Unit -1

LITERARY TERMS:TYPES OF VERSES

Unit Structure

1.0 OBJECTIVES

The present unit is a continuation of the previous two on literary terms. Here the learners shall be introduced to the literary genre of Poetry, through its types and variants.

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Earlier poetry or a collection of poems/verses would have been identified as that which could be sung. Its recitation would have been accompanied by musical instruments such as the 'lyre'. Its language thus would have been different from 'prose'. Its subjects predominantly would have been evocative of emotions such as Nature, God, Love or even Death.

Yet over the years, the concept and understanding of poetry has undergone many modifications and has now become flexible enough to include forms that may use rhymes or may not. It can have different kinds of rhythms or cadences. The language may/may not be distinctly different from common speech. The source can be real or fictitious/imaginative. The text can be broken into lines and stanzas but not necessarily. The only commonality

perhaps will be its evocative aspect. That poetry touches a deeper chord within, has remained its lasting quality. This however does not mean that it is not an intellectual pursuit too. It can very well be used as a telling commentary upon the society and its ways.

Since the essence of 'poetry' eludes a fixed definition, it can best be studied by analysing its different types.

1.2 TYPES OF VERSE

1.2.1 Lyric

Lyric poetry is one of the oldest forms of poetry. Quite literarily, it used to be a song that would be sung to the accompaniment of a stringed musical instrument called the lyre.

The lyric is of a Greek origin, its foremost characteristic is that it is written in first person. It is mostly non narrative and often only expresses a mood, sentiment or a particular point of view of the narrator. It is not necessary that the narrator is the poet himself/herself. The narrator can be a character real or concocted by the poet.

Aristotle has also stressed on the particular aspect of the lyric that it is essentially the utterance of a single speaker. In those days, it was also known as 'melic' poetry.
During the Roman period the lyric became a form more to be read/ recited than sung. After the Romans, medieval France and Germany brought about a revival in the lyric form. It reached its culmination through the Italian poets. By the time the lyric reached the British shores, it had gathered a wider inclusivism sense, encompassing the religious hymns, the sonnets and other love songs, odes and elegies.

The medieval English song:

"Summer is icumen in,
Lhude sing cuccu"
(Summer is coming, Loud sing Cuckoo)

It is an early example of the lyric. Later, English lyric poetry blossomed during the Elizabethan period with the popular belief that:
"England, Merry England, was a nest of singing birds."

Among these, Robert Southwell's lyrics are steeped in religious sentiment. On the other hand those which are sensuous and bordering on erotic are Shakespeare's "Venus and Adonis", Marlowe's "Hero and Leander", Marston's "Pygmalion" and Drayton's "The Barons Wars". The themes sometimes included

even war and patriotism. All these lyrics were compiled into “Song Books”. Some of these were Tottel’s “Miscellany” which had songs by Wyatt and Surrey; Davidson’s “Poetic Rhapsody” was the last of the famous ones.

In the 17th century metaphysical poets from John Donne to Andrew Marvell wrote lyrical verses. Donne writes in one of his Songs:

Go and catch a falling star,
Get with child a mandrake root,
Tell me where all past years are,
Or who cleft the devil’s foot,
Teach me to hear mermaids singing,
Or to keep off envy’s stinging
And find/ what wind serves to advance an honest mind.

The metaphysical poets were followed by William Cowper, Thomas Gray and Oliver Goldsmith. Robert Burns, the precursor to Romanticism, too wrote some very popular lyrical poems. Romanticism as a literary movement itself thrived in the lyrical form. All the Romantics from Wordsworth to Byron were masters of the lyric.

In the 20th century, the Georgian poets such as A.E. Housman, Walter de la Mare and Edmund Blunden kept it alive. Rabindranath Tagore won the Nobel Prize for the self-translation of his lyrical verses, ‘Gitanjali’.

1.2.2Elegy

In the true sense an elegy is a lament. It emphasises the uncertainty of human life and hence the unpredictable nature of death. In the 17th century, the term elegy was formalised to represent:

“…a sustained lament in verse at the death of a particular person, usually ending in a consolation”.

Such an elegy is also known as a monody. The best example of this is John Milton’s ‘Lycidas’. Through the poem Milton expresses his sorrow upon the death of a dear learned friend. Since then, others too have tried their hand at this poetic form. Thomas Gray composed, “Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard” in 1757. P.B. Shelley wrote “Adonais” in 1821. Lord Alfred Tennyson gave English literature a classic long elegy through his “In Memoriam” (1850). When the Nobel laureate W.B.Yeats died, W.H. Auden felt it necessary to write “In memory of W.B. Yeats”(1940).

Some elegies took up existing pastoral conventions and represented the departed soul as a shepherd. “Lycidas”, “Adonais” and Mathew Arnold’s “Thyrsis” etc. are ‘Pastoral elegies’. These have a standard structure:

- Invocation of the muse/s
- Procession of mourners
- Nature as a mourner
- The poet gives vent to his/her sorrow and frustration by even accusing the ‘Super-natural powers’ of negligence and insensitivity;

“… Come to pluck your barriers harsh and crude,
And with forced fingers rude
Shatter your leaves before the mellowing year”
- Lycidas, John Milton

Eventually the pastoral elegy ends in a consolation. This is based on the belief that “death is an entry to a higher life.”

1.2.3 Dramatic Monologue

A Monologue is loosely a literary piece which has only a single speaker. Yet, it is different from the soliloquy popularised in drama. The soliloquy is the voicing out aloud of a character’s thoughts. On the other hand, the ‘Dramatic Monologue’ has implied listener/s. The speaker directly addresses the listener/s, asks them questions, instructs them etc. Furthermore, the speaker also makes the reader aware of the listener/s’ response. For e.g. in Robert Browning’s “My Last Duchess”, the speaker is the Duke of Ferrara and the listener is a messenger from the Count of Tyrol. The listener is looking at a covered painting and wondering about it. The Duke allows the messenger to see that it is a portrait of his last Duchess. He tells the messenger that he should consider himself lucky that he got a chance to see the Duchess’s portrait.

The reason this kind of poetry is called a ‘Dramatic Monologue’ is a subject of much debate. Yet, the popular notion is that it takes place at a time in the speaker’s life that will bring about a ‘dramatic’ change. Hence it is called a ‘Dramatic Monologue’. For example, “The Patriot” by Robert Browning, has a speaker who is being taken to the gallous. Like Robert Browning, his Victorian fellow poets, Lord Alfred Tennyson and Mathew Arnold too were masters of the Dramatic Monologue. Tennyson is famous for his “Ulysses “and “Tithonus” whereas Mathew Arnold has given the unforgettable “Dover Beach”;

“The sea is calm to-night.
The tide is full, the moon lies fair…
Come to the window, sweet is the night air!”

The Dramatic Monologue form has enticed generations of poets since considered to be among the very first modernist creations, T.S. Eliot's "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock" begins in a typical dramatic monologue manner:

"Let us go then, you and I,"

The Indian modernist poet Nissim Ezekiel too has dabbled with the form, in his poems such as "The Professor";

"How many issues you have? Three?
That is good. These are days of planning."

1.2.4 Sonnet

As seen earlier, sonnet is a form of lyric. It is a short lyric of exactly fourteen lines. Often, it used to have a very complicated rhyme scheme which was considered to be a necessity to enhance the lyrical quality. The subject matter of the early Sonnet was "love' and the form gained its popularity as 'love poems' or 'love songs'. It is considered to be Italian in origin. The poet Petrarch gave wide acclaim and hence it became known as the Petrarchan sonnet. He divided the fourteen lines into as 'octave' of eight lines and a 'sestet' of six lines. There comes a distinct shift in the speaker's thought process when the octave end and sestet begins. The Petrarch Sonnet was made more versatile by latter day poets who used it to address different subjects. The 19th century poet H.L.V.Deroziogives it a patriotic form in his "To India-My Native Land";

"My country!In thy days of glory past
Are halo circled round thy brow"

The Sonnet was first brought into the English language in the 16th century by Sir Thomas Wyatt. It later changed hands from Earl of Surrey to Sir Philip Sidney, Edmund Spenser etc. and finally to Shakespeare. The restrictive form of the Petrarchan sonnet was rejected by Shakespeare. He gave it a new structure of three 'quatrains' (4line stanza) and a couplet. The 16th century English Sonnets or Elizabethan Sonnets are often seen in the form of 'Sonnet Sequences' for e.g. Sidney's "Astrophel and Stella", Spenser's "Amoretti" etc. Here too the theme of love dominates the preceding;

"Leaves, lines and rhymes, seek her to please alone,
Whom if ye please, I care for other none."
-Amoretti Edmund Spenser.

The sonnet was infused with new life and vigour by G.M. Hopkins in the 19th century. He lent in the 'sprung rhythm' that

distinguished it from the earlier variants. Since the form is revisited often by the new literati; Wendy Cope, Simon Armitage, Andrew Motion's "Love Sonnets for 21st century" to site a few.

1.2.5 Ballad

A Ballad is a song that tells a story. In short, it is a kind of narrative verse. It belongs to the Folk tradition and it served the dual purpose of entertaining the audience as well as acting as a loose historical records.

During the medieval times there were religious ballads such as the "Cherry tree ballad". Sometimes they dealt with religious themes so flippantly that they were almost blasphemous. Yet, the most common themes of ballads were love and bravery. The ballad as a form often begins in 'media res' i.e. in the middle of the story. Its language is simple and it is often written in quatrains i.e. four line stanzas. The rhyme scheme is commonly 'abcb'. For e.g. the ballad of "The Douglas Tragedy" begins with:

"Rise up, rise up, my seven bold sons,
And put on your armour so bright,
And take better care of your youngest sister,
For your eldest away the last night."

Eventually ballads were written and even printed. In the 16th century, ballads printed on broadsheets became very popular and were called 'the broadside ballads.' They would be based on a particular incident, humorous and some were even satirical in nature. Thomas Percy, Robert Harley, Francis James Child etc. were the early collectors of ballads. Percy's "Reliques of Ancient Poetry" has significantly contributed to the growth of the ballad.

Later, significant work was done on the ballad since 19th century. S.T.Coleridge's "Rime of the Ancient Mariner" is the one such ballad:

"Water, water, everywhere,
And all the boards did shrink;
Water, water, everywhere,
Not any drop to drink."

These ballads became popular as 'Literary Ballads'. Rudyard Kipling came up with his "Ballad of East and West" around the end of this century. Ezra Pound wrote the 20th century "Ballad of the Goodly fere". Thus the trend of written ballads has followed the ballads that were sung, the traditional ballads. Humorous or tragic, ballads have evoked interest for centuries and still do.

1.2.6 Epic

An epic may be broadly described as a narrative poem based on events of national, sometimes universal importance. The earliest epics dealt with an important period of history, generally the "golden" age of the mythical past. These epics were peopled with larger than life heroes. Aristotle says that epics show men both as they are and as they ought to be. Therefore, the epic poet writes about moral integrity but does not include any human frailty.

The history of epic in the West begins with Homer who sang of the Heroic Age in Greece. His epics: the "Iliad" and "The Odyssey", was about popular heroes engaged in adventures or battles. The Roman poet, Virgil, who composed his epic-"The Aeneid" some centuries later, modified the Homeric use of history. In Virgil's work, past history was useful because of its relevance to his own times. C.M. Bowra points out a primary difference in the epics Homer and Virgil wrote by describing the former as "Oral" and the latter as "Literary" or Secondary. The literary epics of Virgil and later poets have a formal design and shape not found in Homer, but they often have less vigour and primary energy than the Oral or Primary epics. Other primary epics are "Gilgamesh" and the early English "Beowulf". Some of the best known secondary epics are Dante's "Divine Comedy", the "Song of Roland", Spenser's "Fairy Queen" and Milton's "Paradise Lost".

There are some common elements of Epic poetry. The first is Invocation to the Muse of Poetry. Milton follows the Homeric model, starting with a call on the muse:

"Sing, Heavenly muse, of the man's first disobedience…"

Furthermore comes the use of Heroic Meter. Iambic pentameter is the one that Milton uses in Paradise Lost. But in all cases, epic poetry uses relatively long lines, as opposed to, say a ballad, which is also a sung narrative but normally uses much shorter lines. It has a Grand Scale and hence a Grand Style. It uses Continuity. Milton makes extensive use of very long sentences with interior pauses marked by commas and semicolons, but with as few full stops-periods- as possible. It uses the Long Tailed Simile or Epic Simile or Heroic Simile. As Epic is basically a narrative verse like the Ballad, it begins in 'media res'.

The secondary epic aims at an even higher solemnity than the primary. This effect is achieved by what is called 'grandeur' or 'elevation' of the style. As far as Milton is concerned, this grandeur is produced mainly by three things:the use of slightly unfamiliar words or constructions including archaisms. The use of proper names, not solely nor briefly for their sound, but because they are the splendid, remote, terrible, or celebrated thongs. They are there

to encourage a sweep of the reader's eye over the richness and variety of the world. And lastly, the continued allusion to all the sources of heightened interest in our sense experience(light, darkness, storm, flowers, jewels, sexual love and the like).But all over 'managed' with an air of magnanimous austerity:

"The mind is its own place, and in itself
Can make a Heav'n of Hell, a Hell of Heav'n."
Book I, Paradise Lost, John Milton

1.2.7Satire

Dr. Johnson defines 'Satire' as a "poem in which wickedness or folly is censured". Dryden went a step further and claimed that the true end of satire is "the amendment of voices". On the contrary Defoe saw satire as a kind of 'moral policeman restraining the righteous but helpless against the wicked'. Yet Satire has always been acutely conscious of the difference between what things are and what they ought to be. A satirist is a kind of social reformer who, through his poetic genius, attacks the society rather amusingly. Satire differs from the 'comic' as the comic evokes laughter for its own sake, whereas satire uses laughter as a weapon. John Dryden's "Mac Flecknoe" is an effective satire on a poetaster who pretends to be a great poet.

Satire has usually been justified by those who practise it as corrective of human vice and folly. AlexanderPope remarked that those who are ashamed of nothing else are so of being ridiculous. Hence, satire's aim has been to ridicule the 'failing'rather than individuals. Satire is generally distinguished into two broad categories:

1. Formal satire which further is named after the great Roman Satirists- Horace and Juvenal. Horatian Satire characterises a witty, urbane speaker, a tolerant man who is more often moved rather than angry. Juvenalian satire tends to be moral and uses dignified and stylish utterance to decry vices and follies.

2. The second type of satire is informal or indirect satire which is cast in the form of narration instead of direct addresses, in which subjects of satire are characters who make themselves and their opinions ridiculous. Satire is a form which is common to both Prose and Poetry.

There are great satires in poetrylike "Mac Flecknoe" and Alexander Pope's "Rape of the Lock". John Dryden added wit and humour, intelligence and sophistication to verse satire. Mac Flecknoe is the evidence of Dryden's sophisticated wit. The poem is an attack on bad writing. It is not a direct attack on the person, but through the personality and mouth of Flecknoe. Earlier the Duke of Buckingham had written about Dryden himself,satirically:

"Our poets make us laugh at tragedy
And with their comedies, they make us cry."

Thus their age itself was conducive to mutual satire.

In the 18th century the 'Rape of the Lock' by Alexander Pope was the best achievement in the satirical form. It is a mock epic and a satire on the rituals of the contemporary English high society. The incident in this case is that of the cutting of the young lady's side curl. It is comically exalted and is ridiculed by casting it in the epic structure. There is a conscious contrast between the content and the form-

"Slight is the subject, but is not so the Praise"

…as the poet declares in the first canto.

Satire, as a genre continued to appeal to the poets even in the 20th century. A serious poet like T.S. Eliot could not avoid its attraction when he chose to write about the state of religion in the 20th century:

"God works in a mysterious way
The church can sleep and feed at once"
-The Hippopotamus

Thus, satire as a genre and a poetic form has been used to awaken man from moral slumber.

It has been indeed, a useful poetic means to exercise the poet's social concern throughout the ages.

1.2.8 Ode

Ode is a literary technique that is lyrical in nature but not very lengthy. Poets praise people, natural scenes and abstract ideas in the Ode. The name of this form is derived from the Greek word aeidein, which means to chant or sing. Hence poets use particular metrical patterns and rhyme scheme in the Ode to express their noble and lofty sentiments. In addition to this the Ode has elaborate patterns of stanzas. The tone is serious and sometimes satirical. Since the themes of odes are inspiring and lofty, they have a universal appeal.

Odes are of three types; the Pindaric ode, the Horatian ode, and the Irregular ode. The Pindaric Ode was named after an ancient Greek poet, Pindar, who wrote early odes. It contains three triads (three line stanzas); the strophe, the antistrophe and the final stanza known as the epode, with regular rhyme patterns and lengths of lines. The Horatian Ode was taken from the Latin poet, Horace. Unlike heroic odes of Pindar, Horatian ode is informal,

meditative and intimate. These odes dwelt upon interesting subject matters that were simple and were pleasing to the senses. Since Horatian odes are informal in tone, they are devoid of any strict rules. The Irregular Ode is one with subjects similar to that of Pindar but without any formal rhyme scheme, and structure.

A perfect example of an English Pindaric ode is 'Ode on Intimations of Immortality' by William Wordsworth:

"There was a time when meadow, grove, and stream,
The earth, and every common sight, to me did seem
Apparelled in celestial light, the glory and freshness of a dream."

On the other hand, an example of the Horatian ode in English, presenting a consistent rhyme scheme but having no division into triads like the Pindaric ode, is the 'Ode to the Confederate Dead' by Allen Tate. It is less ceremonious, less formal and better suited for reading. The purpose of using this type of ode is to give vent to pent-up feelings:

"Row after row with strict impunity
The headstones yield their names to the element,
The wind whirrs without recollection;
In the riven troughs the splayed leaves
Pile up, of nature the casual sacrament
To the seasonal eternity of death;"

Furthermore, an example of the Irregular Ode , which employs neither three parts nor four line stanzas like a Horatian ode, is 'Ode to the West Wind' by Percy Bysshe Shelley. Nevertheless, each stanza of the ode is distinct from the other stanzas in rhyme scheme, pattern and length:

"Scatter, as from an unextinguish'd hearth
Ashes and sparks, my words among mankind!
Be through my lips to unawaken'd earth
The trumpet of a prophecy! O Wind,
If Winter comes, can Spring be far behind?"

1.3 LET'S SUM UP

In this unit, we have tried to acquaint students with the characteristics of the literary genre of Poetry; to cultivate appreciation of Poetry as an artistic medium and to help them understand the importance of forms, elements and style that shape Poetry;to enable students to understand that Poetry is an expression of human values within a historical and social context.

1.4 IMPORTANT QUESTIONS

1. Write brief notes on any four of the following:
a. Lyric,
b. Dramatic Monologue
c. Ballad
d. Sonnet
e. Epic
f. Satire
2. Explain the style of Odes used by the poets with examples of some poems given in the text.
3. Explain the term Elegy with the examples given in the text.

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Unit -2

LITERARY TERMS: GENRE OF DRAMA

Unit Structure

The present unit is a continuation of the previous three on literary terms. Here the learners shall be introduced to the literary genre of Drama through its types and variants.

2.0 OBJECTIVE:

- To acquaint students with the characteristics of the literary genre of Drama
- To cultivate appreciation of Drama as an artistic medium and to help them understand the importance of forms, elements and style that shape Drama
- To enable students to understand that Drama is an expression of human values within a historical and social context

2.1 INTRODUCTION:

Drama, plays, theatre have been associated with human civilisation since antiquity. Role play, narration with deep involvement of the narrator etc. have been its earliest manifestation. Formally, ancient Greeks and Indians have tried to theoretize this 'performing art form'. From an English Drama perspective, only the Greek influence is the significant one.

The Greeks divided Drama into Tragedy and Comedy, as is represented by the two ‘masks’ associated with Drama; the weeping face and the laughing face. Over the years Drama developed to such an extent that many new sub-divisions sprung up. It is through the study of these different types of Drama, that a better understanding of the genre is possible.

2.2. TYPES OF DRAMA:

- Tragedy
- Comedy
- Farce
- Melodrama
- Verse Drama
- Theatre of Absurd
- Angry Young Man Drama

2.2.1 Tragedy:

A play serious in mood and sorrowful in conclusion can be considered to be a tragedy. Among the first to analyse tragedy, Aristotle's based his theory on Greek dramatists such as Aeschylus, Sophocles and Euripides. In the subsequent two thousand years and more, various new types of serious plots ending in a catastrophe have been developed.

Aristotle defined tragedy as "the imitation of an action that is serious and also, as having magnitude, complete in itself." Unlike modern times, the language of Tragic Drama was poetic and not prosaic. The plot is a connected series of events. It begins with the establishment of a tragic hero who is an elevated character, a higher mortal that others can look up to. ‘Peripetia’ or a sudden reversal of his fortunes takes place owing to ‘hamartia’ or a tragic flaw in him. M.H. Abrahms says, “The tragic hero, like Oedipus in Sophocles’ Oedipus the King, moves us to pity because since he is not an evil man, his misfortune is greater than he deserves; but he moves us also to fear because we recognize similar possibilities of error in our own lesser and fallible selves”. This was the real purpose behind Tragedy, to bring about a Catharsis i.e. purgation or purification or both by removing fear and pity from the life of the audience. To evoke maximum response from the audience, Aristotle recommended that the tragic plot should have three unities that of time, place and action. This theory has influenced drama for nearly 2 millennia since.

The greatest tragedies in English were first written during the Elizabethan period. Among them Shakespearean tragedies such as “Macbeth”, “Othello”, “King Lear” and “Hamlet” show definite

influence of Aristotle. Yet he does not fully adhere to the Greek theory and includes his own elements such as breaking the three unities, mixing tragedy and comedy, showing violence on stage etc. Some of his most memorable lines are from these tragedies. *In "Macbeth", he declaims;*

"Life's but a walking shadow, a poor player,
That struts and frets his hour upon the stage,
And then is heard no more. It is a tale
Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury,
Signifying nothing."

Besides the Shakespearean tragedy, another popular form was the Senecan tragedy. Sackville and Norton's "Gorboduc", Thomas Kyd's "The Spanish Tragedy", Christopher Marlowe's "Jew of Malta" and even "Hamlet" show the Senecan influence. Most of these share a revenge theme and a corpse-strewn climax. The Spanish Tragedy and Hamlet also have ghosts among the cast; all these elements can be traced back to the Senecan model. These were also popular as 'Revenge Tragedy' or 'Tragedy of Blood'. The beginning of the 17th century witnessed the great playwright John Webster churn out two similar masterpieces; "The Duchess of Malfi" and "The White Devil".

The Restoration Period produced a curious genre, a cross between epic and tragedy called the 'Heroic Tragedy'. Eighteenth-century writers popularized the 'Bourgeois or Domestic Tragedy', which was written in prose and presented a protagonist from the middle class who suffers a domestic disaster. George Lillo's "The London Merchant" (1731), about a merchant's apprentice who succumbs to a heartless courtesan and comes to a bad end by robbing his employer and murdering his uncle, is an excellent example of the Domestic Tragedy. These were like the Henrik Ibsen kind of 'Problem plays' of the 19th century.

Experimentations with the tragic form continued into the 20th century with classics such as *Bertolt Brecht's "Mother Courage" who says;*

"Courage is the name they gave me because I was scared of going broke, sergeant, so I drove me cart right through the bombardment of Riga with fifty loaves of bread aboard. They were going mouldy, it was high time, hadn't any choice really."

2.2.2 Comedy:

The simplest meaning of Comedy during the ancient Greek period was a performance with a happy ending. The earliest exponents of this form were Aristophanes and Menander. In their

hands, Comedy served the dual purpose to humour/ to amuse and as a satire to comment and correct. Further, comedy was used during this period as a means to escape reality.

The last aspect of escaping reality through comedy enticed the Elizabethan writers who imbibed it in English drama. Since imagination is the vehicle to escape reality, this kind of comedy came to be known as 'Romantic Comedy' (in those days Romance meant imagination). Furthermore, these plays concerned love affairs so eventually the word Romance became associated with love. Shakespeare's "As You Like It", "A Midsummer Night's Dream" etc. fall in this category.

In fact in"As You Like It", Shakespeare brings both the meanings of Romance face to face with each other;

"If ever-You meet in some Fresh Cheek the power of fancy,
Then shall you know the wounds invisible
That love's keen arrows make."

The 'Romantic comedy' was followed by the 'Comedy of Humours', developed by Ben Jonson. Here the characters represent the dominance of one of the 'Humours' (Sanguine, phlegmatic, choleric and melancholic). The best example is in his aptly titled play, "Every Man in His Humour." The names that Ben Jonson gave to his characters, "Zeal-of-the-land Busy", "Dame Purecraft", "Wellbred" etc. influenced later comedy, especially the 'Comedy of Manners'. The Greek playwright Menander should actually get the credit for the Comedy of Manners. As far as English Drama is considered, the Restoration period revelled in the Comedy of Manners. In its subject, it dealt with the love-relation between men and women and in terms of style it involved witty repartees:

Mirabell: She has beauty enough to make any man think so and complaisance enough not to contradict him who shall tell her so.

Finall: For a passionate lover, me thinks you are a man so me what too discerning in the Failings of your mistress

Mirabell: And for a discerning man, somewhat too passionate a lover; For I like her with all her Faults – nay like her for her faults. – The Way of the World, William Congreve

Other than Congreve, even William Wycherley was a superb exponent of the 'Restoration Comedy' in his "The Country Wife."

Later comedy came up with new types such as 'the sentimental comedy', 'farce', 'parody', 'black comedy',

'tragicomedy', 'theatre of the Comedy' and has continued to re-invent itself time and again.

2.2.3 Farce:

If the 'Comedy of Manners' can be considered to be 'high comedy' then Farce surely is 'low comedy'. Farce does not stimulate the intellect. Instead it uses (vulgar), jokes, gags (Small comic episodes that are not part of the whole play, just a cosmetic addition), slapstick humour or clownish activities to make the audience laugh. Sometimes it stoops so low as to comment on a character's physique or handicap etc. and raise cheap laughter at him/her expense;

ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE: Where England?

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE: I looked for the chalky cliffs, but I could find no whiteness in them; but I guess it stood in her chin, by the salt rheum that ran between France and it.

ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE: Where Spain

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE: Faith, I saw it not; but I felt it hot in her breath.

ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE: Where America, the Indies?

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE: Oh, sir, upon her nose all o'er embellished with rubies, carbuncles, sapphires, declining their rich aspect to the hot breath of Spain; who sent whole armadoes of caracks to be ballast at her nose.

The Comedy of Errors William Shakespeare

In the above dialogue, the characters of Antipholus and Dromio are talking about a maid servant named Nell who is quite physically unattractive. Dromio jokes that she is round enough to represent the world and Antipholus picks up on the joke to ask which parts of her body represent different countries.

Indeed the entire play contains many different features of farce. Even the fact that these two characters carry the epithet "of Syracuse" is notable—they are both identical twins to characters who have the same first name and thus must be called either "of Syracuse" or "of Ephesus."

Further, Farce has a very particular kind of 'characterisation'. It employs 'exaggerated caricatures' instead of characters. The plot comes up with ridiculous situations and comic but do not seem to be natural to the flow of the play. A good example would be Aphra Behn's "The Rover" which depicts the amorous adventures of a

group of Englishmen in Naples at Carnival time. She was followed by Henry Fielding's, "The Author's Farce." It is believed that Fielding never wanted to write "a Farce". When all his other plays were rejected, he decided to write a 'Farce' in order to mock the lowly choices or lack of taste, during his times. In the 19th century, John Madison Morton wrote, "Box and Cox" whereas even Charles Dickens tried his hand at a farce in, "The Lamplighter". The best turn of the century Farces were Brandon Thomas "Charley's Aunt" and Oscar Wilde's "The Importance of Being Earnest". In the 20th century, farce had not only been played out in theatre but it had become popular in films all over the world too.

2.2.4 Melodrama:

Until he 19th century, the term 'melodrama' simply referred to a 'musical play'. This was continuation of the Greek theatrical conversations. The word 'melos' means 'a song' in Greek. So melodrama simply meant a play with songs in it. However, in 19th century the term 'melodrama' began to acquire a new meaning. The 19th century drama directors started experimenting with 'background scores' for their plays. A new trend was set up; to enhance and emphasise the importance of a scene or to intensify its emotional experience, a suitable background track would be played out at loud volumes. This eventually completely changed the complexion of the play. In order to be in sync with the music, the actors became 'maudlin' or over sentimental. As the acting was 'affected', it changed the 'character' projected and this characterisation itself got modified. As per this new characterisation, the 'protagonist' became a 'Hero', an excellent human being, an epitome of goodness. The 'Female Lead' had to suit the hero so she was modelled as one having exemplary 'purity' or 'chastity' (this went down very well with the then prevailing notions of Victorian prudery). Since the background score harped more often on the emotions of grief and anger, the 'Villain' had to behave like a ruthless monster, an incarnation of all the vices together. This alone would cause the requisite suffering in the hero and the heroine and subsequently anger and outrage. Finally the heightened background score ended up changing the plot itself, now the plot was reduced to "malicious and wicked plotting" leading to "Violent action", inducing widespread suffering - grief giving way to anger and finally the need to seek revenge. It was surprising, how as experiment with the background score, led to 'flat' characterisation; with as good as it gets characters pitted against the worst villains. Such a plot took up the nature of a 'formula' and this formula of the Victorian melodramatic tragedy rules the roost even today, like the Farcical Comedy, over World Cinema too.

Perfect examples of the 19thcentury melodramas are "Under the Gaslight" by Augustin Daly, "Ten Nights in a Barroom" by W. W.

Pratt and George Dibdin Pitt's thriller, “Sweeney Todd, The Barber of Fleet Street”. The Pitt play was further adapted by Austin Rosser.

Sweeny Todd proclaims in it, in typical melodramatic style:

All you lusty young loving couples, watch out! Sweeney is on the prowl! And I hate yer. It'll be you, then her. Eh? Eh? Haha! All you young fellows with fancy notions in your heads, wenching in shop doorways, in narrow alleyways, yearning for it under the arch of a bridge–watch out tonight, 'cos old Sweeney is on the loose and he'll uncouple you.

No wonder then Hollywood adopted Sweeny Todd and made it into a very popular 2007 film.

2.2.5 Verse Drama or Poetic Drama:

Any drama written as verseor poetry to be recited is known as Verse Drama. For a very long period, verse drama was the dominant form of drama in Europe. In poetic drama the dialogue is written in verse, which in English is usually blank verse;

“Oh, thou art fairer than the evening air
Clad in the beauty of a thousand stars!
Brighter art thou than Flaming Jupiter
When he appeared to hapless Semele.”

- *Doctor Faustus*
Christopher Marlowe

Almost all the heroic dramas of English restoration period, however were written in heroic couplets (iambic pentameter lines rhyming in pairs).

Closet drama: An important trend from around 1800 was the closet drama: a verse drama intended to be read from the page, rather than performed. Its precursor was Milton's “Samson Agonistes”(1671). In the nineteenth century, Lord Byron and Shelley, as well as a host of lesser figures, devoted much time to the closet drama. Byron's “Manfred”(1817), Shelley's “Prometheus Unbound”(1820) and Hardy's “The Dynasts”(1904-1908) are some of the examples.

Among these *Shelley's “Prometheus Unbound” has great lyrical merit:*
To suffer woes which Hope thinks infinite;
To forgive wrongs darker than death or night;
To defy power which seems omnipotent;
To love and bear; to hope till Hope creates
From its own wreck the thing it contemplates

Life may change, but it may fly not;
Hope may vanish, but can die not;
Truth be veiled, but still it burneth;
Love repulsed -but it returneth

Later opera would take up verse drama as something to be sung. Verse drama as such, however, in becoming closet drama, became simply a longer poetic form, without the connection to practical theatre and performance. According to Robertson Davies in A Voice From the Attic, closet drama is "Dreariest of literature, most second hand and fusty of experience!".

2.2.6 Theatre of Absurd:

The term is applied to a number of plays which have a common view that the human condition is essentially absurd and that this condition can be adequately represented only in works of literature that are themselves absurd. The earliest example of this is Alfred Jarry's French play “Uburoi” (Ubu the King). This movement was influenced by the existentialist philosophy and became popular after the Second World War.

Samuel Beckett (1906—89), the most eminent and influential writer in this mode, both in drama and in prose fiction, was an Irishman living in Paris who often wrote in French and then translated his works into English plays, such as “Waiting for Godot” and “Endgame”. The irrationalism, helplessness and absurdity of life is represented in dramatic forms that reject realistic settings, logical reasoning or a coherently evolving plot. “Waiting for Godot” presents two tramps in a wasteland, fruitlessly and all but hopelessly waiting for an unidentified person, Godot, who may or may not come. One of them remarks;

"Nothing happens, nobody comes, nobody goes.”

The lucid but eddying and pointless dialogue is often funny and uses other modes such as slapstick to give a comic cast to the alienation and anguish of human existence. Some of the early dramatic works of the Englishman Harold Pinter and the American Edward Albee are written in a similar mode. The early plays of Tom Stoppard, such as “Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead” and “Travesties”, exploit the devices of absurdist theatre more for comic than philosophical ends. Black Comedy and Black Humour also have affinities with this movement.

The Theatre of the Absurd, a term coined by Martin Esslin, seemed the appropriate literary response to the Post-Second World War despair. Though it was temporal in nature its elements are in wide use even today.

2.2.7 Angry Young Man Drama:

In the late 1950s a number of young writers, such as A. Wesker, Kingsley Amis and above all John Osborne, were grouped under the label of "Angry Young Men". They gave voice to the young generation who, dissatisfied with the world they lived in, wanted to create their own way of living. They struggled against the Establishment and some of its values: family, patriotism, the Church and culture. They began to cry out against conventions, tradition and authoritarianism. They felt cheated as the promises of the Welfare State had revealed to be empty: society fed them well, educated them well but still kept them trapped in a class system. This class discrimination that opened the doors to the rich public-school alumni or the upper-middle class but kept them closed in the faces of the members of the working class.

The Angry Young Men's works were politically committed and dealt with contemporary themes. They took as subject matter the lower middle class and the working class and depicted in realistic terms their typical habitat; generally a gloomy and shabby room. They were torn between the dreams provided by their ideals and the depressed reality which shattered hopes of a better future. Unlike the “Theatre of the Absurd", which was a European phenomenon, the "Angry Young Man" was typically English. As about the origin of the label "Angry Young Men", there has been a popular belief that it is taken from the title of John Osborne’s play "Look Back in Anger". The play does not deal with anger alone but with a love which dies for lack of spiritual generosity. The central character in the play, Jimmy Porter was himself an angry young man who represented the young, rebellious post-war generation that questioned the state and its actions. He complains;

"the wrong people go hungry, the wrong people be loved, the wrong people dying”.

Other plays in this category include, Osborne’s, “The Entertainer”, Harold Pinter’s “Hothouse” etc. Around this same time, there was another movement in theatre dealing with working class characters and their concerns, called the “Kitchen Sink Realism” or the “Kitchen Sink drama”. Arnold Wesker’s “Chicken Soup with Barley*”* and Shelagh Delaney’s, “A Taste of Honey” belong to both the categories. Throughout the late 1950s and into the 1960s, the 'Angries' often met at or were nurtured by the Royal Shakespeare Company and through this venue other such emerging playwrights as Edward Bond and Wole Soyinka were exposed to the AYM movement directly. Though it was essentially a male "movement", Shelagh Delaney contributed to it as well. She was described as an "angry young woman" by Arthur Marwick.

The Angry Young Man Movement remained relevant only until its rebels had a valid cause. It later degenerated into ‘rebel without a cause.’

2.3QUESTIONS:

Q.1 Explain various stages in the development of drama.

Q.2 What according to Aristotle were the elements of drama.

Q.3 What are the various types of comedy. Illustrate with examples.

Q.4 How is farce different from comedy. Give examples.

Q.5 Discuss the "Angry Young Men" drama and its characteristics.

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Unit -3

A STUTY OF PRESCRIBED POEMS BY WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE, OLIVER GOLDSMITH AND JOHN KEATS

Unit Structure :

3.0 OBJECTIVES

The aim of this Unit is to introduce the readers into the world of English poetry with the greatest bard, William Shakespeare, and be acquainted with his first sonnet from the collection of Sonnets. From the sonnet it moves on to the elegy and focuses on Oliver Goldsmith's *An Elegy on the Death of a Mad Dog* which is written in a ballad form. This is followed by Keats's *Ode on a Grecian Urn*

which takes the readers to the enchanted world of the unknown and the mysterious, articulated through the carvings on the urn that captures the essence of beauty forever. Magnificently has the three poems ensured the form and style through wonderful and powerful expressions.

3.1 INTRODUCTION

Shakespeare's sonnets were composed between 1593 and 1601, though they were not published until 1609. That edition, *The Sonnets of Shakespeare*, consists of 154 sonnets, all written in the form of three quatrains and a couplet which is now recognized as Shakespearean sonnet. The sonnets fall into two groups: sonnets 1-126, addressed to a beloved friend, a handsome and noble young man, and sonnets 127-152, to a malicious but fascinating 'Dark Lady', who the poet loves in spite of himself. Nearly all of Shakespeare's sonnets examine the inevitable decay of time and the immortalization of beauty and love in poetry. Oliver Goldsmith, in his poem *Elegy Written on the Death of a Mad Dog* narrates an entertaining story, inducing laughter and at the same time communicating the incident in an incredulous manner. Keats' anticipated urn is addressed as if he was contemplating a real urn and as if the urn has survived unspoiled from the remote past.

3.2 FROM FAIREST CREATURES WE DESIRE INCREASE

3.2.1 THE POET

William Shakespeare (1564-1616) the poet, dramatist, actor was often regarded as England's National Poet and the 'Bard of Avon'. Born and brought up in Stratford-on-Avon, he married Anne Hathaway (who was eight years older to him) at a very young age of 18 and had three children. He made his appearance as an actor on the London stage where he would write the plays which would be later performed. Later with a group of actors he created his own theater – The Globe Theater. His works include approximately 38 plays, 154 odd sonnets, 2 long narrative poems and a few more verses. His early plays were primarily comedies and histories and are considered some of the best works produced ever in this genre. Later he started writing tragedies which include some famous ones like Hamlet, Macbeth, King Lear and Othello. In his last phase he started writing tragicomedies, also known as romances, and collaborated with other playwrights too.

In 1593 and 1594 when the theaters closed because of plague, Shakespeare published two narrative poems on sensual themes, *Venus and Adonis* and *The Rape of Lucrece*. The poems show culpability and moral confusion that resulted from

uncontrollable lust. A third narrative poem, *A Lover's Complaint*, was printed in the first edition of the *Sonnets* in 1609 which were his last non-dramatic works to be printed. The Sonnets are highly appreciated by the critics as reflective contemplation on the nature of love, sexual passion, creation, time and death.

3.2.2 THE TEXT

SONNET 1 (From Fairest Creatures we Desire Increase) by William Shakespeare

From fairest creatures we desire increase,
That thereby beauty's rose might never die,
But as the riper should by time decease,
His tender heir might bear his memory:
But thou, contracted to thine own bright eyes,
Feed'st thy light's flame with self-substantial fuel,
Making a famine where abundance lies,
Thyself thy foe, to thy sweet self too cruel.
Thou that art now the world's fresh ornament
And only herald to the gaudy spring,
Within thine own bud buriest thy content
And, tender churl, makest waste in niggarding.
Pity the world, or else this glutton be,
To eat the world's due, by the grave and thee.

MEANING OF WORDS/PHRASES

- ***From fairest creatures*** **(line 1):** From all beautiful creatures
- ***we desire increase*** **(line 1):** we want offspring
- ***riper*** **(line 3):** more ripe
- ***contracted to*** **(line 5):** bound only to
- ***Feed'st thy light's...fuel*** **(line 6):** Feed your eyes (light's flame) with only the sight of yourself - i.e., you are self-consumed.
- ***only*** **(line 10):** chief.
- ***gaudy*** **(line 10):** showy (not used in the modern uncomplimentary sense); from Middle English *gaude*, a yellowish green color or pigment
  niggarding **(line 12):** hoarding
- ***the world's due*** **(line 14):** what you owe to the world, i.e. the continuation of your beauty. The grave, which will consume the young man's body, will also *eat* any chance of his beauty living on, if the young man helps the grave by himself being gluttonous (in his refusal to have children).

Notes

- The first seventeen sonnets are addressed to the poet's awesome and enthralling friend, whose identity is anonymous and there are questions on his existence as well. The poet's main concern in these sonnets is to convince his friend to start a family, so that his beauty can live on through his children.
- In Shakespeare's sonnets, the rhyme pattern is ababcdcdefef gg, with the final couplet used to summarize the previous 12 lines or present a surprise ending. The rhythmic pattern of the sonnets is usually iambic pentameter.

3.2.3 EXPLANATION

The first sonnet '*From Fairest Creatures we Desire Increase*', from the collection *Sonnets,* implies to the fact that we desire beautiful creatures to multiply, in order to preserve their 'beauty' for the benefit of the world. It can be considered this way that when the parent dies ("as the riper should by time decease"), the child might continue with the parent's beauty ("His tender heir might bear his memory"). The death of the parent should not mean the death of beauty; the beauty of the rose should be carried forward through the children.

In the second quatrain, the poet blames the young man for being too self-absorbed to even think of procreation: he is "contracted" to his own "bright eyes," and feeds his light with the fuel of his own attractiveness. The speaker says that this makes the young man his own unsuspecting rival, because this nature of his makes "a famine where abundance lies". Accumulating all the love by the young man for his own beauty only is really an act of immaturity.

In the third quatrain, he argues that the young man may now be beautiful – he is undoubtedly "the world's fresh ornament / And only herald to the gaudy spring" – but that, in time, his beauty will fade, and he will bury his "content" within his flower's own bud (that is, he will not pass his beauty on; it will wither with him). In the couplet, the speaker asks the young man to "pity the world" and replicate, or else be a glutton who, like the grave, eats the beauty he owes to the whole world. His beauty is not personal; he has to share it with the world and that can happen only if he reproduces.

3.2.4 SUMMARY

Shakespeare begins his sonnets by introducing four of his most important themes – immortality, time, procreation, and selfishness – which are interrelated in this first sonnet both thematically and through the use of images associated with

business or commerce (the word ‘increase’ is a clear representation of this).

The sonnet's first four lines relate all of these important themes. Individually, each of these four lines addresses a separate issue. Line 1 is concerned with procreation, especially in the phrase "we desire increase"; line 2 hints at immortality in the phrase "might never die"; line 3 presents the theme of time's unceasing progress; and line 4 combines all three concerns: A "tender heir" represents the mortality for parents, who will grow old and die. According to the sonnet the poet’s expression of procreation ensures that our continuation will be carried forward by our children. And if we do not have children, our existence will be extinguished with our death.

But, the scenario the poet creates in the next few lines (lines 5–12) apparently has been rejected by the young man, whom the poet addresses as "thou". Interested only in his own selfish desires, the youth is the embodiment of narcissism, a destructively excessive love of oneself. The poet makes clear that the youth's self-love is harmful and unrealistic, not only for himself but for the entire world. Because the young man is not willing to share himself with the world by having a child to carry on his beauty, he creates "a famine where abundance lies" and thus is unnecessarily hurting himself viciously. The "bud" in line 11 recalls the "rose" from line 2 – the rose as an image of perfection underscores the immaturity of the young man, who is only a bud, still imperfect because he has not fully bloomed.

The final couplet – the last two lines – reinforces the injustice of the youth's not sharing his beauty with the world. The "famine" that he creates for himself is communicated through the phrase "To eat the world's due," as though the youth has the responsibility and the world has the right to expect the young man to father a child. Throughout the sonnet Shakespeare draws his imagery from everyday life and the world around him. In this sonnet he writes of love in terms of commercial purpose, the practice of charging exorbitant interest on money lent. For example, in the first line, which reads, "From fairest creatures we desire increase,""increase" means not only nature's gain through procreation but also commercial profit, an idea linked to another trade term, "contracted," in line 5. In line 12, by using the now-antiquated term "niggarding," which means hoarding, the poet implies that the youth, instead of marrying a woman and having children, is selfishly wasting his love all for himself.

3.2.5 COMMENTARY

The first sonnet introduces many of the themes that defines the sequence: beauty, the passage of human life in time, the ideas of virtue and wasteful self-consumption (“thou, contracted to thine

own bright eyes"), and the love of the poet for the young man, which causes him to elevate the young man above the whole world, and to consider his procreation a form of "pity" for the rest of the earth. Sonnet 1 opens not only the entire sequence of sonnets, a group comprising the first seventeen sonnets, often called the "procreation" sonnets because they each urge the young man to bear children as an act of rebelliousness against time.

The logical structure of Sonnet 1 is relatively simple – the first quatrain states the moral premise, that beauty should strive to propagate itself; the second quatrain accuses the young man of violating that moral premise, by wasting his beauty on himself alone; the third quatrain gives him an urgent reason to change his ways and obey the moral premise, because otherwise his beauty will wither and disappear; and the couplet summarizes the argument with a new exhortation to "pity the world" and father a child. Some of the metaphoric images in the poem, however, are quite complex. The image of the young man contracted to his own bright eyes, feeding his "light's flame" with "self-substantial fuel," for instance, is an extremely intricate image of self-absorption.

3.3 AN ELEGY ON THE DEATH OF A MAD DOG

3.3.1 THE POET

Oliver Goldsmith (1728-1774) was an Irish novelist, essayist, poet and playwright who is best known for his novel *The Vicar of Wakefield*, the pastoral poem *The Deserted Village* and his plays *The Good Natured Man* and *She Stoops to Conquer*. Although he was better known as a dramatist, many of his poems and essays attracted encouraging acceptance and with his novel *The Vicar of Wakefield*, a humorous and sentimental story of a village curate's attempts to guide his children through the tribulations of growing up, he gained immense reputation.

Goldsmith's poetry was often comic as is seen in his parodies *An Elegy on the Death of a Mad Dog* and *An Elegy on the Glory of her Sex: Mrs. Mary Blaze*, but at times when his compassion was touched, he created some commendable solemn poems, the most outstanding of which is *The Deserted Village* which is based on a protest against the economic and social conditions that were forcing enormous reallocation of the masses from villages to cities.

3.3.2 THE TEXT

An Elegy on the Death of a Mad Dog by Oliver Goldsmith

Good people all, of every sort,
Give ear unto my song;
And if you find it wondrous short,
It cannot hold you long.

In Islington there was a man,
Of whom the world might say
That still a godly race he ran,
Whene'er he went to pray.

A kind and gentle heart he had,
To comfort friends and foes;
The naked every day he clad,
When he put on his clothes.

And in that town a dog was found,
As many dogs there be,
Both mongrel, puppy, whelp and hound,
And curs of low degree.

This dog and man at first were friends;
But when a pique began,
The dog, to gain some private ends,
Went mad and bit the man.

Around from all the neighbouring streets
The wondering neighbours ran,
And swore the dog had lost his wits,
To bite so good a man.

The wound it seemed both sore and sad
To every Christian eye;
And while they swore the dog was mad,
They swore the man would die.

But soon a wonder came to light,
That showed the rogues they lied:
The man recovered of the bite,
The dog it was that died.

3.3.3 EXPLANATION

The poem is in ballad form and it not only invites the attention of the readers but also instigates them indirectly and expects them to take pleasure in observing the diverse behavior pattern of a dog (the poet might even be referring to a human character in the form of a dog). So he asks every individual – 'good people all of every sort' – to pay attention to his justification. In the second stanza the poet highlights the character from Islington emphasizing upon the man's deceptive outward appearance. Although religious in attitude the man would hide his real self from the world during his stay in the Church. The third stanza talks about the kind and gentle behavior that the man had in the company of his friends and how he would attempt to comfort not only his friends but foes too. The poet wants to enhance that the interior motive of

the person should be reflected rather than the mask of pity and sympathy that he wears. So this hiding of interior motives reflects on the unethical behavior pattern and justifies the meanness of a character – 'the naked everyday he clad when he put on his clothes'. The metaphor 'clothes' here reveals the genuine truth unveiling the actual self.

The next stanza refers to the villainous dog which is a member of the 'canine family' which has other varieties too like the mongrel, puppy, whelp and hound. Though the species of this particular dog has not been mentioned but it is understood that it belongs to that family only which is considered to be man's greatest friend. But it so happens that some problem between the man and the dog results in irritation and the dog desperately strives to hurt the man. Every neighbor wondered and sympathized with the man and swore that the dog has definitely lost its wits to bite such a good man. These pious Christian souls believed that the dog was obviously mad and the wound was so alarming and painful that the man would certainly not survive.

And then the paradox in the last stanza highlighting the central theme of the poet – the man recovered from the bite and it was the dog that died. The man, the hypocrite in the society, is the one who carries the venom in his body. The whole contradiction depends on the following lines – "And while they swore the dog was mad / They swore the man would die." They (the neighbors) could be making two mistakes in this –

1. They think that the man is as good enough as he seems to be and definitely they are not suspecting that his selfishness is instigating more deadly poison that even a mad dog can induce.

2. They know how corrupt the man is as they themselves are and they fail to realize the influence of corruption which can easily transfuse the qualities of wickedness and murder in them.

In both cases the dog is a figure of sensibility; it can be the mad philosopher/prophet/poet that either cures or contaminates the community. If it is the first case, the dog works in the service of the community by saving it from the clutches of an isolated villain. And in the second case, where the community is attacked, it is the dog that is an enemy. The actual situation of responsiveness is between the two – the community which is at large corrupt or the dog-bite which is an act of martyrdom. The dog hasn't, as in the first case above, simply exposed the wicked man; it has exposed the whole community's belief in the harmlessness of corruption.

3.3.4 SUMMARY

Oliver Goldsmith, in his poem *Elegy Written on the Death of a Mad Dog* narrates a rather amusing story, inducing laughter and

at the same time expressing the incident in a skeptical manner. His proficient expertise of stimulating his readers to identify his viewpoints by inspecting the funny approaches of some people, finds its extreme exposure in this poem. The narrator of the poem definitely has a sense of emotional outburst and caring concern when he talks about the poor and the destitute and he very beautifully expresses the essence of connection through his deftly created line – "the naked everyday he clad, when he put on his clothes." The poet tries to highlight that this God-fearing religious good man from Islington has indeed a very 'kind and gentle heart'. The man's personality is infused with wonderful inner spiritual qualities and so he is a comfort not just to his friends but enemies as well. He is such a kind man that he has the capability as well as the desirability to clothe the naked whom he meets.

Definitely the community that the man resides in has a high respect for his caring and compassionate behavior and so they believe that definitely the dog has 'lost its wits' when he bit the man. The neighborhood wonders how any living creature can even think of harming this sincere, caring and kind person. This justifies the high regard that the townspeople have for this generous hearted man. It is obvious that the man is an inspiration to the people as he tries his best to lighten the burdens of life that people carry with themselves on daily basis. And when this Christian soul is bitten by a do it is obvious that the man will die. But ironically enough it is the dog that dies of the venom of the corrupt man justifying the meanness of the man and the society at large.

3.3.5 COMMENTARY

Oliver Goldsmith has very elegantly written this satirical poem in a suggestive tone. If read on a superficial way it clearly states that the man was good and the dog was at fault but it was the dog that died at the end. But from the beginning the poet signals the readers to a very different tone. Initially itself the poem generates a kind of shock especially when the man described in the poem seems godly and kind only when he dresses himself (and not the other times) and when he goes to pray (and not any other time). And this attitude of the man confirms his fake personality. The dog, on the other hand, can be taken as a representation of the deprived and defeated people who are not getting what they deserve because of such 'godly' people around. And, hence, to take revenge and meet their own personal needs the dog bites the man. The dog understands that there is no other way of survival in a world filled with spurious people who are so selfish that they are just bothered about themselves rather than being worried for others. The poet has personified the dog with human qualities who tries to fit in into this inhuman world. The typical neighbors are also very well projected with their stereotype image of gossiping, spreading news and interfering into the matters of others. Here too

they are there to predict the ultimate – the dog bite will definitely cause the man to die. But surprising to every Christian eye, the dog dies and the man survives exposing the fact that man has more poison in him compared to that of a dog, justifying that finally the good is sacrificed and the evil survives. So the ultimate question is whether the Christian faith of goodness and humanity lost in this world of corruption and selfishness, malice and massacre?

3.4 ODE ON A GREECIAN URN

3.4.1 THE POET

John Keats, the most romantic of the Romantic poets, always believed that beautiful things will never die but will keep demonstrating their beauty all the time and this idea of his was explored in his first book of *Endymion*. In many of his poems he leaves the factual world to explore an inspirational, mythical or aesthetic sphere and then he would come back to his ordinary life with a transformed self and a new perception. The capacity to be lost in a reverie, to move out from a conscious life in search of an imaginative one without speculating about reality or reasonableness, is Keats's concept of 'negative capability' – a theory where the poet must disappear from the work (the work should account the experience in such a way that the readers recognize and respond to the incidence without the interference or elucidation of the poet). Keats also imagined that the five senses freely correspond to and connect with the various types of art and music and musicians appear throughout his work as 'symbols' of poetry. Like his fellow Romantic poets Keats also found in nature an endless source of poetic inspiration and he described this natural world with precision and care. Keats also had a continuing interest in the distant past and the ancient world and his longer poems, such as *The Fall of Hyperion* or *Lamia*, takes place in a mythical surrounding.

3.4.2 THE TEXT

Ode on a Grecian Urn by John Keats

Thou still unravish'd bride of quietness,
Thou foster-child of silence and slow time,
Sylvan historian, who canst thus express
A flowery tale more sweetly than our rhyme:
What leaf-fring'd legend haunts about thy shape
Of deities or mortals, or of both,
In Tempe or the dales of Arcady?
What men or gods are these? What maidens loth?
What mad pursuit? What struggle to escape?

What pipes and timbrels? What wild ecstasy?
Heard melodies are sweet, but those unheard
Are sweeter; therefore, ye soft pipes, play on;
Not to the sensual ear, but, more endear'd,
Pipe to the spirit ditties of no tone:
Fair youth, beneath the trees, thou canst not leave
Thy song, nor ever can those trees be bare;
Bold Lover, never, never canst thou kiss,
Though winning near the goal yet, do not grieve;
She cannot fade, though thou hast not thy bliss,
For ever wilt thou love, and she be fair!

Ah, happy, happy boughs! that cannot shed
Your leaves, nor ever bid the Spring adieu;
And, happy melodist, unwearied,
For ever piping songs for ever new;
More happy love! more happy, happy love!
For ever warm and still to be enjoy'd,
For ever panting, and for ever young;
All breathing human passion far above,
That leaves a heart high-sorrowful and cloy'd,
A burning forehead, and a parching tongue.

Who are these coming to the sacrifice?
To what green altar, O mysterious priest,
Lead'st thou that heifer lowing at the skies,
And all her silken flanks with garlands drest?
What little town by river or sea shore,
Or mountain-built with peaceful citadel,
Is emptied of this folk, this pious morn?
And, little town, thy streets for evermore
Will silent be; and not a soul to tell
Why thou art desolate, can e'er return.

O Attic shape! Fair attitude! withbrede
Of marble men and maidens overwrought,

With forest branches and the trodden weed;

Thou, silent form, dost tease us out of thought

As doth eternity: Cold Pastoral!

When old age shall this generation waste,

Thou shalt remain, in midst of other woe

Than ours, a friend to man, to whom thou say'st,

"Beauty is truth, truth beauty,—that is all

Ye know on earth, and all ye need to know."

3.4.3 EXPLANATION

In the first stanza, the speaker locates himself before an ancient Grecian urn and addresses it. Somehow the speaker is thoughtful about and preoccupied with its portrayal of pictures frozen in time. It is the “still unravish’d bride of quietness,” the “foster-child of silence and slow time” – as if it has known so well the importance of silence and time. He also describes the urn as a ‘historian’ who can tell a story. Wondering about the figures on the side of the urn he is curious to know the legend they illustrate and also from where they come. He looks at a picture that seems to depict a group of men pursuing a group of women and wonders what their story could be: “What mad pursuit? What struggle to escape? / What pipes and timbrels? What wild ecstasy?”

In the second stanza, the speaker looks at another picture on the urn and this time it is of a young man playing a pipe, lying with his lover underneath a clearing of trees. The speaker says that the piper’s ‘unheard’ melodies are sweeter than mortal melodies because they are untouched by time. He tells the youth that, though he can never kiss his lover because he is frozen in time, he should not grieve, because her beauty will never fade. Physical beauty dies away with time and so the youth should be happy that the beauty of his beloved is capture forever and has become immortal.
In the third stanza, he looks at the trees surrounding the lovers and feels happy that they will never shed their leaves. He is happy for the piper because his songs will be ‘for ever new’, and happy that the love of the boy and the girl will remain forever, unlike mortal love, which lapses into “breathing human passion” and eventually vanishes, leaving behind only a “burning forehead, and a parching tongue.” Nothing will fade of as it usually happens in the mortal world and this feeling of immortality makes the poet happy and contented.

In the fourth stanza, the speaker examines another picture on the urn, this one of a group of villagers leading a heifer to be sacrificed. He wonders where they are going (“To what green altar, O mysterious priest...”) and from where they have come. He

imagines their little town, empty of all its citizens at the present as everyone is going to the place of the sacrifice, and tells it that its streets will 'for evermore' be silent, because those who have left it will never return as they are now frozen on the urn.

In the final stanza, the speaker addresses the urn again, saying that the urn like Eternity, "doth tease us out of thought." He thinks that when his generation is long dead, the urn will remain, telling the future generations its enigmatic lesson: "Beauty is truth, truth beauty." The speaker says that this is the only thing the urn knows and the only thing it needs to know.

The poem portrays the speaker's attempt to engage with the static immobility of sculpture. The Grecian urn, passed down through countless centuries to the time of the speaker's viewing, exists outside of time in the human sense – it does not age, it does not die, and indeed it is alien to all such concepts. In the speaker's meditation, this creates an intriguing paradox for the human figures carved into the side of the urn: They are free from time, but they are simultaneously frozen in time. They do not have to confront aging and death (their love is 'forever young'), but neither can they have experience (the youth can never kiss the maiden; the figures in the procession can never return to their homes).

3.4.4 SUMMARY

Keats' imagined urn is addressed as if he were contemplating a real urn and as if the urn has survived undamaged from the distant past. It is a 'sylvan historian' telling us a story, which the poet suggests and wants to clarify through a series of questions. Who are these gods or men carved or painted on the urn? Who are these reluctant maidens? What is this mad pursuit? Why the struggle to escape? What is the explanation for the presence of musical instruments? Why this mad ecstasy? Innumerable questions to seek a better judgment and immeasurable knowledge hunt to acquire a better picture!

It's really very true that imagined melodies are lovelier than those heard by human ears. Therefore the poet urges the musician pictured on the urn to play on endlessly. His songs should touch the height of immortality and neither should the trees ever shed their leaves. Although the lover on the urn can never win a kiss from his beloved, but it is also true that his beloved can never lose her beauty. Happy are the trees on the urn, for they can never lose their leaves. Happy is the musician forever playing songs forever new. The lovers on the urn enjoy a love forever warm, forever panting, and forever young, far better than actual love, which eventually brings disappointment and discontent.

And then the queries shift – Who are the people coming to perform a sacrifice? To what altar does the priest lead a garlanded heifer? What town do they come from? That town which will forever remain silent and deserted!

And finally Keats's request to the urn – Fair urn, Keats says, adorned with figures of men and maidens, trees and grass, you bring our speculations to a point at which thought leads nowhere, like meditation on eternity. After our generation is gone, you will still be here, as a friend to man, telling him that beauty is truth and truth is beauty — that is all he knows on earth and all he needs to know.

3.4.5 COMMENTARY

Keats has created a Greek urn in his mind and has decorated it with three scenes. The first is full of hyperactive action and the actors are men, or gods, and maidens. Other figures, or it can possibly be the male figures, are playing musical instruments and the maidens are probably the nymphs of classical mythology. The men or gods are obsessed with love and are chasing them. Keats's love for classical mythology is very well projected and it seems that he had probably read stories of such love games. Even it is found in Book II of his *Endymion,* where he recounts Alpheus' pursuit of Arethusa, and in Book III he tells of Glaucus' pursuit of Scylla.

The second scene is developed in stanzas II and III which takes place under the trees where a lover is crooning to his beloved. In the first stanza Keats restricts himself with question whereas it is not so in the second scene where the romantic image of a youth playing a musical instrument and hoping a kiss from his beloved dominates the atmosphere. The scene enlightens the thoughts of Keats on the function of art which ensures a kind of permanence to reality. Definitely Keats is trying to imagine a state of perfect existence as represented by the lovers.

The third scene on the urn reflects on a group of people on their way to perform a sacrifice along with the sacrificial animal held by the priest. It's really amazing to wonder that Keats instead of limiting himself to the sacrificial procession concentrates more on the town that is desolate because inhabitants have left for the procession.

And the final scene contains the beauty-truth equation which has become one of the most sought after and controversial line in the criticism of Keats's poetry. On the one hand it can be Art's arrest of time which is a form of eternity and has thus brought perpetuity into the poem as well. Or it can be the poet's imagination that the urn has been capable enough of preserving a temporary and happy performance thus making it eternal forever. Keats was

quite charmed by the beautiful works of art and his vision of happiness has always been through the means of sharing one's existence enthusiastically and bringing out the emotional life through one's imagination. And maybe when he says 'that is all ye know on earth' he is presuming an existence beyond earth.

3.5 LET'S SUM UP

The three poems take the readers into the depth of understanding of a Shakespearean sonnet, an elegy in a ballad form and the magnificence of an ode. The poems of these three inspirational and philosophical poets enhance a significant perception of poetry writing. From Shakespeare's most important themes of immortality, time, procreation and selfishness to the amusing and satirical outburst of Goldsmith and then to the thoughtful and expressive portrayal of Keats, the poems augment connectivity and consciousness, worthiness and wisdom.

3.6 SUGGESTED QUESTIONS

1. Comment on the most important themes that Shakespeare has used in his sonnet *From Fairest Creatures we Desire Increase*?
2. *An Elegy on the Death of a Mad Dog*by Oliver Goldsmith is a satirical poem in a suggestive tone. Comment.
3. Elucidate what John Keats wants to express through his poem *Ode on a Grecian Urn*.

3.7 REFERENCES

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Unit -4

A STUTY OF PRESCRIBED POEMS BY THOMAS CAMPBELL, ROBERT BROWNING AND ROBERT FROST

Unit Structure:

4.1 OBJECTIVES

The aim of this Unit is to navigate through the poems of Thomas Campbell, Robert Browning and Robert Frost and experience the essence of love and life at the backdrop of an unrelenting nature. From the tragic story of Lord Ullin's Daughter to the emotional struggle of the lover for his beloved on their last ride together and then the sudden stopping of the traveller in the dark

deep and lonely woods it is observed that the journey of life everywhere is complicated and mournful but one has to move on focusing more on the positive attributes and living for the moment with utmost enthusiasm.

4.2 INTRODUCTION

Thomas Campbell's *Lord Ullin's Daughter* is a Scottish ballad which conveys the tragic story of the daughter of Lord Ullin who runs away with her lover and to avoid the anger of her father takes the boat during a severe storm and is engulfed in water. *The Last Ride Together* by Robert Browning is a dramatic monologue of a rejected lover exploring the end of a love affair and experiencing the heavenly pleasure of the last ride with his lady love. *Stopping by the Woods on a Snowy Evening* by Robert Frost is very universal and philosophical in its allegorical suggestions about life, time and dedication to a goal or vocation, consciousness and so on and including the romantic theme, 'life journey' ideas and religious themes, these general suggestions can be called 'philosophical'.

4.3 LORD ULLIN'S DAUGHTER

4.3.1 – THE POET

Thomas Campbell (1777-1844) was a Scottish poet and is chiefly remembered for his sentimental poetry dealing especially with human affairs. He was the founder and the first President of the Clarence Club and a co-founder of the Literary Association of the Friends of Poland. His major works include *Pleasures of Hope*, a didactic poem in heroic couplets and various stirring patriotic war songs like *Ye Mariners of England*, *The Soldier's Dream*, *Hohenlinden* and *The Battle of Mad and Strange Turkish Princes*. He was a versatile professional writer and not solely a poet. He wrote for newspapers, compiled biographies, contributed articles to encyclopaedias and was also the Editor of The New Monthly Review. His Specimens of the British Poets which extended to seven volumes included selected passages from writers with biographies and criticism.

4.3.2 – THE TEXT

Lord Ullin's Daughter by Thomas Campbell

A Chieftain to the Highlands bound,
Cries, 'Boatman, do not tarry;
And I'll give thee a silver pound
To row us o'er the ferry.'

'Now who be ye would cross Lochgyle,
This dark and stormy water?'

'Oh! I'm the chief of Ulva's isle,
And this Lord Ullin's daughter.
'And fast before her father's men
Three days we've fled together,
For should he find us in the glen,
My blood would stain the heather.

'His horsemen hard behind us ride;
Should they our steps discover,
Then who will cheer my bonny bride
When they have slain her lover?'

Outspoke the hardy Highland wight:
'I'll go, my chief – I'm ready:
It is not for your silver bright,
But for your winsome lady.

'And by my word, the bonny bird
In danger shall not tarry:
So, though the waves are raging white,
I'll row you o'er the ferry.'

By this the storm grew loud apace,
The water-wraith was shrieking;
And in the scowl of heaven each face
Grew dark as they were speaking.

But still, as wilder blew the wind,
And as the night grew drearer,
Adown the glen rode armed men-
Their trampling sounded nearer.

'Oh! Haste thee, haste!' the lady cries,
'Though tempests round us gather;
I'll meet the raging of the skies,
But not an angry father.'

The boat has left a stormy land,
A stormy sea before her-
When oh! Too strong for human hand,
The tempest gathered o'er her.

And still they rowed amidst the roar
Of waters fast prevailing;
Lord Ullinreach'd that fatal shore-
His wrath was chang'd to wailing.

For sore dismay'd, through storm and shade,
His child he did discover;

One lovely hand she stretch'd for aid,
And one was round her lover.
'Come back! Come back!' he cried in grief,
'Across this stormy water;
And I'll forgive your Highland chief,
My daughter!- oh, my daughter!'

'Twas vain: the loud waves lash'd the shore,
Return or aid preventing;
The waters wild went o'er his child,
And he was left lamenting.

MEANING OF WORDS/PHRASES

- Chieftain – the chief or head of a clan
- Tarry – delay
- Loch – a lake
- Lochgyle – or Loch-Na-Keal is the sea loch which separates Gribun on Mull from Ullva to the North
- Ulva – An island in the Inner Hebrides of Scotland
- Glen –valley (typically one that is long, deep and often 'U' shaped)
- Heather – a plant with pinkish-purple flowers

4.3.3 – EXPLANATION

In Stanza 1 a Chieftain who is going to the highlands cries out to the boatman with an appeal not to delay and he promises to give him a silver pound if he takes him and his beloved (Lord Ullin's daughter) across the river on his ferry.

In Stanza 2 when questioned by the boatman regarding who was willing to row across Lochgyle in this dark and stormy weather, the Chieftain introduces himself as the Chieftain of Ulva island and with him was his beloved, Lord Ullin's daughter.

In Stanza 3 he requests the boatman to take them from there before her father's men come and capture them. He informs that they have fled three days back and he knows that if her father's men finds them he would definitely kill the Chieftain and stain the heather plant with his blood.

In Stanza 4 he adds that Lord Ullin's armed horsemen are chasing them close and if they get him they will definitely kill him. And then he assures that he is ready to die but the only question that arises after his death is who will take care and make happy his beautiful beloved?

In Stanza 5 the strong and brave boatman becomes sympathetic towards them and accepts to take them across the river and he also decides not to take any money from the lady.

In Stanza 6 the boatman swears not to keep the lady in danger any more. Although the waves are getting more and more violent and furious and foaming he assures that he will take them beyond Lochgyle.

In Stanza 7 the increasing storm is hinted as turning more and more rough and violent. It seemed as if the water ghost was shouting and the sky turned darker. The turbulence of the sky and its frowning look brought a scared flush on the face of all three.

In Stanza 8 again it is the description of the rough and violent wind that was blowing with all its force and the night that was gradually becoming darker and scarier. Suddenly sounds of armed soldiers are heard from the glen as if coming towards them.

In Stanza 9 Lord Ullin's daughter requests the boatman to move faster. Though the wind and storm were very wild she says she would prefer to face the anger of the sky than to face her angry father.

In Stanza 10 they leave the stormy land and now they have to face the more stormy sea before them. The storm definitely was more powerful for any human to navigate and the gathering tempest over them ensured their defeat.

In Stanza 11 the three are seen fighting hard against the deadly waves till their last breath. And in the meantime, Lord Ullin reaches the fatal shore and the anger that he bore against them changed into mournful wailing.

Stanza 12 discusses how through storm and shade, in pain and shock, the father finds out his child. The beautiful girl stretches out one of her hands towards her father with an intention to be saved by him and the other hand was around her lover who was immensely dear to her.

Stanza 13 finds Lord Ullin screaming out to his daughter in shock and pain accepting his fault and requesting her to come back. Wailing on the shore he promises to forgive her lover.

Stanza 14 shows how the father's howling and lamenting goes waste as the massive violent loud waves made the Lochgyle terrible. Neither was any aid from outside possible nor could they come back fighting the forceful waves. And then a big wave engulfs his child and he is left mourning on the shore.

4.3.4 – SUMMARY

Lord Ullin's Daughter is a Scottish ballad which conveys the tragic story of the daughter of Lord Ullin who runs away with her lover and to avoid the anger of her father takes the boat during a severe storm and is engulfed in water. The poem begins with the daughter and her lover, the Chieftain, who arrive at the banks of Lochgyle with the intention of eloping to a safer place. The lover offers the boatman a silver pound to carry them across to safety but the boatman is apprehensive as the weather is stormy and it is very dangerous to cross Lochgyle is such a state. The lover introduces himself as the Chief of Ulva and also describes how they have been running away from the men of her father who were chasing them. He is anxious of his life as he is very sure that her father will get him slaughtered if caught. Sensing the crisis and unable to say no to the pleading of the beautiful daughter, who is ready to face the raging storm rather than the angry father, the boatman agrees to help though he knows very well that it might cost them their lives.

The boat finally leaves the shore when Lord Ullin and his men arrive. Seeing them in a critical state Lord Ullin's anger immediately evaporates. His heart melts seeing his darling daughter fighting nature's fury. One of her hands she raises towards her father with the plea to be rescued and the other she keeps it around her lover with a determination never to leave him. He cries out to her to return and also promises to accept her lover. But it is too late before the father could do anything and the little boat capsizes and the three of them drown in the turbulent water leaving the leaving the shocked father on the shore lamenting and cursing for his deed.

4.3.5 – COMMENTARY

Lord Ullin's Daughter draws its setting from the real landscape of the Scottish Highlands. The Lochgyle Lake is an actual lake and so is the isle Ulva and hence most part of the poem focuses on depicting both the beautiful and dangerous sides of Scotland – the landscape that can rejuvenate the spirits can also cause death and destruction. The title of the poem might seem misleading initially as Lord Ullin's daughter hardly speaks except for once and most of the conversation is carried out between the Chieftain and the boatman and the concern is the reaction of the father. But it should be understood that Lord Ullin's daughter if the object of affection of every character – she is the beloved of the Chieftain of Ulva, she is the most important thing in her father's life and it is her innocence that convinces the boatman to agree. It is only because of her that the fatal journey is undertaken. The poem teaches us an important lesson – undoubtedly parents have the right to protect their children but they have no authority to control their lives. It's only because Lord Ullin had threatened their lives that they decide to escape even in that dreadful weather. It is tragic

that the daughter is ready to face the fury of nature rather than the anger of her father and this results in death and disaster, suffering and submission.

The poem has all the characteristics of a ballad and it tells a tale that has its origins in Scottish folk-tales. It even boasts of supernatural character in the form of the water-wraith, the sight of which is supposed to spell doom for human beings, according to the Gaelic legends. The tone of the poem is predominantly adventurous as the readers experience fear and anxiety as they read about the violent storm through which the lovers are hoping to escape. Towards the end the tone changes to one of guilt and remorse as Lord Ullin realizes his mistake.

4.4 THE LAST RIDE TOGETHER

4.4.1 – THE POET

Robert Browning (184-1889), an English poet and playwright, is known for his mastery of 'dramatic monologue' and his poems are known for their irony, characterization, dark humour, social commentary, historical settings and stimulating vocabulary & syntax. The uniqueness of 'dramatic monologue' was that the character speaks to a listener articulating his/her subjective point of view. His most acclaimed poems include *My Last Duchess*, *Porphyria's Lover*, *Meeting at Night*, the patriotic poem *Home Thoughts from Abroad* and the children's poem *Pied Piper of Hamelin*.

Browning became in his later years that curious phenomenon, the Victorian sage – widely regarded for his knowledge and his explorations of philosophical questions of great resonance in Victorian life. He started attaining popularity at a later stage of his life and *Dramatis Personae* (1860) was very enthusiastically received. *The Ring and the Book* (1868-69) was highly acclaimed and is considered as one of the greatest work by some critics.

4.4.2 – THE TEXT

Last Ride Together by Robert Browning

I

I said–Then, dearest, since 'tis so,
Since now at length my fate I know,
Since nothing all my love avails,
Since all, my life seemed meant for, fails,
Since this was written and needs must be–
My whole heart rises up to bless
Your name in pride and thankfulness!
Take back the hope you gave,–I claim
Only a memory of the same,

–And this beside, if you will not blame,
Your leave for one more last ride with me.

II
My mistress bent that brow of hers;
Those deep dark eyes where pride demurs
When pity would be softening through,
Fixed me a breathing-while or two
With life or death in the balance: right!
The blood replenished me again;
My last thought was at least not vain:
I and my mistress, side by side
Shall be together, breathe and ride,
So, one day more am I deified.
Who knows but the world may end to-night?

III
Hush! if you saw some western cloud
All billowy-bosomed, over-bowed
By many benedictions–sun's
And moon's and evening-star's at once–
And so, you, looking and loving best,
Conscious grew, your passion drew
Cloud, sunset, moonrise, star-shine too,
Down on you, near and yet more near,
Till flesh must fade for heaven was here!–
Thus leant she and lingered–joy and fear!
Thus lay she a moment on my breast.

IV
Then we began to ride. My soul
Smoothed itself out, a long-cramped scroll
Freshening and fluttering in the wind.
Past hopes already lay behind.
What need to strive with a life awry?
Had I said that, had I done this,
So might I gain, so might I miss.
Might she have loved me? just as well
She might have hated, who can tell!
Where had I been now if the worst befell?
And here we are riding, she and I.

V
Fail I alone, in words and deeds?
Why, all men strive and who succeeds?
We rode; it seemed my spirit flew,
Saw other regions, cities new.
As the world rushed by on either side.

I thought,–All labour, yet no less
Bear up beneath their unsuccess.
Look at the end of work, contrast
The petty done, the undone vast,
This present of theirs with the hopeful past!
I hoped she would love me; here we ride.

VI
What hand and brain went ever paired?
What heart alike conceived and dared?
What act proved all its thought had been?
What will but felt the fleshly screen?
We ride and I see her bosom heave.
There's many a crown for who can reach.
Ten lines, a statesman's life in each!
The flag stuck on a heap of bones,
A soldier's doing! what atones?
They scratch his name on the Abbey-stones.
My riding is better, by their leave.

VII
What does it all mean, poet? Well,
Your brains beat into rhythm, you tell
What we felt only; you expressed
You hold things beautiful the best,
And pace them in rhyme so, side by side.
'Tis something, nay 'tis much: but then,
Have you yourself what's best for men?
Are you–poor, sick, old ere your time–
Nearer one whit your own sublime
Than we who never have turned a rhyme?
Sing, riding's a joy! For me, I ride.

VIII
And you, great sculptor–so, you gave
A score of years to Art, her slave,
And that's your Venus, whence we turn
To yonder girl that fords the burn!
You acquiesce, and shall I repine?
What, man of music, you grown grey
With notes and nothing else to say,
Is this your sole praise from a friend,
"Greatly his opera's strains intend,
Put in music we know how fashions end!"
I gave my youth; but we ride, in fine.

IX
Who knows what's fit for us? Had fate
Proposed bliss here should sublimate
My being–had I signed the bond–
Still one must lead some life beyond,
Have a bliss to die with, dim-descried.
This foot once planted on the goal,
This glory-garland round my soul,
Could I descry such? Try and test!
I sink back shuddering from the quest.
Earth being so good, would heaven seem best?
Now, heaven and she are beyond this ride.

X
And yet–she has not spoke so long!
What if heaven be that, fair and strong
At life's best, with our eyes upturned
Whither life's flower is first discerned,
We, fixed so, ever should so abide?
What if we still ride on, we two
With life for ever old yet new,
Changed not in kind but in degree,
The instant made eternity,–
And heaven just prove that I and she
Ride, ride together, for ever ride?

4.4.3 – EXPLANATION

Stanza 1 begins with a lover getting finally rejected by his lady-love after he waited for her for a long time. But because the lover is sincere and true in his love, he does not have any ill-will for his lady-love and, on the contrary, he tells his beloved that he has been relieved of the uncertainty as he now knows that he would never get her love. The speaker also tells that his beloved's love was the most meaningful and precious thing in his life and after he has lost her love, his life has lost all its meaning and significance. He believes in fate and accepts his rejection and suffering which he believes was destined for him, feels proud that he had the opportunity to love her and enjoy her company for a long time. Despite failure, the lover has neither any anger towards his beloved nor does he blame her for anything. Rather he is grateful to her for the beautiful and blissful moments they had together and he asks God to bless her always. Though he has no hopes of ever getting her love back in his life, he requests her for two wishes – firstly, he should be allowed to cherish the memories of his love and happiness during the courting period. And, secondly, if she considers nothing offensive in this request, he wants to go on a last ride with her.

In Stanza 2 the lady is in a dilemma as she is indecisive whether to accept the request or reject it and for a moment she bows down her head as if thinking deeply. Her pride is in conflict with her pity for her lover. She hesitates for a moment and these brief moments seem like torture to the lover because if she accepts his request it would mean life for him but if she refuses then it would mean death for him. Finally, the lady accepts his request making the lover extremely happy. It seems as if the body has regenerated the circulation of blood. The lover is now at peace as he is going to enjoy bliss and his beloved's company for one more day. He hopes for the world to end that very night so that his moment of bliss becomes eternal and in this way, he can be with her forever.

Stanza 3 is about the description of the heavenly bliss which the lover experiences when his beloved lies on his bosom and he compares his experience with nature's joy and healing power. He feels like a man, who sees an evening cloud, swelling up like a sea-wave, illuminated and made beautiful by the light of the setting Sun, the Moon and the Stars. The man looks at the cloud, he is passionately drawn towards it and it seems as if the cloud was gradually coming closer and closer to him. In such a moment of ecstasy, he feels he has been transported to heaven and his body has lost its physicality but at the same time he is afraid that his lover would leave him anytime and that this moment of bliss will finally come to an end forever.

Stanza 4 starts with the blissful experience of the lover when he starts his journey with his beloved by his side. The poet compares the lover's soul to that of a furrowed paper which has been kept like that for a long time and when exposed to the wind, the paper opens up and the wrinkles get smoothened and it starts fluttering in the wind like a bird. In the same way, the lover's soul has grown wrinkled due to grief of his failure in love. But after encountering the last ride with his beloved, his soul experiences tremendous pleasure and feels rejuvenated. The lover says that his hope of attaining her love is a matter of the past and he feels that it is no use regretting the past. It makes no sense to express his love in different words with an expectation of winning her love. Maybe this type of an approach could have led her to hate him instead of loving him. He is happy that at least now she does not hate him; she is only indifferent to his love. He feels it as a blessing that he has the pleasure of having the last ride with her.

In Stanza 5, the lover rides by his beloved's side and thinks about the remorseful state of humanity in the world. He consoles himself with the thought that he is not the only person to fail and suffer in life. It is obvious that not all men succeed in their efforts. Unlike others, he has his last wish fulfilled by riding with his

beloved. The lover does not want to complain about his failures but enjoy the ride to the fullest in the company of his beloved. As he rides, the landscape seems to him to have a different look and the fields and the cities through which they are passing seem to him more beautiful than before. It seems as if his own joy has brightened the entire region.

In Stanza 6, the lover, as he rides with his beloved, continues to think about the world and says that brain and hand cannot go together – Conception and Execution can never be paired together. Man is not able to keep pace with his actions to match with his ambitions. He plans a lot but achieves a little. The lover feels that he has at least achieved a little success by being able to ride with his beloved. He compares himself with a statesman and a soldier. A statesman works hard all his life but all his efforts are merely published in a book or as an obituary in newspapers. Similarly a soldier dies fighting for his country and is buried in the Westminster Abbey which is his only reward after death and sometimes it is only an epitaph that is raised in his memory.

In Stanza 7 the lover compares his lot with that of a poet. He believes that a poet's reward is too small compared with his skills. The poet composes sweet lyrics, thoughts of emotions of others, views that men should achieve beautiful things in life and in return he gets very little and he dies in poverty in the prime of his life. Compared to the poet, the lover considers himself luckier as he has at least achieved the consolation of riding with his beloved for the last time.

In Stanza 8 the lover considers himself superior to the sculptor and the musician too. A sculptor devotes long years to art and creates a beautiful statue of Venus, the Greek goddess of youth and beauty. Through his art, he expresses his ideas of beauty and elegance. However, the reward for his hard work is all too less as people admire his work and praise it too but the moment they see an actual girl, maybe even less in beauty, they turn away from the statue. This shows that life is greater than art and so the speaker says that in this case he is more successful than a sculptor because he can ride with his beloved and the sculptor cannot have the happiness he deserves. The lover then talks about the musician whom he considers as unsuccessful as the sculptor. A musician devotes his best years in composing sweet and wonderful music but the only praise he receives is by his near and dear ones and the tunes which once were popular are soon forgotten. The lover considers himself happier and more successful than the musician also as he has the pleasure of enjoying the last ride with his beloved and the musician's love for his art is futile.

In the 9th Stanza, the lover states his point that none succeeds in this world, despite the best efforts – success in this life means failure in the life to come. So if the lover is destined to enjoy the supreme bliss in this world by getting the desired love of his beloved, he would have nothing left to hope for in future. He feels that he has reached his destination in this world and has achieved the garland of victory by winning the love of his beloved. He may have failed in his love but it means success in the other world. Now, when he will die he will think of reuniting with his beloved after death. If a man gets perfect happiness in this world, heaven would not be attractive to him. The lover believes that he would have the highest bliss in heaven where he will meet his beloved there.

Stanza 10 describes the moments during the ride – the lover was lost in his own thoughts while his beloved did not speak a single word. But it did not make any difference to him as her company was heavenly bliss for him. He wishes that the moment should become everlasting so that they could continue to ride together forever and ever and that would indeed be the ultimate heavenly bliss for him.

4.4.4 – SUMMARY

The poem is a monologue of a rejected lover exploring the end of a love affair. The title suggests the last ride that the lover has spent with his lady love. However, the poet wants to convey through the narrator that rather than feeling sad about the end, he should be happy for the love that he experienced and which will always remain in his memory. The poet dwells on the significance of the present as he concentrates on the ride. He contemplates on why people attach so much significance to the past and future rather than focusing on the present. The metaphor connotes living life to the fullest in elation and ecstasy for the moment. Why do people leave room for doubts, suspicions, failure, misgivings that haunt the present instead of enjoying every moment with love and life? Every moment should be savoured in such a way as if there is no space for lament and regret. *The Last Ride Together* makes profound statements concerning the irrelevance of the past in relation to present emotions and sentiments. More specifically, Browning discusses hopes that have not been fulfilled and places them in direct contrast to present circumstances. By revealing the idea that sentiments and events of the past often have little effect on future outcomes, Browning suggests that life should not involve dwelling on the past or hoping for the future but living in the moment.

Thus through this poem, Browning expresses the view that, the past is insignificant and that one may only live in the moment in order to pursue happiness in life. The poem also indicates that life

is a long journey that is best travelled with a special love. Assuming every day as one's last can really put a new perspective on everyday experiences and life in general. The juxtapositions of city and ruins, hope for love and a last ride together, both illustrate this idea dramatically. One can learn not to look back on what one hoped for but only to look forward at what one has at the present moment.

4.4.5 – COMMENTARY

The Last Ride Together by Robert Browning is a dramatic monologue. In a dramatic monologue, a single person not the poet; speaks out a speech that makes up the whole of the poem. The first-person speaker in the poem is the mouthpiece of the poet but not the poet himself. This is evident from the phrases like I said, I know, my whole heart I claim, my mistress, my last thought, I miss, I alone, I hoped, I gave my youth, I sign'd, etc. The poem comprises of ten stanzas, each consisting of eleven lines and it follows the rhyming pattern aabbcddeeec.

Moreover the poem presents a self-consolation and it is based on the underlying theory of 'blame it all on fate'. Of course the poem talks about love and its failure but the positive speaker thinks that failure is often inevitable. He is attempting to reduce his pain by trying to restrain his desires. Words are so chosen to convey the feeling of polite resignation and acceptance of defeat. The word 'since' is used five times in the same paragraph which may indicate that Browning most probably got involved in an emotional flow and lost control over his poetic polish of words. Moreover, the diction is superficial and of superhuman psychology because a man who has been ditched cannot have too many good things to say about the former flame unless of course he is ironical about it.

4.5 STOPPING BY THE WOODS ON A SNOWY EVENING

4.5.1 – THE POET

Robert Frost (1874-1963) was an American poet whose work was first published in England and then in America. He is highly regarded for his realistic depictions of rural life and his command of American colloquial speech. He uses the rural setting of New England as a backdrop to examine complex social and philosophical themes. He received four Pulitzer Prizes for Poetry, was awarded the Congressional Gold Medal for his poetic works, was named Poet Laureate of Vermont and became one of America's rare 'public literary figures, almost an artisan institution'.

By the time Frost returned to America in 1915, he had already published two collections, *A Boy's Will* and *North of Boston* and had also established his reputation. In a few years' time he was the most celebrated poet in America and with each new book – *New Hampshire*, *A Further Range*, *Steeple Bush* and *In the Clearing* – his fame and honour increased. Although his work is principally associated with the life and landscape of New England and he was a poet of traditional verse forms and metrics and remained aloof from the poetic movements and fashions of his time, he is an ideally modern poet. Searching the dark meditations on universal themes and portraying psychological complexity, his work is infused with layers of ambiguity and irony.

4.5.2 – THE TEXT

Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening by Robert Frost

Whose woods these are I think I know.
His house is in the village though;
He will not see me stopping here
To watch his woods fill up with snow.

My little horse must think it queer
To stop without a farmhouse near
Between the woods and frozen lake
The darkest evening of the year.

He gives his harness bells a shake
To ask if there is some mistake.
The only other sound's the sweep
Of easy wind and downy flake.

The woods are lovely, dark and deep,
But I have promises to keep,
And miles to go before I sleep,
And miles to go before I sleep.

4.5.3 – EXPLANATION

In Stanza 1 the speaker stops his horse outside some woods that belongs to a farmer he thinks he knows. He is getting late but the scenery is so beautiful that he stops his horse to look around and enjoy the marvellous nature around. He knows that the person whose house it is must be in the village and so he would not know that the traveller had stopped there to watch the beautiful woods fill up with snow.

In the Stanza 2 the speaker expresses his own feelings and brings out his reflections when he says that surely his little horse will think it very strange and abnormal to stop at such a place in this darkest evening of the year and with no farmhouse nearby.

Stanza 3 speaks about the horse's unease when he shakes his harness bell with displeasure as if trying to ask the traveller whether he has done some mistake. And at the background, to create an eerie atmosphere the speaker talks about the only other sound that is heard – the sound of sweet easy wind and the fluffy flakes.

In Stanza 4 the speaker moves on emphasizing the beauty of the woods but he also admits that he has to keep other promises too – he can't just stop and enjoy the beauty of nature. And he has to travel for miles before he could relax himself with some sleep. The repetition of the last two lines shows his urgency and his determination.

4.5.4 – SUMMARY

Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening is definitely one of the most famous, as well as one of the most referred poems of Robert Frost. The poem consists of four identical constructed stanzas where each line is iambic with four stressed syllables. It consists of four quatrains that have the following rhyme scheme: *aaba*, *bbcb*, *ccdc*, *dddd*. The poem's central narrative is simple and the scene is discreet, even stark, without any kind of elaboration or much description. A traveller pauses late one snowy evening to admire the woods by which he passes. He reflects that the owner of the woods, who lives in the village, will not see him stopping to 'watch his woods fill up with snow.'

The speaker interferes with his reflections by imagining that his 'little horse must think it queer' to stop without a farmhouse nearby on the 'darkest evening of the year.' Then the speaker expands this conceit, suggesting that fretfulness over the inconvenient action causes the horse to shake his harness bells and ask the traveller whether he has committed some mistake. Hearing the horse's jingling bells the speaker assumes that the animal is worried about the cold and wants to keep going. Then, by way of contrast, the speaker notes that 'the only other sound's the sweep/ Of easy wind and downy flake.'

Something about the woods compels the speaker's interest and by the poem's end, as most critics note, one has the sense that there is more to these woods than meets the eye. In the last verse, the speaker acknowledges that the 'woods are lovely, dark and deep.' He seems reluctant, however, to pursue this insight more deeply, since he immediately observes that he has 'promises to keep, /And miles to go before I sleep'. Nonetheless, the central focus of the poem is not the woods. Of more importance are the inner sentiments of the speaker as he reflects about and understands or maybe fails to understand, why he stops and why he finds the woods so captivating.

The poem ends obscurely and the reader learns very little about the speaker – where is he coming from, where is he going or why he stops in the dark and lonely woods, etc. neither does the speaker permit himself to reflect too deeply about the occasion and so one can only speculate and wonder at the behavior of this unknown speaker.

4.5.5 – COMMENTARY

The speaker most probably is returning home from far away and it is gradually getting late. Riding his horse he has come to a place where there is very beautiful scenery and he stops the horse and looks around to enjoy the wonderful facets of nature. There is a lake on one side and a small forest on the other where snow is falling like soft cotton. The lake is almost frozen and it's gradually becoming very dark. Except for the whining sound of the wind over the flakes of snow everything else is very quiet. Since the traveller stops the horse in an unusual place, where there is no house nearby, the horse shakes its head, as if to ask whether it has committed some mistake. Then the traveller becomes conscious that he has a long way to go before he gets home to sleep. "The woods are lovely, dark and deep" but he has promises to keep. We do not know whether the promises were made with someone or they are his own commitments but anyway he cannot stop there, he has to go. It is a simple romantic poem with levels of complex allegories. The journey in the poem is an allegory of the journey of life and is, thus, a spiritual journey.

On a literal level, the poem is 'romantic' in subject and theme. The speaker is probably returning home and is crossing lovely woods on a pleasant evening. This makes him feel like stopping there and enjoying the beauty and silence of the place. And the necessity to go ahead makes him regret that he has no other option but to go. The speaker romanticizes whatever is passing by – time and pleasure. Symbolically speaking the journey of the speaker is man's journey of life. The horse is like time and it is obvious that riding on the horse it is not possible for the speaker to stop and enjoy the intricacies of nature.

Certain clues in the poem make the readers feel that even the journey is not of a simple life but the journey of a religious or spiritual life. The speaker is a religious man who has 'promises to keep'. The lovely woods are not only beautiful but also dark and the darkness could be the implication of 'confusing' evils on the way of the religious man. The attractions of the journey are wayside temptation of worldly life and the horse is his conscience or reason. During the journey the man must not fall victim to 'easy' wind and comfortable looking downy flakes because though their softness is tempting they are deceptivesince they are also cold, dark and evil. In this sense of the religious allegory or symbolism, the speaker is a

kind of Everyman on his Christian journey and he is resolved to go ahead after almost being tempted and stopped by the attractions of worldly pleasures.

The poem is also very universal and philosophical in its allegorical suggestions about life, time and dedication to a goal or vocation, consciousness and so on, including the romantic theme, 'life journey' ideas and religious themes, these general suggestions can be called 'philosophical'. The horse is the will power persistent in the sub consciousness of a man and the journey could be a vocation (profession) like poetry, art, academic, pursuit, personal ambition, a commitment to some ideal or any other dedication. Everyone has promises to keep and so without stopping one has to flow with time.

4.6 LET'S SUM UP

The three poems take the readers into the core of a ballad by Campbell, the dramatic monologue of Browning and a lyric by Frost. The poems are significant and suggestive, expressive and assertive. Every poem communicates a wonderful message of love, commitment and forgiveness and enhances in the readers the suffering in late realization, the happiness in yielding oneself to the present moment and the determination of keeping a promise.

4.7 SUGGESTED QUESTIONS

1. Lord Ullin's Daughter by Thomas Campbell is an appealing poem on love, fear, death and suffering. Comment.
2. Robert Browning's dramatic monologue *The Last Ride Together* expresses the emotional conflict of the speaker and his ultimate self-consolation. Justify.
3. Critically appreciate Robert Frost's lyrical poem *Stopping by the Woods on a Snowy Evening*.

4.8 REFERENCES

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Unit -5

A CRITICAL STUDY OF SHAKESPEARE'S TWELFTH NIGHT PART - 1

Unit Structure :

5.0 OBJECTIVES

- To acquaint the students with the playwright and his works
- To help them understand the detailed summary of the play through its plot

5.1 INTRODUCTION TO WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

William Shakespeare was an English poet and playwright who is considered one of the greatest writers to ever use the English language. He is also the most famous playwright in the world, with his plays being translated in over 50 languages and performed across the globe for audiences of all ages. Known colloquially as "The Bard" or "The Bard of Avon," Shakespeare was also an actor and the creator of the Globe Theatre, a historical theatre, and company that is visited by hundreds of thousands of tourists every year.

His works span tragedy, comedy, and historical works, both in poetry and prose. And although the man is the most-recognized playwright in the world, very little of his life is actually known. No known autobiographical letters or diaries have survived to modern day, and with no surviving descendants, Shakespeare is a figure both of magnificent genius and mystery.

This has led to many interpretations of his life and works, creating a legend out of the commoner from Stratford-upon-Avon who rose to prominence and in the process wrote many of the seminal works that provide the foundation for the current English language.

Life Before the Stage

The exact date of Shakespeare's birth is unknown, but it is accepted that he was born in April of 1564 in Stratford-upon-Avon in Warwickshire, England, and baptized in the same month. He was the son of John Shakespeare, an alderman, and Mary Arden, the daughter of the family's landlord and a well-respected farmer. He was one of eight children and lived to be the eldest surviving son of the family.

Shakespeare was educated at the King's New School, a free chartered grammar school that was located in Stratford. There he studied the basic Latin text and grammar, much of which was standardized across the country by Royal decree. He was also known to partake in the theatre while at the school as was the custom at the time. As a commoner, Shakespeare's education was thought to finish at the grammar school level as there is no record of him attending university, which was a luxury reserved for upper-class families.

In 1582, an 18-year-old Shakespeare married Anne Hathaway, who, on the occasion of her wedding, was 26 years old and already with child. Hathaway gave birth to the couple's first child six months later, a daughter named Susanna, with twins, named Hamnet and Judith, following two years later in 1585. Hamnet died at the age of 11 from unknown reasons.

After the birth of his twins in 1585, Shakespeare disappeared from public record until 1592, when his works began appearing on the London stage. These seven years are known as "Shakespeare's Lost Years," and have been the source of various stories that remain unverified, including a salacious story involving Shakespeare escaping Stratford prosecution for deer poaching. This story, among others, are solely entertainment and are not considered as part of the canon that makes up the playwright's personal life.

William Shakespeare first made his appearance on the London stage, where his plays would be written and performed, around 1592, although the exact date is unknown. He was, however, well known enough to be attacked by critics in newspapers, and thus was considered to be already an established playwright.

After the year 1594, Shakespeare's plays were solely performed by a company owned by a group of actors known as the Lord Chamberlain's Men, which became London's leading company. After Queen Elizabeth's death in 1603, the company was given a royal patent that renamed it the King's Men, named so after King James I.

Shakespeare, along with a group of players that acted in his play, created his own theatre on the River Thames in 1599 and named it the Globe Theatre. After that, a record of property purchases and investments made by Shakespeare showed the playwright had become a very wealthy man, so much so that he bought properties in London and Stratford for himself and his family, as he spent most of his time in London.

It was in 1594 that the first known quartos of Shakespeare's plays were published, solidifying his reputation by 1598 when his name became the selling point in new productions. This led to his success as both an actor on stage and a playwright, and his name was published on the title page of his plays.

Shakespeare continued to work with his company of men at the Globe Theatre until around 1610, the year that he retired from working on the stage. He, however, continued to support the Globe Theatre, including buying apartments for playwrights and actors to live in, all of which were near to the theatre

William Shakespeare died on April 23, 1616, and was buried at the Holy Trinity Church in Stratford two days later, with a curse written on his tombstone to ward off those who would disturb his bones.

The Shakespeare Canon

Shakespeare was noted both for poetry and plays, with both mediums serving different needs; the plays were related to the theatrical fashion that was on trend while his poetry served to provide storytelling in erotic or romantic ways, culminating in a canon of work that is as diverse in language as the issues of human nature that the works portray.

Plays

William Shakespeare wrote at least 37 plays that scholars know of, with most of them labeled is comedies, histories, or tragedies. The earliest play that is directly attributed to Shakespeare is the trilogy of "King Henry VI," with Richard III also being written around the same time, between 1589 and 1591. The last play was a collaboration, assumed to be with John Fletcher, known as "The Two Noble Kinsmen."

Shakespeare often wrote play in a genre that was in vogue at the time, with his plays beginning with the histories, including the above-mentioned works as well as "Pericles,""King John," the dual volumes of both "Henry IV" and Henry V, which were written at later dates.

Rom histories written in the late 1580s to the early 1590s, Shakespeare moved into comedies, which were described as such for their comic sequences and pairs of plots that intertwined with each other. Among the most well known are A Midsummer's Night Dream, Merchant of Venice, Much Ado About Nothing, As You Like It, and Twelfth Night. Interestingly, two tragedies bookend Shakespeare's comedic era - Romeo and Juliet were written at the beginning of the 1590s, and Julius Caesar was written at the end of the era.

For the last portion of his writing career, Shakespeare focused his work on tragedies and "problem" plays. In this era, which is acknowledged as the playwright's best era, he wrote the works called Hamlet, Othello, King Lear, Coriolanus, and Macbeth, among others. These are the works that are most in production today, both on stage and in film.

When looking at a chronology of Shakespeare's plays, it is clear that Shakespeare changed the subjects of his plays as he grew in prominence and then returned to a more serene life. Moving from historical subjects to a more playful side and then, finally, into plays where plots would result in a sense of forgiveness and serenity, Shakespeare's evolution as both a man and a writer is evident. In fact, the playwright's devotion to the English language and his rebellion against it has led to fascinating studies done by leading literature scholars.

Poems and Sonnets

There are two volumes of poetry and over 150 sonnets that are attributed to Shakespeare. It is thought that although Shakespeare was a poet throughout his lifetime, he turned to poetry most notably during 1593 and 1594 when a plague forced theatres in London to shut down.

The volumes of narrative poems that Shakespeare released during those years were called Venus and Adonis and The Rape of Lucrece. Both volumes focused on the problems surrounding uncontrollable lust and the guilt associated with it afterwards and were very well received during his lifetime, partially for their erotic tone. In this vein, Shakespeare also wrote A Lover's Complaint, which was included in the first edition of Shakespeare's sonnets, which were released in 1609.

Shakespeare's sonnets were a collection of over 150 works that were published late in his life and without any indication of when each of the pieces was composed. It is widely thought that the sonnets were a part of a private diary that was never meant to be read publicly but nevertheless were published.

The sonnets have a contrasting set of subjects - one set chronicles the poet's lust for a married woman with a dark complexion, known as The Dark Lady, while the other describes a conflicted or confused love for a young man, known as the "fair youth." While it is not known or confirmed, many in literature circles believe that the sonnets accurately portray the heart of the poet, leading the public to speculate on Shakespeare's views on religion, sex, marriage, and life.

Critics have praised the sonnets as being profoundly intimate and meditating on the values of love, lust, procreation, and death. Now a days, Shakespeare is ranked as all-time most popular English poets on history, along with Emily Dickinson, Robert Frost, and Walt Whitman.

Shakespeare's influence on art, literature, language and the vast array of the creative arts has long been known and documented. He is the most-read playwright in the Western Hemisphere, and the English language is littered with quotes and phrases the originated from his works. He is also the inventor of the iambic pentameter, a form of poetry that is still widely used today.

He is also one of the most influential figures in English literature, having had a profound impact on everyone from Herman Melville and Charles Dickens to Agatha Christie and Anthony Burgess. But his influence did not stop at just the arts - the psychoanalyst Sigmund Freud used Hamlet as the foundation for many of his theories on human nature, and his influence can be felt in painting and opera as well, particularly from the operas of Giuseppe Verdi and the whole community of Romantic and Pre-Raphaelite painters.

But Shakespeare was, and still is, the most prominent influential figure in language. Phrases such as "breaking the ice" or "heart of gold" are colloquial now, but are also known to have originated in Shakespeare's plays and sonnets. There are over seven dozen examples that can be taken from common life and be directly attributed to Shakespeare, meaning that much of how people speak to each other now has a history that dates back to the 17th century.

Aside from phrases, it is also common knowledge that the dramatist introduced upwards of 1,700 original words to the English language, which, during the 16th and 17th centuries, was not standardized. In fact, words such as lonely, frugal, dwindle, and more originate from Shakespeare, who transformed English into the populist language that it is today.

5.2 SUMMARY OF THE PLOT

Orsino, the Duke of Illyria, is in love with his neighbour, the Countess Olivia. She has sworn to avoid men's company for seven years while she mourns the death of her brother, so rejects him. Nearby a group of sailors arrive on shore with a young woman, Viola, who has survived a shipwreck in a storm at sea. Viola mourns the loss of her twin brother but decides to dress as a boy to get work as a page to Duke Orsino.

Despite his rejection Orsino sends his new page Cesario (Viola in disguise) to woo Olivia on his behalf. Viola goes unwillingly as she has already fallen in love at first sight with the duke. Olivia is attracted by the 'boy' and she sends her pompous steward, Malvolio, after him with a ring.

Olivia's uncle, Sir Toby Belch, her servant Maria, and Sir Toby's friend, Sir Andrew Aguecheek, who is also hoping to woo Olivia, and is being led on by Sir Toby, who is trying to fleece him of his money, all plot to expose the self-love of Malvolio. By means of a false letter they trick him into thinking his mistress Olivia loves him. Malvolio appears in yellow stockings and cross-garters, smiling as they have told him to in the letter. Unaware of the trick the Countess is horrified and has Malvolio shut up in the dark as a madman.

Meanwhile Viola's twin brother, Sebastian, who has also survived the shipwreck, comes to Illyria. His sea-captain friend, Antonio, is a wanted man for piracy against Orsino. The resemblance between Cesario and Sebastian leads the jealous Sir Andrew to challenge Cesario to a duel. Antonio intervenes to defend Cesario whom he thinks is his friend Sebastian, and is arrested. Olivia has in the meantime met and become betrothed to Sebastian.

Cesario is accused of deserting both Antonio and Olivia when the real Sebastian arrives to apologise for fighting Sir Toby. Seeing both twins together, all is revealed to Olivia. Orsino's fool, Feste, brings a letter from Malvolio and on his release the conspirators confess to having written the false letter. Malvolio departs promising revenge. Maria and Sir Toby have married in celebration of the success of their device against the steward.

The play ends as Orsino welcomes Olivia and Sebastian and, realising his own attraction to Cesario, he promises that once she is dressed as a woman again they, too, will be married.

ACT-WISE SUMMARY OF THE PLOT

ACT ONE

Scene one

This scene introduces us to the Duke, who is in love with a girl called Olivia. His servant goes to ask her wether or not she would like to go out with the Duke. The message back from her servant is that Olivia will not be seen in public for seven years because of the death of her brother.

Scene Two

After a shipwreck, Viola finds herself of Illyria, a coastal town. She believes that her brother has been killed in the shipwreck, and that she will never get off this island. After learning about the Duke, she arranges with the captain of the ship to disguise herself and to serve the Duke. He may then fall in love with her.

Scene Three

Sir Toby and Maria are talking to each other about Olivia's decision to morn for seven years. They are also talking about Sir Toby's drinking and friend, Sir Andrew, a foolish knight that has been brought to the castle as a suitor to Olivia. Sir Andrew says he is going to leave, but Sir Toby persuades him not to, as Olivia is not interested in the Duke. Maria leaves, and Andrew and Toby dance.

Scene Four

Viola, already disguised as Cesario (she is referred to as Cesario instead of Viola throughout the play), has already became a servant to the Duke. Her first job is to try and persuade Olivia to go out with the Duke. Viola has fallen in love with the Duke.

Scene Five

Maria and Feste the clown are talking when Olivia enters with Malvolio. She has a conversation with Feste, and he gets the better of her. Maria announces that a young 'man' (Cesario) is here to see Olivia. She says that if he is from the Duke, she will not see him. Maria returns and says the young man will not take no for an answer, so Olivia meets him with Maria at her side. Cesario is very convincing about the Duke's love, but Olivia is not unstuck. She dismisses Cesario, and when by herself, shows that she is in love with 'him'. She sends Malvolio with a ring Cesario apparently left behind, and said he should return tomorrow.

ACT TWO

Scene One

Sebastian, Violia's identical twin brother comes to shore after the shipwreck, saved by Antonio. He wants to be Sebastian's servant, but he says that he will make it to the Duke's court by

himself. Scene Two Malvolio runs after Cesario to give him the ring. He denies that he gave it to her, and so Malvolio puts it on the ground in front of him. He (Viola) thinks that Olivia is in love with 'him'.

Scene Three

Sir Toby and Sir Andrew are talking loudly. Feste joins them and sings a romantic song for them. The other two then join in. Maria comes down and tells them that they are making too much noise. Malvolio then enters and tells Sir Toby that if he doesn't stop his drinking, he will be banned from the house by Olivia, his niece. He then leaves, as does Feste. Maria makes up a plan that she will leave a note that talks of Olivia's love for Malvolio.

Scene Four

The Duke, still lovesick calls for some music. Feste arrives and sings a lovesick song back to him. He leaves, and Cesario and the Duke talk. Cesario is told to go back and try to woo Olivia.

Scene Five

In this scene, the note is set for Malvolio. Sirs Toby and Andrew and Fabian who hates Malvolio, watch him behind a tree. As Malvolio walks into the scene he is thinking what it would be like to be married to Olivia. He finds the note, and goes to do what the note says, which is to dress in yellow cross garter stockings.

ACT THREE

Scene One

In this scene, Cesario again goes to Olivia. She talks to Feste and Sirs Toby and Andrew. Olivia then comes out and confesses her love for Cesario. 'He' then runs away as Olivia continues to pledge her love.

Scene Two

In this scene, Sir Andrew is attempting to leave the castle, as he believes that Cesario has made more progress towards the love of Olivia. Sir Toby and Fabian persuade him to stay, and convince sir Andrew to challenge Cesario to a fight. Maria then enters and tells them all about Malvolio.

Scene Three

Antonio and Sebastian go to an Inn and Antonio gives Sebastian his purse in case he wants to buy something. Antonio reveals that he is in trouble with the Duke.

Scene Four

Olivia is pondering how she will invite Cesario to her house. Malvolio enters, and he is wearing yellow cross -gartered stockings. He seems to think that he and Olivia have some sort of

understanding. He then leaves to let Cesario in. Meanwhile, Sir Andrew shows Maria, Sir Toby and Fabian his letter to Cesario. They urge him on. Sir Toby delivers the challenge to Cesario, and 'he' is very worried. Sir Toby tells Cesario that Andrew is the best fighter in the country. He tells Andrew the same about Cesario. They start to fight. Antonio sees this, and, mistaking Cesario for Sebastian fights for 'him'. He is then arrested by the police. He asks Cesario for his purse back, and Cesario doesn't know what he is saying. He then calls Cesario Sebastian, which gives her/him a hope. Toby and Andrew see this, and are disgusted.

ACT FOUR

Scene One

Feste goes to collect Cesario, and sees Sebastian. He takes him to Olivia's house mistaking him. When he gets there, Andrew hits Sebastian, also mistaking him. The latter then smacks Andrew. Toby draws his sword, and is quickly beaten. Olivia comes out and shouts at Toby. She takes Sebastian in side, and he is in love with her.

Scene Two

Malvolio is locked up in the dungeon, as everyone thinks he is mad. Feste, dresses up as Sir Topaz the Curate, and goes and teases Malvolio. The latter asks for pen and ink, but Feste refuses. He then leaves.

Scene Three

Sebastian, although concerned about Antonio, can't get over Olivia's behaviour. She then appears with a priest, and asked Sebastian to marry her, mistaking him for Viola. He agrees.

ACT FIVE

Scene One

This long scene brings into conclusion all of the plots and the sub-plots. Feste and Fabian are discussing a letter, when the Duke enters to court Olivia in person. Antonio enters with his guards. Viola (Cesario) points out that was the man that saved her from Andrew. The Duke recognizes Antonio for his past troubles as a pirate, and demands an explanation. He says that he and Sebastian were inseparable for the last three months. Cesario has been working for the Duke for the last three months, and so Antonio is mad. At this time, Olivia enters and calls Viola tardy, and rejects the Duke's love. Viola and the Duke turn to go, but Olivia calls Viola husband. The priest backs this up. Sirs Andrew and Toby enter, and say Cesario beat them. Sebastian enters and tells Antonio not to worry, and all stare at the twins before them. Viola and Sebastian are reunited. The Duke pleads his love to Viola, as Olivia is married. Feste enters with Malvolio's letter, and Malvolio is called for. Malvolio calls Olivia a liar for writing that letter. She says that it

was written by Maria. Fabian confesses the plot to Malvolio, and says that Sir Toby is married to Maria. Malvolio vows his revenge on 'The whole lot of you', and Feste finishes the scene and play with a song.

5.3 QUESTIONS

1) Attempt a summary of Shakespeare's Twelfth Night
2) How are the lost twins reconciled at the end of the play

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Unit -6

A CRITICAL STUDY OF SHAKESPEARE'S TWELFTH NIGHT - PART - 2

Unit Structure :

6.0 OBJECTIVES

- To make students understand the various characters in the play
- To acquaint the students with the Themes and motifs

6.1 ANALYSIS OF CHARACTERS

ORSINO, Duke of Illyria
OLIVIA, a rich Countess
VIOLA, in love with the Duke
SIR ANDREW AGUECHEEK
MALVOLIO, Steward to Olivia
MARIA, Olivia's Woman
SEBASTIAN, Brother to Viola
ANTONIO, a Sea Captain, Friend to Sebastian
A Sea Captain, Friend to Viola
VALENTINE, CURIO, Gentlemen attending on the Duke
FABIAN, Servant to Olivia
FESTE, a Clown, Servant to Olivia
Lords, Priests, Sailors, Officers, Musicians, and other Attendants

ANALYSIS OF MAJOR CHARACTERS

- Orsino

Orsino, the Duke and Count of Illyria, is a young man deeply and fashionably in love with Olivia. Her rejection of him leaves him in a deep and just as fashionable melancholy.

Rather than press his suit in person, he sends messengers to Olivia, and it is in fact quite possible that he has never actually met her, merely seen her at a distance. Now that he is in love, he no longer hunts, but he has a deep love of music that he frequently indulges in. He has a great affection for his newly-acquired page, Cesario, and gives him sage advice about love and women. He also uses Cesario as a messenger to Olivia. He was not always so weary, and has fought in sea-battles, including one against Antonio. Discovering that Cesario is loved by Olivia, he swears to drag them apart. Discovering that they are married, he turns his rage against Cesario in person. Discovering that Cesario is in fact a woman, who loves him dearly and is not married to Olivia, he decides to marry her instead.

- Viola: The Fulcrum of Action

The dramatic world of Twelfth Night is essentially built up on a constant conflict- between Imagination and reality, disguise and actuality. Within such a framework, the characters act and interact to generate the essential comic vision of Shakespeare. Viola, in this context, is presented as the fulcrum of action, since it is around her that the plot develops and the drama unfolds. Being a “non-Illyrian” from the very beginning, she is placed outside the realm of misguided perceptions that the citizens of Illyria possess, thereby becoming the epitome of practical sensibility.

From the very beginning, Viola shows her mark of intelligence even in her dealings with the sea captain. Despite her grief for her brother who is considered dead, and her despair in being left alone on an unknown land, she suppresses her passion and even pays the captain for his help. This action, apparently simple, is significant since it shows that Viola is prepared to take up the challenges of the patriarchal society in her own right. Even in the quickness of mind in which she decides to serve Orsino proves her capability to act strongly, independent of any active male assistance.

This brings up issues, which the modern critics prefer to classify as feminist issues. Indeed, the character of Viola proves to be the strongest character in the whole play. This is not something unusual in Shakespeare who created characters like Portia, Rosalind and even Lady Macbeth who often acted more strongly than their male counterparts. However, these characters were often disguised as men (even Lady Macbeth invokes the spirits to ‘unsex’ her to make her bolder). Viola, (alias Cesario) too assumes a masculine identity which however, fails to conceal her feminine aspects completely.

Orsino invariably responds to her charms unconsciously: " Diana’s lip/ Is not more smooth and rubious. Thy small pipe/ Is as

the maiden's organ, shrill and sound,/ And all is semblative a woman's part."

Ironically she has to be the Duke's messenger to Lady Olivia even when she herself is in love with Orsino. However, the sincerity and sense of moral responsibility makes her carry out the task but at the same time the manner of executing the Duke's command leads to completely adverse consequences- Olivia falls in love with Viola disguised as Cesario. It is at this point of realization that Viola appears to be shaken with misgivings but her inherent wisdom makes her leave things in the hands of Time.

- Sebastian

Sebastian is Viola's twin brother. After the shipwreck, he was rescued by Antonio, and spent three months in his company.

Deciding that he cannot continue moping over his sister's death, he sets forth for Orsino's court, but on arriving in Illyria he discovers that Antonio has followed him. He proceeds to have a very confusing day, where his enjoyment of the usual touristy activities of sightseeing are continually interrupted by a series of mad people who claim to know him, including a pair of insulting ones with whom he almost ends up in a fight. His bafflement and belief that all Illyrians are insane do not stop him from following the beautiful woman who breaks up the fight, however. He is not entirely unconvinced that he's dreaming, but can find no good reason not to follow this woman and the priest she drags in, and so goes along with her plans of secret marriage. Meeting his two opponents again, he shows them no mercy, breaks their heads, and rushes to apologize to his wife—only to discover that his sister is alive and that Olivia originally fell in love with her, not him. he confusion is quickly cleared up, and all is well. Sebastian seems an uncomplicated fellow, as quick to anger as to calming down, loyal and generally well-disposed.

- Antonio

Antonio is a sea captain. Though considered a pirate by Illyrians, he considers himself an honorable opponent.

Though due to his history of capturing Illyrians ships, he is not very welcome in Orsino's lands, he knows which is the best inn in town. He is deeply infatuated with Sebastian, whom he saved from drowning, to the extent of following him to Illyria despite the personal danger to him. He is shocked and wounded when Sebastian (as he thinks) later refuses to acknowledge knowing him, let alone having borrowed his purse. When the real Sebastian rushed up to embrace him and return his money, he is deeply confused, and incapable of telling the difference between the twins. What happens to Antonio, who discovers that Sebastian has been

married since they last saw each other that afternoon, is uncertain. Generally he joins in with the reveling, if in a bit of a lonely way; but it is not impossible that everyone forgets about him and that he's executed after all.

- Sir Toby Belch

Sir Toby Belch is Olivia's uncle and something of a minor-league Falstaff. A penniless drunkard who sets stock by his nobility of birth, with a taste for pickled herrings that likely leave him flatulent, he makes himself quite at home at his niece's.

He has the full confidence of Sir Andrew, whom he considers a fool, and can play him like a charm. This allows him easy access to Sir Andrew's money. He has managed to convince Sir Andrew that he has a chance at Olivia's hand. Though most of what Sir Toby does appears to be purely for his own entertainment, he is quite capable of moments of genuine nastiness, reminding Malvolio of the difference in their social class, tying the steward up and having him locked in a dark room, putting Sir Andrew in situations that could lead to his serious injury or death, and in the end telling Sir Andrew to his face what he is. Sir Toby is quick to pull his sword, though we have no evidence as to whether he has any prowess with it. Taken with Maria's wit and prank-planning ability, he marries her.

- Feste

Feste was Olivia's father's jester, and is now hers, though it appears that he wanders around a bit.

An excellent singer, he also plays the pipe and tabor. He is not especially tall, nor especially thin. An expert in wordplay, he attempts to bring Olivia out of her melancholy and mourning, though this brings him Malvolio's scorn. His wordplay is also useful in convincing people to give him money. Though he joins in the plot against Malvolio, it is clear that his first loyalty is to Olivia: he runs to find her when Sir Toby and Sir Andrew set upon Cesario, and refuses to let Fabian read the letter the steward sends Olivia from his prison, apparently thinking the prank has gone long enough. When Malvolio is freed, however, Feste does make certain to remind him of the scorn he has poured on his underlings. He appears to be the only member of Olivia's household who thinks she should be cheered up. As he was her father's jester, it is likely that he has known her all her life.

- Olivia

Olivia is an orphaned, gray-eyed countess who has sworn to remain in mourning for seven years after the recent death of her brother.

Though aware of all his qualities, she cannot fall in love with Orsino, despite his pestering her with love letters. She is fond of Feste, relies on Malvolio, and has her patience strained by her uncle Toby. She is nevertheless caring and patient, as demonstrated in her treatment of Malvolio when he appears to lose his mind. She has few illusions about the world, being as well-aware of Malvolio's defects as of her uncle's drunkenness as of her own mind. She is ready to fall topsy-turvy in love with Cesario, however, bowled over by his wit and willingness to toss away the script. Despite his rejection of her, she begs him to return, hoping to bring him to love her by degrees – not entirely unlike Orsino. She is quite capable of losing her temper, especially when her uncle is on the verge of fighting with Cesario. She is similarly impulsive enough that when Cesario suddenly starts treating her well, she rushes to find a priest who will marry them in secret. She is therefore deeply hurt when he later denies this and runs away after Orsino, swearing he loves the Duke more than he does her. This confusion is cleared up when it is discovered that the Cesario Olivia fell for is in fact a woman by the name of Viola, while the one who was taken with her and married her is Viola's twin brother Sebastian. She is somewhat shocked at this, but accepts that Viola, who will now be marrying Orsino, will be her sister.

- Malvolio

Malvolio is the Lady Olivia's steward and the target of a major prank. Throughout the play, he's characterized as a fun-hating and overly serious character with no sense of humor. What he wants most of all is status, mostly so he can make other characters stop doing things he considers frivolous and silly. Because he can't take a joke, his efforts to improve his own position in the world make him an easy target for the other characters and drive his role in the plot and humor of the play.

During the Christmas feast, the other characters give Malvolio a forged letter that tricks him into believing that Olivia is in love with him and wants him to walk around wearing weird yellow stockings and smiling. This plays right into Malvolio's desire to improve his status: if he can marry Olivia, he'll have it made! But in fact, Olivia wants exactly the opposite - she hates the color yellow, and her brother just died, so seeing Malvolio acting obnoxiously happy all the time makes her think he must be crazy. She assumes he's gone crazy and has him imprisoned, and the other characters have a good time making fun of him before the play ends.

Malvolio's characterization is central to the plot, because his personality is what makes the trick work. Throughout the play, Malvolio's lines characterize him as a very stern person who hates anything he perceives as silly or frivolous. They explain why his plot arc works and contribute to the humor of the trick.

- Sir Andrew Aguecheek

Sir Andrew is a friend of Sir Toby Belch, the uncle of Lady Olivia in Shakespeare's comedic play, Twelfth Night. Sir Andrew is known as a dunce, and he follows Sir Toby around. He is at Lady Olivia's home to court her and doesn't have much success in that regard. Sir Andrew is a comedic character, and he takes part in an elaborate joke on Malvolio, Olivia's steward. However, in the end, Sir Andrew is left alone, without the girl, and missing some of his precious money. I bet this makes you feel even worse about your wealthy friend, but maybe not enough to pay for your own popcorn at the movies.

Sir Andrew arrives at Lady Olivia's house with Sir Toby, ready to court and woo her. This plan immediately runs into a snag, specifically that Olivia does not want to see anyone, as she is in mourning for her father and her brother. Sir Andrew appears from the start to not be the brightest of fellows, and he immediately begins drinking and acting badly with Sir Toby, who appears to be using him at times.

Sir Andrew joins Feste the clown, Maria, and Sir Toby in playing a joke on Malvolio that is a significant subplot in the play. They trick Malvolio into believing that Olivia is leaving him messages of love, causing Malvolio to look foolish in front of Olivia. This does not improve Sir Andrew's chances with Olivia, however. In fact, she has been busy falling in love with Cesario, who is actually Viola in disguise! This infuriates Sir Andrew, who challenges Cesario/Viola to a duel, egged on by Sir Toby. However, Viola finds out that her brother Sebastian is alive, which confuses Sir Andrew. Granted, it appears that most things confuse Sir Andrew.

- Valentine

Valentine is one of Orsino’s attendants. He was sent to Olivia as a messenger of love, but was not allowed to speak to her.

He brings back the news that she has pledged to mourn a full seven years for her brother. He also advises Cesario (Viola) that he (she) is in a good position, and that Orsino’s favors are not inconstant.

- Curio

Curio is one of Orsino’s attendants. He seeks to distract Orsino by taking him to hunt, but Orsino refuses.

He knows Feste, and is sent to find him so that he can sing a song Orsino particularly desires to hear.

6.2 SYMBOLS

Twelfth Night has symbolic objects such as clothes, love letters, money, and jewels.

- Viola's boy costume symbolizes her identity change. Viola's boy costume is her transformation from being an aristocratic woman to being a handsome servant boy named Cesario.
- Maria's love letter to Malvolio symbolizes deception. Maria fools Malvolio into thinking that Olivia is in love with him by imitating Olivia's handwriting. Also, Viola's miscommunication causes Olivia to fall in love with Cesario (Viola's disguise) after she delivers Orsino's love messages to her. The purpose of sending Viola to Olivia was to convince her that she should accept Orsino's love; however, Olivia ends up falling in love in with Cesario (Viola's disguise) instead of Orsino.
- Olivia's ring and pearl symbolizes her expression of love. Olivia tries to gain Cesario's affection by bribing him with jewels. She uses her ring and pearl to profess her love to Cesario.
- Feste (the clown) is a symbolic character. He symbolizes the hidden wisdom that lies within all of us. Under his foolish antics, Feste possesses a innate gift that he indirectly expresses towards the characters. He does not want to break away from his character and successfully perform his foolishness at the right timing and in appropriate situations. He is fully aware that he is smart, but he does not want that attribute to take over his character as a clown.
- All of the symbols in the story relates to how love can be complicated. If love is not expressed effectively, then it will lead to misunderstandings. Overall, the symbols enhance the story's plot and reveals how each character express their feelings.

6.3 ANALYSIS OF THEMES

Theme of Love

In the play "Twelfth Night," Shakespeare explores and illustrates the emotion of love with precise detail. According to "Webster's New World Dictionary," love is defined as "a strong affection or liking for someone." Throughout the play Shakespeare examines three different types of love: true love, self love and friendship.

"Twelfth Night" consists of many love triangles, however many of the characters who are tangled up in the web of love are blind to see that their emotions and feelings toward other characters are untrue. They are being deceived by themselves and/or the others around them. There are certain instances in the

play where the emotion of love is true, and the two people involved feel very strongly toward one another. Viola's love for Orsino is a great example of true love. Although she is pretending to be a man and is virtually unknown in Illyria, she hopes to win the Duke's heart. In act 1, scene 4, Viola let's out her true feelings for Cesario, "yet a barful strife! Whoe'er I woo, myself would be his wife (1)." That statement becomes true when Viola reveals her true identity. Viola and Orsino had a very good friendship, and making the switch to husband and wife was easy. Viola was caught up in another true love scenario, only this time she was on the receiving end, and things didn't work out so smoothly. During her attempts to court Olivia for Orsino, Olivia grew to love Cesario. Viola was now caught in a terrible situation and there was only one way out, but that would jeopardize her chances with Orsino. It's amazing that Olivia could fall for a woman dressed as a man, but because Viola knew what women like to hear, her words won Olivia's heart. The next case of true love is on a less intimate and romantic scale, and more family oriented. Viola and Sebastian's love for one another is a bond felt by all siblings. Through their times of sorrow and mourning for each of their apparent deaths they still loved each other. They believed deep down that maybe some way or by some miracle that each of them was still alive and well.

Many people, even in today's society, love themselves more than anything else. "Twelfth Night" addresses the issue of self love and how it affects peoples' lives. Malvolio is the easiest to identify with the problem of self love. He sees himself as a handsome and noble man. Malvolio believes many women would love to be with him. He likes to see things one way only, and he deceives himself just to suit his outlook on the situation. For example, in the play he twists Olivia's words around to make it sound like she admires his yellow cross-gartered stockings, when she really despises them. Both Sir Toby and Olivia show signs of self love but it is not as big an issue. Sir Toby only cares about himself and no one else, not even his friends. He ignores Maria's warnings about drinking into the night, and he continues to push Sir Andrew to court Olivia. Although he believes Sir Andrew doesn't have a chance. Olivia cares about the people around her, but she also believes that no man is worthy of her beauty. She thinks she is "all that," and that no one can match her.

Friendship is the third type of love expressed in "Twelfth Night." The biggest and closest friendship would have to be between Orsino and Cesario. They barely knew each other at first, and before long Orsino was telling Cesario his inner love for Olivia. He even had Cesario running his love messages to Olivia. The second friendship between Viola and the Sea Captain was not mentioned a lot, but they had a very deep bond between one another. They survived the shipwreck together and the Sea Captain

promised to keep Viola's idea about pretending to be a man a secret. If he had opened his mouth the entire play would have changed. The third friendship, and definitely the strangest, is between Sir Toby and Sir Andrew Aguecheek. They are close friends but sometimes Sir Toby doesn't show it. He sets Sir Andrew up, and likes to get him into trouble. An example is persuading Sir Andrew to challenge Cesario to a dual, even though he is not a great swordsman and is unaware of Cesario's ability. On the other hand, Sir Andrew appreciates Sir Toby's company because he always lifts his spirits and makes him feel like a true knight.

Love plays a major role in "Twelfth Night," and Shakespeare addresses true love, self love and friendship in a very compelling and interesting way. Love is great to read about because everyone deserves a little love. "Twelfth Night" is the true definition of love, and Shakespeare does a great job of explaining a somewhat difficult topic.

Identity

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

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

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

Melancholy

During the Renaissance, melancholy was believed to be a sickness rather like modern depression, resulting from an imbalance in the fluids making up the human body. Melancholy was thought to arise from love: primarily narcissistic self-love or unrequited romantic love. Several characters in Twelfth Night suffer from some version of love-melancholy. Orsino exhibits many symptoms of the disease (including lethargy, inactivity, and interest

in music and poetry). Dressed up as Cesario, Viola describes herself as dying of melancholy, because she is unable to act on her love for Orsino. Olivia also describes Malvolio as melancholy and blames it on his narcissism.

Through its emphasis on melancholy, Twelfth Night reveals the painfulness of love. At the same time, just as the play satirizes the way in which its more excessive characters act in proclaiming their love, it also satirizes some instances of melancholy and mourning that are exaggerated or insincere. For instance, while Viola seems to experience profound pain at her inability to be with Orsino, Orsino is cured of the intense lovesickness he experienced for Olivia as soon as he learns that Viola is available.

Madness

The theme of madness in Twelfth Night often overlaps the themes of desire and love. Orsino talks about the faculty of love producing multiple changing images of the beloved, similar to hallucinations. Olivia remarks at certain points that desire for Cesario is making her mad. These examples of madness are mostly metaphorical: madness becomes a way for characters to express the intensity of their romantic feelings.

But the play also has multiple characters that seem to go literally mad. As part of the prank that Maria, Sir Toby, and Fabian play on Malvolio, they convince everyone that he is crazy. The confusion that results from characters' mixing up Viola/Cesario and Sebastian, after Sebastian's arrival in Illyria, also leads many of them to think that they have lost their minds. The general comedy and chaos that creates (and results from) this confusion also references the ritualized chaos of the Twelfth Night holiday in Renaissance England.

Theme of Festivity

Twelfth Night, the last day of Christmas feasting, the last night of holiday, is the day before normal life resumes. It is the time to put on masks and disrupt the normal order of life. Carnival, according to the Russian critic Mikhail Bakhtin, “celebrated temporary liberation from prevailing truth and from established order; it marked the suspension of all hierarchical rank… the feast of becoming, change and renewal.” The play Twelfth Night itself is likewise, a suspension in time, but a conscious one, making the spectator aware of the interplay between festivity on one hand and real life on the other. This is because, while the plot is both preposterous and entertaining, its implications are far more serious. Historically, the twelfth night refers to the festivities of the sixth day of January- a festival of the “ Epiphany or the manifestation of Christ to the gentiles”. Possibly, the play was specially composed for performance at the court of Queen Elizabeth on the twelfth night

of Christmas of 1601-02. However this apparently simple explanation of the title is challenged by the sub-title (Or What You Will). All the comic elements being as it where, thrown out simultaneously and held in a sort of equipoise so that, the audience is left to fix the preponderance according to their will. Thus every single spectator may, within certain limits and conditions take the work in whatever sense he wills. This is because, where no special prominence is given to any one aspect of a play, there is a wider scope for individual preference and "greater freedom" as Hudson comments "…for each to select for virtual prominence such parts as will best knit in with what is uppermost in his thoughts."

Quite strikingly the phrase "Twelfth Night" is first uttered in a conversation between Toby and Andrew- the two most important figures of the sub-plot. While Toby plots for deliberately deceiving Malvolio, Andrew deceives himself unknowingly. Thus the title is best suited to the temperament of revelry of two drunk men. These characters hold up action, wasting and ignoring the demands of time. But they do conspire together to produce their own action, showing even a kind of cruelty. Thus, while the disguises and tricks go on, there is an air of menace. "Carnival" observes Kate Flint, "… can be cruel; can tread on the edge of danger". This cruelty, as the play shows, can be present unrecognized in the normal life and attitudes as well as in drama which uses exaggeration to make this more prominent.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE TITLE

The key to the meaning of Twelfth Night is in the title. Twelfth Night is the only one of Shakespeare's plays to have an alternative title: the play is actually called 'Twelfth Night, or What You Will'. Critics are divided over what the two titles mean, but 'Twelfth Night' is usually considered to be a reference to Epiphany, or the twelfth night of the Christmas celebration (January 6), as in the popular song "Twelve Days of Christmas". It marks the Feast of the Epiphany, a culmination of the Christmas period, a holiday in Western Christian theology that celebrates the day that the magi (a.k.a. the three wise men) presented gifts to the newborn Jesus. It represents the manifestation of Light, or Truth, to those who have enough understanding to perceive it. This revelation of Light, or Truth, is the subject of the play, with Viola eventually revealing her true identity as a woman.

Critics argue about whether or not the play was written specifically for the Twelfth Night. Leslie Hotson argues that Twelfth Night was performed for Queen Elizabeth and her guest, Count Don Virginio Orsino, on January 6, 1601 (Orsino, of course, is Viola's love interest in the play). Some argue that the play was written later, but even those who refute Hotson's argument acknowledge that the world of the play celebrates the spirit of

Twelfth Night festivities. Twelfth Night, in Shakespeare's day, was a holiday celebrated by a festival in which everything was turned upside down. Elizabethan communities often appointed young boys as "Lords of Misrule"; it was a chance to play king for a day - much like the upside-down, chaotic world of Illyria. This rebellious spirit is reflected in figures like Sir Toby Belch and Sir Andrew Aguecheek, alongside Feste's singing and comedy.

Some theorize that the second part of the title was an afterthought: when someone asked the playwright "the name of the play, Shakespeare replied, "Urm, Twelfth Night, or what you will" (as in, "I don't know – whatever"). The second title seems to invite the audience to make "what [we] will" of the play – what it means, and why it matters (if it matters at all) - it is entirely subjective.

6.4 QUESTIONS

1. Twelfth Night is based on a series of mistaken identities and disguises of one sort or another. Identify and explain how each of them functions in the plot development
2. Describe the nature and type of love to which Duke Orsino is an easy prey'
3. Discuss the role of mistaken identity in Twelfth Night. Who is mistaken for whom, and what do these mix-ups signify?
4. What role does Malvolio serve in the play? Does his fate seem unjust? Is it out of place in a romantic comedy? Elucidiate

Unit -7

A CRITICAL STUDY OF ROBERT BOLT'S A MAN FOR ALL SEASONS – PART 1

Unit Structure :

7.0 OBJECTIVE

The objective of the Unit is to make the learners understand the importance of the play through the various scenes that offer clear understanding of the proceedings. The historical moment of the play which covers nearly six years, from Thomas More's appointment as Lord Chancellor in 729 to his death in 735, gives an idea about England during those years.

7.1 INTRODUCTION

The play revolves around the English King who came to power in 709, after the death of his older brother and then wanted to marry his brother's widow, Catherine, which was against accepted Biblical norms. So he sent a special request to the Pope asking for his marriage to be legitimized to which the Pope agreed and they were married. But, unfortunately, Catherine failed to give birth to a male heir and in the meantime Henry had an affair with Anne Boleyn and for the sake of having a boy child they decided to marry. But the Church would not allow him to divorce Catherine and so Henry decided to separate England from the Catholic Church and install himself as the head of the Church, instead of the Pope. Henry passed the Act of Supremacy to which most of the Parliament and nobility signed except Thomas More. The play now sets the events which deal with More's refusal to acknowledge the new Church of England and his reward of life as punishment for not obliging to the King.

7.2 THE AUTHOR

Robert Oxton Bolt (1924 -1995), the high prolific, versatile and successful modern British author is best known for his play about Sir Thomas More, *A Man for All Seasons*, and his screen plays for film epics such as *Lawrence of Arabia*, *Doctor Zhivago* and *The Mission*. The two-time Oscar winning screenwriter is widely known for his dramatic works that placed his protagonists in tension with the predominant society, he contributed a lot in the reiteration of his themes and thus emerging his existential scripts. In *Lawrence of Arabia* he had the potentiality of turning T.E. Lawrence's *Seven Pillars of Wisdom* into a convincing screenplay by turning the entire book on its head and making it a search for the identity of its author. Bolt was later arrested and imprisoned when he didn't follow the law and protested against nuclear propagation. He even refused to sign the declaration stating that he would no longer engage himself in such activities and so he was sentenced to one-monthprison. It was Sam Spiegel, the producer of the Lawrence film, who persuaded Bolt to sign the declaration after he had served two weeks in prison for which Bolt regretted later and never spoke to Spiegel again.

Bolt suffered a severe stroke in 1979 which resulted in loss of speech and partial paralysis, but he continued with his contribution and *The Bounty* was his first project after the stroke. *The Mission* was Bolt's final film project which once again epitomized his thematic concern, and this time it was the 18th century Jesuits in South America. *Political Animal*, which was later made into the television movie *Without Warning: The James Brady Story* (1991), was his final produced script. The story revolves around the attempted assassination of Ronald Reagan and the strugglesof his press secretary, James Brady, who was recovering from a near fatal gunshot injury he had received in the procedure. Though reluctant initially to make the film, he changed his mind after meeting Brady as he felt connected to Brady's struggles with the cerebral injury; thus, a lot of his own experiences of recovering from his stroke have paved their way into the script.

7.3 ACT I

SCENE I

The play opens with a monologue of the Common man who is seen reluctant and lamenting in opening a play which relates to royalty and the noble class for he feels that he is unsuitable for the mission but, finally he decides to present his own version. The common man is a character who has all the qualities and characteristics of any other common man and here he puts on the costume of Matthew, the servant of Thomas More. Emphasizing

and representing humanity at large by the Common Man, More tries to bring out the existentialist idea that human beings are defined above all by their inner selves. This unique perspective of existence was initially popularized by thinkers like Albert Camus and Jean-Paul Sartre. The Common Man tries to show the world how everyone betrays oneself by doing other jobs but not being true to the inner self. Declaring that the 16th century is 'the century of the common man', he treats himself well with some wine that he pours for his master and then introduces Sir Thomas More as he enters. Thomas More is followed into the room by Richard Rich and both of them keep arguing over man's probability of being bribed. Though he dismisses Rich's belief that money, status or women can bribe anyone, he is thoughtful when Rich implies that a mancan be bought with suffering. However it turns out that Rich wanted to mean that men who wish to avoid suffering are in fact attracted to the possibility of escape. More immediately recognizes that this is the theory of Machiavelli and he asks Rich who has recommended him to read Machiavelli books to which Rich admits that it is Master Cromwell. Rich also reveals that Cromwell had offered him a job or some kind of a favor to which he had regretted his unemployment and his normally low social stature.More is concerned about Rich and tells the duke about how much More requires a job, although playfully he even adds on that he doesn't 'recommend' Rich. When More points out that there is a comfortable teacher's job available with the dean of St. Paul's School, it is seen that Rich shows hardly any interest and he declares it as a dead-end opportunity. More warns Rich against administrative offices which are usually filled with temptations and also shows him an Italian silver cup that a petitioner has used with the intention of bribing him.When the cup was presented to him he had not realized that it was a bribe, but now that he understands he wants to get rid of it. Rich says that he can sell it off to buy some decent clothing.

The Duke of Norfolk along with Alice, More's wife, enters arguing over whether it is possible for a falcon to stoop from the cloud of around 500 feet high to kill a heron. In the meantime More's daughter, Margaret, also steps in and Rich takes the opportunity to flatter Norfolk. More playfully reveals to everyone about Rich's reading Machiavelli under the guidance of Cromwell. Norfolk discloses the promotion of Cromwell to the position of cardinal's secretary and the news surprises everyone. It is difficult for them to believe that such a lowborn and usually disliked person can get such a wonderful job. More now points out how valuable Rich's relationship with Cromwell has become and he need not come to More anymore to seek help in finding a job, to which Rich pleads that he would rather work for More than go to Cromwell.

They are interrupted by a letter from the Cardinal who wants to see More immediately and as More prepares to leave he takes care of seeing his family off to bed after prayers and arranging for

Norfolk to take Rich home.At the end of the scene Rich is seen snatching the silver cup that was left behind on the table and when Matthew tries to stop him he says it's a gift. Rich's accepting the cup, which represents corruption and declining the offer of the teaching profession which epitomizes social responsibility, proves the immorality of Rich. In fact, when Matthew predicts that Rich has no proper future and that More is too generous on him foretells the ruin of Rich.

SCENE II

More reaches Cardinal Wolsey's office and he is given a message to be delivered to the Pope. Knowing very well that More might oppose to the dispatch, the Cardinal asks him to go through the message to which More very diplomatically comments on the style and not the content. The Cardinal is more interested in the content to which More replies that his message is addressed to Cardinal Campeggio and not to the English ambassador to Rome; to which Wolsey replies that he has been appointed in the office of the ambassador and he can use his position to write to the cardinal directly. When More comments that Wolsey's plot is deceitful, Wolsey laments that he calls More's 'plodding' moral.

Wolsey states that King Henry has decided to divorce his current wife, Catherine of Aragon, in favor of his recent mistress Anne Boleyn with whom, Henry feels, he will be more successful in having a male successor. It is Wolsey who has now to secure the authorization of the Pope for Henry's divorce and remarriageand so he wants the assurance of More that he will not oppose the action. More is very clear that nothing should happen without the willing approval of the Pope. Wolsey tries to convince More how the implications of no divorce might lead to the problem of never having an heir to the throne which can lead to wars for succession. Although More is shaken by this premonition, he still has faith that Catherine will bear their successor to which Wolsey is skeptical. More wonders how will the previous decision of Pope's to allow Henry and Catherine, the widow of Henry's brother, to marry, be nullified. He is bewildered thinking what the receptivity and possibility of disrespecting Pope's first special consideration will be. Wolsey wonders at More's enthusiasm over preserving his own private principles above the interests of the country but More beholds the feeling that by listening to his own conscience he can avoid leading their country into chaos. It is only when, anticipating his own death, Wolsey suggests that his position as Lord Chancellor will be taken over by Cromwell that More is shocked. When More suggests that he should take care rather than the appointment of Cromwell, to which Wolsey says that More is not at all practical and he deserves only to be a cleric.

SCENE III

On his way home to Chelsea, when More is arguing with the boatman over the fare, Cromwell arrives to announce that he is on his way to meet the Cardinal and Cromwell is very sure that even More has met the Cardinal to which More admits. After Cromwell leaves and More is about to depart, Signor Chapuys, the Spanish ambassador, tries to get information from More regarding his interaction with the Cardinal. He understands More's agreement with the Cardinal regarding King Henry's divorce from Catherine who is the aunt of King of Spain. Chapuys departs warning More of the King's taking personal offence against him if the divorce happens.

SCENE IV

Back home More discovers the presence of Roper, the boyfriend of his daughter Margaret, even in such a later hour. He is very displeased when Margaret announces that Roper has asked her hand for marriage and he blatantly refuses. Roper feels that More's objection is because of his social standing and tries to convince him that he will attain a good position by becoming a lawyer. But More's objection is because of Roper's Lutheran faith which he believes to be heterodox, to which Roper reacts and says that it is the Catholic Church that is unorthodox. Roper even goes to the extent of bringing in the divorce case of Henry which he believes that the Pope would accept the proposal. He goes to the extent of calling Pope an Antichrist which angers More and he reminds Roper that he too was a passionate Catholic just two years back and he wishes that Roper, after completing his religious ambiguity, should end up being a Catholic once again. After Roper is sent home on Alice's horse, More and Margaret discuss on Roper's family. In the meantime, Alice comes in and is critical of Margaret and tells More that he should have beaten her for bringing Roper at such a wrong hour, to which More doesn't agree for he feels that Margaret is too 'full of education'. Although More avoids answering Margaret's question of meeting the Cardinal he fails to avoid it to Alice when she asks about it in Margaret's absence. He tries to divert her attention by referring to Roper's proposal of marriage, but finally her insistence makes him to admit that Wolsey has asked him to read over a dispatch to Rome. After Margaret's entry, again they talk about the replacement of Wolsey as Lord Chancellor to which More predicts that there will be no replacement till Wolsey is alive.

SCENE V

The scene starts with the revelation of a red robe and the Cardinal's hat lying on the floor and the Common Man enters to give away the news of the Cardinal's death. Though it is officially ascribed as pulmonary pneumonia, it is understood that it happened because of the King's discontentment of Wolsey's

management of the divorce. Wolsey died on his way to jail for his crime of treachery. The Common Man also announces that More is appointed as the successor –

'England's next Lord Chancellor was Sir Thomas More, a scholar and, by popular repute, a saint. His scholarship is supported by his writings; saintliness is a quality less easy to establish. But from his willful indifference to realities which were obvious to quite ordinary contemporaries, it seems all too probable that he had it.' [*A Man for All Seasons*, p. 20 Heinemann Educational Books Ltd. London]

SCENE VI

Cromwell and Rich, who is now Norfolk's secretary and librarian, run into each other and Cromwell wants to know from him why is he not getting a better position despite his great friend Thomas More holding such an important post. Rich's response, that they actually are not very close friends, makes Cromwell seek a chance of asking him for some exchange of services. Suspicious Rich and Chapuys, who enters then, want to know what work exactly does Cromwell do for the king, to which he replies that he does whatever the king 'wants done'. He gives an example of how he recently arranged Henry's trip down the Thames on the maiden voyage of a new battleship, the Great Harry. It is revealed by Cromwell that the ship is set sail to More's house to discuss the king's divorce. When Chapuys protests that More has already expressed his opinion, Cromwell insists that the king hopes to change his mind.

Matthew, the steward of More appears and the three men eagerly want to know from him about More's opinions regarding the divorce. The Common Man does not reveal to More about the people plotting against himand at the same time he keeps duping More's opponents.

SCENE VII

Back at More's home when Chelsea, Alice, Margaret and Norfolk are preparing for the King Henry's visit, More is not to be seen anywhere and everyone questions Matthew about him, to which Matthew says that he is not aware of. Norfolk is of the opinion that More is disrespecting the King and when More finally enters in his prayer costumes and not his office attire, Norfolk's complain becomes more vigorous. But More reverts by saying that no office is dishonoured by his service to God.

The King arrives and he insists on being received in a very casual manner – he talks in Latin to Margaret, dances with her, talks joyously with Norfolk and attempts to wrestle with him, asks Alice about the dinner. Later when alone with More, the King

informs him that it was Wolsey who had suggested More's name as his successor. When Henry appreciates Wolsey's qualities Henry interferes saying that he was over ambitious and so he had to be broken. Henry then talks about the divorce to which More admits that he cannot agree with it, making the king angry and sad at the same time.When More reminds the king that he had promised not to bother him with the divorce, the king says that because it's a matter of grave importance he has no other option but to discuss. He feels that he has already committed a grave sin by marrying Catherine, his brother's widow, as the book of Leviticus also condemns the act. He is sure that God is punishing him by denying him an heir because of his sinful action. Although everyone has consented to his second marriage, Henry admits that he needs the backing of More for he considers him for his honest reputation but More sticks to his decision. The king asks More of his silence if not his consent and leaves his house in great displeasure.

When Alice rebukes More of making the king angry More argues that his opinion hardly matters to the king; he will do whatever he has decided. In the meantime Roper arrives admitting that his views on Church reforms have changed and he is still concerned about Catholicism but considers that the Catholic Church should be sacred. He asks More whether he has been offered a seat in the next Parliament and becomes passionate even to accuse More of corruption, saying that to maintain his position More has learnt how to flatter the court and the king.

Rich arrives behaving defensively, suspicious that Roper might have known his treacherous action against More and revealed it to him. He pours out to More about Cromwell and Chapuyschecking out on him and also Matthew's duplicity. The disclosures don't surprise More but he turns down Rich when he breaks down and asks for employment again. When others are of the opinion that Rich should be arrested, More reminds them that he has done nothing illegal.

More and Roper keep arguing about man's and God's laws in human society and Roper accuses More of believing only in law and not in God. More is of the opinion man's law offers a safe haven whereas God is very personal and anonymous. More denies Roper his daughter's hand in marriage, exits in haste and reenters to apologize for criticizing Roper ruthlessly and explains to his wife and daughter of being safe in the case of the divorce of the king for he has not broken any law neither disobeyed the king.

SCENE VIII

The Common Man enters as a publican or an innkeeper to a pub named Loyal Subject and says that because he is not a deep thinker like More, his actions should not be expected to be of deep

principles. Cromwell comes and he suspects the innkeeper of being hypocritical and accuses him of being too diplomatic. He then calls for Rich and offers him the position of collector of revenues for York in exchange of information from him. He also makes a joke of the king's expenses and forces Rich to admit bought.

Cromwell is very sure that Henry's divorce will definitely happen and he would try to make it as convenient as possible disregard of More's approval. He is very certain that More has either to bend or get out of the way. Rich discloses to Cromwell about More's receiving a bribe in the form of a silver cup which was passed on to him and he had sold it in a shop and he is ready to take Cromwell there.Though Rich feels guilty of betraying More, he doesn't find it as difficult as he had expected. Cromwell predicts that men like More are fit for heaven and earth and Rich wonders what will Cromwell plan with the information he has let out.

7.4 ACT II

SCENE I

The Common man announces the passing of two years and the establishment of the Church of England which was created by the act of the Parliament and not through bloodshed. Only a few people who had opposed it were considered rebels and had put themselves at risk as torture was the order of the day.

SCENE II

More and Roper, now the husband of Margaret, argue and Roper is critical about the position of More as the Lord Chancellor. More promises to resign if the Bishops side with the king to which Roper reminds him that it is the king who is the head of the English Church. More finds Roper'sviews inappropriate and he advices him to take care of his wife and child and other responsibilities.

Chapuys comes in with the understanding that More is likely to resign and he is appreciative of it because he feels it's a 'signal' but More considers it to be a moral obligation. Even Alice and Norfolk considers his recognition as an act of cowardice. More replies that he is afraid but Norfolk is of the opinion that though the king is disappointed he will neither pursue nor punish More. When the whole family is against More's decision, he himself feels that it is a 'noble decision'. More asks Alice to send off all the servants as they would no longer be able to afford their services but he asks Matthew if he can carry on for less money to which Matthew doesn't approve.

SCENE III

Cromwell is of the opinion that everyone considers More's silence as condemnation to which Norfolk protests. Cromwell points

out that it is the instruction of the king to seek More's consent. He even brings Rich and the woman who had given the silver cup to More to prove More guilty of taking bribe. Norfolk tries to assert that the cup was immediately given off to Rich as soon as More had realized that it was a bribe. Cromwell says that the king wishes that Norfolk should join the campaign as his participation, because he is More's friend, will make Cromwell's campaign look less nasty examination and more a reasonable investigation of facts.

SCENE IV

Situations have declined in More's house and as Chapuys meets More he promises that his fortunes are sure to change with the alliance with Spain. He hands More a letter from the King of Spain but More refuses to break the seal even for it might lead to some kind of obligation.While going Chapuys feels that the King will admire more for having refused the letter. The family is upset on their poverty, More's refusal to explain his intentions and his sudden preoccupation with the changing scenario. In the meantime Roper arrives to announce that someone has come to take More to Hampton Court to answer some charges which alarms Alice but More remains indifferent.

SCENE V

When More wants to know the charges against him, Cromwell says that there are no charges but only questions and Rich will be recording everything. He also informs More that the king is not pleased with him and would reward him handsomely if he changes his opinion to which More refuses. Cromwell even tries to scare More by bringing up the subject of the Holy Maid of Kent, a lady who was executed for sermonizing against the king. He blames More for having written A Defense of the Seven Sacraments, a work attributed to King Henry, to which More tries to defend himself. It is only when Cromwell produces a letter from the king, accusing More as a villain and a traitor, that More becomes disturbed. Cromwell informs Rich that the king had said that More will die if he does not consent because the king cannot tolerate the disapproval of a man of conscience like More.

SCENE VI

When More is trying to hail a boat and no one responds to his call, he is met by Norfolk who informs him about Cromwell's insulting campaign against More and his own role in it. He also insists More to change his mind but More defies and asks Norfolk to forget their friendship and do his duty. More thinks highly about the friendship but he feels that he must remain loyal to his own self first. Playfully More even picks a fight with Norfolk accusing him of neglecting his conscience by surrendering himself to the unethical actions of the state. He criticizes Norfolk so much that he finally gets angry and hits More and departs. Margaret and Roper arrive to

announce the implementation of a new act in the Parliament that calls for the enactment of an oath regarding the king's marriage.

SCENE VII

The Common Man, now playing the role of a jailer, introduces More to his new home in the Tower of London. A letter comes to the jailer predicting the convictions of Cromwell, Norfolk and Cranmer, the archbishop of Canterbury, for high treason and the executions of Cromwell and Cranmer; on the contrary Rich fares well living a long life finally succumbing on bed. No such thing happens in the play though and the three, Cromwell, Norfolk and Cranmer, arrive to interrogate More. They present More with the Act of Succession, the document that invalidates the first marriage of the king and the Pope's right to authorize it and the verdict also confirms the children of Queen Anne as the rightful heirs to the throne.

More refuses to comment for the first half of the document but agrees to the second and he believes that till he maintains this silence for refusing to swear the oath no one can convict him of treachery or issue a death-penalty offence. More desires to have some more books and see his family but Cromwell refuses. In More's absence the jailer is promised money by Cromwell in exchange of any kind of information from More. Cromwell informs Rich about the king's becoming impatient to More's silence and Rich inquires whether Cromwell is trying to acquire the then vacant post of the attorney general of Wales, Cromwell is thoughtful. He admits that More's silence is troubling the king's conscience but More's execution will trouble his own.

SCENE VIII

The family of More comes to pay him a visit and More very clearly understands that they were allowed to see him only because they had promised to convince him to concede. Alice and Margaret are unhappy that More had selected prison over home and they try their utmost to persuade him but More remains unmoved. He rather asks Alice and Margaret to leave the country for he knows he will not be allowed to see them again. He wants Alice to know why he has not yielded to the persuasion of the king because her not understanding will be the worst of tortures for him. When Alice says that she doesn't understand and she might even begrudge him after he is gone, More breaks down. Touched by More's agony, Alice hugs him saying that he is the best man she has ever known.

SCENE IX

The stage is set by the Common Man as the courtroom and it is here that Norfolk offers More one last opportunity to take the oath but More refuses. The charges read by Cromwell claim that More conspired to undermine Henry's authority as the supreme

head of the Church of England and he is also accused of great treachery. Shocked More tries to convince that silence does not suggest denial but Cromwell tries to prove that silence does not signify consent as well and accuses More of self-obsession and individual opinions.

When Rich is called to the stand by Cromwell he affirms that he had heard More say that the Parliament has no power to declare Henry as the head of the Church of England. More is shocked at Rich's falsehood and he tries to convince that he has never disregarded Henry. Even the other eye-witnesses are conspired against More and it is only when More sees the chain of the attorney general for Wales that Rich is wearing that he rebukes Rich of having sold off his soul.

The jury finds More guilty but before Norfolk convicts More to death condemns the Act of Supremacy and points out that both Magna Carta and the Coronation Oath guarantee the authority of the Catholic Church and also his loyalty towards King Henry. He informs the court that he never has denied the Act of Supremacy, he has only declined to acknowledge the marriage.

SCENE X

It is the scene of More's execution. A crowd gathers at the Tower of London. The Common Man in black mask is the executioner. As More approaches the block, he refuses Norfolk's offer of wine and Cranmer's offer of performing last rites. Margaret is hysterical but More comforts her. He then tells the executioner not to feel bad for having killed him and tells Cranmer that he is sure to reach God. And then the blackout.

7.5 LET'S SUM UP

In his Preface, Robert Bolt says that he was not interested in More as a religious martyr but appreciated More as a hero of individual conscience. He portrays More as the ideal humanist who can think for oneself. He brings out the integrity of Thomas More which demands admiration from various angles. A wonderful drama based on devotion and determination, possibility and priority, submission and sacrifice, it reaches out to touch the heart of every reader.

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Unit - 8

A CRITICAL STUDY OF ROBERT BOLT'S A MAN FOR ALL SEASONS – PART 2

Unit Structure:

8.0 OBJECTIVES

- To explain the play *A Man For All Seasons*, its Plot, Characterization, Themes, Metaphors and Symbols, Structure and Language.

8.1 PLOT

More is a close and trusted friend of King Henry VIII. He morally objects to the divorce, which, at the time, is not legal. The country is controlled by the Roman Catholic Church, which is strongly against divorce. Henry, however, is obsessed with creating an heir. Catherine was only allowed to marry Henry after it was discovered that her first husband, Henry's late brother, had not consummated the marriage. More expresses his feelings to the current Chancellor, Cardinal Wolsey, who says that More is simply being impractical.

More meets the Spanish Ambassador to England, Signor Chapuys. Catherine, the aunt of the King of Spain, has his loyalty far more than Henry does. Chapuys talks with More and discovers More's feelings about the divorce. He stresses the religious significance that marriage holds within the Catholic faith, and therefore considers More an ally. More is thoughtful, which Chapuys interprets as signifying More's dedication to the Catholic faith.

More comes home to find his daughter, Margaret, and her boyfriend, Roper. Roper is Lutheran, meaning Protestant. He asks for Margaret's hand, and More, furious about having a Protestant in the family. Meanwhile, Henry sends Wolsey into disgrace after he fails to convince the Pope to support the divorce. Wolsey dies suddenly after this, and More is chosen as his successor.

More helps Richard Rich find a job and gives him a silver cup as a gift not realizing the cup had been given to him as a bribe. Thomas Cromwell, a close confidant of Henry, presses Rich for information about More, promising Rich a high-powered court position. Chapuys enters with More's servant, Matthew. Cromwell, Rich, and Chapuys try to bribe information out of Matthew, who is purposely vague. They pay him anyway.

Henry goes to London in search of More when he cannot be found. More arrives at his home just before Henry gets there, and the two men talk. More says Henry promised not to ask him his opinion on the divorce, which angers Henry. He says he will not ask him anymore, but More must stay quiet about his opinions publicly. Henry leaves, and More's wife, Alice, begs her husband to change his mind. She tells him to do whatever Henry wants. Rich arrives to warn More about Cromwell and Chapuys' intention to blackmail him. Rich uses this to blackmail More himself, asking for a better job, but More refuses. Embarrassed, Rich returns to Cromwell and tells him about the silver cup. For this, Cromwell gives Rich a better job.

The Act of Supremacy is passed, meaning England will be Protestant and follow the Church of England. King Henry will act as the head of the church, but the act is not fully realised: it still needs bishops of England to pass it. More announces that if the bishops pass the act, he will resign his new position and will not explain himself to anyone but the king. Again, his family begs him not to anger the king further, but he refuses. The King of Spain sends him a letter, commending him for his decision.

Henry tells Cromwell he plans to persecute More, but he needs more evidence. Cromwell meets with the Duke of Norfolk and tells him about the silver cup. Norfolk pokes holes in his evidence, telling Cromwell that More gave the cup away once he realised it was a bribe. Cromwell remains determined to find more evidence against More.

Cromwell calls More to his office to cite charges against him. He lists sympathizing with an enemy and taking credit for a book Henry wrote. Then he reads a letter written by Henry, in which he calls More a villain. These words hurt More much more than the others.

More meets with Norfolk, warning that their friendship is a liability; Norfolk might be seen as a conspirator against the king. Shortly after, More is imprisoned. Another act is signed, stating all subjects must swear an oath of allegiance to Henry and his new capacity as the head of the Church of England. All must support Henry's divorce of Catherine. More refuses again.

Many try to change More's mind, including Alice. She finally understands why he did what he did, and they rekindle their love. At the trial, Rich gives false testimony about More denying Henry as the true ruler of the church. More gives a speech about the evils of a government that would condemn a man for being quiet about his opinions. He is then beheaded.

8.2 CHARACTERIZATION

Sir Thomas More

Sir Thomas More is the play's protagonist. A member of the King's Council and later Lord Chancellor, he is a learned and incorruptible jurist, a friend and loyal subject to the King and a devout Catholic (although Bolt plays down the religious dimension of More's character). More cannot in conscience agree to Henry's divorce and his action in making himself head of the Church of England because it is a violation of the Church's, that is, God's law, and for More, divine, or natural law is superior to man's law. More is committed to the service of his King but to violate divine law is to risk the salvation of his soul. He has no desire to be a martyr but puts his trust in English law, under which silence is construed as consent, to save him from punishment for his refusal to swear the King's oath. Convicted on false evidence and sentenced to execution, More is finally forced to choose between his God and his King. He rejects the authority of the King's law to execute him, appealing to the higher law of God. More's reputation as a statesman and scholar extends throughout Europe, and he counts men such as Erasmus among his friends. Because he is widely known and respected he comes under pressure from many quarters over the swearing of the King's oath, but he remains constant to the end. More's character has been shaped by his knowledge and love of the law. He is calm and restrained in his actions and his speech, but he is also witty, insightful and a shrewd judge of character. Having attained the highest position in government, he is not personally ambitious or greedy like men such as Wolsey and Rich. Above all he is a man of integrity; his conscience is his 'self' – his soul – and although he is sometimes afraid, he never doubts that he is doing what is right. He disproves the cynical proposition that 'everyman has his price', even though he is forced to make many sacrifices, including the loss of his family, in remaining true to himself. More is a hero almost too good to be true but Bolt keeps us sympathetic with his character by

exposing his weaknesses and vulnerabilities such as his fear of death and his desperate need to have his family's love and understanding before he dies. The cynical comments of the Common Man also serve to make him seem less a figure of awe.

The Common Man

Bolt explains in the preface that the character of the Common Man is an adaptation of the German playwright, Bertolt Brecht's alienation technique which is intended to distance the audience from the action on the stage. In fact, the Common Man also provides a link between the audience and the play by commenting on and interpreting the action and providing some historical data.

Bolt intended 'common' to be understood as 'universal' but the Common Man is generally seen as vulgar and immoral, embodying the worst in human nature. In order to establish the 'universal' character of the Common Man – and to show how readily he is prepared to adapt in order to survive – Bolt presents him in a number of roles. Despite the variety of roles, however, he develops as though he were a single character. While the Common Man serves a number of masters he always looks out for himself first. He is shrewd and opportunistic and through the course of the play becomes increasingly involved in More's downfall. As Matthew, More's Steward, he is fickle in his loyalty, taking bribes from both Chapuys and Cromwell in return for information – albeit harmless – about his master. He leaves More's employment rather than take a pay cut and uses flattery to manipulate Rich, whom he holds in contempt, to take him on. As the boatman he is the voice of the average working man with his finger on the pulse of public opinion. As publican of The Loyal Subject he is aware that Cromwell and Rich are plotting to trap More but keeps silent, appealing in advance to the audience to exonerate him and feigning not to understand either their intentions or More himself. Forced into close proximity with More, the Common Man, as jailer, begins to feel guilty for the first time, but comforts himself with the thought that it is better to be 'a live rat than a dead lion'. He would setMore free if he could but he has a job to do. With uncharacteristic passion, More condemns the Common Man for his lack of principles: 'Oh, Sweet Jesus! These plain, simple men!' Compelled to act as foreman of the jury then executioner, he cannot escape implication in More's death. The Common Man's priorities represent those of mankind in general: self preservation and a peaceful life.

Thomas Cromwell

Cromwell is identified early in the play as 'the coming man'. A farrier's son, he is initially secretary to Cardinal Wolsey but after Wolsey's fall and More's resignation is appointed to the position of

Lord Chancellor. He is a man of great ambition, intellect and energy but he has no conscience. Cromwell does Henry's dirty work: 'When the King wants something done, I do it'. What Henry wants is Sir Thomas More to agree to his divorce and Cromwell sets himself to break More's opposition, by corruption or force: '[The King] wants either Sir Thomas More to bless his marriage or Sir Thomas More destroyed. Either will do'. Cromwell is clever and manipulative: he professes to be an admirer of More, pays More's manservant to spy on his master and bribes the weak Rich to tell him about the silver cup More gave him and eventually to perjure himself. In prison

Cromwell tries emotional blackmail, using More's family to try to break down his resistance. He is also prepared to use physical force as his brutality in thrusting Rich's hand into the candle flame shows. He dismisses the idea of using the rack to make More swear the oath because he knows the king would not allow it, but taking away More's books is another form of torture. As More continues to hold out, Cromwell's intimidation becomes more intense and he no longer tries to hide his anger and hatred which is aggravated by More's superior knowledge of the law. For More 'the law is not an instrument of any kind' but in facilitating Rich's perjury, Cromwell uses the law as an instrument to bring about More's death. Cromwell, with his overbearing ambition, deceit, lack of conscience and disregard for the law, is the antithesis of More. For More, 'necessity' means, being true to his conscience. For Cromwell, necessity means certain political goals, and More's integrity, or 'innocence', stands in the way of their achievement. Cromwell's character appears to have no redeeming feature but, in his defence, he does believe himself to be acting in the nation's interest in procuring England's independence from Rome; and as Lord Chancellor – a position which had been the undoing of both Wolsey and More – he is answerable to a demanding and powerful King.

The King

Henry appears in only one scene, but is a constant presence throughout the play. Visiting More's home, he reveals himself to be a product of the new Renaissance learning, proficient in Latin and Greek, an excellent dancer and a musician and composer. His religious treatise has been recognised by the pope but Henry's relationship with Rome is now strained. There is a certain superficiality in Henry's manner and an immaturity demonstrated by his need for flattery and his reluctance to face the consequences of his actions. Henry understands More's moral objection to the oath and claims to have great respect for his honesty and sincerity: 'Thomas … I respect your sincerity … it's water in the desert.…' However, Henry shows he is a hypocrite who places greater value on appearances than honesty by ordering More to keep his views

to himself. Henry believes his lack of a male heir is divine punishment for marrying his brother's widow and needs the divorce to ease his conscience. Wolsey, More and Cromwell, in the post of Lord Chancellor, are all charged with satisfying Henry's disturbed conscience. The King's personal and political need for More's approval becomes so strong that it makes his death inevitable: 'While More's alive the King's conscience breaks into fresh stinking flowers every time he gets from bed'. Henry gives power to certain individuals, such as Wolsey and Cromwell, to do his will, but cuts them down savagely when they fail him. His corruption and duplicity call forth the same qualities in those who serve him, and while he does not physically confront More again, he is responsible for his persecution and death.

Alice More

Alice is More's second wife. In her late forties, plain and overdressed, she was born into the merchant class but is now very conscious of her status as 'a knight's lady'. While her husband is an eminent scholar, Alice is illiterate and refuses his offer to teach her to read. She does not approve of Margaret's high level of education and is perhaps jealous of the bond of learning the girl and her father share. Alice constantly scolds More but is quick to defend him against criticism by others: 'Thomas has his own way of doing things'. She is not afraid to speak her mind and almost every other character feels the sharp edge of her tongue at some point in the play. Alice reacts to More's resignation as Chancellor with anger and bewilderment; interpreting his unwillingness to talk about his reasons for resigning and later his refusal to swear the oath as a lack of trust in her. More's silence, the change in the family's circumstances and his unwillingness to accept financial assistance from the clergy make Alice unhappy and bitter. While she does not understand the motivation behind her husband's refusal to swear the oath, she reconciles with him because she knows he is a man of integrity, and accepts that he must follow his conscience: 'As for understanding, I understand you're the best man that I ever met or am likely to; and if you go – well, God knows why I suppose'. More's reaction shows how much he loves her and values her honesty and strength: 'Why it's a lion I married! A lion! A lion!'

Margaret (Meg) More

Margaret, Sir Thomas More's daughter, is a lovely, gentle girl, reserved, intelligent and, unusual for a woman at the time, highly educated. Although she modestly claims to pass for a scholar only 'among women', she embarrasses the King when her Latin proves to be better than his. Where Alice is feisty and outspoken Margaret is the peacemaker, defending her father against Alice's criticism and interceding in his arguments with Roper. The relationship between Margaret and her father is very close and trusting: he protects and encourages her and she

provides him with intellectual support. More has been in the habit of confiding in Margaret, so his silence on the matter of the king's divorce puzzles her. Margaret understands why her father would not want to be Lord Chancellor, and shows her support for him when he decides to resign from the position by taking the chain of office from around his neck. Her unspoken fear that the Act of Succession and the oath could hold dangers for More is realised when he is imprisoned. Although she knows he will be angry, she takes advantage of Cromwell's offer to allow her to visit to convince him to swear the oath. When he dismisses her clever arguments one by one she becomes desperate and resorts to hurting him by describing how miserable she and Alice are without him. Margaret understands her father but she questions his actions. At his execution More acknowledges their special relationship: 'You have long known the secrets of my heart'

William Roper

Will Roper is More's son-in-law. In each of Roper's scenes he is taking a stand on some issue of conscience. Firstly he adopts Luther's ideas, which makes him a heretic in the eyes of More who consequently forbids his request for permission to marry Margaret. However, when the King attacks the Catholic Church, Roper changes his mind and springs to its defence, even dressing in black and wearing a crucifix, 'like a Spaniard'. Roper's inconsistent idealism contrasts with More's steadfastness. More describes his son-in-law's ideals as 'seagoing principles' because like the tides they are never fixed but are always changing. Unlike Roper, More puts his faith not in an unknowable God but in society and the law: 'The law Roper, the law. I know what's legal, not what's right'. Roper lacks a sense of humour and has a touch of pomposity about him – for which More teases him gently – but is basically a decent man.

Chapuys

Chapuys is the Spanish ambassador and uncle of Queen Catherine. He represents the interests of Spain, which opposes the divorce between Catherine and King Henry, and is an important man whose status warrants an attendant to assist him. Chapuys has been sent by the King of Spain to find out where More stands on the matter of the divorce and to persuade him to openly oppose it. Spain represents another quarter from which More faces pressure. Chapuys' diplomacy is underhand: he bribes More's steward, Matthew for information on his master, and tries to manipulate Cromwell who recognises in the Spaniard a cleverness similar to his own: 'O sly! 'Do you notice how sly he is, Rich?' In speaking with More, Chapuys tries to hide his true motives which are political, with flattery and references to religion. Because he is devious himself he hears hidden meanings in what More says, which leads to misunderstanding. Chapuysrecognises that More is

a good man and an influential one, and urges him to speak out against the divorce, to be a rallying point for English opposition. He believes wrongly – but not unreasonably – that More's silence on the divorce indicates support for Spain and is confused and angry when More rejects the Spanish king's letter as treasonous. Chapuys' warning to the Steward, Matthew, that: 'No man can serve two masters' proves to be prophetic for More when he is eventually forced to choose between his God and his King.

Cardinal Wolsey

Cardinal Wolsey, Lord Chancellor of England, holds the country's highest ecclesiastical and political offices. With his great wealth and power he seems for many to embody the worst abuses in the Church. The commanding way in which Wolsey sends for More and the fact that he intends to bypass the King's advisory Council in mediating with Rome for Henry's divorce indicate how much power Henry has allowed him. Wolsey is blunt: 'Myeffort's to secure a divorce. Have I your support or have I not?' His motivation is political – he is prepared to take certain 'regrettable' measures against the church, if necessary – and he is dismissive of More's conscience: 'If you could just see the facts flat on, without that moral squint; with just a little common sense, you could have been a statesman'. After negotiations with the Pope stall, Wolsey falls from favour with the King and More is appointed Lord Chancellor, setting up the confrontation between More and the King which is the play's central theme.

8.3 THEMES

Integrity

Robert Bolt says in his Preface to the play that Thomas More "became for me a man with an adamantine sense of his own self. He knew where he began and left off" (p. xii). In the play More is the only character with such a sense of integrity. Cromwell tells More he is amazed that he is the only one who opposes "the whole movement of the times" (Act Two). More replies that it amazes him too that no one else opposes the injustice going on. All the others, including good people, yield to pressure and let their edges be blurred by society or necessity. A man of integrity can be a problem for others, as Chapuys, the Spanish ambassador, says when he is unable to persuade More to support Spain: "Goodness can be a difficulty" (Act Two). More is his own man and therefore unpredictable. Chapuys has simplistically assumed that if More is against Cromwell he is for the Spanish. Thomas More's integrity is not a Church dogmatism, as his son-in-law Roper would like it to be. He does not act rigidly from a set of rules as a "Catholic" or "Englishman." His is a supple intelligence. He tells his daughter Margaret that God made angels for splendor and animals for innocence and plants for simplicity, but Man was made to "serve

him wittily, in the tangle of his mind" (Act Two). Thomas More is shown dynamically defending his integrity with his whole heart and mind, as in an intricate game of chess with the King. Even the King respects More's integrity, calling his sincerity "water in the desert" (Act One). More is willing to risk his life to keep his own honesty: "I must rule myself" (Act One). He thus refutes the right of the King to rule him in matters of conscience.

Law vs. Power

The conflict between Henry VIII and Sir Thomas More represents a larger conflict of the times. In Bolt's play, More stands for civil law, while Henry stands for monarchical power. More first of all asserts that divine law exists and is more powerful than man's law, but it is mysterious and unknowable by an individual. Although he stands up for the Church law, More doesn't claim authority in the matter. He says, "I'm not God" (Act One). He recognizes limits to the power and knowledge of the individual, including a King, who cannot put himself at will above the law of the Church or the law of the land he rules. Civil law has been established over the centuries so that a person may live according to his conscience as long as he does no harm and can walk through life safely protected from the wrong use of power by others. In the play, the King's laws are shown to be arbitrary and based on his own wishes, not on the larger good. In his Preface, Robert Bolt calls Henry "the monstrous baby" who must have his own violent way at any cost. The laws of religion (such as not killing another) and the civil law (such as evidence being required for accusation of a crime) are more objective, fair to all, and tested over time. They are reasonable as well as ethical. If the civil law is unfair, it can be amended by Parliament.

Henry, on the other hand, insists on absolute power with no checks. He takes over both church and state and executes whomever stands in his way. His decisions are not based on reason or virtue but on his own will. Sir Thomas More articulates a position of the future (civil rights), and Henry uses his traditional authority to rule rather than consensus or law, though both embrace the new humanistic learning that taught the primacy of reason. Roper accuses More: "the law's your god" (Act One). More denies this but says he would even give the Devil "benefit of law, for my own safety's sake" (Act One). More is shown to be right in, that all those who side with the King in hopes they will be saved are eventually cut down by his insatiable power. More would rouse his countrymen to defend the law that keeps them safe and gives them their freedom and basic rights.

The Relativity of Point of View

Bolt makes history into a drama by showing the characters to have conflicting points of view. Henry's view of his right to rule

the kingdom any way he wishes conflicts with More's ethics and moral stance. More's willingness to go all the way to defend his values contrasts with his friend Norfolk's caving in to threats. The Common Man's concern for survival makes him small-minded and duplicitous, but he is not as blameworthy as the educated Rich, whose ambition for high place overrides his virtue. Both Wolsey and Cromwell are crafty and unprincipled, but Wolsey cares for England, while Cromwell is an opportunist. These different responses to historical pressures show a wide variety of human types that are still visible in today's politics. Bolt makes the drama contemporary by adding in the idea that it is not only philosophies that clash but individual points of view. It is more than Catholic vs. Protestant or England vs. Spain or rich vs. poor. Even the Catholics—Chapuys, Roper, and More—differ in the way they see their religion. While Bolt obviously favors More's view as the most admirable and worthy, he makes it clear that even More recognizes his views are his own and not meant to be a model for others. It is when someone insists his or her views are the only "right" ones that citizens are endangered.

More does not claim as Roper does, to prescribe right and wrong for others, to know absolutely what God wants or means. All through the play he is bitter about God's vagueness: "I don't know where he is nor what he wants" (Act One). In the end, More only claims that he must be true to his own conscience, but he does not claim that he can know God's will in the matter. He doesn't expect everyone to go to the Tower and die for what he believes. He can only take responsibility for himself. This is a modern point of view, the idea that everyone has a right to his or her own opinion, but that one's own opinion cannot be taken as an absolute. Every viewpoint is relative, with some having more merit than others. If More had only been a rote defender of the Church like Roper, he would not stand for the humanistic ideal he taught, of reasoning for oneself. More has come to accept his religion and the law through exercise of his own reason and conscience. Norfolk claims that More is giving up everything "for a theory". More contradicts him: "what matters to me is not whether it's true or not but that I believe it to be true, or rather, not that I *believe* it, but that *I* believe it". He does not defend the Church; he defends his right to live and die by his own point of view.

8.4 METAPHORS/SYMBOLS

The Sea and Dry Land

In his Preface to the play, Bolt informs the reader his main metaphors are the sea and dry land, to suggest the supernatural order vs. the human order. The sea is formless, vast, and unpredictable. The land is security, home, order, what is known. Thomas More paradoxically clings to the safety of law and land but

finds himself swept by his religious faith out to sea. Bolt did not want a purely naturalistic play, he says, and the metaphors are a way to add scope and philosophic depth, as in a poem.

Thomas More is a home-loving man with his house and family in Chelsea and their well-ordered ways. In addition, he is a lawyer who believes in the law as the safeguard of the citizens: “The law is a causeway upon which, so long as he keeps to it, a citizen may walk safely” (Act Two). At his trial, More says to the Court which has condemned him through a perjury, “God help the people whose Statesmen walk your road” (Act Two). The government should create and safeguard well-kept roads for the people. There should be landmarks, agreement about the best way to go and how to get there. This is what makes a civilization, and More fervently believes in and lives according to the letter of the law. He believes himself safe, because he knows the law so well that he is sure his silence cannot be interpreted as treason.

The Common Man, who provides narration and commentary, remarks in an early scene, “The great thing’s not to get out of your depth” (Act One). He himself is the example of this advice, for he always has his feet on the ground. In this scene he is Matthew the Steward, who takes bribes from Chapuys and Rich, giving them something they believe to be significant information about More, but he is just playing them, and says it will be a rare day when he “can’t touch the bottom” (Act One). The Common Man is the only one who does not get swept away out to sea by the events of the day. The Steward does refer, however, to More’s being “afraid of drowning” (Act One).

Politicians are compared to boats on the ocean. Cromwell says of More, “There’s a man who raises the gale and won’t come out of the harbor” (Act Two). He has raised a storm of controversy but tries to remain safe. More predicts that when Wolsey falls, “the splash would swamp a few small boats like ours” (Act One). When King Henry visits More at Chelsea he pilots a new warship down the Thames, *The Great Harry,* literally exemplifying a threatening ship of state bearing down on the little domestic garden.

Metaphors of the Self

Related to the water imagery for the supernatural order are images for the conscience or self, a person’s integrity. “As a water spaniel is to water, so is a man to his own self” (Act Two). A water spaniel is attracted to the water; it is his element, just as a man’s self or soul is the element he must swim in. More explains to his daughter that when a man takes an oath, “he’s holding his own self in his own hands. Like water” (Act Two). If he opens his fingers then, breaking the oath, he has lost his self. When Norfolk appeals to their friendship to get More to change his mind, More says, “only God is love right through, Howard, and *that’s* my *self*” (Act Two).

More identifies his essential nature with the mysterious ways of the sea, the supernatural forces, though he tries to cling to the land as long as he can.

Animal Metaphors

To bring out the contrast of More's lofty ideal of conscience and the base corruption he has to deal with, Bolt uses animal metaphors to characterize the power struggle going on in England. Henry's voracious power is foreshadowed by the story Norfolk tells to the Mores at the beginning of the play about the falcon that stoops five hundred feet to kill a heron. The stoop was "Like an Act of God" (Act One), "a royal stoop," though the heron was "clever". The falcon is Henry VIII and the heron is Thomas More. Henry's sudden and deadly acts are well symbolized by the falcon who can attack so fast, it appears to be an act of God. Henry does see himself as having the divine right of kings and executes all his actions with the authority of God, such as defying the Pope and setting up his own church.

In a later scene in Act Two, Cromwell says that More is a "slippery fish," and they need a "net with a finer mesh" to catch him. During the last scene with his family, More calls his wife Alice "a lion" for her courage in standing by him to the bitter end (Act Two). Henry calls his followers like Cromwell "jackals," animals who eat the leftovers, while Henry calls himself a "lion" that provides the meat (Act One). When More is imprisoned, and The Common Man is cast in the role of the jailer, he pleads for his lack of morality by saying "Better a live rat than a dead lion" (Act Two). This makes the Common Man the rat and More the lion or noble one, though he dies for it. The differing use of the lion symbolism points out the subjectivity of values. Traditionally, leaders like to be compared to the lion, king of beasts, but rats are more plentiful, and for the Common Man, the quantity of life rather than the quality of it is the point.

8.5 STRUCTURE, LANGUAGE & STYLE

The play is divided into a simple two-act structure, with the second act taking place some two years after the first, but with unspecified lengths of time passing during each act. The rising action during Act One depicts Sir Thomas as a respected man of substance who advances in status, becoming Lord Chancellor after Wolsey's death, but is subject to increasing pressures in order to support the wishes of the King in conflict with his personal conscience. Soon after Act Two begins, however, Sir Thomas is divested of his chains of office and begins the slide that ends with his imprisonment and execution. Meanwhile, Richard Rich, who starts off desperate for Sir Thomas to give him some sort of position, steadily rises in status as he performs the wishes of the

equally ambitious Thomas Cromwell. By the play's conclusion he has gained resplendent robes and the role of Attorney-General for Wales but has experienced a concomitant fall in his moral standing, resorting to perjury in order to achieve Sir Thomas's ultimate downfall. The most notable aspect of the play's style is Bolt's adoption of what is popularly known as the 'alienation effect', which is a translation of the German verfremdungseffekt, the technique employed by the German playwright Bertolt Brecht. The effect is most obvious through the character of the Common Man, who emphasizes the artificiality of the play from the outset. Instead of allowing the audience to 'lose themselves' in the proceedings on stage, the Common Man's direct address and overt adoption of various roles forces them to remain detached and consider the play in a more intellectual and engaged manner. The Common Man is intended to embody, as Bolt puts it in the preface, 'that which is common to us all', and is therefore appropriate for someone who successively plays the roles of Steward, Boatman, Publican, Jailer and Headsman. Bolt uses a wide range of metaphors in the play, many of which are associated with water. Thus, of William Roper's wilful obstinacy and changeable views, Sir Thomas says, 'Now let him think he's going with the current and he'll turn round and start swimming in the opposite direction', and soon after, 'If Wolsey fell, the splash would swamp a few small boats like ours.' Later, when Roper complains that Sir Thomas's principles are such that he would 'give the Devil benefit of law' and that laws should be dispensed with if they do not achieve the desired purpose, Sir Thomas responds that, 'This country's planted thick with laws from coast to coast … and if you cut them down … do you really think you could stand upright in the winds that would blow then?' A less obvious feature of Bolt's language is the way he uses repeated lines in different contexts in order to drive home the differences in outlook between characters. When More refuses to tell Norfolk what his views on the King's divorce are for fear of persecution, Norfolk responds, 'Thomas. This isn't Spain, you know', implying that he has faith that his friend will not be ill-treated for his beliefs. Yet, when Cromwell forces Norfolk to participate in the actions against Sir Thomas and Norfolk angrily asks if he is using the King's name to threaten him, Cromwell calmly retorts, 'My dear Norfolk … This isn't Spain' The ironic repetition of Norfolk's earlier statement drives home the fact that England has become a country where divergent opinions will not be tolerated.

8.6 CHECK YOUR PROGRESS / QUESTIONS

1. Is Sir Thomas More really a man for all seasons? If he is, then why did he fail to weather the season of legal and theological storm brought about by King Henry's intention to divorce the Queen? Discuss

2. "A hero's character inevitably leads him or her to conflict with forces he cannot master" Explain how true is this claim with respect to Thomas in A MAN FOR ALL SEASONS
3. In "A MAN FOR ALL SEASONS" why does More refuse to agree to the oath? What is the difference between More's understanding of what he's doing and typical expectations of morality and martyrdom?
4. More's pragmatic maneuvering through society contrasts with what More calls Roper's 'seagoing' principles. Roper follows ideals instead of his conscience or the law and More argues that attempting to navigate high-minded ideals is akin to being lost at the sea