



**M.A. ENGLISH
SEMESTER - I (CBCS)**

DRAMA

SUBJECT CODE : 73524

Prof. Suhas Pednekar

Vice-Chancellor,
University of Mumbai,

Prof. Ravindra D. Kulkarni

Pro Vice-Chancellor,
University of Mumbai,

Prof. Prakash Mahanwar

Director,
IDOL, University of Mumbai,

Program Co-ordinator : Dr. Santosh Rathod

& Course Co-ordinator Associate Professor of English, IDOL,
University of Mumbai, Mumbai

Course Writers :

Dr. Sachin Labade

Associate Professor,
Dept. of English,
University of Mumbai, Mumbai

Dr. Mayurakshi Mitra

Maharashtra College of Arts,
Commerce & Science,

Dr. Savita Sukumar

G. M. Momin Women's College
Bhiwandi

Dr. Sangita Kongre

Maharshi Dayanand College of Arts,
Commerce & Science, Parel, Mumbai

Dr. Sushila Vijaykumar

Karnataka Sangha's,
Manjunatha College of Commerce,
Thakurli

Dr. Preeti OZA

St. Andrew's College,
Bandra, Mumbai,

Prof. Hridaya Ajgaonkar

Dept. of English,
University of Mumbai,
Mumbai - 400098

Prof. Shivaji Ingole

Asst. Professor,
Dept. of English,
University of Mumbai, Mumbai

December 2021, Print - I, ISBN - 978-81-929557-4-2

Published by

: Director,
Institute of Distance and Open Learning,
University of Mumbai,
Vidyanagari, Mumbai - 400 098.

DTP Composed

: Mumbai University Press

Printed by

Vidyanagari, Santacruz (E), Mumbai

CONTENTS

Unit No.	Title	Page No.
1.	Concepts in Drama I	1
2.	Literary Terms Part II	17
3.	A Study of Bertolt Brecht's Courage and Her Children - Part - I	32
4.	A Study of Bertolt Brecht's Courage and Her Children - Part - II	46
5.	Study of Kalidasa's Shakuntala - Part I	55
6.	Study of Kalidasa's Shakuntala - Part II	64
7.	A Doll's House - Part - I	73
8.	A Doll's House - Part - II	80
9.	A Study of Christopher Fry's A Phoenix Too Frequent - Part - I	91
10.	A Study of Christopher Fry's A Phoenix Too Frequent - Part - II	98
11.	A Study of Badal Sircar's Play "Procession" / "Juloos" - Part - I	106
12.	A Study of Badal Sircar's Play "Procession" / "Juloos" - Part - II	115
13.	A Study of Amiri Baraka's Home on the Range	125



I

Syllabus for M.A. English Drama

SEMESTER - I

Objectives of the Course

- 1) To introduce the learners to a wide range of theatrical practices around the world.
- 2) To introduce the learners to various theories of drama
- 3) To enable them to understand the elements of drama and theatre
- 4) To introduce them to the conventions of research papers.

Unit I: Concepts

Elements of Theatre, Greek Theatre, Indian Classical Theatre with reference to Natyashastra, Folk element and Indian Theatre, Black theatre, Realistic theatre, 20th Century poetic drama, Angry Young Man, Street play, Third theatre, One-act play

Unit II: Mother Courage and her Children by Bertolt Brecht Shakuntala by Kalidasa

Unit III: A Doll's House by Henrik Ibsen A Phoenix too Frequent by Christopher Fry

Unit IV: Julloos by Badal Sircar Home on the Range by Amiri Baraka

Evaluation

Question Paper Pattern for the 60 mark Semester End Examination:

- I. Essay on concepts (any 1 out of 3 to be attempted) - 15 marks
- II. Essay on Unit 2 : one out of two - 15 marks
- III. Essay on Unit 3: One out of two - 15 marks
- IV. Essay on Unit 4: One out of two - 15 marks

Internal evaluation

Project	20 Marks
Presentation	10 Marks
Viva Voce	10 Marks

The project could be review of plays, a stage presentation or writing a script.

Students of Distance Education to submit one additional assignment in place of presentation and viva voce

References :

- Alter, Jean. A Sociosemiotic Theory of Theatre. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1990
- Bennett, Susan. Theatre Audiences : A Theory of Production and Reception. London; New York: Routledge, 1990.[PN1590.A9 B48 1990].

II

- Bentley, Eric. *The Theory of the Modern Stage: An Introduction to Modern Theatre and Drama*. Harmondsworth,: Penguin, 1968
- Birringer, Johannes H. *Theatre, Theory, Postmodernism. Drama and Performance Studies*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1991
- Bratton, J. S. *New Readings in Theatre History. Theatre and Performance Theory*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003
- Brockett, Oscar. *The Essential Theatre*. New York: Wadsworth Publishing, 2007
- Burwick, Frederick. *Illusion and the Drama : Critical Theory of the Enlightenment and Romantic Era*. University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1991
- Carlson, Marvin A. *The Haunted Stage : The Theatre as Memory Machine. Theater- Theory/Text/Performance*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2002
- *Theories of the Theatre : A Historical and Critical Survey, from the Greeks to the Present*. Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1989
- Case, Sue-Ellen. *Performing Feminisms : Feminist Critical Theory and Theatre*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1990
- Chaudhuri, Una. *Staging Place : The Geography of Modern Drama. Theater-- Theory/Text/Performance*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1995
- Clark, Barrett Harper. *European Theories of the Drama*. New York,: Crown publishers, 1947
- Courtney, Richard. *Drama and Feeling : An Aesthetic Theory*. Montréal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1995
- Dukore, Bernard Frank. *Dramatic Theory and Criticism : Greeks to Grotowski*. New York,: Holt Rinehart and Winston, 1974
- Fortier, Mark. *Theory/Theatre : An Introduction*. 2nd ed. London ; New York: Routledge, 2002
- Frank, Marcie. *Gender, Theatre, and the Origins of Criticism : From Dryden to Manley*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003
- Fuchs, Elinor, and Una Chaudhuri. *Land/Scape/Theater. Theater-- Theory/Text/Performance*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2002
- Keyssar, Helene. *Feminist Theatre and Theory*. New Casebooks. Houndmills: Macmillan Press Ltd., 1996
- Kobialka, Michal. *Of Borders and Thresholds : Theatre History, Practice, and Theory*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999

III

- Levine, Ira A. *Left-Wing Dramatic Theory in the American Theatre. Theater and Dramatic Studies ; No.024.* Ann Arbor, Mich.: UMI Research Press, 1985
- Malekin, Peter, and Ralph Yarrow. *Consciousness, Literature, and Theatre : Theory and Beyond.* New York: St. Martin's, 1997
- Malkin, Jeanette R. *Memory : Theater and Postmodern Drama. Theater- Theory/Text/Performance.* Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1999
- McAuley, Gay. *Space in Performance : Making Meaning in the Theatre. Theater-- Theory/Text/Performance.* Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1999
- Nicoll, Allardyce. *The Theatre and Dramatic Theory.* London,: Harrap, 1962
- *The Theory of Drama.* New York,: B. Blom, 1966
- Quinn, Michael L. *The Semiotic Stage : Prague School Theatre Theory.* Pittsburgh Studies in Theatre and Culture ; Vol. 1. New York: P. Lang, 1995
- Rai, Rama Nand. *Theory of Drama : A Comparative Study of Aristotle and Bharata.* New Delhi: Classical Pub. Co., 1992
- Schmid, Herta, and Aloysius van Kesteren. *Semiotics of Drama and Theatre : New Perspectives in the Theory of Drama and Theatre. Linguistic & Literary Studies in Eastern Europe. V. 010.* Amsterdam; Philadelphia: J. Benjamins, 1984
- Styan, J. L. *Modern Drama in Theory and Practice.* New York: Cambridge University Press, 1980
- University of Kansas. Division of Communication and Theatre., and Joyce and Elizabeth Hall Center for the Humanities. "Journal of Dramatic Theory and Criticism." Lawrence, Kan.: University of Kansas, 1986. v.
- Whitaker, Thomas R. *Mirrors of Our Playing : Paradigms and Presences in Modern Drama. Theater--Theory/ Text / Performance.* Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1999

Syllabus prepared by:

Dr. Shilpa Sapre: Convener

Members:

Dr. Vibhakar Mirajkar

Prof. Vispi Balaporia

Dr. Zareen Pinto



CONCEPTS IN DRAMA I

Unit Structure:

- 1.0 Objectives
- 1.1 Elements of Drama
- 1.2 Greek Theatre
- 1.3 Indian Classical Theatre
- 1.4 Folk Elements in Indian Theatre
- 1.5 Black Theatre
- 1.6 Summing up
- 1.7 Important Questions
- 1.8 References

1.0 OBJECTIVES

Dear learner, this chapter will familiarize you with the rudimentary elements of drama/theatre. You will develop a basic understanding of Greek theatre which is the first documented starting point of the development of theatre and drama in the West. The chapter will also acquaint you with the Indian Classical theatre along with the folk elements that have dominated Indian drama. Besides, you will develop an understanding of the Black Theatre that has made a major impact in the United States of America, South Africa and Europe, especially in Britain.

1.1 ELEMENTS OF THEATRE/DRAMA

There exist oral and written conventions in which the Imaginative literature has manifested itself. There is a wide range of genres in both conventions. However, poetry, prose fiction and drama have been the most prominent genres. The modes have been the defining characteristics of these genres. While poetry is predominantly defined by the verse form, prose defines novel whereas drama is defined by the dialogue form. There is one more element that separates drama from novel and poetry, that is, drama is a performing art and accompanies theatrical conventions. Let us understand the relationship between drama and theatre. The term drama is assigned to the printed text of a play while theatre refers to the production of a stage play. Drama and theatre reciprocate with each other. However, a play may change when it is staged.

According to the online etymology dictionary, the English term 'theatre' came from the Old French word with the same spelling. In the late 14 Century, it meant, 'open-air place for viewing spectacles and plays. It

ultimately originated from Latin "Theatrum" and Greek 'theatron'. It referred to the place, audience, spectacle and the show. The modern usage of the word has retained the multiple references that the original term had.

Origin and definition of 'drama'

Many scholars of drama claim that the origin of 'drama' as a form of literature has its roots in religious records of history. However, as for the etymological roots of the English term, 'drama' is concerned, it goes back to the Ancient Greek word δράμα which means to act, to do or to perform. This meaning comes very close to the Sanskrit term 'Nāṭya'. It is the desire for improvement as well as amusement that is claimed to have been at the core of origin and the development of the form. According to the Aristotelian theory of mimesis, drama is a mimetic art. It imitates life. It is this mimetic urge, according to scholars that appeal to people.

It is said that the religious scriptures were not comprehensible to the masses and hence drama was devised as a strategy to take the religious teachings to the masses through this form. We can relate this explanation to the development of Christian morality plays in England or Rāmīlā in India. As drama became a popular form of entertainment, it became less religion-centric and more secular.

Though theatre with the sense of place of performance is an integral part of understanding drama, the detailed study of the 'theatre' element is beyond the scope of the objectives of this course. We will, therefore, focus more on the elements of drama. For convenience, we will divide this discussion into two categories: Drama of Stage and Drama of Page.

Elements of 'drama' on stage

According to the Encyclopedia, Britannica theatre is a collaborative art that follows a specific hierarchy. The elements of theatre are placed in this hierarchy. The hierarchy includes the director, actors, technical workers and producer. The producer takes care of the financial requirements in staging the play. The director ensures that the script is interpreted and the play is staged or performed effectively. The audience plays a vital role in this hierarchy. It is significant not only for the revenue but to make the performance forceful.

Besides the human element, the theatre structure contributes to our understanding. The changes in the structure of theatre have always impacted the development of drama. The ancient Greek theatre had a tripartite structure: skene, orchestra and theatron. It was an open-air theatre with a semi-circular shape with rows of tiered seating around. The Globe theatre that set the theatrical conventions in England nearly up to the 17th century has had a design that responded to more than one tradition. Though it was circular it borrowed much of its features from the Roman amphitheatre. Shakespeare's plays were very much in tune with the structural design of the Globe theatre. The structure of the theatre played a major role in defining the experience of watching the play. As the

audience was not much distanced from the stage, the staging of the play was 'metatheatrical'.

The 17th Century gave rise to what we come to understand as modern theatre. These were theatres within four walls and a roof. The auditorium is divided by an arch, a proscenium that supports the curtain. The audience was now not able to see the machinery behind the stage. This facilitated changes in scenery. It contributed to the sense of spectacle. The audience is seated facing the stage. Originally this type of theatre was constructed in 17th Century Italy for opera performances. This influenced French theatre and subsequently English theatre during the Restoration period. The majority of the theatre structures in modern times owe a lot to this theatrical convention.

Besides the structure of the theatre, there are technical elements such as set or scenery, costumes, stage properties, that is, any object used in the production dramatic element. If you visit a theatre you will notice that lights sound and makeup also play an important role in staging the play.

Elements of 'drama' on page

You must have studied elements of drama. Let us revise some of these elements. The scholars of drama studies divide these elements into two categories, namely, Aristotelian and modern. The earlier includes spectacle, plot (which is also called fable), character, diction (dialogue), Melody and Thought' while convention, genre, and audience are considered the modern elements.

The plot of a story is a literary device that writers use to map out what happens. However, this device does more than combine sequences of events. Events and actions in the plot must create conflict or raise a dramatic question, resulting in subsequent events that answer the question and resolve the conflict. It follows a story's plot arc in that it begins, progresses, and ends with a climax that resolves the conflict. An author's intent determines the kind of story he or she intends to tell when plotting a literary work. A plot can be influenced by the genre, setting, characters, dramatic circumstances, theme, etc. Aristotle stated, in his work Poetics, that plot structure is composed of three parts: beginning, middle, and end. When it comes to deciding how a story should begin, what should happen in the middle, and how it should end, it can be difficult for writers to come up with an effective plot device. Conflict is a driving force of a plot.

Characters: According to Aristotle, besides plot, character is pivotal to any play. The character is the instrument of the action which shapes the plot. Generally, the term Ethos means character. In realistic plays, most characters are rounded, whereas, in absurd, epic, or comedy, characters are mostly stereotypes.

Thought: It is another word for the theme or the central idea of a play. The complexity of the thought depends on the type of play. In the early

drama, the central idea used to be about religious morals. With the changing times, there has been a shift from religious moral values to more liberal values.

Diction: It is the language that is used by the playwright in a specific play. The choice of diction determines the tone and nature of a play. The writer may deploy different styles, dialects, rhythm etc. Diction is one of the techniques used to make the characters believable.

Music: A play without music is perhaps a rarity. Irrespective of the language, music has been a very important component in any play. It helps in setting the tone of the play and guides the audience in setting expectations.

Spectacle: It contributes to creating a specific impression and emotive response from the audience. What the audience sees and hears may elicit responses from the audience such as fear, anger, surprise, sympathy etc. A spectacle could be achieved through makeup, dancing, physical action between/among characters.

Convention: The modern theatre identifies convention as an important element of the drama. It refers to the techniques and methods that are used in a play to create a certain effect. The use of satire may be seen as one such technique.

Genre: The term refers to the type of play. The development of drama as a literary form has seen a variety of forms emerging. The classical forms are tragedy and comedy. However, now there are a plethora of types. The theme of the play and the intention of the writer determine what genre will be deployed.

Audience: Contemporary scholars of drama maintain that the type of audience could be a decisive factor. Certain plays are written keeping the audience in mind.

Think of writing a note of five plays known to you with the help of the elements. This will help you check your understanding of the elements of drama.

1.2 GREEK THEATRE

In the past, theatre buildings were called theatrons. These beautiful theatres were built on hill slopes with large open spaces. The orchestra, the skene, and the audience were the three main elements of the theatre. As time went on, these morphed into musical interludes. It was decided to allow three actors on stage, but no more, which allowed all poets to compete on an equal footing. However, non-speaking players were permitted to appear on stage as many times as needed, which may allow plays with more financial support to stage a more spectacular performance. As a result of the limitation of actors at the time, each actor

had to take on multiple roles, so masks, costumes, voices, and gestures played a significant role in the performance. As a matter of faith, plays were viewed not merely as entertainment but as an act of worship that every citizen was supposed to attend.

Tragedy:

In ancient Greece, tragedies were most often performed during the spring festival of Dionysus Eleutherius. The archon, the city's highest official, determined which plays were to be performed in competition and who was to act as chorēgoi and finance the production while the state paid the poets and main actors. Three tragedies and one satyr play were required from each poet. The winners of such competitions were often awarded a bronze tripod cauldron as well as honour and prestige. Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides were three of the most well-known playwrights who wrote plays in competition.

It is known that Aeschylus was a world-renowned innovator, adding a second actor to his plays, and even creating sequels. "Homer's feast of morsels" is how he described his works. Euripides' famous plays include *The Persians*, *Seven Against Thebes*, *The Suppliants*, *The Oresteia* (458 BC, a trilogy consisting of *Agamemnon*, *The Libation Bearers*, and *The Eumenides*), *Prometheus Bound*, etc.

Sophocles was highly popular due to the addition of a third actor and painted scenery. His most famous works are the Theban plays, or the Oedipus cycle: *Antigone*, *Oedipus Rex*, and *Oedipus at Colonos*.

Euripides' clever dialogues, his realism, and his writings on common themes that provoked thought were some of his renowned achievements. Among Euripides' most famous plays are *Alcestis*, *Medea*, *Heracleidae*, *Hippolytus* etc.

Comedy:

Greek theatre was also known for its comedies. It is hard to trace the origin of comedy. It is known that comedy comes from imitation. It was Aristophanes who wrote the majority of comedies. *Lysistrata*, one of the eleven plays survived, is a humorous play about a woman who led a coalition in Greece to end the war. In the ancient Greek world, there is evidence of such activity in pottery, in which the sixth century BCE saw actors dressed as horses, satyrs, and dancers in colourful costumes.

Also included in the early source of comedy is the poetry of Archilochus and Hipponax. Their poetry is said to contain humour with overt sexual tone. According to Aristotle, another origin of comedy lies in the phallic songs sung for the Dionysiac festival. Susarion was an Archaic Greek comic poet from Tripodiscus in Megaris, who was one of the originators of metrical comedy and also known as the Foundation of Attic Comedy.

Among Aristophanes' major Greek Old Comedies are *The Acharnians*, *The Knights*, *The Clouds*, *The Wasps*, *Peace*, *The Birds*, *Lysistrata*, *The Frogs*, *Assemblywomen*, and *Plutus*, etc. Many Greek playwrights wrote comedies, such as Epicharmus of Kos, Phormis, Dinolochus and Euetes, etc.

The characteristics of classical drama that formed the Greek theatre can still be seen in modern productions. Now let's take a look at some of the characteristics of Greek tragedy:

- Plays were performed only on special occasions
- The chorus gets to speak more lines of dialogue than the actors.
- The characters in Greek plays wear many masks. This strategy was employed to enable actors to portray a range of roles without confusing their audiences.
- Traditionally, ancient Greek plays were performed in outdoor, open-air theatres with rows of seats arranged around a central stage in tiers as mentioned earlier.
- The tragedies were not filled with comedic lines or scenes.
- Comedies did not include a tragic element and were not performed seriously.
- Greek plays had an organic structure in that they had a proper beginning, middle, and end.
- Greek drama was often dominated by singing, and many of the plays dealt with religious themes.

To conclude, as we examine the Greek theatre, we find substantial evidence to support our argument that theatre has its roots in music and the dithyramb and phallic song are directly linked to the Greek theatre.

1.3 INDIAN CLASSICAL THEATRE WITH REFERENCE TO NATYASHASTRA

Drama has been part of all major civilizations since the Greeks, Chinese, and, hence, Indians. A major problem of trying to determine when a literary tradition like drama emerged is that we cannot pinpoint a specific year, but instead we can trace its influence and evolution to arrive at a more or less realistic understanding of its genesis. Theatre in India is one of the oldest forms of theatre, featuring a variety of textual, sculptural, and dramatic effects that began in the mid-first millennium BC. During Yagya ceremonies, Vedic texts such as the Rigveda mention plays being performed. Ancient Indian traditions and Indian seasonal festivals have always influenced Indian theatre. Approximately five thousand years ago, Indian theatre was established. The NatyaShastra is the most important source of evidence for Sanskrit theatre was composed by Bharat Muni in India, and it was the very first book on drama to be written. As with music

and dance in Indian theatres, Natya is a Sanskrit word meaning drama, which is comprised of narrative, virtuosic dancing, and music. As per Natyasastra, an effective theatre company should have persons specializing in seventeen types, these are called Bharatas who is stage manager or producer or a multifunctional person, the second is Vidusaka, a person to make fun of, the third is Tauripta, someone with significant knowledge of music and all instruments of music.

The fourth and fifth are the Hero and *Sutradhara*, the third and fourth of whom perform as actors and, the sixth is the *Natyakara*, the one who expresses the varied *rasas* and *bhavas* natural to all people with different kinds of acting and so on. China and several Far Eastern countries were influenced by ancient Indian theatre beyond its borders. An important feature of Sanskrit drama is its highly stylized presentation and its structure. A brief description of how the ancient play is structured is given below.

The Structure of Sanskrit Play:

Plays in Sanskrit always begin with a prologue or *Purvanga* that contains elaborate ceremonial rituals. Beginning with a *Nandi* prayer, the plays recognize God's grace. A dramatic prologue follows the Nandi. This involves a short exchange. It is between the production director and one of the performers. In addition to introducing the topic, the author, and possible hints about the major themes of the play, with a prayer, the Sanskrit drama has a happy and optimistic end. This is what distinguishes it from the Greek tradition. Having fully achieved his desires, the hero prays that all may live in peace and prosperity. In Sanskrit drama, the three main components are *Vastu* (plot), *Nayak* (hero) and *Rasa* (emotion). Other than these elements, the four kinds of *abhinayas*, *vachika* (Dialogue), *sattvika* (State of mind), and *aharya* (make-up and costumes) are also very important in drama.

- Plot (*Vastu*): In the play, it can be either the main plot of the play that is *Adhikarika* or the secondary plot of the play which is *Prasangika*. The principal plot or *adhikarika* provides the framework of the play and ties the entire plot together. An accessory or *prasangika* is a supplementary storyline that introduces the secondary or supporting characters. Virtuoso narrations, popular tales, or the composer's imagination must be the basis for the plot of Sanskrit drama. The play plot is composed of five elements. These are; *bija*, *bindu*, *pataka*, *prakrari*, and *karya*.
- Hero (*Nayak*): The Natyasastra describes a hero as modest, good-tempered, giving, heroic, dedicated, civil, representing a noble family, demonstrating discernment, being articulate, consistent, beginning young, endowed with intelligence, enthusiasm, and strong memory. The hero of Sanskrit drama should possess certain specific characteristics. It is believed that the hero must comprise four types; noble, valiant, graceful, and tranquil.

- *Rasa*: A Sanskrit play is considered to be effective if *rasaprapti*, or stirring of the emotions, occurs in the audience. *Natya* refers to the totality of human experience as it relates to happiness, misery, joy, and sorrow as it arises through the process of histrionic representation and thus the *Natyasastra* considers emotional experience to be the central component of drama.

Sutradhara is the one who holds the strings for the play during the play and coordinates a large amount of action during the performance. A study of Sanskrit theatre would be incomplete without looking at this role. The poet *Bhasa* is thought to have been the first innovator to use *Sutradhara* as their stage manager. There are five acts in each Sanskrit play. Dramatic actions consist of five stages: establishment, efforts, the prospect of success, conditional success, and attainment of success.

Among the greatest Sanskrit dramatists in India, *Kalidasa* is considered one of the greatest. A few of *Kalidasa*'s famous plays include *Malavika gñimitram*, *Vikramuuvashiiya* and *Abhijanashakuntala*. Let us discuss these plays in detail.

- 1) There are five acts in *Kalidasa*'s *Malvikagnimitram*. The story is about how King *Sunga Agnimitra* was courted and ended up marrying *Malvika*. The story focuses on the love, attachment, and marriage of *Malvika* to *Agnimitra*, who was the King of the *Sunga* dynasty. Throughout the plot, the King pursues *Malvika*, whose attention is interrupted by *Iravati*, the second queen of *Agnimitra* and the theme derives from contemporary history. In the closing scene of the play, the hero speaks a *Bharatvakya* and asks for the benediction of the heavens for all the people ruled by King *Agnimitra*.
- 2) *Vikramauryashiiya* is *Kalidasa*'s second play. A celestial nymph named *Urvashi* is portrayed as the love interest of King *Pururava* in this play.
- 3) *Abhijanashakuntala* is a play based on the story of *Shakuntala* in the *Mahabharata*. It is also stated in the *Padmapurana* that *Shakuntalopakhyaana* is also found there, but that *Kalidasa* does not have borrowed the story from it, and instead, it is based on the short account of *Shakuntala* from the *Mahabharata*.

In addition to its social, economic, cultural, and religious views, India's artistic identity is closely tied to various facets of its national identity and because of this, it is essential to study Indian cultural practices because they have direct relevance to performers and performances of that time. In the Indian culture, there is an emphasis on performance as an expression of devotion, so when describing the term 'theatre' in a broader sense, a broader definition must be given.

Let's summarize some of the distinctive features of Classical Indian Drama:

- Nataka and Prakrana are the two main types of Sanskrit drama
- The hero of any play has to be brave and a royal
- The play must be composed of five acts
- A story that is celebrated must be the plot
- The Vidusakas play a major role in most dramas dealing with love.
- The other important characteristics of Indian classical theatre are flamboyant music, dance, the elaborate make-up, masks and chorus singing etc.

1.4 FOLK ELEMENT AND INDIAN THEATRE

There is a strong connection between the folk elements and the Indian theatre. It is one of the defining features of modern Indian theatre. Hence, it is necessary to explore the folk element.

In different contexts, folk has different meanings, such as 'natural', 'native', 'traditional', or 'rural'. As folklore evolves, native speech and expressions from the heart become more and more prevalent. The local culture and social values are embedded in folk theatre, which has roots in native culture. It has been widely used as a cultural and social tool throughout India, serving as a means of entertainment among individuals, within a group, and within a village. Because it is an indigenous form, it breaks all kinds of formal barriers between humans, and appeals directly to the masses. Indian folk theatre has had a rich and illustrious history. Ancient Sanskrit dramas were performed to celebrate special occasions or festival seasons. The courts of several Indian kings offered actors and dancers special treatment between the 15th and 19th centuries. During the Maratha kingdom's golden age, the Peshwas patronized the Tamasha folk theatre.

The oral tradition of cultures is known as folklore. In addition to written literature and poetry, oral literature consists of prose and verse narratives, songs, rituals, proverbs, riddles, and so on. As a result of this merging of myths, costumes, and masks into ancient drama, folk theatre evolved into diverse regional forms. The theatre has been a part of India's culture for centuries. In India, folk theatre combines elements from music, dance, pantomime, versification, recitation of epics and ballads, graphic and plastic arts, religion, and folk festival culture.

Folk Elements in Indian Theatre:

Traditional music: Music is an integral part of folk theatre. It is one of the most important factors in Indian drama. Folk music is used by many dramatists to give their plays a regional touch and to convey their themes more effectively.

Mask: Masks made of wood and leather are painted brightly and often have metallic or gilded accoutrements. Usually, a leather strap or rattan strap attached to the inside of the mouth holds the hooks. This is done by holding the mask in front of the player's face while he says his line.

Costumes with vibrant colours: Tamilnadu's street theatre, Therukoothu, is a form of traditional entertainment among the rural population. Classical Sanskrit drama influenced it. Traditionally, mythological stories and epics are performed in the open during temple festivals in villages. Male actors in bright costumes, sparkly shoulder plates, elaborate headdresses, and thick makeup perform lively dances and songs in a high pitch while wearing brightly coloured costumes.

Each culture in India has a different form of traditional theatre, and these traditional theatres use unique elements. Music, Masks, colourful costumes, authentic styles of dance, and improvised acting and gestures give this theatre a unique style that appeals to a wide audience. Among all the various forms of folk theatre in India, some are well-known, such as Raslila, Nautanki, and Ramlila, while others remain mostly unnoticed, despite their similarities.

Let's take a look at some major folk theatres in India:

- *Tamasha:* During the reign of the Maratha kings of the 18th and 19th centuries, Tamasha, a traditional folk theatre form of Maharashtra, reached its peak. The form has evolved from folk forms such as Gondhal and Kirtan. With tamasha, unlike other theatre forms, the female actress is the main character and the chief dancer. Music, rhythmic footwork, and vivid gestures contribute to the distinct character of this folk theatre.
- *Koodiyattam:* it is a traditional form of theatre in India dating back thousands of years. It follows the traditional principles of Sanskrit theatre in its performance. In addition, it shares many of the distinctive characteristics of Kerala culture. Originally this theatre was used in sacred theatres known as Koothambalms to perform temple rituals.
- *BhandPather:* It is an ancient form of Kashmiri theatre that combines dance, music, and acting. In this folk drama that concerns both local mythology and social commentary, satire, wit, and parody are prominent.
- Other Indian folk theatres include *AnkiyaNaatBhaona*, *Therukoothu*, *Jatra*, *Bhavai*, *Dashavtaar*, *Swang*, and *Yakshagana*.

These folk elements have been incorporated into the works of many prominent playwrights and writers. GirishKarnad, who introduced us to this form of literature through his play *Naga-Mandala*, is one such playwright. Rani, a devoted Hindu wife, who suffers because of social customs and traditions, is the protagonist of this play about the condition

of women in Indian society. We see folklore and myth at work when Rani mixes the love roots from Kurudava into the curry. The curry has turned blood-red when she mixes the second root after being unsuccessful in her first attempt. Naga licks the curry and falls in love with Rani when her curry is poured over the anthills. In the bathroom, Naga turns himself into a human being and descends through the drain to Rani's house.

In addition to using folk elements in his performances, Badal Sircar is known as the founder of the third theatre in India. Although highly influenced by folk theatre traditions, Badal Sircar's plays developed their own identity rooted in contemporary politics.

1.5 BLACK THEATRE

In our brief tour around drama, we will now visit one of the significant theatres in 20th Century America which had an impact on the theatres around the world. The theatre as we understand through explorations can satisfy both artistic and economic needs, maintaining the cultural expression and providing a livelihood for artists; instructing audiences and providing entertainment. The black theatre has not been an exception to this. Let us first take a look at some questions to understand Black theatre.

- If Black theatre were to have a primary objective, what would it be?
- Does Black liberation have a role in defining the content of Black theatre?
- Who is the primary target audience for this theatre?
- Does Black theatre have a particular form?
- Then, how would it depict a Black identity, if one exists?
- What value can be placed on art in Black theatre while the Black community is fighting for its existence?

Neither theorists nor practitioners offer any substantive answers to these questions, which only invite more manifestos. When William Wells Brown addressed public audiences against slavery in 1858, he used dramatic devices. Yet the Black drama was not used as a programmatic instrument for social reform until 1915 when the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People introduced it. In the early 19th and early 20th century, minstrel shows were a popular American theatrical form that featured comic portrayals of racial stereotypes. During the 1850s and 1870s, the tradition reached its height. Despite its gradual disappearance from professional theatres, it continued to have an influence in most of the era's motion pictures and music industries from vaudeville to radio and television. While some claim that minstrel shows, originally written and performed by whites, in blackface, were the origins of black theatre, they ultimately were performed for white people.

Ancient Negro art and history should be resurrected and the black man should be seen for what he is as an artist and a powerful subject for artistic expression and therefore, developing good Black playwrights and assuring them of a stage for their work was essential. Black theatre is seen as an American dramatic movement representing plays that were written by African Americans, about African Americans, and for, African Americans. Black actors began performing minstrel shows after the Civil War, and by the turn of the century, they had begun to write and perform Black musicals. As a result of their popularity, they were called "Ethiopian minstrelsy".

King Shotaway was the first known play penned by a Black American and *The Escape; or, A Leap for Freedom* is the first black play to be published, but Angelina W Grimké's *Rachel* is the first African American play to achieve a significant level of attention. In the 1920s and 1930s, black theatre flourished during the Harlem Renaissance. Theatre of Black Americans offers a penetrating view of a black art form that has exploded into a huge cultural force in the U.S.

Throughout the discussions over black theatre's function and structure, then as now, the prevailing opinion was that Black theatre should by definition be distinct from White theatre. Thus, Black theatre that appears similar in form to Euro-American theatre is considered a betrayal of the black culture and any attempt to copy an alien culture. There can no longer be a futile hope that one day the United States will construct and support a House of Black Culture, including a National Black Theatre, in a major Black city. In Chicago, New York City, and Washington, D.C., experimental groups and Black theatre companies emerged. Among them was the Ethiopian Art Theatre, which established Paul Robeson as America's foremost Black actor. The American Negro Theater and Negro Playwrights' Company had become the foundation of Black theatre by 1940.

When discussing black theatre, one might think that it is primarily about the Black Americans; however, there is of course the spread of black theatre throughout the world. Let's discuss some of the significant Black theatres.

Black British Theatre:

British society has expanded and diversified since the end of the Second World War. It is partly due to a significant influx of immigrants from the Caribbean and Africa, who have brought new social and cultural traditions with them, complicating "black" and "British." Several theatre practitioners, including Felix Cross, take pride in identifying as black British. The concept of being 'black British,' however, is viewed by Kwame Kwei-Armah as enabling Africans and Caribbeans to feel like they have arrived somewhere, as having a home. Black and British cultural tensions, as well as issues of nationality, belonging, and racism, are at the very heart of discussions about the black British culture. After the Second World War, Black British theatre emerged in the 1950s as a

result of migration from Africa and the Caribbean. These three individuals, Errol John, Barry Reckord and Wole Soyinka were extremely successful at the Royal Court, and they ultimately occupied a significant position in the canon of black British theatre.

Black British Women theatre:

As the Windrush generation came of age in the 1970s and early 1980s, Britain experienced a convergence of anti-racist and anti-sexist activism. There were around fifty different organizations in Britain providing support to black or Asian women by the mid-1980s. Together, they shared knowledge and resources, educated people, and nurtured unity. 'Organization of Women of Asian and African descent and 'Brixton Black Women's Group' were some of the most active. Among the first to channel this political energy into creative practice was Theatre of Black Women. Three women founded the company in 1982 - Bernardine Evaristo, Patricia Hilaire, and Paulette Randall - and it operated until 1988. They defined themselves as 'Black Feminists,' and their work included discussion of the historical exclusion of black women from the feminist movement.

During the 1960s, Black theatre experienced an explosion, with Amiri Baraka as its most important proponent. *Dutchman* (1964), an award-winning play by Baraka, portrays whites exploiting African Americans. In the early 1960s, Imamu Amiri Baraka and his theatre groups, the Black Arts Repertory School and Theatre in Harlem, and the Spirit House in Newark, started a legacy that continues today and inspired playwrights Ed Bullins and others to develop a "Black aesthetic" in American theatre. Artists like August Wilson, Suzan-Lori Parks, and George Wolfe helped shape Black theatre during the 1980s and '90s.

We will conclude with some of the most important characteristics of black theatre:

- The plays must be based on African-American experiences.
- It must be written by a Black playwright, for and about the black community
- It should serve a purpose and teach a lesson.
- Ideally, it should be group-oriented.
- A central character simultaneously tries to redefine him/her in opposition to the societal roles he/she is expected to play.
- Stereoscopic images are only used in satirical or disparaging contexts. As a form of education, satire pokes fun at an issue.
- Production elements such as spectacle are the least important.
- This inspires thought and action in the viewer. Etc.

1. 6 SUMMING UP

Dear learner let us sum up what we have learned in this chapter. We discussed the rudimentary elements of drama/theatre. We have arrived at a basic understanding of the Greek theatre with the focus on its origin, significance, major forms and salient features. The chapter also discussed the Indian Classical theatre with special reference to *Natyashastra*. We then took a cursory look at the folk elements that have dominated Indian drama and theatrical practices. Lastly, we studied the Black Theatre, its origin, historical development, and major features with illustrations.

1. 7 IMPORTANT QUESTIONS

Consider working on the following concepts with the help of notes and the references given at the end of the chapter.

- Drama on Stage
- Drama on Page
- The etymology of theatre and Drama
- Development of Theatre in Europe
- Salient Features of Greek theatre
- Classification of plays in Greek Theatre
- Features of Classical Indian Theatre
- Natyashastra and the Classical Indian Drama
- Folk elements in Indian Theatre
- Origin and the development of Black theatre
- Black theatre in America and Europe

1. 8 REFERENCES

Greek Theatre

- Arnott, Peter. *An Introduction to the Greek Theatre*. Indiana University Press, 1963.
- Ley, Graham. *A Short Introduction to the Ancient Greek Theater: Revised Edition*. Revised ed., University of Chicago Press, 2007.
- <https://novaonline.nvcc.edu/eli/spd130et/ancientgreek.htm>
- <http://www.ancientgreece.com/s/Theatre/>
- https://www.worldhistory.org/Greek_Theatre/
- <https://www.enotes.com/homework-help/what-main-features-greek-drama-what-makes-unique-315619>
- https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_ancient_Greek_playwrights

Indian Theatre

- Bhatt. G.K. *Bharata Natya Manjari*. Poona: Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute, 1975.
- Bhattacharya, Biswanath. *Sanskrit Drama and Dramaturgy*. Sharda Publishing, 1994
- Lal, Ananda, ed. *The Oxford companion to Indian theatre*. Oxford University Press, USA, 2004.
- Modali, Naga Bhushana Sarma. "Block-2 Indian Theatre." (2018). egyankosh.ac.in
- "Theatre of India." *Wikipedia*, 23 June 2021, en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Theatre_of_India
#Ancient_Indian_playwrights.
- <http://www.iloveindia.com/indian-traditions/theatre.html>
- https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Theatre_of_India#Ancient_Indian_playwrights
- <https://www.myexamsolution.com/2020/08/indian-classical-drama.html>
- <http://www.mahavidya.ca/2017/12/27/rasa-theory-in-hinduism/>

Folk Element and Indian Theatre

- Hansen, Kathryn. "Indian folk traditions and the modern theatre." *Asian Folklore Studies* (1983): 77-89.
- <https://www.britannica.com/art/mask-face-covering/Theatrical-uses>
- https://www.indianetzone.com/5/indian_folk_theatre.htm
- <https://www.thebetterindia.com/72088/traditional-folk-theatre-india/>
- <http://homeofbob.com/literature/genre/fiction/folktales/elements.html>
- <https://www.supersummary.com/evam-indrajit/summary/>

Black Theatre

- Abram, Nicola. *Black British Women's Theatre: Intersectionality, Archives, Aesthetics*. 1st ed. 2020, Palgrave Macmillan, 2020.
- Barrios, Olga. *The Black Theatre Movement in the United States and in South Africa*. Vol. 53. Universitat de València, 2008.
- Hill, Errol. *The Theatre of Black Americans: A Collection of Critical Essays (Applause Books)*. Applause, 2000.

- Ponnuswami, Meenakshi. “Contemporary Black British Playwrights: Margins to Mainstream by Lynette Goddard.” *Theatre Journal*, vol. 68, no. 4, 2016, pp. 695–96. *Crossref*, doi:10.1353/tj.2016.0131.
- <https://www.etymonline.com/word/theater>
- <https://www.britannica.com>
- <https://www.britannica.com/art/black-theatre>
- <https://www.britannica.com/art/minstrel-show>
- [Theatre of Black Women | BPA \(blackplaysarchive.org.uk\)](https://www.blackplaysarchive.org.uk)
- <https://www.bl.uk/20th-century-literature/articles/black-british-theatre-1950-1979#>



LITERARY TERMS PART II

Unit Structure:

- 2.0 Objectives
- 2.1 Realistic Theatre
- 2.2 20th century poetic Drama
- 2.3 Angry Young Men Movement
- 2.4 Street Play/Theatre
- 2.5 Third Theatre
- 2.6 One Act Play
- 2.7 Summing Up
- 2.8 Important Questions
- 2.9 References

2.0 OBJECTIVES

Dear learner the purpose of this chapter is to comprehend certain aspects and terms in drama. You will gain a better understanding of Realistic theatre, and realism and naturalism in drama, the origin and the development of Poetic Drama in the 20th Century, the Angry Young Men Movement and its practitioners, Street Theatre, its meaning and development of the form. You will also be acquainted with the Third theatre and its practice in India and will have a revisit the notion of One-Act Play, its meaning and characteristic features. It is believed that a revisionary study of these terms will prepare you to understand and interpret drama as a genre of literature.

2.1 REALIST THEATRE/ REALISM AND NATURALISM IN THEATRE

It was Aristotle who defined tragedy as "the imitation of an action, serious, complete, and of a certain magnitude..." A serious tragedy is defined by its subject matter and by how it is presented. A tragedy that has a royal person as the central character should be presented with dignity. In ancient Greece, the concept of the hero was confined to characters of high status or gods or deities, and this tradition was perpetuated until Humanism. A lot of literature, or drama, during the Elizabethan age or the age of Shakespeare, and in the Jacobean, age featured characters of high standing, such as Kings, Queens, Knights and Noblemen. With each new age came a revolutionary change in Drama. The Restoration comedy was aristocratic and amoral during the Age of Reason due to the rationalistic

nature of drama during this period. Sentimentalism was born when Rationalism was excessively used. Works such as 'A Short View of the Immorality and Profaneness of the English Stage' published in 1698 helped it prosper. Women's playing female characters was the most revolutionary change in theatre, as opposed to boys playing female roles. Romantic literature was characterized by its use of imagery, metaphor, and fantasy and thus, the realist movement arose in reaction to Romanticism as a way to oppose this convention.

Playwright Henrik Ibsen is considered to be the father of modern realism in theatre. During the early nineteenth century, realism gained popularity as a reaction to romanticism. In the late 1800s, the movement began to make the drama more appealing to society by changing the aesthetics. Artists and writers of the era wanted to see everyday life rather than create exotic works not grounded in reality. One of the most famous realists was Rembrandt.

Literary realism can easily be detected. It has some classic traits in the writing that indicates that this story is literary realism - realistic characters and setting, complete with detail about everyday life, plausible plot (a story that could happen in your neighbourhood) and setting. In real life drama, we explore real-life examples to get a glimpse of the untampered world, but still, real-life drama is anything but boring. It even explores the real dialects of people. Other than bringing an interesting story to life, literary realism gives people an idealized view of the world.

There is a difference between realism and naturalism which teachers and students often find confusing when studying theatre history and performance styles. While influenced by the same historical events and sharing some stylistic similarities, the two schools of thought and subsequent movements in the theatre were separate and distinct. What to do about over-the-top melodramas full of spectacle that had been part of early to mid-19th-century theatre? Realism or naturalism, that depends on who you ask. Although both terms can be interchanged without meaning the same thing in terms of style, they are not the same thing. Stanislavski's system has been hailed as the foundation of naturalistic acting by some scholars. Dramas that feature naturalistic acting are radically different from plays featuring realistic acting. Besides differing character criteria, they also have a host of different requirements for the actor concerning costumes and sets, and the subject matter often varies as well.

Using the characteristics listed below, let's analyse realism and naturalism in drama

- In the 20th century, realist theatre and cinema have greatly influenced theatre and cinematic productions, and their influence can still be seen today.
- Drama with a realist approach tends to have likeable, everyday characters

- In many cases, the settings (stage settings) and props are in an apartment or believable location
- Stage dramas are usually staged with brick walls and an invisible fifth wall referred to as a box set.
- The setting and dialogue in realistic plays are often bland, as is the case with realistic fiction.
- There is often a psychological underpinning to drama, where the plot is secondary and the primary focus is placed on character motivation, others' reactions and the like.

Naturalism can be characterized as follows:

- Traditionally, naturalism can be defined as a form of heightened realism
- Naturalism endured only briefly as a movement and style of performance
- A stage time is the same as real-time.
- In the world of the play, three hours in the theatre is the same as three hours for the characters
- A photographic image of reality is reproduced in the fashion of costumes, sets, and props which are historically accurate and highly detailed
- In naturalistic dramas, settings are frequently bland and uninteresting, as they are in realism
- The naturalistic drama typically follows the principles set forth by Aristotle in his 'three unities' (of time, place, and action).
- It is not uncommon for the characters in naturalistic plays to be seen as victims of their circumstances, which accounts for their behaviour.

Check out these realists and naturalist theatre pieces

'A Doll's House' by Henrik Ibsen

A Doll's House, written by Henrik Ibsen, was both a huge success and was immediately criticized when it first appeared for its highly controversial views on marriage and family at the time. The play revolves around Nora Helmer, a middle-class housewife who takes out an illegal loan to save her husband Torvald's life. She realizes, however, that she is no longer content to be anyone's "doll wife" as she navigates Victorian gender roles and manages to dismantle the illusions that plague her marriage. Fans found A Doll's House relatable, inspiring, and refreshing despite critics complaining that it threatened Victorian values.

2.2 20TH CENTURY POETIC DRAMA

In the middle of the 20th century, the rise of realism and naturalism caused most spectators to look down on what is called "poetic drama," which are plays written for reading rather than hearing. Drama and poetry became separate genres of contemporary writing. Classic poets have had little success with dramaturgy. Several of Alfred Tennyson's plays were unsuccessful. The English Parliament was said to have appeared for approximately two minutes onstage at one of those plays. Today, many of T.S. Eliot's plays are rarely performed. Sturm und Drang of the Angry Young Men, as well as the rise of realistic or naturalistic theatre in the mid and late 20th century, drove dialogue writers away from poetry or vice versa. Christopher Fry is relegated to the dustbin of history, while John Osborne is seen as the embodiment of the theatre of the 1950s."

But as a counterpoint to the realistic plays of G. B. Shaw and Galsworthy and Harley Granville-Barker, the Poetic Drama arose by 1920. While some Victorian poets tried to write dramatized poems, including Tennyson and Browning, there was significantly more poetry than drama. And thus, at the beginning of the twentieth century, there was virtually no tradition of poetic drama. So, with the poetic drama of T S Eliot, it was a rebirth of poetry drama in the early twentieth century. On stage, these playwrights strived to bring back the true essence of poetry, imagination, passion. Some of the playwrights who were poets and who wrote in verse employed the poetic form of prose as their form of expression. English poets Stephen Phillips, Masfield, Gordon Bottomley, John Drinkwater, and Lord Dunsany are notable examples of this tradition. In all, they were prominent poets of their time who turned to theatre. The history of poetic drama is rich and storied, so much so that most studies on contemporary practitioners begin with discussions of the parameters set by critics from Aristotle to Dryden.

Some of the Abbey theatre authors were drawn to poetic drama in Ireland. Despite the strict verse form, Philip Stephen still stayed true to his intentions. His play 'Paolo and Francesca' was a great success in 1900 because it was modelled after Dante's famous episode from Inferno. In his earlier career, Drinkwater also attempted to re-establish the poetic play. This style is evident in his plays 'Rebellion' and 'The Storm'. A great poet and the director of the Abbey Theatre, W.B. Yeats created plays in this style. As a result of his work, the poetic playwriting style was developed. T.S. Eliot, Gordon Bottomley, Abercrombie, and W.H. Auden are all credited with helping develop the modern poetic drama in England. Amid decline, Abercrombie and Bottomley stepped into the breach to save English drama. During his poetical exploration, Abercrombie revisited traditional verse-forms to restore them to their once vital status as dramatic tools. He has several plays in this style, including *Deborah*, *The Adder*, *The End of the World*, *The Staircase*, *The Deserter*, and *Phoenix*.

Abercrombie's poetry aimed to bring close contact between his poetry and the reality of the stage that he appreciated.

To begin anew, Bottomley drew inspiration from the classical drama of Greece. *King Lear's Wife*, *The Crier by Night*, *Midsummer Eve*, *Laodice and Danae*, and *Kate Kennedy* are among his most acclaimed plays. T. S. Eliot's *Murder in the cathedral* stands out among modern dramas. He applied poetry to the stage most powerfully and artistically and his plays display an impressive amount of emotional power. Ever since its first presentation in 1935, it has enjoyed great success.

Other plays on this list include *The Dog Beneath the Skin* written in 1935 by W.H. Auden together with Christopher Isherwood and Stephen Spender's *Trial of a Judge* in this category is another play worth mentioning.

Here are some of the main characteristics of Poetic drama:

Poetic drama is characterized by its technicality, diction, language, and art of speaking. In fact, throughout history, poetry has been a powerful medium of expression.

A poetic imagination can best tune the rhythm of life.

Additionally, many dramatists who write in this genre have attempted to capture the symphony of language in the commonplace. As a consequence, theatricality, poetry, action, and characterization suffer. In the modern age of poetic dramas, the drama itself has lost its essence, since the action itself is the soul of the drama.

The following are the major practitioners of poetic drama:

- **Stephen Philips:** In addition to *Paolo and Francesca*, *Ulysses* and *Nero*, he wrote many blank verse plays. While his plays proved popular, they can most appropriately be viewed as blank verse spectacles, lacking any sense of dramatic impact.
- **William Butler Yeats:** The Abbey Theatre in Dublin was founded by William Butler Yeats, Lady Gregory, and John Menzies Synge to encourage the poets and playwrights. At this theatre, Yeats attempted to revive the poetic drama. Despite writing about twenty-six plays in verse, Yeats was more of a poet than a playwright. He has been praised for his contribution to poetic drama by Eliot.
- **Lord Dunsany:** *The Glittering Gate* is one of his most important works. Despite writing in prose, his plays are poetic dramas since they are infused with romance and his ability to conjure up the atmosphere of the East.
- **T. S. Eliot:** The theory of poetic drama was proposed by Eliot. In the 20th century, he was responsible for establishing the tradition of poetic drama. In addition to *The Murder in the Cathedral*, *The Family Reunion*, *The Cocktail Party*, *The Confidential Clerk*, and *The Elder Statesman*, he also wrote several important poetic plays.

- Auden, Isherwood, Stephen Spender, and Christopher Fry etc. are the other practitioners of poetic drama.

2.3 ANGRY YOUNG MEN/ANGRY THEATRE

Angry Young Men was a movement of writers and playwrights in Britain in the 1950s who rejected, scorned, and rebelled against the established social and political order. Their anger was especially triggered by what they perceived as hypocrisy and mediocrity among middle- and upper-class members. This new group of intellectuals called the Angry Young Men was made up primarily of working-class or lower-middle-class origin. A few of them had attended state-funded red-brick universities following the war, while others came from Oxford. A common trait they shared was a scepticism of the British class system, including its elitist universities. Despite their lofty aspirations for genuine change, the post-war welfare state often fell short of their expectations, and their writings expressed a sense of devastation and frustration as reforms failed to meet the expectations of their readers.

Initially evident in John Wain's novel *Hurry on Down* (1953) and Kingsley Amis' *Lucky Jim* (1954), the trend reached its zenith in 1956 with the play *Look Back in Anger*, which became the symbol of the movement. According to the press agent of the Royal Court Theatre, John Osborne was an "angry young man," and that label was extended to all his contemporaries who despised highbrow mannerisms and complained that class distinctions persisted.

At that time, English theatre was only giving light comedies to a limited audience, and it was primarily for the middle class. The plays being staged there are usually either conventional or foreign. It is commonly acknowledged that the Angry Young Men dominated literary trends in the '50s. Contrary to the old trend came the 'Drama of Commitment and Social Protest', 'The Kitchen Sink Drama', 'The Theatre of Ideas', 'The Theatre of the Absurd' and 'The Theatre of the Angry Young Men'. The play describes man's solitude in an unfriendly world, his feeling of isolation from others, his frustration and rage at the current state of the world and society's general disorganization. By contemporary reviewers, they were considered leftist authors because of what they expressed in their plays. The new audience of the late 1950s played an important role in the promotion of new drama. This was a new generation of men in their thirties with a particular cultural and political background.

Several young writers achieved great success in Britain during the late 1950s, such as Arnold Wesker, Kingsley Amis, and most importantly, John Osborne. As a group, they were referred to as "Angry Young Men." Their work reflected dissatisfaction with the world they lived in, and a desire to create a new way of living. A lot of their values were at odds with the Established System: family, patriotism, established culture and religion. Typically, work plays are about a rootless, lower-

middle/working-class male protagonist who has a love-hate relationship with society and is always trying to move upward. They felt cheated because the Welfare State had proven hollow: they were fed well and educated well, but still trapped in a class system that opened the doors to the rich public-school students and closed them to the working class.

For many British young people of the late 1950s, Jimmy Porter, the protagonist of the play "Look Back in Anger", became an example to imitate. He speaks the simple language of the street-smart generation rather than the sophisticated language used by the upper class.

Following are some of the features of The Angry Young Men Movement:

- Work by The Angry Men dealt with contemporary issues and was political.
- The middle class and the working class were their subjects, and they depicted their typical habitat in a realistic way.
- Their ideals provided hope for the future, but their depressing reality shattered that hope.
- They revolt against social inequalities.
- They criticise both the middle and upper classes for their hypocrisy.
- Image of the youth in society at their most abject
- All acceptable norms and ideals were radically questioned in Angry Young Men literature.
- The hero of this sort usually has a university degree and is typically rootless and working-class. Etc.

Let's look at some famous angry young men plays:

- Look back In Anger- John Osborn:

Osborne's main character in the play "Look Back in Anger", was an example to emulate for the British young generation of the late 1950s. The Second World War ended in 1945, and Britain had to rebuild its destroyed infrastructure and stabilize a failing economy. This difficulty contributed to British withdrawal from their colonies in India, Sri Lanka, and Myanmar in 1947. British class structure remained relatively static during this period, so we ended up with a generation of educated working-class children who found it difficult to use their education.

- Bernard Kops, Arnold Wesker, and John Arden are other playwrights associated with the Angry Young Men movement.

2.4 STREET PLAY/THEATRE

India's street theatre tradition is deeply rooted in communication through public performance. The use of this form has been increasingly

prevalent to spread social and political messages and to raise awareness of critical issues amongst the masses. Unlike formal theatre, street theatre approaches the people directly. People might appear out of nowhere - behind the vegetable complex in the market, during a walk in the evening, or even on the corner near your office- performing a short skit or play for anyone who might stop and watch. It is not simply about giving entertainment for free. It is a way for them to reach out to people of all strata and create awareness of events around them, calling them to change what they believe are the social ills of society.

Generally, street theatre is performed by a group of people on the streets for people who may not have time to see a play, and who are not prepared. These limitations dictate the play's parameters. Plays on the street are typically short, direct and intimate, whereas large and loud plays are more effective.

Street theatre was also known as “Nukkad Naatak” and to trace back is the oldest form of theatre that is derived from the times when religious plays and other forms were performed on the streets for entertainment purposes. Street theatre was not confined to the traditional theatre elements and is open to anyone and everyone to watch and most of the performances are free.

The most fascinating feature of street theatre is that it breaks the formal conventions and addresses the people directly. This form of theatre is used to spread messages and most importantly create awareness amongst the people regarding social issues. Issues concerning women have also been voiced through the performances, hence, they have become one of the important themes for street plays. Street plays often deal with issues concerning women. 1980 saw a lot of shows on the need to improve rape laws after the famous Mathura case.

In addition to spreading political ideologies, street theatre is also used during elections to propagate their importance. Performers in theatres address problems like caste conflict or ideas about health and hygiene. This platform is also used as a means to encourage literacy amongst rural areas and especially encourages child education and women empowerment. Street theatre has spread to almost all the cities in India and is used as a weapon to raise a voice and bring awareness on several subjects. Street theatre is also approached by non-governmental organisations to spread awareness about HIV and AIDS, injustice against women and to develop ecological consciousness. Street theatre is one of the most important forms of expression.

Feisal Alkazi, a street theatre instructor at the Jamia Millia University in Delhi, believes that:

There must be a tangible impact if the communication was worthwhile. The importance of plays is that they make people think.

Viewers of the play, from different age groups, question and discuss the contents of the play. Creating an atmosphere of questioning by itself has an impact. According to him, most street theatre groups have encountered audience members who came up to talk about the play they just saw.

When it comes to street theatre, Safdar Hashmi has to be mentioned. He started out acting in stage plays, but then switched to street theatre, bringing about social and political awareness with it. As a result of his message, he and his group were attacked while performing a play in Ghaziabad near Delhi. His injuries led to his death the next day.

Here are some interesting features of Street Play:

- It breaks the formal conventions of theatre and addresses the people directly.
- The productions are humorous to attract diverse crowds.
- These street plays contain songs based on popular tunes to enhance their appeal.
- Plays are choreographed differently based on their scripts
- This form of theatre is used to spread social messages and awareness.
- it is performed in outdoor public spaces without a specific paying audience.
- The play should be as inexpensive and portable as possible
- Actors in street theatre are mostly teachers and students dedicated to social change

Thus, these plays create an impact on the audience and force the audience to think about the message a street act is conveying. And most importantly, Street theatre gives the audience as well as the performers to voice their opinions which can lead to some positive changes in society. Street plays with messages on certain social issues bring new perspectives to the mindset of the audiences. Thus, these Street theatre groups study society today, envision the world of tomorrow, and then attempt to present their vision.

2.5 THIRD THEATRE

The 'third theatre' is the manifestation of values other than those of tradition, as it is apart from the institutional theatre - which has both past and present memories, and apart from supposed 'avant-garde' and experimental theatre and is a blend of contemporary and traditional theatrical techniques. This theatre would bring together both the rural folk theatre and the urban proscenium theatre, and it would be versatile, low-cost, and address both urban and rural audiences. Before discussing the term in detail let's figure out the following question. Between puppetry, mime, dance, and dramatic art, how can relations, differences, and antagonistic relationships be established? The 'third theatre' seeks to

clarify these questions. Eugenio Barba, the founder of the Odin Theatre in Denmark, coined the term in 1976.

In India, Badal Sircar one of the best leading playwrights started a movement in the theatre world called 'Third Theatre', which is inspired by Grotowski and Eugenio Barba. Sircar took a decisive break from the traditional theatrical practices of the urban proscenium stage in the early-1970s, dissatisfied with the city's proscenium theatre, particularly its disadvantageous audience-actor relationship, and exposed to the experimental theatre of the West. He emerged as a theatre director and writer who brought new ideas and methods to Indian theatre and established a new form called the 'Third Theatre'. He was also inspired by Polish theatre practitioner Jerzy Grotowski's 'The Poor Theatre', who considered an actor's body as the primary element in a theatre performance. Grotowski constructed a 'theatre laboratory' to experiment with the physical, spiritual and ritualistic elements of theatre. He was able to learn this acting style and system through Indian Classical dance, Kathakali, and yoga. For him, yoga remained inefficient, as it focused on interiority whereas actors required exteriority of emotions as well as gestures. Gestures for him were to be expressive and dominant enough to overpower the lack which the form inhabits consciously.

Excessive scenery, costumes, sets and other elements are rejected in 'Poor Theatre'. The performance focuses on the actor's body, which is accompanied by minimalist props. As a result, the process becomes simplistic and can be executed in any space, thus rejecting traditional theatre halls or spaces.

The "third theatre" is a blend of modern theatrical techniques and ancestral traditions. Through the willingness and desire needed for these encounters to happen, cultures are opened up. An exciting new mode of dramatic expression emerged as a third theatre when puppetry, dance, song, traditional instrumental music, masks, parades, street theatre, mime, acrobatic and circus arts mix and meld. Nevertheless, the theatre goes beyond the exchange of techniques, scenographies, and aesthetic intentions, it manifests its presence in reality and becomes an integral part of society. As a result, the traditional schism between actors and spectators is disappearing. A theatre can be viewed as a workshop of creation or as a laboratory of life. Today, it has become more than just a means to express cultural symbols, but also a means of communication between men.

Sircar believes that as a result of the poor theatre, the theatre has returned to its ritualistic form with the body of the performer becoming the only ornament. Immediately after encountering such ideas, the group began to use sets, lights, costumes, and even background music in a minimalistic manner, completely eschewing technology and mechanical tools. Grotowski too, experimented with the body more than with speech, using mime, dance, movement, and time. Audiences, as well as critics, highly praised this new form.

There are certain unique characteristics of Third Theatre, as follows:

- A blend of the rural and the urban: The third theatre is the combination of two theatres rural and urban theatre. Sircar had observed the inherent characteristics of folk theatre There is a greater emphasis on live performers and direct communication than on props and mechanical devices from the proscenium theatre, and the emphasis on the body as opposed to the set-ups.
- A focus on audience participation: Sircar realized that a theatre is a place where humans come to experience life when exploring the theatre. According to Sircar, theatre enhances the social awareness of performers, including the audiences.
- Against the Proscenium: The third theatre is in contrast to the conventional proscenium theatre. Stage set-ups, props, spotlight, costume, make-up etc. are used to create the illusion of reality in proscenium theatre whereas the third theatre emphasizes the performer's body rather than set, props and costumes. The stage in the proscenium theatre is raised to keep distance from the audience but the third theatre shares the space and the environment with the audience.
- Low cost, portability, and flexibility: The third theatre is portable as it can be moved anywhere because it does not require any heavy set-up, spotlight, furniture, costumes etc.
- Acting approach: The third theatre is more about the acting than the conventional proscenium theatre's set-ups, props, costumes, etc.

The following are some of the famous examples of the Third theatre:

- '*Spartacus*', by Badal Sircar: Sircar's first play, written in consideration of his Third Theatre, is *Spartacus*, a dramatization of Howard Fast's eponymous novel whose subject is the Roman slave revolt of 71 B.C. led by *Spartacus*.
- '*Bhoma*', by Badal Sircar: Sarkar's "*Bhoma*" is an example of a third play that's set as usual in the urban environment

2.6 ONE-ACT PLAY

One act play is regarded by many scholars as a modern product because it became very popular in the 20th century. The plays in one act were staged over the 18th and 19th centuries, as "*The Curtain Raisers*" or "*The Afterpieces*". The Repertory Theatre Movement also spurred the development of the One-Act Play. A one-act play, in the most basic terms, is a play that has only one act. It may consist of one or more scenes and focuses on one significant event and is an elaboration of the same incident. In recent years, the one-act play has developed and its sub-genre has emerged which is well-known as "*flash drama*", it is a 10-minute play. The origin of the One-act play can be traced back to ancient Greece times, a satyr play *Cyclops* by Euripides is an early example of the same.

“The Monkey’s Paw” is a famous one-act play written by W.W. Jacobs, is a horror play which is an adaptation of a short story. This famous play is said to mark the beginning of the modern one-act play. The Monkey's Paw has three scenes and it follows a one-act structure. The entire play has no change of place as all the action takes place within the setting of the old cottage of the Whites, but there is a change of time in the three scenes. The play deals with only one theme with a specific situation which develops with the climax to produce the maximum effect on the spectator. It is generally the problem of everyday life. However, the theme must be meaningful for the audience to take away something useful or to experience catharsis.

The one-act play, like the longer drama, has a beginning, a middle and an end. This sequence of events can be classified into four stages: The Exposition, The Conflict, The Climax, and The Denouement. The exposition is like a brief introduction to the play. The action of the play develops through the conflict. It is the foundation of a one-act play. The climax is without any doubt the turning point of the play. It is an integral part of the one-act play and it brings a moment of interest to the spectator. The Denouement is very brief as it is connected with the climax. It has limited characters, generally two or three principal characters. However, the full development of the characters is not presented as it's a short play. The language and dialogues of these plays are very simple, brief and crisp to let the spectator understand the purpose and meaning behind the play. In the One-Act Play, the dramatist always introduces detailed stage directions. Since the playwright has a limited amount of space at his disposal, he cannot give us detailed information during the play's action. Through the stage direction, the reader can get a sense of the entire scene, thereby appreciating the drama's true spirit to a great extent.

One-act plays have several important characteristics, among which are:

- It has only one act with one or more scenes.
- The play is usually written concisely.
- Since it is a short play, there is no interval or any break in the action.
- The three dramatic unities- the unity of time, unity of place & the unity of action are observed in the one-act play.
- The plot of the one-act play is usually simple.
- The characters depict real problems and themes which are influenced by realism.

Let's have a look at some famous one-act plays:
Anton Chekhov - *A Marriage Proposal* (1890)

Anton Chekhov, a Russian playwright and short-story writer who received the Pushkin Prize in 1888. He is famously known for his plays: ‘*The Seagull*’, ‘*Three Sisters*’, ‘*The Black Monk*’ etc. His work ‘A

Marriage Proposal is a one-act play written in 1888–1889 and first performed in 1890. It was originally written in the Russian language. This one-act play is a fast-paced play where a young man Lomov comes to propose to his neighbour Natalya but they both keep fighting on various topics.

Arthur Miller - *A Memoir of Two Mondays*

Arthur Miller is one of the greatest American playwrights of the 20th century. In addition to 'All My Sons' and 'The Crucible,' he won the Pulitzer Prize for 'Death of a Salesman'. Miller's autobiographical work 'A Memory of Two Mondays', is set in Brooklyn during the depression period before he was admitted to University of Michigan. This one-act play is about the difference between human needs and work requirements.

'Riders to the Sea', by John Millington Synge, 'The Stepmother - a farce in one act' by Arnold Bennett, 'Pariah', 'Motherly Love', and 'The First Warning' by August Strindberg, 'Krapp's Last Tape' by Samuel Beckett are the other famous one-act plays.

2.7 SUMMING UP:

We have discussed six important dramatic terms in this unit. While discussing Realistic theatre we saw that both Realism and Naturalism share some similarities and diverge in some ways. And Poetry in the drama was revived in the twentieth century as a phenomenon known as poetic drama. An act of anger against social systems was captured in the theatre movement, Angry Young Men. In the twentieth century, street theatre, also known as street play, launched a new phenomenon aimed at reaching the unreached masses. The third theatre is similar to the street theatre in that it is flexible, portable, and inexpensive. Additionally, it served as an ideological platform for promoting have-nots among them. In the end, the unit looks at a one-act play, its meaning and growth, as well as its development over time.

2.8 IMPORTANT QUESTIONS:

The questions in this unit shall be asked in the Short Notes format, therefore the learner needs to comprehend each literary term in detail. Following are some of the sample questions.

- The Origin of Realism in Drama
- Similarities and dissimilarities in Realism and Naturalism
- Revival of Poetic Drama in 20th Century
- The Angry Young Men Movement in Drama
- Features of Angry Young Men Drama
- Street plays/Theatre
- Third theatre in India
- Meaning and Characteristic features of One-Act Play. etc

2.9 REFERENCES

- Abrams; Geoffrey Galt Harpham; *Glossary of Literary Terms by Geoffrey Galt Harpham (2011–02-09)*. Heinle & Heinle Publishers Inc., U.S.; 10th International edition edition (2011–02-09), 2021.
- Childs, Peter, and Roger Fowler. *The Routledge Dictionary of Literary Terms (Routledge Dictionaries)*. 3rd ed., Routledge, 2005.
- Cash, Justin. “Realism and Naturalism Theatre Conventions.” *The Drama Teacher*, 30 May 2021, thedramateacher.com/realism-and-naturalism-theatre-conventions.
- “What Were the Main Features of the Theatre of Realism? - ENotes.Com.” *ENotes*, 17 Mar. 2020, www.enotes.com/homework-help/what-were-main-features-theatre-realism-339642.
- Oldham, Cydni. “Realism - Examples and Definition of Realism.” *Literary Devices*, 21 Nov. 2020, literarydevices.net/realism.
- Quinn, Edward. *A Dictionary of Literary and Thematic Terms (Facts on File Writer’s Library)*. 2nd ed., Checkmark Books, 2006.
- “THE THEATRE OF THE ABSURD AND THE ANGRY YOUNG MEN.” *Spazio Personale Di Mario Aperto a Tutti 24 Ore Su*, 15 Jan. 2014, rosariomariocapalbo.wordpress.com/2011/03/08/the-theatre-of-the-absurd-and-the-angry-young-men.
- Wikipedia contributors. “Badal Sarkar.” *Wikipedia*, 17 May 2021, en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Badal_Sarkar.
- ---. “Street Theatre.” *Wikipedia*, 15 Apr. 2021, en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Street_theatre.
- Shaurya, Ria. “The One-Act Play.” *English Literature Notes*, 6 July 2015, riashaurya.wordpress.com/2015/07/06/the-one-act-play.

Web Sources:

- <https://www.enotes.com/homework-help/what-were-main-features-theatre-realism-339642>
- <https://www.the-criterion.com/V10/n6/IN12.pdf>
- <https://thedramateacher.com/realism-and-naturalism-theatre-conventions/>
- <https://literarydevices.net/realism/>
- https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Badal_Sarkar
- <https://riashaurya.wordpress.com/2015/07/06/the-one-act-play/>
- https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Street_theatre
- <http://www.indiaprofile.com/religion-culture/streettheatre.htm>
- <https://poemanalysis.com/movement/angry-young-men/>

- <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Angry-Young-Men>
- <https://rosariomariocapalbo.wordpress.com/2011/03/08/the-theatre-of-the-absurd-and-the-angry-young-men/>
- <https://www.englishliterature.info/2020/04/beginnings-of-poetic-drama.>
- <https://havescripts.com/poetic-drama-in-the-20th-century/>
- <https://wepa.unima.org/en/third-theatre/>
- [https://www.academia.edu/24466032/ Third Theatre A Media Closer to the Folk](https://www.academia.edu/24466032/Third_Theatre_A_Media_Closer_to_the_Folk)



A STUDY OF BERTOLT BRECHT'S COURAGE AND HER CHILDREN PART I

Unit Structure

- 3.0 Objectives
- 3.1 Introduction to the Play
- 3.2 Bertolt Brecht : The Playwright
- 3.3 Summary in a Nutshell
- 3.4 Scene wise Summary of the Play
- 3.5 Let's Sum up
- 3.6 Important Questions

3.0 OBJECTIVES

The objective of this unit is to familiarise you with the play *Mother Courage and Her Children* by Bertolt Brecht. After reading this unit you will be able to:

- Understand the background of the play
- Acquaint with the background of the dramatist and the dramatic techniques employed by him
- Understand the plot summary of the play

3.1 INTRODUCTION TO THE PLAY

The play *Mother Courage and Her Children* was written by Bertolt Brecht during his exile in Sweden in the year 1939. The play was published and performed for the first time in the year 1941 and became successful and greatest anti-war play in the twentieth century. The play is set during the Thirty Years War and is located in Europe. The play is an illustration of Brechtian technique of Epic Theatre and Alienating Effect that became popular during the twentieth century drama in Europe. The play has had many successes on stage and influenced many playwrights of the time. The play was originally written in German language.

The protagonist of the play, Mother Courage plays the role of an ordinary woman who has to survive during the Thirty Years War with her children. Brecht describes the suffering of the common people during the war and how war actually looked as a business proposition and profitable venture. The action of the play takes place in 12 years depicted as 12 scenes in the play. Through the technique of Alienation, Brecht is able to

remarkably portray the character of Mother Courage as a woman who is more interested in making the most from the war. She is an opportunistic woman and not like any epic characters.

3.2 BERTOLT BRECHT: THE PLAYWRIGHT

Bertolt Brecht (1898- 1956) was born in Ausburg, Bavaria in a middle-class family. He suffered from heart disease throughout his life. He received firm classical education and instruction on the Bible from his mother who was prominent figure in many of his plays. He attended the University of Munich and moved to Germany after his graduation. He started working with the Deustches Theatre in 1924 and started writing and directing plays for the theatre. He wrote three short plays *Baal*, *Drums in the Night* and *In the Jungle* won him immediate success and he was bestowed with a prestigious award.

Brecht was a Marxist and anti-Fascist and wrote his ideas about these ideologies in newspapers. Due to his Marxist and anti-Fascist leanings, he had to flee Germany and lived in exile for the next fifteen years in Scandinavia and United States. His dramatic style was largely influenced by comic actors Karl Valentine and Charlie Chaplin and German playwright Karl Buchner. Brecht developed the idea of “Epic Theatre” that strongly resonated in his plays. The Epic Theatre emerged as a strong reaction to consequences of the Second World War and Brecht’s engagement with the political climate of his time. The basic aim of Brecht’s Epic Theatre was to educate the audience to view the action of the play critically from point of view of distancing or detached or alienated rather than getting emotionally involved in the play. The distancing or alienating effect was known as *Verfremdungseffekt*. He rejected the Aristotlean notion of drama with its rising action, exposition and climax. Instead, he wanted his plays to be known as dialectical comments on society.

Brecht devised an acting technique for his epic theatre that he called as *gestus* that involved physical gestures or attitudes. He wanted the actor to observe the character, demonstrate the actions of the character but the actor should not identify with the role. To emphasize the technique of epic theatre on stage, Brecht aimed at unfamiliar stage settings, interruption of action and dialogue, music, use of banners to indicate change of scenes and the stage divided by half curtains.

During the War Years Brecht wrote many plays that were successful such as *Life of Galileo*, *Mother Courage and Her Children*, *The Good Woman of Schezwan*, *The Caucasian Chalk Circle*, *The Three Penny Opera* and many others. In the year 1949, Brecht established his theatre group called The Berliner Ensemble and spent the next years of his life writing and directing plays for the Ensemble. Brecht died at the age of 58 of a heart-attack.

3.3 SUMMARY IN A NUTSHELL

Mother Courage was first produced in the year 1941 in Switzerland. Brecht's second wife Helene Wiegel played the title role in the Berlin production of the play in 1949. It has been considered as the greatest play of the 20th century and a great anti-war play of all times. Since its first production, it has seen numerous stage and film productions. The action of the play takes the course of 12 years (1624-1636) represented in 12 scenes. The play portrays the indomitable courage of the central character and spans her career without any empathy or sentiment. Unlike the traditional epic characters Mother Courage is quite ordinary and far removed from the epic situations faced by the heroes. At the end of the play, the character of Mother Courage does not inspire the readers but makes us think about the folly of her actions.

The play is set in Europe especially in Sweden, Poland and Germany during the Thirty Years War that was fought between 1618 and 1648. The play opens with the character of Mother Courage and her three children: Eilif, Katrin and Swiss Cheese. Mother Courage is a canteen woman seen with her wagon trading her goods for money and profit. The readers are then introduced to the Recruiting Officer and the Sergeant who express their difficulty in recruiting soldiers for the war. They distract Mother Courage and her wagon to a corner with the promise of a transaction and the Recruiting Officer takes Eilif with him. One of Mother Courage's children is now gone.

After two years we find Mother Courage haggling with the General's Cook over a capon. On the other side of the stage, Eilif is praised by the General for heroically slaughtering some peasants and stealing their cattle. Eilif sings "The Song of the Girl and the Soldier," and his mother joins in. She then scolds him for risking his life in a thoughtless manner. The play moves ahead by three years where Swiss Cheese, Mother Courage's son has taken a job as the regiment's paymaster. Yvette Pottier, the camp prostitute sings "The Song of Fraternization" to warn Katrin about the horrors of a relationship with a soldier. The Cook and the Chaplain arrive to greet Mother Courage with a message from Eilif, and there is suddenly a Catholic attack. The Chaplain discards his robes, and Swiss Cheese hides the regiment's paybox.

In the same evening Swiss Cheese is being followed when he attempts to return the paybox to his General but is captured. Mother Courage mortgages her cart to Yvette and tries to bargain with the soldiers using the money--but she bargains for too long and Swiss Cheese is shot. Mother Courage denies his body when it is brought to her to be identified so it is thrown into a pit. In the next scene we find Mother Courage waiting to complain outside the Captain's tent. She sings the "Song of the Great Capitulation" to a young soldier who also has come to complain to the Captain. The song which contains the moral lesson "everyone gives in

sooner or later" leads to the soldiers' storming out and Courage herself ends up deciding that she doesn't want to complain.

One day Mother Courage undertakes a stock check of her goods. she talks with the Chaplain for a long time discussing about the continuation or ending of the war. He convinces her that it will continue so she decides to invest in more stock for her cart. The Chaplain suggests that Mother Courage could marry him, but he is rejected. Katrin appears and returns to her mother, severely disfigured, having collected some merchandise. Mother Courage thus curses the war. In the following brief scene, Courage sings a song that praises the war as a good provider. Business is good for now.

Two peasants wake up Mother Courage, trying to sell her some bedding, shortly before the news breaks that peace has broken out. The Cook returns, unpaid by the regiment, and he instigates an argument between Mother Courage and the Chaplain. Yvette makes her second appearance, now a rich widow, much older and fatter, and reveals that the Cook was once her lover. Mother Courage leaves for the town, and Eilif is dragged along by soldiers. Again he has slaughtered some peasants and stolen their cattle, but it is now peacetime. He is executed for it, but his mother never finds out. She returns with the news that the war is back on again, and she now returns to business with the Cook in tow.

The seventeenth year of the war finds the world in a bleak condition, with nothing to trade and nothing to eat. The Cook inherits an inn in Utrecht and invites Mother Courage to run it with him, but he refuses to take Katrin. Mother Courage is forced to turn him down, so the two go their separate ways. Pulling the wagon by themselves, Mother Courage and Katrin hear an anonymous voice singing about the pleasure of having plenty. The Catholics are besieging the Protestant town of Halle, and Mother Courage is away in the town, trading. Sleeping outside a peasant family's house, Katrin is woken by their search party, who take one of the peasants with them as a guide. The peasant couple prays for the safety of those in the town, but Katrin, unseen, gets a drum from the cart and climbs onto the roof. She beats the drum to try to awake the townspeople so that the siege can be anticipated.

The soldiers return and shoot her, but before she dies, she is successful in awakening the town. The next morning, Mother Courage sings a lullaby over her daughter's corpse, pays the peasants to bury her, and harnesses herself, alone, to the cart. The cart rolls back into action, but it is easier to pull now, since there is so little left in it to sell.

3.4. SCENE WISE SUMMARY OF THE PLAY

3.4.1. SCENE ONE

Mother Courage opens in Dalarna, in spring of 1624. A Sergeant and Recruiting Officer are recruiting soldiers for the Swedish campaign in

Poland. They stand shivering on a highway outside a town. The Officer complains of the difficulty in recruiting soldiers from the untrustworthy townspeople. The Sergeant declares that the people could use a good war. Without war, there is no organization.

A harmonica is heard, and a canteen wagon appears on stage. The infamous Mother Courage sits on it with her dumb daughter, Kattrin, and her sons, Eilif and Swiss Cheese pull it along. Introducing herself to the officers, she sings her trademark song. A "sales pitch" of sorts, it markets the wares that will help the soldiers march to their deaths. She calls the soldiers to wake: "Let all of you who still survive/ Get out of bed and look alive!"

The Sergeant demands to see her license. Fishing out a number of papers, Courage mocks his request. He again bemoans the lack of discipline in the army and asks the group's names. Courage reveals her family's rather colorful lineage, each of her children being the offspring of a different, and perhaps forgotten, father of a different nationality. The two officers deride her, and Eilif threatens to punch them out. Courage silences him and offers the men her wares.

The Recruiting Officer reveals his intentions and attempts to seduce Eilif into the army. Courage demands that he leave her children alone, ultimately drawing her knife. The Sergeant protests, saying that since Courage lives off the war, the war should not ask something of her in return. The war has not done him any harm. Looking into the future, Courage disagrees. To her, the Sergeant is a corpse on furlough.

To confirm her prophecy, she has the Sergeant choose his fortune. Courage puts two strips of parchment in his helmet, drawing a black cross on one of them. She mixes them, and he draws. To his horror, the Sergeant has chosen his death.

Unbeknown to Courage, the Recruiting Officer has continued his pursuit of Eilif. When Eilif admits that he would like to sign up, Courage similarly foretells the fate of her children. Each draw the black cross as well. She laments their fate. Eilif will die for his excessive bravery, Swiss Cheese for his honesty, and Kattrin for her kindness. Sorrowfully, she readies to leave.

The Recruiting Officer presses the Sergeant to stop them. The Sergeant examines one of Courage's belts, taking her behind the wagon. Simultaneously the Recruiting Officer takes Eilif off for a drink. A horrified Kattrin leaps from the wagon and starts screaming. Courage emerges and stands still, realizing she has lost her child. Bitterly the family departs. Looking after them, the Sergeant delivers his own epigrammatic prophecy: "When a war gives you all you earn/ One day it may claim something in return!"

3.4.2 SCENE TWO

In 1625–1626, Mother Courage journeys through Poland with the Swedish army. The scene begins in the tent of the Swedish Commander and the adjacent kitchen outside the besieged town of Wallhof. Courage is arguing with the Cook over the sale of a capon, a castrated rooster. She cries that the soldiers are starving, chasing after field rats and drooling over boiled leather—no food is left. If the Cook does not buy the capon, the Commander will take his head. Nonplussed, the Cook begins to prepare an old cut of beef.

The Commander, a Chaplain, and Eilif enter the tent, the Commander lauding the young man for a recent raid on the local peasants. Angrily he calls for meat. Having overheard the conversation, Courage rejoices at finding her son again and forces the capon on the Cook for a pretty penny.

Eilif recounts the raid. Upon learning that the peasants had hidden their oxen, he began to deprive his men of their meat rations to make them desperate for food. When his company attacked, however, they found that the peasants outnumbered them. Four cornered Eilif. Laughing, he bid on the oxen to confuse them and then he retrieved his sword and chopped them to pieces. "Necessity knows no law, huh?" he chuckles.

The Commander asks the Chaplain what he thinks of the tale. Cynically, the Chaplain notes that Jesus told men to love their neighbor at a time when their bellies were full, but this is no longer the case. The Commander remarks that Eilif got his men meat, and any act done for the least of God's children is done for God. He celebrates Eilif's bravery, calling him Julius Caesar, and declares that he should be presented to the king. In the kitchen, Courage remarks that trouble must be afoot. If the Commander's campaign were any good, he would not need brave soldiers. Indeed, great virtues always signal that something is amiss.

The Commander declares that Eilif's father must have been a great warrior. The boy concurs and sings a song of warning Courage taught him called "The Song of the Wise Woman and the Soldier." It tells of a soldier who joins the fight against the advice of a wise woman and dies, vanishing like smoke and leaving nothing but glorious deeds that cannot console the living. Courage picks up the song from the kitchen, beating on a pan with a spoon. Eilif enters and embraces her. She boxes him on the ear for failing to back down when the peasants attacked him.

3.4.3 SCENE THREE

Three years later, Mother Courage and Katrin fold washing on a cannon. At the same time, Courage bargains with an Ordinance Officer over a bag of bullets. Swiss Cheese, now in a paymaster's uniform, and Yvette Pottier, the camp prostitute, look on. Yvette's red boots stand nearby. Courage declares that she will not buy military property, reproaching the officer for selling ammunition when his soldiers have

nothing to shoot with. The officer encourages her to sell them to another regiment and Courage buys the bullets. Giving Swiss Cheese his underwear, Courage enjoins her son to balance the regiment books. Even if the seasons do not come, the books must balance. He leaves with the Officer.

Courage remarks to Yvette that the war is drawing in more countries, thus her business prospects improve as well. Yvette is desperate because of rumors that she is ill and none of the men will touch her. She starts recounting a familiar story of her Dutch army beau, Peter dubbed Piper for the pipe he always carried in his mouth. The story should harden Katrin against love. Yvette sings it in "The Fraternization Song," telling of his arrival, their affair, and his departure. She has spent the past five in a futile search for her lover. She moves behind the wagon, and Courage warns her daughter against military affairs.

The Chaplain and Cook appear. Eilif has requested money; Courage gives some to the Chaplain, chiding her son for speculating in maternal love. The Cook says she is too hard: her son may die at any moment. The Chaplain rejoins that to fall in a war of religion is a blessing to his skeptical interlocutors.

The three move behind the cart, talking of politics. This campaign has cost the Swedish King a great deal. Neither the Poles nor Germans wanted their freedom from the Kaiser, forcing him to subjugate if not execute them. He got nothing but trouble for his outlays and so he had to levy an unpopular salt tax back home. In any case, his justification by God kept his conscience clear. Without it, he could be accused of seeking profit alone. Courage and the Chaplain chastise their friend for his disloyalty and he eats the king's bread. The Cook disagrees; he does not eat his bread, but instead bakes it.

While the three converse, Katrin's dons Yvette's boots and imitates her sashay. Suddenly cannons, shots, and drums explode: the Catholics have launched a surprise attack. The Ordnance Officer and a Soldier enter and attempt to move the cannon. The Cook departs for the Commander, leaving his pipe behind. The Chaplain remains, wringing a cloak from the reluctant Courage to disguise himself. Discovering Katrin, Courage rips off the boots and smears her face with dirt. When a clean face appears before a soldier, another whore comes into the world. To her horror, Swiss Cheese arrives and stupidly hides the regiment cash box in the wagon. They quickly take down the regiment flag.

Three days later, the remaining characters sit eating anxiously. Swiss Cheese worries that his sergeant is wondering about the cash box, and the Chaplain complains of having no one to preach to. Mother Courage has sworn herself a Catholic to keep the canteen safe. The Chaplain asks Swiss Cheese what he plans to do with the cash box. Spies are everywhere, the Chaplain even found a one-eyed fellow sniffing his

excrement. Courage also commands her son to leave the cash box where it is. She leaves with the Chaplain, and Kattrin clears the dishes.

Swiss Cheese resolves to return the cash box, daydreaming about his sergeant's reaction. Two men—an enemy Sergeant and the Man with the Bandage over his eye—confront Kattrin. They ask if she has seen a man from the Second Protestant Regiment and she flees in terror. The men withdraw after seeing Swiss Cheese. Oblivious to the imminent danger, Swiss Cheese prepares to leave. Kattrin does all she can to warn him but to no avail.

When Courage and the Chaplain return, Kattrin desperately tells her mother what has happened. Suddenly the two men bring in a struggling Swiss Cheese. Mother and son pretend to not know each other. Nevertheless, Courage strongly suggests that Swiss Cheese give up the cash box. The men take him away, and Courage follows.

That evening, Kattrin and the Chaplain appear rinsing glasses and polishing knives. The Chaplain sings "The Song of the Hours," a song that recounts the passion of Christ. An excited Courage enters, declaring that they must buy Swiss Cheese's freedom. Yvette has picked up a hoary old Colonel who might buy the canteen from her. Courage plans to pawn the wagon and reclaim it after two weeks with the money from the cash box. Yvette seduces the Colonel into the purchase. He exits. Stopping her as she counts the merchandise, Courage sends Yvette to bribe One Eye with the 200 guilders. She thanks God men are corruptible, as corruption is their only hope.

Yvette returns and reports that One Eye has agreed. She also relates that Swiss Cheese confessed under thumbscrews that he threw the cash box into the river when he was near capture. Courage hesitates and decides that she will not be able to reclaim the wagon. She asks Yvette to return with a new offer of 120 guilders.

Courage sits to help polish the knives. She muses that they will get Swiss Cheese back, that the war will never end, and that she was once offered 500 guilders for her wagon. Kattrin flees, sobbing behind the wagon. Yvette returns, One Eye rejected her offer, and Swiss Cheese's execution is imminent. Desperately, Courage orders Yvette to tell him that she will pay 200. "I believe—that I've haggled to long" she murmurs.

Drums roll in the distance. Yvette appears and Swiss Cheese has eleven bullets in him. The army remains convinced that they are hiding the cash box. They are coming with the body. She asks if she should keep Kattrin away and Courage asks that she bring her. Two men enter with a stretcher with a sheet over the top. Raising the sheet, the Sergeant asks Courage if she can identify the body. Courage shakes her head. The Sergeant orders that the body be thrown into the carrion pit: "He has no one that knows him."

3.4.4 SCENE FOUR

Mother Courage appears outside an officer's tent, complaining to a Clerk that the army has destroyed her merchandise and charged her with an illicit fine. She plans to file a complaint with the captain. The Clerk responds that she should be grateful they let her stay in business.

A Young Soldier enters, threatening the captain's murder. Apparently the captain has stolen his reward for rescuing the Colonel's horse, squandering it on food, drink, and whores. He is hungry and wants to eat. The Commander ordered the army into the fields the year previous, not thinking they would remain in the area. The soldiers ruined the crops, and famine has been the result.

An Older Soldier tries to calm the younger one. Courage tells him to quiet down, saying that the screamers never last long. His rage will not last. He wonders how much time it will take in the stocks before he realizes that he can bear with injustice. Suddenly the Clerk announces the captain's imminent arrival and orders the group to sit. They follow and Courage remarks that it is better to not rise again.

Courage then sings "The Song of the Great Capitulation." It tells of a proud man who joined the army and quickly came to submit to its discipline and ultimate capitulation. The soldier leaves and the Clerk informs Courage she can see the captain; she exits as well.

3.4.5. SCENE FIVE

Two years have passed and the wagon crosses Poland, Moravia, Bavaria, Italy, and Bavaria again. In 1631, it stands in a war-ravaged village after Tilly's victory at Magdeburg. Mother Courage and Kattrin serve two soldiers at the counter. One wears a stolen women's fur coat. Victory marches play throughout the scene.

Courage demands that the men pay and they protest that their "humane" commander was bribed and only allowed one hour for plundering. The Chaplain staggers in and there is another family of peasants in the farmhouse. He needs linen, and an excited Kattrin tries to get her mother to fetch some. Courage refuses, as she has sold all her bandages and will not sacrifice her officer's shirts.

The Chaplain brings in a wounded woman and peasant who stayed behind to protect their farm. All look to the unmoved Courage. Kattrin threatens her with a board. The Chaplain lifts her off the wagon, takes out the shirts, and begins tearing them in strips. From the house comes the cry of a child in pain. Kattrin rushes into the collapsing building.

Torn in two directions, Courage anxiously watches for Kattrin and warns the Chaplain to go easy on her linen. Kattrin emerges triumphantly with a baby. Courage commands that she return it to its mother. Kattrin rocks the baby and hums a lullaby. Courage demands that the victory

marches stop; the victory has only cost her money. She sees a soldier trying to make off with a bottle of schnapps and snatches his fur coat as payment. The Chaplain murmurs that there is still someone in the farmhouse.

3.4.6. SCENE SIX

In 1632, the canteen sits before the Bavarian city of Ingolstadt during the funeral of Commander Tilly. Mother Courage and Kattrin take inventory while the Chaplain and a Clerk play draughts. They sit inside the canteen tent and outside it rains.

Counting her merchandise, Courage ruminates on Tilly's death. Courage confesses her pity for the Commander: men of his stripe undoubtedly leave special plans unaccomplished, something worthy of a monument. These plans are always spoiled by the "littleness" of the underlings who should carry them out. The Chaplain laughs at her subtly subversive speech. She asks him if he thinks the war will end; she needs to know if she should buy more supplies.

The Chaplain responds that heroes grow on trees and that, though the war might be imperfect, someone will always pull it out of the hole. A Soldier at the counter begins singing a cynical call to battle. Scandalized, the Clerk asks the Chaplain what he thinks of peace. The Chaplain responds that war has its islands of peace. Moreover, it satisfies all needs. You can take a crap, drink, screw, nap, and onward. War is like love—it always finds a way.

Courage resolves to buy new supplies. Kattrin bangs a basket of glasses on the ground and runs out, distraught. Courage has promised her a husband come peacetime. Courage goes back and consoles her daughter. She then sends her to town with the Clerk to fetch some supplies and they exit.

The Chaplain commends Courage on her courage. She replies that the poor need it because they need it to wake in the morning, plough their field during wartime, raise their children, face each other, and suffer rulers who would cost them their lives. She sits, smokes her pipe, and asks the Chaplain to chop her some wood.

He comments on the pipe. Upon learning that it comes from the Cook, he jealously maligns its owner's character, angrily bringing the axe down on the chopping block. Courage warns him against breaking the block. The Chaplain laments that he has no talent for physical labor. He is a great preacher, rousing his listeners out of their senses and providing them with warmth. Courage responds that she needs her senses, and that firewood provides warmth best. Brandishing his ax, the Chaplain pursues his courtship: he wants to cement his bond with Courage. Courage refuses him laughingly.

3.4.7. SCENE SEVEN

Suddenly Kattrin enters with wound across her eye and forehead, dragging the supplies behind her. She was attacked en route and permanently scarred. Courage attempts to console her, giving her Yvette's boots. Kattrin leaves the boots and enters the wagon. Counting the scattered merchandise, Courage bitterly curses the war.

Courage appears at the height of prosperity, dragging the wagon and its new wares along a highway with the Chaplain and Kattrin. She wears a necklace of silver coins. She declares that she will not let "you" spoil the war for her; war feeds its people. She sings "The Song of Mother Courage" anew.

3.4.8. SCENE EIGHT

It is 1632. An Old Woman and her son appear in front of the wagon on a summer morning, dragging a bag of bedding. They attempt to sell it to an unwilling Courage. Suddenly bells starting ringing, and voices from the rear announce Gustavus Adolphus's fall at the battle of Lützen. Peace has been declared. Courage curses: she has just purchased new supplies. Crawling out of the wagon, the Chaplain decides to don his pastor's coat.

Suddenly the Cook, bedraggled and penniless, arrives. Eilif is expected at any moment. Courage calls Kattrin from the wagon, but she has come to fear the light in the wake of her disfigurement. Courage and Cook sit and chat, flirting as they recount their respective ruin. The Chaplain emerges wearing his coat, and the Cook chastises him from urging Courage to buy new supplies. They begin to argue. As the *Courage Model Book* indicates, they are engaged in a "fight for the feedbag." When Courage defends the Cook, the Chaplain calls her a "hyena of the battlefield," a war profiteer who has no respect for peace. Courage observes that the Chaplain has been living off her with little complaint and suggests they part company.

Upon the Cook's suggestion, Courage rushes off to town to sell as much as she can. The Cook removes his boots and the wrappings on his feet. Poignantly, the priest begs the Cook not to oust him. Suddenly an older, fatter, and heavily powdered Yvette enters with a servant in tow. The widow of a colonel, she has come to visit Courage. When she sees the Cook, she unmask him as the Peter Piper that abandoned her years ago, warning Courage of his history. Courage calms her and takes her to town.

Both men are now convinced that they are lost. They reminisce about happier days under the service of the Commander. Eilif, now a richly dressed lieutenant, then enters in fetters followed by two soldiers. He has come to see his mother for the last time. He has been arrested for another of his acts of plundering, now criminal under the new peace, one that left the wife of a peasant dead. He has no message for his mother. The soldiers take him away and the Chaplain follows, instructing the Cook to defer telling Courage for now.

Uneasily, the Cook approaches the wagon, asking Kattrin for food. A cannon thunders. Courage appears, breathless, with her goods in arms. The war resumed three days ago. They must flee with the wagon; she wants the Cook to join her and takes hope that she will be seeing Eilif soon. With the Cook and Kattrin in the harness, Courage sings triumphantly: "Report today to your headquarters! If it's to last, this war needs you!"

3.4.9 SCENE NINE

By the autumn of 1634, the war has taken half of Germany's population. A hard winter has come early. Everyone is starving, the towns are razed, and only begging—rather than business—remains. Courage and the Cook appear in rags before a half-ruined parsonage in Fichtelgebirge. They ring to ask for food, but there is no answer. Courage suggests that they sing for their alms.

Abruptly the Cook tells her that he has received a letter from Utrecht: his mother has died of cholera and left him the family inn. Recounting the woes of the land, Courage confesses that she tires of wandering. "The world's dying out" the Cook responds, inviting her to join him at the inn. She must, however, decide whether she will join him immediately.

Courage calls Kattrin and tells her of the plan. The Cook asks to have a word with her alone. Once Kattrin has returned to the wagon, he tells her that they must leave Kattrin behind with the wagon. There is no room for her, and the customers do not like to look upon disfigured mutes. Courage does not know what to do; Kattrin overhears the conversation.

Calling to the parsonage, the Cook sings "The Song of the Great Souls of the Earth." It recounts the fates of Solomon, Julius Caesar, Socrates, and Saint Martin, all of whom meet their dark destinies on account of their respective virtues—that is, wisdom, bravery, honesty, and pity. Thus, a man is better off without such qualities. A voice calls them inside. Courage decides she cannot leave her daughter, and they enter the parsonage.

Kattrin climbs out with a bundle, laying a skirt of her mother's and a pair of the cook's trousers on the ground as a parting message. Courage emerges with a plate of soup and stops her daughter. They toss the Cook's belongings on the ground, harness themselves to the wagon, and depart. The Cook enters, still chewing, and sees his abandoned possessions.

3.4.10. SCENE TEN

During 1635, Courage and Kattrin follow the ever more tattered armies from central Germany. They come upon a prosperous farmhouse on the highway. A voice inside sings of the house's prosperity through the seasons. Courage and Kattrin stop to listen and then start out anew.

3.4.11. SCENE ELEVEN

One night in January 1636, the wagon stands near a farmhouse outside the Protestant town of Halle. Out of the woods come a Catholic Lieutenant and three soldiers in full armor. They have come from a guide to the town and the Lieutenant orders to kill anyone who makes a sound.

They knock and seize the Old Peasant Woman who answers. The soldiers bring out an Old Peasant and his son. Kattrin appears on the wagon and her mother has gone to town to buy supplies because the shopkeepers are fleeing and selling cheap. The soldiers demand a guide; the son refuses, even upon the threat of death. The soldiers then threaten to destroy their cattle. The son complies and exits with the soldiers.

The Old Peasant climbs on the roof and spies a Catholic regiment, which has killed the watchman and readies for a surprise attack on the town. Convinced there is nothing they can do, the Peasant Woman begins to pray, asking God to protect their family members in the town.

When she learns of the Peasant Woman's grandchildren in town, Kattrin quietly climbs on the roof. She withdraws a drum from under her apron and begins to beat it. The peasants command her to stop, threatening to stone her. The soldiers return, threatening to kill them all. Craftily, the First Soldier promises Kattrin that they will spare her mother if she stops and accompanies them to town. She ignores them, as the young man notes, and she does not beat for her mother alone. The Old Peasant begins maniacally chopping wood to conceal her drumming with an innocent peacetime noise. The soldiers consider setting the farm on fire.

Kattrin listens and laughs. Enraged, the Lieutenant orders his men to bring a musket. The Peasant Woman suggests that they smash the wagon. The Young Peasant deal it a few blows; Kattrin pauses in distress but continues. Suddenly he cheers her on and the soldier beats him with his pike. The second soldier returns and shoots the weeping Kattrin. Her final drum-beats mingle with the thunder of a cannon. She has saved the town.

3.4.12. SCENE TWELVE

Toward morning, Mother Courage sits by Kattrin's body in front of the wagon. The drums and pipes of the marching troops are heard. The peasants order the parasite away and Courage must follow her regiment. Courage responds that Kattrin has perhaps fallen asleep and sings her a lullaby. The peasants bring her to her senses. Courage fetches a sheet from the wagon to cover the body. She plans to go to Eilif. The peasants offer to bury her. Courage pays them and harnesses herself to the wagon. She is confident she can manage: "I must get back into business" she resolves. As she calls to the passing regiment, the soldiers sing her signature song.

3.6. LET'S SUM UP

In this unit we have understood the background of the play. It was followed by the circumstances that led to shape Bertolt Brecht as a

playwright and his major contribution to the world theatre. Lat two sections provide outline summary and scene wise summary of all 12 scenes in the play.

3.7. IMPORTANT QUESTIONS

1. What kind of response can we gauge about Mother Courage from the summary provided?
2. How has Brecht successfully handled his dramatic technique through this play? Explain with suitable examples from the text.
3. What ideas can be formulated with the respect to the summary?

3.8. REFERENCES

- Bertolt Brecht, and Eric Bentley. *Mother Courage and Her Children : A Chronicle of the 30 Years' War*. New York, Samuel French, 1987.
- Bertolt Brecht, et al. *Bertolt Brecht Collected Plays / Translated by John Willett*. London, Eyre Methuen, 1980.



A STUDY OF BERTOLT BRECHT'S COURAGE AND HER CHILDREN PART II

Unit Structure :

- 4.0 Objectives
- 4.1 Character Analysis
- 4.2 Themes in the Play
 - 4.2.1 War
 - 4.2.2 Anti-war Play
 - 4.2.3 War as Business and Profit
 - 4.2.4 Motherhood
 - 4.2.5 Religion
- 4.3 Symbols in the Play
 - 4.3.1 Mother Courage's Wagon as a Symbol
 - 4.3.2 The Red Boots of Yvette
 - 4.3.3 Silence and Dumbness
 - 4.3.4 The Drum
- 4.4 Significance of Songs in the Play
- 4.5 Mother Courage as an example of Epic Theatre
- 4.6. Let's Sum up
- 4.7. Important Questions
- 4.8. References

4.0 OBJECTIVES

This unit will familiarise you with the analysis of the play and enable you to understand the play in detail. At the end of this unit, you will be able to:

- Understand the various themes in the play
- Give the character sketches in the play
- Analyse the literary and theatrical devices for a deeper understanding of the play

4.1 CHARACTER ANALYSIS

Mother Courage: The real name of Mother Courage is Anna Feirling in the play. She is a mother of three children Eilif, Swiss Cheese and Kattrin. She operates a small business as a canteen woman selling products, food and drinks to soldiers and military from a wagon. Mother Courage is a representative of the brutalities, hypocrisy, corruption, capitalist forces

operating in war. The three children of Mother Courage have been born in three different countries of Europe and with three different fathers. Brecht has taken extreme care to portray Mother Courage as an antithetical image to the traditional roles of a mother. On the one hand, audience sympathise with Mother as the only provider of the family and also who struggles for survival. She looks at war as an ongoing opportunity to make money and keep her head above water. Having lost one son already to the war, she is not ready to sacrifice her second son Eilif to the war but is unable to prevent it by the Recruiting Officer.

She earned the nickname Mother Courage as she boldly ran through the bombardment to sell her loaves of bread before they perish. The title of the play itself creates the image of a formidable woman possessing several admirable qualities. Mother Courage the central character of the play produces a mingled impression upon the readers of the play. Brecht depicts mother with admirable qualities as well as certain weaknesses. The root cause of her suffering is in some of her faults, weaknesses and surroundings.

Mother Courage also represents the theme of motherhood in the play reflecting the anxiety and tension of a mother trying extremely hard to save her sons from the war. Mother Courage realizes the cruelty of war. She is aware of destructiveness and terrible misfortunes that have befallen in her personal life. The contradictions in Mother Courage are perceived throughout the play. Once she praises the war for feeding its people better than peace does. Immediately in the very next utterance, she shows her resentment and warns the soldiers of the premature death they would meet. She considers herself as ruined by peace. The lament of Mother Courage provokes the Chaplain to describe her as a “hyena of the battlefield”.

As the play progresses, Mother Courage’s character also undergoes changes that is portrayed by Brecht as anti- motherhood. However she pines for her children and gives up the comforts of leading a decent life with the Cook because of her mute daughter Katrin. Mother Courage also sings songs in the play that depict various events in the play. In the end Brecht informs that despite the deaths of her children, Mother Courage does not change her ways and continues with whatever she was doing.

Eilif: is the eldest son of Mother Courage. He represents the virtues of good soldiers as well as the worst that war brings out in humans. He seeks fame and recognition by killing peasants and stealing their livestock to feed the starving regiment fighting the war. When Eilif performs such acts during peacetime he is mercilessly executed. Eilif’s death raises pertinent questions about how heroic acts during war and peace time raise questions about the absurdities of war.

Swiss Cheese: the youngest son of Mother Courage but rather stupid. He gets appointed as a Paymaster for the Finnish regiment and takes his job quite seriously. When he is getting ready to return the cash box to the commanding officer, he is captured by the enemy forces. Mother Courage

tries to bargain by haggling over the prices for the release of Swiss Cheese but to no avail. This exposes the value of money over humanity by Mother. Ultimately Swiss Cheese is executed for his trouble.

Katrin: is a victim of the brutalities, abuse and cruelties of the war. She is the mute daughter of Mother Courage. According to Mother, Katrin was gagged and abused that left her without a voice. Secondly, her face also suffered a gash by some soldiers that results in disfigurement of her face. Katrin is full of compassion and desires love from an eligible companion despite Mother's warning of Yvette being dumped after passionately loving a soldier. All she desires is to get married and have a family. She is the voice of resistance and resilience in the play. She does not turn around the war like her mother. She tries to alert the villagers about the enemy attack by drum beats and gets shot in the process for refusing to stop. Despite her sacrifice, the war continues and Mother Courage carries on with her business as usual.

The Cook: provides comic relief in this disturbing satire on war. He is a greedy man, prepares food for the Swedish general but leaves quickly when the food is insufficient. He is cynical and is on the lookout for opportunities he can get from the war. He is an aging lover who has seduced many women including Yvette, the camp prostitute. He plans to open an inn along with Mother Courage. He invites her to be a part of this comfortable life but without Katrin, Mother Courage's daughter. He also agrees with the Mother that war is nothing but a racket.

The Chaplain: is the religious leader of the army but extremely hypocritical and cowardly. He personifies Brechtian view of religion during war time that religion is no use during war. He switches allegiance freely and is not ashamed of such acts. During peacetime, the chaplain assumes he will be able to return to his church, despite having abandoned his faith and those who needed him during difficult times. He lacks real faith.

Yvette Pottier: Yvette is a prostitute who follows the army. She was once deeply in love with a soldier that did not materialise. She gets married to a rich colonel and becomes wealthy but loses her looks. She wears red boots that are a fascination for Katrin. When Katrin playfully imitates Yvette wearing red boots, it results in a disaster for Katrin.

4.2 THEMES IN THE PLAY

4.2.1. War

War is one of the important themes in the play. Bertolt Brecht presents the play in the background of Thirty Years War. He also discusses the futility and destruction caused by war. Through the theme of War, Brecht exposes the manner in which common people and civilians like Mother Courage and her children are affected by war. More over war has destroyed all the qualities, virtues and traits like humanness, sympathy

and compassion. War has turned people and society into a disintegrated whole with emotions like fear, anxiety and disappointment lurking in the minds of people. War has consumed both sons of Mother Courage: Swiss Cheese and Eilif and also resulted in the tragic death of her mute daughter, Katrin. Mother Courage has no other means of livelihood except to capitalise on war. Through the money that she earns by selling goods from her wagon, Mother Courage is able to provide for her family. Brecht in this play very poignantly depicts the brutalities of war in terms of destruction, ravage, loss of innocent lives and the futility of war.

4.2.2 Mother Courage as an Anti- War play

Brecht wrote the play while in exile in the year 1939. He was extremely moved and disturbed by the turn of events in Europe during the war. Mother Courage is an expression of anti- war play that seems topical in its time and has a universal appeal. Amidst the loss of lives in the war, Brecht writes about the struggle of survival of Mother Courage and her three children. The wagon becomes a source of her livelihood. Mother Courage's children become victims of war and death is inevitable for them. Right from the beginning of the play, the inverted interests of the military become apparent. Brecht's main aim was to expose the horrors of war and how it destroys the people through inhuman conditions and wished that the future world should not witness war of such magnitude.

4.2.3 War as Business and Profit

Brecht shows the character of Mother Courage as a "war profiteer"- who makes a living out of the profits of the war. The Thirty Years War has drained the finances of the people and they have no choice but to turn to war as a means of livelihood. Mother Courage is no exception to this rule. She is forced to profit from the war. Not only Mother Courage but other characters like the General Tilly, Cook, Recruiting Officers also profit from the war. Even Yvette Portier, the prostitute is a victim of the business of war. The reader observes the business mind of Mother Courage when she bargains for the release of her son Eilif from the war. Unfortunately, her not relenting to the price quoted of two hundred guilders proves expensive as her son dies before she accepts the price. Mother Courage has a love/ hate relationship with war. She is more interested in profiteering rather than the wellbeing of her children.

4.2.4. Motherhood

Brecht presents a picture of motherhood that is antithetical to the play. All the three children of Mother Courage are born of different fathers. Mother Courage plays the role of a mother who is more interested in money. If war ends, Mother Courage would have no business. Even while trying to save her son Eilif, she is bargaining with the money to be paid rather than releasing him ultimately resulting in his death. In contrast to the profiteering, capitalist Mother Courage, Katrin is picture of compassion and sacrifice. Though she is mute, she attempts to warn the people against the enemy by beating the drums from the rooftops. This results in getting herself shot.

4.2.5. Religion

Brecht shows that religion is often an obstacle during wartime. One of the main concerns in the play is about Christianity and the Bible. He shows the sarcastic character of Chaplain and how the Bible fails during wartime. The Chaplain appears first to be glorifying war and calls it as a “holy war”. Later he appears scared and afraid of the guns roaring during war and tries to save himself from danger. Instead of offering spiritual comfort and solace to people, he is seen with Mother Courage pulling wagon and chopping wood. Brecht exposes the hypocritical view of Christian morality and religion.

4.3 SYMBOLS IN THE PLAY

4.3.1 Mother Courage’s Wagon as a Symbol

The wagon symbolizes survival and the continuation of war. It was due to vested interests of individuals like Mother Courage and the Recruiting Officers, war continues bringing havoc upon people’s lives and livelihood. The wagon symbolizes the business and profession of Mother Courage who uses it to trudge her wares and survive without the help of any man. The wagon also changes hands by way of her three children, the Cook, the Chaplain. It is the only means of livelihood for the mother. The wagon gets broken and vandalized but continues doggedly at conducting the main purpose of selling and reinforcing the belief that war is business and capitalism. The Mother through the symbolism of wagon represents the doggedness and determination to continue her business amidst all the tragedies taken place in her life. The wagon also traverses borders and travels throughout Europe. At a deeper level, the wagon symbolises the inherent brutality of the war and how it is synonymous with the character of Mother Courage

4.3.2 The Red Boots of Yvette

The red boots worn by Yvette symbolise sexual attraction in the play. Yvette wears them to attract customers but discards them later out of frustration. When Kattrin wears them and playfully imitates Yvette’s walk, it painfully symbolizes her aging and lack of love. As the play progresses, the audience learns about Kattrin’s abuse by men that has scarred both physically and mentally. When mother gives the same boots to cheer Kattrin, it suggests abuse at the hands of soldiers. Her rejection of the boots symbolizes rejection of love and fulfilment.

4.3.3. Silence and Dumbness

Kattrin symbolizes this aspect in the play. Her silence reflects the silence and sacrifice of virtues during war time. At the same time her silence was probably due to silencing her voice during war by means of assault and abuse.

4.3.4 The Drum

The drum symbolizes protest and resistance to violence unleashed due to war. It acts as a vehicle of resistance for the peasants and to kattrin. The

drum becomes a voice for the mute and unvoiced Kattrin to express her anguish and frustration about the war. Through the drum beats, Kattrin alerts the villagers about the enemy attacking them. She continues to play the drum louder and louder as the soldiers aim to shoot her. Kattrin dies a tragic death playing the drum and getting shot by the soldiers.

4.4 SIGNIFICANCE OF SONGS IN THE PLAY

Brecht emphasized on music and songs in his plays and *Mother Courage* is no exception to music and songs. In fact, in this play, there are songs in almost all the scenes except in scenes 5 and 11. Brecht considered music and songs to be insertions in the play treated them in an unconventional and novel manner. The songs in the play perform the role of explaining the themes of the play, describe various events in the play and comment on the past actions and future events in the play. Every important character sings a song in the play. Mother Courage herself sings five songs and a lullaby in the play, Eilif, Yvette, Chaplain and the Cook sing one song each and the soldiers sing two songs.

In Scene 1 Mother Courage sings a song informing about her trade as a canteen woman and invites soldiers to buy food and drinks from her wagon as they may soon be buried or gone underground in the course of the war. This song strikes the keynote of “war” in the play.

“Oh have yer squaddies halt and buy
New boots and claes an aw forbye!
Fleariddensojers who love their loot”

The song exposes the true nature of Mother Courage as an individual who profits from the war by selling her goods at a higher price and also the cynical realism adopted by Mother to her life.

Eilif sings a song in Scene 2 called “The Fish Wife and the Soldier” that describing a story about an ambitious soldier lad getting killed in the war meeting a premature death. The song proves to be ironic for Eilif as he predicts his own tragic destiny. In Scene 3 Yvette sings a song called “The Song of Fraternalization”, an autobiographical song describing her camp life as a prostitute after she was left a destitute by a soldier who she loved passionately. This song also proves to be a warning for Mother Courage’s daughter Kattrin against getting involved with a soldier. In the same scene the Chaplain sings a funeral song that is dirge “Song of the Hours” describing the passion of Christ suffering his execution in agony known as ‘The Crucifixion’. The song is an appropriate description and comparison of the impending execution of Swiss Cheese with Christ’s Crucifixion.

In Scene 4 Mother Courage sings the autobiographical song “Song of the Great Capitalization” that describes the disillusionment, frustrations and dashing of hopes related to war. It also describes the bitterness, anger

and hatred of Mother Courage towards war and how war forces one to compromise on our principles for the sake of survival. In scene 6, a soldier's song describes his feelings and attitude who is always on the move and how he tries hard to enjoy the fewer pleasures of life. In the same scene Mother Courage sings about "War as Business" but does not seem to learn any lessons from the horrors and destruction of war but continues to profit from the war.

In Scene 9, the Cook sings a long song titled "The Song of the Wise and the Good" expressing the futility of wisdom, bravery, unselfishness, honesty and every virtue in the world. The Cook describes himself and Mother Courage as God fearing individuals and faith has only caused them misery. The song also provides a symbolic significance to three children of Mother Courage who represent three cardinal principles such as bravery of Eilif like Julius Caesar, honesty of Swiss Cheese like Socrates and unselfishness of Katrin like Martin who all meet a tragic end. In scene 10 "The Song of Shelter and Security" sung by the inmate of a prosperous farmhouse and heard by Mother Courage and Katrin makes the audience aware of the contrast between the prosperity of the farmhouse and the hardships faced by Mother Courage and her daughter.

In the concluding scene 12 there are two songs and a lullaby sung by Mother Courage to Katrin who has fallen asleep. The song is a painful reminder to the misfortunes in relation to both her sons.
"aya Papaya

Who sleeps in the hay?

I see your eyes close
One kid lies in Poland
The other, well, who knows?"

The last song is sung by the soldiers that describe the devastation of war causing more misery and that war will continue for three generations. The song ends on a painful note of gloom and helplessness. All the songs are integral to the plot and development of action of the play. They enhance the dramatic action of the play and offer commentary on scenes and themes in the play.

4.5 MOTHER COURAGE AS AN EXAMPLE OF BRECHT'S EPIC THEATRE

Bertolt Brecht was the staunch follower of the Epic Theatre and almost all of his plays fall into this category. The alienation method followed by Brecht is a landmark in the Western theatrical world to express the disillusionment, frustrations and discontent of the post war world and Europe. Brecht desired that the audience should be motivated to think and so the character of Mother Courage brings apathy and helplessness to the audience. On the one hand we empathise with Mother

and on the other we are shocked with the business like manner conducted by her. Brecht's technique of theatre and ideas was a product of a devastated world and he used theatre to communicate his perception of reality. Brecht wanted to show *Mother Courage* unreformed, unadvised and unadvisable. According to him, each society is unique with its own circumstances facing its own problems. The aim of the theatre is to raise such problems. He puts forward the view that the goodness must be ready to take a stand against the evil rather than meekly resigning to the oppression.

The play *Mother Courage and Her Children* begins with a broad sweep of historical fact that is The Thirty Years' War. It is a chronicle of the Thirty Years War that took place from 1618 to 1648 in Germany fought between the Protestants and Catholics. Though Brecht wrote it as an anti-war play, he does not mention it explicitly. He simply depicts the misfortunes and sufferings of a family against the background of war, and leaves his audiences to draw their own inferences. The play creates a powerful impact upon the minds of the spectators especially because the evils of the war produce tragic effects upon the main characters in the play itself.

The play is divided into 12 scenes that serve the purpose of an episodic structure to explicate the themes of War as Business, Profit and Capitalism. The purpose of the narrative in epic theatre was to reveal the conditions in which people lived.

The play successfully depicts the social conventions in Europe at the time of war. All the characters are meek sufferers of the war unable to express their rebellion or resistance to the war. Kattrin who alerted the villagers through drum beats met with death as a punishment for her resistance.

The aim of epic theatre was to clarify the process by which men and women were shaped by their living conditions and by which they were also able to shape those conditions. This aim was the theatrical basis for another technique which Brecht employed was alienation. He wanted his audiences to view characters and their actions on the stage with detachment and with a critical observation. Brecht has certainly used distancing or alienation devices in the course of the play. We do feel alienated from *Mother Courage* at various points in the play. The contradictions in her character particularly alienate us. She wants the war to continue, and yet she does not want her sons to enlist in the army. She denies that she is a 'hyena of the battlefield' and yet is the most callous towards the Protestants who have been wounded in an attack by the Catholics. She is full of maternal anxiety about the safety of her own children but proves hard-hearted towards a child whom Kattrin has rescued. She curses the war, and yet continues to desire continuance of the same and even to sing songs praising the war. And yet at the end of the play, the audience is filled with the deepest sympathy for her so that all the alienating devices in her case ultimately lose their effectiveness. *Mother*

Courage emerges as a noble, tragic figure despite Brecht's own unfavourable view of her. Katrin's heroic deed to save the townspeople is also highly esteemed by the audience.

4.6. LET'S SUM UP

We have learned the character analysis in *Mother Courage and Her Children* discussed various themes such as war, anti-war play, war as business, notion of motherhood and religion. The playwright has brilliantly employed symbols like wagon, red boots, drum and silence and dumbness to reinforce the meaning of the play. The use of song in the play is another important aspect of the play which has been discussed at length. The last section discusses how *Mother Courage and Her Children* is the finest and the most illustrative example of epic theatre.

4.7. IMPORTANT QUESTIONS

1. Identify the various themes in the play and explain each with textual examples.
2. Do you think that the playwright's interpretation of war as reflected in the play? Illustrate with suitable examples.
3. How does the character of Mother Courage shape in the course of the war as depicted in the play?
4. Comment on the importance of songs in the play.
5. Discuss *Mother Courage and Her Children* as an Epic Theatre.

4.8. SUGGESTED READING

- Bertolt Brecht, and Eric Bentley. *Mother Courage and Her Children: A Chronicle of the 30 Years' War*. New York, Samuel French, 1987.
- Bertolt Brecht, et al. *Bertolt Brecht Collected Plays / Translated by John Willett*. London, Eyre Methuen, 1980.
- Esslin, Martin. *Brecht: A Choice of Evils*. London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1963.
- *Bertolt Brecht, Brecht on Theatre: The Development of an Aesthetic*. ed. John Willet. London: Methuen, 1964
- Anjala Maharishi, Anjala. *A comparative Study of Brechtian and Classical Indian Theatre*. New-Delhi: National School of Drama, 2000



STUDY OF KALIDASA'S SHAKUNTALA PART I

Unit Structure

- 5.0 Objectives
- 5.1 Introduction
- 5.2 Sanskrit Plays
 - 5.2.1 *Natyashastra* and Sanskrit drama and theatre
 - 5.2.2 Characteristics and Types
- 5.3 Major Sanskrit Playwrights
- 5.4 Kalidasa
- 5.5 *Nataka* and Shakuntala
- 5.6 Epic Source and Kalidasa's innovative retelling
- 5.7 Some Translations of Shakuntala
- 5.8 Summing up
- 5.9 Suggested Reading (Print and web resources)
- 5.10 Hints for self-check exercises

5.0 OBJECTIVES

The four objectives of this unit are as follows:

- to acquaint you with some characteristics and types of Sanskrit drama
- to make you familiar with some of the major Sanskrit playwrights
- to understand the form of *Nataka* in Sanskrit drama
- to appreciate the aesthetic range of Kalidasa

After reading this unit, you should be able to:

- ✓ recognise the features and types of Sanskrit drama
- ✓ know some major Sanskrit playwrights
- ✓ understand the elements of Sanskrit drama in general and *Nataka* in particular
- ✓ appreciate the artistry of Kalidasa

5.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, we shall provide a brief overview of Sanskrit drama and its types. We shall also shed light on some of the major characteristics of Sanskrit drama. After outlining a few acclaimed Sanskrit playwrights, we will briefly elaborate on Kalidasa's artistic works. Thereafter, we will highlight the characteristics of *Nataka* as seen in Kalidasa's classic play

Shakuntala followed by Kalidasa's innovative retelling of the episode from the *Mahabharata*.

5.2 SANSKRIT PLAYS

In this section we will look at the significance of the *Natyashastra* in Sanskrit drama and theatre. Then we will elucidate on the important traits of Sanskrit plays.

5.2.1 *Natyashastra* and Sanskrit drama and theatre

Classical Indian Drama was greatly influenced by the treatise on Sanskrit dramaturgy i.e. *Natyashastra* which is attributed to Bharatamuni. *Natyashastra* laid down the principles to be followed while writing a play. Bharatmuni relates to Atreya and other sages that Lord Brahma took words from *Rigveda*, music from *Samaveda*, movements and make-up from *Yajurveda*, emotional acting from *Atharvanaveda* and produced the *Natyaveda*, the fifth Veda, accessible to all Varnas (castes), on Mahendra's request. The first performance took place at the flag-festival of Mahendrato mark his victory over the demons. The enrageddemons disturbed the performance by paralyzing the actors. Hence a *natyavesham* was constructed and Lord Brahma pacified the demons and reinforced that the *Natyaveda* represented the ways ofthe entire three worlds.

In classical Indian categorization, drama was considered as *drishya kavya*. In simple terms 'drishya' means seeing or visualizing and 'kavya' means poetry which is heard. Indian Classical theatre with reference to the *Natyashastra* consists of two classes: *lokdharmi* (popular and realistic) and *natyadharmi* (conventional and theatrical i.e. marked by artificiality with songs, dances, asides and soliloquies).

5.2.2 Characteristics and Types

Plays were considered as spectacles. So, the term *preksaka* referred to spectators and not merely the audience. Elite spectators and royal patronage ensured that the plays reinforced upper class values and were not a means of mass entertainment.

Sanskrit playwrights dipped into the acclaimed Indian epics *Mahabharata* and *Ramayana* due to three main reasons. First, these epics were part of every Indian's shared stories, a treasure-house of faith and instruction. Second, the *preksaka* could connect to the play and appreciate the playwright's dramatization. Third, the playwright could pick up an episode and subtly connect it to the ruling King.

Dialogues were used effectively by the playwrights to stimulate the imagination of the *preksaka*. The high or divine characters spoke Sanskrit and the other characters spoke Prakrit (colloquial languages). The poetic quality of the plays was due to the mixing of lyrical stanzas (poetic language) with prose dialogues. The aim of the lyrical passages was to allow for commentary or reflection. All characters were placed in

Bharatvarsha (India) without restrictions of place and time (day/month/year).

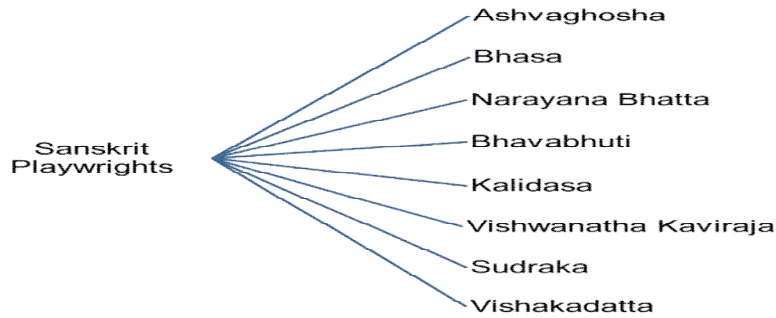
Two interesting characters, always Brahmins, were the Sutradhara/ Stage-director/ Manager and a Vidushaka/ clown/ jester/ fool (a confidante). The Sutradhara performed many functions. He introduced the play and the playwright and directed the play. Sometimes, he was a performer, a narrator and a commentator. The Vidushaka provided comic relief and could easily enter everywhere, even the women's quarters.

Plays began with the preliminaries or what was called as *purvaranga* which consisted of music, song or dance as a means of propitiating the Gods and entertaining the *preksaka*. The *purvarangawas* unrelated to the play. Plays began with the *Nandi* or the benediction to a deity and it was a prayer for the success of the performance. This was followed by the *prastavna* or the introduction (generally done by the Sutradhara) to the play and the playwright and the hero. *Rasa* or 'aesthetic emotion or sentiment' was integral to Sanskrit plays. But, there was no place on the stage for death, curses, degradation, banishment, national calamities, biting, scratching, kissing, eating or sleeping. Tragedy was completely absent and there are only happy endings followed by the *Mangalastuti* or a prayer for the kingdom.

The Sanskrit plays are classified into two main types: the major *Rupakas* (Sanskrit term for drama) and the minor *Uparupakas*. *Rupakam* means that which is presented on the stage and it is further classified into *Nataka*, *Prakarana*, *Bhana*, *Prahasana*, *Dima*, *Vyayoga*, *Samavaara*, *Vithim*, *Anka* and *Ihamrga*. As M.R. Kale and Benegal mention, the basis of differentiation of *Rupakas* is based on three factors, namely, plot (*Vaastu*) Hero (*Neta/Nayaka*) and emotion/sentiment (*Rasa*). Of these, the two principal types of drama are *Nataka* (stories about Kings and divine beings) and *Prakarana* (middle-class characters). Kalidasa's *Shakuntalais* a *Nataka*. Before moving on to Kalidasa, let us list some of the major Sanskrit playwrights.

5.3 MAJOR SANSKRIT PLAYWRIGHTS

A quick overview of some of the famous Sanskrit playwrights is as below:



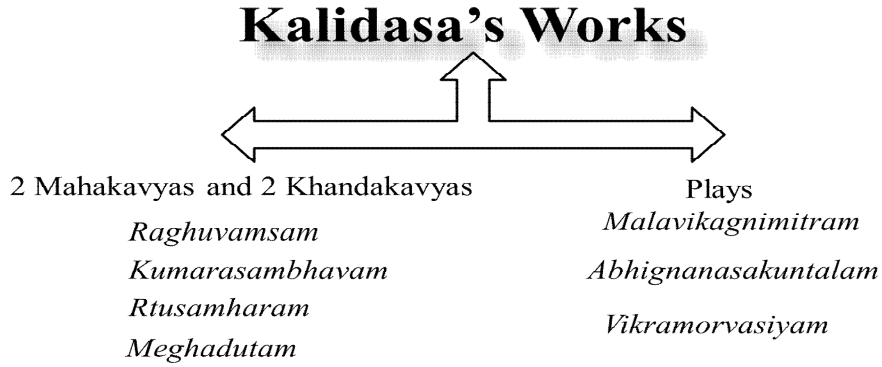
Sudraka wrote only one play *Mrichchakatikam* (English translation -*The Little Clay Cart*) in the *prakarana* form. It depicts a social revolution and the courtesan-heroine loves a poor Brahmin Charudutta. We will focus on Kalidasa's play *Shakuntala*.

Self-Check Exercise 1

1. What were the functions of the *Sutradhara*?
2. Name the two principal types of Sanskrit drama.
3. Surf the web and know more about the plays written by each of the Sanskrit playwrights mentioned above.

5.4 KALIDASA

There are many disputes regarding the times or period of Kalidasa's works but scholars agree on the broad overview of his works as below:



Take a close look at the titles. Interestingly, as Miller (1999) points out, each title includes the names of the protagonists or the story's central idea. *Malavikagnimitram* (*Malavika and Agnimitra*) dips into an episode from History and is a five Act play revolving around the Sunga King Agnimitra from Vidisa and a princess from Vaidarbha, Malavika who serves as the maid of the chief queen Dharini, *Abhignanasakuntalam* (*The Recognition of Shakuntala*) and *Vikramorvasiyam* (*Urvashi won by valour*). Likewise, *Raghuvamsam* (*The dynasty of Raghu*), *Kumarasambhavam* (*The birth of the War-God Kumara*), *Rtusamharam* (*The Song of the Seasons*) and *Meghadutam* (*The Cloud Messenger*).

David Damrosch places *Abhignanasakuntalamas* one of the 'two masterpieces of world drama (besides Sophocles' *Oedipus*). (2008, p.47) Let us now understand as to why *Abhignanasakuntalamis* considered as a *Nataka*.

5.5 NATAKA AND SHAKUNTALA

Nataka, considered as the highest form of drama, drew its subject from epic tradition. The subject was famous, for instance, a King was its hero. The dominant emotion was heroic and erotic. The play had a happy ending. The play *Shakuntala* fulfils these three requirements of *Nataka*. The plot was from epic tradition i.e., the narrative of Shakuntala from the *Mahabharata*. The hero was the brave King Dushyanta and the dominant emotion was *sringara rasa* or love or heroism.

5.6 EPIC SOURCE AND KALIDASA'S INNOVATIVE RETELLING

Kalidasa has drawn from the Sakuntalopakhyana from the Adi Parva of the *Mahabharata*. Refer to one of the translated versions for appreciating as to how Kalidasa has dramatized the epic narrative and understand the difference between narration and dramatization. As Thapar suggests, Kalidasa's use of the dramatic form indicates the 'deliberate distancing from the epic' for the epic genre and the dramatic genre reflect 'diverse literary and social interests' (*Preliminaries*, 5).

In Vaisampayana's narration, we find only four main characters, namely, King Dushyanta, Shakuntala, Bharata (son of King Dushyanta and Shakuntala) and Sage Kanva. Kalidasa's retelling of the Shakuntala narrative involves many invented characters and interesting devices. Kalidasa uses the benediction or *Nandi* followed by the Prologue (a conversation (between the Stage Director or *Sutradhara* and the actress). These highlight the varied elements in the making of theatre. We will learn more about the functions of the prologue in the section on the play's structure.

Whereas the forthright Shakuntala herself relates the story of her birth and abandonment in the epic narrative, Kalidasa introduces two friends Anusuya and Priyamvada who relate the story of the coy Shakuntala to King Dushyanta. The innovative device of the love-letter (writing with nails on a lotus leaf) is used to allow Shakuntala to express her romantic feelings for the King and move the action forward. King Dushyanta feigns ignorance of his marriage vow to Shakuntala in the epic narrative for fear that his subjects won't accept Shakuntala's son as the King. It takes a heavenly voice to resolve the doubts of the courtiers.

In Kalidasa's retelling, the King is made to appear as noble by three dramatic techniques: the curse, the loss of the ring and the discovery of the

ring by the fisherman. Shakuntala, lost in thoughts of Dushyanta, does not extend her hospitality to Sage Durvasa. The angry sage curses her that she the person she was thinking of would forget her. The curse is not heard by Shakuntala but by her friend who requests the Sage to take back the curse. The Sage cools down and informs that the King would remember Shakuntala on seeing a token (ring). Another interesting device is the use of a heavenly voice to inform Sage Kanva about Shakuntala's marriage and pregnancy which is brought home to us through the conversation of her friends. Dushyanta, under the effect of the curse, forgets Shakuntala and regains his memory when he sees the signet ring that he had given to her. These invented scenes make the King appear noble and the *preksakas* sympathise with the King. Read the episode and the play and discover the numerous additions and deletions. The most interesting part is Act IV wherein the trees bless her and present her with jewels and clothes befitting a queen.

Self-Check Exercise 2

1. Name three plays written by Kalidasa.
2. Explain how the play Shakuntala fulfils the requirements of a *Nataka*.
3. Surf the web and know more about the plays written by Kalidasa.

5.7 SOME TRANSLATIONS OF SHAKUNTALA

Do keep in mind that we are studying the play *Shakuntala* in English translation while the play was originally written in Sanskrit. Indeed, Sanskrit literature became known to the West through William Jones' English translation of *Shakuntala* in 1789. Sir Monier Williams in the preface to his English translation has hailed Kalidasa as 'the Shakespeare of India' and placed him among the foremost literary figures in Sanskrit.

English translations of *Shakuntala* and the debates centred on the translated versions continue to grow. They enrich the repertoire of translations of the play and shed light on the variations. Some translators of *Abhignanasakuntalam* from Sanskrit into English are: Sir William Jones, William Moniers, M.R. Kale, C.S.R. Shastri, J.G. Jennings, Richard Pischel and Arthur W. Ryder. There are many more and you can make a list. As Thapar observes, we can understand the play better when we familiarize ourselves with the way the many translations remodelled the

play to offer multiple perspectives or illuminate the text or reflect the historical moment.

In order to draw your attention to the differences in the varied versions of the English translations, it would be apt to quote a few lines from Act I when Dushyanta is jealous of the bee which is disturbing Shakuntala.

Translation 1 William Jones	Translation 2 Monier Williams	Translation 2 Arthur Ryder
<p>Dushm. [<i>Aside, with affection.</i>] How often have I seen our court damsels affectedly turn their heads aside from some roving insect, merely to display their graces! but this rural charmer knits her brows, and gracefully moves her eyes through fear only, without art or affectation. Oh! happy bee, who touchest the corner of that eye beautifully trembling; who, approaching the tip of that ear, murmurest as softly as if thou wert whispering a secret of love; and who sippest nectar, while she waves her graceful hand, from that lip, which contains all the treasures of delight! Whilst I am solicitous to know in what family she was born, thou art enjoying bliss, which to me would be supreme felicity.</p>	<p>http://www.columbia.edu/itc/mealac/pritchett/00litlinks/shakuntala_jones/01_act.html Thou touchest repeatedly her quivering eye, whose outer-corner moves (playfully); going close to her ear, thou art softly humming as if whispering a secret (of love); thou art drinking the lip, containing all the treasures of delight, of her waving her hand ; (whilst) we, bee ! through (the necessity for) inquiring into the truth (of her origin), are disappointed (of immediate fruition), thou indeed art in the full enjoyment (of thy desire).'</p>	<p>King (ardently) As the bee about her flies, Swiftly her bewitching eyes Turn to watch his flight. She is practising to-day Coquetry and glances' play Not from love, but fright. (Jealously.) Eager bee, you lightly skim O'er the eyelid's trembling rim Toward the cheek a-quiver. Gently buzzing round her cheek, Whispering in her ear, you seek Secrets to deliver. While her hands that way and this Strike at you, you steal a kiss, Love's all, honey maker. I know nothing but her name, Not her caste, nor whence she came –You, my rival, take her.</p>

5.8 SUMMING UP

In conclusion, we provided an overview of some Sanskrit playwrights. Then we outlined some of the major features of Sanskrit plays and the various forms of *Rupakam*. After mentioning some works by Kalidasa, we delineated the characteristics of the play as a *Nataka* and the innovations of Kalidasa. Finally, we attempted to illustrate the difference in some western translations of the play. In the next unit, we will examine the play in greater detail.

5.9 SUGGESTED READING/VIEWING (PRINT AND WEB RESOURCES)

- Damrosch, David. *How to Read World Literature*, John Wiley & Sons, Incorporated. *ProQuest Ebook Central*, 2008. <https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/inflibnet-ebooks/detail.action?docID=416426>.
- Figuera, Dorothy Matilda. *Translating the Orient: The Reception of Sakuntala in Nineteenth Century Europe*. Albany: State University of New York Press. 1991
- Ghosh, Manmohan. Trans. *The Natyashastra*. Calcutta: The Asiatic Society of Bengal. 1951
- Jones, Sir William. Trans. *Sacotala or The Fatal Ring: An Indian Drama*. By Kalidas. Calcutta: Joseph Copper. 1789
- Kale, M.R. *The Abhijnanasakuntalam of Kalidasa*. Delhi: MOTILAL BAANARSIDASS. 1960
- Keith, Berriedale. *The Sanskrit Drama in its Origins, Development, Theory and Practice*. Lodon: OUP. 1954
- Lal, Ananda. *The Oxford Companion to Indian Theatre*. New Delhi: OUP. 2004
- Miller, Barbara Stoler. Kalidasa's world and his plays. In *The plays of Kalidasa: Theatre of memory*. by Barbara Stoler Miller. Delhi: MOTILAL BANARIDASS PUBLISHERS PVT. LTD. 1999
- Richmond, F., Swann, D. and Zarrilli, P. (Eds). *Indian theatre: Traditions and Performance*, Honolulu, HI: University of Hawaii Press. 1990
- Ryder, Arthur. Trans. *Shakuntala*. By Kalidasa. Cambridge, Ontario: In parentheses Publications. 1999.
- Thapar, Romila. *Sakuntala: Texts, Readings, Histories*. New York: Columbia University Press. 2010
- Varadpande, M.L. *History of Indian Theatre*. New Delhi: Abhinav Publications. 1987

- Zarrilli, Phillip B., et al. *Theatre Histories: An Introduction*, edited by Tobin Nellhaus, Taylor & Francis Group, 2010. *ProQuest Ebook Central*,
- <http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/inflibnet-ebooks/detail.action?docID=472466> .
- Ganguly, Kisari Mohan. Trans. *Sacred Texts Hinduism. Mahabharata*.
- <http://www.sacred-texts.com/hin/m01/m01069.htm>>24 July 2019
- <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Kalidasa>
- <http://egyankosh.ac.in/bitstream/123456789/64650/1/Unit3.pdf>
- <https://www.textlog.de/22272.html>
- <http://onlinebooks.library.upenn.edu/webbin/book/lookupname?key=Kalidasa>
- <https://www.gutenberg.org/files/16659/16659-h/16659-h.htm>
- www.columbia.edu/itc/mealac/pritchett/00litlinks/shakuntala_jones/index.html

5.10 HINTS FOR SELF-CHECK EXERCISES

- Self-Check Exercise 1 Refer to Section 5.2.
- Self-Check Exercise 2 Refer to Section 5.4 and 5.5.



STUDY OF KALIDASA'S SHAKUNTALA PART II

Unit Structure

- 6.0 Objectives
- 6.1 Introduction
- 6.2 Structure
 - 6.2.1 Overall Structure
 - 6.2.2 Prologue
- 6.3 Summary
- 6.4 Characters
- 6.5 Themes
 - 6.5.1 Love and Duty
 - 6.5.2 Ecology and Nature
- 6.6 Allusions
- 6.7 Rasa
- 6.8 Summing up
- 6.9 Suggested Reading (Print and web resources)
- 6.10 Hints for Self- Check Exercises

6.0 OBJECTIVES

The three objectives of this unit are as follows:

- ✓ read and appreciate the Sanskrit play *Shakuntala* in English translation
- ✓ familiarize yourselves with the characters and themes of the play
- ✓ learn more about some allusions and rasas in the play.

After reading this unit, you should be able to:

- ✓ understand and appreciate the play *Shakuntala* in English translation
- ✓ become familiar with the characters and themes of the play
- ✓ identify the allusions and rasas in the play.

6.1 INTRODUCTION

In the previous unit, we learnt about some Sanskrit playwrights and characteristics of a Sanskrit play. We explained the innovations of Kalidasa and dwelt briefly on some translations of the play. In this unit,

we will gain a better understanding of *Shakuntala* through a study of its structure, summary, characters, themes, allusions and rasas.

6.2 STRUCTURE

The play begins with the benediction (*Nandi*), a prayer to the *Ashtamurthi* (eight manifest forms) Lord Shiva. The prologue and seven acts are followed by the *Bharatavakya* or epilogue or blessings for the Kingdom.

6.2.1 Overall Structure

As mentioned in unit 5, located in Bharatavarsha, the play's action takes place in varied geographical areas like the forests (hermitage), Palaces (cities) and the Mountains (abode of the Gods). There are three locations. Act I - IV - Sage Kanva's hermitage, Act V and VI - King Dushyanta's Palace and Act VII - Heavenly Mountains. The table below depicts the seven-acts with the action spread over seven years:

Prologue	
Act I	The Hunt
Act II	The Secret
Act III	The Love-Making
Act IV (Scene I and Scene II)	Shakuntala's Departure
Act V	Shakuntala's Rejection
Act VI (Scene I and Scene II)	Separation from Shakuntala
Act VII	Reunion

Scenery and stage properties are absent. There are no curtains or lights or announcements and the scene is indicated or evoked through vivid dialogues. There is no chariot and no deer in Act I but only artificial theatrical conventions. The vivid description of the chase conveyed by King Dushyanta and his charioteer helps to recreate the scene. There is no actual attack by the bee in Act I but the King's verbal description and Shakuntala's gestures, both natural and conventional or stylized enable the *preksaka* to vividly imagine the scene. Some more examples include Sage Durvasa's curse (reported by her friends) and the trees presenting Shakuntala with clothes and jewellery (reported by the hermits).

Scholars have noted the parallels and contrasts when the Acts are considered as reflections of each other as given in the table below (1 and 7, 2 and 6, 3 and 5):

<p style="text-align: center;">Act I</p> <p>Dushyanta and his earthly charioteer arrive at Sage Kanva's hermitage. He receives a blessing that a son as great as King Puru would be born to him. He meets Shakuntala and makes inquiries about her parentage with her friends. His signet ring reveals his identity.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Act VII</p> <p>Dushyanta and the heavenly charioteer Matali arrive at Sage Kashyapa's hermitage on the heavenly mountains. The amulet reveals Dushyanta's identity as the young Bharata's father. Dushyanta reunites with his wife Shakuntala and son Bharata. They receive the blessings of Sage Kashyapa and Aditi.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Act II</p> <p>Dushyanta confesses his love (for Shakuntala) to his companion Madhavya and plans to win her over. When the hermits arrive at his camp and request him to stay back to protect them from demons, Dushyanta gets an opportunity to woo and wed Shakuntala.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Act VI</p> <p>Dushyanta regains his memory on seeing the signet ring. In Madhavya's company in the garden, he paints Shakuntala's portrait and grieves for her. Charioteer Matali informs that Lord Indra needs protection from demons. This paves the way for Dushyanta's reunion with wife Shakuntala and son Bharata.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Act III</p> <p>Dushyanta conceals himself and learns that Shakuntala too loves him. They marry secretly (<i>gandharva</i> marriage). They separate when the hermit mother Gautami calls Shakuntala and the hermits ask for Dushyanta's help against the demons.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Act V</p> <p>A heavily pregnant Shakuntala is escorted to Dushyanta's court by Gautami, and hermit pupils, Sharadvata and Sharngarva. Dushyanta fails to recognise her and disowns her and her child. Shakuntala is left at the palace but an invisible fairy carries her away. There is a long separation of six years.</p>

6.2.2 Prologue

As mentioned in unit 5, the prologue is significant. It is agreed that the prologue captures the theatrical worldview expressed in the *Bhagavad Gita*. Two theatrical techniques are used, namely, the benediction (to ward off obstacles) and the witty conversation between the *Sutradhara* and the actress. The mention of all the elements of a theatrical performance make it metadramatic (drama about drama.) The *Sutradhara's* presence - between the world of the *preksaka* (hall) and the world of the play (stage) - and his interaction links the two worlds, enabling a smooth transition from the *lokdharmi* (real) world into the *natyadharmi* (theatrical) world.

The opening interaction between the *Sutradhara* and the actress informs about the staging of the play (Shakuntala) and the playwright (Kalidasa). The song sung by the actress is both a device to entertain the *preksaka* and verbally indicate the summer season, the settings, timings and locations and create a total theatre. The *Sutradhara* foreshadows the theme of forgetting by assuring the actress that she has enchanted him

with her song (making him forget) and hints at the entry of King Dushyanta, who is chasing a deer, in Act I. Thus, the prologue creates ‘a willing suspension of disbelief’ and allows for an intellectual engagement.

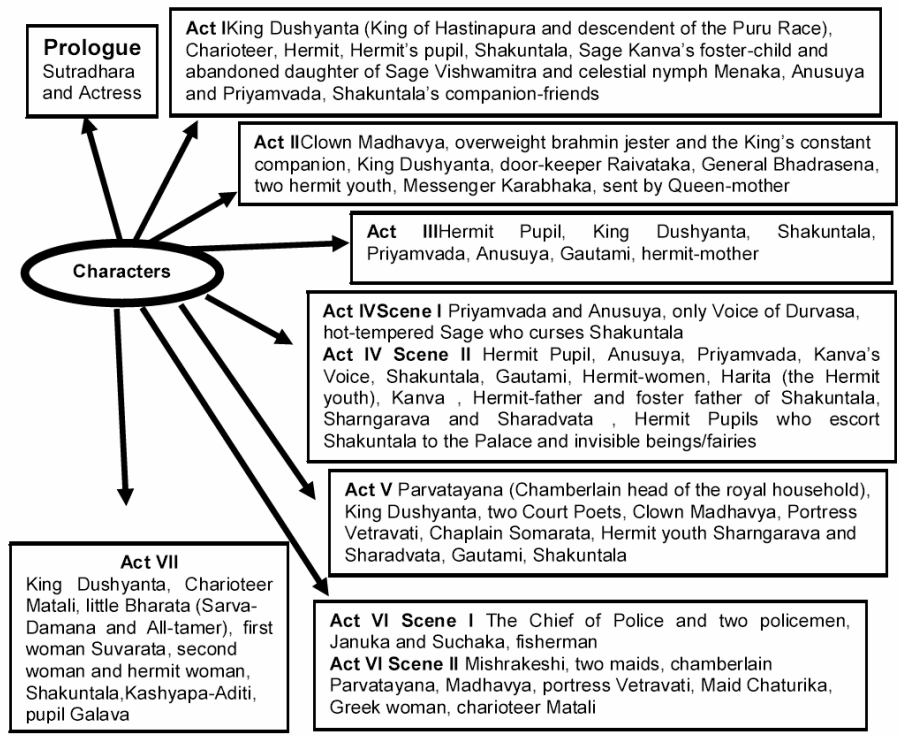
6.3 SHORT SUMMARY

In Act I, King Dushyanta is chasing a deer. A hermit informs that the deer belongs to Sage Kanva’s hermitage, which is under the King’s protection. The King obeys the hermit who prophesies the birth of a son as mighty as Puru. The hermit tells him that Shakuntala would receive the King in Sage Kanva’s absence. On entering the hermitage, the King hides himself and sees Shakuntala and her friends watering the trees. Both Dushyanta and Shakuntala are drawn to each other. He asks her companions about her parentage. Offering his signet ring to free Shakuntala from the debt of watering more trees, he hears cries of the hermits warning of an injured Elephant. In Act II, the King confides his love for Shakuntala to Madhavya and receives a message from the Queen Mother. The hermits request the protection from evil spirits, so he sends Madhavya to the palace. In Act III, the King overhears Shakuntala’s love poem and declares his love. They unite in Gandharva marriage and he assures her that he would send for her. In Act IV, Shakuntala’s friend reports about Sage Durvasa’s curse and remedy. A heavenly voice announces Shakuntala’s marriage and pregnancy to Sage Kanva and he prepares to send her to the palace.

In Act V, the King receives the hermits but denies any relation with Shakuntala. She wishes to remind him by showing the ring but the ring is missing. The hermits leave the weeping Shakuntala at the palace but a celestial nymph carries her away. In Act VI, a fisherman discovers her in a fish’s belly. The King regains his memory and cancels the spring festival in grief. Mishrakeshi, Menaka’s friend, spies on the King, who paints Shakuntala’s portrait, and affirms that he is depressed with Shakuntala’s absence. Matali, Lord Indra’s charioteer takes him to fight the demons. After being honoured by Lord Indra, the King and Matali descend in Marica’s hermitage. The King sees a young boy playing with a lion cub. When the King picks up the magical amulet, his paternity is proved and he is reunited with his wife Shakuntala and son Bharata. All misunderstandings are cleared when the sage explains about the curse and blesses them and their Kingdom.

6.4 CHARACTERS

In addition to the invisible fairies, divine voices and voices of characters who are not actually visible (Sage Durvasa) on the Stage, the characters of all classes in their order of appearance in each Act/Scene is as follows:



Self-Check Exercise 1

1. Explain the significance of the prologue in the play Shakuntala.
2. Write in brief about the play's locations.
3. In which Acts is Shakuntala not present physically?
4. Who were Shakuntala's parents?

6.5 THEMES

The play reflects the social-cultural and ecological consciousness of the playwright and his times. The theme of love and duty encompasses two of the four *purushartas*, namely, *dharma* (duty), *artha* (material/meaning), *kama* (desire) and *moksha* (liberation). The second theme proves Kalidasa's non-binary thinking i.e., the harmonious blending of the humans and the non-humans in the pious hermitage.

6.5.1 Love and Duty

Dushyanta loves hunting but stops when reminded of his duty to protect the hermitage. He is bound to pay his respect to Sage Kanva and

meets Shakuntala in Kanva's absence. He falls in love at first sight but upholds social values (here caste) and inquires if Shakuntala was a Kshatriya (not a Brahmin) and if she was to be married. He reflects on the social order and proposes his love and suggests *gandarva -vivah* (marriage by mutual consent) only after ascertaining that she was a Kshatriya's daughter. Shakuntala and her friends dutifully water the trees daily. She is duty-bound to extend hospitality to Sage Durvasa but her absent-mindedness makes her forget her duty resulting in the curse and separation of the lovers.

6.5.2 Ecology and Nature

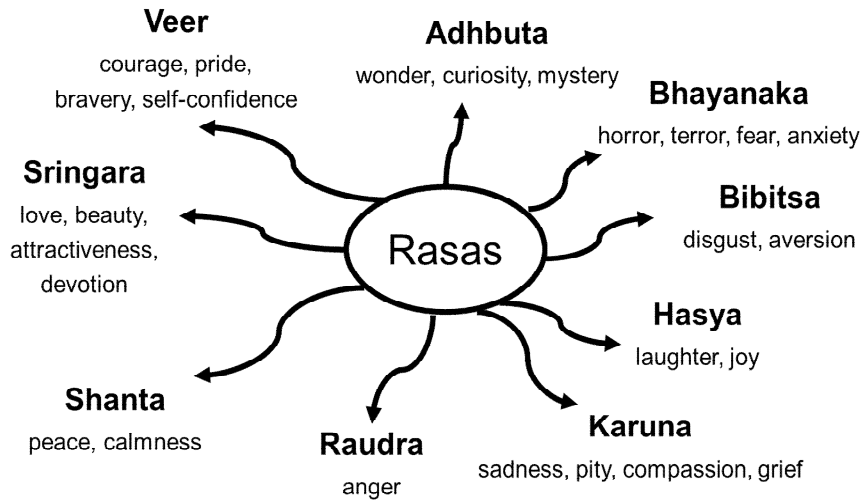
There is a peaceful co-existence of humans, plants and animals in the hermitage. Shakuntala wears sirisha blossoms and lotus bracelets. Besides watering the trees which bloom during summer, she waters plants which are past their flowering time. She calls the spring-creeper as her sister and the young fawn as her adopted son. As Miller observes, infused with the spirit of interchange ability between the *nayika* (heroine) and nature's elements, Shakuntala is depicted as an embodiment of the fertile nature and her bodily parts are equated with natural objects. (p.29) The mango-tree gestures to her and the jasmine vine chooses the strong mango-tree as husband (symbolic of Shakuntala and Dushyanta). The trees give gifts (silken marriage dress, lac-dye for feet), invisible fairies give gems and cuckoos sing a farewell song. Shakuntala employs nature imagery to express her anguish when she parts from Kanva "I am torn from my father's breast like a vine stripped from a sandal tree on the Malabar hill. How can I live in another soil? (Ryder, Act IV, p.48).

6.6 ALLUSIONS

Allusion is an indirect or implied reference (to a person, place, event or a text) and dips into shared stories. Let us look at some of the allusions. In Act I, there is a reference to God Shiva's immortal chase. This story draws upon Sati's self-immolation and Shiva's hunting down the sacrificial fire which takes the form of a deer. The reference to Kaushika (Act I) brings to mind the story of Vishwamitra's seduction by celestial nymph Menaka and Shakuntala's birth. Dushyanta's reference to the burning of love-tree by an angry Shiva in Act II reminds one of the destructions of love-God Kama when Shiva opens his third eye. Kama disturbs Shiva's meditation and shoots an arrow to fill Shiva with love for Parvati. The reference to Puru (not once but thrice) and 'Sharmishtha, Yayati's wife and kingly son Puru' in Act IV brings to mind the exchange of the curse of old age between father Yayayi and son Puru.

6.7 RASA

Rasa means 'aesthetic emotion or sentiment' and was a significant aspect of Sanskrit plays. This is a mind map which captures the nine *rasas* in Sanskrit dramaturgy:



Read the play slowly and learn to savour the *rasas*. Do remember that the rasas can be experienced more deeply when one reads the play in Sanskrit! Let's illustrate a few instances of the varied rasas in the play. The main emotion of *Sringara Rasa* which consists of both union and separation. Dushyanta and Shakuntala experience mutual attraction/love for each other in Act I and their long separation makes them spiritually stronger in Act VII. When Dushyanta's right arm throbs, he experiences *Adhbhuta Rasa* and wonders if love can blossom in a hermitage. The parting gifts of the trees to Shakuntala in Act IV exemplifies *Adhbhuta Rasa*. *Bhayanaka Rasa* is felt when the injured elephant or the flesh-eating demons in Act III disturb the hermits. Madhavaya's comments in Act II create *Hasya Rasa*. One experiences *Bibitsa Rasa* in Act V on seeing the King's rejection of Shakuntala and *Raudra Rasa* when Sharngrava accuses the King of treachery. One experiences *Karuna Rasa* on seeing the weeping Shakuntala who is left behind in the palace by her hermit-brothers and mother. Dushyanta's courage in extending protection to the hermits and Lord Indra against the demons are instances of *Veer Rasa*. The happy ending of Act VII culminating in a *Bharatavakya* or epilogue leads to *Shanta Rasa*.

Self-Check Exercise 2

1. Which duty did Shakuntala neglect?
2. Give more instances of *Adhbhuta Rasa* in the play.

6.8 SUMMING UP

In this unit, we developed a deeper understanding of Kalidasa's acclaimed play *Shakuntala*. We analysed the overall structure and explained the significance of the prologue. We gave an overview of the summary and the characters and elaborated on some themes, allusions and rasas in the play.

6.9 SUGGESTED READING/VIEWING

- Figuera, Dorothy Matilda. *Translating the Orient: The Reception of Sakuntala in Nineteenth Century Europe*. Albany: State University of New York Press. 1991
- Jones, Sir William. Trans. *Sacontala or The Fatal Ring: An Indian Drama*. By Kalidas. Calcutta: Joseph Copper. 1789
- Kale, M.R. *The Abhijnanasakuntalam of Kalidasa*. Delhi: MOTILAL BAHANARSIDASS. 1960
- Keith, Berriedale. *The Sanskrit Drama in its Origins, Development, Theory and Practice*. London: OUP. 1954
- Miller, Barbara Stoler. Kalidasa's world and his plays. In *The plays of Kalidasa: Theatre of memory*. by Barbara Stoler Miller. Delhi: MOTILAL BANARIDASS PUBLISHERS PVT. LTD. 1999
- Ryder, Arthur. Trans. *Shakuntala*. By Kalidasa. Cambridge, Ontario: In parentheses Publications. 1999.
- Thapar, Romila. *Sakuntala: Texts, Readings, Histories*. New York: Columbia University Press. 2010
- <http://egyankosh.ac.in/handle/123456789/64647>
- <http://onlinebooks.library.upenn.edu/webbin/book/lookupname?key=Kalidasa>
- <https://www.gutenberg.org/files/16659/16659-h/16659-h.htm>
- www.columbia.edu/itc/mealc/pritchett/00litlinks/shakuntala_jones/index.html
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pR5LE3X7Jko>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0U7TOT2xtlo> Act IV
- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LVqBD_2P4Pg short stop-animation film
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DP75esh1hA0> Vinay Dharwadkeron *Shakuntala*
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ieRAMZabsdI> *Shakuntaladir*. Dr. Ananda Lal

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tIg5HXUudNMR>Romila Thapar on *Shakuntala*
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=haZGHUcVbzQe>-paathshaala, play synopsis
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z3nilC60uII>Sanskrit Drama and Theatre

6.10 HINTS FOR SELF-CHECK EXERCISES

Exercise 1 Refer to section 6.2. 2 and 6.2.1 for questions 1 and 2 and section 6.4 for questions 3 and 4.

Exercise 2 Refer to section 6.5 for question 1. Read the play and discover more instances.



A DOLL'S HOUSE PART- I

Unit Structure

- 7.1 Objective
- 7.2 About Author
- 7.3 Biography
- 7.4 His Style
- 7.5 About the Play
- 7.6 Introduction
- 7.7 Plot
- 7.8 Questions
- 7.9 Bibliography

7.1 OBJECTIVES

The basic objective of this unit is to make learners aware of the play 'A Doll's House' and to provide basic information about the author, the period, and the text.

7.2 ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Henrik Ibsen:

Ibsen is frequently referred to as "the father of Realism" because of his role as one of the early pioneers of Modernism in the theatre. Ibsen, a Norwegian writer who lived in the late 1800s, reinvented the ideals of drama with a realism that may still be seen in theatres today. He changed the order of the stage from one that served as a toy and distraction for the bored to one that served as an ethical analysis replacement-order. Peer Gynt, An Enemy of the People, Emperor and Galilean, Hedda Gabler, Ghosts, The Wild Duck, When We Dead Awaken, Rosmersholm, and The Master Builder are only a few of the masterpieces that need to be mentioned.

7.3 BIOGRAPHY

Henrik Ibsen was born on March 20, 1828, in the Norwegian city of Skien. In 1862, he was banished to Italy, where he wrote the tragedy Brand, which is still performed today. In 1868, Ibsen relocated to Germany, where he wrote A Doll's House, which is considered to be

one of his most important works. The novel *Hedda Gabler* was first published in 1890. By 1891, Ibsen had returned to Norway as a literary hero, having won the Nobel Prize for Literature. On May 23, 1906, he passed away in Oslo, Norway.

7.4 HIS STYLE

Ibsen, in contrast to his predecessors, invited his audience inside the homes of common people, where bourgeois and upper-middle-class individuals kept their most closely guarded secrets in order to retain their social standing. It was against this true middle-class backdrop that the issues that arose from the challenging assumptions and conflicts were established through piercing discourse and meticulous attention to detail. It is because of this that he has earned a place in historical memory.

7.5 ABOUT THE PLAY

A Doll's House:

A *Doll's House* is one of the most widely played board games in the world. It is the drama's conclusion that Nora's character abandons her husband Torvald and her three children, which was unprecedented at the time of the play's first performance in 1879. Despite the passage of time, it remains one of literature's most prominent instances of gender politics. Nora's position is so well-known that she is included in the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization's Memory of the World registry as "a symbol throughout the world, for ladies striving for freedom and equality."

7.6 INTRODUCTION

A Doll's House is a three-act drama by Norwegian playwright Henrik Ibsen that is set in a doll house. It was first performed on December 21, 1879, at the Royal Theatre in Copenhagen, Denmark, after having been published earlier in the month of December. The action of the drama takes place in a Norwegian town in 1879. A key and polarising aspect of the play is its portrayal of a woman's fate, who at the time in Norway lacked sufficient options for self-fulfillment in a male-dominated cultural environment. Ibsen, on the other hand, categorically denies that he had any intention of writing a feminist drama. A "storm of intense debate" broke out in the media and throughout society at the time because of the significant sensational response it elicited at the time of its publication.

The prose dramas by Henrik Ibsen, which were formerly the subject of public controversy and were only defended by nineteenth-

century avant-garde theatre critics, are now well-known as successful television plays and as a key component of repertory theatres around the world. These productions no longer elicit angry reactions from the audience and are now considered acceptable fare by even the most affluent theatregoers.

7.7 PLOT

In Act I of Henrik Ibsen's *A Doll's House*, Nora Helmer, a housewife, arrives home after a Christmas shopping trip with her daughter. Torvald, her spouse, welcomes her with a sarcastically amusing remark about how much money she had spent that day. Nora asserts that the Helmers are in a better financial position than they were in prior years as a result of Torvald's recent promotion at his place of employment. The doorbell rings in the middle of their conversation. According to Helene, the Helmers' maid, Dr. Rank, an old and close family friend who is critically ill, and Nora's old acquaintance Christine Linde have come, much to Nora's surprise. Dr. Rank is a close family friend who is critically ill.

After the visitors have been admitted, Dr. Rank and Torvald meet in Torvald's study, while Nora and Mrs. Linde stay in the living room with the rest of the family. Nora feels terrible for Mrs. Linde, who is now a childless widow, and expresses regret for not keeping in touch with her after Torvald's marriage ended up in divorce. During her interview, Mrs. Linde admits that she has had a miserable life since her husband's death and that she feels alone because she has no one to care for or be concerned about. Ms. Linde is hoping that Nora will be able to persuade Torvald to provide her a position or some work at the bank that he now owns, and Nora is willing to give it a shot. Torvald became ill due to his overwork during Nora's first year of marriage, which she discusses in detail later in the book. A luxurious trip to Italy was required by the Helmers in order for him to be properly treated and returned to normalcy. Initially, Nora claimed that the funds came from her wealthy father's estate. The fact that Nora received the funds through borrowing money, which she was not legally entitled to do, responds to Mrs. Linde's insinuation that she is blissfully unaware of the true issue.

After receiving a call from a young bank employee named Krogstad requesting assistance in locating Torvald, Nora and Mrs. Linde become concerned. The seclusion of Torvald and Krogstad is confirmed by Dr. Rank, who supports Mrs. Linde and Nora in labelling Krogstad as "morally sick."

Following the meeting between Torvald and Krogstad, Torvald, Dr. Rank, and Mrs. Linde depart from the Helmers' home, leaving Nora to spend time with her children. Krogstad then enters Nora's chamber and converses with her in hushed tones, hinting that he is the

source of her financial difficulties. He further claims that he is aware that Nora illegally falsified her father's signature on the bond in order to obtain money. Torvald wants to fire Krogstad from the bank, so he uses the evidence of Nora's forgery to get her to speak out on his behalf and safeguard his position at the institution.

Upon Torvald's return home, Nora approaches him and attempts to persuade him to keep Krogstad employed at the bank. Torvald declines. As a result, Torvald castigates her for standing up for Krogstad, informing her that the initial offence that tarnished Krogstad's image was a fabrication on her part. According to Torvald, "I despise people who lie, hold secrets, or disappoint their families." Nora feels irritated by this particular point of view.

As Act II opens, Nora is stumbling around the front room, unsure of what to do. In walks Nora's maid, Anne-Marie, who is carrying the gown she will be wearing to a ball the following night. In the midst of their conversation, Nora confesses to Anne-Marie that she has been avoiding seeing her children. She is also concerned about the potential of them abandoning her if she decides to go permanently.

Mrs. Linde arrives to assist Nora in putting together her costume for the party. She makes an attempt to find out more about Nora's relationship with Dr. Rank, with the implication that Nora may have gotten money from him. Nora ignores the claim, despite the fact that she finds the concept intriguing. Torvald's entrance causes a pause in their conversation. Nora tries to urge Torvald to keep Krogstad on as a result of his previous actions. She is concerned that Krogstad will publish libellous and cruel articles about the Helmers and their children. Torvald assuages Nora's fears by assuring her that he would take care of any ramifications of the situation. She makes the decision that Torvald will not be held accountable for her actions over the autumn.

Dr. Rank arrives shortly after, alerting Nora that he is gravely ill and will die within the next several days. Torvald asks Nora not to tell him about the incident because he isn't used to dealing with "ugly" situations. In the course of their conversation, Nora inquires of Dr. Rank about the possibility of doing her a favour. It is true that they are nuts together, and he is willing to go to any limit for her, he explains further. Dr. Rank is reprimanded by Nora, who refuses to tell him what favour she is requesting in exchange for his comments. They are interrupted in their talk by the appearance of a stranger. Dr. Rank should remain because Nora is well aware that it is Krogstad. Torvald, on the other hand, was focused with something else, indicating that she did not want her spouse to see her in her last gown.

Krogstad recognises that he has received the letter of termination from the company. He swears Nora that he would no

longer expose her dishonesty in public, but he devises a strategy to blackmail Torvald into providing him a job at the bank in order to reestablish his reputation as a trustworthy individual. The fearful Nora expresses her willingness to commit herself in order to protect her beloved Torvald from the consequences of his actions (guilt, shame, and scandal), but Krogstad assures her that this will not help. Torvald believes that, on a social level, a man is always in control of the behaviour of his female partner.

Nora's activities are explained in a note left in the Helmers' letterbox by Krogstad as soon as he leaves the house. After Krogstad has left, Nora quickly informs Mrs.Linde of everything that has occurred. Nora is taken aback when Mrs.Linde informs her that she and Krogstad are interested in developing a romantic relationship. She has promised to work with Krogstad in the hopes of convincing him to return the letter. Nora, on the other hand, is attempting to prevent Torvald from reading the letter. She asks him to assist her in practising the dance that she will be doing at the party the following night. Torvald gives his approval with a nod.

After returning, Mrs.Linde informs them that Krogstad has left town and will not return until the following evening. Mrs. Linde has written him a letter and intends to meet with him when he returns to the United States. Nora intensifies her efforts to divert Torvald's attention away from the letters as she becomes more and more agitated by the situation. Act III begins at the end of the previous day's dusk. Mrs. Linde is at a meeting at which the Helmers are also present, waiting for Krogstad to arrive at the house. When Krogstad first arrives, he is hostile toward Mrs. Linde, believing that she has abandoned him in order to marry a more wealthy man. Mrs.Linde assures him that she has done everything she can to provide for her family's financial well-being. Following the disclosure of their mutually unpleasant situations, the two come to terms and decide to marry. Frau Linde interrupts Krogstad's apologetic agreement in order to demand that his letter be returned to him. Nora believes that Torvald's willingness to be transparent with her is essential. The Helmers are not going to use Nora's fabrication against them, so Krogstad agrees to deliver a second letter confirming that this will not be the case. Immediately following this, Nora and Torvald return from the party. Mrs. Linde extends a cordial welcome to them and reminds Nora that Krogstad has yet to react to the letter she sent him. Dr. Rank arrives after Mrs. Linde has left the building. He informs Nora that his condition has progressed to the point that he wishes to seclude himself and die by sending coded messages to the people around him. In response, Nora tells him to "sleep well," and she begs him to reciprocate by doing so for her. Torvald checks the letterbox after Dr. Rank has left the building and finds nothing. Dr. Rank only receives one piece of mail a year: a death notice. He is distraught when he learns of his friend's impending death through a mutual pal. He goes

back to his study to continue his work. In preparation for leaving the house as swiftly as she can, Nora gathers her items and prepares to go. She's made the decision to end her life by hanging herself. Torvald confronts her about Krogstad's letter just before she leaves the room. When Torvald scolds Nora, she becomes frightened. He threatens to take her children away from her, claiming that she would corrupt them if she continues to live with him. He also prefers to comply with Krogstad's requests rather than risk jeopardising his professional reputation. As Torvald continues to criticise and humiliate Nora, she grows increasingly withdrawn. She discovers that he is not who she had assumed he was. Torvald's fury is cut short when he receives Krogstad's second letter, which prompts him to apologise. Among the contents of the second letter is Nora's promise to protect the Helmers as well as Krogstad's assurance that they have nothing to fear from him. Torvald is ecstatic, saying that he has forgiven Nora for everything that has happened to him. In light of what she has witnessed in response to Torvald's first letter, Nora makes the decision to stay away from him. Torvald and her father, she claims, have both treated her as if she were a "doll" rather than a rational individual, and as a result, she has been infantilized. In an attempt to encourage her to stay, Torvald cites the repercussions of her decision on the social, moral, and non-secular levels. For Nora, on the other hand, learning to think for herself and achieving independence are two things she is certain of. It is her or he who believes that the restrictions barring women from withdrawing loans are unjust and that Torvald would have perished if she or he had not transported him to Italy. Contrary to Torvald's pleadings, Nora abandons Torvald and her two young children. Nora steps out the door in the final direction she intends to go, closing the door behind her.

7.8 QUESTIONS

1. Discuss important features of the plot of 'A Doll's House' with reference to the position of Nora as a woman of the house
2. Discuss Henrik Ibsen as a play-wright of the 'New Age' literature

7.9 BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Boyesen, Hjalmar. *A Commentary on the Works of Henrik Ibsen*. New York: Russell & Russell, 1973.
- Bradbrook, M.C. *Ibsen the Norwegian: A Revaluation*. London: Chatto and Windus, 1966.
- Egan, Michael, ed. *Ibsen: The Critical Heritage*. Boston: Routledge and K. Paul, 1972.
- Gray, Ronald. *Ibsen, A Dissenting View*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1977.

- Ibsen, Henrik (trans. Charlotte Barslund and Frank McGuinness). *A Doll's House*. London: Faber and Faber, 1997.
- Ibsen, Henrik (trans. Michael Meyer). *A Doll's House (Ibsen Plays: Two)*. London: Methuen Drama, 2000.
- Ibsen, Henrik. *A Doll's House*. No city: no publisher, 1879.
- Johnston, Brian. *Ibsen's Selected Plays: A Norton Critical Edition*. New York: W.W. Norton, 2004.
- Lebowitz, Naomi. *Ibsen and the Great World*. Baton Rouge: Louisiana University Press, 1990.
- Lee, Jennette. *The Ibsen Secret*. Seattle: University Press of the Pacific, 2001.
- Lyons, Charles R. *Henrik Ibsen: The Divided Consciousness*. Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1972.
- Marker, Frederick. *Ibsen's Lively Art*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1989.
- McFarlane, J., ed. *The Cambridge Companion to Ibsen*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994.
- Meyer, Michael. *Ibsen*. Great Britain: Sutton Publishing, 1967.
- Northam, John. *Ibsen: A Critical Study*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1973.
- Shaw, George Bernard. *The Quintessence of Ibsenism*. London: Dover Publishing, 1891.
- Steiner, George. *The Death of Tragedy*. London: Faber and Faber, 1961.
- Weigand, H. J. *The Modern Ibsen: A Reconsideration*. Salem, New Hampshire: Ayer, 1984.



A DOLL'S HOUSE PART - II

\

Unit Structure

- 8.1 Objective
- 8.2 Significance of the Title
- 8.3 Important Literary Devices
- 8.4 Major Themes
- 8.5 Character Analysis
- 8.6 Critical Analysis of the Play
- 8.7 Questions
- 8.8 Bibliography

8.1 OBJECTIVES

This unit is an extension of the previous unit, Unit 7. The purpose of this lesson is to provide an in-depth examination of the play 'A Doll's House.' It is divided into two parts. This lesson includes a character profile of the principal characters, a discussion of the importance of the play's title, and a critical study of the play. It is divided into three sections.

8.2 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE TITLE:

The title of the play is crucial to understanding the plot. Her daughter has created dolls and puppets for her children, in addition to Nora, who is not the only doll in the family. The children's mother constantly refers to Emmy as "my lovely little babydoll" and all three of the children as "my pretty little dollies" when they return from playing outside (just before Krogstad arrives for a personal visit with Nora in Act 1). Afterwards, Nora undresses the dolls by flinging their outerwear and outer caps, and then she and the dolls play hide-and-seek as if she were twiddling with dolls herself. The storey is suitably dubbed A Doll's House, which means "a doll's house." Because she is that doll, she is the one who created the house. This is something she recognises at the highest levels of her organisation. As a result, she has allowed herself to be placed in the position of the doll; she has permitted her father to treat her in this manner, and she or he has permitted Helmer to do the same. She has participated in the sport with them in greater numbers than she has been permitted, and she has

taken advantage of this. In many ways, she built her own home from the ground up, and her decision to leave her marriage home at the top indicates her wish to step away from the position she created for herself. Nora has no concept what it takes to be a mother because she has only had Anne Marie to guide her through the process. Anne Marie has taken on the responsibility of caring for Nora's children. In addition to Nora's doll, is Anne Marie the one who made her? Generally speaking, her father and Helmer are to blame for her delayed personality development, however the nurse also has a part to play.

8.3 IMPORTANT LITERARY DEVICES UTILIZED IN THE DRAMA:

In Ibsen's play *A Doll's House*, foreshadowing and symbolism are two of the most prominent literary tactics employed. Foreshadowing is the term used to describe when a storyteller gives hints about events that will take place later in the story. This is a frequent approach for building tension and maintaining a sense of continuity in a piece of writing. In *A Doll's House*, the literary devices of foreshadowing and symbolism are prominently displayed. Foreshadowing occurs throughout the play, with Nora lying to Torvald about eating macaroons and asking for money as a Christmas present, among other things. It is anticipated that Nora will expose to Torvald her secret, which is that she has been repaying an illegally obtained loan, through this series of events. Because they depict the way the characters treat one another as if they are toys, dolls are essential symbols in the play. *A Doll's House* makes great use of foreshadowing to build suspense and tension. It is Nora's consumption of macaroons without the approval of her husband that is the most heinous incident.

8.4 THE SETTING OF THE DRAMA:

The action of *A Doll's House* takes place entirely within the Helmer family's home; other locations are only referenced in passing throughout the novel. Because the playwright, Henrik Ibsen, was Norwegian, the names of the characters have a unique Scandinavian flavour, and their apartment is supposed to be in Norway, as is the case with many other Scandinavian plays. In this instance, the setting is extremely important because it symbolises not just the title of the piece but also different thematic components as a whole. The Helmer mansion has been turned into a miniature world. For their guests' entertainment—and to maintain the illusion of a happy, loving family—it has been tastefully designed and kept neat and pleasant by them and their staff. A bourgeoisie lifestyle is reflected in the description of the most room, which is "furnished comfortably and elegantly, but not extravagantly" at the outset of the play, indicating the family's bourgeois upbringing. Despite the fact that it is winter, the

house has carpeted flooring and is generally warm, providing a comfortable environment for Nora and Torvald's family and guests.

8.5 MAJOR THEMES:

Marriage, Family, and Love:

Often read as a play about Nora and Torvald's marriage, or perhaps more profoundly as a play about a person's desire for love and marriage if there is often love in marriage, *A Doll's House* is a popular interpretation of the play. Even to themselves, Nora and Torvald look to be a happy couple at the outset of the play, and this appears to be the case throughout. At first glance, Nora and Torvald appear to enjoy performing the roles of husband and wife in a socially acceptable manner, and this appears to be the case. Unlike Mrs. Linde, who discloses to Nora right once that she took the money from Krogstad behind Torvald's back, breaching both the law and the rules of marriage at the time, Torvald is not so quick to own his mistake. This creates a conundrum: although Nora violated marriage customs, she did so in the service of saving her husband's life, which was a real act of love on her part. Nora expresses her feelings for Torvald with great intensity, and Torvald refers to her affectionately as "Nora" and "Torvalda." It stands in stark contrast to the lives of the opponents, whose marriages were miserable because they were founded on necessity rather than love, as Krogstad and Mrs. Linde's were. Doctor Rank has had feelings for Nora for years, despite the fact that he has never been married. However, even if Nora and Torvald's marriage is rooted in passion and not in need, as with Krogstad and Mrs. Linde, it is nonetheless constrained by the rigorous societal conventions that define husband and wife responsibilities. Torvald's employment demands him to be able to brag about his successful marriage to a devout lady, which he has accomplished. Nora is expected to submit to Torvald's authority and allow him to make decisions for her; nonetheless, it is critical to Torvald's employment that he be able to boast of a happy marriage to a dedicated lady in order to maintain his position.

However, such acts of affection are often punished by society, which elevates marriage criteria above those of love. After all is said and done in the last minutes of the play, it is revealed that Nora's dread of the key escaping is based on her belief that Torvald will protect her by accepting responsibility and therefore ruining himself.

Nora is persuaded that, beneath Torvald's outward appearance, he adores her in the same way as she adored him when she defied society's expectations. Torvald's response, of course, demonstrates that he isn't "playing a role" at all; he places a high value on his reputation and would never put it at risk in order to protect Nora or any other person. Nora's erroneous impression of role-playing turned out to

represent the entirety of the reality she encountered. Not only does Nora realise that Torvald doesn't love her, but she also realises that the concept of marriage in her society, as defined and practised in her society, may be difficult to achieve, she becomes increasingly agitated about her marriage, and about marriage more generally. The fact that Krogstad and Mrs.Linde had a happy marriage demonstrates that the play does not totally agree with Nora's point of view, but it is also crucial to note that their union violates all social expectations. Mrs.Linde yearns for the fulfilment that comes from receiving genuine care from someone she cares about, but Krogstad sees Mrs.Linde as the source of his integrity's salvation, rather than as a trinket to help him maintain his good name and increase his wealth.

Man-Woman Relationships: Their Importance and Stereotyping:

At the time of its conception, *A Doll's House* is concerned with the restricted status of girls, as well as the challenges that occur from a significant power disparity between men and women. The film is directed by Catherine Hardwicke. Through the course of the play, the other characters refer to Nora as if she were a young child. Torvald refers to her as his "pet" and "property," as if she isn't competent or responsible enough to be entrusted with financial responsibility. Mrs.Linde rejects her as a "child," and neither Krogstad nor Dr. Rank consider her to be a serious contender for the position. In spite of the fact that Nora appears to be annoyed by her husband's treatment, she plays along by referring to herself as "little Nora" and pledging that she will never defy him again. There are hints, however, that she is unsatisfied with her limited status as a lady, as seen by her behaviour. The key to how she borrowed money to spend her trip in Italy is something she takes great satisfaction in, and she believes that being on top of money problems was "almost like being a human." Despite the fact that she is remorseful for borrowing money, Nora's discontent with her social standing grows more intense throughout the course of the play. In the closing scene, she expresses her dissatisfaction with Torvald, stating that she is not being treated as a self-sufficient individual with her own opinions. Her brave answer to the current issue, despite Torvald's pledges that he will change, is to give up her home, despite his guarantees. As a result of Nora's decision, and hence the play, it is implied that she and the audience believe Torvald is only partially to blame for the problem. Domestic life is the more fundamental issue because it was developed and lived during a period in which women were legally and culturally infantilized, making it more difficult for them to be recognised as fully functioning persons in the workplace.

Meanwhile, the players in the play are expected to perform a variety of roles. Torvald and Krogstad are both driven by ambition, motivated not just by a desire to provide for their families, but also by a desire to advance in their respective fields of endeavour. As soon as Nora's borrowing is discovered, Torvald's first thoughts turn to

protecting his own reputation. meanwhile, Krogstad is determined to achieve success now that he has "come clean," and he hopes to one day succeed Torvald as the bank's chairman and chief executive officer (CEO).

Importance of Money in Marriage :

A Doll's House features a monetary need that has an impact on all of the primary characters in the storey. However, despite the fact that Torvald has recently been promoted and will receive a "big fat wage," he still reprimands Nora for overspending, emphasising the significance of them being responsible with their money. Because of her husband's death, Mrs.Linde is anxious for work, and her replacement at the bank, Krogstad, has threatened to show Nora in so that she can take over his position. The bank, in reality, serves as a metaphor for the protagonists' constant transactions with money throughout the storey. Money represents the characters' ability to exert control and dominance over one another in the play. When Torvald instructs Nora how much money she should spend on Christmas presents in the first scene, it demonstrates his dominance over her. In the meantime, Nora owes Krogstad a loan, which grants him authority over her and Torvald as a result of the obligation. Nora and Mrs.Linde are both unable to acquire large sums of money as a result of their gender; their incapacity to acquire major sums of money is one way in which they are oppressed by sexism at the time of the novel's publication.

Having money might be advantageous, but it can also be destructive, as the play demonstrates. Despite the fact that Nora is overjoyed at the beginning of the play because she has "raised" the funds for her and Torvald's trip to Italy, the debt she owes quickly becomes a source of anxiety, dread, and guilt for Nora and her husband. As a result, the pleasures of getting money are demonstrated to have a negative side effect.

In a family, there is a lack of mutual trust. As a committed mother and wife, Nora is known for putting others before herself throughout the most of the game. In contrast to her husband and children, she is indifferent with the personal ramifications of her deceit and debt to Krogstad. Instead, she is concerned about the implications for her husband and children. Not because she wanted to hide her humiliation, but because she knew Torvald will wreck himself trying to protect her if she survives, she made the decision to kill herself even at the end of the play. The same way, Mrs.Linde is unhappy with her life because she has no spouse or family members to worry for, and thus she expresses her discontent with her lot in life. So these women find fulfilment by assisting others and fulfilling the caring, obedient roles that society expects them to play. Nora, on the other hand, realises through the course of the play that prioritising her responsibilities as a wife and mother will not bring her true happiness.

When she realises that Torvald would never put his life on the line to protect her, she realises that she had been deluding herself into thinking she was protecting her love, when in fact there was no such love, and that society's framework renders the love she had alleged impossible. Consequently, she decides to detach herself from him in order to forge her own sense of self in the process. Nora decides to live as a hermit near the end of the play in order to avoid the expectations placed on her by the rest of society.

Nora appears to be a loving and honest wife at first, but it soon becomes clear that she is concealing a huge secret from him: the undeniable fact that she borrowed money from Krogstad to fund a trip to Italy that she claims saved Torvald's life. Nora and Torvald are married, and they have a son, Torvald. Consequently, she is unable to claim that she has never challenged him or concealed anything from him. As soon as Mrs.Linde learns of her treachery, she is told that she must confess to Torvald immediately because a marriage cannot be successful unless both the husband and the wife are entirely honest with each other. When it is determined that Nora and Krogstad were both guilty of forgery, a comparison is drawn between the two women. Because of their deception, both of their lives are thrown into disarray: Krogstad's reputation is shattered, and Nora is forced to re-evaluate everything about herself and consequently society around her, which ultimately leads to her decision to leave her husband and family at the conclusion of the play.

In some aspects, deception is represented as a corrupting and corrosive force in people's lives; nevertheless, Nora's dishonesty was clearly driven by love—she lied in order to preserve her husband's life—and her dishonesty was definitely motivated by love. Furthermore, if it weren't for cultural rules prohibiting women from dealing with financial problems on their own, her actions would not have had to be deceptive. As a result, rather than being a personal weakness, Nora's dishonesty served as the lone means of overcoming limitations in order to do a wonderful performance.

Agonies of the Individual vs. Society's Morality:

Throughout the battle, Krogstad appears to be more concerned with his reputation than with anything else. After being chastised by society for his dishonesty, he makes an effort to restore his good name in the eyes of the general public. Nonetheless, his conversation with Mrs.Linde in the third act reveals that, rather than relying on outward respectability, the only way for him to be happy is to reform himself and reclaim the private integrity that he has lost over the years. In this episode, Nora tells Krogstad that the way society perceives him is irrelevant if he does not value himself as a private individual.

8.6 CHARACTER ANALYSIS:

1. Nora

Nora, a devout mother and wife, spends the majority of the play putting the needs of others before her own. In contrast to her husband and children, she is indifferent with the personal ramifications of her deceit and debt to Krogstad. Instead, she is concerned about the implications for her husband and children. Not because she wanted to hide her humiliation, but because she knew Torvald will wreck himself trying to protect her if she survives, she made the decision to kill herself even at the end of the play. The same way, Mrs. Linde is unhappy with her life because she has no spouse or family members to worry for, and thus she expresses her discontent with her lot in life. So these women find fulfilment by assisting others and fulfilling the caring, obedient roles that society expects them to play. Nora, on the other hand, realises through the course of the play that prioritising her responsibilities as a wife and mother will not bring her true happiness. When she realises that Torvald would never put his life on the line to protect her, she realises that she had been deluding herself into thinking she was protecting her love, when in fact there was no such love, and that society's framework renders the love she had alleged impossible. Consequently, she decides to detach herself from him in order to forge her own sense of self in the process. Nora decides to live as a hermit near the end of the play in order to avoid the expectations placed on her by the rest of society.

2. Torvald Helmer:

Torvald Helmer appears to be a lawyer who has lately been appointed to the position of director at the start of the play. He has three children with his wife, Nora Helmer, with whom he has been married for almost a decade. Despite the fact that he doesn't seem to like his children, he claims that they make the house "unbearable for everyone except the mothers." Even though he adores Nora and is quite fond of her, the fact that he treats her more like a pet, child, or object rather than a human being is discouraging. His views on marriage and society are unambiguous and conservative, as is his demeanour. Dr. Rank is one of his allies, and he pays him a daily visit in his office. While this looks to be a genuine companionship at the beginning of the play, as the play progresses, Torvald appears apathetic, if not even relieved, at the prospect of Dr. Rank's death. When he discovers Nora's hidden debt, he immediately activates her and keeps her active until he is satisfied that his reputation is safe. It is clear that Torvald is obsessed with his image and reputation, as indicated by his awareness of his social status and the fact that he is seen superior by people such as Nils Krogstad. Upon learning that Nora is leaving him, Torvald accuses her of being insane and behaving in an impertinent manner. In an attempt to change her mind, Torvald searches for a way to be with her until he realises how firm she is in her resolve. In spite of his patronising and harsh treatment of Nora,

Torvald's sadness when she exits the stage at the conclusion of the performance reveals that he cares about her (or a minimum of the thought of her).

3. Mrs.Linde

Mrs.Linde, as she is referred to by the villains, was Nora's former love interest before she met Mr.Linde. He or she could be a woman who has never had children and who married for financial security rather than for the sake of her children. When she and Krogstad were together, they were both psychotic, but he couldn't help her family since he was broke. She travels to town in quest of work in order to provide for herself and her family's well-being. All along, she appears to be a lovely modern woman; near the end of the play, she informs Krogstad that her profession brings her joy and significance. She is, nonetheless, more traditional in other aspects of her personality. She informs both Krogstad and Nora that she feels lonely because she does not have someone to care for her, thereby fulfilling the traditional female role of nurturer and caregiver in the process. She marries Krogstad near the end of the play as a result of her conviction in this. Nora is a firm believer in the importance of honesty, and she prevents Krogstad from returning the letter he wrote to Torvald, ensuring that Torvald learns Nora's secret in the process. However, although this appears to be a betrayal of Nora at first glance, it turns out to be a move in Nora's favour because Nora is only able to discover the truth about her marriage after Torvald discovers the debt. Mrs.Linde's conviction that honesty is typically preferable to deception is confirmed by this twist; nevertheless, Mrs.Linde had expected Nora's lying to be discovered rather than Torvald's vanity in his feelings to be confirmed by this twist.

4. Nils Krogstad is the play's antagonist from the very beginning of the production. After learning that he is being fired from his position at the bank, he blackmails Nora, who had borrowed money from him using a falsified signature. Forgery had been brought against him in the past, but he had avoided prison time because of the nature of the offence. Nonetheless, it had tarnished his reputation and made it incredibly difficult for him to get work. Later in the play, it is revealed that he had an affair with Kristine Linde, who had married another man in order to provide for her ailing mother and two young brothers at the time of the affair. As a result, Krogstad was left devastated and offended, as well as unhappy in his marriage, and he is now being held responsible for his moral decline. In the beginning, he is cruel to Nora, believing that he has never been treated with mercy in his life; however, after he and Mrs.Linde decide to marry, he becomes happier and renounces his threats against Nora, citing regret. He is one of many characters in the play who are compelled to engage in ethically questionable behaviour as a result of society's strict and harsh constraints.

5. The doctor, Dr. Rank, may be close friends with Torvald and Nora, whom he sees on a daily basis. Dr. Rank suffers from spinal tuberculosis, which he believes is caused by his father's vices, which include adulterous affairs and binge eating. It's immediately apparent that Dr. Rank has a thing for Nora, despite the fact that he's single and unmarried. He is cynical about life, so when he learns that his illness is terminal, he is overjoyed, and he refuses to see Torvald or Nora during his final days. According to what he predicted, the opposing characters aren't especially fond of him.

8.7 CRITICAL ANALYSIS:

We can gain a unique perspective on modern literature if we comprehend Ibsen's social experiments. Ibsenian theatre has become a part of the stage's social history, and understanding his work gives us a unique perspective on present literature. Another type of social criticism that Ibsen pioneered is the popular "theatre of the ludicrous," which indicates a private isolation from society and is communicated through humour. Because of the societal message that his plays convey, they are incredibly interesting to watch. His works would not have survived to the present day if it had not been for Ibsen's outstanding technical ability. In each drama, a logical structure is meticulously constructed from the ground up with well defined characters, interconnected plots, and happenings that have both symbolic and real-world importance. The symbolism in Ibsen's plays is never overdone; rather, it is subtle. In comparison to his vision of life, which is methodically incorporated into the environment, events, and character portrayals to bind them all together, the symbols are accidental and secondary. Having grown up with a propensity for painting, Ibsen was always meticulous in his attention to detail when recording his impressions. He regarded himself to be both a photographer and a playwright, with his skills of observation acting as a lens and his staged plays serving as evidence of his ability as a skilled darkroom worker, respectively. His ability to see into the future adds to the authenticity of his performances. In the case of Ibsen, his photographic abilities are due to the genuineness of his characters, the immediacy of his subjects, and his ability to pay attention to even the slightest details. His devotion to the reality of his dialogue was particularly noticeable during the several edits he performed for each performance. He attempted to mould each speech into the personality of the speaker by rewriting it numerous times in order to get the greatest meaning out of the fewest number of words. Ibsen's ability as a poet provided a touch of grace to his plain style, which was otherwise straightforward.

Ibsen's Thoughts on a Woman's Lack of Love:

There is a recurring element in all of Ibsen's works, and it is found in his social tragedies. An examination of the challenges of female social passivity in a male-dominated environment was the

subject of *A Doll's House* by John Steinbeck. What would have happened if Nora Helmer hadn't returned to the reception desk after contemplating her dilemma intrigued him. *Ghosts* is a film that explores the consequences of his thoughts. Individual love is extremely important to Ibsen, who believes that denial of any sort of love leads to the ultimate human misery. Individual love is also crucial to other people. When we look at Torvald from this perspective, we can see that he is an imperfect person who places the societal crime ahead of the sin against love.

Human Nature: Some Insights

It was politically prophetic for Ibsen to present his vision of democracy at a time when nations were battling for independence. He considered that "right" was a privilege reserved for the educated minority, rather than the general public. He believed that the development and enrichment of the individual was the only way to establish a community that was unusually cultured and enlightened in its outlook. To be sure, the theatre was a popular source of amusement up to the second part of nineteenth century. A by product of the dramatist's efforts was the development of new insights about the human condition. As a result of his modification of a recent theatrical occurrence, Ibsen gave the play an entirely new meaning in his work. The discovery of dramatic material in ordinary occurrences heralded the beginning of realism, which was already being used by novelists as disparate as Zola and Flaubert at the time of its conception. The quietly spoken "Sit down, Torvald," Nora gently encourages her husband, "since you and that I have a lot to say to each other." A theatrical performance becomes more than a diversion; it becomes an experience that has a direct impact on the lives of those who participate in it. During Ibsen's reign, the theatre was transformed into a pulpit, and the dramatist who challenged his audience to rethink their views on society was replaced by a minister of social duty.

8.8 QUESTIONS

1. Discuss 'A Doll's House' as a Realistic Play.
2. Discuss major characters of the play.
3. Critically discuss the significance of the title of the play.

8.9 BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Boyesen, Hjalmar. *A Commentary on the Works of Henrik Ibsen*. New York: Russell & Russell, 1973.
- Bradbrook, M.C. *Ibsen the Norwegian: A Revaluation*. London: Chatto and Windus, 1966.
- Egan, Michael, ed. *Ibsen: The Critical Heritage*. Boston: Routledge and K. Paul, 1972.

- Gray, Ronald. *Ibsen, A Dissenting View*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1977.
- Ibsen, Henrik (trans. Charlotte Barslund and Frank McGuinness). *A Doll's House*. London: Faber and Faber, 1997.
- Ibsen, Henrik (trans. Michael Meyer). *A Doll's House (Ibsen Plays: Two)*. London: Methuen Drama, 2000.
- Ibsen, Henrik. *A Doll's House*. No city: no publisher, 1879.
- Johnston, Brian. *Ibsen's Selected Plays: A Norton Critical Edition*. New York: W.W. Norton, 2004.
- Lebowitz, Naomi. *Ibsen and the Great World*. Baton Rouge: Louisiana University Press, 1990.
- Lee, Jennette. *The Ibsen Secret*. Seattle: University Press of the Pacific, 2001.
- Lyons, Charles R. *Henrik Ibsen: The Divided Consciousness*. Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1972.
- Marker, Frederick. *Ibsen's Lively Art*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1989.
- McFarlane, J., ed. *The Cambridge Companion to Ibsen*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994.
- Meyer, Michael. *Ibsen*. Great Britain: Sutton Publishing, 1967.
- Northam, John. *Ibsen: A Critical Study*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1973.
- Shaw, George Bernard. *The Quintessence of Ibsenism*. London: Dover Publishing, 1891.
- Steiner, George. *The Death of Tragedy*. London: Faber and Faber, 1961.
- Weigand, H. J. *The Modern Ibsen: A Reconsideration*. Salem, New Hampshire: Ayer, 1984.



A STUDY OF CHRISTOPHER FRY'S *A PHOENIX TOO FREQUENT* PART I

Unit Structure:

- 9.0 Objectives
- 9.1 Introduction: Christopher Fry and Post-war Britain
- 9.2 Verse Drama
- 9.3 *A Phoenix Too Frequent*: A Brief Overview
- 9.4 Conclusion
- 9.5 Important Questions
- 9.6 References

9.0 OBJECTIVES

The objectives of this unit are firstly, to ensure that the student develops an understanding of the social position of verse drama and a playwright such as Christopher Fry in the mid-20th century Britain, and secondly, to introduce Fry's *A Phoenix Too Frequent* as a play that succeeded in the immediate post-war period before the onset of a more realistic and minimalist style of theatre.

9.1 INTRODUCTION: CHRISTOPHER FRY AND POST-WAR BRITAIN

Christopher Fry (18 December 1907 – 30 June 2005) was a British poet and playwright. He was born as Arthur Hammond Harris to Charles John Harris, a master builder who retired early to work full-time as a licensed Lay Reader in the Church of England, and his wife Emma Marguerite Fry Hammond Harris in Bristol, England. In his youth, Fry took his mother's maiden name because he believed her to be related to the 19th-century Quaker prison reformer Elizabeth Fry. He eventually admitted that the relation to Elizabeth Fry was rather unsubstantiated. Nevertheless, Fry also adopted Elizabeth Fry's faith to become a Quaker, and consequently, a lifelong pacifist. As a pacifist, Fry played the role of a conscientious objector during World War II, and went on to serve in the Non-Combatant Corps. Accounts suggest that for a part of the time, he cleaned London's sewers. It was after this brutally trying period of war that Fry wrote a comedy: *A Phoenix Too Frequent*. (Nightingale)

A formidable figure in the British theatre scene of the mid-20th century, Fry was best known for his verse drama. His popularity sustained in the five years beginning in 1946, immediately after the end of the

second World War— five of his major dramas, plus his translation of a Jean Anouilh play, achieved critical and public appreciation.

Fry is placed in the literary tradition of several other post-war playwrights such as T. S. Eliot and Archibald MacLeish who attempted a revival of drama in verse. The rich, poetic grandeur of the genre is most fully visible in Fry's *The Lady's Not for Burning* (1948), which remains till date his best-known play and is produced regularly. Fry's mainstream popularity first began when he was commissioned by Alec Cunes, the manager of the Arts Theatre in London. This commission led to the writing of *The Lady's Not for Burning*, which was first performed there in 1948 and directed by the actor Jack Hawkins. The play met with great success and was eventually transferred to the West End for a nine-month run, starring John Gielgud as well as Richard Burton and Claire Bloom as a part of its cast. *The Lady* went on to be presented on Broadway in 1950, again with Burton. The warm reviews and critical acclaim that Fry's play received marked an undeniable revival in the audience's interest in poetic drama. *The Lady* remains one of Fry's most performed plays and has also gathered some popular and political significance after it inspired British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher to declaim, "You turn if you want to — the lady's not for turning," at the Conservative Party conference in 1980.

The 1950s were speckled with several adaptations and translations from Fry, including the adapted translation of Jean Anouilh's *Invitation to the Castle* as *Ring Round the Moon* for director Peter Brook. In the same period, Fry also wrote *Venus Observed*, which was produced at the St James's Theatre by Laurence Olivier. Shortly after, in 1951, Fry wrote *A Sleep of Prisoners*, which was first performed at St Thomas' church in Regent Street, London, and went on tour with Denholm Elliott and Stanley Baker.

In 1954, Fry penned a winter play starring Katharine Cornell and Edith Evans, called *The Dark is Light Enough*. The play was the third in a quartet of seasonal plays and notably featured Leonard Bernstein's famed incidental music. This play followed the springtime of *The Lady's Not for Burning* and the autumnal *Venus Observed*. The quartet was completed in 1970 with *A Yard of Sun*, representing summer.

A number of works by Fry in the period that followed these seasonal plays were translations from French dramatists. These included a play called *The Lark*, which was an adaptation of Jean Anouilh's *L'Alouette* ("The Lark"). In 1955, Fry translated both a *Tiger at The Gates*, which was based on Jean Giraudoux's *La guerre de Troie n'aura pas lieu*, as well as *Duel of Angels*, adapted from Giraudoux's *Pour Lucrèce*. Fry went back to Giraudoux in 1960 with his *Judith*.

The fullness of verse drama such as Fry's was, unfortunately, short lived. After the success of several dramas in verse in the immediate post-war period, the scene and aesthetic tastes of modern English theatre shifted to realism and minimalism. The existential minimalism of the

plays of Samuel Beckett and Harold Pinter, the arrival of John Osborne, and the 'kitchen-sink' realists in the 1950s contributed directly to a decline in the popularity of poetic language and theatrical grandeur.

After Fry's poetic style of drama fell out of fashion in the mid-1950s, his focus shifted to writing and working mainly for cinema in the 1960s. He had numerous cinematic collaborations to his credit, including one with Denis Cannan on a screenplay for the film version of John Gay's *The Beggar's Opera* (1953), for director Peter Brook, and starring Laurence Olivier. Fry's work as one of the writers of the widely popular film, *Ben-Hur* (1959), directed by William Wyler, remained uncredited for several years. Nevertheless, drama seemed to have remained Fry's first love, and he continued to write plays, including *Curtmantle* for the Royal Shakespeare Company in 1962, and *A Yard of Sun* – the fourth in his seasonal quartet as mentioned earlier – for the Nottingham Playhouse in 1970.

Fry's popularity, albeit short-lived in the theatre scene, is still sustained as an important figure in the proliferation of drama in verse. Diane Gillespie writes:

"Poetry in the theatre, Christopher fry says, is a response to the twentieth-century need for a new realism.' In saying so, he follows in the wake of W. B. Yeats, J. M. Synge, and T. S. Eliot, and is joined by other English-speaking dramatists like Archibald MacLeish. Maxwell Anderson. Robert Frost. W. H. Auden, and Christopher Isherwood. However diverse and uneven their achievements are in practice, these men are remarkably consistent in theory: the realistic or naturalistic theatre dominated by imitators of Ibsen's social-problem plays, they insist, must be amplified or replaced' instead of mundane, trivial human lives lived in powerlessness and despair, they emphasize deeper emotion and sensitivity in man, or they insist that man and his efforts are potentially noble however much his modern environment seems to degrade him. Poetry, they insist, communicates these complexities more successfully than prose.' Fry's own emphasis is on the spiritual dimension in the human experience and the poetic language that can say "heaven and earth in one word.'" (287)

Benedict Nightingale also suggests that Fry's plays were often spiritual at their core, and radiated an optimistic faith in God and humanity, evoking, in his words, "a world in which we are poised on the edge of eternity, a world which has deeps and shadows of mystery, and God is anything but a sleeping partner." (qtd. in Nightingale). Fry is said to have written his plays in poetry because that was "the language in which man expresses his own amazement" at the complexity both of himself and of a reality which, beneath the surface, was "wildly, perilously, inexplicably fantastic." (Nightingale)

9.2 VERSE DRAMA

Verse drama, as a genre, can be described quite broadly as any drama written in verse, and such a form may also be called 'poetic drama'. In poetic drama the dialogue is written in verse, and the forms of such verse vary according to languages and at time literary traditions. For instance, poetic drama in English is usually in blank verse, which consists of lines in iambic pentameter which are unrhymed. In French, the verse in poetic drama is the twelve-syllable line called the *alexandrine*.

Drama in verse was for several centuries the most dominant mode of drama in both European and non-European literary and artistic cultures. Most dramatic works in Elizabethan and Restoration England were in verse, including the plays of Christopher Marlowe and William Shakespeare. In Germany, Johann Wolfgang Goethe's much acclaimed and influential *Faust*, among others, was a verse drama as well. Due to its continued use in the literary works of the 'Golden Age' of literature, especially in England, verse drama has come to be associated with the seriousness, heroism, and grandeur of tragedy. Aside from the artistic and aesthetic pull of this form, a more practical advantage of verse drama is that lines in verse are often easier for the actors to memorize in the original, precise form.

The immediate period following the end of the second World War in the twentieth century, proved to be a period conducive to the revival of drama written in verse. The ravages of war, the social and moral upheaval of society, as well as a general desire for optimism made the theatre scene prime for the richness of poetic plays.

In what David Daiches calls "by far the most interesting development in dramatic literature in the first half of the twentieth century" (1109), writers such as W. B. Yeats and T. S. Eliot began their experiments in reviving poetic drama. Yeats, especially, began by writing fantastical plays on Irish mythological themes, but from the beginning he showed a symbolic power in both action and imagery, which suggested levels of meaning the drama had not sought after for a long time (Daiches 1109). The period also saw the verse-drama of John Millington Synge, whose poetic prose based on the speech rhythm of the Irish peasantry provided him with some of the resources of his unique vocabulary, which in drama was both poetic and real, both rich and natural (Daiches 1110). T. S. Eliot, another stalwart of this tradition, attempted to restore ritual to drama; Eliot's *Murder in the Cathedral* (1935), arguably remains the most successful of his plays because the poetic, lilting ritualistic element is implicit in the situation (Daiches 1111). Christopher Fry followed in this tradition with an airy exuberance in both imagery and wit, with *A Phoenix Too Frequent* (1946), *The Lady's Not for Burning* (1948), and *Venus Observed* (1950).

The sudden and intense popularity of such verse-drama was also a reaction to the realistic ‘problem’ plays of G. B. Shaw or John Galsworthy written in straightforward prose. While these plays provided an understanding of the social ills of the age in great depth, their tone often bordered on pedantic and did little to address the sentimental requirements of the immediate post-war age.

As societal narratives progressed, and the ideas of fragmentation, minimalism, and alienation took hold and the dramatical aesthetic of England and other neighbouring countries, verse-drama rapidly declined in popularity, making the poetic plays of Yeats, Eliot, Synge, and Fry the last of a rich and long tradition.

9.3A PHOENIX TOO FREQUENT: A BRIEF OVERVIEW

After the end of the second World War, in which Christopher Fry served in the Non-Combatant Corps, he wrote a comedy called *A Phoenix Too Frequent*, which was produced at the Mercury Theatre, Notting Hill Gate, London, in 1946, starring Paul Scofield. The Mercury Theatre was opened by Ashley Dukes in 1933. A part of the theatre’s brief was to strive to present new and experimental drama. Before the second World War and the subsequent upheaval began, plays by T. S. Eliot, W. H. Auden, Christopher Isherwood and many other verse dramatists of the time were presented there. After the war, the Mercury reverted to its endeavour to showcase new plays and forms of theatre. In the April of 1946, shortly after the end of the war, the theatre staged the first British performance of *The Resurrection* by W. B. Yeats as well as the world premiere of Fry’s comedy *A Phoenix Too Frequent*. Interestingly, both works had a limited cast, with only four performers in the Yeats play, and three in that of Fry.

For *A Phoenix Too Frequent*, Christopher Fry took as his inspiration Jeremy Taylor’s retelling of a tale from Petronius, while the title of the play comes from Robert Burton’s translation of lines from an epigram of Martial, lamenting his lost love, in comparison with whom a ‘peacock’s undecent, a squirrel’s harsh, a phoenix too frequent’.

The play is a comedy that is based upon the once well-known tale of the “Widow of Ephesus” told in Petronius’ “Satyricon”. The Widow, here named Dynamene, has vowed to join her husband Virilius in the afterlife by starving herself to death in his tomb. Her faithful servant Doto hasto follow her mistress into death. Dynamene and Doto while away their time in the tomb by discussing their mental states and recalling Virilius’ exaggerated grandeur, thereby setting the comic tone of the play.

The situation becomes complicated when a Roman soldier, Tegeus, guarding six recently hanged prisoners, follows the light into the tomb and finds the women. At first, Doto is quite taken by Tegeus and attempts to woo him. However, Tegeus finds greater interest in Dynamene. In these

exchanges, Doto's insatiable appetite for men in combination with her imminent death becomes a source of humour. It is notable that Fry presents Doto's dalliances in a positive light, with an air of celebration rather than moral highhandedness, and sets a decidedly secular tone for the play.

Tegeus offers Doto and Dynamene wine, and the women begin to chat more animatedly under the influence. Tegeus' consistent admiration for Dynamene's faithfulness soon turns to love while Dynamene is torn between her vow and the possibility of new life. At the end of the play, Tegeus steps out to check on the bodies he is guarding and finds one of them missing. Tegeus returns to the tomb and reports to Dynamene that he must kill himself honourably rather than be hanged after he is found guilty of misplacing a body. Here, Dynamene resolves to save Tegeus' life by sacrificing Virilius literally and figuratively. Virilius is 'resurrected' from the tomb to give Tegeus a 'new life', and thus ensure that Dynamene continues to live on. Fry's play draws both its humour and its philosophy from the false heroics of Dynamene's mourning of her husband in his tomb, and her reawakening to the joy of life by a handsome officer who enters the tomb to rest on a course of duty (Fry).

Through *A Phoenix Too Frequent*, alongside several other of his plays, Fry thus brings colour and gaiety to the stage in the form of humour, while also artfully rendering myth and allegories through his rich verse. The play is an artful blend of an old dramatic form and new thematic as well as comic styles.

9.4 CONCLUSION

A study of Christopher Fry's play, *A Phoenix Too Frequent*, is of great importance to gain a fuller understanding of drama in the mid-20th century. The play allows a glimpse not only into classical techniques and contemporary humour, but also allows a study of the counter-views to the realists of the 1940s and 50s. After the temporal distance of over half a century, Fry's verse drama can be appreciated not only for its inauguration of a particular trend, but also for its inherent worth. Fry's work remains a beacon of the lively, dialogic nature of drama, and of literature as a whole.

It is important to credit Christopher Fry with not only bringing a neo-Elizabethan verbal dash to the theatre scene that was growing increasingly dry, but also as the writer who brought a refreshing warmth and to post-war Britain. Even at the time, Fry was not without critics who argued that Chekhov, Ibsen and Shaw had proved that prose was the proper form for contemporary drama. But Fry, through his suppleness and versatility, remained a dominant figure in the English theatre of the early 1950s. For Kenneth Tynan, "he gave us access to imagined worlds in which rationing and the rest of austerity's paraphernalia could be forgotten." Fry, who took a quiet pride in liberating the theatre from one-dimensional realism, often found his works side-lined on account of

escapism by the adherents of the "angry young men" and the existential minimalists. His poetry was increasingly dismissed as affected and decorative. The critic Denis Donoghue talked of "the wanton prancing of words." (Nightingale; Billington)

Nevertheless, Fry still believed passionately in the validity of poetic drama. As he wrote in the magazine, *Adam*: "In prose, we convey the eccentricity of things, in poetry their concentricity, the sense of relationship between them: a belief that all things express the same identity and are all contained in one discipline of revelation." (Billington)

9.5 IMPORTANT QUESTIONS

1. Critically examine the socio-political factors that determined the theatre scene in mid-20th Century Britain.
2. How does verse drama differ from the realistic and minimalist plays of the 1950s?
3. Discuss the style of the literary tradition that Christopher Fry was placed in.
4. Offer a brief overview of Christopher Fry's body of work.
5. Comment on the decline of verse-drama in the second half of the 20th century, and the subsequent shifts in English theatre.

9.6 REFERENCES

- Billington, Michael. "Christopher Fry Christian Humanist Playwright Who Brought A Spiritual Elan To The Drab World Of Postwar Theatre". *The Guardian*, 2005,
- Daiches, David. *A Critical History of English Literature: Volume II*. Mandarin, 2015.
- Fry, Christopher. "A Phoenix Too Frequent." *The Hudson Review*, vol. 3, no. 2, 1950, pp. 165–202. *JSTOR*, www.jstor.org/stable/3856638. Accessed 31 Dec. 2020.
- Gillespie, Diane Filby. "Language as Life: Christopher Fry's Early Plays." *Modern Drama*, vol. 21 no. 3, 1978, p. 287-296. *Project MUSE*, doi:10.1353/mdr.1979.0015.
- Nightingale, Benedict. "Christopher Fry, British Playwright In Verse, Dies At 97". *The New York Times*, 2005, <https://www.nytimes.com/2005/07/05/theater/christopher-fry-british-playwright-in-verse-dies-at-97.html>.
- <https://www.theguardian.com/news/2005/jul/04/guardianobituaries.art.sobituaries>.



A STUDY OF CHRISTOPHER FRY'S *A PHOENIX TOO FREQUENT* PART II

Unit Structure:

10.0 Objectives

10.1 Synopsis

10.2 Significance of Character Names

10.3 Themes

10.3.1. The Archetypal Dialectic of Life, Death, and Resurrection

10.3.2 Moral Dilemma

10.4 Symbolic Layers in *A Phoenix Too Frequent*

10.5 Conclusion

10.6 Important Questions

10.7 References

10.0 OBJECTIVES

The objectives of this unit are, firstly, to help students develop an in-depth understanding of the themes, symbols, and literary techniques that are at play in Christopher Fry's *A Phoenix Too Frequent*, and secondly, to equip them with the tools to form their own interpretation of the play after engaging with a variety of perspectives.

10.1 SYNOPSIS

The one-act play is set in the underground tomb of the recently-dead Virilius, near Ephesus. Dynamene, Virilius' grieving widow, has determined to remain in the tomb until she can join Virilius in the underworld. She is accompanied by her maid Doto. Outside the tomb, there are several human bodies hanging on trees. The play opens during the night, as Doto and Dynamene fast. The two ladies are disturbed at 2 a.m. by Tegeus, a soldier on guard nearby, who comes to investigate the activity taking place in the tomb, drawn by the light inside. He has originally been put on guard over the bodies of six criminals hanged nearby. Doto and Tegeus begin bantering as Dynamene sleeps, and share wine as well. When Dynamene wakes up, she is at first displeased by Tegeus' presence in her place of mourning and thinks of him as a trespasser, but warms up to him eventually. The intimacy between the two increases, and Dynamene renames Tegeus as Chromis. However, Tegeus eventually has to return to check on his guard post, which he leaves unmanned while spending time in the tomb. When Tegeus returns shortly

after, he reports that one of the bodies from his post is missing, and was most likely cut down by the family members for a proper funeral. He further reports that when his neglect of his duties will be discovered, he is liable to court martial. Tegeus then resolves to kill himself rather than be dishonoured thus. Once again, Dynamene finds herself faced with the prospect of losing her love a second time. However, she suggests that she use Virilius' body as a substitute for the body that has gone missing on Tegeus' watch. While Tegeus is appalled at first, she manages to persuade him. Dynamene, Tegeus and Doto drink a toast to the memory of Virilius as the play ends, as Dynamene opts for life with Tegeus/Chromis rather than death with the entombed Virilius.

10.2 SIGNIFICANCE OF CHARACTER NAMES

The characters in Christopher Fry's *A Phoenix Too Frequent* are limited, yet layered with meaning.

Dynamene, whose name means power/energy, is the character at the centre of the play. She is recently widowed and has made the decision to join her husband in the afterlife. However, she finds that her penance and her sentiments are ceremoniously interrupted by Tegeus, and is eventually attracted to him. Dynamene, like the reference of her name suggests, does indeed wield a considerable amount of power over the rest of the characters in the play. Doto is condemned to die simply as a companion for Dynamene, and she further decides what is to be done with the dead Virilius' body in order to save Tegeus, who she takes the liberty of re-naming Chromis.

Dynamene is accompanied by Doto, whose name refers to 'dowry', which could mean property. In this case, the name is perhaps a suggestion of the slave-like position that Doto occupies under Dynamene. Doto is 'meant to' die alongside Dynamene and keep her company in her mourning. The lack of choice and agency given to the character of Doto is thus foregrounded in the meaning of her name. Phonetically, Doto also sounds like 'doting', wherein she dotes on Dynamene and on several of her own lovers, or alternatively, 'dodo' suggestive of her comical role in the play.

Tegeus is the handsome soldier who acts as an intervention in Dynamene and Doto's resolution to mourn until death. His name is phonetically similar to the word 'tedious', and may be thus seen as a suggestion of his (at first) tiresome interruption of the two ladies' attempt at death by starvation. He also offers them food and wine in the course of the play. Dynamene decides to rename Tegeus as Chromis, stating "I shall call you Chromis. It has a breadlike I think of you as a crisp loaf". The signification of Tegeus as colour may be a marker of his role in returning the colour to the prospects in Dynamene's, and indirectly Doto's, life. He also literally returns the colour to their cheeks by offering them wine.

The play is set in the tomb of Virilius, whose name harks to 'virility'. However, his absence in the play, an ironic description of him by Dynamene, alongside his replacement by Tegeus adds a rather comical effect to the association of Virilius to virility. At one point, while mourning for Virilius, Dynamene declares "I am lonely, /Virilius. Where is the punctual eye/ And where is the cautious voice which made/ Balance-sheets sound like Homer and Homer sound/ Like balance-sheets?". These descriptions of Virilius grate against the traditional definition of virile masculinity, and enhances the effect that Tegeus' virility has on Doto, Dynamene, and the comic irony of the play. However, Virilius' is able to figuratively 'give life' to Dynamene and Tegeus when his body is used to evade Tegeus' court martial and/or impending death.

10.3 THEMES

10.3.1. The Archetypal Dialectic of Life, Death, and Resurrection

The saving of one's life, and losing that life, exist in a dialectical, reciprocal relationship in Christopher Fry's *A Phoenix Too Frequent*. After Tegeus and Dynamene fall in love, Tegeus discovers that one of the bodies that he was guarding is missing, and resolves to kill himself instead of being discovered in dishonour. Death, thus arrives close on the heels of the newfound life shared by Dynamene and Tegeus. Emil Roy notes interestingly that in a number of plays by Fry one finds "the overt and concealed suicide attempts, a motif which Fry had observed in a hospital for shell-shocked patients after the war while he was considering the problem of acting Hamlet. Although he had the reluctant prince in mind, his insights illuminate the conflicts of most of his displaced seekers for identity" (96), thus situating the life-death dialectic of Fry's play in the context of its time, alongside its mythological significance.

Tegeus' fate is resolved by Dynamene's decision to use Virilius' body as a substitute; the lover's dalliance in the tomb is "not regular and circular, but elastic and elliptical" between life and death, much like the Christian myths that Fry borrows so heavily from. Unlike Virilius' "daily revolution of habit" (Fry 167), the relationship between the two new lovers, Dynamene and Tegeus, is counterpointed by its occurrence, as it were, between life and death.

The title of the play becomes a significant image in such a dialectic context between life and death, for it references the phoenix that gets new life out of its own death. The phoenix submits to time and death, and in doing so is paradoxically liberated into a new life. A life together for Dynamene and Tegeus too comes out of time and (a) death:

DYNAMENE. Time runs again; the void is space again;
Space has life again; Dynamene has Chromis(Fry 198)

Tegeus and Dynamene discover at the end of the play that they need not necessarily become the victims of death, but can harness it for

their own benefit and life instead. Alvin Vos argues that the life-death dialectic is linked specifically to its Christian substructure. The lifeless corpse of Virilius suddenly acquires the power to save the erring soldier from his doom. Virilius is to accomplish his mission as Christ did, by hanging from a holly tree. Moreover, his substitutionary atonement is, from another perspective, his resurrection from the tomb. He figuratively moves again in the world to achieve the welfare of the lovers (240). The theme of resurrection in the play thus becomes a potent one; as a result of Virilius' resurrection, Dynamene's and Doto's imminent death in the tomb is subverted, while Tegeus is given a 'new life' by the use of Virilius' body.

Fry himself explained in a lecture delivered on "Death" at Chichester Cathedral that "The nature of love and the nature of death... are not opposites, but correlatives... If death has the quality of mystery it is only so because of the abundant mystery of life" (qtd. in Vos 239).

10.3.2 Moral Dilemma

The characters in Fry's play consistently display a moral and/or psychological dilemma.

The actions of the widow of Ephesus, who is Dynamene in Fry's play, serve as moral as well as philosophical markers for the concepts of love, loyalty, atonement, and choice. Dynamene, who has made a seemingly permanent decision of starving to death in Virilius' tomb, is faced with multiple choices, especially when she is confronted with the prospect of a life with Tegeus. Even as she is prepared to die, she confesses her dilemma while speaking to Tegeus (and to herself):

DYNAMENE. Stop, stop, I shall be dragged apart!
Why should the fates do everything to keep me
From dying honourably? They must have got
Tired of honour in Elysium. Chromis, it's terrible
To be susceptible to two conflicting norths.
I have the constitution of a whirlpool.
Am I actually twirling, or is it just sensation? (Fry 192)

With the arrival of Tegeus, she is drawn into conversation and offered wine, where her decision to starve and mourn is challenged. Further, she finds herself attracted to Tegeus while still in Virilius' tomb, and acting upon her vow to join him in death. Dynamene is faced with firstly, the choice of her older love for the dead Virilius and her newfound love for the lively Tegeus, and secondly with the choice of death as per her vow and of life in what Tegeus has to offer. It is her choice of life with Tegeus that allows her to navigate the decision to use Virilius' body to save Tegeus from the court martial and secure her life with him.

Doto, Dynamene's maid, is jolly, and celebrates her colourful life even when she is faced with her own imminent death. She does not

attempt to rid any thoughts about the men she has had relations with in the past, and proceeds to philosophise about her choices in with the arrival of Tegeus. Although Doto assures Dynamene that she is “dying to be dead” (Fry 195), just like her mistress, her appetite for her lovers consistently subverts her resolve. She continually oscillates between the commitment to join Dynamene in the quest for death and her scarcely repressible desire to have the interloper Tegeus as her lover (Vos 234). Such a breach of moral ‘propriety’, and its presentation through Doto’s humorous philosophy of life make the question of bodily desire in Doto’s mind, and in the play, an ambivalent one (Wiersma 295). When she admits to her mistress that she would not have allowed the soldier into the tomb, she becomes explicit about her dilemma:

DOTO. Maybe I could have kept him out
But men are in before I wish they wasn't.
I think quickly enough, but I get behindhand
With what I ought to be saying. It's a kind of stammer
In my way of life, Madam. (Fry 196)

However, Vos writes that Fry means to celebrate Doto’s “openness to the tension between flesh and spirit, death and love” (234), and that her sexuality in the play is Fry’s wonderfully ironic symbol for the Phoenix-like life that the play affirms:

DOTO. ...life is more big than a bed
And full of miracles and mysteries like
One man made for one woman, etcetera, etcetera.
Lovely. I feel sung, madam, by a baritone
In mixed company with everyone pleased.
And so I had to come with you here, madam,
For the last sad chorus of me. It's all
Fresh to me. Death's a new interest in life (Fry 168)

Tegeus, the soldier, is also faced with multiple moral dilemmas from the moment of his arrival in the tomb. At first, he is faced with the affections of Doto, which he side-lines in order to nurture his feelings for Dynamene. He is then faced with the question of whether he loves the idea of Dynamene, created by her sense of purity and sacrifice, or whether he loves the actual woman in the flesh.

Tegeus is presented with his largest dilemma at the end of the play, where he first must decide between facing dishonour after the court martial, or dying honourably by his own hand before he is found. After he resolves to kill himself, Dynamene creates another dilemma by suggesting that they rid themselves of Tegeus’ court martial by replacing the lost body on the tree with the dead Virilius.

It is interesting to note that while Doto as well as Tegeus are both faced with moral dilemmas and life-changing choices of their own, Dynamene makes the final decision, or at least influences it greatly.

She makes the decision of using Virilius' body as a substitute, thereby determining the course of Tegeus' life:

TEGEUS. Hang your husband?

Dynamene, it's terrible, horrible.

DYNAMENE. How little you can understand. I loved

His life not his death. And now we can give his death

The power of life. Not horrible: wonderful!

Isn't it so? That I should be able to feel

He moves again in the world, accomplishing

Our welfare? It's more than my grief could do

(Fry 202)

Further, it is Dynamene's decision to not let Doto die in the tomb, after which she orders Doto out of the tomb:

DYNAMENE. I'm asking you

To leave me, Doto, at once, as quickly as possible,

Now, before-now, Doto, and let me forget

My bad mind which confidently expected you

To companion me to Hades. Now good-bye

Good-bye (Fry 196).

From the perspective of gender roles and expectations, one may question why the onus of the moral dilemma falls squarely on the shoulders of the widow. The dilemma in the play, between the honour of dying for one's love versus the choice of continuing to live on with another can be wielded to vilify Dynamene, while the morals of Virilius and Tegeus remain untouched. Interestingly, Doto, the only other woman in the play, is characterised as a woman who has taken more lovers than she can count, and is used as a source of humour. The theme of morality in the play, thus, is gendered by the sexual politics of the characters.

10.4 SYMBOLIC LAYERS IN A *PHOENIX TOO*

FREQUENT

Christopher Fry's *A Phoenix Too Frequent* operates between the boundaries of a bawdy secularism and a Christian allegory. The metamorphoses of the lives and decisions of the characters also represent several symbolic levels. All the characters in the play, in their own way, come to represent the erotic. Dynamene, Doto, Tegeus, and even Virilius signify the desire for life and for love in its bodily and sexual form, especially when confronted with death. However, Doto and Virilius seem to both embody a more physical desire, as is evidenced through Doto's recollections of the several men she has been with, and Virilius' name evoking the image of sexual prowess. Such a physical desire is

counterpointed by the existentially placed love of Dynamene and Tegeus, which is ripe with images of recreation and resurrection. However, any clear symbolic division is problematised by Fry through the use of humour and moral questions directed at Dynamene's renewed affections for Tegeus.

Dynamene and Tegeus both also become symbols of existing outside societal and statutory laws; Dynamene finds that she is no longer expected to be wedded to the societal idea of sacrificing her life in grief over her husband, while Tegeus learns that the Regulations' are nothing more than mere demands that may be fulfilled by an unexpected substitute.

The bowl of wine that is shared by the three characters also becomes an important symbolic reference point in the mythical context of the play. At the outset, the bowl of wine becomes a mean of establishing a friendship between the living inhabitants of the tomb. Further, the intoxication of the wine allows Doto at first, and eventually Dynamene herself to stray from the original decision to starve until death and join Virilius in death. The reduced inhibitions between Dynamene and Tegeus also allow their love to blossom. Further, the design on the bowl becomes significant for its mythological connotations:

DYNAMENE. What an exquisite bowl...

TEGEUS. Yes. Do you see the design?

The corded god, tied also by the rays
Of the sun, and the astonished ship erupting
Into vines and vine-leaves, inverted pyramids
Of grapes, the uplifted hands of the men (the raiders),
And here the headlong sea, itself almost
Venturing into leaves and tendrils, and Proteus
With his beard braiding the wind, and this
Held by other hands is a drowned sailor (Fry 179)

From one perspective, the design on the bowl is an allusion to the Ovidian story about the kidnap of the wine-God Bacchus, described here as the corded god. He is kidnapped by sailors or "the raiders" who intend to sell him in Egypt as a slave. However, their venture is thwarted when the ship "erupting/ Into vines and vine-leaves, inverted pyramids" undergoes a metamorphosis caused by the god, and is consequently unable to move through the sea (Vos 231). The overthrow of Dynamene's journey to the underworld is interrupted in much the same way by the wine bowl and Tegeus, as the tomb transforms from a place of grief and death to a place of love, resurrection, and life.

10.5 CONCLUSION

Through *A Phoenix Too Frequent*, Christopher Fry participates in the revival of verse drama and artfully renders several complex themes

through rich, witty lines. The archetypal dialectics of life, death, and resurrection become integral to the movement of the play. Fry's articulation of the dialogue between life and death reveals that they are complementary to each other, rather than in opposition. It also reveals a phoenix-like philosophy about the celebration of life, further highlighted by the moral dilemmas of the characters, and their comic renditions. A study of Fry's play, thus, allows an understanding of one of the oldest forms of drama in combination with a variety of secular themes and comedy.

10.6 IMPORTANT QUESTIONS

1. Discuss the dialectics of life and death in the context of Christopher Fry's *A Phoenix Too Frequent*.
2. Critically comment on the symbols and the symbolic levels employed in Christopher Fry's *A Phoenix Too Frequent*. What is the significance of the wine bowl?
3. What are the moral dilemmas that shape the characters in Christopher Fry's *A Phoenix Too Frequent*?
4. How does Christopher Fry render the theme of resurrection in *A Phoenix Too Frequent*? Discuss in the context of the Christian mythology that informs the course of the play.
5. In your opinion, does Christopher Fry's *A Phoenix Too Frequent* successfully deliver its philosophy of the celebration of life in spite of the moral dilemmas of the characters? Justify your answer with textual evidence.

10.7 REFERENCES

- Fry, Christopher. "A Phoenix Too Frequent." *The Hudson Review*, vol. 3, no. 2, 1950, pp. 165–202. *JSTOR*, www.jstor.org/stable/3856638. Accessed 31 Dec. 2020.
- Roy, Emil. "Archetypal Patterns in Fry." *Comparative Drama*, vol. 1, no. 2, 1967, pp. 93–104. *JSTOR*, www.jstor.org/stable/41152429. Accessed 3 Jan. 2020.
- Vos, Alvin. "Christopher Fry's Christian Dialectic in "A Phoenix Too Frequent". *Renascence*, Summer 1984, p. 230-244. Print.
- Wiersma, Stanley M. "Christopher Fry's *A Phoenix Too Frequent*: A Study in Source and Symbol." *Modern Drama*, vol. 8 no. 3, 1965, p. 293-302. *Project MUSE*, doi:10.1353/mdr.1965.0037. Accessed 3 Jan. 2020.



A STUDY OF BADAL SIRCAR'S PLAY "PROCESSION" / "JULOOS" PART I

Unit Structure

- 11.0 Objectives
- 11.1 Origin of Indian Drama and Theatre
- 11.2. Modern Indian Drama
- 11.3 About the Playwright: Badal Sircar
- 11.4. Badal Sircar's Career as a Playwright
- 11.5. Badal Sircar's Contribution to Indian Modern Theatre
- 11.6. Badal Sircar's Concept of "The Third Theatre"
- 11.7. Let's Sum Up
- 11.8. Important Questions
- 11.9 References

11.0. OBJECTIVES

The prime objectives of this unit are to make the students familiar with the glimpses of the origin of Indian drama, modern Indian theatre, Badal Sircar as a prominent name in Indian theatre, his contribution to the third theatre and Indian theatre in general.

11.1 ORIGIN OF INDIAN DRAMA AND THEATRE

It is aptly said, "The stage constitutes a very important chapter in the social and political history of people, and the bend of national genius cannot be fully comprehended without its study. . . . it is no exaggeration to say that a 'nation is known by its theatre'" (Gupta -1). Drama / play projects the real life on stage. It makes aware readers / audiences to their lives when characters performed their roles on stage. We have a long history of drama. It almost traces back to more than two thousand years. The critic A. Berriedale Keith says, "Indian tradition, preserved in The *Natyasastra*, the oldest of the texts of the theory of the drama, claims for the drama divine origin, and a close connexion with the sacred Vedas themselves" (12). Indian drama, as it is viewed, originates from the ancient Four Vedas. According to the Hindu belief, the knowledge of dramatic art is created by the Lord Brahma- the Creator of the Universe. It is believed that the lord Indra requested Lord Brahma to create *Natya Veda*. This *Fifth Veda* derives a lot from the ancient Vedas. Lord Brahma, assigned this task of performing art to the Gods, and later it came to

Bharatmuni- the sage. Bharatmuni's *Natyashastra* has all the dramatic elements such as – dialogue, plot, theme, characters, plots, subplots, setting, stage decoration, language, music etc. Gradually *Natyashastra* turned into 'Folk Theatre' which is also considered as the 'First Theatre'. The Folk Theatre has its own strengths and limitations.

11.2 MODERN INDIAN DRAMA / THEATRE

The modern Indian drama mostly derives from contemporary Proscenium theatre which basically 'imports' a lot from the colonisers' performative arts. The influence was so prevalent that it supersedes the traditional Indian Folk Theatre. The critic Aparna Dharwadkar opines, "The influence of Western textual models produced a body of new "literary" drama and dramatic theory in several Indian languages, led to a large-scale translations and adaptations of European as well as Indian canonical plays, and generated the first nationalist arguments about the cultural importance of a national theatre in India." (3) During the colonial period, Indian theatre borrowed from proscenium theatre but with the indigenous themes and content.

The post-independence period witnessed a vast change in the Indian drama as it developed rapidly in various regional languages with the contemporary context such as afflicting impact of colonialism, traditional vs. modernism, impact of industrialization, issues of independent country and some dramatists made efforts to revive the folk theatre. The plays in the regional languages got worldwide acclaimed and got translated into other languages especially in English. The scenario of Indian theatre, however, got changed during the 1960s, when the contemporary renowned playwrights such as Vijay Tendulkar, Girish Karnad, Mohan Rakesh and Badal Sircar came on the stage of Indian theatre. These are the dramatists who broke away with the conventional trends of Indian drama with modern strategies. They brought modern man's concerns, anxiety, issues, feeling of meaningless existence in their scripts. One critic aptly writes ". . . these playwrights have made bold innovations and fruitful experiments in terms of both thematic concerns and technical virtuosity."

11.3 ABOUT THE PLAYWRIGHT: BADAL SIRCAR

Badal Sircar was born on 15th July 1925 in an educated middle-class family. Badal Sircar's real name is Sudhindra Sircar. He studied Civil Engineering from a reputed Bengal Engineering College, Shibpur, Howrah, near Kolkata, and completed his Masters of Arts from Jadavpur University in comparative literature. After completion of Civil Engineering, he became a town planner and started earning his livelihood. But he did not forget his childhood passion for theatre. Later he involved himself in politics for a short period of time. Disillusioned due to the political estrange policies, he concentrated on his job of being a civil

engineer at Maithon, near Kolkata. This was a time which allowed him to focus on his childhood passion for theatre. Badal Sircar formed a 'Rehearsal Club' with the help of his friends and started rehearsing the plays. But, he realised the lack of serious and relevant plays, this motivated him to write play scripts. The other reason was that Sircar felt dissatisfaction to see the contemporary Indian society was divided into two classes-the bourgeois and proletariat class. He desperately wanted to bring the balance in the society but was uncertain about the ways to bring the reformation in the society.

Drama, Sircar believed, is one of the important tools to reform the society and make people aware about the need of bringing the change in the society. He wrote his plays with certain intension / message to be given to the society. His most of the plays showed his rejection of artificial naturalistic approach of the contemporary playwrights. He reluctantly accepted 'Arts for Arts Sake'. He altered his plays totally to suit his purpose of reformation of the society. Sircar's innovative themes and experiments with the performances led to various social movements in the modern Indian Theatre. Through his plays, Sircar depicted the innate search for the ways to change the society for better. His plays, therefore portrayed the actual reality of commoners' life. The plays captured the exact essence and sensibilities of common people with their real-life pain, problems and sufferings. Most of his dramas focussed on socio-political situation in India, especially Bengal.

Badal Sarkar was awarded India's highest honour in the field of Theatre by the National Academy for the performing arts. "For his eminence in the field of drama and his contribution to its enrichment Sri Badal Sarkar receives the Sangeet Natak Academy Award for play writing". In 1969 he was awarded with the "Padmashree" award the greatest national recognition for artist in India. Badal Sircar dies on 13th May 2011.

11.4 BADAL SIRCAR'S CAREER AS A PLAYWRIGHT

Badal Sircar was the first-generation Bengali playwright of post-independence India. He was popularly known for his anti-establishment plays. Sircar, initially, started his career with the proscenium theatre but soon rejected it for its typical influence of Britishers. Sircar by profession was as a town planner in India, England and Nigeria. Later he entered Theatre and became an actor. Gradually he started directing dramas and later soon he became the playwright.

Many well-known critics acclaimed his work and compared him with contemporary popular playwrights in India such as Vijay Tendulkar, Mohan Rakesh, Girish Karnad and many other. Badal Sircar elevated egalitarian society. He was influenced by several western writers but he believed that influences will always be there, the question is whether one copies it exactly or assimilates it to make something new out of it to fulfil

one's own needs. Badal Sircar never charged for his plays' performances. As he intended through his free performances to raise people's awareness to fight for a better life.

He wanted to project an authentic picture of common masses on stage and hence formed his own concept of theatre as the "*Third Theatre*". At the beginning of his career he, was writing in the fashion of proscenium theatre but later left it. Though his path breaking play *EbongIndrajit* (Evam Indrajit, 1963) from the proscenium phase truly set Sircar as a playwright. The other plays like *That Other History*, (1965) and *There is No End* (1970) are the chief plays which Sircar wrote for the proscenium stage. However, he gave the reason of leaving the proscenium theatre. In one of the interviews, he said, the reason of quitting on the proscenium theatre is: "When I came to the proscenium stage, I hadn't realized the strength of the theatre. I wasn't aware of what theatre can do. In other words, there was already deep down an awareness of the limitations of this theatre. It was from that awareness itself that there eventually came the question of communication, utilization of space, redefining the spectator performer relationship, and the gradual realization that the distinctive feature of theatre is that it is a live show and it offers scope for direct communication, man to man communication, and therefore the barriers between the two parties to the process, viz. spectators and performers, should be minimized, and if possible, eliminated. With that realization, I left the proscenium theatre. (Sircar 8-9). Badal Sircar as a playwright through his 'Third theatre' produced the plays in his mother tongue-Bangla only. Later his almost all plays got translated worldwide.

11.5 BADAL SIRCAR'S CONTRIBUTION TO INDIAN MODERN THEATRE

In order to understand his huge contribution to Indian Drama and the Theatre one has to understand his prolific contribution as a whole. Sircar, initially, wrote few comedies such as *-Solution X* (1956), *Baropisima (The Elder Aunt)*, 1959), *Sanibar (Saturday)*, 1959), *Ram Shyam Jadu (Tom Dick Harry)*, 1961), *Ballabhpurer Rupkatha (The Fairy Tale of Ballabhpur)*1963) and many other.

Sircar believed that his roles as playwright, director and actor with precision was of significance. He said, "I wrote plays to perform them. I am a theatre person that's all." His scripts and radical use of theory surpassed the contemporary dramatists. Badal Sircar's Omniscient commitment to the Theatre of social change after independence especially during the 1960s. The decade witnessed formation of art in many parts of the world including India. Plays were performed throughout the country in various regional languages. Indian drama, however, got nationally recognised from one region to another. Badal Sircar, of course, made a major contribution to the Indian Theatre.

At the beginning of his career Badal Sircar wrote pure comedies of local Bengali during 1950s and 1960s. He came into limelight in 1965 with his seminal work *EbongIndrajit*. The play showed Sircar's rebellious beginning in the world of theatre. He never experimented for the sake of experiments. His plays explored the contemporary ruling classes and the exploitation of masses but with the positive remark. At the end of the play, Badal Sircar provided a concrete vision, an optimistic tone for better future. The theme of the play is a writer's search for the subject of his play. The play depicted a story of a man who was torn between his mother and his love Manasi. He looked for inspiration from them but failed he could not get married with Manasi and had to marry the one whom he did not love. When the play was performed for the first time it was a big hit, undoubtedly, accepted as a hallmark in Indian dramatic history. The play highlighted the anxiety, angst, dilemma, complexity and anxiousness of the Indian educated middle-class man. The play can be seen as an existentialist play based on Albert Camus and Samuel Beckett's Theatre of Absurd.

The play *EbongIndrajit* proved significant as Badal Sircar through it did away with contemporary traditional, conservative, naturalist conventions which have tied down the Indian Theatre. Badal Sircar gave up contemporary set conventions, montage of past and present, and introduced fragmentary scenes, with experiments with the language. Sircar also rejected the conventional features of drama such as 'unity of action', 'unity of time' and so on. Another feature of his play is his extensive and absolutely relevant use of poetry and wry humour.

One of the most modern leading Marathi playwrights and a critic G. P. Deshpande wrote about Badal Sircar's innovation in the theatre. The critic said, "Badal Sircar's Bangla is radically different from the pre-Sircar Theatre speech in Bangla that it came close to actual speech is not its only achievement, the economy of words was unknown to several Theatre traditions in India." (Mitra)

The play *EbongIndrajit* was an instant success on stage. The play was translated in many languages including Hindi, English, Marathi, Kannada, Gujarati etc. The play was performed in various parts of India. During 1964 to 1967, Sircar wrote many plays which firmly established him as a leading contemporary playwright in Indian Theatre.

Sircar's plays like *BaakiItihas (The Other History)* published in 1964, and *Pagla Ghoda (Mad Horse)* published in 1969, were the main plays based on the theme of existentialism. The play *BaakiItihas* projected the story of a man who killed himself because of the burden of that 'other history'. In fact, it killed almost all human beings but no one talked about it directly. Sircar's play very relevantly shouldered the responsibility on all the human beings. The play *Pagla Ghoda* centralises on the theme of the four men at graveyard watching the cremation of a girl who has committed suicide. The play unfolded each of their lives through

memories and showed how these characters were responsible directly or indirectly for the girl's suicide.

Sircar's plays got widespread publications and high-profile productions. Badal Sircar got widespread popularity and his name became indispensable in the Indian Modern Theatre. In spite of popularity and fame, Badal Sircar was not happy with the kind of experiments he was doing in Indian theatre. Richard Schechner accurately captured this dissatisfaction. The critic wrote, "Badal knew that the modern Theatre of psychology, drama, the spoken words, the proscenium stage, the box set, and the spectator, audience was dead. Worse, it was rotting." (1972)

This quote depicted Sircar's dissatisfaction with the contemporary Theatre. He rejected First Theatre that is Folk Theatre for its conservative ideologies and the rigid, redundant monotonous themes. He criticised the second theatre for its glorification of the rural India. He also denounced Proscenium Theatre which imported European especially Britishers' trends in the Theatre. Sircar did not accept these prominent theatres in India he wanted to bring innovations which will help to project modern man's life on Indian Theatre.

11.6 BADAL SIRCAR'S CONCEPT OF "THE THIRD THEATRE"

Badal Sircar's dissatisfaction with the First theatre i.e. Indian conventional Folk Theatre, Second Theatre (Urban) and the Proscenium Theatre, led him to form his own new Theatre and that he called it as the 'Third Theatre'. Folk Theatre was still busy with only the folk forms and the second theatre was engaged with the projection of an urban life which was a minor population. Therefore, Badal Sircar believed a true Theatre of the people, therefore, would have to go where the majority of population lives. 'Badal Sircar Theatre' was considered as an experimental and alternative as it took radical departure from these well established naturalists' theatres.

Sircar wanted to establish such a theatre where he could project his anger against the colonisers' exploitation of Indians and hence in his 'Third Theatre' he reacted and opposed the colonisers' language. He felt that English language cannot convey his objectives to the masses exactly as he wanted. Hence, he adopted his mother tongue- Bangla for his plays. Of course, later his plays got translated in English by others. His popular plays which were translated: *EbongIndrajit* (1963), *Michhil* (1974), *Bhoma* (1976), *Sukhpathya Bharter*, *BakiItihas* (1976), *Hattamalar Uparey* (1977), *There is No End* (1970) and *Basi Khabar* (1979) were written in Bengali language. These plays emphasise on meaningless existence of commoners, their struggle for the survival, the declining human values. He intended to make aware the down trodden classes of their exploitation by the bourgeois classes.

Sircar, through his new Theatre introduced a novel turn to the Indian Theatre. It was a theatre which had taken its foundation from both the First and the Second Theatre but with his own unique style. He made his dramas/ plays as 'live performance'. His scripts were performative scripts and hence very dynamic, multifaceted, multidimensional, multi-layered instead of rigid or limited and confined. The Third Theatre suited the post-independence environment and the changes that were taking place in and around India.

Badal Sircar realised the Proscenium Theatre was insufficient to bring all the liveliness of modern life and hence tried to enhance the relations between the performers and the spectators. The new theatre, he felt should not create an illusion of reality, but must project reality itself. Sircar intended the performers and the spectators must share the same space and acknowledge each other's presence. The theatre was completely indispensable on the performers' body on the one hand, and the spectators' imagination on the other end.

The three major features of Sircar's Third Theatre were its free of cost, portability, flexibility. Sircar never charged for the performances, only at the end of each performance, the group was requesting for charity and generous contributions by the spectators. The charity used to be the income source for planning of next performance. Badal Sircar never used props or any other costly material for the performances. His plays touched the inner self and emotions of the audience.

11.7. LET'S SUM UP

In this unit we have learned the origin of Indian drama and theatre from earlier times to the modern-day theatre. The later part of the unit made you acquainted with a modern-day theatre luminary, Badal Sircar, the circumstances that shape Sircar as a prominent playwright and his contribution to Indian theatre especially the third theatre. The glimpses of theatre and drama you gained in this unit will, by all means, help you understand and analyse Indian drama prescribed for your course.

11.8. IMPORTANT QUESTIONS

1. Trace the origin and development of Indian drama and theatre.
2. Describe the circumstances that shape Badal Sircar as a prominent Indian theatre personality.
3. Critically evaluate Badal Sircar's contribution to Indian Modern theatre.
4. Write short notes on:
 - I. Indian Modern theatre
 - II. The third theatre
 - III. Badal Sircar as a playwright

11.9 REFERENCES

- Bajaj, Yogita, and Sangita Mehta. "Emerging Trends in Indian English Drama." *Researchers World*. 1.1 (2010): 150-55. Web. 20 Jan. 2012.
- Bharatmuni. *The Natyasastra*. Trans. Manmoham Ghosh. Calcutta: The Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal, 1959. PDF file.
- Course Material For IDOL MA- Part I, Semester I, Paper VII- Drama
- Crow, Brian, and Chris Banfield. *An Introduction to Post-colonial Theatre*. New York: Cambridge University Press. PDF file.
- Dharwadker, Aparna Bhargava. *Theatre of Independence: Drama, Theory and Performance in India since 1947*. Iowa city: University of Iowa Press, 2005. PDF file.
- Dr.G. Kiran Kumar Reddy. Badal Sircar's Procession; Exploration of Search For Real Home *International Journal of Recent Research in Social Sciences and Humanities (IJRSSH)* Vol. 2, Issue 2, pp: (86-88), Month: April 2015 - June 2015, Available at: www.paperpublications.org
- Dr.Kulsoom Fatima, select plays of Badal Sircar <http://hdl.handle.net/10603/110706>
- Dutta, Ella. Introduction. *Three Plays: Procession/ Bhoma/ Stale News*. By Badal Sircar. Kolkata: Seagull Books, 1983. v-xi. Print.
- Gupta, Hemendra Nath Das. *The Indian Theatre*. New Delhi: Gyan Publishing House, 2009. Print.
- [https://frontline.thehindu.com/books/a-life-intheatre/article8068393.ece#:~:text=Michhil%20\(1974\)%20was%20one%20of,love%20Dhate%20relationship%20with%20Calcutta](https://frontline.thehindu.com/books/a-life-intheatre/article8068393.ece#:~:text=Michhil%20(1974)%20was%20one%20of,love%20Dhate%20relationship%20with%20Calcutta).
- Iyengar, K R Srinivasa. *Indian Writing in English*. New Delhi: Sterling Publishers Private Limited, 2008. Print.
- Keith, A. Berriedale. *The Sanskrit Drama in its Origin, Development Theory & Practice*. London: Oxford University Press, 1959. Print.
- Lal, Anand. *The Oxford Companion to Indian Theatre*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2004. Print.
- Mathur, J. C. "Hindi Drama and Theatre." Publications Division, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting. *Indian Drama*. Delhi: National Printing Works, 1956. 23-32. Print.
- Mitra, Shayoni. "Badal Sircar: Scripting a Movement." *TDR/The Drama Review*. 48.3. (2004): 59-78. Web. 20 Sept. 2011.
- Mohan, T. M. J. Indra. "Post-Colonial Writing – Trends in English Drama." *The Indian Review of World Literature in English*. 2.II (2006): n. pag. Web. 15 May 2014.

- Sarkar, Subhendu. “More on Badal Sircar (1925-2011).” *Frontier* 43.51 (2011): n. pag. Web. 2 Dec 2012.
- Sarkar, Subhendu. Introduction. *Two Plays Indian History Made Easy/ Life of Bagala*. By Badal Sircar. New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2010. xi-xxxvii. Print.
- Shayoni Mitra. “Badal Sircar: Scripting a Movement.” *TDR (1988-)*, vol. 48, no. 3, 2004, pp. 59–78. *JSTOR*,
- Sircar Badal. “Juloos”. Print (Hindi)
- Sircar Badal. “The Third Theatre: A Photographic Exhibition of his Work”. New Delhi: The Press, 2009. 8-13. Print.
- Sircar, Badal. “In Conversation: Badal Sircar with Samik Bandhopadhyay.”
- Sircar, Badal. *On Theatre*. Kolkata: Seagull Books, 2009. Print.
- Web- references:
- www.jstor.org/stable/4488571. Accessed 9 Feb. 2021.



A STUDY OF BADAL SIRCAR'S PLAY "PROCESSION" / "JULOOS" PART II

Unit Structure :

- 12.0 Objectives
- 12.1 Introduction to the Play
- 12.2 The significance of the Title 'Procession'
- 12.3 The Outline of the Play 'Procession'
- 12.4 Characters in the Play 'Procession'
- 12.5 Symbols/Imagery in the Play 'Procession'
- 12.6 The Themes of the Play 'Procession'
- 12.7 Idea of Stage Performance
- 12.8 Conclusion
- 12.9 Let's Sum up
- 12.10 Important Questions
- 12.11 References

12.0 OBJECTIVES

The objectives of this unit are to make the students acquainted with the introduction to Badal Sircar's play 'Procession' (originally *Michhil*), the significant use of title, its outline summary, characters, use of symbols and imagery, central themes of the play and Sircar's idea of stage performance. After the study of this unit, you will be able to critically evaluate not only the prescribed play 'Procession' but also entire corpus of Sircar's writing.

12.1 INTRODUCTION TO THE PLAY 'PROCESSION'

The prescribed play was originally published in 1972 in Bangla language. It is titled as *Michhilin* its original language which means procession. The play was first performed on 13th April 1974 at the village Ramchandrapur by Satabdi. The peculiar feature of the play that it had no distinct characters, plot or story line. It was circular and open-ended. The play was well written and performed. In most of the parts of Bengal, it was performed in its original language. The play and its performances became so popular in a very short period of time that people demanded it to be translated into various languages. Hence it got translated, later, in many languages. The play was titled as *Juloosin* Marathi, *Juloosin* Hindi, and *Procession* in English. The play projected multiple themes – such as the

consequences of colonisation, its impact on Indians especially commoners, increasing corruptions, unstable governments and its policies, class conflict, exploitation of labour class, underprivileged and downtrodden subalterns by the leading and emerging industrialists, their increasing greed for money etc. *Procession* highlights chaos, meaninglessness in existence, commoners' mental, physical, financial trauma, and widespread anarchy in the civilization and Indian culture.

12.2 THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE TITLE 'PROCESSION'

The play's title *Procession* was very apt and relevant as it was based on the dominant imagery for Kolkata's nickname as 'the city of procession'. Sircar remembered: "I have always had a love-hate relationship with Calcutta. In the early 1970s I had this idea of making a play on Calcutta in the form of a collage. As Calcutta is known as a city of processions, *Michhil* seemed to be an appropriate name as well as a suitable way of making the play. In the immediately preceding years, so many young people and adolescents were killed by the police, brutally and cruelly, secretly and openly, that the image of the man who is being killed every day was very strong in my mind, and I had a vague idea of a clownish old man, probably visualising myself in the role" (quote from Sircar; *Voyages in the Theatre, On Theatre*; pages 115-16).

The projection of the mental deformity (procession) is affected and how it was perpetuated is focussed. The play depicted modern man's search for real home. The critics, Brian Crow and Chris Banfield wrote about the significance of title of the play, "*Michhil* (Procession, 1974) has been an immensely successful play using the noisy, chaotic evocation of Calcutta's crowded streets in a theatrical setting that incorporates an audience arranged informally around the acting arena, in a fast-moving, satirical tragi-comedy of police repression, establishment hypocrisy, race riot and personal loss of direction. (129). Lot of processions, in the play, were happening. The character of the old man said, ". . . Michhil, Michhils for food and clothes, Michhils for salvation, Michhils for the revolution, Michhils in military formation, Michhils for refugees, Michhils for flood relief, Michhils mourning, Michhils protesting, Michhil festive, Michhils with stars" (*Procession* 8).

Brian Crow and Chris Banfield added to the suitability of the title "The image of the procession in *Michhil* is employed to present both negative and positive aspects of the joining together of individual and communities under a common banner" (130).

12.3 THE OUTLINE OF THE PLAY 'PROCESSION'

Badal Sircar once said that he wanted to produce it even before the play was written. He wrote, "It is one of the very few plays where I had

the idea of the production even before I began writing it, particularly the procession idea” (qtd. in Dutta viii).

The play *Michhil* did not have a definite plot. It depicted the journey of two characters in search of true procession through various processions. The play was the sign of rejection, resistance, protest, rights, responsibilities towards families, society. It depicted the futility of all sorts of processions of refugees, strikes, poverty, politics, oppressed and oppressors, ideologies, festive processions, condolences, etc. The character khoka projected this challenging and unstable scenario by saying, “I’m lost in the colour of the flags of the procession, in the noise of the footsteps...” Khoka was crossing through all phases but he was not getting his own real hope the road through to the true home real true home was lost. The play reinforces the theme of unresolved connections of existence. The play projects the socio-political upheaval and the city-Kolkata with its storms and processions.

The play was staged with the scenes of Calcutta streets, chatting in teashops, conversations in the coffee houses, different scenes in the offices. These variety of processions aptly captured the meaningless existence and unguided crowd searching for nothing, the exploiters exploiting the poor.

The following dialogue made it clear:

THE MASTER: What is the greatest enemy of civilization?

CHORUS: Communism.

THE MASTER: Who upholds, preserves, and protects civilization?

CHORUS: You, Master!

THE MASTER: Rest assured, my children, I’ll keep you civilized. Communism is the religion of the animals. Keep in mind that you are not animals, you are men.

CHORUS: But Master, we’re dying.

THE MASTER: There’s heaven for you after you die, and heavenly happiness. Animals have no heaven. I bless you, you’d die as men, not animals. (*Procession* 23-4)

The one more scene projected the insignificance of poor people’s lives. The play focusses on the disappearance of a character called Khoka. The other characters try to enquire about him but the Officer silenced them. He threatened and kicked them away. Badal Sircar used dead Khoka to capture this cruelty who gets killed daily, every day, yesterday, in the past, today, in the present, tomorrow, in the future also he will be killed. Khoka says, “. . . the day before the day before. Last week. Last month. Last year. I am killed every day” (*Procession* 7). Repetition of dialogues enforced the seriousness of the theme. Badal Sircar depicted the harsh reality of poverty through the scene of - the Beggar-woman’s desperate cry for bread. She screamed for: “A piece of stale bread please, moth-e-e-er. O mother-O moth-e-e-er” (*Procession* 22).

Sircar wanted to make the masses aware of their exploitation and hence he reduced the gap between the performers of the plays and the spectators. It was the one significant feature of his Third Theatre. The gap between the two is bridged by the direct communication between the performers and the spectators. For example, the Old Man directly talks to the audience in the play, “Every day in the battlefields thousands die, thousands of I’s like me. (To the audience) You sit on the sidelines watching processions, (shrieking) you are watching murders, murders! You sit in peace watching murders, you are killed yourselves, you kill. Yes, you kill, you have killed. I’m killing, you are killing. We are all killers. We all kill, we all get killed. We kill by sitting quietly and doing nothing at ease, we get killed. Stop it. Stop it. (*Procession* 37)

12.4 CHARACTERS IN THE PLAY ‘PROCESSION’

Badal Sircar’s unique style of characterization is that the characters are not types. They are representative and symbolic. The play *Procession* has characters like Dead Khoka, the Old Man, the Officer and the Chorus-One, Two, Three, Four, Five (men) and Six is a girl and the spectators

The characters appeared on stage from the audience only. When they didn’t have their performance on stage, they will sit among the spectators, so no entry from somewhere outside. The performers did not decorate themselves as characters. They played their roles as the characters but without characters’ costumes, make up, and so on. At maximum to let the audience know who is playing which character, the performers attached labels on their clothes with the names of the characters they are performing. To our surprise, the playwright did not give a specific name to any characters in the play. As they are symbolic of any person in the real world. His characters had names like One, Two, Three, four and so on.

At the end of the play, the characters joined hands with the audience by inviting them to play their roles. They all including the performers and the spectators started singing the positive song with the optimistic tone in the procession. This is how Sircar directly involved and connected the spectators through the play. Sircar actualised his intension of making spectators aware of his ideology and made them hopeful to change the current situation with a hope.

Badal Sircar used human body instead of expensive material to perform. He advocated that human body is the most significant tool in the theatre. The use of human body through movements, use of human voices as the chorus used, wood branches, bamboo sticks for the music to create a very different aura in the play. Sircar rejected the conventional naturalistic theatre’s fashion of performance. He viewed that that the naturalistic theatre copies and applies, in short, it is all fake. This was generally known as ‘acting’. But the performers in his plays came down, came close, appeared as the human beings as they were, to the human beings

that the spectators were. In his play, the characters were no longer fake. The performer had to take on his/ her own mask and be himself / herself.

The Third Theatre focussed on human presence and hence other theatrical elements and requirements became absolutely unessential. Lighting was reduced to minimum level, makeup was natural, props were removed and hence the play was produced with a minimal cost. Of course, all these innovations in performances did not come at once to Satabdi- the performing house. Sircar believed that if he continues doing experiments with the theatre, they would be able to do away with the costing and heavy items of Theatre. Hence, gradually a flexible, portable and inexpensive Theatre is being created.

12.5. SYMBOLS/ IMAGERY IN THE PLAY 'PROCESSION'

Badal Sircar used powerful symbols to convey his ideology / ideologies poignantly to the readers /audiences. Sircar, though, projected all pessimism and cruel realities on the contemporary India, he did not do away with the hope in *Procession*. Look closely at the scene where a character Khoka went on missing, the people tried to lure him with lots of gifts and awards such as chocolates, books, pass, job, land, house, car, gold, happiness, peace and salvation to come back to the old home. But he does not return to the old home. And here Badal Sircar who actually performed the character of the old Khoka said, "Khoka means Little. Khoka means one who hasn't grown up yet. Khoka means Green, Raw, Immature" (*Procession* 10-11). He added, "Khoka'll never come back to the O-o-old house. . . if he comes back, it'll be to a new home, a real home, a really real ho-o-ome" (11). The powerful images like Khoka and the old and new home had symbolic significance. Khoka seemed to be an innocent child who is not ruined by the contemporary degraded society and its culture. New home symbolised an imaginary new balanced society which will not have the limitations, inequalities of the contemporary society. The new home / society will be based on humanity, generosity and balanced. The characters of the Officer and the Master symbolised the ruling class in India who exploited people for their profits, completely ignoring the powerless class. The Officer denied the fact of the murder of Khoka as he said, "It's nothing, sir. It's all quiet" (*Procession*34).

12.6. THE THEMES OF THE PLAY 'PROCESSION'

The play had multiple themes but no story element or plot as such. The play depicted the afflicting influences on the post independent-India communal riots, conflict between political parties, oppressor and oppressed, impact of partition, unemployability etc. These were major themes of the play. Badal Sarkar poignantly highlighted all contemporary burning sensitive issues like strikes, loss of spirituality, increased greed for material aspects, down fall of families, poverty, and many more such problems. The play, however, ends with an optimistic note.

The play *Procession* is deeply rooted in socio political anarchy dissent and its protest to the contemporary trends. The play began with the Chorus- five men – One, Two, Three, Four, Five and the Six – girl on stage talking about the murder, assassination, kidnapping, and disappearance. When the play starts, we can observe the conversation of the Chorus about power (current). ‘One’ speaks to ‘two’ about power cut. They discussed about the load-shedding. Everyday darkness engulfs the area. ‘Five’ warned others to guard their pockets. The chorus hear a piercing death scream. Here Chorus pointed out about the screaming. They conversed with each other about murder. The search for a ‘torch’.

One: Does anybody have a torch? A torch?

Two: who would carry a torch in the city?

The play showed that there was a young boy called Khoka, went on being killed every day on the roads and there was an old man who gets lost his way. Michhil of allsorts- protest for revolutions, social-spiritual procession, festive procession, funeral procession, political procession, flood relief procession, military procession, unemployability procession, operation procession, unemployability procession etc. Both the Khoka and the old man are in search of the real home. They tried to search their home but failed to find the road. The young man in search of his home following the procession helplessly in the expectation of getting his own home. Nobody knew anything about their search. They were simply walking on and walking on. They’re following all sorts of processions fruitlessly, hoping that particular procession will lead them to the real home. Khoka was lost, killed assassinated, kidnapped. He tried hard to search his home. He thought that he would find the road leading to his new home but again returned at the same place with frustration. Khoka represents all those who were lost, killed similar to the young kids of Bengali parents during the period of riots. Khokamet the Old Man who himself had lost his way trying to search for his home seeking the true procession with the hope because he believed, “if you’re lost you can get search if you can search then you can find young Khoka believes on the old Man’s opinion and tries to search for the new home.

The play rarely focussed on the urban people. It was very well accepted by poor villagers. The play was performed at various places. *Procession* is very popular and significant for its projections of real image of processions. It closely connects to the audience because the play involves the spectators actively in the performance itself.

The play *Procession* ends with the performers holding hands of each other, inviting spectators to join the procession and hoping for the better future in the gloomy present. The play connects audience emotionally and offers hopes for the better future.

Badal Sircar never advertised or promoted his plays. Satabdi was founded in 1967, most of the plays’ performances were performed under Sircar’s guidance as director but unfortunately his plays are still generally ignored by the Theatre intellectuals.

The major themes like suicide, execution, the dead or disappeared, frequently appearing and explaining the difficulties in living, has accurately captured by the dramatist.

12.7. IDEA OF STAGE PERFORMANCE

Badal Sircar's plays were the reaction to the proscenium theatre and the first (urban) as it is full of artificiality and hence, he believed Theatre in the urban centres are an elite minority. He often accused the theatre of romanticising the rural landscape. And the second (folk) theatre. Most of his plays were directed by himself. He was, hence, very well acquainted with the kind of performances.

The play *procession* is also directed by him. It posed a challenge to the spectator's imagination when it was performed. Badal Sircar being the playwright, director and performer gave a thought that his plays should be attended by all the public irrespective of their financial conditions. He did not commercialise his plays. Sircar wanted to make public aware about his ideologies. His main concern was for the ordinary public, poor people which encompassed most of the population of India

The cut-throat competition was brought in by the technological advancement during the era. Public started to prefer cinema instead theatre due to its comparative high cost. And hence cinema was becoming a predominant media to reach to the public with all its luxurious richness. In such circumstances, Badal Sircar pondered over the issues like use of props, elaborate lighting, expensive costumes, stage decoration, and stars etc. It was all very costly affair and difficult to manage with the meagre income. He determined to offer something real which cinema cannot offer and it's the concept of 'live show'. He rejected all these for a noble cause and he started his own Muktmanch (open / free theatre) for all. Sircar firmly believed, there had to be a real close connection between what is happening on the stage and the emotions of the spectators.

Badal Sircar changed the setting of his plays in the Third Theatre. He believed that architecture of proscenium theatre appears to be all wrong. He explained that all spectators on one side pushing the last row far, which affected the last rows' audiences' comprehension of the play. And hence to resolve this issue he put the spectators on all sides of the theatre. He brought the stage performers at the level of the spectators. It made easy for performers to get the spectators feedback immediately. Feedback from both the spectators and the performers played a significant role in Sircar's plays.

He firmly advocated establishing the direct communication between both the parties. There were three types of communication happening in his plays: performer to performer; performer to spectator; and spectator to spectator. Badal Sircar bridged the gap between the two and closely connected with the drama which was going on the stage. Badal Sircar made every aspect of the theatre live by introducing very innovative

concepts in his Third Theatre. The special feature of this theatre was it was not at all expensive for spectators. Anyone can watch the plays which were performed in this Theatre. Badal Sircar believed and proved “Theatre is a human event, cinema is not” by bringing the ‘live event’ on stage.

The play *Procession* was performed throughout India and it charged nothing to the audience. The performance of the play happened on the stage surrounded by audiences. Badal Sircar in his venture, attracted many youngsters during the 1970s. For Sircar tried to project the actual reality on the Indian stage. It was a period of all socio-political upheaval in India. The set trends were rooted out. New concepts were coming into existence during the period. This small group of people led by Badal Sircar shun the proscenium performances. They introduced the concept of Anganmanch. Anganmanch (backyard of house) was used to perform the plays. So, no requirement of specific theatre locations. Badal Sircar and his group tried to make theatre free for all public.

12.8. CONCLUSION

To conclude, Badal Sircar’s plays were basically by the people, of the people and for the people. Sircar firmly believed that the theatre can help in bringing revolution as he said, “Let us be clear that theatre alone will not bring about social change but it can be one of the tools in the movement to bring about the social change”. He had a huge contribution in bringing the dynamic change in the Indian theatre as well as the contemporary society.

The critics, however, attribute to him both negative and positive opinions. For example, Sudhanwa Deshpande, a well-known author director wrote, “Badal Sircar is cynical of political processes and has a slightly romantic notion of the villager’s”. Sircar’s ‘Third Theatre’, relevantly related and exactly projected the modern young generation which seemed to be lost and the complexities of the contemporary Indian society. It established direct communication with the spectators. ‘Badal Sircar Theatre’ was a direct reaction to the dominant forms of Indian First Theatre and the Second Theatre and the Proscenium Theatre. Of Course, we can’t deny the fact that Sircar borrowed a lot from the Folk Theatre such as Jatra, Tamasha, and Nautanki but with its modified forms. Sircar actually revived these forms of the traditional theatres and contributed rigorously to the Indian Modern Drama and the Theatre with his ‘Third Theatre.’

12.9 LET’S SUM UP

In this unit we have studied the first appearance of Badal Sircar’s *Michhil* or *Procession* on the arena of Indian theatre and how it became an acclaimed play due to the new techniques of theatre, novel way of characterisation, experiments with plot and the whole notion of the Third

Theatre and its use for promotion and propagation of thoughts and ideologies to bring social changes in the lives of the common men or masses.

12.10 IMPORTANT QUESTIONS

1. Write short notes on the following:
 - a. The significance of the title of the play, *Procession*
 - b. Badal Sircar's art of characterisation
 - c. Badal Sircar's idea of the stage performance
 - d. Comment on the Badal Sircar's use of symbols and imagery in the play *Procession*
2. Discuss Badal Sircar's play *Procession* as a people's play.
3. Explain how Sircar's play *Procession* bears the characteristic features of The Third Theatre.

12.11 REFERENCES

- Bajaj, Yogita, and Sangita Mehta. "Emerging Trends in Indian English Drama." *Researchers World*. 1.1 (2010): 150-55. Web. 20 Jan. 2012.
- Bharatmuni. *The Natyasastra*. Trans. Manmoham Ghosh. Calcutta: The Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal, 1959. PDF file.
- Course Material For IDOL MA- Part I, Semester I, Paper VII- Drama
- Crow, Brian, and Chris Banfield. *An Introduction to Post-colonial Theatre*. New York: Cambridge University Press. PDF file.
- Dharwadker, Aparna Bhargava. *Theatre of Independence: Drama, Theory and Performance in India since 1947*. Iowa city: University of Iowa Press, 2005. PDF file.
- Dr.G. Kiran Kumar Reddy. Badal Sircar's *Procession*; Exploration of Search For Real Home *International Journal of Recent Research in Social Sciences and Humanities (IJRSSH)* Vol. 2, Issue 2, pp: (86-88), Month: April 2015 - June 2015, Available at: www.paperpublications.org
- Dr.Kulsoom Fatima, select plays of Badal Sircar <http://hdl.handle.net/10603/110706>
- Dutta, Ella. Introduction. *Three Plays: Procession/ Bhoma/ Stale News*. By Badal Sircar. Kolkata: Seagull Books, 1983. v-xi. Print.
- Gupta, Hemendra Nath Das. *The Indian Theatre*. New Delhi: Gyan Publishing House, 2009. Print.
- [https://frontline.thehindu.com/books/a-life-in-theatre/article8068393.ece#:~:text=Michhil%20\(1974\)%20was%20one%20of,love%20Dhate%20relationship%20with%20Calcutta](https://frontline.thehindu.com/books/a-life-in-theatre/article8068393.ece#:~:text=Michhil%20(1974)%20was%20one%20of,love%20Dhate%20relationship%20with%20Calcutta).

- Iyengar, K R Srinivasa. Indian Writing in English. New Delhi: Sterling Publishers Private Limited, 2008. Print.
- Keith, A. Berriedale. The Sanskrit Drama in its Origin, Development Theory & Practice. London: Oxford University Press, 1959. Print.
- Lal, Anand. The Oxford Companion to Indian Theatre. New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2004. Print.
- Mathur, J. C. “Hindi Drama and Theatre.” Publications Division, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting. Indian Drama. Delhi: National Printing Works, 1956. 23-32. Print.
- Mitra, Shayoni. “Badal Sircar: Scripting a Movement.” TDR/The Drama Review. 48.3. (2004): 59-78. Web. 20 Sept. 2011.
- Mohan, T. M. J. Indra. “Post-Colonial Writing – Trends in English Drama.” The Indian Review of World Literature in English. 2.II (2006): n. pag. Web. 15 May 2014.
- Sarkar, Subhendu. “More on Badal Sircar (1925-2011).” Frontier 43.51 (2011): n. pag. Web. 2 Dec 2012.
- Sarkar, Subhendu. Introduction. Two Plays Indian History Made Easy/ Life of Bagala. By Badal Sircar. New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2010. xi-xxxvii. Print.
- Shayoni Mitra. “Badal Sircar: Scripting a Movement.” *TDR (1988-)*, vol. 48, no. 3, 2004, pp. 59–78. *JSTOR*,
- Sircar Badal. “Juloos”. Print (Hindi)
- Sircar Badal. “The Third Theatre: A Photographic Exhibition of his Work”. New Delhi: The Press, 2009. 8-13. Print.
- Sircar, Badal. “In Conversation: Badal Sircar with SamikBandhopadhyay.”
- Sircar, Badal. On Theatre. Kolkata: Seagull Books, 2009. Print.
- Web- references:
- www.jstor.org/stable/4488571. Accessed 9 Feb. 2021.



A STUDY OF AMIRI BARAKA'S HOME ON THE RANGE

Unit Structure :

- 13.0 Objectives
- 13.1 Amiri Baraka
- 13.2 Afro-American Drama and Baraka as a Dramatist
- 13.3 Different Phases of Barak's Literary Career
- 13.4 About the play, *Home on the Range*
- 13.5 Characters
- 13.6 Themes
- 13.7 Language, Style and Tone of the Play
- 13.8 Significance of the Song and Dance
- 13.9 *Home on the Range* as a representative of Revolutionary Theatre:
- 13.10 Conclusion
- 13.11 Questions
- 13.12 Bibliography
- 13.13 Reference for further study

13.0 OBJECTIVES

This unit discusses the play, *Home on the Range* by an Afro-American playwright, Amiri Baraka. This section begins with a short introduction to the playwright and his contribution to Afro-American Theatre. It also highlights on the different phases of Amiri Baraka's literary career as it helps to understand the events and movements that influenced him as a black writer and his contribution to Afro-American literary world. A short discussion of the play with respect to its content, characters, themes, symbols and language and style has been attempted at to help the readers understand and appreciate Amiri Baraka's *Home on the Range* as an Afro-American play. A list of probable questions and bibliography too has been added to help the readers engage themselves in further study of Afro-American plays, the growth and development of Black Theatre and assess their understanding of the same.

13.1 AMIRI BARAKA (1934 –2014)

LeRoi Jones (Amiri Baraka) was a poet, story-writer, dramatist, political activist, art critic and teacher who devoted his literary career in exploring and depicting the experience and anger of Afro-Americans. His literary work mainly aimed at making the black voice prominent in the land of the whites. Baraka's writings have been his weapon against racism and later in his life to advocate scientific socialism. He entered the American consciousness not merely as a multifarious genius but as an event, a symbolic figure, somehow combining the craft and insights of Euro-American radicalism with the rebellious energies of young Afro-Americans. He was one of the leading representatives of the Black Aesthetic or Black Arts Movement and was regarded in high esteem because he created through his writing a compelling force of consciousness in the minds of the Black Americans. The overall theme of his works of art reflects initiation, renunciation and reformation of Black people in America.

Born in 1934, in Newark, New Jersey, LeRoi Jones attended Rutgers University for two years, then transferred to Howard University, where in 1954 he earned his B.A. in English. He served in the Air Force from 1954 until 1957.

13.2 AFRO-AMERICAN DRAMA AND BARAKA AS A DRAMATIST:

Black theatre, in the United States, dramatic movement encompassing plays written by, for, and about African Americans.

Though the minstrel shows of the early 19th century are believed by some to be the roots of Black theatre, they were actually written by whites, acted by whites in blackface, and performed for white audiences. Only after the American Civil War, when Black actors began to perform in minstrel shows (then called “Ethiopian minstrelsy”), they started producing Black musicals, many of which were written, produced, and acted entirely by African Americans. The first known play by a Black American was James Brown’s *King Shotaway* (1823). William Wells Brown’s *The Escape; or, A Leap for Freedom* (1858), was the first Black play published, but the first real success of an African American dramatist was Angelina W. Grimké’s *Rachel* (1916).

Black theatre flourished during the Harlem Renaissance of the 1920s and '30s. Experimental groups and Black theatre companies emerged in Chicago, New York City, and Washington, D.C. Among these was the Ethiopian Art Theatre, which established Paul Robeson as America’s foremost Black actor. Garland Anderson’s play *Appearances* (1925) was the first play of African American authorship to be produced on Broadway. After a period of lull, it was with Langston Hughes’s

Mulatto (1935) that Black theatre gained a wide recognition. In that same year the Federal Theatre Project was founded, providing a training ground for African Americans. In the late 1930s, Black community theatres began to appear, revealing talents such as those of Ossie Davis and Ruby Dee. By 1940 Black theatre was firmly grounded in the American Negro Theater and the Negro Playwrights' Company.

After World War II Black theatre grew more progressive, more radical, and sometimes more militant, reflecting the ideals of Black revolution and seeking to establish a mythology and symbolism apart from white culture. Councils were organized to abolish the use of racial stereotypes in theatre and to integrate African American playwrights into the mainstream of American dramaturgy. Lorraine Hansberry's *A Raisin in the Sun* (1959) and other successful Black plays of the 1950s portrayed the difficulty of African Americans maintaining an identity in a society that degraded them.

The 1960s saw the emergence of a new Black theatre, angrier and more defiant than its predecessors, with Amiri Baraka (originally LeRoi Jones) as its strongest proponent. Baraka's plays, including the award-winning *Dutchman* (1964), depicted whites' exploitation of African Americans. He established the Black Arts Repertory Theatre in Harlem in 1965 and inspired playwright Ed Bullins and others seeking to create a strong "Black aesthetic" in American theatre. During the 1980s and '90s August Wilson, Suzan-Lori Parks, and George Wolfe were among the most important creators of Black theatre.

The dramatic world of Baraka is immense. He writes his plays with a strong commitment and tries to bring about a social and cultural consciousness among the Black Americans. He reflects himself as a radical rebel of the 60s through them. He writes plays of great purpose, seeking justice for the Black Americans. Like his poetry, his plays project a brilliant and pragmatic mind of an American Black writer. His plays expose several features related to Black culture, Black society and Black mind with a magical touch of the Black Arts Movement of 1960s. Baraka's plays are strongly affected by the tension between art and activism that he always felt. His career as a playwright was also greatly touched by the philosophy and perspectives of Marxist-Leninist-Mao Tsu-Tung, hence most of his plays emphasise on the greater legitimacy of the act over the word (Brown 135). His plays also reflect the influence of Maoists on his mind and work. Therefore, the Maoist insistence on the unity of politics and art, on the fusion of revolutionary political content" and "the highest possible perfection of artistic form mark his writings. The fact that Baraka manages to achieve such difficult goals in his creative work proves his determination to follow and practice the principles that he strongly believes in. The socialist ideal is peculiarly attractive to Baraka the dramatist, or more specifically, to Baraka the revolutionary dramatist. In this connection Brown comments:

Drama is the means of achieving that unity of political action and literary word, which has always been crucial to Baraka. Hence that interest in the word as act which dominates much of the later poetry culminates in the drama—especially in the later plays. In these plays the dramatic synthesis of language and action is both the symbolic and literal example of Baraka's ideal of the word as action. Indeed in Baraka's drama, even in the earlier works but especially in the more recent revolutionary plays, the very idea of dramatic form is both an aesthetic principle and political concept: the play as action is integral to the revolutionist's idealistic activism; dramatic form as motion through time and space is incompatible with the revolutionary view of history as constant change (Brown, 136).

Baraka's theory of dramatic art is so integral to his political principles and practices that Baraka's achievement as a dramatist is decidedly uneven. Indeed, on the basis of those very socialist standards, which he himself invokes, he is "least effective as a dramatist in the revolutionary plays of his Black Nationalist and socialist periods." However, it is known that all his plays of the 60s exclusively befit the purpose of the Black Arts Movement. William J. Harris writes, Baraka's "abilities as a playwright transcend particular artistic milieu is suggested by the fact that although the Black Arts Movement is moribund, Baraka's influence and creativity is persevere" (Harris xvii). The spirit of Baraka's plays is the spirit of the Black Arts Movement.

13.3 DIFFERENT PHASES OF BARAK'S LITERARY CAREER

Baraka's works have shown many stages of self-revelation and they are nothing but the outcome of his self-conscious sensibility. Baraka's plays are written chronologically in four periods. They are:

The 'Beat Period' (1957-1962),
The 'Transitional Period' (1963-1965),
The 'Black Nationalist Period' (1965-1974) and
The 'Third World Marxist Period' (1974 - 2014).

During the **Beat Period**, he was greatly influenced by the white *avant-garde* like Charles Olson, O' Hara, and Ginsberg. He wrote poems, which were full of imagery and spontaneous humour. Historical events like The Civil Rights Movement, Martin Luther King Jr. and the Black political upsurge of the late 1960s also influenced him. These events or incidents changed attitude toward race and art. He developed the consciousness of his identity as a Black, rather a Negro, and gradually rejected his earlier perception of life and his existence. The early plays of Baraka include *Dutchman*, *The Slave*, *The Baptism* and *The Toilet*. Each play is a highly effective analysis of American society with immense radical value from the point of view of Black Americans' social and cultural consciousness. *Dutchman* and *The Baptism* are symbolic and

allegorical plays whereas *The Slave* and *The Toilet* are quite realistic and reactionary. These plays enact tensions or conflicts prevailing among the Black Americans.

In the **Transitional period**, his writings became expressions of his racial and political consciousness. They expressed the theme of Blackness and politicization of art by Baraka. During this phase he started showing interest in Black Nationalism and gradually became a Black Nationalist. His sense of hatred for the whites knew no bound. The assassination of Malcolm X hurt him so intensely that he wanted the death of the white race. Also in this period, he tried to formulate the Black aesthetics in which he tried to express his American experience in forms that spring from his own unique culture and that his art must be evaluated by standards that grow out of his own culture.

In the **Third World Marxist Period**, Baraka rejected Black Nationalism as racist and became a Third World Socialist. Having struggled as a Nationalist, he came to the state of a Marxist. His socialist art is addressed to the Black community, which he believes as the greatest revolutionary potential in America. Thus Baraka quickly earned the respect of artists of all mediums, particularly the writers of the so called Beatnik movement. He could emerge as a personality and leader and transformed himself from a Beat poet to "father of the Black Arts Movement".

The essence of Amiri Baraka's writings in these various phases can be summed up in his own words as he has put in the Preface to *The Le Roi Jones/Amiri Baraka Reader* edited by William J. Harris, Baraka writes-

My writing reflects my own growth and expansion, and at the same time the society in which I have existed throughout this longish confrontation. Whether it is politics, music, literature, or the origins of language, there is a historical and time/ place/ condition reference that will always try to explain exactly why I was saying both how and for what (Harris, xvii).

13.4 ABOUT THE PLAY, *HOME ON THE RANGE*

A small one act play, *Home on the Range*, which was read as a part of the 1967 Black Communications Project was produced at Spirit House in Spring 1968. It has much of music, suspense and absurdity. It takes place in an American family whose members are found "seated in a room watching television, eating popcorn, chattering" (43). The language that the family members like Father, Mother, Son and Daughter use are quite symbolic which the Black Criminal can't understand. However, the Black Criminal wants to command them variously. It seems as if he is sadistic and revengeful in mood. But the family members do not take him seriously and watch TV. When laughter comes from the television set, "they all begin to imitate the laughter... are wiggiling" and shaking,

slapping each other and grabbing themselves in a frenzy of wicked merriment" (107-108). The Black criminal fails to understand this kind of strange behaviours and asks them to shut up: "What the hell's wrong with you folks? Godamit, shutup, shutup"(108). But the families members do not pay any heed to his words and howl even louder. The criminal becomes very angry and shoots at the television set. As a result, "the Family stops laughing as suddenly as the bullet shattering the set's tubes" (P 108). However, at the very next moment the family members start dancing and singing in response to the criminal's confession that he has come to commit a crime. Looking at the absurdity of the actions of the family members, the criminal guesses that probably they are panic-stricken. Therefore, he tries to convince them that "it is not the reign of terror" (108) and tries to bring them to reality. When vague sounds come from a concealed loudspeaker, the Criminal gets angry again and he shoots at it. Immediately after it as the lights on the stage become dim, and go down and finally off, the criminal sleeps for a while and again "comes awake with a start" (110). He listens to "the FAMILY singing: first a version of 'America the Beautiful/ then a soupy stupid version of the Negro National Anthem, lift Every Voice and Sing' and brings the action to a super-dramatic climax by "having been moved to tears, finally giving a super-military salute"(110). The stage direction continues to describe the following situation:

As they reach the highest point of the song, suddenly a whole CROWD OF BLACK PEOPLE pushes through the door. The criminal wheels around, at first, started, then he lets out a yell of recognition, and there is a general yowl from all the Black People, and they proceed to run around and once they take in the family, with second takes, over the shoulder Jibes, and stage whispered insult - inquiries, they race around and begin getting ready for a party (110).

The party, dance and movement go on and everybody get absorbed in it. The criminal is absorbed in the party too. However, the Criminal then targets the audience. Gradually shifting his attention from the party to the audience, he continues showing his boldness and confidence:

Criminal. This is the tone of America. My country, 'tis of thee. *He shoots out over the audience.* This is the scene of the Fall. The demise of the ungodly. *He shoots once. Then quickly twice.* This is the cool take over in the midst of strong rhythms, and grace. Wild procession, Jelly Beans. French Poodles. Razor Cuts. Filth. Assassinations of Gods. This is the end, He shoots. Run. Bastards. Run. You grimy mother fuckers who have no place in the new the beautiful the black change of the earth. Who don't belong in the mother fuckering world....*He shoots again three times.* The world ! (110 - 111)

The same night brings another turn in the play as the Criminal keeps awake when others are fast asleep and listens to the father murmuring in his sleep, "I was born in Kansas city in 1920. My father was

the Vice-President of Fertilizer Company. Before that we were phantoms ... *waving at his family*. Evil ghosts without substance" (111) and repeats it again. In the mean time the criminal shouts "Come on, Come on" which Black girl compliments with "Good Morning" as morning arrives; symbolically suggesting the dawn of a new starting for the Black people.

13.5 CHARACTERS

The play, *Home on the Range*, consists of two sets of characters: a white family consisting of four members and the other set consisting of a Black Criminal and a crowd of Black people. The members of the white family are without any names. They are basically identified with the relation that they share amongst each other. Hence, the family members are identified as father, mother, son and daughter. The other set of characters consists of Black people. The leading character amongst them is the Black Criminal. He is also without any specific name. He is identified as the Black Criminal throughout the play. The Crowd of Black people is also anonymous. None of them has a name nor are they identified on the basis of their work or role as the Black Criminal is identified.

The absence of name for the characters is very significant and befits the theme and structure of the play. The Black Criminal tries to reveal the psychological reality of a Black man as well as that of a white. In this play, the Black Criminal shows self-assertion, a freedom of mind, daringness, protest and anger against the white family who is affected by mania, a sadist and the representative of careless white people. The boldness with which the Criminal tries to dictate on the white family and throws his weight in the domain of the Whites indicates that the Criminal has escaped the hideous past of the "slave mentality" and entered a history of slave rebellion. He is trying to subvert the hierarchies and trying to take the role of a white dictator with Black skin in a white household. However, the Criminal is without a name. He is known by his actions, that is his crime. His lack of a name in a way reflects his identity crisis. However, by taking control over the white family he tries to gain one. His identity as a Criminal that is used as his name can also be interpreted as he is seen in the eyes of a White man; a Black criminal and how the Negroes are made to conceive of themselves and their identities; as the white wanted to see or perceive of them.

Other characters in the play besides the White family consisting of four members are also known as Black Man 1, Black Man 2, Black Man 3, Black Woman 1 and Black Girl. The irony of the existence of these characters is that none of them has an individual existence. They are collectively identified as Black and hence to be recognised individually, they are attributed with a number. Amiri Baraka by not naming any of his characters like many other plays of his once more reiterates the fact that an individual's name is only a superficial creation of one's identity. According to Amiri Baraka, plays are the most suitable vehicle to raise

Black consciousness in the Negroes and fight for their due respect. Hence, he might have deliberately kept his characters nameless in order to convey how the Black people in America are perceived. Their names are not the signifiers of their individual identity. Through their nameless existence, Amiri Baraka attempts to convey the fact that a Black individual is actually known by the baggage of his ancestral history, the place of his origin, his race and his skin colour.

13.6 THEMES

One of the major themes that can be discerned from the short but complex storyline of *Home on the Range* is the Black Criminal's desire to take revenge on the White family by plundering the White's household. Associated with it is a sense of fear that the Black Criminal manages to create in the members of the White family by commanding on them, shouting and screaming at them as and when they falter and eventually keeping them under gunpoint. Since the plot is loosely woven it creates a sense of mystery and not much is understood about the objectives of the Black Criminal's visit to the White household unless and until the Crowd consisting of the Black people actually ask him and makes it apparent to the readers/ audience. The revenge that he intends to take is not an individual one but a collective one. More than looting the material possession of the family, he attempts at robbing the Whites of their complacency and egoistic attitude. The White family initially tries to ignore his presence and keep themselves calm and composed. However, gradually their sense of all time power and authority start crumpling down in the presence of the Black Criminal and they become the subjects of his commands. The White family is eventually silenced by the Black Criminal and soon one by one all the family members fall flat on the floor while dancing. Their falling down flat on the floor and getting into a long sleep can be regarded as their waning power control and gradual acceptance of the over bearing power and authority of the Black criminal. The father's coming back to normal state and attempting to utter, though very faintly audible, "I was born in Kansas city in 1920. My father was the vice-president of a fertilizer company..." (111) indicate his last attempt to claim his position and status as a White. The whole scene where the White father, fallen flat on the floor endeavours to claim his lost glory in the presence of the Black criminal and other Negroes also symbolically depict the fall of the Whites and the rise of the Blacks.

Another major theme that the play deals with is identity crisis. The Blacks in the American land had lost their identity as humans. They were verbally, physically and psychologically abused and were treated as things. They were even refused basic needs of human beings and in order to inflict psychological pain and force them to internalise their condition as no better than inanimate things they were most often addressed as 'it'. There was a deliberate effort on the Whites to keep the Black people nameless and call them as niggers. The Black people in Amiri Baraka's plays continuously fight against identity crisis and hence they are

identified in his plays either through their actions or their relation with the others in the play. The Whites too in this play, quite surprisingly, are depicted as nameless people. This might be read as an artistic attempt of Amiri Baraka to hint at the subversion of roles that is depicted in the later part of the play.

The play also deals with another significant theme of power struggle. The Black Criminal who takes control on the White family wants to establish his power over the White family, sort of dream come true for him. Whereas, there are indications made by the White family that speak about their attempt to resist it, they ultimately fail. The nonsensical language, the Father's utterance about his past in his sleep amply speaks about their attempts to give up and resist the dominance that the Black Criminal was trying to build over them. However, the involvement of the white family in the nigger dance ultimately establishes the dominance of the Black over the white, a future that the playwright tries to visualise.

The play also deals, though very subtly, with the theme of despair, loss and shame on one hand and an overwhelming sense of contentment and satisfaction on accomplishing the desired objectives on the other hand. *Home on the Range* was written by Amiri Baraka in the late 1960s, when he had already achieved a heightened sense of Black consciousness and was almost successful in achieving a nationalistic spirit. The play through the presence of the White family and the Black Criminal and later the crowd of black people depict the despair and sense of loss of control, position and respect of the White as they encounter the Black Criminal.

The play also subverts the theme of assimilation. The Afro-American literature always focussed on the Black's conscious efforts to assimilate the White culture. However, in *Home on the Range*, Amiri Baraka interrogates the concept of assimilation as understood by the Blacks and subverts it by showing the White family trying to assimilate the Black culture in their endeavour to become a part of the Black Nigger Party and dance with them. It also symbolically indicates the end of White sophisticated culture and reign and the rise of the Blacks into power where they will be dictating on the Whites as happened in the White household.

13.7 LANGUAGE, STYLE AND TONE OF THE PLAY

The play, *Home on the Range*, is a unique play of Amiri Baraka that is for the most of the part consists of dialogue that is beyond comprehension. In this play though the Black Criminal and the crowd consisting of Black people utter words that are clear and make sense the language of the White family is completely beyond comprehension. The words that they speak are meaningless and do not help in forming a sentence. Most of the time whatever they utter is monosyllabic and repetitive. Hence, the conversation that they engage into is also meaningless and leaves no clue of any kind of interpretation. The given

conversation is one such example of an ambiguous, almost meaningless conversation that altogether defeats the idea of a conversation:

Daughter: Deedee, dodo! Laredgrepe and stooble.

Son: Noik. Dissreal grump!

Father: Yak. Yak. (laughs).

Mother: Dirigible (33)

and again, similar type of gibberish exchange of dialogues continue:

Father: Terring. Gollygolly.

Daughter: Ahhhhhhk. Bretzel. Mamarama.

Father: Crackywacky. Riprip. Dullongdulux cracks. Dirigible.

Son: Bahl-grepe. Ramona...(33).

The conversation that the White family engages into is so very meaningless that the Black Criminal is left absolutely clueless. His sense of irritation with their meaningless conversation is the most vocal when he screams,

Criminal: What the hell's wrong with you? Goddamn idiot, back up. and when the father replies saying, "Yiip, Vachtung. Credool. Conchmack. Vouty", the Criminal cries out, "What kind of shit is this? What the fuck's wrong with you people?" (33).

Though the words leave no clue of any kind of emotions that the White family possesses, Amiri Baraka's direction in parenthesis does the needful. The action words depicting their emotions and feelings leave sufficient clue to interpret the condition of the White family in the presence of the Black Criminal. It is only through the playwright's direction in parenthesis like (Rest of the family now up and moving concerned toward door. Are frozen when they see father and daughter under the Black criminal's gun) (33) that the readers/audience come to know about the fear that the White family is experiencing under the gunpoint of the Black Criminal.

Through the exchange of some incongruous monosyllabic sounds and words the play sets various types of tones. *Home on the Range* is a one act play, the action of which spans from one evening to next day early morning. However, in such a short span of time the play switches between that of authority and command to that of shock and surprise and again from that of helplessness and despair to a tone of accomplishment and satisfaction. If the utterances of the father, "Vataloop, Lurch, Crench. Crench" and Baraka's stage direction indicate his fear and anger, his utterances, "I was born in Kansas City in 1920. My father was the vice-president of a fertilizer company..." (33) in the latter part of the play as he lies on the floor evoke a sense of satisfaction and contentment in the Black Criminal.

13. 8 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE SONG AND DANCE

Amiri Baraka in *Home on the Range* had introduced a song and a dance that play a very significant role in reinforcing the theme of the play. Like his many other plays, song and dance has become an integral part of the play and indicates at a vital turn that is exclusive of this particular play. Dance in Amiri Baraka's plays has a ritualistic significance. Like the play, *Slaveship*, dance in *Home on the Range* highlights the roots of African culture and its significance in the lives of the Negros.

The Black Criminal who has entered the White family with the objective of looting, while taking control on the White family members, starts humming the beautiful and melodious song, "America the Beautiful", written and composed by Katherine Lee Bates. This beautifully American patriotic song not only depicts the great beauty of America but also the spirit attached with the land. The Black Criminal, though started with it, quickly switches over to another very powerful song, "Lift Every Voice and Sing" composed and sung by the Blacks. It was embraced as the Black National anthem. The song is a prayer of thanksgiving of fruitfulness and freedom. The Black Criminal probably sings this inspirational song to draw inspiration from its powerful lyric and organise his objectives of gaining prominence in White culture by overturning the power struggle. The song also embodies Afro-Americans' desire to break free from the slavery that they had were conditioned to think and internalise as encrypted on their fate. Therefore, when the Black Criminal sings this song, he not only tries to motivate himself to achieve his objective with which he has visited this place but also indicates a remarkable twist that he is about to bring. The Black criminal by insisting and almost forcing all the members of the White family to sing this Black National Anthem, actually tries to highlight on the role reversal of the Whites that he is trying to achieve. The Whites' singing of this song can be symbolically treated as their acceptance and assimilation of the African culture; a move that actually brings their culture and power related with it towards a fading end.

The Black Nigger Dance too emphasises on the slow but subtle acceptance of the Black culture by the White family. Dance is an essential part of Afro-American culture. It signifies the inversion of the normative trend where the Blacks tried to assimilate the culture of the Whites to make some space for themselves in the society. The fact that the Head of the family and his daughter is so absorbed and possessed by the charm of the dance that they get lost dancing it for hours signify their gradual loss of power. The dance in a way is symbolic of the fall of the whites and the rise of The Blacks. Thus, the dance serves two vital functions. First, it invites the members of the audience to act out the aggression and violence. Secondly, with its unifying force, it also celebrates the spiritual restoration of the Black criminal and the Black crowd. The final scene suggests that the primal energy of the Afro-American Black people is in the process of being reasserted. The song, 'Lift every Voice and Sing' and the Nigger

dance actually help the readers to identify Amiri Baraka as a rebel writer with revolutionary aims and objectives and his play, *Home on the Range* as one of his revolutionary plays.

Hence, the music and dance in the Nigger party can be interpreted as a form of protest as it subverts the normative notion of assimilation of American culture and celebrates Black Nationalism.

13.9 HOME ON THE RANGE AS A REPRESENTATIVE OF REVOLUTIONARY THEATRE

The play, *Home on the Range*, depicts the attitude of a Black burglar towards members of a White family. Baraka demonstrates his continuing awareness of the newest theatrical modes in this play. In this play the objectives of “the revolutionary theatre’ are fully realized. There is no definite plot in the play. The playwright uses very little of moving speech and there is total absence of steady dialogue. All the theatrical elements are set towards creating an “atmosphere of feeling”. The gibberish communication, the song and nigger dance party symbolize the future of the Blacks. It also symbolizes a step towards a more liberated soul and independence that the Blacks crave for. The ultimate scene with the head of the White family lying flat on the ground trying to recollect his glorious past and the Black girl announcing the dawn of a new day is not only symbolic of the new future but also speaks a lot about the mind of the playwright, Amiri Baraka. The play through its short but evocative use of words, characters, setting and scene set the tone of a revolutionary play.

13.10 CONCLUSION

The play, *Home on the Range*, is an excellent study of Afro-American play and the revolutionary types of plays that Amiri Baraka excelled in. It also gives a glimpse of the socio-cultural and political background of the Afro-American existence amongst the Whites. Amiri Baraka’s *Home on the Range*, like many other plays of his can be treated as an excellent example of plays written in the principles of *Black Aesthetics*. The play while focussing on the feelings of a Black burglar about a white family actually attempts to depict, though very subtly, the attitude of the Blacks towards the White. Through the interaction of the Black Criminal with the White, the playwright endeavours towards opening a new window to the future of the Black community.

13.11 QUESTIONS

- i. Assess Amiri Baraka’s *Home on the Range* as a strong statement in African American protest.
- ii. Examine Amiri Baraka’s *Home on the Range* as a representative of the Revolutionary Theatre.

- iii. Critically discuss the themes of the play, *Home on the Range*.
- iv. Discuss the symbolic significance of the song and dance in the play, *Home on the Range*.
- v. Consider Amiri Baraka's play *Home on the Range* as an exploration and a critique of absurd theatre.

13.11 BIBLIOGRAPHY

1. Brown, Llyod W. "Drama", *Amiri Baraka*. Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1980.
2. Harris, William. J. "Introduction", *The Leroi Jones / Baraka Reader*, New York: Thunder's Mouth Press, 1986.
3. Home on the Range- In *Drama* *Beylea* 12 (Summer 1968): 106-11.
4. Bullins Ed. *New Plays from the Black Theater*. New York: Bantam Books, 1969.

13.12 REFERENCE FOR FURTHER STUDY

- i. Andrews, W.L. and others, ed. *The Concise Oxford Companion to AfricanAmerican Literature*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2001.
- ii. Baraka, Amiri, and W.J. Harris, ed. *The LeRoi Jones/Amiri Baraka Reader*. New York: ThunderV Mouth Press, 1991.
- iii. L.C. Sanders, *The Development of Black Theater in America: From Shadows to Selves*, London: Louisiana State University Press, 1988.
- iv. Jones, LeRoi [Amiri Baraka]. *Home: Social Essays*. New York: William Morrow and Company, Inc., 1971.

