

DRAMA

(B.A. English Sem. III)



Contact us:



8252299990



8404884433

AISECT University, Hazaribag

Matwari Chowk, in front of Gandhi Maidan, Hazaribag (JHARKHAND)-825301



www.aisectuniversityjharkhand.ac.in



info@aisectuniversityjharkhand.ac.in

UNIT-1 SHORT TERMS

Drama

Definition of Drama

Drama is a mode of fictional representation through dialogue and performance. It is one of the literary genres, which is an imitation of some action. Drama is also a type of a play written for theater, television, radio, and film.

In simple words, a drama is a composition in verse or prose presenting a story in pantomime or dialogue. It contains conflict of characters, particularly the ones who perform in front of audience on the stage. The person who writes drama for stage directions is known as a “dramatist” or “playwright.”

Types of Drama

Let us consider a few popular types of drama:

- **Comedy** – Comedies are lighter in tone than ordinary works, and provide a happy conclusion. The intention of dramatists in comedies is to make their audience laugh. Hence, they use quaint circumstances, unusual characters, and witty remarks.
- **Tragedy** – Tragic dramas use darker themes, such as disaster, pain, and death. Protagonists often have a tragic flaw — a characteristic that leads them to their downfall.
- **Farce** – Generally, a farce is a nonsensical genre of drama, which often overacts or engages slapstick humor.
- **Melodrama** – Melodrama is an exaggerated drama, which is sensational and appeals directly to the senses of the audience. Just like the farce, the characters are of a single dimension and simple, or may be stereotyped.
- **Musical Drama** – In musical dramas, dramatists not only tell their stories through acting and dialogue, but through dance as well as music. Often the story may be comedic, though it may also involve serious subjects.

Examples of Drama in Literature

Example #1: *Much Ado About Nothing* (By William Shakespeare)

Much Ado About Nothing is the most frequently performed Shakespearian comedy in modern times. The play is romantically funny, in that love between Hero and Claudio is laughable, as they never even get a single chance to communicate on-stage until they get married.

Their relationship lacks development and depth. They end up merely as caricatures, exemplifying what people face in life when their relationships are internally weak. Love between Benedick and Beatrice is amusing, as initially their communications are very sparky, and they hate each other. However, they all of sudden make up, and start loving each other.

Example #2: *Oedipus Rex* (By Sophocles)

Tragedy: Sophocles' mythical and immortal drama *Oedipus Rex* is thought to be his best classical tragedy. Aristotle has adjudged this play as one of the greatest examples of tragic drama in his book, *Poetics*, by giving the following reasons:

- The play arouses emotions of *pity* and *fear*, and achieves the tragic *Catharsis*.
- It shows the downfall of an extraordinary man of high rank, Oedipus.
- The central character suffers due to his tragic error called *Hamartia*; as he murders his real father, Laius, and then marries his real mother, Jocasta.
- Hubris is the cause of Oedipus' downfall.

Example #3: *The Importance of Being Earnest* (By Oscar Wilde)

Farce: Oscar Wilde's play, *The Importance of Being Earnest*, is a very popular example of Victorian farce. In this play, a man uses two identities: one as a serious person, Jack (his actual name), which he uses for Cecily, his ward, and as a rogue named Ernest for his beloved woman, Gwendolyn.

Unluckily, Gwendolyn loves him partially because she loves the name Ernest. It is when Jack and Ernest must come on-stage together for Cecily, then Algernon comes in to play Ernest' role, and his ward immediately falls in love with the other "Ernest." Thus, two young women think that they love the same man – an occurrence that amuses the audience.

Example #4: *The Heiress* (By Henry James)

Melodrama: *The Heiress* is based on Henry James' novel the *Washington Square*. Directed for stage performance by William Wyler, this play shows an ungraceful and homely daughter of a domineering and rich doctor. She falls in love with a young man, Morris Townsend, and wishes to elope with him, but he leaves her in the lurch. The author creates melodrama towards the end, when Catherine teaches a lesson to Morris, and leaves him instead.

Function of Drama

Drama is one of the best literary forms through which dramatists can directly speak to their readers, or the audience, and they can receive instant feedback of audiences. A few dramatists use their characters as a vehicle to convey their thoughts and values, such as poets do with personas, and novelists do with narrators. Since drama

uses spoken words and dialogues, thus language of characters plays a vital role, as it may give clues to their feelings, personalities, backgrounds, and change in feelings. In dramas the characters live out a story without any comments of the author, providing the audience a direct presentation of characters' life experiences.

Tragedy

Tragedy Definition

Tragedy is a type of drama that presents a serious subject matter about human suffering and corresponding terrible events in a dignified manner.

Greek Tragedy

The term is Greek in origin, dating back to the 5th century BC, when it was assigned by the Greeks to a specific form of plays performed at festivals in Greece. The local governments supported such plays, and the mood surrounding the presentation of these plays was that of a religious ceremony, as the entire community, along with the grand priest, attended the performances.

The subject matter of Greek tragedies was derived chiefly from Homer's *Iliad*, and *Odyssey*, which included misfortunes of heroes of history and religious mythology. The three prominent Greek dramatists were Aeschylus (525–456 BC), Sophocles (496–406 BC), and Euripides (480–406 BC).

Aristotle's Definition of Tragedy

Aristotle defines Tragedy in his famous work *Poetics* as:

“Tragedy is an imitation of an action that is admirable, complete (composed of an introduction, a middle part and an ending), and possesses magnitude; in language made pleasurable, each of its species separated in different parts; performed by actors, not through narration; effecting through pity and fear the purification of such emotions.”

From the above definition, we can understand the objective of the Greek tragedies, which is the “...purification of such emotions,” also called “catharsis.” Catharsis is a release of emotional tension, after an overwhelming experience, that restores or refreshes the spirit.

English Tragedy

Shaped on the models of Seneca, the first English tragedy appeared in 1561, written by Thomas Norton and Thomas Sackville. The play chose the story of a British king and his sufferings at the hand of his two disobedient sons as a subject matter. The importance of the play lies in the fact that it transformed the style of English drama, from morality and mystery plays, to the writing of tragedies in the Elizabethan era.

Tragedy Examples

Below is the list of prominent English tragedy writers and their famous works:

A. Christopher Marlowe

Marlowe was the first English dramatist worthy of the tradition of Greek tragedy. The characters of his tragedies are the great men of history, who became victims of their own fate.

- Tamburlaine
- Doctor Faustus
- The Jew of Malta
- Edward III

B. William Shakespeare

Shakespeare, the most popular of all playwrights, knew the Greek tragedy style well and he used several Greek themes but modified them to his own purpose. He intentionally violates the unity of action and mixes tragic actions with comical. Examples of tragedy written by Shakespeare include:

- Hamlet
- Othello
- King Lear
- Macbeth
- Antony and Cleopatra
- Troilus and Cressida

C. John Webster

Webster was a Jacobean dramatist who modelled his tragedies on the Shakespearean model. Among his famous works are the following tragedy examples:

- Titus Andronicus
- The White Devil
- The Duchess of Malfi

D. Henrick Ibsen

He is known as “the father of realism”. He was the creator of some of the well-known tragedies also called “problem plays”. His famous works are:

- A Doll’s House
- Hedda Gabler
- The Wild Duck
- Emperor and Galilean

E. Arthur Miller

He is a famous American playwright and essayist. His famous works are:

- All My Sons
- Death of a Salesman
- The Crucible
- A View from the Bridge
- The misfits

The Difference Between Greek and English Tragedies

We notice the following differences between the tragedies by the Greek playwrights, and those written by English playwrights:

Device	Greek Tragedies	English Tragedies
Theme/Plot	Focused on a single theme and plot	Have several story lines developing at the same time into plots and sub-plots
Character Origins	“great” characters were mortals who were equal to gods in their significance	Heroes come from all walks of life
Subject Matter	Serious, treated in a dignified manner	Mixed tragic with comic (Modern playwrights argue that such depiction is nearer to life as our life is a mixture of good and bad fortunes.)
Purpose/Objective	Religious teaching	Instructive of a religious or ethical issue, though their primary objective is to entertain.

Comedy

Definition of Comedy

Comedy is a literary genre and a type of dramatic work that is amusing and satirical in its tone, mostly having a cheerful ending. The motif of this dramatic work is triumph over unpleasant circumstance by creating comic effects, resulting in a happy or successful conclusion.

Thus, the purpose of comedy is to amuse the audience. Comedy has multiple sub-genres depending upon the source of the humor, context in which an author delivers dialogues, and delivery methods, which include farce, satire, and burlesque. Tragedy is opposite to comedy, as tragedy deals with sorrowful and tragic events in a story.

Types of Comedy

There are five types of comedy in literature:

Romantic Comedy:- Romantic comedy involves a theme of love leading to a happy conclusion. We find romantic comedy in Shakespearean plays and some Elizabethan contemporaries. These plays are concerned with idealized love affairs. It is a fact that true love never runs smoothly; however, love overcomes difficulties and ends in a happy union.

Comedy of Humors :- Ben Johnson is the first dramatist who conceived and popularized this dramatic genre during the late sixteenth century. The term humor derives from the Latin word *Humor*, which means “liquid.” It comes from a theory that the human body has four liquids, or humors, which include phlegm, blood, yellow bile, and black bile. It explains that, when human beings have a balance of these humors in their bodies, they remain healthy.

Comedy of Manners:- This form of dramatic genre deals with intrigues and relations of ladies and gentlemen living in a sophisticated society. This form relies upon high comedy, derived from sparkle and wit of dialogues, violations of social traditions, and good manners, by nonsense characters like jealous husbands, wives, and foppish dandies. We find its use in Restoration dramatists, particularly in the works of Wycherley and Congreve.

Sentimental Comedy:- Sentimental drama contains both comedy and sentimental tragedy. It appears in literary circles due to reaction of the middle class against obscenity and indecency of Restoration Comedy of Manners. This form, which incorporates scenes with extreme emotions evoking excessive pity, gained popularity among the middle class audiences in the eighteenth century.

Tragicomedy:- This dramatic genre contains both tragic and comedic elements. It blends both elements to lighten the overall mood of the play. Often, tragicomedy is a serious play that ends happily.

Comedy Examples from Literature

Example #1: *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (By William Shakespeare)

William Shakespeare's play, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, is a good example of a romantic comedy, presenting young lovers falling comically in and out of love for a brief period. Their real world problems get resolved magically, enemies reconcile, and true lovers unite in the end.

Example #2: *Every Man in His Humor* (By Ben Johnson)

In his play *Every Man in His Humor*, Ben Johnson brings a comedy of humors. An overpowering suspicion of, and obsession with, his wife – that she might be unfaithful to him – controls Kiteley. Then a country gull determines every decision of George Downright in order to understand the manners of the city gallant. Kno'well worried for moral development of his son, tries to spy on him.

Example #3: *The Conscious Lovers* (By Sir Richard Steele)

Sir Richard Steele's play, *The Conscious Lovers*, is a best-known and popular sentimental comedy, which is like a melodrama. It characterizes extreme exaggeration, dealing with trials of its penniless leading role Indiana. The play ends happily with the discovery of Indiana as heiress.

Example #4: *All's Well that Ends Well* (By William Shakespeare)

Shakespeare's play, *All's Well that Ends Well*, perfectly sums up tragic and comic elements. This tragicomedy play shows antics of low-born but devoted Helena, who attempts to win the love of her lover, Bertram. She finally succeeds in marrying him, though she decides not to accept him until she wears the family ring of her husband and bears him a child. She employs a great deal of trickery by disguising herself as Bertram's other, and fakes her death. Bertram discovers her treachery at the end but realizes Helena did all that for him and expresses his love for her.

Function of Comedy

Comedy tends to bring humor and induce laughter in plays, films, and theaters. The primary function of comedy is to amuse and entertain the audience, while it also portrays social institutions and persons as corrupt, and ridicules them through satirizing, parodying, and poking fun at their vices. By doing this, authors expose foibles and follies of individuals and society by using comic elements.

HISTORICAL PLAYS

Historical plays are dramas having for their subject historical events, and for their dramatis persona real men who have made their names famous in history.

The writer of such dramas labours under a disadvantage, in as much as he has to confine himself more or less closely to the facts of history, and cannot use his imagination freely in the construction of an interesting plot. But, on the other hand, it is a great advantage that he places upon the stage men and women who have really done what they are represented as doing, so that the audience are not tempted to condemn what they see on the stage as impossible and unnatural. The spectators in theatres are also naturally more interested in real than in fictitious characters.

The noblest examples of historical plays are those of Shakespeare, who wrote three plays on Roman historical subjects and in a long series of dramas illustrated the course of English history from the reign of John to the birth of Elizabeth is difficult to realize how great a service he did to his native land by writing these plays.

In the first place, we must consider the pleasure their representation afforded to the spectators. Shakespeare, while preserving general historical truth, does not hesitate to depart from strict chronological accuracy and to make immaterial alterations in the course of events.

When such changes are required to give his plays dramatic unity. In this way he succeeds in making his historical plays as delightful to readers and audiences, as those in which he has fictitious characters to deal with.

ONE ACT PLAY

One-Act plays were written & staged throughout the 18th & 19th centuries as “The Curtain Raisers” or “The After Pieces”.

They were chiefly farcical & served to amuse the audience before the commencement of the actual drama or were staged for their amusement just after it had come to an end.

The famous one-act play “Monkey’s Paw” was first staged as a ‘Curtain Raiser’ & it proved to be more entertaining than the main drama. It may be said to mark the beginning of the modern one-act play.

The origin of the one-act play may be traced to the very beginning of drama — in ancient Greece, Cyclops, a play on the forest God, by Euripides, is an early example.

It was great Norwegian dramatist Ibsen, who, for the first time, introduced the minute stage-directions into the one-act play. Before him, one-act plays were written in poetry, but he made prose the medium of his one-act plays. In short, he made the drama, simple & real, & brought it nearer to everyday life. He made the modern one-act play what it is & his example has been widely followed. George Bernard Shaw & John Galsworthy are two of his greatest followers.

The one-act play requires no elaborate setting & costumes, & so comes in handy to be staged in amateur dramatic societies & clubs.

One-act plays by major dramatists —

- (i) Anton Chekhov — A Marriage Proposal (1890)

- (ii) August Strindberg — Pariah (1889)
Motherly Love (1892)
The First Warning (1892)
- (iii) Thornton Wilder — The Long Christmas Dinner (1931)
- (iv) Eugene Ionesco — The Bald Soprano (1950)
- (v) Arthur Miller — A Memory of Two Mondays (1955)
- (vi) Samuel Beckett — Krapp's Last Tape (1958)
- (vii) Israel Horovitz — Line (1974)
- (viii) Edward Albee — The Goat, or Who is Sylvia? (2002)

2. Chief Characteristics

- (i) One-act play is a play that has only one act, but may consist of one or more scenes.
- (ii) One-act plays are usually written in a concise manner.
- (iii) It deals with a single dominant situation, & aims at producing a single effect.
- (iv) It deals with only one theme developed through one situation to one climax in order to produce the maximum of effect.
- (v) It treats the problems of everyday life as marriage, punishment for crimes, labor conditions, divorce, etc.
- (vi) The one-act play, like the longer drama, should have a beginning, a middle & an end. It may be divided into four stages : The Exposition, The Conflict, The Climax & The Denouement.
The exposition is usually brief, serves as an introduction to the play.
It is through the conflict that the action of the drama develops. It is the very backbone of the one-act play.
Climax is the turning point of the drama. It is an important part of the one-act play & constitutes its moment of supreme interest.
The Denouement is very brief & often overlaps with climax.
- (vii) Action begins right at the start of the play.
- (viii) There are no breaks in the action, that is , it is continuous since its a short play; no intervals.
- (ix) Everything superfluous is to be strictly avoided as the play is short & the action takes place within a short period of time. It introduces elaborate stage directions to minimize the time taken by the action itself.
- (x) The creation of mood, or atmosphere is indispensable to its success.
- (xi) There are three dramatic unities which are observed in the one-act play. The unities are —
- the unity of time, unity of place & the unity of action.
- (xii) It aims at simplicity of plot ; concentration of action & unity of impression. It does not rely on spectacular effects & common dramatic tricks of old.
- (xiii) The characters in a one-act play are limited in number. Generally, there are not more than two or three principal characters.
- (xiv) There is no full development of character. All the different aspects of a character are not presented. The attention is focused on only one or two salient aspects of character & they are brought out by placing the characters in different situations & circumstances. The author implies the past & intimates the future of a character by presenting a crucial moment in the life of that character.
- (xv) There is an influence of realism. The characters in the modern one-act play are ordinary men & women. It depicts characters that seems to be real & related to everyday life.
- (xvi) It must present a question, for which the audience eagerly awaits the answer.

(xvii) Its language is simple & can be followed without any strain. All superfluity is to be avoided in the dialogue. The dialogue must be purposeful; the best dialogue is that which does several things at one time. Every word is to be carefully chosen & sentences must be compact & condensed. Effort should be made to say, whatever is to be said, in the least possible words. Thus, the language of the dialogue should be simple, brief & easy to understand. Long speeches & arguments & long sentences would be out of place & would lessen the charm & interest of the play.

EXPRESSIONIST DRAMA

Expressionism is a modernist movement in drama and theatre that developed in Europe (principally Germany) in the early decades of the 20th century and later in the United States. It forms part of the broader movement of Expressionism in the arts.

History

There was a concentrated Expressionist movement in early 20th century German theatre of which Georg Kaiser and Ernst Toller were the most famous playwrights. Other notable Expressionist dramatists included Reinhard Sorge, Walter Hasenclever, Hans Henny Jahnn, and Arnolt Bronnen. They looked back to Swedish playwright August Strindberg and German actor and dramatist Frank Wedekind as precursors of their dramaturgical experiments.

Oskar Kokoschka's *Murderer, the Hope of Women* was the first fully Expressionist work for the theatre, which opened on 4 July 1909 in Vienna. In it, an unnamed man and woman struggle for dominance. The Man brands the woman; she stabs and imprisons him. He frees himself and she falls dead at his touch. As the play ends, he slaughters all around him (in the words of the text) "like mosquitoes." The extreme simplification of characters to mythic types, choral effects, declamatory dialogue and heightened intensity would become characteristic of later Expressionist plays. The first full-length Expressionist play was *The Son* by Walter Hasenclever, which was published in 1914 and first performed in 1916.^[2]

In the 1920s, Expressionism enjoyed a brief period of popularity in the theatre of the United States, including plays by Eugene O'Neill (*The Hairy Ape*, *The Emperor Jones* and *The Great God Brown*), Sophie Treadwell (*Machinal*), Lajos Egri (*Rapid Transit*) and Elmer Rice (*The Adding Machine*).

Style

Expressionist plays often dramatize the spiritual awakening and sufferings of their protagonists and are referred to as *Stationendramen* (station dramas), modelled on the episodic presentation of the suffering and death of Jesus in the Stations of the Cross. August Strindberg had pioneered this form with his autobiographical trilogy *To Damascus* (1898-1904). Early expressionism in particular testified to the failure of social values^[3] with a predilection for ecstasy and despair and hence a tendency towards the inflated and the grotesque; a mystical, even religious element with frequent apocalyptic overtones; an urgent sense of the here and now.^[4]

The plays often dramatise the struggle against bourgeois values and established authority^[citation needed], often personified in the figure of the Father. In Reinhard

Sorge's *The Beggar* (*Der Bettler*), the young hero's mentally ill father raves about the prospect of mining the riches of Mars and is eventually poisoned by his son. In Arnolt Bronnen's *Parricide* (*Vatermord*), the son stabs his tyrannical father to death, only to have to fend off the frenzied sexual overtures of his mother. In Expressionist drama, the speech is heightened, whether expansive and rhapsodic, or clipped and telegraphic. Director Leopold Jessner became famous for his Expressionistic productions, often unfolding on stark, steeply raked flights of stairs (an idea originally developed by Edward Gordon Craig), which quickly became his trademark.

DRAMA OF IDEAS

"Drama of Ideas", pioneered by George Bernard Shaw, is a type of discussion play in which the clash of ideas and hostile ideologies reveals the most acute problems of social and personal morality. This type of comedy is different from the conventional comedy. Drama of Ideas established George Bernard Shaw, one of the popular dramatist in English literature such as Shakespearean comedies. In a Drama of Ideas there is a little action but discussion. Characters are only the vehicles of ideas. The conflict which is the essence of drama is reached through the opposing ideas of different characters. The aim of Drama of Ideas is to educate people through entertainment.

Arms and the Man is an excellent example of the Drama of Ideas. Here very little happens except discussion. The plot is built up with dynamic and unconventional ideas regarding war and love. Shaw criticizes the romantic notion of war and love prevailing in the contemporary society. Unlike the conventional comedies, here characters are engaged in lengthy discussion and thus bring out ideas contrary to each other.

POETIC DRAMA

The poetic drama is a great achievement of the modern age. It is a mixture of high seriousness and colloquial element. It is the combination of the tradition and the experiment and of the ancient and the new. It is symbolic and difficult. Its verse form is blank verse or free verse. In short, its vehicle is verse, its mechanism is imagery, its substance is myth and its binding force is musical pattern.

Beginning: The 18th and the 19th century contributed little to the development of poetic drama due to the unfavourable conditions. There were signs of rebirth of this drama by 1920. But it could not gain much ground. The reason was that most of the dramatists of this period were interested in realistic drama. A change was noticed with the passage of time. The disciples of Ibsen began to be overshadowed. At the **Abbey Theatre** Yeats tried to revive poetic drama. But he could not succeed. It was T.S. Eliot who firmly established it. He prepared the

concrete ground for it by saying that the craving for poetic drama is permanent in human nature. He added that poetry was the complete medium for drama.

Beginners: Before T.S. Eliot some dramatists tried to create a taste for poetic drama. This attempt helped Eliot in making his valuable experiments in poetic drama. Among these dramatists Stephen Phillis, Jon Masefield, Gordon Bottomley, Flecker and John Drinkwater are important. They all experimented in poetic Drama and prepared ground for Eliot. Their plays vitalised the course of poetic drama.

W.B. Yeats: W.B. Yeats, Lady Gregory and J.M. Synge established the Abbey theatre in Dublin to encourage the poet - playwrights. At this theatre Yeats endeavoured to revive poetic drama. He wrote about twenty-six plays in verse but Yeats was more of a poet than dramatist. His plays are rich in poetical intensity. Eliot has praised his contribution to poetic drama. Yeats' important plays are on Baile's Strand, The Resurrection and Deirdre.

T.S. Eliot: Eliot propounded the theory of the poetic drama. It was he who established its tradition in 20th century. The murder in the Cathedral is his first full-length poetic play. The family Reunion, The Cocktail Party, The Confidential Clerk and the Elder Statesman are his other important poetic plays. Through these plays he evolved a befitting poetic mode of expression for the poetic drama. He discarded the use of traditional blank verse. He carefully avoided any echo of Shakespeare. He explored the dramatic possibility of verse and extended the scope of poetic drama.

Auden and Isherwood: Auden wrote two plays alone and three plays in collaboration with Isherwood. Auden's The Dance of Death is an important poetic drama. Isherwood's Ascent of F6 and Across the Frontiers are important plays. His plays deal with symbolic situation and cartoon characters.

Stephen Spender: He wrote Trial of a Judge. But it can't be considered to be a poetic play of permanent value. John Masefield, Drinkwater, Macneice, Duncan, and Ridler are the other dramatists that have enriched the field of the poetic drama.

Christopher Fry: His 'The Lady Is Not For Burning' is an important experiment in verse and technique. In 'Venus Observed' Fry uses simple poetic language.

Conclusion: Thus Poetic drama is completely a new phenomenon in the history of English drama. It is a literary revolution of 20th Century.

CLOSET DRAMA

Closet dramas are plays that have been written to be read, but not performed. Their value is in the play itself, not in the performance of the play. This art form was popularized in the Romantic era by such writers as Robert Browning and Goethe. Plays are written, generally, to be performed, and the playwright depends on the actors and actresses to bring his script to a higher level. With closet dramas, the playwright intends just the opposite. There will be no performance, and the play itself carries its own strength and value. In a nutshell, a closet drama is meant to be read but not performed.

History- During the early 1800s, most plays that were performed were 'melodramas' or 'burlesque.' Serious writers such as Browning and Byron sought to elevate the art form by removing it from the stage altogether by creating closet dramas. It was a natural reaction to the sensational performances of the day.

Because Romantics wrote the plays, we must remember that they were radical in thought. In some ways, the Romantic was a revolutionary writer, so it is no surprise that historical events such as the American and French Revolutions influenced these writers - including those previously mentioned, and others like John Keats and Samuel Taylor Coleridge, and even women such as Joanna Baillie.

In fact, Coleridge and Southey worked together in 1794 to write a play about the French Revolution called *The Fall of Robespierre*, while Wordsworth's only play, *The Borderers*, was about the French Revolution as well. The Romantic playwrights used the plays to talk about their radical political and social views. Therefore, some theaters were reluctant to produce them.

Another motivating factor for creating closet dramas was the monopoly that the two most popular theaters in England, Drury Lane and Covent Garden, held over everyone else at that time. A 'Licensing Act' was passed from 1737 to 1843 stating that the only plays produced between September through June had to be performed at one of the two theaters. A person would not even have to be a Romantic to rebel against the law. But even more so, the closet drama gave the Romantic writer full control over his or her play; it was free, as Byron believed, from the 'judgment' of others.

***Why Romantics Chose to Write Them?**

To the Romantic, imagination was almost holy. If a play could be read and then imagined on the stage of the mind, there could really be no greater stage. It was

the reader's own inner interpretation and view of Romantic plays that held greater value than something interpreted by someone else on stage.

UNIT-2 **MERCHANT OF VENICE**

Character List

- **Shylock-** A Jewish moneylender in Venice. Angered by his mistreatment at the hands of Venice's Christians, particularly Antonio, Shylock schemes to eke out his revenge by ruthlessly demanding as payment a pound of Antonio's flesh. Although seen by the rest of the play's characters as an inhuman monster, Shylock at times diverges from stereotype and reveals himself to be quite human. These contradictions, and his eloquent expressions of hatred, have earned Shylock a place as one of Shakespeare's most memorable characters.
.Portia-A wealthy heiress from Belmont. Portia's beauty is matched only by her intelligence. Bound by a clause in her father's will that forces her to marry whichever suitor chooses correctly among three caskets, Portia is nonetheless able to marry her true love, Bassanio. Far and away the most clever of the play's characters, it is Portia, in the disguise of a young law clerk, who saves Antonio from Shylock's knife.
- **Antonio-** The merchant whose love for his friend Bassanio prompts him to sign Shylock's contract and almost lose his life. Antonio is something of a mercurial figure, often inexplicably melancholy and, as Shylock points out, possessed of an incorrigible dislike of Jews. Nonetheless, Antonio is beloved of his friends and proves merciful to Shylock, albeit with conditions.
- **Bassanio-** A gentleman of Venice, and a kinsman and dear friend to Antonio. Bassanio's love for the wealthy Portia leads him to borrow money from Shylock with Antonio as his guarantor. An ineffectual businessman, Bassanio proves himself a worthy suitor, correctly identifying the casket that contains Portia's portrait.
- **Gratiano-** A friend of Bassanio's who accompanies him to Belmont. A coarse and garrulous young man, Gratiano is Shylock's most vocal and insulting critic during the trial. While Bassanio courts Portia, Gratiano falls in love with and eventually weds Portia's lady-in-waiting, Nerissa.
- **Jessica-** Although she is Shylock's daughter, Jessica hates life in her father's house, and elopes with the young Christian gentleman, Lorenzo. The fate of her soul is often in doubt: the play's characters wonder if her marriage can overcome the fact that she was born a Jew, and we wonder if her sale of a ring given to her father by her mother is excessively callous.
- **Lorenzo-** A friend of Bassanio and Antonio, Lorenzo is in love with Shylock's daughter, Jessica. He schemes to help Jessica escape from her father's house, and he eventually elopes with her to Belmont.
- **Nerissa-** Portia's lady-in-waiting and confidante. She marries Gratiano and escorts Portia on Portia's trip to Venice by disguising herself as her law clerk.
- **Launcelot Gobbo-** Bassanio's servant. A comical, clownish figure who is especially adept at making puns, Launcelot leaves Shylock's service in order to work for Bassanio.
- **The prince of Morocco-** A Moorish prince who seeks Portia's hand in marriage. The prince of Morocco asks Portia to ignore his dark countenance and seeks to win her by picking one of the three caskets. Certain that the caskets reflect Portia's beauty and stature, the prince of Morocco picks the gold chest, which proves to be incorrect.

- **The prince of Arragon-** An arrogant Spanish nobleman who also attempts to win Portia's hand by picking a casket. Like the prince of Morocco, however, the prince of Arragon chooses unwisely. He picks the silver casket, which gives him a message calling him an idiot instead of Portia's hand.
- **Salarino-** A Venetian gentleman, and friend to Antonio, Bassanio, and Lorenzo. Salarino escorts the newlyweds Jessica and Lorenzo to Belmont, and returns with Bassanio and Gratiano for Antonio's trial. He is often almost indistinguishable from his companion Solanio.
- **Solanio-** A Venetian gentleman, and frequent counterpart to Salarino.
- **The duke of Venice-** The ruler of Venice, who presides over Antonio's trial. Although a powerful man, the duke's state is built on respect for the law, and he is unable to help Antonio.
- **Old Gobbo-** Launcelot's father, also a servant in Venice.
- **Tubal-** A Jew in Venice, and one of Shylock's friends.
- **Doctor Bellario-** A wealthy Paduan lawyer and Portia's cousin. Doctor Bellario never appears in the play, but he gives Portia's servant the letters of introduction needed for her to make her appearance in court.
- **Balthasar-** Portia's servant, whom she dispatches to get the appropriate materials from Doctor Bellario.

Summary

Antonio, an antisemitic merchant, takes a loan from the Jew Shylock to help his friend to court Portia. Antonio can't repay the loan, and without mercy, Shylock demands a pound of his flesh. The heiress Portia, now the wife of Antonio's friend, dresses as a lawyer and saves Antonio.

Act I

In Venice, a merchant named Antonio worries that his ships are overdue. As his colleagues offer comfort, his young friends—Bassanio, Graziano, and Lorenzo—arrive. Bassanio asks Antonio for a loan, so that he can pursue the wealthy Portia, who lives in Belmont. Antonio cannot afford the loan. Instead, he sends Bassanio to borrow the money on the security of Antonio's expected shipments.

At Belmont, Portia and her maid, Nerissa, discuss the suitors who have come in response to Portia's father's strange will. The will says Portia may only marry a man who chooses the correct casket made from three possible options: gold, silver, and lead. Much to Portia's distress, all her suitors are unsatisfactory. However, she does fondly remember a time when Bassanio came to Belmont, and that leaves her with some hope.

Bassanio approaches Shylock, a Jewish moneylender, about the loan. Shylock holds a grudge against Antonio for his lending practices and apparent antisemitism. Still he offers Bassanio the loan. Instead of charging interest, seemingly as a kind of joke, he asks for a pound of Antonio's flesh if the loan isn't repaid within three months. The bond is agreed to (who wouldn't agree to that?) and Bassanio prepares to leave for Belmont with his friend Graziano.

Act II

Meanwhile, one of Shylock's servants, Launcelot, wishes to change masters and persuades Bassanio to employ him. Shylock's daughter, Jessica, also longs to leave home. She wants to become a Christian and marry Antonio's friend Lorenzo. Before he departs to serve his new

master, Launcelot takes a letter to Lorenzo that contains plans for Lorenzo and Jessica to elope that night. When Shylock goes out, Jessica escapes to elope, taking gold and jewels with her. The following day, Bassanio sets sail for Belmont, while Shylock rages over the loss of his daughter and the treasures she has stolen.

In Belmont, one of Portia's suitors (the Prince of Morocco) chooses the golden casket, while another (the Prince of Aragon) selects silver. Both chose the wrong casket and are unsuccessful. As Aragon leaves, Bassanio is announced. Portia eagerly goes to greet him.

Act III

After a few days, Shylock hears that his daughter Jessica is squandering her stolen wealth in Genoa. He begins to rail bitterly against Christians. He reminds Antonio's friends that if the loan is not repaid on time, he will insist on the original agreement of one pound of flesh.

Back in Belmont, Bassanio chooses the lead casket, and in so doing, he wins Portia. His friend Graziano asks for Portia's maid Nerissa to be his wife. Portia gives her ring to Bassanio, making him promise never to give it to another. As Lorenzo and Jessica come to Belmont, news arrives that Antonio's ships have been lost at sea, and he is now bankrupt. They are also told Shylock insists on the fulfilment of his bond and has had Antonio arrested. Bassanio and Graziano leave in haste to help Antonio. Portia and Nerissa resolve to follow afterwards, disguised as lawyers.

Act IV

In the court in Venice, Shylock demands his pound of flesh. The Duke, presiding over the court, seeks legal advice from the lawyer "Balthazar," who is Portia in disguise. Portia pleads for Shylock to have mercy on Antonio. Bassanio offers his wife's money, which would more than pay the debt, but Shylock refuses to accept. Antonio's death is only prevented as Balthazar explains the bond is for flesh but not for a single drop of blood. So Shylock cannot collect the pound of flesh.

For threatening the life of a Venetian, Shylock forfeits his goods to Antonio and Bassanio. Antonio refuses his share of compensation and asks for it to be put in a trust for Lorenzo and Jessica. He also demands that Shylock becomes a Christian. Broken and in submission, Shylock leaves the court. Bassanio and Graziano thank the lawyers, who ask for their rings as legal fees. Bassanio and Graziano refuse until Antonio intervenes and makes them give the rings to the lawyers.

Act V

Undisguised, Portia and Nerissa return home at night to find Lorenzo and Jessica enjoying the tranquillity of Belmont. When their husbands arrive, Portia and Nerissa scold them for giving away their rings, pretending they had been given away to other women. Before long, they reveal themselves as the lawyers from the trial. Antonio receives news that his ships have returned safely after all (looks like we didn't need to go through all this mess in the first place!). The play ends as the three couples prepare to celebrate their marriages.

MACBETH

Character List

- **Macbeth-** Macbeth is a Scottish general and the thane of Glamis who is led to wicked thoughts by the prophecies of the three witches, especially after their prophecy that he will be made thane of Cawdor comes true. Macbeth is a brave soldier and a powerful man, but he is not a virtuous one. He is easily tempted into murder to fulfill his ambitions to the throne, and once he commits his first crime and is crowned King of Scotland, he embarks on further atrocities with increasing ease. Ultimately, Macbeth proves himself better suited to the battlefield than to political intrigue, because he lacks the skills necessary to rule without being a tyrant. His response to every problem is violence and murder. Unlike Shakespeare's great villains, such as Iago in *Othello* and Richard III in *Richard III*, Macbeth is never comfortable in his role as a criminal. He is unable to bear the psychological consequences of his atrocities.
- **Lady Macbeth-** Macbeth's wife, a deeply ambitious woman who lusts for power and position. Early in the play she seems to be the stronger and more ruthless of the two, as she urges her husband to kill Duncan and seize the crown. After the bloodshed begins, however, Lady Macbeth falls victim to guilt and madness to an even greater degree than her husband. Her conscience affects her to such an extent that she eventually commits suicide. Interestingly, she and Macbeth are presented as being deeply in love, and many of Lady Macbeth's speeches imply that her influence over her husband is primarily sexual. Their joint alienation from the world, occasioned by their partnership in crime, seems to strengthen the attachment that they feel to each another.
- **The Three Witches-** Three "black and midnight hags" who plot mischief against Macbeth using charms, spells, and prophecies. Their predictions prompt him to murder Duncan, to order the deaths of Banquo and his son, and to blindly believe in his own immortality. The play leaves the witches' true identity unclear—aside from the fact that they are servants of Hecate, we know little about their place in the cosmos. In some ways they resemble the mythological Fates, who impersonally weave the threads of human destiny. They clearly take a perverse delight in using their knowledge of the future to toy with and destroy human beings.
- **Banquo-** The brave, noble general whose children, according to the witches' prophecy, will inherit the Scottish throne. Like Macbeth, Banquo thinks ambitious thoughts, but he does not translate those thoughts into action. In a sense, Banquo's character stands as a rebuke to Macbeth, since he represents the path Macbeth chose not to take: a path in which ambition need not lead to betrayal and murder. Appropriately, then, it is Banquo's ghost—and not Duncan's—that haunts Macbeth. In addition to embodying Macbeth's guilt for killing Banquo, the ghost also reminds Macbeth that he did not emulate Banquo's reaction to the witches' prophecy.
- **King Duncan-** The good King of Scotland whom Macbeth, in his ambition for the crown, murders. Duncan is the model of a virtuous, benevolent, and farsighted ruler. His death symbolizes the destruction of an order in Scotland that can be restored only when Duncan's line, in the person of Malcolm, once more occupies the throne.
- **Macduff-** A Scottish nobleman hostile to Macbeth's kingship from the start. He eventually becomes a leader of the crusade to unseat Macbeth. The crusade's mission is to place the rightful king, Malcolm, on the throne, but Macduff also desires vengeance for Macbeth's murder of Macduff's wife and young son.
- **Malcolm-** The son of Duncan, whose restoration to the throne signals Scotland's return to order following Macbeth's reign of terror. Malcolm becomes a serious challenge to Macbeth with Macduff's aid (and the support of England). Prior to this, he appears weak and uncertain of his own power, as when he and Donalbain flee Scotland after their father's murder.

- **Hecate-** The goddess of witchcraft, who helps the three witches work their mischief on Macbeth.
- **Fleance-** Banquo's son, who survives Macbeth's attempt to murder him. At the end of the play, Fleance's whereabouts are unknown. Presumably, he may come to rule Scotland, fulfilling the witches' prophecy that Banquo's sons will sit on the Scottish throne.
- **Lennox-** A Scottish nobleman.
- **Ross-** A Scottish nobleman.
- **The Murderers-** A group of ruffians conscripted by Macbeth to murder Banquo, Fleance (whom they fail to kill), and Macduff's wife and children.
- **Porter-** The drunken doorman of Macbeth's castle.
- **Lady Macduff-** Macduff's wife. The scene in her castle provides our only glimpse of a domestic realm other than that of Macbeth and Lady Macbeth. She and her home serve as contrasts to Lady Macbeth and the hellish world of Inverness.
- **Donalbain-** Duncan's son and Malcolm's younger brother.

Summary:-

Three witches tell the Scottish general Macbeth that he will be King of Scotland. Encouraged by his wife, Macbeth kills the king, becomes the new king, and kills more people out of paranoia. Civil war erupts to overthrow Macbeth, resulting in more death.

Act I

On a bleak Scottish moorland, Macbeth and Banquo, two of King Duncan's generals, discover three strange women (witches). The witches prophesy that Macbeth will be promoted twice: to Thane of Cawdor (a rank of the aristocracy bestowed by grateful kings) and King of Scotland. Banquo's descendants will be kings, but Banquo isn't promised any kingdom himself. The generals want to hear more, but the "weird sisters" disappear.

Soon afterwards, King Duncan names Macbeth Thane of Cawdor as a reward for his success in the recent battles. The promotion seems to support the prophecy. The King then proposes to make a brief visit that night to Macbeth's castle at Inverness. Lady Macbeth receives news from her husband about the prophecy and his new title. She vows to help him become king by whatever means are necessary (*ominous music*).

Act II

Macbeth returns to his castle, followed almost immediately by King Duncan. The Macbeths plot together to kill Duncan and wait until everyone is asleep. At the appointed time, Lady Macbeth gives the guards drugged wine so Macbeth can enter and kill the King. He regrets this almost immediately, but his wife reassures him. She leaves the bloody daggers by the dead king just before Macduff, a

nobleman, arrives. When Macduff discovers the murder, Macbeth kills the drunken guards in a show of rage and retribution. Duncan's sons, Malcolm and Donalbain, flee, fearing for their own lives; but they are, nevertheless, blamed for the murder.

Act III

Macbeth becomes King of Scotland but is plagued by feelings of insecurity. He remembers the prophecy that Banquo's descendants will inherit the throne and arranges for Banquo and his son Fleance to be killed. In the darkness, Banquo is murdered, but his son escapes the assassins. At his state banquet that night, Macbeth sees the ghost of Banquo and worries the courtiers with his mad response. Lady Macbeth dismisses the court and unsuccessfully tries to calm her husband.

Act IV

Macbeth seeks out the witches who say that he will be safe until a local wood, Birnam Wood, marches into battle against him. He also need not fear anyone born of woman (that sounds secure, no loop-holes here). They also prophesy that the Scottish succession will still come from Banquo's son. Macbeth embarks on a reign of terror, slaughtering many, including Macduff's family. Macduff had gone to seek Malcolm (one of Duncan's sons who fled) at the court of the English king. Malcolm is young and unsure of himself, but Macduff, pained with grief, persuades him to lead an army against Macbeth.

Act V

Macbeth feels safe in his remote castle at Dunsinane until he is told that Birnam Wood is moving towards him. Malcolm's army is carrying branches from the forest as camouflage for their assault on Macbeth's stronghold. Meanwhile, an overwrought and conscience-ridden Lady Macbeth walks in her sleep and tells her secrets to her doctor. She commits suicide. As the final battle commences, Macbeth hears of Lady Macbeth's suicide and mourns.

In the midst of a losing battle, Macduff challenges Macbeth. Macbeth learns Macduff is the child of a caesarean birth (loophole!), realises he is doomed, and submits to his enemy. Macduff triumphs and brings the head of the traitor Macbeth to Malcolm. Malcolm declares peace and goes to Scone to be crowned king.

UNIT-3 SHE STOOPS TO CONQUER

Character List

Sir Charles Marlow

The father of Young Marlow and friend of Hardcastle. A respectable and aristocratic fellow from the town who believes his son is of very modest character.

Marlow

Ostensibly the hero of a play. A respectable fellow who comes to Hardcastle's home to meet Kate Hardcastle. Possessed of a strange contradictory character, wherein he is mortified to speak to any "modest" woman, but is lively and excitable in conversation with barmaids or other low-class women.

Hardcastle

The patriarch of the Hardcastle family, and owner of the estate where the play is set. He despises the ways of the town, and is dedicated to the simplicity of country life and old-fashioned traditions.

Hastings

Friend of Marlow's, and lover of Constance Neville. A decent fellow who is willing to marry Constance even without her money.

Tony Lumpkin

Son of Mrs. Hardcastle from an earlier marriage, and known for his free-wheeling ways of drinking and tomfoolery. Loves to play practical jokes. Proves to be good-natured and kind despite his superficial disdain for everyone. His mother wants him to marry Constance but he is set against the idea.

Diggory

Hardcastle's head servant.

Mrs. Hardcastle

Matriarch of the Hardcastle family, most notable for her pronounced vanity. She coddles her son Tony, and wants him to marry her niece, Constance Neville.

Kate Hardcastle

Called "Miss Hardcastle" in the play. The heroine of the play, she is able to balance the "refined simplicity" of country life with the love of life associated with the town. She pretends to be a barmaid in order to judge her suitor Marlow's true character.

Constance Neville

Called "Miss Neville" in the play. Niece of Mrs. Hardcastle, an orphan whose only inheritance is a set of jewels in the care of her aunt. Her aunt wishes her to marry Tony Lumpkin, but Constance wants to marry Hastings.

Maid

Kate's servant. The woman who tells her that Marlow believed Kate to be a barmaid, which leads Kate towards her plan to stoop and conquer.

Landlord

Landlord of the Three Pigeons, who welcomes Marlow and Hastings, and helps Tony to play his trick on them.

Jeremy

Marlow's drunken servant. His drunken impertinence offends Hardcastle, which leads Hardcastle to order Marlow to leave.

Summary

She Stoops to Conquer opens with a prologue in which an actor mourns the death of the classical low comedy at the altar of sentimental, "mawkish" comedy. He hopes that Dr. Goldsmith can remedy this problem through the play about to be presented.

Act I is full of set-up for the rest of the play. Mr. and Mrs. Hardcastle live in an old house that resembles an inn, and they are waiting for the arrival of Marlow, son of Mr. Hardcastle's old friend and a possible suitor to his daughter Kate. Kate is very close to her father, so much so that she dresses plainly in the evenings (to suit his conservative tastes) and fancifully in the mornings for her friends. Meanwhile, Mrs. Hardcastle's niece Constance is in the old woman's care, and has her small inheritance (consisting of some valuable jewels) held until she is married, hopefully to Mrs. Hardcastle's spoiled son from an earlier marriage, Tony Lumpkin. The problem is that neither Tony nor Constance loves the other, and in fact Constance has a beloved, who will be traveling to the house that night with Marlow. Tony's problem is also that he is a drunk and a lover of low living, which he shows when the play shifts to a pub nearby. When Marlow and Hastings (Constance's beloved) arrive at the pub, lost on the way to Hardcastle's, Tony plays a practical joke by telling the two men that there is no room at the pub and that they can find lodging at the old inn down the road (which is of course Hardcastle's home).

Act II sees the plot get complicated. When Marlow and Hastings arrive, they are impertinent and rude with Hardcastle, whom they think is a landlord and not a host (because of Tony's trick). Hardcastle expects Marlow to be a polite young man, and is shocked at the behavior. Constance finds Hastings, and reveals to him that Tony must have played a trick. However, they decide to keep the truth from Marlow, because they think revealing it will upset him and ruin the trip. They decide they will try to get her jewels and elope together. Marlow has a bizarre tendency to speak with exaggerated timidity to "modest" women, while speaking in lively and hearty tones to women of low-class. When he has his first meeting with Kate, she is dressed well, and hence drives him into a debilitating stupor because of his inability to speak to modest women. She is nevertheless attracted to him, and decides to try and draw out his true character. Tony and Hastings decide together that Tony will steal the jewels for Hastings and Constance, so that he can be rid of his mother's pressure to marry Constance, whom he doesn't love.

Act III opens with Hardcastle and Kate each confused with the side of Marlow they saw. Where Hardcastle is shocked at his impertinence, Kate is disappointed to have seen only modesty. Kate asks her father for the chance to show him that Marlow is more than both

believe. Tony has stolen the jewels, but Constance doesn't know and continues to beg her aunt for them. Tony convinces Mrs. Hardcastle to pretend they were stolen to dissuade Constance, a plea she willingly accepts until she realizes they have actually been stolen. Meanwhile, Kate is now dressed in her plain dress and is mistaken by Marlow (who never looked her in the face in their earlier meeting) as a barmaid to whom he is attracted. She decides to play the part, and they have a lively, fun conversation that ends with him trying to embrace her, a move Mr. Hardcastle observes. Kate asks for the night to prove that he can be both respectful and lively.

Act IV finds the plots almost falling apart. News has spread that Sir Charles Marlow (Hardcastle's friend, and father to young Marlow) is on his way, which will reveal Hastings's identity as beloved of Constance and also force the question of whether Kate and Marlow are to marry. Hastings has sent the jewels in a casket to Marlow for safekeeping but Marlow, confused, has given them to Mrs. Hardcastle (whom he still believes is the landlady of the inn). When Hastings learns this, he realizes his plan to elope with wealth is over, and decides he must convince Constance to elope immediately. Meanwhile, Marlow's impertinence towards Hardcastle (whom he believes is the landlord) reaches its apex, and Hardcastle kicks him out of the house, during which altercation Marlow begins to realize what is actually happening. He finds Kate, who now pretends to be a poor relation to the Hardcastles, which would make her a proper match as far as class but not a good marriage as far as wealth. Marlow is starting to love her, but cannot pursue it because it would be unacceptable to his father because of her lack of wealth, so he leaves her. Meanwhile, a letter from Hastings arrives that Mrs. Hardcastle intercepts, and she reads that he waits for Constance in the garden, ready to elope. Angry, she insists that she will bring Constance far away, and makes plans for that. Marlow, Hastings and Tony confront one another, and the anger over all the deceit leads to a severe argument, resolved temporarily when Tony promises to solve the problem for Hastings. **Act V** finds the truth coming to light, and everyone happy. Sir Charles has arrived, and he and Hastings laugh together over the confusion young Marlow was in. Marlow arrives to apologize, and in the discussion over Kate, claims he barely talked to Kate. Hardcastle accuses him of lying, since Hardcastle saw him embrace Kate (but Marlow does not know that was indeed Kate). Kate arrives after Marlow leaves the room and convinces the older men she will reveal the full truth if they watch an interview between the two from a hidden vantage behind a screen. Meanwhile, Hastings waits in the garden, per Tony's instruction, and Tony arrives to tell him that he drove his mother and Constance all over in circles, so that they think they are lost far from home when in fact they have been left nearby. Mrs. Hardcastle, distraught, arrives and is convinced she must hide from a highwayman who is approaching. The "highwayman" proves to be Mr. Hardcastle, who scares her in her confusion for a while but ultimately discovers what is happening. Hastings and Constance, nearby, decide they will not elope but rather appeal to Mr. Hardcastle for mercy. Back at the house, the interview between Kate (playing the poor relation) and Marlow reveals his truly good character, and after some discussion, everyone agrees to the match. Hastings and Constance ask permission to marry and, since Tony is actually of age and therefore can of his own volition decide not to marry Constance, the permission is granted. All are happy (except for miserly Mrs. Hardcastle), and the "mistakes of a night" have been corrected.

There are two epilogues generally printed to the play, one of which sketches in metaphor Goldsmith's attempt to bring comedy back to its traditional roots, and the other of which suggests Tony Lumpkin has adventures yet to be realized.

The Rivals

Character List

Captain Jack Absolute

An entitled aristocrat masquerading as a poor but honest ensign for the purpose of wooing the romantic Lydia Languish. He is dogged in his determination to win Lydia's hand, and he has a playful approach to their courtship. Eventually, when the truth comes out, Lydia is angry with Jack, but he continues to fight for her affections nonetheless.

Lydia Languish

Lydia is a 17-year-old noblewoman inclined to fantasy, whose views on love are shaped mainly by dramatic sentimental novels. As a result, she believes that the pinnacle of romance is wrapped up in a life of poverty, and wants to forfeit her inheritance to be with a poor man. She falls in love with such a man when she meets Ensign Beverley, but little does she know that he is actually the equally noble Jack Absolute.

Sir Anthony Absolute

Jack's conservative, traditionalist father, Sir Anthony, is firm in his belief that he has the right to choose whom his son will marry. He is strict and authoritarian, and seems to care more about his influence than about the actual decisions he is making for his son. He has gout.

Mrs. Malaprop

Lydia's aunt who has a particularly quirky relationship to the English language, often misusing words. She is very protective of Lydia and, like Anthony, wants Lydia to do exactly as she desires. She is smitten with Lucius O'Trigger, who has no idea that it is Malaprop that he is corresponding with. She is perhaps the most comedic character in the play.

Bob Acres

Bob Acres is a country squire who is also in love with Lydia. He is a bumpkin trying to become a more sophisticated city person, and his primary means of doing so is in affecting a new sense of fashion. When he learns that his rival, Ensign Beverley, is actually just an alter ego for Jack Absolute, he no longer wishes to duel, as Jack is his friend.

Sir Lucius O'Trigger

Lucius is an Irishman who believes he is corresponding with Lydia via letter, and is shocked to find that he is actually in touch with Lydia's aunt, Mrs. Malaprop. Before he learns this, he challenges Jack Absolute to a duel, and is determined to win out no matter what.

Faulkland

A friend of Jack's who is in love with Julia. While Julia returns his affections, Faulkland is exceedingly insecure, and believes that she doesn't actually love him. He is constantly worrying and testing her love, which tries her patience and only drives her away. However, by the end of the play, they are reunited, and he is more confident in Julia's love for him.

Lucy

The scheming maid of Lydia who creates a great deal of the misunderstandings in the play. For instance, it is she who brings Lucius' letters to Malaprop instead of to Lydia.

Julia

Julia is a beautiful young woman who is in love with Faulkland, but must contend with his overwhelming insecurities.

Summary

The play begins with a preface written by the author, Sheridan, in which he outlines what the audience is about to see. Sheridan writes in the preface that the success of the play was unexpected for him, as was the way in which the play was initially received. After a disastrous first night, he was forced to rewrite certain parts. Sheridan claims that the reason the play was unsuccessful was that it was the first play he had ever written and because he did not research the writing style enough.

Sheridan then talks about various critics who, in his opinion, misjudged his play and only wanted to make him feel bad and did not want to see him improve as a writer. Sheridan also expresses his opinion that critics should not write harsh criticism about anyone who they do not know personally.

Next, Sheridan presents the prologue of the play, a prologue which was presented only on the first night. The prologue presents a scene in which an attorney is trying to give money to a court official to present a brief speech on behalf of a poet.

A second prologue is then presented during which an actress comes on stage playing the role of the Muse and claiming that the purpose of the play is to transmit a moral lesson.

The play then begins with two servants meeting accidentally on the streets in the city of Bath. The servants, Fag and Thomas, talk about their masters and Thomas tells Fag that his master, Sir Anthony, has decided to move his entire family to the city. It is then revealed that Fag works for Sir Anthony's son, Captain Absolute, who decided to change his name to Ensign Beverley, hoping to win the affection of a woman named Lydia Languish who prefers poor people. The two servants part when Fag sees his master in the distance.

The next scene takes place in Lydia's home where one of her servants, Lucy, returns from running an errand. Lucy was sent to bring her mistress some books, and then she lists all the books she was able to find for Lydia. Julia, Lydia's cousin, enters and tells Lydia about Sir Anthony and his arrival in town. The two then discuss their love interests and each criticizes the other, even though they both have secret relationships.

Lydia then tells her cousin about how she had never had a fight with her lover, Beverley, so she faked a letter just to have a reason to fight with him. Unfortunately, the plan back-fired and Lydia didn't get a chance to mend things with him. Julia tries to assure Lydia that if Beverley really loves her, he will not give up that easily. Lydia also tells Julia that she does not care if Beverley is rich or not and that she will willingly give up her money just to be with him.

Next, Julia talks about her fiancé, a man named Faulkland, who is always questioning Julia about her love for him. The two fight frequently, but Julia still claims that she loves him.

When Sir Anthony arrives, Julia leaves in a hurry before he enters the room. Sir Anthony comes with a woman named Mrs. Malaprop, Lydia's guardian, and they begin talking with her about Beverley and how their relationship is a mistake. When Lydia disagrees, she is sent from the room. Sir Anthony expresses his concern regarding the quality of Lydia's education, claiming that the education she receives makes her act too independently. Sir Anthony then

proposes to marry Lydia to his son and tells Mrs. Malaprop to do everything she can to convince Lydia to accept the match.

After Sir Anthony leaves, Mrs. Malaprop writes her own letter to her admirer, a man named Sir Lucius, and has Lucy deliver the letter. After Lucy takes her leave, Mrs. Malaprop begins talking to herself and revealing how she orchestrated the release of certain bit of information behind her master's back and how she did everything she could to turn the things in her favor.

In the second Act, Fag talks with his master and tells him that his father is in town. Fag claims that he lied to Sir Anthony about Absolute's visit and the two agree to tell Sir Anthony that the reason Absolute is in town is that he is recruiting soldiers.

Faulkland then enters and they soon begin to talk about Lydia. Faulkland advises Absolute to try and convince his father and Mrs. Malaprop to accept the match, but Absolute refuses, saying that if Lydia were to find out that he has money, she will reject him. They talk next about Julia and how Faulkland feels as if he will never be able to love another woman except Julia. Absolute then reveals to Faulkland that Julia is in town but advises Faulkland to be patient and to wait until he goes to see her. Acres, a man who was close to Julia, comes in and tells Faulkland that Julia was well during his absence. Instead of feeling happy, Faulkland feels betrayed, not knowing how Julia can be happy when he is miserable. After hearing this, Faulkland leaves the room, angry.

Alone, Acres and Absolute talk about Lydia and Acres expresses his love for Lydia and his hatred for Beverley, not knowing that Absolute is Beverley.

After Acres leaves, Sir Anthony enters, telling his son that he plans to marry him to a woman, but does not tell him who the woman is. Absolute tries to tell his father that he already loves someone, but Sir Anthony refuses to listen to what his son has to say and leaves, angered by his son's disobedience.

In the second scene of the second act, Lucy delivers a letter from Malaprop to Sir Lucius who is unaware of the fact that Delia, the woman he thinks he is talking with, is an old woman and not a 17-year-old girl. After Sir Lucius leaves, Fag appears on the scene and calls out Lucy for her act. Then, Lucy tells Fag about Absolute and how he will compete for Lydia's love as well. Fag leaves laughing, not telling Lucy that Absolute and Beverley are the same man.

Act 3 returns to Absolute who has found out from Fag that Sir Anthony plans to marry him to Lydia, the woman he loves. Soon after finding out about the woman's identity, Absolute meets with his father and tells him that he has agreed to marry whoever his father has selected for him. Sir Anthony is surprised to see his son changed so much and promises he will arrange for him to meet his future wife.

Faulkland meets with Julia. Having heard about her happiness in his absence, he expresses his disapproval. Julia tries to reassure him that she loves him, but he does not accept it and she ends up leaving the room, crying.

In the next scene, Absolute goes to visit Mrs. Malaprop about Lydia and they begin talking about Lydia and her passion for Beverley. Mrs. Malaprop tells Absolute that she was unable to convince Lydia to give up her passion for Beverley but that she hopes the two will get along fine. Mrs. Malaprop then gives Absolute a letter written by Beverley and he pretends to laugh at it and at how Beverley planned to win Lydia by using Mrs. Malaprop.

Absolute tricks Malaprop and proposes to scheme together. Absolute tells Malaprop that she should let Lydia and Beverley continue to correspond, and that he will come when the two try to elope. Malaprop then calls Lydia down and Absolute convinces her that he somehow managed to fool her aunt into believing that he is Absolute. He then proposes that they run away together, but Lydia is reluctant to accept. The two are interrupted when Mrs. Malaprop enters the room and begins to criticize Lydia for rejecting Absolute.

Acres talks with his servant about dancing, when suddenly Sir Lucius appears. They begin talking about Lydia, the woman they both love, and how she loves another man, named Beverley. Sir Lucius doesn't realize that they are both pining for the same woman, and tells Acres that he should provoke Beverley into a duel since his reputation and honor have been tainted. Lucius leaves after he helps Acres write a letter challenging Beverley to a duel.

Acres becomes worried that he will die, even though everyone assures him he will survive. Acres sends for Absolute and asks him to deliver the letter to Beverley and to make sure that Beverley understands just how dangerous an opponent he is. Through this, Acres hoped to make Beverley deny the duel and thus save his honor.

Meanwhile, Mrs. Malaprop tries to convince Lydia to accept Absolute and forget about Beverley. Absolute comes to see Lydia with his father, but Lydia refuses to look at him. Absolute tries to convince his father to leave him alone with Lydia, but he refuses. Left with no other choice, Absolute talks with Lydia and she recognizes him as Beverley. Not knowing what else to do, Absolute reveals the truth to everyone in the room, telling Lydia that the only reason why he lied to her is to test whether she would still love him even if he was a poor man.

While Sir Anthony is pleased with how things have turned out, Mrs. Malaprop realizes that Absolute made fun of her through his letters. When Lydia and Absolute are alone, Lydia tells Absolute she no longer loves him because he deceived her and treated her like a child. Absolute tries to convince Lydia to marry him, but says he will not force her should she want to find someone else. The scene ends with Lydia storming out of the room. Sir Anthony tells Mrs. Malaprop she needs to convince Lydia to accept the match.

Absolute leaves Lydia's home and runs into Lucius, who wants to fight with him. Absolute does not understand why, but agrees to meet with him that night at six o'clock—the same time and place given by Acres for his duel with Beverley. Faulkland also appears, and Absolute asks him to be his second in the duels. Faulkland refuses at first, saying that he needs to mend things with Julia. A letter she sent him made him change his mind and also to come up with a plan to test her love.

Faulkland sends a letter to Julia, telling her he must flee the country because he did something terrible and that he wishes she could come with him. However, the only way for her to go with him is if she were to be married to him. When the two meet, Julia tells Faulkland that she will marry him, and will follow him anywhere, no matter the circumstances.

Being sure that Julia loves him, Faulkland tells her the truth and promises to marry her the next day. Julia, however, is enraged that Faulkland does not trust her and is playing tricks on her, so breaks up with him.

Lydia then enters and tells Julia about everything that happened. Julia confesses to knowing about Beverley's identity and while Lydia remains mad, Julia urges her to accept Absolute as her husband and marry him. The two ladies are interrupted by David who comes to tell them

about the duel, so both women and Mrs. Malaprop rush to stop the men from injuring or possibly killing one another.

In the park where the men were supposed to meet, Absolute's father passes through by chance. Absolute manages to convince his father that he plans to go to Lydia, so his father leaves him alone.

Meanwhile, Lucius coaches Acres about the art of dueling. As Lucius presents some of the possibilities of the duel, Acres gets even more scared as he realizes that he might die. When Absolute and Faulkland appear, Absolute reveals his identity, but Acres refuses to fight against his best friend. Lucius, on the other hand, is more than happy to fight against Absolute, and they prepare to duel.

Before the fight can start, Sir Anthony and the women appear and the duel stops. Sir Anthony demands to know why Lucius wants to fight his son and he tells Sir Anthony that Absolute insulted his honor. Lucius then takes out the letters written to him by Delia. Lydia claims that she was not the author of those letters. Upon seeing the letters, Mrs. Malaprop admits to being the one who wrote them. Sir Anthony proposes that Lucius marry Mrs. Malaprop, but Lucius refuses.

Faulkland and Julia reconcile at Sir Anthony's insistence, and the play draws to an end. The last character to speak is Julia, who expresses her hope for everyone in their group to continue being in love with their partner even in old age.

UNIT-4 Saint Joan

Character List

Joan of Arc

Joan is the protagonist of the play. She is born the daughter of a humble farmer, but, inspired by divine visions, she becomes an important military leader who plays a decisive role in the 100 Years' War.

The Dauphin (Later King Charles VII of France)

Charles is the expected heir to the French throne (hence the title "Dauphin"), but at the start of the play, he has not been officially crowned and has been declared illegitimate. With Joan's help, Charles is crowned as Charles VII and goes on to become a good leader.

The Inquisitor (Brother John Lemaitre)

A French monk who plays a key role in Joan's trial.

Peter Cauchon, Bishop of Beauvais

Cauchon is a Frenchman but is part of the Burgundian faction, which means he is allied to the English. He works with Warwick to ensure that Joan will be turned over to the English if she is captured.

Richard de Beauchamp, Earl of Warwick

An English nobleman and Joan's primary opponent on the English side of the war. Though not nearly as concerned about Joan's heresy against the Church as he pretends, he sees the value of paying lip service to this offense as a means of protecting his real interest: the continuation of the aristocratic entitlement that benefits him.

John de Stogumber (the Chaplain)

An English priest who acts as chaplain to the Cardinal of Winchester and the Earl of Warwick. Initially, he has a passionate hatred of Joan, but after he witnesses her execution, he has a change of heart. De Stogumber goes on to dedicate his life to serving the poor and advocating for religious tolerance.

The Gentleman from 1920

A man dressed in clothing of the 1920s who appears in the epilogue. He has traveled back in time to 1456 to tell the other characters that Joan will eventually be canonized as a saint.

Robert de Baudricourt

A French nobleman who gives Joan soldiers and arms so that she can travel to the Dauphin.

Robert's Steward

A household servant who encourages Robert to meet with Joan.

A French nobleman and soldier who is friends with Robert de Baudricourt. He believes in Joan and offers to go with her to the Dauphin.

Georges, Duc de la Tremouille, Constable of France

A French nobleman who is close to the Dauphin.

Regnault de Chartres, the Archbishop of Rheims

A French Churchman who crowns Charles as King and later rebukes Joan for being proud and stubborn.

Gilles de Rais (Bluebeard)

A French nobleman and military leader.

Captain La Hire

A French soldier who strongly believes in Joan.

Duchess de la Tremouille

A French noblewoman and the wife of Tremouille.

Jean, Comte de Dunois, Bastard of Orleans

A French military leader who is in charge of the attack of Orleans.

John d'Estivet, Canon of Bayeux

A French Church official who plays a key role in Joan's trial.

Thomas de Courcelles, the Canon of Paris

A French church official involved in Joan's trial.

Brother Martin Ladvenu

A monk present at Joan's trial; he will go on to become a strong advocate to have her reputation restored.

The Executioner

The man who carries out Joan's execution and later appears in the epilogue.

English Soldier

A common English soldier of lower-class origins; he gives Joan a cross made out of sticks during her execution, and later appears in the epilogue.

Summary

The play is set between 1429 and 1431, with an epilogue set in 1456. During this time, the 100 Years War was raging between England and France, and English forces had occupied a number of French cities and towns. The play begins with Joan asking a French nobleman, Robert de Baudricourt, to provide her with armor, a horse, and soldiers. Joan is an adolescent girl from a small country village, but she has had visions of saints telling her that it is her destiny to lead French forces to victory and ensure that the Dauphin (heir to the throne) is officially crowned as King. Robert is hesitant to support Joan, but he gives in when he sees that she is capable of inspiring men to fight for her.

Joan travels to Chinon, where the Dauphin has set up an informal court. Despite an attempt to trick her, she easily identifies the Dauphin, which further encourages others to see her as guided by God. Joan persuades the Dauphin that she is going to free the city of Orleans (held under siege by English forces) and have him crowned at Rheims Cathedral. Leading troops, Joan goes to Orleans, where the French forces are frustrated. They need the winds to change so that they can sail upriver and attack the English from behind. Joan prays, and the wind immediately changes, allowing the French forces to win a triumphant victory.

The French victory at Orleans changes the tide of the war, which worries English leaders. Earlier in the war, the English had formed an alliance with the Burgundians, a French faction who opposed the royal house to which Charles belonged. Warwick, an English nobleman, meets with Cauchon, a Burgundian Bishop. Both men agree that Joan is dangerous and must be eliminated. Meanwhile, Charles has been crowned at Rheims Cathedral. Joan is worried because she seems to be becoming unpopular, and several people accuse her of being proud, stubborn, and reckless. With Charles crowned, Joan wants to lead forces to try to take back Paris, but no one supports this plan. Nonetheless, Joan insists that she has to follow God's orders.

The action of the play then jumps ahead 2 years, to 1431. In the interim, Joan has been captured by Burgundian forces and sold to the English. She is now on trial on charges of heresy, with a number of Church officials questioning her. Undaunted, Joan defends her decision to wear men's clothes, and she insists that her voices are truly the voices of divine messengers. She only wavers when she is threatened with execution, at which time Joan signs a confession and recantation. However, she is horrified to realize that even though her life will be spared, she is still going to be imprisoned for life. Faced with this fate, Joan tears up her confession. She is immediately taken out to be executed. Other characters report that she showed great strength and courage during her painful execution.

The epilogue to the play is set 25 years later. An inquiry has been held into Joan's trial, and the charges have been reversed: Joan is now declared innocent. Her spirit appears in a vision to Charles, who is now successfully ruling as a strong French king. The pair are joined by many other characters, showing that Joan has now been vindicated and that her enemies have been proven wrong. Eventually, a man dressed in 1920s-style clothing appears and announces that Joan has been declared a saint. Excited by all of the seeming praise and recognition, Joan suggests that maybe she should return to life. However, all of her seeming allies immediately abandon her, making excuses for why this is not a good idea. At the end of the play, Joan is left alone, wondering when the world will be ready to fully embrace her.

UNIT-5 Riders to the Sea

Character List

Maurya

Maurya has given birth to six sons during her life on the coastal island lying off at the mouth of Ireland's Galway Bay. Four of them are already dead, along with their father and grandfather. She is old and poor and fears that the extended and uncharacteristic absence of her son Michael means he is about to be added to the list of her deceased loved ones. As if worrying that Michael has drowned weren't enough stress, she also doesn't appear to be very successful at persuading her other remaining son, Bartley, from crossing over to the mainland in a bid to deal away a

couple of horses. In the end, Maurya has only her daughters to help with the cold comfort of knowing that there are no more men in her life for the sea to take from her. She feels at last a sense of peace and serenity now that her greatest anxiety has been lifted.

Bartley

Bartley is the youngest of Maurya's six sons; when Michael's death is confirmed, he steps up to become the family's sole financial support. His means of supporting the family is what gives the play its title: he rides horses out to sea and to the steamer ship, which must lay anchored far offshore; the horses are sold at a fair on the mainland. Maurya refuses to give Bartley her blessing after having a vision of his impending death.

Cathleen

Cathleen is the eldest of Maurya's daughter. Cathleen is 20 years old; she commiserates with Bartley's position and is scornful of her mother's superstitions. In contrast to the somewhat mystical bent of her mother, who is given to lamentations and omens, Cathleen is pure practicality in action, which is a great necessity when living with someone like Maurya.

Nora

The youngest member of the clan, Nora is much more patient with mother's penchant for self-pity than her oldest sister is. At the same time, she provides a great sounding board for Cathleen to express her contrarian views.

The Priest

The priest is never actually seen on stage, but his presence is so vital to the story that he must be considered at least as important a character as Nora. It is the priest who delivers the message through Nora that Maurya must put her faith and trust in a God that would never allow every last one of her sons to die while she is still alive. He is younger and more modern than Maurya.

Summary

The play, set on an island off the coast of Ireland, begins with Nora bringing in a small bundle with her and telling Cathleen that these may be the clothes of their brother Michael. The young priest told her a body of a drowned man was found at Donegal, and the body might be Michael's. The sisters are scared to open the bundle of clothes because they do not want their mother, Maurya, to know: Michael has been missing for a week and the family had already lost five men to the sea. They hide the bundle in the turf loft of the cottage.

Maurya is prepared for the funeral for Michael, with whiteboards for his coffin ready at the cottage. She enters the kitchen; she is a woman who is seen lamenting all the time and worrying that her sons will never come back from the sea. Maurya, Nora, and Cathleen discuss the last son, Bartley, who is also planning to go the sea to sell the family horses so they could get some money. Nora and Cathleen are convinced that Bartley should go to the fair at Galway to

sell the animals, while Maurya is still hoping that the Priest will not allow him to go in such dangerous tides.

Bartley enters the cottage looking for a new piece of rope. Maurya tries to stop him, but he says he wants to make a halter for the horses; clearly Bartley plans to go to the sea. Maurya again tries to dissuade him by showing him the whiteboards for Michael. Paying no heed, Bartley changes his clothes, asks his sisters to take care of the sheep, and leaves without receiving any blessings from his mother. It is a tradition in Ireland that the son receives the blessings of his mother before going anywhere, but Maurya breaks this fashion.

Bartley leaves with a red mare and a grey pony tied behind. Cathleen then notices that he has not taken any food and tells Maurya to walk down to the well to give Bartley his food and the blessings. Maurya leaves using a stick that Michael brought, lamenting over how in her family, the old ones never leave anything behind for their heirs, despite that being the general custom.

Once Maurya is gone, the girls retrieve the bundle of clothes from the loft to check if they are Michael's. Nora realizes that the stockings are truly Michael's, because she recognizes her own stitching on them. They count the number of stitches and arrive at the conclusion that Michael was dead and buried.

The sisters hide the clothes again because they think that Maurya will be returning in a good mood since she got the chance to bless Bartley; however, Maurya comes back more distressed than ever. She tells her daughters that she saw Michael on the grey pony; she could not bless Bartley due to the shock. To calm her down, Nora and Cathleen show Maurya the clothes and tell her that Michael has had a clean burial. Maurya's laments are interrupted when islanders bring the body of Bartley into the cottage and tell the women that the grey pony knocked Bartley into the sea, where he drowned.

Maurya gets on her knees near Bartley's body and sprinkles holy water on him. She finally resigns herself to her fate as she claims that she will finally sleep at night because she no longer has anyone to worry about: all the men of her family have died to the sea. The whiteboards that were supposed to be used for Michael's coffin will now be used to bury Bartley. Maurya prays that the souls of her husband, her husband's father, and four sons may rest in peace, and the curtains are drawn.
