the return from Norway of the ambassadors, with the news that the King of Norway has persuaded Fortinbras to invade Poland instead of Denmark. He also states his belief that the cause of the Hamlet's madness is unrequited love, Ophelia having spurned his advances. This reason scarcely persuades the King and queen. The queen thinks it is her hasty marriage which caused her son to lose his mind. Hamlet enters feigning madness, which allows him to mock and deride the remarks made by Polonius, who leaves. Hamlet soon discovers that Rosencrantz and Guildenstern have been sent by the King to spy on him and the conversation turns instead to the arrival of a troupe of actor comedians, to theatre and to the fact that principal roles are more and more often played by children and adolescents. Hamlet welcomes the comedians and they recite the lines concerning the death of King Priam of Troy and the grief borne by his wife, Hecuba. Polonius leads the actors away. The principal actor remains with Hamlet, who asks him to perform *The Murder of Gonzago*before the court and to add a few lines Hamlet himself is to write. Left alone Hamlet marvels at the suggestive power of the theatre and agonizes over his inactivity. He decides to stage the murder of his father by his uncle, and observe the latter's reactions to the play, before unmasking him and avenging his father, (Second soliloquy: ''O, what a rouge and peasant slave am I'')

13.4 ACT-III

In the hope of discovering the reasons for Hamlet's distress, the King and queen decide to engineer a meeting between him and Ophelia. Polonius asks her to pretend to be alone whilst he and the King hide behind a tapestry. Hamlet enters and disclaims his famous monologue, 'to be or not to be', up until the moment he notices Ophelia. He denies any love for her and advices her not marry and to become a nun. Claudius now starts to believe that Hamlet's madness is not due to unrequited love and suspects that he might pose a threat to his crown. He decides to get him out of way by sending him to England. Polonius suggests one final attempt at discovering the reasons for the Hamlet's behaviour by arranging a meeting with his mother, Gertrude.

Having given his instructions to the actors, Hamlet asks Horatio to observe the reactions of the King during the performance. The King, queen and court attend the performance. Hamlet, his head on the Ophelia's knees, prepares to make comments to her about the play, which is preceded by a mimed summary of the action, followed some words addressed to the public by a character called 'Prologue'. The spoken play itself begins, stressing the themes of treason, murder and incest. At the moment Locianus pours the poison into ear of the King Claudius rises and leaves the hall in anger, even though Hamlet had forewarned him that the play would deal with the murder of Duke Gonzago in Vienna. Hamlet now believes he has received the confirmation that his father was murdered. The King sends Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, then Polonius, to convey his mother's wish that they speak with each other. Hamlet declares is intention to wreak vengeance on the King but decides not to take it out on his mother other than his words. Claudius charges Rosencrantz and Guildenstern with escorting Hamlet to England. Polonius goes to spy on Hamlet's meeting with the queen. Left alone, the King experiences remorse for his actions, and gets down on his knees to pray and ask for his sins. Hamlet enters and could easily kill the King, but refuges the opportunity as the King would go to heaven if killed whilst praying.

Polonius, hidden behind a hanging curtain, over hears the conversation between Gertrude and Hamlet. Hamlet's wild behavior and manner so frighten the queen that she cries out for assistance. When Polonius moves, betraying his presence, Hamlet kills him, believing him to be the King. He then admonishes the queen for her unworthy behavior and loss of virtue. The ghost of the dead King arrives and urges Hamlet to seek vengeance against the King but not to add to the suffering of his mother. Hamlet asks his mother to stop sharing Claudius's bed, then shifts slightly and suggests that she meet and inform him of what has happened. He leaves the room, dragging behind him the dead body of Polonius.

13.5 ACT-IV

Gertrude is now convinced that his son is in the grief of madness, and informs the King of the death of Polonius. The King realizes that he probably was Hamlet's target and tells Rosencrantz and Guildenstern to leave immediately for England with Hamlet.

Rosencrantz and Guildenstern try to discover where Hamlet has hidden Polonius's body. Hamlet mocks them and refuges to answer. Nevertheless he agrees to meet the King. Hamlet refuges to answer the King's questions but pretends to be happy to go into exile. Left alone, Claudius reveals that he has ordered that Hamlet be executed on his arrival in England. Before leaving for England, Hamlet meets Fortinbras, who is crossing Denmark to battle for barren lands. Musing on the futility of this action, considering what is at stake, Hamlet, who has to avenge the death of his father and his mother's dishonoring, reproaches his own inactivity.

Ophelia arrives, driven mad by the death of her father and the loss of Hamlet. The queen tries to reason with her, but she says nothing, consenting herself with singing lovers' laments. Laertes arrives from France demanding to learn the truth about the circumstances of his father's death and why he didn't receive a stage funeral. Just at the moment the King is preparing to explain, Ophelia enters the room. Realizing what has befallen his sister Laertes promises to punish those responsible for his father's death. Horatio receives a letter from Hamlet in which he describes how his ship had been attacked by pirates, who spared him after receiving assurance that they would be received by the King of Denmark. Hamlet informs Horatio that Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are still on their way to England.

Claudius holds Hamlet responsible for the death of Polonius and Ophelia's madness, and tells Laertes the reasons which pushed him to spare Hamlet; apart from the affection of his mother, Hamlet has the support of the people. A messenger arrives and announces Hamlet's return. The King considers stratagems and suggests that Laertes provoke his nephew into a duel. Laertes accepts the King's propositions and announces his intention to coat the end of his sword with a deadly poison. In addition the King will offer Hamlet a poisoned goblet during the duel. The queen enters and announces the death of Ophelia, who has drowned.

13.6 ACT-V

Hamlet and Horatio come across two gravediggers preparing Ophelia's tomb. Hamlet talks to them concerning the nature of life and death. Examining skulls uncovered by the gravediggers he is saddened to find that of Yorick, the fool who amused him in his childhood. The funeral cortege arrives. Laertes curses whom he considers the assassin of his sister and jumps into the grave. Hamlet joins him there and they fight. They are separated and before leaving, Hamlet shouts out his love for Ophelia.

Hamlet tells Horatio how he was able to substitute for a letter from the King asking the English authorities for the execution of Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, the bearers of the message. Next he tries to affect reconciliation with Laertes and offer him apologies for having wronged him. Osric, a courter, enters to ensure that Hamlet takes part in the duel. Laertes seemed ready to accept Hamlet's friendship but now insists that they fight each other; Hamlet accepts the challenge and the duel begins. After the first exchanges and parries the King offered the poisoned goblet to Hamlet, who put it aside. Hamlet carries the opening exchanges and parries and the King offers the poisoned goblet to Hamlet, who puts aside. Hamlet carries the opening exchanges and the queen drinks to his health from the poisoned goblet. In the following chaos both duelists are wounded by the poisoned sword, the queen dies and Laertes reveals the plot concocted by himself and the King. Hamlet throws himself on the King and stabs him with the poisoned sword before finishing him by forcing him to drink from the deadly goblet. Laertes dies after reconciliation with Hamlet. Horatio also wants to drink from the goblet but Hamlet dissuades him, charging him with telling the story of the tragedy. At that moment Fortinbras arrives from Poland and Hamlet expresses his wish that the prince of Norway should rule Denmark. He dies in his turn. The ambassadors arrive and announce the execution of Rosencrantz and Guildenstern. Fortinbras orders that Hamlet be given funeral honours.

13.7 THE SOLILOQUIES

1. 'O that this too sullied flesh would melt' (Act-1,Scene-2)
2. 'O all you host of heaven' (Act-1,Scene-5)
3. 'O what a rogue and peasant slave am I' (Act-2,Scene-2)
4. 'To be or not to be, that is the question' (Act-3,Scene-1)
5. 'Tis now the very witching time of night' (Act-3,Scene-3)
6. 'And so a goes to heaven' (Act-3,Scene-3)
7. 'How all occasions do inform against me' (Act-4,Scene-4)

Hamlet gives us seven soliloquies, all centered on the most important existential themes: the emptiness of existence, suicide, death, suffering, action, a fear of death which puts off the most momentous decisions, the fear of beyond, the degradation of flesh, the triumph of vice over virtue, the pride and hypocrisy of human beings, and the difficulty of acting under the weight of a thought 'which makes cowards of us all'. He offers us also, in the last act, some

remarks made in conversation with Horatio in the cemetery which it is suitable to place in the same context as the soliloquies because the themes of life and death in general and his attitude when confronted by his own death have been with him constantly. Four of his Seven soliloquies deserve our special attention: 'O that this too sullied flesh would melt', 'O what a rogue and peasant slave am I', 'To be, or not to be, that is the question', and 'How all occasions do inform against me'.

Important Remarks in Soliloquies

The destiny of Hamlet's thought is extraordinary. Not a word is wasted; every syllable and each sound expresses the depth of his reflection and the intensity of his emotion. The spectator cannot but be hypnotized.The language is extremely beautiful. Shakespeare was in love with words. His soliloquies are pieces of pure poetry, written in blank verse, sustained by a rhythm now smooth, now rugged, by a fast or a slow pace, offering us surprises in every line.The soliloquies are in effect the hidden plot of the play because, if one puts them side by side, one notices that the character of Hamlet goes through a development of which, in substance, is nothing other than the history of human thinking from the renaissance to the existentialism of the twentieth century.

Hamlet in the first soliloquy is an outraged man who, disgusted by his 'sullen flesh', can see no out come to his disgust other than death. To free himself from the grip of his flesh he must put an end to his life. But there is the rub: God, the Everlasting, he tells us, does not allow one to act in this way. God still rules the universes and Hamlet must obey his scriptures.

O that this too too sullied flesh would melt,
Thaw, and resolve itself into dew;
Or that the Everlasting had not fix'd
His cannon 'gainst self-slaughter.

Hamlet's attitude is different in 'To be or not to be'. He asks himself about death beyond religious considerations; the nature of his dilemma has changed, as Hamlet tells us with a lucid simplicity.

To be, or not to be, that is the question:
Whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer
The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune
Or to take arms against a sea of troubles
And by opposing end them. To die, to sleep
No more; and by a sleep to say we end
The heart-ache and the thousand natural shocks
That flesh is heir to; 'tis a consummation
Devoutly to be wish'd. to die, to sleep;
To sleep, perchance to dream-ay, there is the rub:
For in that sleep of death what dreams may come.
When we have shuffled off this mortal coil,
Must give us pause- there is respect
That makes calamity of so long life.
For who would bear the whips and scorns of time,
Th'opressor's wrong, the proud man's contumely,
The pangs of despise'd love, the law's delay,
The insolence off office, and the spurns

That patient merit of th'unworthy takes
When he himself might his quietus make
With a bare bodkin? Who would fardels bear,
To grunt and sweat under a weary life,
But that the dread of something after death,
The undiscover'd country, from whose bourn
No traveler returns, puzzle the will.
And makes us rather bear those ills we have
Than fly to others that we know not of?
Thus conscious does make crowds of us all,
And thus the native hue of resolution
Is sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought,
And enterprises of great pitch and moment
With this regard their currents turn awry
And lose the name of action.

In the first soliloquy Hamlet submits to rules and prohibitions; in the second he imagines and rationalizes and decides to remain in the world, for the moment at least. But he goes too much further. Throughout the final act he pictures the final scene, 'there, where another dramatist would have given the dying Hamlet a long discourse on death, Shakespeare has Hamlet say just a few words of disconcerting simplicity ''the rest is silence'', precisely because Hamlet has already said everything, before.

The other soliloquies are memorable because they reveal all the passionate nature of Hamlet's personality. On observing young Fortinbras and his army on their way to conquer Poland'an eggshell' 'a wisp of straw' Hamlet, on the edge of despair, asks himself why he, when he has so many reasons cannot stir himself to action, why he cannot carry out the necessary act of vengeance. Why? Why? The last lines of Act Four are very revealing.

How all occasions do inform against me,
And spur my dull revenge. What is a man
If his chief good and market of his time
Be but to sleep and feed? A beast, no more.
Sure he that made us with such large discourse,
Looking before and after, gave us not
That capability and godlike reason
To fust in us unus'd. Now whether it be
Bestial oblivison, or or some craven scruple
Of thinking too precise? On th' event
A thought which, quarter'd hath but one part wisdom
And ever three parts coward 1do not know
Why yet I live to say this thing's to do,
Sith I have cause, and will, and strength, and means
To do't. Examples gross as earth exhort me.
Witness this army of such mass and charge,
Led by adelicate and tender prince,
Whose spirit with divine ambition puff'd
Makes mouths at the invisible event,
Exposing what is mortal and unsure
To all that fortune, death, and danger dare,
Even for an eggshell. Rightly to be great
Is not to stir without great argument,

‘But greatly to find quarrel in astraw
When honour’s at the stake. How stand I then.
That have a father kill’d, a mother staine’d,
Excitements of my reason and my blood,
And let all sleep, while my shame I see
The imminent death of twenty thousand men
That, for afantasy and trick of fame,
Go to their graves like beds, fight for a plot
Whereon the numbers cannot try the cause,
Which is not tomb enough and continent
To hide the slain? O, from this time forth
My thoughts be bloody to be nothing worth.

Here Hamlet is enraged, furious and rude. He lays himself, we feel, totally bare. He is not a fool however. Recovering his spirits lie devises a plan which will lead the King to betray himself. This is Shakespeare at the height of his theatrical prowess, stamping Hamlet’s language with relentless changes in tone, the peaks of rage inter-cut with short moments of profound depression or of incredulous questioning.

O what a rouge and peasant slave am I!
Is it not monstrous that this player here,
But in a fiction, in a dream of passion,
Could force his soul so to his own conceit
That from her working al his visage wann’d,
Tears in his eyes, distractions in his aspect,
A broken voice, and his whole function suiting
With forms to his conceit? And all for nothing!
For Hecuba!
What’s Hecuba to him, or he to her,
That he should weep for her? What would he do
Had he the motive and cue for passion
That I have’5 He would down the stage with tears.
And cleave the general ear with horrid speech
Make mad the guilty and appal the free,
Confound the ignorant, and amaze indeed
The very faculties of eyes and ears.
Yet I,
A dull and muddy-mettled rascal, peak
Like John-a-dreams, unpregnant of my cause
And ca n say nothing—no for a King,
Upon whose property and most dear life
A damn’d defeat was made. Am I a coward?
Who calls me villain, breaks my pale across,
Plucks off my bread and blows it in. my face.
Tweaks me by the nose, gives me the lie I’th’ throat
As deep as to the lungs_who does me this?
Ha!
‘Swounds I should take it: for it cannot be
But I am pigeon liver’d and lack gall
To make oppression bitter, or ere this
I should ha’ tatted all the reason kites

With this slave's offal. Bloody, bawdy villain!
Why, what an ass am I! 'this is most brave,
That 1.the son of a dear father murder'd,
Prompted to my revenge by heaven and hell,
Must like a whore unpack my heart with words
And fall a-cursing like a very drab.
A scullion! Fie upon't! Foh!
About, my brains. Hum –I have heard
That guilty creatures sitting at a play
Have, by the very cunning of the scene,
Been struck so to the soul that presently
They have proclaim'd their malefactions.
For murderer, though he has no tongue, will speak
With most miraculous organ. I'll have these players
Play something like the murder of my father.
Before mine uncle. I'll observe his looks;
I'll tent to the quick, if a do blench
I know my course.
The play's the thing
Wherein I'll catch the conscience of the King.

13.8 THEMES

One could read *Hamlet* simply, simplistically even, as a revenge tragedy. Hamlet's father, the King of Denmark, is killed by his brother, Claudius, who, overriding the rights of succession, appropriates both the crown and the wife of Hamlet's father. The ghost of the father reveals everything to his son, and all the elements of the revenge tragedy are in place; Hamlet is an obligation to avenge the murder, the usurpation, and the adultery. This he does by killing Claudius as the end of the play.

However it is clear that the theme of vengeance is merely a vehicle used by Shakespeare in order to articulate a whole series of themes central to humanity.

The theme of 'relationships between father and son, mother and son, and Hamlet and his friends; the theme of 'love relationships ', the theme of power wielding', the theme of 'madness, feigned madness, dissembling', the theme of 'youth and age' the theme of 'action and inaction', the theme of 'corrupt power and power corrupting', the theme of most significant existential questions; the existence of God; 'to be or not to be'; if it be now….The theme of 'the meaning and possibilities of stagecraft'.

All these themes, as well as others, are found in Hamlet. However it is important to remember that Hamlet himself is at the center of everything, and it is on him that all the great themes are focused. There is no other character in literature so rich, so complex, so enigmatic, at once so opaque and transparent.

Readings of Hamlet are innumerable and vary according to the personality of the reader, director, or actor. Hamlet is someone who both imposes himself on us through the complexity and mysteries nature of his character, which is to an extent almost indecipherable. His is also one around which our own personality can allow itself to be shaped. He is one of the rare characters of theatrical world, perhaps the only one, who permits such constant exchange. Each of us, no matter what age, recognizes him.

13.9 GLOSSARY

Danes: The people of Denmark

Historical Play: The dramas written based on history

Purgatory: According to Catholic Church doctrine Purgatory is an intermediate state after physical death throughwhich those destined for heaven pass.

Soliloquy: Soliloquy is a device often used in drama when a character speaks to himself relating thoughts and feelings, thereby also sharing them with the audience

13.10 SELF-ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

1. Write a note on the historical source of *Hamlet*?
2. Explain the story of Hamlet actwise.
3. How did Hamlet reveal his mind through soliloquies?
4. Write a note on the importance of soliloquies in the play *Hamlet*.
5. What are the major themes in *Hamlet*?

13.11 REFERENCE BOOKS

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LESSON-14

HAMLET AND THEATER, HAMLET AND MADNESS, OEDIPUS COMPLEX AND CRITICAL COMMENTS

Objectives of the Lesson

- To draw an outline of the theatre art of the day and the play *Hamlet*
- To understand the psychological condition of Hamlet.
- To identify the thematic innovation of the play.
- To learn how Oedipus Complex is applied in the play
- To make the students analyse and evaluate the play critically.

Structure of the Lesson

14.1 HAMLET AND THEATRE

1. Structurally Hamlet offers all the characteristics of a classical tragedy. The first act gives us nearly all the elements necessary to drive the plot. The second act accelerates the action until the formidable explosions of the third act, which can lead to the tragic denouement in the fifth act. The play is long and some directors don't hesitate to make drastic cuts.
2. There are numerous remarks about the theatre itself in the play and Shakespeare obviously makes use of his principal character to make a number of observations on the acting of the players and, by extension, on acting methods and conventions in London at the turn of the seventeenth century. Be natural, he tells them don't overdo it. To this are added some observations on the young boys who play female roles. This is Shakespeare the master speaking. He tells us how things should be, or tries to explain, for it is not an easy matter, as he is above to show us in a moment. In any case, if one can judge from the sharpness of some of his comments, the acting of some of his contemporaries was such that he would have happily sent them to be flogged! Clearly Shakespeare is settling a few accounts of her; what is astonishing is that, to do so. He has to stop the action and suspend the plot. Only he, Shakespeare, offered such a thing.
3. The play within the play - the theatre within theatre - occupies the heart of Act Three. It does have its function within the plot, although it is not absolutely certain that it really enables Hamlet to flush out the King, but above all it is a striking example of what theatre should not be. Being bad actors, the players fall into all the traps Hamlet

has just warned them against, and give us a piece of bad theatre. This is Shakespeare at his most sardonic, but he may be the butt of his own irony.

4. Great theatre is therefore to be found elsewhere in his play, and in no way is Shakespeare economical with it. Let us remember that Hamlet hides behind his 'antic disposition' for the greater part of the play; it is therefore important to remember that he is an actor, and that he acts so well that none of the other characters ever succeeds in 'reading' him. But Shakespeare sprinkles other choice pieces of theatre within theatre throughout the play. The most successful and sticking being without doubt the meeting between Hamlet and Ophelia in Act-II, Scene-I. Not a word is exchanged but many things occur. It is a mime; an almost ritualistic dance the full meaning of which we cannot be sure has not escaped us. Hamlet is a master actor, an amateur who acts a hundred times better than the inept professionals of the mime in the third act. There it is, that is good theatre. Shakespeare tells us. However this genius of a director goes further still: itis mime does not take place on the stage: in a supreme paradox, it only exists through language, for it is through the words of Oedipus that it is given life in the theatre of our imagination. A perfectly real illusion, it takes shape in our minds through another illusion: the language and acting of the actor on the stage.

With Hamlet Shakespeare has bequeathed us a supreme gift, it is a testament in which the creative genius of its author shines out, demonstrating his knowledge of the human spirit, his mastery of plot, and the unbelievable wealth of his language. But there is too much theatre within theatre in this play for us not to see that through a sustained engagement with this theme Shakespeare wanted to discover and to make known a truth rarely grasped, or even perhaps to tell us that there is no truth, save for that truth given existence by a genius through theatrical devices, representation illusion and art. This is what Tom Stoppard understood very well, when, in his play Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead, he took the two most insignificant characters in Hamlet, turned them into heroes, and reproduced entire passages from Shakespeare's plays. This is theatrical in is purest form which self reflexively claims itself as such. That idea was already present in Hamlet.

14.2 DILEMMA AND INDECISION

Hamlet's dilemma is not about what decisions he should take but rather he will be able to make any decisions at all. According to some interpretations, Hamlet makes no decisions and instead projects the image of an indecisive, inactive and passive individual, a romantic incapable of action who is in some ways sniveling and pathetic; he is nothing but a compulsive talker taking pleasure in his own words. Jean-Louis Barrault said of him that he is 'the hero of unparalleled hesitation'. He astonishes us with soliloquies of unequalled beauty, his emotions are of stunning force, but he does not evolve beyond them. This is why T.S Eliot regarded Hamlet as a failure and said that it presented a character 'dominated by an emotion which is inexpressible because it exceeds the events that occur'. Why so much emotion and so little action? That is his nature, say some critics: this is what he is, the absolute opposite of *Macbeth*. Others see him as stunted by an Oedipus complex which has turned him into a belated adolescent, somewhat mad, mired in sterile existentialist ponderings. Others still see him as suffering from an overdose of charity. The murder of his father and the revelation that his own brother was his assassin the betrayals by Gertrude, Ophelia, Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, even Laertes: it is not only the state of Denmark which is rotten, it is the entire world. The celebrated French critic HenriFluchere, who sees Hamlet as 'the first Shakespearean drama which can lay claim to both extremes in personality and university',

interprets the play as a symbolic representation of the battle between man and his destiny, his temptations and contradictions.

To this is opposed another reading. First of all it has to be said that Hamlet, loquacious as he is, is nevertheless extremely active, although it is true that the impulse for his actions is imposed on him by other characters or by events. He listens to the ghost he adopts a coarse attitude verging on insubordination vis-à-vis the King, he violently rejects Ophelia, he thwarts one after the other plots aimed at revealing his plans, he stages for the court a show which is nothing but a trap in which he hopes to catch the King, he confronts his mother in a scene of extreme violence, and he fights Laertes. Engaging further in pure physical violence he kills Polonius, sends his friends Rosencrantz and Guildenstern to their deaths, kills the King, and is indirectly responsible for the death of Laertes. Not bad for someone who, for some, doesn't know the meaning of the word action. It is possible even probable, that in his particular fashion Shakespeare wanted to disrupt the conventions of classical tragedy, which may have seen as too heavily laden with stereotypes. His Macbeth, his Ophelia, his Brutus, even his King Lear, are from the first act, so imprisoned in conversational attitude that they become perfectly predictable; the mechanisms of the plot evolve through cause and effect, the outcome becomes ineluctable.

14.3 HAMLET AND MADNESS

The third act of Hamlet opens with a remark by the King, Claudius, who instructs Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, old school friends of his nephew, to discover why the latter 'puts on this confusion, grating so harshly all his days of quiet, turbulent and dangerous lunacy?'.The characters of Shakespeare's plays are themselves desperate to discover the origins of the affliction which mars the prince of Denmark. While Polonius sees Hamlet's conduct as the result of disappointed love, Ophelia can only see the symptoms of pure madness. For Rosencrantz and Guildenstern it is ambition and frustration which are gnawing away at the young heir to the throne. Finally, for Gertrude, Hamlet's mother, who in this joins most critics, at the root of it is a warped reaction, including rejection, to the death of his father and her own hasty remarriage. This interpretation does indeed play an essential role in the play. Hamlet himself never ceases speculating not only about the overt or covert motivations of other characters but also about the uses and abuses of power, the fault of passion, action and inaction, the significance of ancestral customs as well as the question of suicide. Most of the characters observing Hamlet's behavior can't agree whether it is fake and calculating or whether the prince really is suffering from a mental illness threatening the 'noble, sovereign reason' which separates men from beasts (Claudius). Claudius himself is conscious of fact that the conduct and words of his nephew are at one and same time completely irrational and absolutely coherent. Basing his judgment on the theories of ancient medicine, he attributes the ambiguities of the deranged speeches to the workings of a harmful temperament provoking a state of deep melancholy.

Hamlet's madness is not only the effect of disturbing those around him; it also allows him the freedom to transgress the court's rules of etiquette and obedience without incurring immediate punishment. Hamlet under cover of madness, takes on the role of a critical and sardonic commentator on the schemes of other characters, and in this he succeeds Yorick, the King's late fool, whose fate is the subject of a full discussion in the fifth and final act. Amongst Hamlet's principal targets are his mother's infidelity, Rosencrantz's servitude and the devouring ambition of his uncle whom he reminds, by means of a riddle, that all are equal before death.

14.4 OEDIPUS COMPLEX

The critical appreciation of the famous theory of the Oedipus complex to the tragedy of Hamlet is innumerable. It was Freud himself who, in an essay published in 1905, and first to try and resolve in psychoanalytical terms the enigma offered by Hamlet's behavior. According to Freud, the personal crisis undergone by Hamlet's awakening his repressed incestuous and parricidal desires. The disgust which the remarriage of the Hamlet's mother arouses in him as well as violent behavior during their confrontation in the queen's bedroom, are signs of the jealousy which he constantly experiences, even if unconsciously. Hamlet is absolutely horrified by the thought that his mother could feel desire for Claudius, whom he describes as a 'murderer and villain, a slave that is not twentieth part the tithe, of your precedent lord'.

Contrary to Freud the psychoanalyst Jacques Lacan thinks that the real psychological dimension of the play lies not in Hamlet's behavior but in his language. In his famous essay, entitled 'Desire and the interpretation of desire in Hamlet', he holds that the most striking characteristic of Hamlet's language is its ambiguity. Everything he says is transmitted in varies degrees, through metaphor, simile and, above all, wordplay. His utterances, in other words, have a hidden and latent meaning which often surprises the apparent meaning. They have, therefore, enormous affinities with the language of the unconscious which proceeds equally by varies forms of distortion and alternations in meaning, notably through slips of the tongue, dreams, double entendres, and wordplay. Hamlet himself is aware of the ambiguous nature of hisown speeches as well as the feelings which drive them. Concerned by the dialectic between reality and appearance, and surface and depth, he is conscious that whatever happens to him is deeper and stranger than that which is displayed by the superficial symptoms of meaning.

1. **Get thee to a nunnery-why wouldst thou be a breeder of sinners? ……what should such fellows as I do crawling between heaven and earth? We are arrant knaves, all, believe none of us.**

Context:

In Act-III, Scene-I of Shakespeare's *Hamlet,* hamlet says so to Ophelia.

Meaning:

Hamlet says that Ophelia respects her father's advice too much and keep herself away from him. Polonius tells Claudius and the queen that the reason for Hamlet's madness is rejection of love. He tells that he will send Ophelia to him to test if Ophelia's love for him will cure him. Hamlet guesses all this and develops hatred for Ophelia, because she has consented to spy upon him. Therefore he asks her not to think of love and marriage. Because she has no idea of her ownto judge the sincerity and the faithfulness of a true lover, she cannot believe any man in this world with a suspicious mind. If she marries, she will marry only a knave, as per her idea of a lover. In such a case she will breed only knaves. Therefore it is better for her to go to a nunnery and become a nun. This advice very much shakes Ophelia.

Comments:

Polonius is a kind of Machiavelli. His too careful and selfish ways bring ruin on him, as well as on the heads of all those connected with him. Shakespeare's workmanship is very much revealed in the portrayal of the character of Polonius.

2. I would have such a fellow wipped for, o'erdoingTermagent- It out- Herods Herod. Pray you avoid it.

Context:

In Act-III, Scene-II of Shakespeare's *Hamlet,* Hamlet gives this piece of advice to the players.

Meaning:

Some actors were sent to Hamlet by Claudius and the queen to entertain him. Hamlet asked the players to enact the some samples from different dramas. In this connection he asked them to avoid over action such as overdoing a Termagant or the overacting part of ahero like Herod.

Comments:

Hamlet was presented in these lines as a great scholar, actor and a stage director. In fact we see in this the greatness of Shakespeare who rose from the stable boy to the rank of a stage director and playwright.

3. For anything so o'erdone is from the purpose of playing, whose end both at the first and now, was and is, to hold as it were the mirror up to nature;

Context:

In Act-III, Scene-II of Shakespeare's *Hamlet,* Hamlet gives this piece of advice to the players.

Meaning:

Some actors were sent to Hamlet by Claudius and the queen to entertain him. Hamlet asked the players to enact the some samples from different dramas. In this connection he asked them to avoid over action such as overdoing a Termagant or the overacting part of ahero like Herod.

Comments:

Hamlet was presented in these lines as a great scholar, actor and a stage director. In fact we see in this the greatness of Shakespeare who rose from the stable boy to the rank of a stage director and playwright.

4. Where love is great, the littlest doubts are fear; where little fears grow great, great love grows great there.

Context:

In Act-III, Scene-II of Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, play queen says so to the play King:

Meaning:

Hamlet made the actors enact the play called 'Gonzago; so as to watch the reactions of the King and the queen, while witnessing the play. In Gonzago play the King was murdered by his own brother while he was a sleep in the garden. The ghost of the Hamlet's father told Hamlet that he was killed by his own brother who poured poison into his ear while

he was sleeping in the garden. It asked Hamlet to avenge his death. Hamlet and his Horatio doubted the bonafides of the ghost. Sometimes the ghost appears in an agreeable form to mislead man from their right path. Therefore they decided to verify the veracity of Ghost's statement by means of enacting a play. In this play within the play, the play queen professed great affections and concern for the King's safety. She said that people who had great love for a person worry greatly, even when a small doubt was raised for the safety of the beloved one.

Comments:

The play Queen's profession of the affections for the play King was much like Hamlet's queen mother's professions of love for his father. Her professions of love were only pretentions, because she married Hamlet's uncle within days of King's death.

5. **Oh heart, lose not thy nature; let not ever**
   The soul of Nero enters this firm bosom.
   Let me be cruel, not unnatural:
   I will speak daggers to her but use none.

Context:

In Act-III, Scene-II of Shakespeare's *Hamlet,* hamlet says so to himself.

Meaning:

Hamlet evidently feels that he delays his purpose. He asks himself not to imitate the Roman emperor Nero. 'Nero was fiddling while Rome was burning. Hamlet hates such casual conduct to overtake to him and neglect avenging his father's death. Taking a firm decision to act quickly, he decides to talk to his mother in bitter terms. He would take daggers to her but would not kill her. It means that he would tell her how horrible and awful her hasty marriage with his murderous uncle looked. He would not spare any harsh words unused.

Comments:

Hamlet decided only to speak bitterly to his mother and her reactions to it. This again would delay his purpose.

6. **He keeps them, like an ape in the corner of his jaw first mouthed to be last swallowed.**

Context:

Act-IV, Scene-II of Shakespeare's *Hamlet,* hamlet says so to Rosencrantz and Guildenstern.

Meaning:

Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are being used by the King as spies to detect the real cause of Hamlet's madness. They were Hamlet's friends, but Hamlet dislikes their willingness to be used as the King's puppets. Hamlet told them that they were playing a dangerous role. The King would act like a clever monkey which kept things in its jaw for some time only to be swallowed in the end. Rosencrantz and Guildenstern would be treated like those things kept in the monkey's jaw.

Comment:

Shakespeare's humour, and great commonsense is seen in the passages like this. So critics observed that Shakespeare possessed ineffable commonsense.

7. **When sorrows come, they come not single spies;**
   But in battalions.First, her father slain;
   Next your son gone,

Context:

In Act-IV, Scene-II of Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, Claudius says so to the queen.

Meaning:

Ophelia was very much distracted and almost became insane after her father was slain by Hamlet. Roaming about like a mad-chap she happened to see the King and the queen singing sorrowful songs. Hamlet was sent to the ship, sailing to England. He was to go away to England to continue his studies there. So his mental distraction might be lulled. Claudius and the queen felt very bad about Ophelia's condition. So Claudius remarked that sorrows visited anybody not like a single spies, but in large numbers at a time like an army. Here Claudius referred to the death of Polonius, the departure of Hamlet, and Ophelia's insanity as battalions of sorrows.

Comment:

This line is very often quoted by scholars and orators. This common saying is aptly inserted in poetic language in the drama by Shakespeare. Shakespeare's genius is reveled in such occasions.

8. **Alexander returneth to dust: the dust is earth; of earth we make loam; and why of that loam where to he was converted might they not stop a beer-barre?**

Context:

Act-V, Scene-I of Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, hamlet says so to Horatio.

Meaning:

Many philosophic observations were made in this famous 'grave diggers' scene'. The grave diggers dug the grave for Ophelia's corpses. Hamlet did not know that Ophelia was dead, so he was talking in a hilarious mood. He said that the earth thrown out of the grave might be the earth into which Alexander was converted. It is quite possible that Alexander's dust was used by a potter to make an earthen bear barrel.

Comment:

The grave 'diggers' scene' in Hamlet is very famous for its philosophic tone. Shakespeare's genius is revealed in such scenes.

9. **I lov' thee Ophelia ; fourty thousand brothers ,**
   Could not with all their quantity of love,
   Make –up my sum. What will thou do for her?

Context:

In Act-V scene-I of Shakespeare's Hamlet, hamlet says so to Laertes's and others in the grave yard.

Meaning:

Hamlet was greatly moved to sorrow seeing Ophelia's corpse laid in the grave. It was then only he learnt that Ophelia was dead. He jumped into the grave embraced the body and bitterly expressed his sorrow for her untimely death. Laertes who nursed anger against Hamlet as a foe who killed his father protested against Hamlet's expression of sorrow for Ophelia's death.

Hamlet's said that his love for Ophelia was so great that even forty thousand brothers put together would not be able to love her as Hamlet did. He loved Ophelia, even forty thousand brothers with their entire love, which would amount in the aggregate to a very small quantity, cannot equal his love for her.

Comment:

Hamlet's expression of love for Ophelia was really sincere. Could Ophelia's father and brother understand Hamlet properly, this story would have taken a different turn.

10. **There is a special providence in the fall of a sparrow. If it be now' its not to come; if it be not to come, it will be now; if it be not now, yet it will come.**

Context:

In Act-V scene-II of Shakespeare's Hamlet, hamlet says so to his friend Horatio.

Meaning:

A duel was arranged between Hamlet and Laertes by the King to do justices to the death of Polonius. The King and the queen would watch the duel. If Hamlet was innocent he should escape unhurt. The King sent a messenger to find out it Hamlet was ready for the duel or he needed some time. Horatio advanced Hamlet to take some time and renew his practice in fencing. Hamlet understood Horatio's concern for his safety, but he refused to ask for time. He said that fate was fully decided by God. However clumsy was one's performance, he would be if it was god's will. He would lose the battle even with well planned preparation, if it was so willed by God. Therefore he said that there was a divine power which decides the result. Even the death of a sparrow was to be decided by the God.

Comment:

This is an apt quoted line. Shakespeare's belief in platonic theory of fate is seen here.

14.5 GLOSSARY

Antic Disposition: As a synonym of madcap stressing deliberate playfulness.
Amateur: Non-professional

Oedipus complex, in psychoanalytic theory, is a desire for sexual involvement with the parent of the opposite sex and a concomitant sense of rivalry with the parent of the same sex; a crucial stage in the normal developmental process. Sigmund Freud introduced the concept in his Interpretation of Dreams (1899)

14.6 SELF-ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

1. Write a note on procrastination in *Hamlet*.
2. Is Hamlet really mad in Hamlet? Explain.
3. Write a note on Oedipus complex in *Hamlet*.
4. Write a note on *Hamlet* and Theatre

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LESSON-15

HAMLET : TRAGEDY, REVENGE PLAY, SUPERNATURAL ELEMENT, THE GRAVE DIGGERS SCENE AND CRITICAL COMMENTS

Objectives of the Lesson

- To sensitise the students to be aware of the Revenge Tragedy
- To develop the awareness of the students about the Tragic Plays of those times.
- To make the students appreciate the thematic innovation of the play.
- To encourage the students to learn the important themes of the play.
- To make the students understand the importance of the play within the play in Elizabethan Drama.
- To make the students analyse and evaluate the play critically.

Structure of the Lesson

15.1 TRAGEDY

Tragedy is a word which is very loosely used now-a-days. When a boat turns upside down in mid-stream, drowning number of people, the newspaper reports it as a boat tragedy. When a good mango slips down your hand into the dust while you are eating it, you call it a tragedy. But this word is used with a definite connotation in olden days by Greek, Latin and Elizabethan dramatists. Aristotle the great philosopher formulated scholarly idea of a tragedy. According to him a tragedy should tell us the story of a good and great personality who suffers all through his life because of aflaw in his character or due to a chance happening and meets with death in the end. The story should centre round this single individual's life and it should tell us the whole story. The narration should be serious all through. The story should present a conflict between good and evil, and it is a tragedy because ''Good'' suffers and ''dies''. The great suffering undergone by the hero works evokes pity and fear in the hearts of the audience. This pity acts like a purging agent or catharsis and cleans the hearts of the audience purging out all evil thoughts. The audience feel the littleness of man and the great power of ''fate''. However the audiences do not suffer from the depressing ideas or pessimism. That is because though the tragic hero suffers and dies, he emerges out of this suffering as a noble and worthy soul like ''burnished gold''. His physical body dies, but his soul lives long in the hearts of the audience. That is how the tragic hero, becomes immortal passing through the gate of death.

If we examine Hamlet in the light of Aristotle's idea, of a tragedy, we find some differences between the Greek Tragedy and the Shakespearean tragedy. So his main concern was to satisfy the audience but not the scholars and critics. His job was commercial, but not scholastic. If the audiences call it good and the house is full, he is satisfied. The University Wits who cared more for the scholars could not attract large crowds in the Theatre. Shakespeare did not follow Aristotle's rule (namely) that the tragedy should be although serious because the audience felt bored by the seriousness of serious scenes. Therefore Shakespeare altered serious and light scenes in his tragedies to provide relief to the audience after every serious scene. Shakespeare was a man of great common sense. He knows that the taste of the food lies in the eating. Further he wanted his drama ''to hold mirror to life''. "Life was not all tragedy or all comedy" It is a happy mixture of these two elements. It is away a glory from the earth".

Shakespeare was not a University Wit, he wrote for the stage and audience not the scholars and critics. Shakespeare altered serious and light scenes in his tragedies to provide relief of the audience after every serious scene. Shakespeare was a man of great commonsense. He knew very well the taste of the audience, further he wanted drama "to hold mirror to life". Life was not all tragedy or all comedy, it was a happy blend of these two elements. It is for this reason that Shakespeare's tragedies look quite natural lifelike. Hamlet is also like that.

15.2 REVENGE PLAY

The medieval man believed that the murdered man's soul did not rest in peace until his murder was avenged. So it was a sacred beauty of the near relative of the murdered man to avenge the murder. Hamlet is the prince of Denmark. He is good and great scholar, fit to be a tragic hero with his education and intellect his "doubting Thomas". His father's ghost tells him that his uncle has killed him and it asks to avenge the murder. But Hamlet being a scholardoubts the bona fides of the words of the ghost. He thinks of the possibility of some evil spirit appearing in the form of his father's ghost to mislead him from his right path. So he waits to verify the veracity in the ghost's charge, leveled against his uncle but he delays the execution.

Hamlet gets to a golden opportunity to kill his uncle who is kneeingwith closed eyes in prayers to God; Hamlet says to himself that if he kills Claudius then he will straight away go to heaven. In this manner he delays action and misses every opportunity. This delay in Hamlet's action is the main flaw in his character. This procrastination put into and holds mental torture all through and he dies in the end fighting duel against Laertes. Inviting some pretext or the other to delay in action reveals Shakespeare's genius.

We know that Hamlet has succeeded bringing about the Claudius and the unfaithful queen. That is how his father's death is avenged. Polonius and Laertes are also killed by hamlet. These deaths avenge the death of Ophelia who has been thoughtlessly pulled out of Hamlet's affections. Hamlet also dies accidently, hurt by the poisoned rapier of Laertes andthat is how the death of Polonius is avenged. From the point of view of Laertes, Ophelia's death is also avenged in the death of Hamlet.

Some University Wits like Thomas Kyd wrote*TheSpanish Tragedy*, a revenge tragedy followed Senecan model. The play Hamlet also contains supernatural elements; feigned in madness a play within play as in any revenge tragedy. That is how Hamlet is a revenge tragedy besides being a model of Shakespearean tragedy.

15.3 SUPERNATURAL ELEMENT

Introducing supernatural elements in dramas is not specialty of Shakespeare's drama only supernatural elements were also seen in the Greek, Latin and Elizabethan dramas. Chorus was very often seen in Greek drama. We come across Mephistopheles and even Christ's blood, streaming in the firmament in Marlow's *Dr.Faustus* we see the three witches and banquet ghost in Shakespeare's*Macbeth*. We also see Caesar's ghost *Julius Caesar*. We come across spirits in *Midsummer Night Dreams*. We see ghost of Hamlet's father again and again in *Hamlet*.

Supernatural elements are introduced in dramas with a specific purpose. Particularly in tragedies, supernatural elements contribute to the creation of tragic atmosphere necessary for the tragedy. Midnight, cold and chill climate, darkness, dead silence and the appearance of the ghost create the tragic atmosphere of awe, fear and horror in Hamlet. Supernatural elements are necessary to report secret happenings which would remain otherwise undisclosed. Without this disclosure action would not proceed further in the drama.

The ghost of Hamlet's father informs hamlet that Claudius has killed him pouring poison into his ear will he has been asleep in the garden. This is a revelation to hamlet, because everybody is giving to understand that hamlet's father died of snakebite. This information is necessary to provide Hamlet with a strong motive to take revenge against Claudius. The ghost appears again to what Hamlet's blunt purpose. That is how the ghost's appearance is necessary to push forward halting action.

Supernatural elements are necessary to enrich to entertainment value of the Elizabethan drama. They wear relished by the Elizabethan audience. They provide a kind of nervous impetus very much relished by the Elizabethan audience. Influenced by the scientific enquiry and the spirit Renaissance, the scholars tried to explain ghosts and apparitions as a hallucination and creation of the mind. Marlow's Dr.Faustus sows that a great scholar like Faustus believed in 'Necromancy'.

Supernatural elements also help the revelation of characters. People in the medieval ages believed that only noble characters were able to see and speak to good spirits. Evil and ignoble characters would not be seen and speak to good spirit. Hamlet and his friends see that ghost, Hamlet even talks to it. Hamlet's queen mother lost her status of virtue, therefore she is not able to see or hear the ghost. She asks Hamlet why he talks to airy nothing.

Finally the introduction of supernatural elements in drama as commercial purpose too. The Elizabethan audience always craved for something sensational. The posters announced "See the Winter's Tale and the Bear too". People thronged to the theatre to see the Bear and the house was full. Similarly "See Hamlet and ghost too" would have certainly drawn crowds to the theatre. Thus introduction of supernatural element was "A Box Office Hit" in the Elizabethan times. Now we see how the introduction of supernatural element served multipurpose in Shakespeare.

15.4 THE MOUSE TRAP: PLAY WITHIN THE PLAY

The play within the play is introduced normally to provide extra entertainment to the audience. Usually it is used in the climax to turn the story will different dimension. In Thomas Kyd's *Spanish Tragedy* there is play within the play. Hieronima uses it to avenge the death of his son by filing the culprits pretending to be enacting a murder Shakespeare uses it hamlet as a psychological device and calls it a 'Mouse Trap'.

Hamlet being a university student is influenced by the scientific spirit of enquiry; he and his friend doubt the bona fide of the ghost. Therefore the decision to verify the veracity of the ghost's vision by man's of enacting a play. They choose a play called Gonzago wherein the King has been murdered in much the same way as hamlet's father. The play will be witnessed by the King and Queen and Hamlet and Horatio will watch the reaction in the face of the King and the Queen.

At first there is a dumb show. The play Queen exhibits great feelings of sincere love for the King. The King's brother walks silent there and pours poison into the ear of the sleeping King. Claudius suspects something fishy about the acting of something which happened years ago in a foreign land. When the action comes to point of the Kingbrother pouring poison in the ear of the sleeping King, Claudius is enabled to entrain himself. He raises and leaves the place in candle light. It is reported that the King has suddenly taken ill. Hamlet and Horatio are now sure that the King is guilty of the murder.

So hamlet decides that he should avenge his father's death. He says that the 'mouse is trapped': so he calls Gonzagoplay a 'mouse trap'. He also understands why his father's ghost has asked him to leave the queen alone. He has lost all respect for his mother and he considers being an animal. So when the queen asks Hamlet how he is beingso unkindly to his mother, Hamlet says that she is not his mother but his father's brother's wife; in this manner the play within the play of Hamlet as a psychological purpose besides helping port nail of characters. It also provides high class additional entertainment to the classes as well as masses.

15.5 GRAVE DIGGERS SCENE

Many philosophic observations were made in this famous 'grave digger's scene'. The grave digger dug the grave for Ophelia's corpse. Hamlet did not know that Ophelia was dead, so he was talking in a hilarious mode. He said that the earth thrown out of the grave might be the earth into which Alexander was converted. It is quite possible that Alexander's dust was used by potter to make an earthen bear barrel.

Hamlet greatly moved to sorrow seeing Ophelia's corpse lid in a grave. It was then only he learnt that Ophelia was dead. He jumped into grave embraced the body and bitterly expressed his sorrow for her. Untimely death of Polonius and how Laertes nursed anger against Hamlet for killing his father protested against Hamlet's expression of sorrow for Ophelia's death. Hamlet said that he loved Ophelia, even forty thousand brothers with their entire love which would amount in aggregate to a very small quantity connect equal to his love for her.

Grave digger's scene in Hamlet is very famous for its philosophic tone. Shakespeare's genius is revealed in such scenes.

15.6 CONTEXTS, MEANINGS AND CRITICAL COMMENTS ON IMPORTANT TEXTUAL LINES

1. **Let me not think On't, - ''frailty, thy name is woman''**
   A little month; or ere those shoes were old
   With which she followed my poor father's body

Context:

In Act-I Scene II of Shakespeare's *Hamlet,* Hamlet makes this observation in his soliloquy touching his mother's hasty marriage with his unworthy uncle Claudius.

Meaning:

Claudius poured deadly poison into the ear of King Hamlet while he was asleep in the garden after lunch. He made it known to all that the King died of snakebite. He consoled the queen, courted her and married her within days after the King's death. Hamlet came to Denmark from his university in England. He came home with a heavy heart; full of sorrow for his father's sudden death. He was surprised to see that his mother already married to his uncle. This hasty marriage of his mother gave Hamlet a very bad shake. He re-called how his mother professed to carry great affections in her heart for his father. Now he felt that his mother's professions of affections for his father were all pretentions. His uncle whom she married possessed no merits to attractive. In fact the King was like a 'Hyperion' while Claudius was a 'satyr' before the dead King. Therefore he made this caustic remark regarding his mother's inconstant or frail conduct. So he generalizes frailty as the chief trait of woman. He said, his inconsistency or frailty was another name for woman.

Critical Comments:

Anybody would be surprised to read this line and raise his finger to his nose; How courageous Shakespeare must have been to make such a caustic sweeping remark, on woman's general conduct, at the time when England was being ruled by a very powerful woman, Queen Elizabeth II. The queen was in the habit of witnessing plays enacted in the palace. However, Shakespeare paid very high tributes elsewhere in his writings to the Queen saying"Inmaiden meditation fancy free''. However should we think that woman only should be constant while man is licensed to be licentious and go with polyandry?

2. **Do not, as some ungracious pastors do,**
   Show me the Steep and thorny way to heaven;
   Whiles like a puff'd and reckless libertine
   Himself the primerose path of dalliance treads.

Context:

In Act-I Scene III of Shakespeare's *Hamlet,* Ophelia says so to her brother Laertes who cautions her to be careful in assessing the sincerity in Hamlet's wooing her.

Meaning:

Laertes learns that Hamlet is in the habit of visiting Ophelia too often, professing love for her. He warns his sister Ophelia to judge Hamlet's professions of love, with great care and discretion. Hamlet is a prince who has approach, familiar access to any young woman. Young men generally, freely make tall promises to win a beautiful damsel to their side. They take all kinds of oaths on the spur of the moment, only to satisfy itching lust. So Laertes says that Ophelia should be careful with Hamlet and not to give herself to his lustful feelings. He says that he will prescribe some rules of conduct to her in this regard. Ophelia reacts to it, like sensitive and sensible woman. She asked her brother not to prescribe very hard rules to her and easy ways to himself. The hand rules are referred to as 'steep and thorny path'. The easy ways are signaled by the primrose path of dalliance''. This means the rose bed of love.

Critical Comments:

Shakespeare was a great psychological observer. His deep insight into human behavior is seen in Polonius advice to Laertes; in Hamlet's soliloquies and several references like present one about Ophelia. That is why critics say that Shakespeare possesses''ineffable common sense''. Expressible

3. **O Villain, Villain smiling damned villain!**
   My tables, - meet it is I set it down
   That one may smile, and smile, and be a villain;

Context:

In Act-I Scene V of Shakespeare's *Hamlet,* Hamlet makes this observation in his soliloquy after the exits of his father's ghost**.**

Meaning:

Hamlet was horrified at the revelation made by his father's ghost about the gruesome murder of the King by his own brother Claudius. The ghost gave details of murder and asked Hamlet to avenge his father's death. It also asked him to save the royal blood of Denmark from being polluted by the murderous Claudius. Hamlet recalled with a heavy heart, how Claudius had been trying to console him. He and the queen had been receiving Hamlet with smiling faces to make him forget all about his father's death. Face must be the index of the mind. But here Claudius beguiled nature by always putting on a smiling face, while carrying dark, vicious ideas in his heart. Therefore Hamlet remarked that smiles should not be understood as signs of fair conduct. One might smile and smile and (yet) be a villain.

4. **And, with his head over his shoulder turned**
   He seemed to find his way without his eyes;
   For-out-a-doors he went without their helps

Context:

In Act-II Scene I of Shakespeare's *Hamlet,* Ophelia says to her father Polonius regarding Hamlet's visit to her chamber.

Meaning:

Ophelia was asked by her father if Hamlet was seeing her. She told that Hamlet visited her chamber. He was very much disturbed in his mind. He held her hand and keeping himself at a distance looked into her face for a while and left her hand. Thereafter he left her room, but while going he turned head to her and went through the door way, finding his way not with his eyes but with his hands.

Comments:

Shakespeare was not only a great playwright, but also a stage director. He did not simply say that Hamlet left. He described how he left the room. The description is simple but very vivid like a word picture. That is why critic say that he is ''inimitable Shakespeare''.

5. **''For if sub breed maggots in a dead dog, being s good kissing carrion, -Have you a daughter?''**

Context:

In Act-II, Scene-II of Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, Hamlet says to Polonius.

Meaning:

Polonius visited to Hamlet to find out if the Hamlet's madness was the result of failure in love. He knew that Hamlet was habit of visiting his daughter, Ophelia professing to be having real affection for her. Polonius warned his daughter to be cautious and not to reciprocate Hamlet's promises and professions of love. Hamlet could understand that Polonius was responsible for Ophelia's changed behavior he also knew that Polonius was a loyal spy of Claudius. Therefore, when Polonius saw him, Hamlet talking to himself likea mad chap, mixing sense and nonsense and he said that the sun god bred worms in a dead dog. He called the sun god – a god loving to kiss died animals and breading them. Therefore it was dangerous to walk in the sun. He asked Polonius not to allow Ophelia to walk in the sun, lest she should breed maggots or worms.

Comments:

Through this sounds- nonsense, there is any amount of sense in it? This sun god helps breeding good things in living beings. But in died and rotten things he helps breeding worms which eat a way the rotten thing and relieve the world of their stink and nuisance. Shakespeare's great with and humor can be seen in passages like this.

6. **Through this be madness, yet there is method in't.**

Context:

In Act-II, Scene-II of Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, Polonius says to himself commenting on Hamlet's talk touching Ophelia.

Meaning:

Polonius visited Hamlet to find out if Hamlet's madness was the result of failure in love. He knew that hamlet was in the habit of visiting his daughter; Ophelia's professing to be having real affection for her. Polonius warned his daughter to be cautious and not to reciprocate hamlet's promises and professions of love. Hamlet could understand that Polonius and professions of love. Hamlet could understand that Polonius was responsible for Ophelia's changed behavior he also knew that Polonius was a loyal spy of Claudius. Therefore when Polonius saw him Hamlet talking to him like mad chap, mixing sense and nonsense and therefore Polonius remarked that there was reason in this mad talk.

Comments:

Though this sounds nonsense, there is any amount of sense in it? This sun god helps breeding good things in living beings. But in died and rotten things he helps breeding worms which eat a way the rotten thing and relieve the world of their stink and nuisance. Shakespeare's great with and humor.

7. **What a piece of work is a man! How noble in reason, How infinite in faculties, in form and moving how express and admirable.**

Context:

In Act-II, Scene-II of Shakespeare's *Hamlet,* Hamlet makes this philosophic observation in the presence of Rosencrantz and Guildenstern.

Meaning:

Hamlet expressed his great admiration for the skill of god. God made all the things and living creatures seen in the world. Man was the most wonderful creation of them all. He was special because he was thinking and talking about the creator and he would laugh, weep, argue, and guess unlike other creature. The origins of his body were also created with proper proportions to give him the most beautiful angelic appearance.

Comments:

Those lines are often quoted by scholars and orators. This piece of composition is said to me 'poetic prose'. Shakespeare excelled other writers in poetry as well as in prose. The prose is not in pedantic and verbs like that of Bacon. It is simply in style and brief. It sounds almost like modern prose.

8. **What's Hecuba to him or he to Hecube,**
   That he should weep for her? What would he do,
   Had he the motive and the cue for passion,
   That I have? He would drawn the stage with tears,

Context:

In Act-II, Scene-II of Shakespeare's *Hamlet,* Hamlet makes this observation in his soliloquy commenting on play actor, enacting the role of Queen Hecuba.

Meaning:

Hecuba's husband was hacked to death in her presence. He wept bitterly for her husband's death. This play turned into a popular and very often staged. A troupe of players was sent to Hamlet to enact some drama in his presence, so as to soothe in his disturbed mind. Hamlet was a scholar who could offer directions to the players. He asked one of them to recite the portion of Hecuba. The actor recitesit so well, exhibiting deep emotions with tears gushing out of his eyes that looked as though he lived the portion himself. Hamlet was much struck with wonder at this sincerity that it looked he was a close blood kin of Hecuba-himself. His relationship with Hecuba was only imaginary, still he could be very sincere and liked realistic quality in his action. Hamlet had a real reason to be emotional because his own father's ghost appeared goaded him to avenge his death. Still he remained cold and inactive. He wondered what the actors who have done had the real reason and direction to act.

Comments:

This is a kind introspectiondone by Hamlet, Hamlet knew that he had real cause to avenge his father's death, still he delayed taking action. He knows that he was making delay. That was how he was a conscious man of inaction. This delay was the flaw in his character. So he suffered great mental torture and died in the end like a tragic hero.

9. **I know my curse,**
   The spirit that I have seen may be a devil,

And the devil hath power.

Context:

In Act-II, Scene-II of Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, Hamlet makes this observation in his soliloquy.

Meaning:

Hamlet's father's ghost told Hamlet that he was murdered by his uncle 'Claudius' and it asked him to avenge the murder. Being a university student Hamlet doubted the credentials of the ghost. He thought that devil might appear in the form of his father's ghost, so as to lead him into a wrong path. So he thought of verifying the truth about the ghost's version by making the players enact the drama of *Gonzago* where in the King was murdered very much like the King Hamlet.

Comments:

This explains Hamlet delay in acting 'conscious man of inaction'. This delay was the flaw in his character. So he suffered great mental torture and died in the end like a tragic hero.

10. To be, or not to be, that is the question
Whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer
The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune,

Context:

In Act-III, Scene-I of Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, Hamlet makes this observation in his soliloquy.

Meaning:

This is the most famous soliloquy of Hamlet wherein he does introspection. He is informed by his father's ghost about the murder of his father by his uncle Claudius. Claudius married his mother. This puts Hamlet to further mental torture. He delays action doubting the ghost to be the devil himself. So he wants to verify the truth in the ghost version by means of enacting a play called Gonzago. Where in the King was murdered very like the King Hamlet. In the meantime he suffers great mental torture. So he asks himself if he is to live to take revenge or to die in the doubt.

Comments:

Shakespeare's play Hamlet is full of soliloquies which reveal Shakespeare's great insight into the human psychology. This soliloquy is the most famous one. Many soliloquies were written in various languages on this model.

Critical Comments

Hamlet is the most famous, the most popular play in the English language. For the readers and of playgoers it has no rival, even among Shakespeare's works. Even after four hundred years after its creation. Hamlet is still the confident and the friend of sad and thoughtful souls in every land. The poetry of the play is admirable; philosophy although not altogether original with Shakespeare, is expressed in matchless artistry. The universality of its

appeal lists in large measure in the creator of Hamlet himself. In Hamlet, he mirrored the hopes and fears, the feelings of frustration and despair, of all mankind. Coleridge opines that Hamlet is a great acting-play, despite some slowness of movement, inherent in subject and increased by the exceptional length. T.S.Eliot calls Hamlet the "Mona Lisa" of literature. Some critics say that he is "inimitable Shakespeare".

Though Shakespeare received "small Latin and little Greek", he is a dramatic genius. There was a decline in his father's fortunes and he was compelled to leave school at the age of thirteen. He worked as an actor in a drama troupe and studied the psyche of Elizabethan audience. Shakespeare wrote dramas to satisfy the audience but not the scholars and critics. He became famous as playwright and actor, a serious rival to the University Wits. Robert Greene, who was second only to Marlow then in the dramatic field, referred contemptuously to Shakespeare "an upstart crow beautified with our fathers". In fact Shakespeare was indebted to University Wits. Who supplied him some plots and readymade structure of drama. His dramas reveal the evolution of genius and art and the remarkable changes which came over his thought and style.

15.7 GLOSSARY

Procrastination: Delay in action
Supernatural:Beyond natural world
Alexander:Alexander III of Macedon, commonly known as Alexander the Great, was a King of the Ancient Greek kingdom of Macedon and a member of the Argead dynasty

15.8 SELF-ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

1. Comment on Hamlet's delay.
2. Comment on the ply within the play in Hamlet.
3. Write a critical note on the use of the supernatural element in Hamlet.
4. Consider*Hamlet* as a revenge tragedy
5. Explain the importance of The Grave Diggers Scene in *Hamlet*.

15.9 REFERENCE BOOKS

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LESSON - 16

THE ETERNAL HAMLET

Objectives of the Lesson:

a. To establish the universal relevance of Hamlet.
b. To enquire into the 'ever-problematic' nature of Hamlet.
c. To verify the treatment of women characters in Hamlet. Portrait of Artist as a Youngman
d. To discover the philosophical aspect that Hamlet is Everyone

Structure of the Lesson:

16.1 UNIVERSALITY IN LITERATURE

Notwithstanding the present day critical objections that have emerged with post-structuralism and postmodernism, universality in Literature has been a matter of great interest in the critical canon of Literature. In fact, it has often been felt that any Literary text to be considered as a classic is expected to pass the litmus test—standing the test of times and remaining as ever-relevant, and relevant not only to the times a text has been written but for all times to come.

Definition for Universality:

"noun, plural universalities.
1. the character or state of being universal; existence or prevalence everywhere.
2. relation, extension, or applicability to all.
3. universal character or range of knowledge, interests, etc."

Major Universal Themes of Literature and their Meanings

1. Alienation - creating emotional isolation
2. Betrayal - fading bonds of love
3. Birth - life after loss, life sustains tragedy
4. Coming of age - boy becomes a man
5. Conformity - industrialization and the conformity of man
6. Death - death as mystery, death as a new beginning
7. Deception - appearance versus reality
8. Discovery - conquering unknown, discovering strength
9. Duty - the ethics of killing for duty

10. Escape - escape from family pressures, escaping social constraints
11. Family - destruction of family
12. Fortune - a fall from grace and fortune
13. Generation gap - experience versus youthful strength
14. God and spirituality - inner struggle of faith
15. Good and evil - the coexistence of good and evil on earth
16. Heroism - false heroism, heroism and conflicting values
17. Home - security of a homestead 18. Hope - hope rebounds
19. Hopelessness - finding hope after tragedy
20. Individualism - choosing between security and individualism
21. Isolation - the isolation of a soul
22. Journey - most journeys lead back to home
23. Judgment - balance between justice and judgment
24. Loss - loss of innocence, loss of individualism
25. Love - love sustains/fades with a challenge
26. Patriotism - inner conflicts stemming from patriotism
27. Peace and war - war is tragic, peace is fleeting
28. Power - Lust for power
29. Race relations - learned racism
30. Sense of self - finding strength from within
31. Suffering - suffering as a natural part of human experience
32. Survival - man against nature

16.2 ESTABLISHING THE UNIVERSALITY OF *HAMLET* AND HAMLET AS EVERYONE

Shakespeare's 'Hamlet' is exemplary of the universal nature which Despite the passage of time still holds its textual integrity. As 'Hamlet'Â is not limited by contextual barriers multiple interpretations are plausible through the text's ability to be re-contextualised. The thematic representations of love, power and the central theme of life and death continue to hold significance to audiences and propose an understanding of the mental instability of the human condition. The themes will be highlighted in this response in order to expose Hamlet's transcendent nature.

Political instability and Power through matters of Corruption are timeless and can be expressed during the Elizabethan Era of Hamlet. Corruption is epitomised in Hamlet through the character of Claudius who used the ambiguous method of murdering King Hamlet to satisfy his obsession for power. Claudius's immoral and corrupt rise to power is illustrated in Act 1 scene 5 as King Hamlet states, "The serpent that did sting thy father's life now wears his crown." The metaphoric language present exemplifies Claudius's unjust rise to power. Claudius has used corruption at the detriment of justice and virtue to proclaim power within Denmark. Furthermore, Claudius corrupt rise to power is further cemented into the kingdom of Denmark through Hippocratic characters such as Polonius and Rosencrantz and Guildenstern. This can be reinforced as Hamlet states, "there are many confines, wards and dungeons; Denmark being one o'th' worst." The extended metaphor of imprisonment not only encapsulates his view of Claudius's corrupt kingdom but represents his feelings of being entrapped in an unstable political monarch. Therefore political instability and power occur through matters of corruption.

Central to 'Hamlet's' development is the themes of intricacies of the human condition thus being life and death. Shakespeare's usage of soliloquies depicts Hamlet thoughts and feelings strengthing Hamlet's as a truth teller. This dramatic technique is used to reveals admiration of his father in contrast to Claudius. A hostile Hamlet illustrates the difference between the two kings, his deceased father and Claudius through the anthropomorphic allusion of his father to Claudius in being as "Hyperion as the satyr". Thus suggesting Claudius who appears regal to be in reality like that of a lustfulness beast while his father to be that of a loyal God. The iambic pentameter present in the most part of the soliloquy is heavily disregarded as this line extends to fifteen syllables as to implore Hamlet's distress. His turbulent response is furthermore illustrated by the enjambment which closely follows in the soliloquy indicating struggle to control his emotions. Imagery displays greater meaning in the death of his Hamlet's father. "'tis an unweeded garden, that grows to seed" symbolises that the thrown has been overtook by weeds, that is Claudius, after what was before has died. Shakespeare imagery used allows the audience to view Hamlet's thoughts graphically of the truth of the fratricide and incest in Elsinore.

Shakespeare's use of soliloquies reveals Hamlet's thoughts into life and death and reveals the weight of the contemplation in this stream of consciousness. The speech is written in a fractured, fragmented manner which is symbolic of Hamlet's internal struggle. Emphasis is placed upon the second last syllable rather than the last syllable, which draws upon the tradition of feminine rhyme further elucidating Hamlet's inner turmoil. Anadiplosis is evident in the metonymic chain in this soliloquy between the association of sleeping with death. The use of metonymy stresses the introspection of Hamlet, as it is a technique often used to convey thought processes, as thinking is an associative practice. Shakespeare suggests through the characterisation of Hamlet that the fear of what will come after death makes individuals suffer the corrupt world as suicide would mean "eternal damnation". This is again reflected in his statement, "Thus consciousness does make cowards of all". Poignantly highlighting Hamlet's inability to execute his reprisal and his struggle to turn his desire for revenge into action, accentuating his restraint due to the fear of what his future will hold after death.

"Alas poor Yorick! Iknew him / Horatio" a transcendent quotation and is a famous reflection on the fragility of life. It is in this soliloquy where Shakespeare reveals Hamlet's intelligence, emotional complexity into the fate of us all as the themes of life and death follow on into his stream of consciousness.

Hamlet is a play which both, reflects its own context and resonates with modern audiences. Through exploring themes such as the love, power and most highly life and death. 'Hamlet' educates the modern responder about the Shakespearean context and allows them to relate to universal these themes. This combination will ensure that the text continues to be valued as significant through numerous contexts.

16.3 HAMLET AS A PROBLEM PLAY

Hamlet, the first in Shakespeare's series of great tragedies, was initially classified as a problem play when the term became fashionable in the nineteenth century. Like Shakespeare's other problem plays -- *All's Well that End's Well*, *Troilus and Cressida* and *Measure for Measure* -- *Hamlet* focuses on the complications arising from love, death, and betrayal, without offering the audience a decisive and positive resolution to these complications. This is due in part to the simple fact that for Hamlet, there can be no definitive

answers to life's most daunting questions. Indeed, Hamlet's world is one of perpetual ambiguity.

Although those around him can and do act upon their thoughts, Hamlet is stifled by his consuming insecurities. From the moment Hamlet confronts the spirit of his father, and consistently throughout the play from that point on, what he is sure of in one scene he doubts in the next. Hamlet knows that it is the spirit of his father on the castle wall, and he understands fully its unmistakable cry for revenge. But, when he is alone, Hamlet rejects what he has witnessed in a maelstrom of doubt and fear:

The spirit that I have seen
May be the devil; and the devil hath power
To assume a pleasing shape; yea, and perhaps
Out of my weakness, and my melancholy,
As he is very potent with such spirits,
Abuses me to damn me. (2.2.600-05.)

The emphasis on ambiguity in the play, and the absence of overt instruction on how to overcome such ambiguity is Shakespeare's testament to real life. Each one of us has experienced Hamlet's struggle to find the truth in a mire of delusion and uncertainty, often to no avail. As Kenneth

Muir points out in *Shakespeare and the Tragic Pattern*:

[Hamlet] has to work out his own salvation in fear and trembling; he has to make a moral decision, in a complex situation where he cannot rely on cut-and-dried moral principles, or on the conventional code of the society in which he lives; and on his choice depend the fate of the people he loves and the fate of the kingdom to which he is the rightful heir. (154)

Hamlet also can be sub-categorized as a revenge play, the genre popular in the Elizabethan and Jacobean periods. Elements common to all revenge tragedy include: **1)** a hero who must avenge an evil deed, often encouraged by the apparition of a close friend or relative; **2)** scenes of death and mutilation; **3)** insanity or feigned insanity; **4)** sub-plays; and **5)** the violent death of the hero. Seneca, the Roman poet and philosopher, is accepted to be the father of such revenge tragedy, and a tremendous influence on Shakespeare. Thomas Kyd's *Spanish Tragedy*, written in 1592, is credited with reviving the Senecan revenge drama as well as spawning many other plays, such as Marlowe's *The Jew of Malta*, Webster's *The Duchess of Malfi*, the *Ur-Hamlet* (see the sources section), and Shakespeare's own *Titus Andronicus*, in addition to *Hamlet*.

16.4 TREATMENT OF WOMEN IN LITERATURE

In A Literature of Their Own, Elaine Showalter shows how women's literature has evolved, starting from the Victorian period to modern writing. She breaks down the movement into three stages — the Feminine, a period beginning with the use of the male pseudonym in the 1840s until 1880 with George Eliot's death; the Feminist, from 1880 till the winning of the vote in 1920; and the Female, from 1920 till the present-day, including a "new stage of self-awareness about 1960."

When discussing the characteristics of each of these phases, she looks at how other literary subcultures ("such as black, Jewish... or even American") to see how they developed. A female solidarity always seemed to exist as a result of "a shared and increasingly secretive and ritualized physical experience... the entire female sexual life

cycle." Female writers always wrote with this commonality and feminine awareness in mind. Therefore, women's writing and women's experiences "implied unities of culture."

Showalter finds in each subculture, and thus in women's literature, first a long period of imitation of the dominant structures of tradition and an "internalization of its standards of art an its views on social roles." This Feminine phase includes women writers such as the Brontës, Elizabeth Gaskell, Elizabeth Barrett Browning, Harriet Martineau, George Eliot, Florence Nightingale, and the later generation of Charlotte Yonge, Dinah Mulock Craik, Margaret Oliphant, and Elizabeth Lynn Linton. These women attempted to integrate themselves into a public sphere, a male tradition, and many of them felt a conflict of "obedience and resistance" which appears in many of their novels. Oddly enough, during the Victorian period, women flooded the novel market and comprised a healthy segment of the reading public — still, women writers were left "metaphorically paralyzed." The language with which they could fully express their experience as women and their sufferings as they still identified themselves within the confines of Victorian bourgeois propriety.

In the second stage, the minority — or rather, the subordinate — lashes out against the traditional standards and values, demanding their rights and sovereignty be recognized. In this Feminist phase, women's literature had varying angles of attack. Some women wrote social commentaries, translating their own sufferings to those of the poor, the laboring class, slaves, and prostitutes, thereby venting their sense of injustice in an acceptable manner. They expanded their sphere of influence by making inroads into social work. In a completely different direction, the 1870s sensation novels of Mary Braddon, Rhoda Broughton, and Florence Marryat, "explored genuinely radical female protest against marriage and women's economic oppression, although still in the framework of feminine conventions that demanded the erring heroine's destruction." Their golden-haired doll-like paradigms of womanhood mock contemporary expectations of Angels in the House by turning out to be mad bigamists and would-be murderesses.

Militant suffragists also wrote prolifically during this protest phase of literature. Women such as Sarah Grand, George Egerton, Mona Caird, Elizabeth Robins, and Olive Schreiner made "fiction the vehicle for a dramatization of wronged womanhood... demand[ing] changes in the social and political systems that would grant women male privileges and require chastity and fidelity from men." On the whole, Showalter finds these women's writings not examples of fine literature. Their projects concerned themselves more with a message than the creation of art, though their rejection of male-imposed definitions and self-imposed oppression opened the doors for the exploration of female identity, feminist theory, and the female aesthetic.

The third period, then, is characterized by a self-discovery and some freedom "from some of the dependency of opposition" as a means for self-definition. Some writers end up turning inward during the subsequent search for identity. In the early half of Female phase of writing, it "carried... the double legacy of feminine self-hatred and feminist withdrawal... [turning] more and more toward a separatist literature of inner space." Dorothy Richardson, Katherine Mansfield, and Virginia Woolf worked towards a female aesthetic, elevating sexuality to a world-polarizing determination. Moreover, the female experience and its creative processes held mystic implications — both transcendental and self-destructive vulnerability. These women "applied the cultural analysis of the feminists [before them] to words, sentences, and structures of language in the novel." However,

Showalter criticizes their works for their androgynistic natures. For all its concern with sexual connotations and sexuality, the writing avoids actual contact with the body, disengaging from people into "a room of one's own."

This changed when the female novel entered a new stage in the 1960s. With twentieth-century Freudian and Marxist analysis and two centuries of female tradition, writers such as Iris Murdoch, Muriel Spark, Doris Lessing, Margaret Drabble, A.S. Byatt, and Beryl Bainbridge access women's experiences. Using previously taboo language and situations, "anger and sexuality are accepted... as sources of female creative power." Showalter's analysis shows how the progress of women's writing reached this phase and expresses all the conflicts and struggles still influencing the current of women's literature.

16.5 TREATMENT OF WOMEN CHARACTERS IN HAMLET

It is frequently argued that the women characters in *Hamlet* are drawn in fainter lines than their male counterparts. Interpreters of the work are therefore urged to sharpen their image through speculation. They feel obliged to produce answers to the seemingly unresolved questions that surround them: Was Gertrude having an affair with Claudius prior to her husband's murder? Was she a collaborator (conspirator) in that murder? Had Polonius commonly baited his traps with his own daughter? How deeply involved were Hamlet and Ophelia?

Needless to say, directors have to make some choices. They range from explicit to ambiguous. On the explicit side, Kenneth Branaugh's 1997 film version of *Hamlet* includes cutaway shots of Hamlet and Ophelia making love. Tinted blue, these inserts hint at more than they reveal, hardly making the film a "blue" movie. Similarly, in Tony Richardson's 1969 production, Ophelia (Marianne Faithful) blurts out laughter at Laertes warning not to "lose your heart, or your chaste treasure open."

An interesting take on the relationship comes in Linda Bamber's Comic Women, Tragic Men. Ms. Bamber dismisses love as psychologically impossible for Hamlet.

> Of all of Shakespeare's tragedies, *Hamlet* is the one in which the sex nausea is most pervasive. The other heroes all have to be brought by the action of the play to that low moment when their pain is translated into misogyny; Hamlet compares his mother to a beast in his very first scene
>
> > O God, a beast that wants a discourse of reason
> > Would have mourned longer ...
> > O, most wicked speed to post
> > With such dexterity to incestuous sheets! (I.ii.50-1, 156-7)
>
> And from the first his encounters with Ophelia are spattered with hostility and disgust:
>
> > I have heard of your paintings, well enough. God hath given you one face, and you make yourselves another. You jig and amble, and you lisp; you nickname God' creatures and make your

wantonness your ignorance. (III.i.143-7)

In the closet scene with Gertrude, Hamlet's loathing comes to its climate.

... Nay, but to live
In the rank sweat of an enseamed bed
Stewed in corruption, honeying and making love
Over the nasty sty.... (III.iv.92-95)

Furthermore, there is no reconciliation with women at the end of the play... Hamlet does throw himself into Ophelia's grave, but clearly this is more an act of aggression against Laertes than of reconciliation with the dead Ophelia. - Linda Bamber, *Comic Women, Tragic Men*, Stanford Univ. Press, Stanford, 1982. p.71.

To sustain this viewpoint, Linda Bamber invents her own past for Hamlet.

The sex nausea is here, as in the other tragedies, a corollary to the hero's psychological and spiritual suffering. It is isomorphic not with the play as a whole but only with the second phase of the tragic fable. It is present from the beginning because *Hamlet* actually begins in the middle of the second phase. The first phase has ended with the death of Hamlet's father, two months prior to time present. That death has ended the old world, comfortably centered on the masculine Self and based on an identity of interests between father and son. In the new world the presence of the Other destroys the hero's sense of centrality. Misogyny is a version of the anger the hero directs toward the Other for destroying his old, self-centered world. Hamlet, like other heroes, rages against women when he loses his place in the sun. - Linda Bamber, *Comic Women, Tragic Men*, Stanford Univ. Press., Stanford, 1982. p.72.

Ms. Bamber sees the women as a barometer of Hamlet's psychological state. When Hamlet is at ease with his destiny, the women cease being monstrous and lustful and become worthy andtrue.

According to Ms. Bamber, Hamlet's misogyny ceases at the point where he makes his voyage to England and arranges the execution of Rosencrantz and Guildenstern. At this point, he overcomes his underlying doubt in his own manliness and emerges as "a man of action." "With this gesture of single-minded aggression against his enemies," she states, "Hamlet finally proves himself as a history hero." (p.84) Her theory is based on the notion that Hamlet transforms his sexual aggression against women who have withdrawn from him into the more appropriate channel of political aggression. With this change, the sexuality of the play moves from "violent and disgusted" to "clear and elegiac," and Ophelia emerges as "an icon of positive femininity." (p.72) "The sexuality of the final movement is natural first of all, in that Ophelia's femininity is defined by its association with natural things - with flowers that she gives away, hangs on the willow tree, and has thrown on her grave. Ophelia becomes a kind of inverse Perdita, a pathetic May Queen." (pp.72-3.)

In any case, the likelihood of a relationship between Hamlet and Ophelia seems to depend on two things that are beyond Ophelia's control, and possibly even the control of Hamlet. The first is Hamlet's psychological state. The second is the political exigencies of the drama. For Ophelia, this means that any willfulness she might bring to the relationship is overridden by her father's and brother's demands. The becomes bait in a trap (springes to catch woodcocks), and in the process is trapped herself.

It is often stated that Ophelia, with her willow tree and her flowers serves at a representative of the natural world within the artificial construct of the court at Elsinore. If this is the case, it is also true that she is no longer capable of what is most natural within this environment. Just as Gertrude is kept from the natural process of mourning, Ophelia's love is muted and repressed by forces that overwhelm her.

16.6 SELF-ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

1. What is universality in Literature?
2. Discuss *Hamlet* as a Universal literary text.
3. What is a problem play?
4. Treat *Hamlet a*s a problem play.
5. Delineate the treatment of Ophelia and Gertrude characters in Hamlet by Shakespeare.

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LESSON: 17
THE TEMPEST

Objectives of the Lesson

- **To introduce Shakespeare's Dramatic Evolution**
- **To make the students aware of dramatic genres like Dramatic Romances**
- **To familiarize the students with dramatic devices such as Masque and Music**

Structure of the Lesson

17.1 INTRODUCTION

Shakespeare's dramatic career extends over a period of nearly twenty-two- years, from 1590 to 1612. During this period, the dramatist worked hard producing, over most of the time, about two plays a year, besides two poems – Rape of Lucrece and Venus and Adonis – and 154 sonnets. His plays achieved immediate success, he rapidly rose to eminence, and died a rich and prosperous man.

A study of his plays reveals a gradual development of his mind and art. To stress the gradual growth of his art, Prof. Dowden has divided his dramatic career into four parts, each revealing a definite advance over the previous one.

(A) In the Workshop- This is the period of apprenticeship. The dramatist was learning his craft. He was revising old plays, working in collaboration with other known dramatists of his day, and imitating them. He was, "in the workshop" **(Dowden)**, so to say. The plays of this time are immature in theme, treatment and characterization. The work is largely experimental in nature far the poet was still grouping in the dark.

This early work consists of Early Comedy, Early Tragedy, and early work on History. The most important of them are:

(1) Love's Labour Last- said to be the first independent and original work of Shakespeare.
(2) The Comedy of Errors-a farce full of boisterous fun and laughter.
(3) The Two Gentlemen of Verona- a delightful romance.
(4) Richard III- His first successful attempt at Historical drama, revealing the influence of Marlowe.
(5) Romeo and Juliet- a lyrical love tragedy, later revised and perfected.
(6) A Mid-summer Night's Dream- a fantasy, marking the close of his apprenticeship.

(B) "In the World" – This is the period of mature, joyous comedies and mature Histories. Shakespeare has now found himself. By this time he has acquired experience of the world as well as mastery over his craft. He is now, as Dowden remarks, "In the world". His powers have matured, and he writes with full confidence and sureness of touch. The works of this period are entirely original and independent creations and can easily be recognized as Shakespeare's own. He is at the fullness of his powers, and his work is robust and strong.

The most important works of this period are:

(1) Much Ado About Nothing- this delightful romance is in the manner of his early comedies, but reveals a higher level of wit and humour.

(2) As You Like It, and Twelfth Night the atmosphere of these comedies is one of mirth and gaiety and they are marked with a frank enjoyment of life. There is a perfect blending of humour and romance. They are the best comedies of Shakespeare.

(3) Merry Wives of Windsor, and the Taming of the Shrew- farcical comedies, largely in the vein of early comedies, yet revealing a maturity of Shakespeare's powers.

(4) The Merchant of Venice- a comedy "hovering on the brinks of tragedy", or a tragic-comedy.

(5) Richard II, Henry IV and Henry V- the great English Histories, which depict the splendid panorama of the history of the nation, and reveal the secret springs of human action.

(6) **"Out of the Depths" –** This is the period of the Dark comedies, the Four Great Tragedies, and the Great Roman Plays. Prof. Dowden refers to this stage as "Out of the Depths". It seems as if some change has come over the poet and he is ill at ease and depressed. Frustration in love treachery of some trusted friend, death of his father or sons, seems to have cast a shanow over him, and the plays of this time partake of the gloom and bitterness of his life. His attention is now occupied with the darker side of human nature, to the total exclusion of all that is sunny of bright.

The plays of the period may be classified as:

(1) The Dark Comedies – All is Well That Ends Well; Measure For Measure, and Troilus and Cressida. They are comedies only in name, as they partake fully of tragic pain and intensity.

(2) Roman Plays – Julius Caesar; Antony and Cleopatra, and Coriolanus.

(3) The Four Great Tragedies – Hamlet, Macbeth, King Lear and Othello. They are the four greatest tragedies of the world, and the supreme creations of Shakespeare.

(D) **"On the Heights"** – The last period is the period of the great Dramatic Romances Shakespeare was now, "On the heights". He was at the top of his profession and was no longer forced to follow accepted convention. He, therefore, wrote with perfect liberty and cared only to indulge his whim. The darkness and burden of tragic suffering had passed away and dramatist had acquired perfect serenity and calm of mind. He "seeks refreshment in irresponsible play" as he needed relaxation after the strain of the great tragic period.

The plays of this period are: (1) Pericles (2) Cymbeline (3) The Winter's Tale (4) The Tempest (5) Henry VIII.

17.2 DRAMATIC ROMANCES

The plays of Shakespeare's closing years, Cymbeline, the Winter's Tale, the Tempest and Pericles, are called Dramatic Romances. Critics have all agreed that in these last plays the playwright was breaking new ground; he was certainly attempting to do something new though opinions differ as to what this thing is or why he was doing it.

Critics are equally at variance with each other as to why Shakespeare was breaking new ground in his final phase. The theory has been advanced that he was experimenting along new lines owing to a change in theatrical conditions. His earlier plays were written for the open-air theatre, but now he was writing for an indoor theatre-the Black friars. "The indoor theatres, with their candle light and with facilities of vision little affected by the weather, were suited to masque and pageantry: while their enclosedness and the good behavior of the audience encouraged delicacy in intonation rather than shouting." The masque-like nature of the final plays, and their pageantry certainly supports this contention. Moreover, the dramatist had to reckon with the rising influence of Beaumont and Fletcher who had

popularized a new type of drama, a type full of melo-dramatic situations, and all sorts of improbabilities, "Never before was Shakespeare more shameless, in creating, against all probability, a melodramatic situation, just for that situation's sake." He must have learnt this from his younger contemporaries; they must have supplied him with, "the fantasies and improbabilities that separate his last plays from those that preceded them," The mellifluousness" of the verse of his last plays, and the technique which, "sacrifices all else to neatness of plot and to unrelated sensational situation", is something new in Shakespeare and, as Miss Ellis-Fermor argues "the Bard of Avon may have taken the hint for them from the suggestion into something entirely his own, something far superior to the original As everywhere else he turned borrowed matter to his own ends.

The Dramatic Romances are different, in atmosphere and conception, both from the tragedies and the earlier comedies: "The subjects chosen are tragic in nature but they are shaped to a far innate result." There is tragic material in plenty, and there are also some high wrought tragic scenes; but the tension is soon relaxed. The darkness and burden of tragic suffering is wit large on the face of these plays. Imogen and Hermione are deeply wronged like Desdemona; Prospero like Lear is driven from his inheritance yet the forces of destruction do not prevail, and the ends bring forgiveness and re-union. Forgiveness and reconciliation were there in the earlier comedies, too, but here it is a different affair. "There is no reversion" says **Raleigh**, "to the manner of the comedies: the new-found happiness is a happiness wrought from experience, and none like the old high-spirited gaiety it does not exult over the evildoer. An all-embracing tolerance and kindliness inspires these last plays".

The final plays have been called Dramatic Romances, for in them Shakespeare gives free rein to his fancy and writes unhampered by any laws of logic, or dramatic causation. It is as if he were weary of the business of the drama, and cared only to indulge his whim. He was at the top of his profession and could afford to ignore all convention. The plays have the inconsequence of a reverie, they are fantastic like a dream. His imagination knows no restraints, and all sorts of impossibilies are conceived, and many absurdities, creep into the plots. It appears that his grasp on the hard realities of life was loosened by fatigue, and that he sought refreshment in irresponsible play, As **Raleigh** puts it; "The brave new world of h is latest invention is rich in picture and memory-ship-wreck, battle, the simple funeral of Fidele, the strange adventures, adventures of Autolycus, the dance of Shepherdesses on the russet lawn, and of fairies on the yellow sand." The boldest stroke of his mature power is seen in his creation of a new mythology in Aerial and Caliban. The brain that devised The Tempest was not unstrung by fatigue

The "mellow romantic atmosphere" of these play is further heightened by shifting the scene to a remote enchanted island across, "perilous seas in fairylands forlorn,' or to the equally remote mountains of Wales or to the sheep-walks of Bohemia where the like of the inhabitants is a peaceful round of daily duties and rural pieties. The beautiful scenery of the mountains and the sea is particularly romantic . The prominent scenes are also laid on the sea-coast.

Forgiveness and reconciliation are the themes of the Romances, and this reconciliation of the grown-ups is invariably brought about by their children. Perdita and Florizel, Miranda and Ferdinand, all make amends for the faults and misfortunes of their parents. Prospero and Alonso become friends through the love of Ferdinand and Miranda. The sins of the fathers are not visited on the children. Perdita is happily united with Florizel, Miranda with Ferdinand, Imogen with Posthumus, and Marina with Pericles- and all this happiness despite the faults of the parents.

Evil and discord are present in the final plays in all its abundance. This discord and evil were also there in the Comedies and the Tragedies in ample measure; the difference lies in the way in which it is overcome or expelled. In the comedies, the discord takes the form of "Crosses" in the way of true love and these are removed by the intervention of kindly Fortune. In the Tragedies, on the other hand, Fate is on the side of Evil and leads to much undeserved suffering and ruin. In the Romances, too; Destiny intervenes in favour of the protagonists, but it takes on a more palpable and visible form. In the Winter's Tale Apollo proclaims the truth about Hermione; in Cymbeline, Jupiter appears on the scene riding on h is eagle and swaying the fortunes of the British and the Roman forces; his influence is felt throughout the play. "In The Tempest, Destiny places herself in the control of main; she has indeed become man. Prospero with his magic wand has absolute control over human affairs, over the forces of nature and even over the spirits of the air".

The last creations of Shakespeare, more specially 'The Tempest' are rich in Symbolism. Perdita and Miranda symbolize the fertility and continuity of Nature. The luxuriance of Nature, described so vividly and beautifully, stands for the beneficent power of Destiny. Caliban is of the earthly. He stands for sensuality grossness and meanness ; he is evil personified. Aerial, on the other hand, is refined spirit of the air, ethereal and pure. He stands for the spirit of freedom, Caliban also represent the eternal slave as well as the dispossessed native, and according to this view Prospero becomes a colonizer. He has been called the symbol of Destiny, the personification of Wisdom, and the Eternal teacher. He also represents an inspired artist, who is ever absorbed in the pursuit of his art to the neglect of his social duties and so is rejected by society.

"The style of these last pays" says **Raleigh**, "is a further development of the tragedies", The thought is more packed and crowded together than in the earlier plays. "The very syntax is the syntax of thought rather than of language; constructions are mixed, grammatical links are dropped, the meaning of many sentences is compressed into one; hints and impressions count for as much as full blown propositions". This later style of Shakespeare is perhaps the most wonderful thing in English Literature:

The latest group of Shakespeare's plays, of which the Tempest is the very last. In all the earlier plays, punishment for sin and error was inevitable, and the catastrophe of all the plays shows the remorseless inevitable, infliction of that punishment on the sinners and all connected with them. No wonder that Dowden has labeled that period, "Out of the Depths". But in the final group, there is a marked change of thought in Shakespeare s if he had taken to heart the gentler Christian lesson of forgiveness of injuries and God's mercy for sinners. This may be the reason why in Winter's Tale the king, who had unjustly expelled his faithful wife, Hermione, is allowed to atone for his error and receive her forgiveness; and, in Cymbeline, even the scheming Iachimo is allowed to repent and go off unpunished. Nowhere is this gentler creed more clearly stated than in The Tempest, in the most direct contradiction of the severe classic conception of remorseless Destiny as portrayed in the tragedies, Prospero forgives all his foes in the highest Christian fashion; even the non-human Ariel is made to speak on their behalf. Prospero delivers himself of the highest religious principles:

'Though with their high wrongs I am struck to the quick
Yet with my nobler reason, "gainst my fury
Do I take part; the rarer action is
In virtue than in vengeance; they being penitent
The sole drift of my purpose doth extend
Not a frown further."

This is what has made Dowden speak of the final period as "Out of the heights", for Shakespeare has shaken off his indignation against life's injustice, and looks on all things with a higher and holier knowledge. "Forgiveness" is the keynote of the final plays. "Reconciliation" is their theme.

17.3 MASQUE AND MUSIC

One striking aspect of the play is the intrusion of the classical figures of Ceres, Iris and Hymen, and intrusion it indeed is, for they do not in any way contribute to the action. The explanation lies in the Elizabethans' love of pageantry, bright colours and spectacular displays. That branch of the drama known as the Masque first became popular in Shakespeare's time. Briefly the Masque is a short drama possessing very little action or plot, but mainly spectacular and basing its appeal on costumes and diaglogue. It is akin to the pageant, but has some little action and dialogue. The Masque was usually played on special day at the king's court, or in the households of the great nobles. In his later days, Milton condemned the Masque as wanton and frivolous, but in his youth he had himself written the well-known masque of Comus. Ben Johnson wrote many masques, most of them being designed as short and spectacular plays on special occasion, such as the marriages and birthdays of the great. The people of English at that time were well versed in the literature and lore of the classical peoples, and Latin and Greek were looked upon as part of the necessary education of a man. Jonson sneered at Shakespeare because he knew little of those languages. But the classical gods and goddesses were well-known to English people, who knew Jupiter and Juno, Venus, Ceres, Iris and Hymen. They were symbolic figures which were used in many masques and pageants. Because the public
liked such figures, who no doubt appeared in elaborate and striking costumes, it is no wonder that Shakespeare inserted them frequently as concession to the popular taste. This taste had come down in direct line from the Miracle plays and the Mysteries. The Masque in the play, then, has no other purpose than to supply colour and pageantry. One German critic argued that the idea for this Masque was taken from certain festivities in Scotland held by King James there in 1594, for the baptism of his son, since Iris, Ceres, and others were seen in the Scottish show. But the idea and plan were common at this time, and these characters were commonly used for allegory. Shakespeare probably knew Jonson's Masque of Hymen, produced in 1606, which had the same general scheme and characters. To use this well known model would have been quite in the fashion.

If The Tempest was specially written for the occasion of the marriage of Prince Charles to Elizabeth of Bohemia, and was first performed at the royal court for this purpose, much is explained. It was a well-known method of entertainment and compliment to royal and noble families. If this was the avowed object of The Tempest, then the masque was a very important part of the play, considering the object for which it was intended. The congratulations and blessings spoken to Ferdinand and Miranda by the deities, Ceres and Iris, would be addressed to the royal box; they would be taken by all as Shakespeare's loyal address and compliment to Charles and Elizabeth.

The last element which many have observed in this play is that of autobiography, Shakespeare's sole lyric incursion and personal note in all the plays. Audience demands of a dramatist that he be impersonal, and this Shakespeare has observed, though many have tried to interpret the gloom of the tragic period in terms of the state of the dramatist's own mind at the time. In the final group of all, there is clearly a tendency to write of the reunion of long-separated relations, lonely and sad people who have been parted from their loved ones by long misunderstandings, or from their loved home and country. It seems more than significant that Shakespeare had spent many years in London, apart from his wife and family in Stratford, and was reunited to them on his return to Stratford just about the time

that he was writing the final plays, Cymbeline, Winter's Tale, and The Tempest. May be the return of Prospero to Milan an allegorical description of the return of the dramatist to Stratford? Whether or not there be director intended allegory here, it is an undoubted fact that in another way Shakespeare speaks direct to his audiences, and makes his farewell to the world of drama and the stage in which he had reigned as chief magician and undisputed monarch for years. He had written rapidly and labored hard, and there is little doubt that he felt the failing of his powers under the strain. He realized that The Tempest was his final play, and that he would no more create the tempests of Lear, the ecstasies of Othello, no more would he resurrect the dead and departed kings of England and Rome to move before the audiences of the Globe Theatre. Regretfully he says:

'graves at my command
Have waked their sleepers, oped, and let them forth
By my so potent art. But this rough magic
I here abjure, and, when I have required
Some heavenly music…
I'll break my staff
Bury it certain fathoms in the earth,
And deeper than did ever plummet sound,
I'll drown my book'.

The whole of this passage should be carefully studied in this light for there is no doubt that, for the moment, the dramatist is Prospero, and the words have the secondary sense of a last farewell from Shakespeare to the English public, whom he had enthralled with his art for such a glorious period. "Prospero" may be regarded as a symbolic projection of Shakespeare's own personality as he attained to the serenity and ripe wisdom of age.

A striking feature of The Tempest is the dramatic use of song by Shakespeare. Music is an all-pervading element in The Tempest, for as Caliban declares:

''The isle is full of noises
Sounds and sweet airs that give delight and hurt not".

Shakespeare has admirably succeeded in The Tempest in making music a dramatic revelation personality. The songs are in tune with the character; the character projects itself dramatically through song. The songs of Ariel are delicate, graceful, of exquisite fancy and melody, of elfin charm. Caliban's songs are an expression of an uninhibited nature, intense with primitive energy. They give vent to the diabolical hatred or a diabolic glee of primitive man. The songs of Stephano have a human, work-a-day note, they are of the earth, and earthy.

There, then is The Tempest: an old continental legend about a banished king, some strange stories of startling adventures experienced by a few shipwrecked English sailors who were compelled to live on an enchanted island, a reflection of the general interest which people of the time were taking in colonization, some personal autobiography, and perhaps a more personal farewell to the drama in general than anything in drama is usually personal. The interesting point is that all these elements have been completely absorbed and fused into perfect dramatic unity. The entertainment and recreation, the research student may find pleasure in breaking the play up into its component parts; the ordinary reader will be content to find the play a perfect harmony, yielding what he wants in the way of entertainment and recreation. This is the highest criterion of the drama, and it is here that Shakespeare has succeeded completely.

17.4 SELF ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

1. Discuss Shakespeare's dramatic evolution as suggested by Prof. Dowden.
2. Discuss Shakespeare's contribution towards Dramatic Romances.
3. To what extent is the Masque appropriate and an integral part of the play?

17.5 REFERENCE BOOKS

1. Daiches David: A Critical History of English Literature
2. Charlton, H.B.: Shakespeare's comedy
3. Wagner, Emma Brockway: Shakespeare's Tempest
4. Walter Raleigh: Shakespeare

LESSON: 18
THE TEMPEST

Objectives of the Lesson:

- **To introduce names of the characters in the play**
- **To enlighten the students about the principle characters of the play**
- **To encourage the students to learn the story of the play act wise**

Structure of the Lesson

18.1 DRAMATIS PERSONAE

ALONSO	KING OF NAPLES
FERDINAND	HIS SON
SEBASTIAN	BROTHER TO ALONSO
PROSPERO	THE RIGHTFUL DUKE OF MILAN
ANTONIO	HIS BROTHER, THE USURPING DUKE OF MILAN
GONZALO	AN HONEST OLD COUNSELLOR
(ADRIAN AND FRANCISCO)	LORDS
TRINCULO	A JESTER
STEPHANO	A DRUNKEN BUTLER
(MASTER OF THE SHIP, BOATSWAIN, MARINERS)	THE CREW
CALIBAN	A SAVAGE AND A DEFORMED SLAVE
MIRANDA	DAUGHTER TO PROSPERO
ARIEL	AN AIRY SPIRIT
(IRIS CERES, JUNO NYMPHS, REAPERS)	SPIRITS

18.2 INTRODUCTION TO THE PRINCIPLE CHARACTERS OF THE PLAY

Prospero: The main character of this play, Prospero used to be the legitimate Duke of Milan. Unfortunately his treacherous brother Antonio stole his title and banished Prospero to a Mediterranean island with his daughter Miranda. A great lover of the arts and in particular books, Prospero has harnessed the powers of magic whilst in exile.

Miranda: Prospero's daughter. Attractive and young at the tender age of fifteen years, Miranda has lived with her father in exile for twelve years. Aside from her father, she has seen few men in her life, and quickly enchants the shipwrecked Ferdinand.

Ariel: An airy spirit, Ariel serves his master Prospero well in his many tasks of magic on Prospero's island. Once enslaved by a witch, Ariel wants his freedom now from Prospero. At the conclusion of this play Ariel is given freedom.

Caliban: A giant misformed beast, Shakespeare describes Caliban as "a savage and deformed slave." Hating his master Prospero, Caliban works for him out of fear of Prospero's magic than loyalty

Iris, Ceres, Juno, Nymphs and Reapers: Spirits that appear by Prospero's will.

Ship Wrecked Characters on Prospero's Island:

Alonso: The king of Naples. When Prospero's brother Antonio, usurped Prospero's dukedom, it was Alonso who recognized Prospero's brother, sealing Prospero's fate of living in exile.

Ferdinand: The much-loved son of the king of Naples. Shipwrecked, but alive, Ferdinand falls instantly in love with Miranda, when he first sees her on Prospero's island.

Sebastian: The brother of Alonso, the king of Naples. He plots to kill his king and take his title with the scheming Antonio.

Antonio: The brother of Prospero, he took Prospero's title from him when Prospero trusted him to manage his affairs. Having replaced his brother, he now encourages Sebastian to do the same to his brother, Alonso.

Gonzalo: An honest old counselor. When Prospero was to have starved to death when exiled by boat, it was Gonzalo who provided food, clothing and books to comfort Prospero and the then three year old daughter Miranda.

Stephano: A drunken butler, he attempts to kill Prospero and take the island for his own. Trinculo and Caliban whom he fools into believing he is a god to help them.

Trinculo: A jester, who tries to kill Prospero.

Master of the Ship, Boatswains, Mariners: Sailors who fight Prospero's storm but are ultimately shipwrecked on his island.

18.3 ACT WISE SUMMARY

Act I.

A huge storm batters a ship carrying Alonso, the King of Naples, Sebastian, Alonso's brother, Ferdinand Alonso's son, Antonio, Gonzalo and others. They are likely to die by shipwreck.

On the island near the storm, Prospero and his daughter Miranda are introduced. It is learnt that Prospero has created the storm battering Alonso's and company's ship. Miranda asks Prospero to stop the storm. It is revealed that Prospero was once The the Duke of Milan but was banished to this island with Miranda by Antonio, his brother who took over Prospero's dukedom of Milan.

Ariel, Prospero's magic fairy is introduced who tells that the men onboard the ship have all made it ashore unharmed as planned. Caliban, a misformed beast is also introduced. Ariel leads Ferdinand to Miranda and the two immediately fall in love. Prospero decides to be rude to Ferdinand, fearful of too rapid a courtship.

Act II.

The rest of the shipwreck survivors wake up on the island. They are surprised that their clothes smell and feel as fresh as if they had just been bought at a market.

Ariel's song puts them all to sleep again except for Sebastian and Antonio. Anonio who replaces his brother Prospero as Duke of Milan manipulates Sebastian, King Alonso's brother into doing the same thing by usurping King Alonso's thone . The two are about to kill Alonso in his sleep but Ariel awakens everyone and the two men quickly make an excuse for drawing their swords out.

Trinculo, a jester on the ship, discovers Caliban and quickly realizes that such a beast would earn a fortune for him as a novelty in England. Stephano, Trinculo's friend eventually finds Trinculo under Caliban's huge frame. Stephano gives Caliban alcohol, causing Caliban to think Stephano is more powerful than Prospero whom Caliban hates. The three men set off together later deciding to kill Prospero.

Act III.

Prospero who is now invisible to Ferdinand and Miranda, witnesses Ferdinand and Miranda expressing their deep love for one another in words that out rival Romeo and Juliet in their tenderness. Prospero, realizing he is witnessing a truly rare meeting of hearts, approves of Ferdinand's proposal for his daughter. The scene ends with Ferdinand taking Miranda for his fiance Prospero is pleased but must now leave to attend to matters before supper.

Bottle in hand, Stephano, Trinculo and Caliban continue on their merry way together. Stephano starts getting delusions of grandeur, which Caliban blindly follows. Trinculo thinks Caliban is being foolish to follow Stephano so blindly. Caliban succeeds in convincing Stephano into killing Prospero and taking over the island and suggests several gruesome ways of killing Prospero. Ariel lures the group away with his entrancing sounds…

Alonso, Sebastian Antonio, Gonzalo, Adrian and Francisco and others witness a banquet on the island but it is an illusion. Ariel returns and verbally punishes Alonso (King of Naples), Antonio and Sebastian for their roles in exiling Prospero.

Act IV.

Prospero tells Ferdinand that he no longer will punish him, but instead will freely give his daughter's hand in marriage to him. Prospero conjures up a beautiful, mythical, illusory party to complete the celebrations with goddesses and nymphs.

Prospero instructs Ariel to lead the shipwrecked men on the island before him. Remembering Stephano, Caliban and Trinculo, Prospero has Ariel distract them with clothes. Caliban fails to keep his friends focused on killing Prospero. Prospero promises Ariel that he will soon be free

Act V.

Prospero brings everyone except Stephano, Caliban and Trinculo before him in a circle.Spellbound, he verbally reprimands several of the men who exiled him. Prospero tells Ariel that he will soon be free and that he will miss him. Prospero also intends to destroy his ability to use magic. Making his presence known, Prospero forgives King Alonso, and tells Sebastian and Antonio he will keep secret their treacherous plan to kill Alonso, forgiving both. The famously sweet scene of Ferdinand playing chess with Miranda is shown.. King Alonso is overjoyed to see his son Ferdinand alive and soon learns of Ferdinand's imminent marriage to Miranda.

Prospero appeals to the Stephano and Trinculo. Caliban is embarrassed that he followed a fool (Trinculo). Caliban is given his freedom. Prospero announces that in the morning they will all set sail for Naples. Ariel is at last set free.

Epilogue:

Prospero appeals to the audience to allow him to travel back to Naples reclaiming his life as Duke of Milan.

18.4 THE PLOT SUMMARY

There is a certain deserted island in the sea and the only inhabitants are an old deposed Duke of Milan, Prospero and his charming young daughter Miranda. They come to this island driven by fate when Miranda was just a three year old toddler. She has no memory of having seen any other human face than her father's.

They live in a cave where Prospero preserves his books of magic. Prospero, like all learned men of his times devotes his time to the study of magic leaving the administrative affairs to his brother Antonio. He gets engrossed in occult studies and becomes a stranger to his people,while Antonio seizes the opportunity and makes the loyal courtiers subservient to his purpose. Prospero's evil natured brother joins hands with king of Naples and devises a scheme to stamp out the duke and his family from his dukedom. A disloyal army is raised and the duke with his infant daughter is hurried to board an old boat to perish in the high seas. A kind noble, Gonzalo puts food, fresh water and Prospero's precious books of magic in the boat. Drifting in the sea they arrive on the island which is enchanted by a witch called Sycorax. She dies a short time before his arrival. Prospero by virtue of his art, releases many good spirits imprisoned by Sycorax in the tree trunks because of their refusal to execute her evil commands. These gentle spirits are grateful to Prospero for releasing them and are obedient to his will.

Prospero also has in his service the ugly monster, Caliban, son of Sycorax. He finds him in the woods a misshapen thing far less human in form than an ape. He takes him into h is family and teaches him to speak. Caliban only susceptible to all that is evil inherited from his witch-mother, attempts to violate the honour of Miranda. Furious Prospero enslaves him and gives him the menial tasks like fetching of the firewood. Caliban spitefully curses Prospero for taking his land and turning him into a slave in the very language he is taught to communicate. Caliban says

"You taught me language, and my profit

On't is, I know how to curse. The red

Plague rid you

For learning me your language!"

This very instance makes the critics to re-read the text as the one which displays the aspect of colonialism. The clash between the native culture and the colonizer is shown in the characters of Caliban and Prospero.

Caliban is compelled to perform laborious task and when he is lazy Ariel invisible to Caliban slyly pinches him, tumbles him and with variety of tricks vexes him. Prospero with the aid of powerful spirits can command the winds and waves of the sea. Destiny drives a vessel full of his old enemies towards the island. The king of Naples gives his daughter Claribel to the king of Tunis. After the wedding, on their way to Naples, they are caught in the tempest created by Prospero. Miranda, on seeing the fine large ship full of living beings like themselves on the verge of wrecking requests her father to stop the dreadful storm. Gentle Prospero assures her that he means no harm by saying

"Be collected: no more amazement: tell your

Piteous heart there's no harm done…

No harm I have done nothing but in care of thee-"

He reveals to her their woeful story of the deprived dukedom , of the betrayal by a trusted brother who usurped his throne and finally of the arrival on this strange enchanted island

Having said so, he gently touches her with his magic wand which makes her fall asleep. The spirit Ariel comes and gives him an account of the tempest, the disposal of the ship's company, the rescue of Prince Ferdinand from the sea and his estrangement from his father and others who believe that he has met his watery grave. Prospero is extremely pleased with Ariel and orders him to bring Ferdinand to arrange a meeting between his daughter and the young prince. Then Prospero asks about the king and Antonio, his brother. Ariel says that they are unharmed and they are lamenting the loss of Ferdinand who they believe has perished in the sea. Ariel says that not a single person in the crew is lost and even the ship is safe in the harbor. Prospero appreciates Ariel for his excellent performance and proceeds to entrust him with more work. Ariel reminds him of his promised freedom. Prospero is annoyed by this request and reminds him how the evil Sycorax, with her witchcraft has shut him up in the pine tree trunk for twelve years and how he with his superior magical power has released him.

Ariel immediately apologizes for his seeming ungrateful behavior and readily obeys his commands. Prospero assures Ariel of his freedom and Ariel goes to fetch Ferdinand to arrange an encounter between him and Miranda. Ariel finds Ferdinand sitting on the grass in the same melancholic posture. He remains invisible and sings a song about his father

"full fathom five thy father lies;

Of his bones are coral made…"

This strange news of his lost father rouses the prince from the stupor in which he has fallen. He follows in amazement the strain of Ariel's song and is led to Prospero and Miranda, who are sitting under the shade of a large tree. Miranda , who has never seen a man other than her own father sees Ferdinand with a strange surprise and says

"What is 't? a spirit/

Lord, how it looks about ! Believe me, sir.
It carries a brave form: but 'tis a spirit."

Her father answers that he is a human being who eats, sleeps and has senses. He looks dejected because he has lost his companions in a shipwreck otherwise he is a handsome person. Miranda who thinks that all men have grey beards and grave faces like her father is delighted to see the handsome young prince Ferdinand. Ferdinand in turn thinks that she is the goddess of this enchanted island. When he addresses her as goddess she timidly answers that she is a simple maid. Prospero is pleased to witness their mutual admiration. He wants to test the constancy of Ferdinand and resolves to throw some difficulties in their way. So he addresses the prince with a stern voice and accuses him of being a spy and threatens that he will tie him up. Ferdinand is fixed to the ground and has no power to move. Miranda begs her father to be kind to him. Prospero chides her like any other well meaning father,

"Silence! One word more

Shall make me chide thee, if not hate thee what,

And an advocate for an imposter! Hush!

Thou think'st there is no more such shapes as he,

Having seen but him and Caliban: Foolish Wench!
To the most of men this is a Caliban,
And they to him are angels"
These words he utter to check her constancy and Miranda proves her true love when she
says,
"My affections
Are then most humble; I have no ambition
To see a goodlier man"

Prospero orders Ferdinand to perform the menial task. Ferdinand is astonished to find himself so strangely compelled to follow Prospero. The thought of beholding Miranda's face gives him a hope. He says

"My spirits as in dream are bound up;

My father's loss, the weakness which I feel,

The wreck of all my friends, nor this mans threats

To who I am subdued are but light to me.

Might I but through my prison once-aday

Behold this maid"

Prospero keeps a secret a vigil on the young couple. He imposes hard labour of piling of heavy logs of wood on Ferdinand and also allows Miranda to watch over the prince. Miranda unable to see her lover's plight asks to rest and volunteers his task. Ferdinand by no means agrees to this. They engage in a long love conversation.

Prospero who gives the task to Ferdinand merely as a trial of love is not at his study but is observing them invisible to over hear their conversation. Prospero is much pleased with Ferdinand's long speech in which he professes his true love. The dis-obedience of his daughter does not dishearten him and smiles at the prospect of his daughter becoming the queen of Naples .

"Fair encounter
Of two most rare affections! Heavens rain grace
On that which breeds between "em!"

Prospero makes himself visible to Ferdinand and promises to make amends, by giving him his daughter. He appreciates for standing the test nobly and winning affection of his lady love. He leaves the young couple to themselves and instructs them not to indulge in any amorous play. They willingly obey his orders. Prospero now leaves them and calls Ariel to enquire about others. Ariel relates the plight of king of Naples and Antonio. There are almost out of their senses with fear as they have seen and heard strange things. They are fatigued and keep wandering. He also tells Prospero that they are reminded of their cruelty in driving out Prospero from his dukedom when the banquet appears and vanishes before them. The terrors they witness, the hunger and loss of loved ones make them repent for their misdeeds. Ariel assures his master that their penitence is sincere and that he though a spirit, cannot but pity them. Prospero is moved to kindness.

"And mine shall,

Hast thou, which art best air, a touch, a feeling

Of their afflictions, and shall not myself,

One of their kind, that relish all as sharply,

Passion as they, be kindlier moved than thou art?

Though with their high wrong I am struck to the quick.

Yet with nobler reason 'giant my fiery

Do I take part: the rarer action is

In virtue than in vengeance: they being penitent

The sole drift of purpose doth extend…"

Though his heart is struck by great wrong committed against him he nobly treats his enemies with virtuous kindness than with revenge since they are penitent. He asks Ariel to set them free. Ariel soon returns with the king, Antonio and Gonzalo by guiding them with a melodious music to his master's presence. Grief and terror have stupefied their senses so much that they fail to recognize Prospero. Prospero first addresses Gonzalo, calling him preserver of his life. Then king and Prospero's brother recognize the very man who was the victim of their evil designs.

Antonio is subdued by Prospero's superior magical powers. King Alonso expresses his sincere remorse and apologies for joining hands with Antonio in deposing the duke. After a happy reconciliation Prospero surprises the company by showing Ferdinand and Miranda at a game of chess. Nothing can exceed the joy of the king and Ferdinand to meet the lost son and father in an unexpected fashion for they each has thought that the other is drowned in the storm. Miranda is awe struck to see so many noble creatures. King Alonso is also astonished by the beauty and grace of Miranda and wonders that she may be a goddess. When he comes to know that she is the daughter of Prospero and Ferdinand desires to marry her, he is more than pleased. Alonso truly feels sorry even seeks Miranda's forgiveness.

"But, O, how oddly will it sound that I must ask my child forgiveness!"

And Prospero stops him and says

"There, Sir stop!

Let us not burden our remembrance with a heaviness that's gone"

Prospero also embraces his brother and assures him of his forgiveness. The kindness of Prospero fills his enemies with remorse and they weep with repentant hearts. The great reconciliation takes place and Gonzalo blesses the couple. Prospero also informs them that the ship is safe and they can sail together the very next morning and mean while he offers them a banquet. He orders Caliban to prepare the banquet and the terrified Caliban whose conspiracy against Prospero with the aid of the drunken butler Stephano and the Jester Trinculo is frustrated by Ariel, submits himself

Before Prospero leaves the island he gives Ariel and the other spirits the promised freedom. The lively spirit and though a faithful servant to his master has always been longing for freedom to wander uncontrolled in the air like wild bird under green trees, among sweet smelling flowers and luscious fruits. He thanks him and promises him to give assistance in providing prosperous gains on their onward voyage.

Prospero breaks his wand and buries his books of magic and resolves never to use their magic art.

"I'll break my staff,
Bury it certain fathoms in the Earth,
And deeper than did ever plummer sound
I'll drown my book"

With the reconciliation, regal wedding of Miranda and Ferdinand and restoration of dukedom, the return to his native land completes his joy. The tempestuous times of his life end with the Tempest of his creation and he looks forward to a happy future spent in meditation on final destination.

18.5 SELF ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

1. What are the reasons for Prospero's harsh treatment of Ferdinand?

2. Why does Prospero not take revenge on his enemies when they are in his power?

3. Discuss the minor characters in the play

18.6 REFERENCE BOOKS

1. Daiches David: A Critical History of English Literature
2. Charlton, H.B.: Shakespeare's comedy
3. Wagner, Emma Brockway: Shakespeare's Tempest
4. Walter Raleigh: Shakespeare

LESSON: 19
THE TEMPEST

Objectives of the Lesson:

- **To make the students understand the play with detailed commentary with glossary**

Structure of the Lesson

19.1 Act wise and Scene wise commentary

19.2 Self Assessment Questions

19.3 Reference Books

19.1 ACT WISE AND SCENE WISE COMMENTARY

Act-1 Scene -1 On a ship at Sera. A tempestuous noise of thunder and lightning heard.

The Boatswain: " What cares these roarers for the name of king?"

A huge storm batters a ship carrying Alonso, (King of Naples), Sebastian, (Alonso's brother), Ferdinand (Alonso's son), Antonio, Gonzalo and others. Death looks likely….

They play begins to the sound of howling seas, strikes of lightning and the claps of thunder. Drenched in rain and salt, a Shipmaster and a Boatswain (sailor) enter or more likely, stagger into view. The Shipmaster tells the Boatswain to speak to the mariners:" and ensure they all "fall to't yarely, or we run ourselves around: bestir, bestir" (work together or we will run around and be shipwrecked),The Boatswain orders that the topsails be taken down, and now Alonso, Sebastian, Antonio, Ferdinand and Gonzalo, go up on deck.

Their presence on deck is not welcomed by the already busy Boatswain who tells Antonio that "You mar our labour: keep your cabins." (you distract our work, go to your cabins), adding that their distraction helps the storm, not the sailors fighting to save their ship.

Gonzalo tells the Boatswain (senior sailor commanding others) to "be patient". The Boatswain has little time for Gonzalo when his ship is so close to sinking and questions his superiors by asking "What cares these roarers (rollers or large waves) for the name of king? (what cares these huge waves or rollers for the name of king or your positions for that matter?) again telling the gentlemen to retreat to their cabins.

Gonzalo reminds the rude Boatswain whom he is shouting to, to which the Boatswain tells Gonzalo that as a counselor if he cannot calm the seas then he should retire to his cabin. Gonzalo however, says he derives "great comfort from this fellow:" (great comfort from the boatswain) adding that since the Boatswain appears to be a man more likely to die by being hung than by drowning, he will probably live and therefore so will they. Says Gonzalo of the Boatswain, "If he be not born to be hanged, our case is miserable" (if this man was born to die by hanging then our hope of surviving this storm is miserable.

The Boatswain continues to bring down sails and now Sebastian returns on deck along with Antonio. Sebastian insults the Boatswain, calling him a "bawling, blasphemous, incharitable dog!. The Boatswain returns fire, telling Sebastian to work instead.

Antonio now insults the Boatswain as a "whoreson, insolent noisemaker," adding "we are less afraid to be drowned than thou art" (we are less afraid to die by drowning than you are),

The Boatswain ignores them now and a wet Mariner (sailor) exclaims "All lost!" (all is lost/we will die). Gonzalo calls on Sebastian and Antonio to join "The king and prince at prayers!" (praying),

Sebastian and Antonio worry that they will be cheated out of their lives by some lowly drunkards (the sailors) whilst Gonzalo maintains hope , adding that the Boatswain will "be hanged yet,/Though every drop of water swear against it," (the Boatswain will be hanged yet even though every drop of water swears that he will drown),

Fearing the end, Gonzalo, Antonio and Sebastian bid their lives good bye

Act I Scene II. – The Island: before the Cell of Prospero.

Prospero: "They are both in either's powers: but this swift business/ I must uneasy make, lest too light winning/make the prize light."

On the island near the storm, Prospero and his daughter Miranda are introduced. We learn that Prospero has created the storm battering Alonso and company's ship. Miranda asks Prospero to stop the storm. It learnt that Prospero was once the Duke of Milan but was banished to this island with Miranda by Antonio, his brother who took over Prospero's dukedom of Milan. Ariel, Prospero's magic fairy who tells that the men aboard the ship have all made it ashore unharmed as planned. Caliban, a misformed beast also makes his appearance. Ariel leads Ferdinand to Miranda and the two immediately fall in love. Prospero decides to be rude to Ferdinand fearing a rapid courtship.

Prospero and Miranda enter. Miranda knows that her father's magic has conjured up the storm the ship is experiencing and Miranda would like it stopped: If by your art, my dearest father, you have / Put the wild waters in this roar, allay them" (dearest father, if by your art or magic you have created this storm, please stop it),

Miranda has felt Alonso and company's pain and regrets that these noble men are likely to be dashed or rather bashed to pieces when their ship breaks up: "O! I have suffer'd /With those that I saw suffer: a brave vessel, / Who had, no doubt, some noble creatures in her, /Dash'd all to pieces".

Prospero tells his daughter not to worry. "Tell your piteous heart / There's no harm done" he says

Now Prospero decides it is time for his daughter to know the truth; how she and her father came to this island: "I should inform thee (you) further"

Asking his daughter to take off his magic garment and laying down his mantle, he tells his daughter to "Wipe thou thine eyes;" (wipe away those tearful eyes of yours) which have obviously been crying for the men aboard the previously doomed ship

Miranda explains that many a time she was about to learn her past, but her father hesitated from telling her. Prospero asks Miranda about her earliest memories as a child. She remembers that four or five women once tended to her which Prospero confirms

Prospero explains to Miranda that she has been on this island for twelve years adding that her Father (Prospero) was the Duke of Milan, her mother , "a piece of virtue." (had great

virtue),Miranda now asks how if she were once a princess, why she should now live on an island in exile.

Prospero explains that he entrusted the matters of his state to his brother Antonio whilst he followed his love of art and in particular reading. Unfortunately, his brother turned his subordinates against him and had him exiled.

Seeking to replace Prospero completely, Antonio made a pact with the King of Naples to "Subject his coronet to his (the King's) crown," (be loyal to King Alonso),Now allied with the King of Naples, Prospero and daughter were evicted from MilanMinisters (agents) of Antonio's dark purpose, rushed Prospero and daughter onto a boat so decrepit, "the very rats / Instinctively have quit it:" (the very rats aboard it, left the boat as they instinctively thought it was unsafe for them) Only "A noble Neapolitan (a person living in Naples), Gonzalo," helped them, charitably providing Prospero with "Rich garments, linens, stuffs," (clothes, supplies), and crucially, books from Prospero's own private library.

Now knowing the truth, Miranda asks about the necessity of the storm. Prospero explains that it was good luck that his enemy's ship had come within his powers and having already picked up his mantle, Prospero uses his magic to cast Miranda asleep.

Ariel is now introduced. A spirit or fairy, Ariel explains that he has performed all that was asked of him. He created a great storm, but not a man was hurt and now the rest of the fleet have sailed on fearing this ship lost. The ship itself is now safely moored in one of the island's coves. Ariel now brings up to issue of his freedom. Specifically he has none as a servant to Prospero. Prospero now reminds Ariel of the fate he found him in when he first landed on the island.

Prospero recounts how a cruel witch called Sycorax imprisoned Ariel for refusing to obey her, encasing him in a cloven pine. Sycorax died and Ariel remained imprisoned.

Now Prospero makes an important decision; Ariel will be free in two days if he does as commanded of him. He now bids Ariel a way telling him to be invisible.

Miranda awakes and Prospero decides to visit his slave Caliban, son of the witch Sycorax. Caliban is gathering wood for Prospero. He insults his master, and Prospero commands a spell of aches and pains upon him as punishment.

Caliban curses Prospero for teaching him to speak and regrets telling Prospero of the entire island's charms (places to find food, fresh springs and so forth).
Prospero explains that he treated Caliban well. This only changed because Caliban overstepped the mark. He tries to rape Miranda and Prospero says, "violate / The honour of my child (Miranda)" in Prospero's own cell or home adding that Caliban deserves much more punishment than he presently receives .

Ferdinand now awakes from his sleep and his memories of the storm. He is alive, yet he hears music, beautiful music. Following the melody he cannot make sense of his actions, yet compelled, he follows the mesmerizing tune nonetheless.

Miranda, who has seen few men save her father, sees Ferdinand, asking "What is 't? a spirit? Lord, how it looks about! Believe me, sir, / It carries a brave form:" (what is it? A

spirit. Lord, how it looks around! Believe me, it carries a brave, striking appearance),Miranda is clearly impressed, " I might call him / A thing divine; for nothing natural / I ever saw so noble" (I might call this sight divine for I have never seen anything quite so noble),Ferdinand is also enchanted by her presence, surprised that Miranda can speak the same language and asking if Miranda is a maid (woman). Or a fairy Worried that Ariel's plan to get the two lovebirds together may be proceeding too fast, Prospero is now quite rude to Ferdinand. Ferdinand's wish to make Miranda his "Queen of Naples" intensifies this.

Prospero decides that he must now slow things down between the two lovers: "They are both in either's powers: but this swift business I must uneasy make, lest too light winning / Make the prize light" (they are both entranced by each other or in love but I must move quickly now to slow things down since a prize like my daughter's heart that is too easily won is less prized in its winning).
Threatened with being manacled and chained, Ferdinand attempts to draw h is sword in defense against Prospero but is charmed out of doing it.

Miranda begs her father for mercy. Now spellbound by Prospero, Ferdinand yields, and does things at Prospero's bidding

Act II

Scene I. – Another Part of the Island.

The rest of the shipwreck survivors wake up on the island. They are surprised that their clothes smell and feel as fresh as if they had just been bough at a market… Ariel's song puts them all to sleep again except for Sebastian and Antonio. Antonio who replaced his brother Prospero as Duke of Milan, manipulates Sebastian, King Alonso's brother into doing the same by replacing King Alonso. The two are about to kill Alonso in his sleep but Ariel wakes everyone up and the two men make an excuse for drawing their swords out.

Alonso, Sebastian, Antonio, Adrian, Francisco and Gonzalo, who have all survived the shipwreck, now ponder their position on the island.
Gonzalo remarks on how odd it is that their clothes should be "new-dyed" (freshly dyed or colored) in appearance rather than stained with salt from their shipwreck. It is revealed by Gonzalo that Alonso and company were returning from Africa, where they attended the marriage of the "king's (Alonso's) fair daughter Claribel to the King of Tunis".

Gonzalo repeats his fresh clothes observation to Alonso, but Alonso has more pressing fear. He believes that he has lost his son Ferdinand forever . Francisco tries to offer hope, saying that he is sure he saw Ferdinand escape the ship alive.Alonso, however, is convinced that he has lost his son, and asks his subjects now for, "Prithee, peace" (quiet),. Sebastian adds that it is the King's fault he lost his son, since the voyage to Africa was advised against "By all of us;".

Gonzalo seconds Sebastian for this thinking and then daydreams about what he would do with his new island home as a part of a commonwealth. This earns Gonzalo the mockery of both Antonio and Sebastian.

Ariel now enters, invisible and playing solemn music. This music has a powerful effect on our survivors; they each fall asleep except for Antonio and Sebastian.

Now alone, Antonio begins to convince Sebastian to kill his brother, The King of Naples (Alonso), by telling him that "My strong imagination sees a crown / Dropping upon thy head"

(my strong imagination sees the crown of your father, King Alonso falling on your head. I can see you replacing y our brother as king).

Sebastian is at first reluctant to accept this but is gradually convinced by Antonio's guarantees that the King's men will follow him. Antonio further points out that he has experience in this; he did after al, replace his brother Prospero by similar means and was successful.

While drawing their swords to kill Alonso in his sleep, Ariel reappears and with a song in Gonzalo's ear awakens him, Gonzalo's shouting then wakes the King. Alonso and Gonzalo ask a to why Sebastian and Antonio have their swords drawn.

Sebastian explains that they heard "a hollow burst of bellowing / Like bulls, or rather lions;" (we heard noises like bulls or lions and so we drew our swords out as protection0,. This appears to convince all present, Ariel departs, pledging to tell Prospero of his deed and telling Alonso to "go safely on to seek thy son" (go safely on to look for your son, Ferdinand)

Act II. Scene II.- Another part of Island.

Trinculo, a jester on the ship, discover Caliban and quickly realizes that such a beast would earn him a fortune as a novelty in England. Stephano, Trinculo's friend eventually finds Trinculo under Caliban's huge frame. Stephano gives Caliban alcohol, causing Caliban to think Stephano is more powerful than Prospero whom Caliban hates. The three set off together…

Caliban enters carrying a heavy burden of wood. Caliban is cursing his master Prospero. Trinculo now appears. Caliban seeing this jester, assumes that he must be a spirit: " here comes a spirit of his to torment me for bringing the wood in too slowly), he says deciding to lie flat on the ground to hopefully avoid it's attention.

Trinculo, dressed in his jester costume fears the elements. He has a solution, and decides to hide his head under Caliban's large frame. Not sure whether Caliban is man or fish, such is his smell, Trinculo nonetheless uses Caliban as shelter. Furthermore, he believes that should Caliban be a fish, he would earn Trinculo a good living back in England as a novelty.

Stephano now arrives, singing, bottle in hand. Caliban again believes this man to be a spirit telling Stephano to leave him alone. " Do not torment me." Caliban cries.

The sight of Caliban amazes Stephano. At first he believes this monster to have four legs and two heads but later realizes it is just his friend Trinculo crawling under the frame of Caliban. Probing Caliban, Stephano like Trinculo, realizes that Caliban would be worth a fortune back in England as a "monster of the isle with four legs,". Caliban, However, is not enjoying any of this, telling Stephano to leave him alone.

Discovering Caliban's head, Stephano pours his alchol into Caliban's mouth. Stephano now discovers h is friend Trinculo under Caliban's frame.

The alcohol, however, has affected Caliban profoundly. Spellbound by what he believes is a celestial drink, Caliban renounces (rejects) Prospero, and pledges his loyalty to Stephano whom he believes has fallen from heaven and will be powerful enough to free him from Prospero, and pledges his loyalty to Stephano whom he believes has fallen from heaven and will be powerful enough to free him from Prospero. Caliban will fish for his new leader, find wood and pick berries. Stephano now decides that with the King and all his followers

likely to have drowned, he will inherit this island. Together they follow Caliban, newly united as three.

Act III.

Scene I. – Before Prospero's Cell.

Miranda: "Do you love me?"

Prospero who is now invisible to Ferdinand and Miranda, witnesses Ferdinand and Miranda expressing their deep love for one another in words that rival Romeo and Juliet in their tenderness. Ferdinand, realizing that he is witnessing a truly rare meeting of hearts, approves of Ferdinand for his daughter. The scene ends with Ferdinand taking Miranda for his wife. Prospero is pleased but must now leave to attend to matters before supper…

Ferdinand is lifting logs for Prospero. This doesn't bother him unduly, because, as Ferdinand puts it, his labors will lead to richer ends, namely the heart of Miranda. "There be some sports are painful, and their labour / Delight in them sets off: some kinds of baseness / Are nobly undergone, and most poor matters / point to rich ends" Ferdinand remarks.

Ferdinand knows his work is hard, but the thought of Miranda gives him strength: "This my mean task/ Would be as heavy to me as odious; but/The mistress (Miranda) which I serve quickens what 's dead / and makes my labours pleasures: O1 she is / Ten times more gentle than her father's crabbed, / And he's composed of harshness".

Ferdinand is aware that the sight of Miranda's love (Ferdinand) working so hard saddens Miranda (Line 10- 12), but his thoughts of Miranda inspire him to go on: "But these sweet thoughts do even refresh my labours,"

Miranda enters, oblivious to the invisible Prospero behind her. She asks Ferdinand not to work so hard, telling Ferdinand that " My father / Is hard at study;" asking him to "pray now, rest yourself :" since Prospero will be away for at least three hours.

Miranda tells Ferdinand to sit down, she will "bear" or carry his logs for a while. Ferdinand, ever the noble gentleman, refuses Miranda's kind offer, telling her "No, precious creature: I had rather crack my sinews, break my back, / Than you should such dishonor undergo, /While I sit lazy by" (no precious creature, I would rather break my back than see you dishonored by carrying logs while I sit idly by).

Miranda decides to try again, and Prospero who is nearby but because of his magic cloak is invisible, realizes that Miranda must be in love.

Ferdinand now asks for Miranda's name so that he may use it in his prayers. Miranda answers with her name, immediately realizing that she has a broken a "hest" (promise or command) to her father in doing so.

Ferdinand now speaks of his deep admiration for Miranda, telling her that she is "worth/What's dearest to the world!". Ferdinand has seen many fair ladies in his time, but all had some defect in his opinion. Miranda, however, is someone completely unique. She is "So perfect and so peerless," (so perfect and without equal), that she is clearly created "Of every creature's best (clearly made from the best of every creature.

Miranda explains to Ferdinand that she remembers no women's faces but her own, nor has she seen "More that I may call men than you, good friend, / And my dear father :" (more men than you, good friend and my father), . Nonetheless Miranda tells Ferdinand that she "would not wish / Any companion in the world but you;" (would want no companion other than you, Ferdinand), nor could she imagine any better shape .

Ferdinand now explains to Miranda that, "The very instant that I saw you did / My heart fly to your service; there resides, / To make me slave to it; and for your sake / Am I this patient log-man" (the very instant I saw you, my heart flew into your service, and it stays,

there making me a slave to it, and it is for you that I patiently have become a log man to be close to you.

Miranda now sweetly asks Ferdinand, "Do you love me?.

Ferdinand is almost ashamed that he is even being asked….O! heaven! O earth! Bear witness to this sound," he says for as he explains to Miranda, "I,Beyond all limit of what else I' the world. /Do love, prize, honour you" (I, beyond all limit of what else is in the world, love, prize and honour you.

Miranda replies that, "I am a fool / To weep at what I am glad of' (I am a fool to weep at what makes me happy .

Prospero too is pleased, describing this courtship in an aside (private speech) as a "Fair encounter / Of two most rare affections!" a fair and good joining of two most rare loves) while adding "Heavens rain grace / On that which breeds between 'em!" (heaven rain grace on that which breeds or grows between them).

Miranda now weeps at her unworthiness of Ferdinand.

Ferdinand will have none of it, telling her that she will always make him humble, so lucky does he feel to be loved by her.

Ferdinand and Miranda continue to trade deep affections for each other and Miranda explains that should Ferdinand not accept her as his wife, she will nonetheless forever be his servant "Whether you will or no" (whether you will it or not).

Ferdinand naturally takes Miranda as his wife with all his willing heart.

Prospero, a silent, invisible witness to all of this, approves. He must, however, leave for before "supper time," since he has much business to do.

Act III. Scene II. – Another Part of the Island.

Bottle in hand, Stephano, Trinculo and Caliban continue on their merry way. Stephano starts getting delusions of grandeur, which Caliban blindly follows. Trinculo thinks Caliban is being foolish to follow Stephano so blindly. Caliban suggests several gruesome ways to kill Prospero. Ariel lures the group away with h is entrancing sounds…

Meanwhile, some distance away on the island, Stephano, Caliban and Trinculo proceed on their way together about the island. They are not aided by their increasingly drunken stupor. Stephano is increasingly seeing himself in a grandiose light , aided by Caliban's blind devotion of him. Trinculo is not at all impressed by this, deriding both Caliban and Stephano and Caliban now sick of being insulted by Trinculo, demands that something be done.

Stephano, not willing to lose his loyal monster, tells Trinculo to "keep a good tongue" in his head, and not to offend Caliban nor himself.

Ariel, who is invisible, now enters and causes dissension (trouble) in the ranks. When Caliban explains Prospero's tyranny, Ariel soy that he is "Thou liest" (you lie),. Further comments by Ariel, which mimic Trinculo's voice earn Trinculo a beating .

Caliban who has successfully convinced Stephano to kill Prospero and take over the island, Now outlines his plan to kill Prospero whilst he is asleep, noting his timetable and the importance of first taking away Prospero's books, the source of his magic. Caliban also makes his attraction for Miranda whom he attempted to molest, quite clear. Caliban also suggests several grotesque ways of killing his hated master (Prospero).

Stephano now decides that he will become both "king and queen,-" of this island and will kill both Prospero and Miranda. Stephano and Trinculo put their earlier disagreements behind them, Stephano on Caliban's request starts to sing.

Ariel plays a tune now on tabor and pipe (noticed by Stephano, and is almost caught out, but Caliban explains that "the isle is full of noises, / Sounds and sweet airs," (this isle or island is full of deceptive, entrancing sounds and smell), and that they should not be alarmed.

The plotting threesome now continue on their way.

Act III. Scene III – Another Part of the Island.

Sebastian: "Now I will believe / That there are unicorns; that in Arabia / There is one tree…"

Alonso, Sebastian, Antonio, Gonzalo, Adrian and Francisco and others witness a banquet on the island but it is an illusion. Ariel returns and verbally punishes Alonso (the King of Naples), Antonio and Sebastian for their roles in exiling Prospero, Ariel's master…

Alonso, Sebastian, Antonio, Gonzalo, Adrian, Francisco and others are exhausted from walking the maze that is the island. At Gonzalo's suggestion, they choose to rest.

Strange and solemn music is heard. Prospero emerges from above, completely invisible . Various strange shapes appear, "bringing in a banquet; they dance about it with gentle actions of salutation; and , inviting the King, & c., (and company) to eat, they depart."

Sebastian amazed by what he sees, exclaims that "Now I will believe / That there are unicorns; that in Arabia / There is one tree". (now I believe that unicorns exist and that there is just one tree in all of Arabia).

Antonio agrees and Gonzalo wonders if anyone would believe this story back in Naples. Prospero now dismisses the strange shapes. Sebastian does not mind since " They have left their viands behind; " and the court now very hungry can eat what is left.

Ariel enters amid thunder and lightning . Clapping his wings upon the table , Ariel uses " a quaint devise" to make the banquet disappear.

Now that the banquet has been removed, Ariel who can be heard, begins to bring to account all those who crossed his master Prospero twelve years ago. Specifically, Ariel singles out three men who are most responsible for Prospero's exile, namely Antonio, Prospero's traitorous brother , Alonso, the King of Naples and Sebastian.

Ariel describes the three men as "three men of sin,". Alonso and Sebastian draw out their swords on Ariel only to be called "fools1" by Ariel. Antonio is guilty for having abused his brothers trust, the King of Naples for recognizing Antonio's new rule of Milan in exchange for an annual tribute (money) and Sebastian for plotting to kill the King of Naples (Alonso) with Antonio.

Prospero is pleased with Ariel's work and especially that all three men heard Ariel's judgment of them. This affects each man differently. Alonso now finds his conscience, telling Gonzalo how the winds spoke to him and exits.

Sebastian and Antonio, not regretting their deeds follow, leaving Gonzalo to comment on the three men's great guilt. Adrian, on Gonzalo's command follows the three men to prevent them coming to strife or injuring themselves.

ACT IV

Scene I. –Before Prospero's Cell.

Prospero tells Ferdinand that he will no longer punish him, but instead will freely give his daughter Miranda's hand in marriage to him. Prospero conjures up a beautiful, mythical , illusory party to celebrate, complete with goddess and nymphs. Prospero instructs Ariel to bring the shipwrecked men on the island before him. Remembering Caliban, Stephano and Trinculo who wish to kill him, Prospero has Ariel distract them with clothes, Caliban failing to keep his friends from being distracted. Prospero promises Ariel that he will soon be free…

Prospero opens the scene, deciding that the punishments he has dealt Ferdinand will soon be amended by his compensation, namely his blessing for Ferdinand to marry his daughter.

Prospero: "If I have too austerely punish'd you, / Your (Ferdinand's) compensation makes amends," Prospero now recommends marriage wholeheartedly to Ferdinand, making allusions to his daughter's virginity.

Prospero summons Ariel and tells him to "Go bring the rabble, /O'er whom I gave thee power, here to this place:" (go bring over the rabble of men over whom I gave you power to control before me), telling Ariel to make them come quickly. Prospero also commands Ariel to bring forth "a corollary, / Rather than want a spirit:" and a masque now appears.

Ariel does as his master bids, and the masque begins with the Greek goddess of Iris (the many-colored messenger of the Gods), Ceres (the goddess of wheat, rye, barley…) and Juno (highest queen of state) all arriving.

When Ceres asks Iris why she has been summoned, Iris explains that it is for "A contract of true love to celebrate, / And some donation freely to estate / On the bless'd lovers"

Ceres is concerned as to whether Venus " or her son," shall be joining them. She explains that earlier Venus and her son had plotted against her.

Iris assures Ceres not to worry; they are away one more urgent business , namely a troubled Mars .

Juno arrives and blesses the happy couple with song, Ceres doing the same. Amazed by what he sees, Ferdinand questions Prospero as to whether this "most majestic vision," can be described as "spirits".

Prospero explains the goddesses and vision as "Spirits, which by mine art I have from their confines call'd to enact / My present fancies" (Spirits that I have brought here with my magic to serve my present wishes or fancies).

Nymphs now enter on Iris' urging to "help to celebrate / A contract of true love". Reapers join in the Nymphs in graceful dance.

Prospero, however now remembers something; the threesome of Stephano, Caliban and Trinculo who want to kill him. He curtly ends the presence of the spirits, and Ferdinand wonders about Prospero's change of mood. Prospero tells Ferdinand to enjoy him self and not to worry for him.

Prospero summons Ariel, telling him that they must now prepare to meet with Caliban. Ariel brings Prospero up to speed with the threesome's progress. He explains to Prospero that he led them by tubor through thorns, which hurt their "frail shines:"

When Ariel finally left them, they were up to their chins in the "filthy-mantled pool" (a swamp) beyond Prospero's cell. Prospero now explains that he will deal out justice, saying that "I will plague them all, / Even to roaring (screaming / shouting).

On Prospero's command, Ariel entices the three would-be assassins out of the pond. Ariel, who is still invisible, does this with an array of 'glistering apparel," (shiny, flashy clothes) which he hangs on a line beyond the pond.

The three men are not fairing well, stuck in the pond which smells of "horse-pisss,". Even worse for Trinculo and Stephano, they have lost their "bottles in the pool, -" and so are now without alcohol Now outside the mouth of Prospero's surprisingly quiet cell, Stephano begins to have "bloody thoughts" (murderous thoughts).

Stephano and Triculo now notice the clothes beyond the pond and head toward the garments, trying them on. Caliban is not impressed, begging Triculo and Stephano to ignore them since they are losing valuable time and cannot afford to be discovered by an awake Prospero.

Several spirits in the shape of hounds now appear and the noise of hunters is heard. Prospero and Ariel are now, setting these hounds upon Stephano, Caliban and Triculo who exit in terror.

Prospero encourages his spirits not to be merciful: "Go, charge my goblins that they grind their joints / With dry convulsions; shorten up their sinews / With aged c ramps, and more pinched-spotted make them / Than pard, or cat o' mountain"

Ariel notes that the spirits roar and Prospero again speaks, exclaiming that "At this hour / Lie at my mercy all mine enemies: / Shortly shall all my labours (labors) end, and thou (Ariel) / Shalt have the air at freedom: for a little, /Follow, and do me service" . Ariel will soon be free.

ACT. V

Scene I.- Before the Cell of Prospero.

Miranda: O, wonder! How many goodly creatures are there! How beauteous mankind is! O brave new world, / That has such people in't!"

Prospero brings everyone except Stephano, Caliban and Trinculo before him in a circle. Spell bound, he verbally reprimands several of the men who exiled him. Prospero tells Ariel that he will soon be free and that he will miss him. Prospero also intends to destroy his ability to use magic. Making famously sweet scene of Ferdinand playing chess with Miranda occurs. Prospero forgives Stephano and Trinculo. Caliban is embarrassed that he followed a fool (Trinculo). Caliban is given his freedom. Prospero announces that in the morning they will all set sail for Milan. Ariel is set free.

Prospero now dressed in his magic robes, is accompanied by Ariel. His plan is coming to it's conclusion. "Now does my project gather to a head:" (now does my project or plan gather to its head or conclusion),

Prospero asks Ariel about the status of the King and his followers. Ariel tells him that they are "Confin'd together" (confined together) in the same way as Prospero had earlier commanded

Ariel; they are fin the "linegrove" which borders Propero's cell and will not move until Prospero demands it. The King and his brother Sebastian and Antonio are distracted, the rest, largely mourning over them, including ""The good old lord Gonzalo:"".

Prospero commands Ariel to release them. Prospero now alone, explains that he will soon break and deeply bury his magic staff, and drown his magic book once his final task is complete. He also recalls all the magic feats he was capable of on this island.

Ariel now returns, bringing with him Alonso, Gonzalo, Sebastian, Antonio, Adrian and Francisco. All enter into a circle Prospero has made and now Prospero speaks to his "spell-stopped" (spell-stopped or spellbound) audience.

Prospero praises Gonzalo and reprimands Alonso for his cruel actions against him and his daughter. He decides to forgive both his brother Antonio and Sebastian who would "have kill'd your king (King Alonso);.

Noting that not one of his spellbound audience "would k now (recognize) me", Prospero commands Ariel to fetch his hat and rapier from his cell. He also reminds Ariel to be quick, for soon he will be free. Ariel returns, singing and Prospero tells Ariel how much he will soon miss him. He commands Ariel now to head to the ship invisibly and bring"the master and the boatswain" of the ship before him.

Prospero now makes his presence known to the King and his followers. The King, now deeply embarrassed, disgraced and remorseful for his actions, proclaims loudly his guilt to Prospero, Prospero embracing first Alonso and then his "noble friend," noble friend," Gonzalo. Alonso returns to Prospero his dukedom of Milan.

Speaking only to Sebastian and Antonio, Prospero makes it very clear that he knows what they were going to do to their King (Alonso). Prospero however will keep this a secret.

"I here could pluck his highness' (Alonso's) frown upon you, / And justify you traitors: at this time / I will tell no tales" Prospero darkly warns.

Prospero even forgives his brother but tells him that he will "require / My dukedom of thee (you), which, perforce, I know, / Thou (you) must restore".

Alonso now mourns for his son. Prospero's cell now opens to find the sight of Ferdinand and Miranda, sweetly playing chess together.

Ferdinand greets his father and Miranda remarks on the beauty of mankind: "O, wonder! How many goodly creatures are there here! How beauteous mankind is! O brave new world, / That has such people in't!".

Alonso asks his son Ferdinand about Miranda, whom Ferdinand, whom Ferdinand explains he has taken for his wife without his father's advise since he thought he was dead. Alonso now gives his blessing .

Ariel now returns, bringing in an amazed Master and Boatswain who explain that they have now found "Our king and company:" and that their ship is now as fit for sea as when they first departed.

Prospero tells Alonso not to question these strange happenings too deeply and Prospero now tells Ariel to set "Caliban and his companions free;"

Stephano, Trinculo and Caliban are brought, in, wearing their stolen clothing. Antonio remarks that one of them (Caliban) "Is a plain fish, and, no doubt, marketable" (is a plain fish and no doubt marketable or capable of earning money).

Prospero tells King and company of Caliban's mother and now Trinculo and Stephano who are both extremely drunk are told to return their clothes back to where they found them.

All three are remorseful, especially Caliban who is especially embarrassed that he took a drunkard for a god, saying that, "I' ll be wise hereafter, / And seek for grace. What a thrice-double ass / Was I, to take this drunkard for a god, / And worship this dull fool!".

Prospero now invites the King and his followers to stay the night in his cell where he will tell them of his time on the island. In the morning they shall all set sail for Naples and Prospero after commanding Ariel one last time to prepare calm weather for his journey, informs Ariel that he is now free.

Epilogue:

Prospero asks the audience to free him to travel back to Naples re claiming his life as the rightful Duke of Milan.

19.2 SELF ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

1. To what extent Shakespeare succeeds in maintaining the three unities?

19.3 REFERENCE BOOKS

1. Daiches David: A Critical History of English Literature
2. Charlton, H.B.: Shakespeare's comedy
3. Wagner, Emma Brockway: Shakespeare's Tempest
4. Walter Raleigh: Shakespeare

LESSON: 20
THE TEMPEST

Objectives of the Lesson

- To make the students analyse the characters of the play
- To make the students appreciate the thematic innovation of the play
- To make the students aware of the popular beliefs of Elizabethan period
- To expose the students to various interpretations
- To enable the students to evaluate the play critically

Structure of the Lesson

20.1 CHARACTER ANALYSIS

PROSPERO:

Prospero the exiled duke of Milan is the personification of wisdom. He symbolizes wisdom, goodness and a detachment for material interests of life. His detachment increases when he devotes his time in intellectual pursuits of occult studies and ignores monarchical and patriarchal duties. This slight negligence costs him and his infant daughter their well being . He loses his dukedom to his scheming brother and finds himself exiled on a deserted island.

Misfortune makes his sense of duty towards his daughter sharper and he tries to restore her to her rightful position by designing a tempest and finding her a princely husband Ferdinand the son of Alonso, who has schemed against Prospero.

To right the injustice done to Miranda he punishes his enemies not to gain any material advantages. When the justice is done he forgives his enemies. It is in this noble act one can see the moral elevation in his character. He is benevolent in his role as a good magician using white magic to carry out h is design. He uses his power as benevolent Providence.

Though he acts as an indifferent Providence he also exhibits intense human passion. His devotion to Miranda, his joy in the union of lovers, his gratitude to Gonzalo and his emotional out burst at Caliban's conspiracy, his resentment towards his enemies depict his human nature. Yet he exercises great self control and listens to the voice of reason when he forgives them.

"the rarer action is

In virtue than in vengeance"

This elevation above base motives and pursuit of lofty ideals make him an extraordinarily impressive character that is surrounded by divinity of goodness and wisdom.

MIRANDA:

Miranda is Prospero's daughter. She was three years old at the time of banishment and is fifteen at the time of the opening scene. She has been brought up on the deserted and enchanted island for twelve years and her sole human companions are her father and the slave Moon calf Caliban. She is wholly ignorant of the knowledge of other human beings. Brought up thus in such idyllic conditions, she is so utterly beautiful, innocent, pure and simple that she captivated the heart of Ferdinand the prince of Naples.

She also exhibits feelings of compassion when she witnesses the ship wreck and when she listens to Prospero's story of woes. Her admiration for Ferdinand, her pleas to release him and her determination to marry him and not remain as a maiden show her constancy of love. There is no bashful cunning about her love of Ferdinand. She is a guileless and simple maiden untainted by the artificiality of civilized world. In her elemental simplicity she can be compared to a sinless Eve of Paradise Lost. She truly fills the audience with a sense of admiration as her very name indicates wonder.

CALIBAN:

Caliban, son of Sycorax a witch and a slave of Prospero on the enchanted island is an elemental earth bound man who performs the menial tasks for Prospero. He has been taught language and he uses it to curse his master. Prospero calls him

" A devil, a born devil, on whose nature

Nature can never stick"

He is always vexed by Ariel who is an invisible task master hastening him to work. He tries to conspire against Prospero with Trinculo and his schemes are frustrated by Ariel. Caliban symbolizes the native who is oppressed by the colonizer.

Though he is bestial, immoral and gross there is still an elemental poetry in him. Through out the play he speaks in verse. As half fish and half human with monstrous features and evil action, Caliban is sharply contrasted with Ariel the air spirit.

With his very presence Caliban an anagram of Cannibal represents the native of the colony. Though he is a savage has rational knowledge when Prospero lovingly teaches him and repays with his natural knowledge of the island's properties. The early association is broken when Caliban attempts to violate Miranda's chastity. He displays brutish instinct and loses Prospero's goodwill. Though Caliban is evil and perverse certain pathos surrounds him in his failure to live up to his master's demands.

Ariel:

Ariel is a supernatural being and an air spirit. Though not a human has the intelligence and personality. He is imprisoned by Sycorax a witch for refusing to perform her evil commands. When Prospero releases him from the tree trunk he becomes Prospero"s agent and performs all the tasks including creating the tempest. The final out come of the events depend on Ariel. His presence adds an ethereal quality to the play.

OTHER CHARACTERS:

FERDINAND:

Ferdinand is the son of Alonso, king of Naples. He is one of the most charming of Shakespeare's young men. He is symbol of purity and innocence and is the perfect match for equally innocent Miranda. He is courteous and respectful to Prospero in spite of latter's harsh treatment of him. He is a dutiful son who mourns his father 's loss and is in turn mourned by the courtiers indicating his popularity with them . He is a man of spirit and decision, when he announces his betrothal to Miranda to his father. Next to Prospero he is the most superior of the gentlemen.

ALONSO, ANTONIO AND SEBASTIAN

Alonso is the king of Naples. He has sinned against Prospero by joining hands with Antonio, evil brother of Prospero. But after the shipwreck on the enchanted island, he is struck with deep remorse. The despairing grief over the supposed loss of his son and depression over the marriage of his daughter to king of Tunis change his nature. He takes the discipline meted out by Prospero in all humility.

Antonio, unlike Alonso, is a subtle and conniving man. He not only usurps his brother's throne but also instigates Sebastian to murder his own brother. He is morally unrepentant, but is subdued by Prospero's magic. He is rendered incapable of doing further harm, where as Sebastian, brother to Alonso is a fit companion to Antonio and follows Antonio's lead.

GONZALO:

The old noble counselor is an idealist who saves Prospero and his child. He does not take taunts of his villainous colleagues rather gives them fitting retort. He is so thoughtful and kind that Prospero expresses his gratitude by calling him preserver of his life.

STEPHANO AND TRINCULO:

Stephano is king's butler and Trinculo, the jester is his side kick. They form a team with servant monster Caliban and conspire against Prospero. Their plans are frustrated by Ariel. They fill the play with comic element.

20.2 SUPERNATURAL ELEMENT: I

Elizabethans believe in witchcraft and magic. So introduction of supernatural element in the plays is common. Shakespeare introduces supernatural element in the plays like **Hamlet, Macbeth and The Tempest.** Shakespeare makes a profound impression on the audience. The characters like Ariel, gentle spirits witch Sycorax will not be improbable or strange to the spectators. Sir Thomas Brown says " I have never believed and do now know that there are witches. " Such is the impact of Shakespearean supernatural element.

Magic is a pivotal theme in the Tempest, as it is the device that holds the plot together. Prospero commands so much power in the play because of his ability to use magic and to control the spirit Ariel, and with magic, he creates the tempest itself, as well as controlling all the happenings on the island, eventually bringing all his old enemies to him to be reconciled. Magic is also used to create a lot of the imagery in the play, with scenes such as

the masque, the opening scene, and the enchanting music of Ariel. It is also believed that magic may in fact refer to Shakespeare's writing, hence the "drown ing" of the magic book can be interpreted as Shakespeare retiring from his play writing.

In **The Tempest** the supernatural is treated strictly as the agency by which the plot is worked out. There is no grotesque element of magic. The mishaps that befall the characters are merely described not enacted. So the play presents a gentle supernatural element not grotesque.

20.3 THE THEMATIC CONCERNS THE THEATRE AND THE STRUCTURE OF THE PLAY

THEMES

The pervading themes of **The Tempest** are sin, atonement, reconciliation and purification through suffering. The evil act of sin begins with the banishment of Prospero and atonement takes place when Alonso and Antonio become repentant and reconciliation is cemented by the marriage of Ferdinand and Miranda. The other themes like contrast between nature and society reflected in Caliban-Prospero relationship and concept of ideal common wealth of Gonzalo are found in the play.

Focusing on Prospero's evocative surrender of magic in the play's final scene, traditional critics regularly offered an impressionistic and subjectivist interpretation of the play as Shakespeare's farewell to the stage" preceding his retirement – though it is certainly not his "final play", as has sometimes been claimed. The available evidence indicates that Henry VIII and The Two Noble Kinsmen were written later, though both are regarded as collaborations.

One author notes: "Why Shakespeare observed the three unities in the Tempest is not known. In most of his other plays, events occur on several days and characters visit numerous settings. Some scholars have suggested that, because The Tempest contains so much fantasy, Shakespeare may have wanted to observe the unities to help audiences suspend their disbelief. Others have pointed to criticism that Shakespeare received for ignoring the unities; they say he may have wanted to prove once and for all that he could follow rules if he felt like it.

The concept of usurping a monarch occurs frequently throughout the play: Antonio usurped Prospero; Caliban accuses Prospero of having usurped him upon the latter's arrival on the island; Sebastian plots to kill and overthrow his brother King of Naples; Stephano has designs to depose Prospero and set himself up as "king o'the isle." As such, the play is simultaneously concerned what constitutes virtuous kingship, presenting the audience with various possibilities. In the twentieth century, post-colonial literary critics are extremely interested in this aspect of the play, seeing Caliban as representative of the natives invaded and oppressed by imperialism.

The themes of political legitimacy, source of power, and usurpation arise in the second act as well. While Prospero firmly believed that the only legitimate power was the power that came from one's knowledge and hard work, Antonio believes that the power he usurped from his brother is legitimate, because he deserved it more and had the skill to wrestle it away. What is interesting here is that there are hints that Prospero was quite a negligent king, wrapped up in his books rather than attending to the needs of the state. Antonio often

filled in for him in h is duties, and eventually took the opportunity to commit the crime of making his pretense of kingship a reality. Look how well my garments sit upon me, much feater than before," Antonio brags t o Sebastian; Antonio's lack of remorse over his offence, and his arrogant claim that his power is just because he uses it better, foreshadow a confrontation with his brother Prospero, and an eventual fall from this ill-gained power.

Although Caliban asserted his natural authority over the island in Act 1, Prospero's usurpation of Caliban's power is negated by Caliban's portrayal as a savage seeking a new master. Caliban proves Prospero's view of him as a natural servant to be true, when Caliban immediately adopts Stephano as his new master upon Stephano's sudden appearance. Caliban is seen as a "monster," not only by Prospero, but by Trinculo and Stephano also; modern interpretations cast their contempt for dark-skinned Caliban as analogous to Europeans' view of "natives " in the West Indies and other colonies, and Shakepeare's treatment of Caliban has come to provide some interesting social commentary on colonization although it is unlikely that Shakespeare's contemporary audiences viewed the character in this way and the author's original intent is debatable. Caliban's actions and activities lend credence to the view that the original idea was of more of a thematic monster than an allegorical figure.

The Theatre

The Tempest is overtly concerned with its own nature as a play, frequently drawing links between Prospero's Art and theatrical illusion. The shipwreck was a 'spectacle""performed" by Ariel;Antonio and Sebastian are "cast" in a "troop" to act "; Miranda's eyelids are "fringed curtains". Prospero is even made to refer to the Globe Theatre when claiming the whole world is an illusion: "the great globe…shall dissolve…like this insubstantial pageant". Ariel frequently disguises himself as figures from Classical mythology, for example a nymph, a harpy and Ceres, acting as the latter in a masque and anti-masque that Prospero creates.

Early critics saw this constant allusion to the theatre as an indication that Prospero was meant to represent Shakespeare; the character's renunciation of magic thus signaling Shakespeare's farewell to the stage. This theory has fallen into disfavor; but certainly The Tempest is interested in the way that, like Prospero's Art", the theatre can be both an immoral occupation and yet morally transformative for its audience.

20.4 OTHER INTERPRETATIONS

In Shakespeare's day, most of the planet was still being "discovered", and stories were coming back from distant islands, with myths about the Cannibals of the Caribbean, faraway Edens, and distant Tropical Utopias. With the character Caliban (whose name is roughly anagrammatic to Cannibal), Shakespeare may be offering an in-depth discussion into the morality of colonialism. Different views are discussed, with examples including Gonzalo's Utopia, Prospero's enslavement of Caliban, and Caliban's subsequent resentment. Caliban is also shown as one of the most natural characters in the play, being very much in touch with the natural world and modern audiences have come to view him as far nobler than his two Old World friends, stephano and Trinculo, although the original intent of the author may have been different. There is evidence that Shakespeare drew on Montaigne's essay "Of Cannibals," which discusses the values of societies insulted from European influences, while writing The Tempest.

Beginning in about 1950, with the publication of Psychology of Colonization by Octave Mannoni, The Tempest was viewed more and more through the lens of postcolonial theory. This new way of looking at the text explored the effect of the colonizer (Prospero) on the colonized (Ariel and Caliban). Though Ariel is often overlooked in these debates in favor of the more intriguing Caliban, he is still involved in many of the debates. The French writer Aime Cesaire, in his play Une Tempete sets The Tempest in Haiti, portraying Ariel as a mulatto who, unlike the more rebellious Caliban, feels that negotiation and partnership is the way to freedom from the colonizers. Fernandez Retamar sets his version of the play in Cuba, and portrays Ariel as a wealthy Cuban (in comparison to the lower-class Caliban) who also must choose between rebellion or negotiation. Although scholars have suggested that his dialogue with Caliban in Act two, Scene one, contains hints of a future alliance between the two when Prospero leaves, in general, Ariel is viewed by scholars as the good servant, in comparison with the conniving Caliban-a view which Shakespeare's audience would have shared. Ariel is used by some postcolonial writers as a symbol of their efforts to overcome the effects of colonization on their culture. Michelle Cliff, for example, a Jamaican author, has said that she tries to combine Caliban and Ariel within herself to create a way of writing that represents her culture better. Such use of Ariel in postcolonial thought is far from uncommon, as Ariel is even the namesake of a scholarly journal covering post-colonial criticism.

The Tempest has only one visible female character in Miranda. Other women, such as Caliban's mother Sycorax, Miranda's mother, and Alonso's daughter Claribel, are mentioned. Because of the small role women play in the story in comparison to other Shakespeare plays, The Tempest has not attracted much feminist criticism. Miranda is typically viewed as being completely deprived of freedom by her father. Her only duty in his eyes is to remain chaste. Ann Thompson argues that Miranda, in a manner typical of women in a colonial atmosphere has completely internalized the patriarchal order of things, thinking of herself as a subordinate to her father.

The less-prominent women of the play are subordinated as well, as they are only described through the men of the play. Most of what is said about Sycorax, for example, is said by Prospero. Further, as scholars point out, Prospero has never met Sycorax – all he learned about her he learned from Ariel. Proper's suspicion of women makes him an even more unreliable source of information. Skeptical of female virtue in general, his only mention of his wife is in a question of her fidelity.

20.5 CRITICAL COMMENTS:

Two famous professors, both eminent in Shakespearean criticism combine to write as follows:

"No one can read Shakespeare's later plays in a block without recognizing that the subject which constantly engaged his mind towards the close of his life was reconciliation , with pardon and atonement for the sins or mistakes of one generation in the young love of the children, and in their promise. This is the theme of **Pericles, Cymbeline, Winter's Tale and The Tempest** successively. But the process of reconciliation – especially when effected through the appeal of sons and daughters-is naturally a slow one, and therefore extremely difficult to translate into drama which handles the 'two hours traffic of our stage' and therefore must almost the necessarily rely on the piling of circumstance and character upon one crisis and its swiftest possible resolution. In attempting to condense such 'romantic stories of reconciliation as he had in his mind. Shakespeare was in fact taking up

the challenge thrown down by Sir Philip Sydney in his pretty mockery of bad playwrights… The whole action of the play, with the whole tale of ancient wrong unfolded, the whole company of injuring and injured gathered into a knot, the whole machinery of revenge converted into forgiveness-all this is managed in about three hours of imagined time, or scarcely more than the time of its actual representation on the stage." (From Sir A. Quiller-Couch and Professor Dover Wilson's edition)

20.6 SELF ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

1. What references are there in the play to the schemes colonization and adventures in the new world?

2. To What extent is the supernatural element an essential part of the machinery of the Play

3. What new themes did Shakespeare introduce in the play?

4. The Tempest is the play of reconciliation and forgiveness-discuss

20.7 REFERENCE BOOKS

1. Daiches David: A Critical History of English Literature
2. Charlton, H.B.: Shakespeare's comedy
3. Wagner, Emma Brockway: Shakespeare's Tempest
4. Walter Raleigh: Shakespeare

M.A DEGREE EXAMIANTIONS, OCTOBER 2021

Second Semester

English

Paper-III – DRAMA – II (SHAKESPEARE)

Time : Three hours Maximum : 70 marks

Answer ALL questions.

All questions carry equal marks

UNIT I

1. (a) (i) Elizabethan Audience
   (ii) Groundlings
   (iii) Theme of Revenge and Elizabethan Audience
   (iv) Significance of Shakespearean Tragedy
   (v) Treatment of History in Chronicle Play
   (vi) Place of Elizabethan Actors in Society

   Or

   (b) Discuss the major reflection of the attitude of Elizabethan society towards the seminal aspect of romance with reference Twelfth Night and The Tempest.

UNIT II

2. (a) Compare and contrast Viola and Olivia characters and indicate how do they augur New Woman

   Or

   (b) Treat Twelfth Night as a typical romantic play of the Elizabethan times, referring to the significant yet fundamental romantic attitude towards life.

UNIT III

3. (a) Establish that Julius Caesar as a play that stands the essence of Shakespearean tragedy.

   Or

   (b) Brutus in Julius Caesar play as a rigid idealist. Substantiate.

UNIT IV

4. (a) Discuss the Shakespearean view of royalty in the play, Hamlet, and explore the consequent artistic compromise on the part of the author.

   Or

   (b) Elucidate the treatment of women characters in the play, Hamlet.

UNIT V

5. (a) Bring out the not-so-explicit power conflicts between Prospero and Caliban. Unravel the significance of the same.

Or

(b) Explore the romantic elements in the play, The Tempest, especially with reference to the love between Ferdinand and Miranda.