Unit-1

A) Definition and Elements of Drama

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1.0 Objectives

After studying this Unit you will be able:

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

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

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

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

Drama like other forms of literature, imitates life. It is the form of composition designed for performance in the theater, in which actors take the roles of the characters, perform the indicated action, and utter the written dialogue. It is designed for representation on the stage by actors who act the parts of the characters of its story, and among whom the narrative and the dialogue are distributed. It is a form of expression which depends largely upon communication from a playwright to an audience through the medium of actor. Drama generally takes the form of the theater performance. But it can as easily be transferred broadcasting to a home television screen, or to the printed page. The word drama comes from the Greek and means to do or act. The drama has mirrored the life, customs, manner and general living habits of the people.
A drama must create a desired effect in very short period of time. This necessitates various elements such as a very tight plot, precise delineation of character, conflict, setting, dialogue etc. Aristotle’s treatise ‘Poetics’ is especially written on tragedy. It deals with the principles that contribute to the composition of elements in his treatise. Aristotle defined tragedy and analyzed its constituent elements in his treatise. Aristotle was not primarily thinking of drama as a book to be read but as a text to be acted on the stage with people, the audience, and so he considered following elements of drama especially.

1.2 Presentation of Subject Matter

1.2.1 Definition of Drama

What is drama?

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

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

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

- Webster’s English Dictionary

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

- Shorter Oxford Dictionary

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

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

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

1.2.2 The Origins of Drama:

The word drama comes from the Greek meaning “to act, do or perform”, and it is in the several subtle and diverse meanings of “to perform” that drama can be said to have begun. All communities accept that their later drama has roots in pre-history. Anthropologists have shown that primitive societies used (and in certain cases still use) role-playing in teaching the codes and behavior required to live and survive in that society; for example, to teach the skills needed in knowing what and how to hunt, the making and use of weapons and the rules of warfare. Performance could be involved in oral repetition to teach the laws and social customs, while enactment of mythical or historical episodes perpetuates and transmits what is thought important to maintain in the race-memory of the tribe. Most early societies lived by a seasonal cycle, a regular pattern allied to the movements of the sun or moon, and perhaps related to the movement of prey, or to seed time and harvest, and drama was especially important in devising rituals to deal with the inexplicable, the changing seasons, the natural phenomena of night and day, or the waxing and waning of the moon. Without propitiation with certain symbolic ceremonial safeguards or sacrifices, the sun might not rise again, the crops might fail. All humankind has, and had, concerns with life and death and has evolved ceremonies and rituals to help deal with the perennial questions of “where did I come from?” and “where do I go after death?” These were usually answered by some kind of belief in an outside power, an almighty being or beings, to give the hope of an after-life, to avoid extinction at death. Thus the invention of gods happened to provide a liaison between this world and the next and societal rituals would encompass joy, hope, and renewal, or death, despair and foreboding. Omens became important and had to be interpreted by wise men, perhaps involving impersonation, and disguise, in punctiliously performed ceremonies to appease or placate the gods. Rules for communal living would gradually be agreed: incest might be banned, but witchcraft allowed within given limits; murder be condoned for some offences but avenged for others. Most societies
would include rituals of purification, perhaps for menstruating women or after childbirth, and ordeals for children to undergo in order to attain adulthood and acceptance into full membership of the community. And all this would be taught and learnt through oral tradition, through story-telling and through performances and enactments passed down from generation to generation. All societies seem to have had these ritual traditions in one form or another from which spoken drama often, but not always, emerged. It is these ritual and community roots that later dramatists have drawn on in trying to express humanity’s concern with life and death in both tragedy and comedy. In the early communities everyone was involved in the drama of a ceremonial ritual, perhaps with impersonation and identification with priestly roles, or as characters depicted in enactments, or simply as celebrants but it was not theatre. Theatre requires a separate audience of spectators which happened when the occasion became a performance by some in front of others as an entertainment. However since the sixteenth century, the two terms have become synonymous with both words loosely understood as meaning the representation of a story enacted by actors in front of an audience. Most communities have some mention of folk drama derived from oral storytelling becoming a narrative in dialogue, but by its nature oral storytelling is mostly unrecorded, and histories are sparse and fragmentary. It is thought that music and dance associated with death and rejuvenation? is represented in ancient Egyptian hieroglyphs from around 2500BCE but little more is known about Egyptian practices. Although Herodotus wrote about an Egyptian temple ceremony involving a mock battle, and implied this was an annual event, nothing is known about any spoken drama. In China music is believed to have existed in 5400BCE, scribes wrote of rituals and religious worship accompanied by music and dance from 2200BCE, and of emperors who were reproved for enjoying theatrical performances by actors. However, written classical Chinese poetic drama is only recorded from the 700s BCE. In India the beginnings of spoken drama are uncertain but it is also thought to have derived from earlier dramatic dances and mimes related to ancient rituals and seasonal celebrations, and to have appeared about the same time as the Greeks began writing their plays. Some authorities suggest Indian dramatic writings were influenced by the influx of Greek culture after the invasion by Alexander the Great in 327BCE. For Greece, and in particular Athens, is credited with the beginnings of performing plays in front of an audience as we understand them today.
The English drama at its initial stage developed from religious rituals, commemorating the birth and resurrection of Jesus Christ. It grew out of the liturgy of the church. In order to amuse the congregation, and make the people familiar with the Bible, the bishops in the church began to dramatize some of the incidents from the life of Christ and other saints, out of this the English drama was born. In the 21st and 13th centuries, some plays, describing the life of Christ and other saints, were called Morality and Miracle plays. At the end of 15th century, the play called ‘The Morality Play’ took birth. The morality play mark the next stage in the growth of the drama in England. These plays were didactic and religious in nature. The characters were no longer Biblical figures but personified virtues and vices. Everyman(1490) is the finest of this type of play. Sackville and Norton’s, “Gorboduc” (1561) was the first regular English Tragedy. Udall’s, “Ralph Roister Doister” (1566) was the first English regular comedy. The Elizabethan Drama reached its highest point in the works of William Shakespeare and Marlowe. After the Restoration period drama restored and in modern age various types of drama are developed. In modern age G. B. Shaw and Galsworthy were the great dramatists.

1.2.3 Elements of drama

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

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Plot means the arrangement of the events in a story, including the sequence in which they are told, the relative emphasis they are given, and the causal connections between events. Plot is the series of events that take place in a play. There are six stages in a plot structure: Initial incident, Preliminary event, Rising action, Climax, Falling action and Denouement or Conclusion. For the dramatic purpose plot means plan, scheme or pattern. It may be defined as a pattern of events- the way in which
events are organized. It has to do with internal relation of events or the way incidents are combined or unified to produce an ‘organic whole’. The events have to be formed into a plot. It is also narrative of events, the emphases on causality. Plots could be infinite or limitless, but their significance have no limits and that’s why Aristotle said that plot is the soul of tragedy. According to Aristotle action in drama is complete in itself. It has a beginning, a middle and an end. At some points action begins, then complications enter, which gradually reaches a peak point, technically called the climax, followed by a crisis or the terming point what Aristotle termed us as peripety, this leads to the failure of the central character; the catastrophe depends on discovery or anagnorsis.

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

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

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

**Characters:**

Character is the next important element of the drama. We can’t imagine the drama without characters. Characters are persons like the men and women we see around us but sometimes unreal and supernatural types of characters are also present. Plot and characters are inseparable part because when we read plays for their plots- to find out what happens- we also read them of discover the fates of their characters. We become interested in dramatic characters for varying, even contradictory,
reasons. Characters bring play to life. First and last we attend to characters: to how they look and what their appearance tells us about them; to what they say and what their manner of saying it expresses; to what they do and how their action reveal who they are and what they stand for.

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

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

■ Dialogue:

In its widest sense, dialogue is simply conversation between people in literary work; in its most restricted sense, it refers specifically to the speech of characters in a drama. As a specific literary genre, a ‘dialogue’ is a composition in which characters debate and issue or idea. The dictionary tells us that; “dialogue is a conversation between two or more persons real or imaginary”. According to the critics of drama reading drama means reading dialogue.
Our discussion of character and conflict brings us to a critical aspect of dramatic characters—their speech, or dialogue. Dialogue involves two speakers and monologue to the speech of one. An important dramatic convention of dialogue is the use of a soliloquy to express a character’s state of mind. A soliloquy represents a character’s thoughts so the audience can know what he or she is thinking at a given moment. Soliloquies should be distinguished from asides, which are comments made directly to the audience in the presence of other characters, but without those characters hearing what is said. Unlike a soliloquy, an aside is usually a brief remark.

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

**Action:**

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

**Conflict:**

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

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

Staging / Stage Directions:

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

Theme:

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

1.2.4 Conclusion:

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

1.3 Summary

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

1.4 Glossary and Notes

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

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

1.6 Exercises

A) Answer the following questions in 250 words.
   I) Trace the development of English drama.
   II) Write a detail note on the origin of drama.

B) Write short note on the following (150 words)
   I) Various definitions of Drama.
   II) The importance of dialogue in drama.
   III) Plot in the drama
   IV) Characters in drama

1.7 Answers to check your progress
1 Simple and complex
2 dynamic and static
3 dialogue
4 Plot
5 as a dramatic speech
B) Comedy as a Form

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1.7 Further Reading

1.1 Introduction:

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

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

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

The linking of the origins of comedy to some sort of phallic ritual or festival of mirth seems both plausible and appropriate, since for most of its history--from
Aristophanes to Seinfeld--comedy has involved a high-spirited celebration of human sexuality and the triumph of eros. As a rule, tragedies occur on the battlefield or in a palace's great hall; a more likely setting for comedy is the bedroom or bathroom.

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

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

1.2 Presentation of Subject Matter

1.2.1 History:

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

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

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

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

1.2.2 Definition of Comedy:

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

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

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

■ Romantic Comedy

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

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

■ Comedy of Manners:

The phrase comedy of manners is particularly applied in English to the plays of the Restoration dramatists, and especially to Congreve and Wycherley, but is a type of comedy which can flourish in any civilized urban society and we see it again in Sheridan and Oscar Wilde. The English comedy of manners was early exemplified by Shakespeare’s *Love’s Labour’s Lost* and *Much Ado about Nothing*, and was given
a high polish in Restoration comedy (1660-1700). The Restoration form owes much to the brilliant dramas of the French writer Moliere, 1622-73. It deals with the relations and intrigues of men and women living in a sophisticated upper-class society, and relies for comic effect in large part on the wit and sparkle of the dialogue—often in the form of repartee, a witty conversational give-and-take which constitutes a kind of verbal fencing match—and to a lesser degree, on the violations of social conventions and decorum by would-be wits, jealous husbands, conniving rivals, and foppish dandies. This form deals with the relations and intrigues of gentlemen and ladies living in a sophisticated society. It relies upon comic effect in great part on the wit and sparkle of the dialogues, and to a certain degree, on the ridiculous violations of social conventions and decorum by stupid characters such as would be wives, jealous husbands, foppish dandies. Excellent examples are Congreve’s *The Way of The World* Wycherley’s *The Country Wife*. The main thrust in The ‘comedy of Manners’ is to make fun not so much of individual human being as of social groups and their fashionable manner.

**Satirical Comedy.**

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

**Farce**

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

### Comedy of Humours:

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

### Sentimental Comedy:

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

Jeremy Collier (1650-1726) protested against the permissiveness of the ‘comedy of manners’ specially those of Congreve and Vanbrugh, and wrote his treatise
entitled *Short View of The Immortality and Profaneness of The English Stage*. One result of this was the appearance of the new ‘sentimental comedy’. This form achieved some popularity with respectable middle-class audiences of the 18th century. It showed virtue rewarded by domestic bliss; its plots usually involved unbelievably good middle-class couple and emphasized pathos rather than humour. **Pioneered** by Richard Steele in *The Funeral* (1710) and more fully in *The Conscious Lovers* (1722), it flourished in the mid-century with the French comedia larmoyonete (Tearful comedy) and in such plays as Huge Kelly’s *False Delicacy* (1768). The pious moralizing of this tradition also involved an element of preaching as a result of which the entertainment values of these plays was reduced.

**Tragic-Comedy:**

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

1.3 Glossary and Notes

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

### 1.4 Check Your Progress

**Fill in the blanks**

1. Shakespeare’s *As You Like It* is an example of ……….comedy.
2. The function of tragedy according to Aristotle is……..
3. Shakespeare’s later plays like *The Winter’s Tale* and *Cymbeline* are the example of ……………… comedy.

4. The sentimental comedy of the 18th century was actually a reaction against Comedy of ………………

5. The phrase comedy of manners is particularly applied in English to the plays of the……………

### 1.5 Exercises

**A)** *Answer the following questions in 250 words.*

i) Comedy as a form of drama

ii) Write a note on historical development of comedy

iii) Write a note on types of comedy.

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

i) Tragic-Comedy:

ii) Romantic comedy

iii) Sentimental comedy

iv) Farce

### 1.6 Answers to check your progress

1. romantic

2. Cathersis

3. tragi-comedies

4. Manners of the Restoration period.

5. Restoration dramatist
1.7 Further Reading


5) Butcher S. H. (trans): Aristotle’s Poetics


Unit-2

A) Tragedy as a Form

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2.0 Objectives:

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

2.1 Introduction:

In the previous unit you are introduced to the concept of drama, its definition and its elements. You know that drama probably gets most of its effectiveness from
its ability to give order and clarity to human experience. The basic elements of drama- feelings, desires, conflicts and reconciliations- are the major ingredients of human experience. The playwright can organize these experiences into understandable patterns, in a meaningful manner. The unimportant is omitted and the significant is emphasized.

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

2.2 Presentation of Subject Matter

2.2.1 Origin of Tragedy

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

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

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

**Check your progress-I**

A) Complete the following choosing the correct alternative:

i) Western drama was born in _________.
   a) Rome   c) Greece
   b) England d) France

ii) The tragedies were performed at the festival of ________.
   a) Zeus   c) Vulcan
   b) Dionysus d) Here

iii) The word tragedy is derived from the Greek word ‘tragos’ which means a ________.
   a) goat   c) cat
b) sheep  d) lion

iv) ______ is a famous tragedy by Sophocles.
   a) Oresteia  c) Titus Andronicus
   b) Medea  d) Oedipus Rex

v) Gorboduc was written in ______.
   a) 1564  c) 1616
   b) 1562  d) 1662

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

i) Who won the first ever tragedy competition?

ii) What is a trilogy?

iii) Who introduced tragedy in Rome? When?

iv) Who was the most influential Roman tragedian?

v) What is Aristotle’s contribution to the study of Poetry?

2.2.2 Tragedy: Definition and Constituents

Tragedy: Definition

Let us now see the definition of tragedy as given by Aristotle.

“Tragedy is the imitation of an action, that is serious, complete and of a certain magnitude; in language embellished with each kind of artistic ornament, the several kinds being found in separate parts of the play; in the form of action, not of narrative; through pity and fear effecting a proper catharsis of these emotions”.

The above definition sums up two main aspects- the nature of tragedy and the function of tragedy. The definition tells us that tragedy, like any other form of art is an imitation. But it is an imitation of an action which is of a serious nature and has a certain magnitude and is complete (i.e. has a definite beginning, middle and an end). The language is artistic and consists of many ornaments which are found in the various parts of the tragedy. The most important feature of tragedy is that it is performed, enacted before the audience and not narrated by someone. The actions in a tragedy are meant to arouse the twin emotions of pity and fear in the minds of the
audience and thereafter bring about their catharsis which means purgation or cleansing. The aim of tragic representation on the stage is to leave an audience relieved and not depressed and give what is termed as “tragic pleasure” by bringing about a catharsis of pity and fear. Aristotle tells that certain emotions like pity and fear do not get used enough in civilized life. So tragedy attempts to evoke these emotions and let them flow in order to establish calm of mind. This is the guiding principle in the choice of the tragic hero.

The Constituents of Tragedy:

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

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

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

2. **Characters:** The agents that carry forward the plot are called characters.
Characterization is an important constituent of a play after the plot. Aristotle
calls it “ethos”, a set of moral qualities. We assess characters on the basis of
what they say and do, and what other characters say about them. We understand
them in the real sense when we relate them to the broader theme of the play.
Aristotle’s concept and the modern concept of the character are two different
things. Aristotle, who belonged to the classical tradition regarded community and not the individual as the centre. But today, a character is seen not only as a distinct personality but as a man with psychological depth, motivation, attitudes and a general emotional disposition. The main character is called protagonist or hero. In Shakespeare, we sometimes have an anti-hero in addition or a hero and a heroine. In Greek tragedy, the tragic hero was a person of high social position like a king, a prince etc. He was a good man but not perfectly good. During the course of the tragedy he passes from prosperity to adversity because of some “hamartia” (a miscalculation or an error in judgment). He commits series of such errors which is with the best intention though. It is also called tragic flaw. The unjustified downfall of such a tragic hero alone arouses the feelings of pity and fear. Thus, an exceptionally good infallible person or an utter villain cannot be a tragic hero according to Aristotle. However, Shakespeare’s Macbeth, in spite of being a villain wins our sympathy.

3. **Diction:** It means the expression of the meaning in words. It is the exchange of words between the characters in a tragedy. Commonly known as dialogue, it carries the action forward in the form of verse or prose and holds a mirror up to what the dramatist attempts to express. It unfolds the relations between characters. Soliloquies and asides also form an important part of dramatic speech and help in understanding of the characters.

4. **Setting:** It is the general locale and the historical time in which the action occurs. The setting of an episode or scene within a work is the particular physical location in which it takes place. e.g. The general setting in *Macbeth* is medieval Scotland and the setting of Macbeth’s encounter with the witches is a blasted heath. The physical setting is an important element which generates the atmosphere of a work. When applied to theatrical production, setting also means the properties or the movable pieces of furniture on the stage. Sometimes it even includes the positioning of the actors in a particular scene.

5. **Stage directions:** They are guidelines, suggestions given by the dramatist usually to the producer, in the script of the play. In earlier drama, they were simple and few in number. They establish a link between the reader and the dramatist. Usually this function was performed by the Chorus in the Greek drama. In modern plays the stage directions are many, complex and given in detail. They help the dramatist to create the exact atmosphere.
6. **Conflict:** It means some kind of struggle or competition. Without a conflict, there cannot be a drama. Conflict is of two types- external and internal. It could be between two persons, thoughts or ideas. It could be physical, psychological or intellectual. Hegel in his discussion on tragedy points out that the most decisive conflict that lends grandeur to the human life is articulated when an individual has to choose between two versions of right action, the most painful and trying experience for him. Drama represents conflict in all its diversity and from a variety of perspectives. Shakespeare seems to prefer internal conflict to external one, though there are many scenes of external conflict in his tragedies. In modern absurd drama, the conflict the centres round the philosophical belief that life is meaningful and the experience that such meaning does not really exist.

7. **Chorus:** It was an important constituent of the Greek drama and consisted of fifty persons. It has an interpretative function and is in fact a commentator. In a Greek tragedy, this body of persons formed, as it were, a multiple individuality, moving, dancing, and singing together and continually interrupting the dialogue and the progress of the action with its odes and interludes. “To combine, to harmonize, to deepen for the spectator the feelings excited in him by the sight of what was passing on the stage”—this was one of the grand effects produced by the chorus in Greek tragedy. It also served the purpose of a narrator or a commentator. The actions that happen off-stage, especially, acts of violence, war, etc. are narrated by the chorus.

8. **Thought:** It is the faculty of saying what is possible and pertinent in given circumstances.

9. **Song:** It held the chief position among embellishments in Greek tragedy.

10. **Spectacle:** It has an emotional attraction of its own, but, of all parts, it is the least artistic. The spectacular effects do not depend on the art of the poet but on the stage mechanism.

★ **Check your progress-II**

A) **Complete the following sentences choosing the correct alternative:**

i) Tragedy is an imitation of an action in the form of ________.

   a) narration  
   b) action
c) dance d) song

ii) _______ is the function of tragedy according to Aristotle.
   a) hubris b) hamartia
c) catharsis d) ethos

iii) Aristotle preferred a _______ plot.
   a) simple b) compound
c) collateral d) complex

iv) The plot structure given by Freytag is _______ in shape.
   a) round b) pyramidal
c) hexagonal d) square

v) According to Aristotle _______ is the soul of tragedy.
   a) Character b) Plot
c) Song d) Diction

B) Answer the following in one word, phrase or sentence each:
   i) What is the aim of tragic representation?
   ii) Which is the most important of the Unities?
   iii) What is the use of the Unities in a tragedy?
   iv) What is “ethos”?
   v) What is hamartia?
   vi) What is setting?
   vii) What is the function of the chorus in a tragedy?

2.2.3 Types of tragedy:

1. Classical or Greek tragedy: Aristotle’s Poetics is based on the analysis of the Greek tragedies of Aeschylus, Sophocles and Euripides. Hence, the characteristics of Greek tragedy are well stated in the Poetics. The stories in these tragedies being based on myths were known to the audience. Hence, there was little element of surprise in them. As part of the religious festivals, there
was a strong religious and moral element in the plays. Fate (nemesis) was supreme. The Greek tragedy, as far as possible, avoided scenes of brutal violence on the stage, though the subjects were often shocking and terrible. There were as few as five to six characters in the play. Such incidents were narrated by the chorus which was fifty men strong. The characters, usually the protagonist belonged to a high social order; a man with exceptional character but with a flaw which led to his downfall. Women and slaves were not considered fit subjects for a tragedy. The tragedies were ‘pure tragedies’ and there was no mixing of the comic with the tragic, thus following the Unity of Action. Greek tragedies were performed as trilogies; a series of three plays. But after serious plays usually there would be a ‘Satyr play’ which was separate from the tragedy and often crudely comic in nature.

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

3. The Restoration Tragedy/ The Heroic Play: The Heroic play is a peculiar product of the Restoration period (1660-1700). It was often criticized as unnatural, artificial and alien. It came into existence in response to the spiritual needs of a tired, disillusioned and decadent aristocracy. It created a dream-world with love, virtue and greatness in contrast to the debased life in reality of the times. It dealt with the themes of love and honour or duty. It is an artificial world which can be best termed as ‘heroic’ for the protagonist and his belief in his absolute power over his actions and surroundings. The Heroic play shows more affinity with the epic with its character, with its style, especially the use of heroic metre. The plot, the characters, the wit, the passions, the descriptions are all exalted and epical in style. Love and valour are the themes of a heroic play. The audience is amazed by the superhuman devotion and loyalty shown by the hero. To this love is linked the theme of honour, which includes all spiritual and moral qualities and the hero strives to possess them to be worthy of his beloved. The Heroic play shows complications such as two men loving the same woman, or two brothers or two friends. These lead to sudden turns in the fortune of the hero. The Heroic play usually ended on a happy note as the aim of the dramatist was to present the hero as a model to be emulated. Hence, he was rewarded in the end. Thus, there is poetic justice in the tragedy unlike the Greek or Shakespearean tragedy. Another version of such a play is the blank verse tragedy which uses the blank verse instead of the heroic couplet as the metre. John Dryden wrote such Heroic plays His All for Love based on Shakespeare’s Antony and Cleopatra is a famous Heroic play.

4. Domestic Tragedy: This type of tragedy existed in the eighteenth century. It deals with the domestic day to day life of average middle class citizens and shows that family life and happiness are destroyed if the husband or the wife strays from the path of virtue. This type of tragedy flourished due to the rise in sentimentalism. There is a conscious attempt to make it ordinary, commonplace by doing away with the rhetorical style of the Heroic play. Fate had an important role in this type of tragedy as the authors felt that such situations gave a chance for the display of sentiments. George Lillo was the most important writer of domestic tragedy. His The London Merchant or The History of George Barnwell
(1973) is the best example of a domestic tragedy. The play is full of artificiality and is in prose. The domestic tragedy paved the way for the modern theatre.

★ Check your Progress-III

A) Complete the following choosing the correct alternative:

i) The Greek tragedy is also called _______ tragedy.
   a) Renaissance  b) classical
   c) Neo-classical  d) romantic

ii) _______ is one of the greatest tragedians of the Elizabethan –Jacobean Age.
   a) Shakespeare  b) T.S. Eliot
   c) Ben Jonson  d) John Milton

iii) Horror tragedy is inspired by the works of the Roman dramatist _______.
   a) Plautus  b) Terence
   c) Sophocles  d) Seneca

iv) The Heroic play is written in the _______ metre.
   a) Spenserian stanza  b) ballad
   c) heroic couplet  d) blank verse

v) All for Love was written by _______.
   a) John Dryden  b) John Milton
   c) Prof. Dowden  d) Ben Jonson

2.3 Glossary and Notes:

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

liturgical (adj.): about a fixed form of public worship used in churches

Mysteries and Miracle plays (n): a medieval drama based on events in the Bible or the lives of Christian saints

interlude (n): a piece performed during an interval separating the parts of a play

incorporate (v): to include

embellish (v): decorate

delineation (n): the process of showing something by describing it in detail

illuminate (v): to make something clear, explain

predicament (n): difficult or uneasy situation

infallible (adj.) perfect

grandeur (n): the quality of being great, impressive

pertinent (adj.): relevant to something

flaw (n): a fault

emulate (v): follow, imitate

2.4 Key to check your progress:

I  A.  i) Greece  ii) Dionysus  iii) goat  iv) Oedipus Rex  v) 1562

B.  i)  Thespis
    ii)  a series of three plays
    iii)  Livius Andronicus in 240 B.C.
    iv)  Seneca
    v)  Poetics- an essay on the nature and function of tragedy

II  A  i) action
    ii) catharsis
    iii) complex
iv) pyramidal
v) plot

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

vii) narrator, commentator and interpreter of actions on the stage

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

2.5 Exercises:

1. Answer the following in about 200-250 words each:
   i) Give an account of the origin of tragedy.
   ii) Write a detailed note on the constituents of tragedy.
   iii) Explain the various types of tragedy.

2. Write short notes on following in about 100-150 words each:
   i) Definition of tragedy
   ii) Plot in tragedy
   iii) Characterization in tragedy
   iv) Chorus in tragedy
   v) Domestic tragedy
   vi) Heroic play
   vii) Renaissance tragedy
2.6 Activities:
   i) Study the evolution of the tragic hero from the Greek to the modern drama.
   ii) Find out information about the theatre of the Absurd.

2.7 Suggested Reading:
   iv) The World Book Encyclopedia
B) Problem Play as a Form

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2.0 Objectives:

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

2.1 Introduction:

In the previous units you have studied about the beginning of drama, tragedy, comedy and also about the various types of plays. In this unit you will get acquainted with the Problem play. Problem play is a term used for the type of drama that began in the last quarter of the nineteenth century in England. It was written under inspiration from the Norwegian playwright Henrik Ibsen. In Problem plays the situation faced by the protagonist is put forth by the author as a representative presentation of a contemporary social problem. The problem is presented either by
the character who speaks for the author or by the evolution of the plot or both. An attempt to put forth a solution to the problem is made. The problems could be wide ranging- social, economic or psychological. T. W. Robertson and Arthur W. Pinero prepared the ground for G.B. Shaw, Galsworthy and H. Granville-Barker who wrote Problem plays in English. Robertson and Pinero were instrumental in introducing the realist mode in English drama and also a new vitality into it. Another important dramatist in this regard is Henry Arthur Jones who discussed problems of man’s religious faith and spiritual life in his Problem plays. According to Albert Guerard, “The problem play is the presentation of a contemporary question through realistic technique”. The realistic movement was supported by the growth of the scientific attitude, which created an urge for facts and dispassionate observation and analysis of a social problem. The naturalistic influence of Henrik Ibsen and Emile Zola was clearly felt on English drama. By giving a vivid and faithful impression of the banality of everyday life, these dramatists tried to make the theatre modern and realistic.

2.2 Presentation of Subject Matter

2.2.1 Background:

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

The term “Problem play” was coined by Sidney Grundy who used it in disparaging sense for the intellectual drama of the nineties. G.B. Shaw defined it as “the presentation in parable of the conflict between man’s will and his environment”. The play usually ends with a question mark as the dramatist aims at presenting the
problem clearly and effectively rather than suggesting a specific remedy. The problem play is also called “the drama of ideas” because it deals with themes like the problems of religion, of youth and age, of labour and capital and sex. These ideas were for the most part revolutionary, so that the drama came to form an advanced battleground for a rising school of young thinkers. Revolt took the form of reaction to the past literary models, to current social conventions, and to the prevailing morality of Victorian England. The spirit of youth inspires many of these plays. The characters of these plays seem constantly questing, constantly restless and dissatisfied as compared to the characters of the romantic drama. The Problem play continued to dominate in the early years of the twentieth century also. Some writers like G.B. Shaw, Granville-Barker and the like have made significant contributions to the Problem play.

2.2.2 Features of the Problem play:

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

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

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

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

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

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

7. Symbolism: With increased inwardness it became very difficult to express the almost inexpressible ideas, emotions, instincts defined by the psychologists in ordinary direct words. As a result we find excessive use of symbolism in modern drama. In Bravely Fought the Queen there are many symbols like Kanhaiya, bonsai, rain dance, mask and the strong black arms. Each of these has its own significance. In The Glass menagerie too, we have the unicorn and also the world of little glass animals is a symbol in itself.
8. **Social forces as dramatic personages:** With the increasing inwardness in drama, the tendency to make unseen forces especially social forces the personages of their plays increased. This helped in widening the scope of drama. With increased urbanization, the city life had become quite artificial and men became emotionally and morally cut-off from elemental conditions and impulses. This led the modern drama to be satiric of this over civilized life.

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

2.2.3 **Important Dramatists and their Works:**

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

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

- *Mrs. Ebbsmith*
- *Iris*
- *Mid Channel*

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

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

- *The Triumph of the Philistines*
- *Michael and His Lost Angel*
He was a master craftsman and made advance in the field of dialogues.

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

   *Justice*
   *Strife*
   *Silver Box*
   *Loyalties*
   *The Mob*
   *The Eldest Son*

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

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

   *Arms and the Man*
   *Man and Superman*
   *Saint Joan*
   *Candida*
   *The Apple Cart*
   *Widower’s House*
   *Mrs. Warren’s Profession*
Heartbreak House

Major Barbara

Getting Married

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

The Marrying of Ann Leete

The Voysey Inheritance

Waste

The Madras House

The Secret Life

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

2.3 Glossary and Notes:

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

Check your progress-I

1. Complete the following sentences choosing the correct alternative:
   i) The Problem play developed in England in the ______ quarter of the nineteenth century.
      a) first   b) second   c) third   d) fourth
   ii) The Problem play presents a contemporary problem in a ________ way
        a) realistic   b) romantic   c) abstract   d) classical
   iii) Ibsen’s play_______ is regarded as the pioneer Problem play.
        a) Strife   b) Justice   c) The Doll’s House   d) Heartbreak House
   iv) The term Problem play was coined by______.
        a) G. B. Shaw   b) H. Granville-Barker   c) Henrik Ibsen   d) Sidney Grundy
   v) The Problem play prescribed the “Truth to ______” attitude.
        a) dream   b) life
   vi) The Problem play gives more importance to ______.
        a) diction   b) song   c) plot   d) character

2.4 Key to check your progress:
I   i) fourth, ii) realistic, iii) The Doll’s House, iv) Sidney Grundy,
    v) life, vi) character
2.5 Exercises:
A. Write short notes on the following in about 150-200 words each:
   i) The contribution of G.B. Shaw to the Problem play
   ii) The themes of Problem plays
B. Answer the following questions in about 200-250 words each:
   i) Emergence of the Problem play
   ii) Features of the Problem play
   iii) Contribution of some important dramatists to the Problem play

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

2.7 Suggested reading:
3.1 Objectives

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

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

3.3 Biographical Information:

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

He was an English poet, playwright, and actor. He is often called England’s national poet. His extant works, including some collaborations, consist of about 38 plays, 154 sonnets, two long narrative poems, and a few other verses. His plays have been translated into every major living language. Shakespeare produced most of his known work between 1589 and 1613. His early plays were mainly comedies and histories. He then wrote mainly tragedies until about 1608, including Hamlet, Othello, King Lear, and Macbeth. The works have been considered some of the finest works in the English language. In his last phase, he wrote tragicomedies, also known as romances.
In 1623, John Heminges and Henry Condell, two friends and fellow actors of Shakespeare, published the First Folio, a collected edition of his dramatic works that included all but two of the plays now recognised as Shakespeare’s. It was prefaced with a poem by Ben Jonson, in which Shakespeare is hailed, presciently, as “not of an age, but for all time”.

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

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

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

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

Shakespeare divided his time between London and Stratford during his career. In 1596, the year before he bought New Place as his family home in Stratford, Shakespeare was living in the parish of St. Helen’s, Bishopsgate, north of the River
Thames. He moved across the river to Southwark by 1599, the year his company constructed the Globe Theatre there. By 1604, he had moved north of the river again, to an area north of St Paul’s Cathedral with many fine houses. There he rented rooms from a French Huguenot named Christopher Mountjoy, a maker of ladies’ wigs and other headgear.

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

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

**Check your Progress**

A) Complete the following choosing the correct alternative:

i) William Shakespeare was born in------
   a) 1560    b) 1564    c) 1570    d) 1616

ii) Shakespeare wrote ------ sonnets.
   a) 150    b) 154    c) 164    d) 180

iii) At the age of 18, Shakespeare married a lady of 26 years old. Her name is--
    ----
a) Ann Hathaway  b) Mary Fit ton  
c) Elizabeth Boyle  d) Helen of Troy  
v) In 1597, Shakespeare bought big house in ------ named New place.  
a) London  b) Stratford  c) Paris  d) Oxford  

B) Answer the following in one word, phrase of sentence  
1) When was First Folio of Shakespeare’s plays published?  
2) When did Queen Elizabeth die?  
3) How many daughters Shakespeare had?  
4) Who were John Heminges and Henry Condell?  
5) Who changed the name of Lord Chamberlain’s Men as King’s Men?  

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

When Prospero arrives on the island, he rescues Ariel from a tree. He repeatedly promises to release the airy spirit from servitude and maintains Ariel’s loyalty. Caliban was a deformed monster and only non-spiritual inhabitant. Prospero adopts him. He and his daughter Miranda teach him religion and their language. Caliban teaches them how to survive on the island. Unfortunately Caliban attempts to rape Miranda. So Prospero compels him to serve as his slave. Caliban becomes conscious about Prospero’s tyrannical treatment to him and his usurper’s view. On the other
hand, Prospero and Miranda look at Caliban with contempt and disgust. Actually Prospero doesn’t use any magic on the island; he just manipulates others by his oratory power and makes them believe in his power.

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

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

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

3.5 Sources of the play:
1. Erasmus’s book Naufragium
2. Peter Martyr’s book De orbe novo
4. Montaigne’s essay Of the Canibales,
5. Ovid’s poem Metamorphoses.

3.6 List of Characters:

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

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

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

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

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

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

Alonso: The king of Naples. He believes his son has died and is overjoyed to later find him. Alonso is repentant for the pain he caused Prospero in the past.
Sebastian: Alonso’s brother. He is easily led into planning his own brother’s (the king’s) murder.

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

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

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

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

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

3.7 Act-wise Summary

Act I

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

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

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

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

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

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

Ariel enters and leads in Ferdinand with playing music and singing. Prospero tells Miranda to look upon Ferdinand. Miranda has seen no humans in her life other than Prospero and Caliban. So she falls in love. Ferdinand is similarly fanatical and reveals his identity as the prince of Naples. Prospero is pleased that they are so taken
with each other. But he decides that the two must not fall in love too quickly. So he accuses Ferdinand of simply pretending to be the prince of Naples. When he tells Ferdinand he is going to imprison him, Ferdinand draws his sword. Prospero charms him so that he cannot move. Miranda attempts to convince her father to have mercy, but he quiets her ruthlessly. He tells her that this man is like Caliban. He explains that she simply doesn’t know any better because she has never seen any others. Prospero escorts the charmed and helpless Ferdinand to his imprisonment. Secretly, he thanks the invisible Ariel for his help. He sends him on another mysterious errand, and promises to free him soon.

**Act II**

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

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

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

At this moment, Ariel takes action. He awakens Gonzalo in time to prevent the murders. Antonio and Sebastian quickly make a story to explain their drawn swords, warning of great noise, as if from bulls or lions. Alonso is easily convinced of his
brother’s sincerity, and the scene ends with the royal party leaving the stage in search of Ferdinand.

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

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

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

Act III

Act Three opens with Ferdinand performing tasks against his will by his captor, Prospero. He tells himself that, although he is not use to such hard labour, he actually likes the work because he knows that Miranda “weeps” when she sees him suffer. Miranda appears, followed by Prospero who hides from their site. She offers to carry the logs for him but he refuses her help, insisting that he would rather break his back
than see her undergo “such dishonor”. They declare their love for one another and agree to be wed as soon as possible. Prospero is delighted by what he is hearing and, now sure that Ferdinand is worthy of his daughter, he returns to his books and to his other pressing business with Antonio and the King.

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

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

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

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

**Act IV**

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

As I foretold you, were all spirits and
Are melted into air, into thin air:
And, like the baseless fabric of this vision,
The cloud-capp’d towers, the gorgeous palaces,
The solemn temples, the great globe itself,
Ye all which it inherit, shall dissolve
And, like this insubstantial pageant faded,
Leave not a rack behind. We are such stuff
As dreams are made on, and our little life
Is rounded with a sleep. Sir, I am vex’d;
Bear with my weakness; my, brain is troubled:
Be not disturb’d with my infirmity:
If you be pleased, retire into my cell
And there repose: a turn or two I’ll walk,
To still my beating mind. (163-77)

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

Act V

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

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

While Alonso continues to mourn the loss of his son, Prospero relates that he too has lost his child, his daughter. But he means that he has lost her in marriage and pulls back a curtain to reveal Ferdinand and Miranda playing chess. Ferdinand
explains to his father that he is betrothed to Miranda and that this event occurred
while he thought his father dead. Alonso quickly welcomes Miranda and says he will
be a second father to his son’s affianced. At the sight of the couple, Gonzalo begins
to cry and thanks God for having worked such a miracle.

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

Epilogue

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

3.8 Glossary & Notes

- **abstemious** moderate, especially in eating and drinking; temperate. Prospero is
  warning Ferdinand once again about resisting lust before the wedding occurs.
- **amain** at or with great speed; here, Miranda’s peacocks fly quickly.
- **bark** any boat, but especially a small sailing ship.
- **bass my trespass** Here, meaning that the condemnation (my trespass) was
  uttered in a deep bass voice. The thunder proclaimed his sin, according to
  Alonso, like a noise from the heavens.
- **Bermoothes** refer to the Bermudas, a common word to describe tempests and enchantments.
- **betid** happened or befell; here, it means that nothing has happened to the boat’s inhabitants.
- **boatswain** the ship’s petty officer, in charge of the deck crew, the rigging, anchors, boats, and so on.
- **bombard** a large leather container meant to hold liquor.
- **bourn** a limit; boundary. Here used to mean that no land would be divided among landowners.
- **bring a corollary** here, meaning to bring too many spirits rather than not enough.
- **Br’r lakin** ”By your ladykin”; a reference to the Virgin Mary.
- **case** here, prepared.
- **chaps** jaws. Stefano is telling Caliban to open his jaws and drink more.
- **coragio** take courage (Italian).
- **dowle** small feather.
- **dropsy** a disease characterized by the accumulation of fluid in the connective tissues, resulting in swelling.
- **drowning mark** refers to a mole, located on the boatswain’s face, the appearance of which was thought to portend a person’s manner of death. In this case, the boatswain’s mole appears to be the type that predicts a death by hanging.
- **extirpate** to pull up by the roots. The reference here is to Prospero and Miranda’s being forced from their home and country.
- **feater** more graceful. Here, Antonio’s new rank — and clothes that befit it — looks graceful on him.
- **foil** to keep from being successful; thwart; frustrate.
- **foison** plenty; here, specifically, an abundance of produce.
- **frippery** here, an old clothing shop.
- **furtherer** an accomplice.
- **genius** either of two spirits, one good and one evil, supposed to influence one’s destiny.
- **hereditary sloth** the natural inclination of a younger brother to be lazy, according to Sebastian, who sees the lack of a hereditary title as a reason to achieve nothing on his own.
- **hest** [Archaic] a behest; a bidding; an order. Miranda was commanded not to reveal her name.
- **hollowly** here, insincerely.
- **inch-meal** inch by inch. Here, Caliban hopes for Prospero’s fall.
- **inveterate** firmly established over a long period.
- **jerkin** a short, closefitting jacket, often sleeveless.
- **kibe** a chapped or ulcerated sore, esp. on the heel. If Antonio’s conscience were a sore on his foot, Antonio might put on a slipper.
- **a living drollery** probably a puppet-show with live actors.
- **long spoon** alluding to an old proverb that a man must have a very long spoon to eat with the devil. Stefano thinks that Trinculo is a ghost.
- **maid** here, handmaiden, a woman or girl servant or attendant.
- **mantle** to enclose or envelop.
- **merely** [Obs.] absolutely; altogether; here, it means that they are completely cheated of their lives by drunkards.
- **moon-calf** [Obs.] a monstrosity; a misshapen creature born under the moon’s influence.
- **murain** a disease of cattle.
- **patch** [Archaic] a court jester; any clown or fool
- **Phoebus’ steeds** the mythological horses that drew the chariot of the sun. Here, the suggestion is that they are lame from the long day and overriding.
- **pied ninny** a fool.
- **rapier** a slender two-edged sword used chiefly in thrusting.
- **rate** opinion.
- **requite** to make return or repayment to for a benefit, injury, and so on; reward.
- **roarers** noisy and unruly waves; here so called because they care little for royal rank.
- **Seamels** The meaning is uncertain but thought to be either shellfish or rock-inhabiting birds.
- **sicklemen** reference to nymphs disguised as harvesters.
- **Signories** domains or city-states in Northern Italy, subject to the rule of a lord or signior.
- **subtleties** here, the illusions.
- **surety** a person who takes responsibility for another. Miranda will be Ferdinand’s guarantee.
- **swabber** the sailor who washes the ship and keeps the decks clean.
- **tawny** brownish-yellow; here used to mean that the sun has turned the ground a parched brown color.
- **teen** injury or harm. Prospero worries about the trouble that he has created for Miranda.
- **tight and yare** sound and ready. The ship is ready to sail.
- **too massy** unable to move. Here, through magic, the men are paralyzed.
- **trident** a three-pronged spear used by a gladiator in ancient Roman gladiatorial combats and by the Greek god of the sea, Neptune.
- **troll the catch** to sing the round lustily or in a full, rolling voice
- **trumpery** something showy but worthless; here, the gaudy clothing designated as bait for the three conspirators.
- **twain** two. Ferdinand refers to himself and his father as but two of the victims of the storm.
- **unbacked** not broken to the saddle: said of a horse.
- **vanity** reference to an illusion or trick that Prospero has created.
- **Wallets** here, meaning wattle, the fleshy, wrinkled, often brightly colored piece of skin that hangs from throat of a turkey.
- **wezand** windpipe.
- **wooden slavery** being compelled to carry wood.
andrely briskly or smartly. Here the boatswain is instructing the sailors to move quickly or the ship will be pushed around by the storm.

3.9 Characterization:

Prospero

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

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

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

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

The pursuit of knowledge gets Prospero into trouble in the first place. By neglecting everyday matters when he was duke, he gave his brother a chance to rise
up against him. His possession and use of magical knowledge renders him extremely powerful and not entirely sympathetic. His punishments of Caliban are petty and vindictive, as he calls upon his spirits to pinch Caliban when he curses. He is defensively autocratic with Ariel. For example, when Ariel reminds his master of his promise to relieve him of his duties early if he performs them willingly, Prospero bursts into fury and threatens to return him to his former imprisonment and torment. He is similarly unpleasant in his treatment of Ferdinand, leading him to his daughter and then imprisoning and enslaving him.

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

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

Miranda

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

“O, I have suffered
With those that I saw suffer!”

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

“I, not rememb’ring how I cried out then,

Will cry it o’er again”

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

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

“When thou didst not, savage,

Know thine own meaning, but wouldst gabble like

A thing most brutish, I endowed thy purposes

With words that made them known”

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

“I am your wife, if you will marry me;
If not, I’ll die your maid”

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

**Caliban**

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

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

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

Finally, and most tragically, Caliban becomes a parody of himself. In his first speech to Prospero, he regretfully reminds the magician of how he showed him all the ins and outs of the island when Prospero first arrived. Only a few scenes later, however, we see Caliban drunk and fawning before a new magical being in his life:
Stephano and his bottle of liquor. Soon, Caliban begs to show Stephano the island and even asks to lick his shoe. Caliban repeats the mistakes he claims to curse. In his final act of rebellion, he is once more entirely subdued by Prospero in the most petty way—he is dunked in a stinking bog and ordered to clean up Prospero’s cell in preparation for dinner.

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

**Ariel**

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

**Ferdinand**

Ferdinand is the son of the king of Naples. During the storm, he is separated from the rest of the king’s party. Once ashore, he meets Miranda and falls in love with her. Like Miranda, Ferdinand is honest and kind, a loving son, who will make a
loving husband to Miranda. He easily reassures Prospero that he will respect Miranda’s chastity and not violate the trust he has been given. Ferdinand also respects and loves his father. He makes a commitment to marry Miranda while thinking that his father is dead. When he finds that his father is alive, Ferdinand immediately acknowledges his father’s authority and informs his father of his obligation to Miranda. Ferdinand is an honorable match for Miranda, sharing many of the same qualities that his innocent bride displays.

**Alonso**

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

**Antonio**

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

★ Check your progress

Choose the correct option given below:

1. Caliban mistakes for one of Prospero’s spirits sent to torment him to…
   - (A) Stephano
   - (B) Ferdinand
   - (C) Miranda
   - (D) Trinculo

2. Prospero’s title before his position was usurped and he was forced to flee Italy, is…
   - (A) Duke of Milan
   - (B) King of Naples
3. Alonso’s ship was returning from……when it is caught in the tempest?.
   (A) Naples   (B) England   (C) Tunis   (D) Bermudas

4. Prospero and Miranda had been on their island for …
   (A) Ten years   (B) Fifteen years   (C) Twelve years   (D) One day

5. The name of Caliban’s mother was…
   (A) Ariel   (B) Claribel   (C) Sycorax   (D) Setebos

6. The action of The Tempest takes place in…..
   (A) Two days   (B) One day   (C) Three days   (D) Four days

7. The mythical figures…. appear in the wedding masque Prospero stages for Miranda and Ferdinand.
   (A) Cupid, Venus, and Mars   (B) Jupiter and Saturn
   (C) Ceres, Iris, and Juno   (D) Isis and Osiris

8. What is the name of Prospero’s brother?
   (A) Alonso   (B) Sebastian   (C) Gonzalo   (D) Antonio

9. Who of the following is Sebastian’s brother?
   (A) Prospero   (B) Antonio   (C) Gonzalo   (D) Alonso

10. At the end of the play, Miranda and Ferdinand are….
    (A) Playing cards   (B) Carrying wood
    (C) Playing chess   (D) Playing tag

11. Ariel assumes….. at the magical banquet in Act III, scene iii.
    (A) Harpy   (B) Eagle   (C) Sea-nymph   (D) Hound

12. The name of Alonso’s daughter is…
    (A) Claribel   (B) Miranda   (C) Sycorax   (D) Alonso

13. …helped Prospero and Miranda to flee Italy.
    (A) Antonio   (B) Gonzalo   (C) Trinculo   (D) Claribel
14. Ariel puts the mariners and Boatswain after the tempest…
   (A) In a thicket         (B) Under Caliban’s cloak
   (C) Asleep in the ship in the harbor (D) In Prospero’s cell

15. Sycorax imprisons Ariel…
   (A) On another island     (B) In a cloven pine
   (C) In a lion’s den       (D) Inside a stone

16. … persuades Sebastian to try to kill Alonso.
   (A) Antonio            (B) Gonzalo        (C) Ariel             (D) Alonso

17. Prospero intends to drown …after he has reconciled with his enemies.
   (A) His magic garments (B) His book
   (C) His staff          (D) Caliban

18. The final task Prospero orders Ariel to perform is…
   (A) To release Sycorax       (B) To haul a load of wood
   (C) To give the fleet calm seas on its return to Italy
   (D) To take charge of Caliban

Key to check your progress:

A)  I) 1564, II) 154, III) Ann Hathaway IV) Thames V) Stratford

B) 1) 1623  2) 1603  3) Two
   4) John Heminges and Henry Condell were friends of Shakespeare who published the First Folio of Shakespeare’s plays.

5. James I

   5. Sycorax  6. One day  7. Ceres, Iris, and Juno
18. To give the fleet calm seas on its return to Italy

3.10 Activities

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

3.11 Suggested Reading

10. Mane, Prabhanjan. Interpreting Drama (Atlantic Publishers & Distributors (P) Ltd. (January 15, 2010)


Unit-4

The Tempest

- William Shakespeare

(Part-II)

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Objectives

After studying this unit you will be able

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

Introduction

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

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

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

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

Like her mother, Miranda is a commodity. Her value like goods in barter is in her nobility and purity. Prospero tells her of her mother’s nobility:
Thy mother was a piece of virtue, and
She said thou wast my daughter; and thy father
Was Duke of Milan, and his only heir
And princess, - no worse issued. (I. ii. 56-59)

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

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

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

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

the fair soul herself
Weigh’d between loathness and obedience, at
Which end o’th’ beam should blow. (II.i.129-131)
Obviously, although Claribel loathes marrying an African king her father’s choice, her obedience to her father weighed more heavily than her own desire. In a way, it supports the point that a woman’s primary value as a chattel to be bartered on the marriage market for her husband is what her father desires most.

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

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

4.2 *The Tempest*: Post-colonial implication

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

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

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

This approach raises certain questions. Does Shakespeare really want to focus on the oppression by Prospero? Is the play about colonization? The post-colonial critics emphasizes that there is tension between the oppressive colonial power and the rightful claim of the native people in the play. These critics also stress that this tension also has effect on the relation between the colonizers and colonized. For
instance the relationship between Prospero and Ariel is also almost similar to that of Prospero and Caliban. Caliban is unskilled native while Ariel belongs to the class of skilled native. Ariel is forced to work for Prospero, through with a promise of freedom.

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

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

4.3 Themes

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

4.3.1 The Illusion of Justice

Justice simply means doing right to what is wrong. The Tempest tells a fairly straightforward story involving an unjust act. The story is the usurpation of Prospero’s throne by his brother Antonio and Prospero’s quest to seek justice by
restoring himself to power. However, the idea of justice in the play seems highly subjective. It represents the view of one character who controls the fate of all the other characters. No doubt, Prospero is a victim of injustice, but his idea of justice and injustice is somewhat hypocritical. Though he is sufferer, he has no right to enslave Ariel and Caliban in order to achieve his goal. At many occasions in the play, Prospero’s sense of justice seems extremely one-sided and mainly involves what is good to Prospero. Besides, the play is morally ambiguous, because it offers no notion of higher order or justice to replace Prospero’s view.

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

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

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

When Miranda sees Ferdinand first time, she says that he is “the third man that e’er I saw” (I. ii. 449). The other two are, most likely, Prospero and Caliban. However, in their first conversation with Caliban, Miranda and Prospero say very little that shows they consider him to be human. Language is human. So, Prospero reminds Caliban that he gabbled “like / A thing most brutish” (I. ii. 359-60) before he taught him language. He gave him “human care” (I. ii. 349). It implies that this was something Caliban ultimately did not deserve. The exact nature of Caliban continues to be slightly unclear later in the play. Miranda and Prospero both have contradictory
views of his humanity. On the one hand, they think that their education has lifted him from his early brutishness. On the other hand, they seem to see him as inherently brutish. His devilish nature can never be overcome by nurture in Prospero’s view. He says, “thy vile race, / Though thou didst learn, had that in’t which good natures / Could not abide to be with” (I. ii. 361- 363). The “good natures” imposed on him is driven out by the inhuman part in Caliban.

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

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

4.3.3 The attraction to Rule a Colony

The island on which the characters land in the play is nearly inhabited. Thus it presents the countless possibilities to almost everyone. Prospero has found it, in its isolation, an ideal place to school his daughter. Sycorax, Caliban’s mother, worked her magic there after she was exiled from Algeria. Caliban laments that he had been his own king (I. ii. 344-5) and now he is slave to Prospero. To comfort Alonso, Gonzalo imagines a utopian society on the island, over which he can rule (II. i. 148-56). When Caliban suggests that Stephano should kill Prospero, immediately Stephano fancies his own reign on the island: “I will this man: his daughter and I will be king and queen, - save our graces! –and Trinculo and thyself shall be vicerois” (III. iii. 101-103). All these characters foresee the island as a space of freedom and unrealized potential.
The hopeful tone of these would-be colonizers is downsized at best in the play. For instance, Gonzalo’s utopian vision is undercut by a sharp retort from Sebastian and Antonio. When Gonzalo says that there would be no commerce or work or “sovereignty” in his society, Sebastian replies, “yet he would be king on’t,” and Antonia adds, “the latter end of his commonwealth forgets the beginning” (II. i. 156-7). Gonzalo’s fantasy thus involves him ruling the island while seeming not to rule it. In this way he becomes a kind of parody of Prospero’s supremacy on the island.

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

4.3.4 Forgiveness and Reconciliation

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

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

But I say to unto you which hear, love your enemies, do good to them which hate you
Bless them that curse you, and pray for them which despiseth you… For if ye love them which love you, what thank have ye? For
The sermon gives the basic tenets of the idea of forgiveness. However, Prospero’s behaviour seems to contradict the tenets from the beginning of the play. The misfortune of his enemies has brought them within his grasp and he seizes the opportunity for revenge. “Desire for vengeance has apparently lain dormant in Prospero through the years of banishment, and now, with the sudden advent of his foes, the great wrong of twelve years before is stirringly present again, arousing the passions and stimulating the will to action” (Davidson 225).

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**4.3.5 Revenge versus Reconciliation**

Nearly all the tragedies written during the reigns of Queen Elizabeth and King James I were plays about revenge. The greatest among them are by Shakespeare,
who examined the theme dramatically, and the idea itself in nuanced soliloquies and conversations in his most complex tragedies. In *The Tempest*, he took a situation that the dramatists of his age were accustomed to present in a revenge tragedy and used it to fashion a reconciliation comedy. The first act of *The Tempest* actually comes after the events of a tragedy—the usurper brother overthrows the righteous ruler. Instead of killing Prospero, however, Antonio sets him adrift on the sea. And instead of seeking revenge, Prospero, the righteous ruler, forgives his brother, seeks reconciliation, and sets reason above passion.

4.3.6 Art, Magic, and Illusion

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

4.4 Style:

4.4.1 Blank Verse

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

4.4.2 Epilogue

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

4.4.3 Music, Song, Spectacle

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

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

4.4.4 The Unities

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

4.4.5 The scene of Masque

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

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

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

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

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

4.5 Symbols

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

4.5.1 The Tempest

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

4.5.2 The Game of Chess

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

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

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

4.6 Check your progress

Choose the correct option given below:

1. The.............. critics view that The Tempest is about the colonization of the island.
   (A) Elizabethan  (B) Shakespearean (C) Postcolonial (D) Modern

2. Prospero’s books are symbol of............
   (A) Loneliness (B) Power  (C) Poverty  (D) Love

3. In the play The Tempest, the reconciliation is achieved through.......  
   (A) Revenge  (B) Love  (C) Magic  (D) Forgiveness

4. Generally, the characters in the Masque are............
   (A) gods and nymphs (B) villains  (C) humans  (D) Animals

5. ............ is emphasized as a highest quality in Miranda.
   (A) Virginity  (B) Beauty  (C) Obedience  (D) Serenity

6. Sycorax was banished from ........
   (A) Algeria  (B) Italy  (C) England  (D) Virginia

7. ........ is the goddess of fertility and of harvest.
   (A) Iris  (B) Juno (C) Ceres (D) Ariel
8. In view of the postcolonial critics, .......... is the native of the island.
   (A) Miranda    (B) Prospero    (C) Antonio    (D) Caliban

9. *The Tempest* is grouped with *Pericles, Cymbeline* and .......... as “romances”.
   (A) The Winter’s Tale    (B) Hamlet    (C) King Lear    (D) Othello

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

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


