

# ELIZABETHAN AGE - THE RISE AND CONSOLIDATION OF MONARCHIC IDEOLOGY

## Unit Structure:

- 1.0 Objectives
- 1.1 Elizabethan Age: The Rise of Consolidation of Monarchic Ideology
- 1.2 Summing up
- 1.3 Important Questions
- 1.4 References

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## 1.0 OBJECTIVES

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Dear learner, this chapter will familiarise you with the brief history of the English throne. From the 'Hundred Years' War' to the age of Elizabeth. You will develop a basic understanding of the Elizabethan age and its development. The chapter will also acquaint you with the political and monarchic situation and religious tensions during these periods. Also, the literature produced during this era and its contributions to the history of the English throne. Besides, you will develop an understanding of politics and its relation to religion and monarchy. And will also see how literature is an institution embedded in cultural politics and literary texts, mediating dominant ideologies of their times, with the examples of literary texts indirectly functioning as an instrument of power.

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## 1.1 ELIZABETHAN AGE: THE RISE OF CONSOLIDATION OF MONARCHIC IDEOLOGY

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To begin with, Elizabethan Age: The Rise of Consolidation of Monarchic Ideology, we need to understand a brief history of the English Throne and how power was shifting from one hand to another and the political and religious interference in the government. Also, the role of religion matters a lot as far as the history of the English throne is considered. And then the Renaissance thought or spirit changed the entire structure of the nation. After the Hundred Years' War, a war with France over control of the French throne, the Renaissance spirit reached England in the fifteenth century. The Hundred Years' War was not a single, one-hundred-year conflict. Instead, it was a series of warfare interspersed with intervals of peace that lasted from 1337 to 1453. The Hundred Years' War arose from disagreements between England's and France's reigning dynasties, the Plantagenets in England and the Capetians in France.

The English were weakened as a result of their defeat by the French during the Hundred Years' War. The stability of England was soon jeopardised by complex internal arguments over who should be king. York and Lancaster, two rival houses (royal families), each claimed the right to the throne. Each house used a rose to represent itself, with Lancaster using a red rose and York using a white rose. As a result, the war became known as the War of the Roses. Tensions erupted in 1455, when Richard, Duke of York, attempted to depose the weak and mentally disturbed King Henry VI.

At the Battle of Bosworth Field in 1485, Henry's army beat Richard's armies. Richard was killed in the battle, and Henry became King Henry VII. He was a member of the House of Lancaster, but the War of the Roses ended when he married Elizabeth of York. With this marriage, a new royal house, the Tudors, was established. Beginning with Henry VII, Tudor kings played an essential influence in the English Renaissance. Humanist concepts connected with the English Renaissance had begun to permeate England prior to Henry's accession to the throne, but they were firmly established only during his reign. For these reasons, Henry VII was once regarded as England's first Renaissance king, and the English Renaissance was frequently associated with the start of his reign in 1485.

In the 1530s, during the reign of King Henry VIII, Renaissance concepts grew prevalent in England, and Henry is now regarded as the true English Renaissance prince. He was handsome and dashing, well-educated in classical Latin and theology (religious philosophy), and eager to spend money on education and the arts. The closure of monasteries was a significant event during Henry VIII's reign. Religious establishments owned up to one-fourth of all land in England. Most chose to renounce their vows. In the following years, the big abbeys (churches associated with monasteries) were suppressed one by one. In 1540, a second statute authorised these closures and required the seizure of all remaining property. Former monastery properties were overseen by the Court of Augmentations, a new financial agency. Former monks and nuns received small pensions, whereas former abbots and priors (leaders of monasteries) received bigger incomes for their cooperation in the closure of their places. Most of the monastic territory had been sold to noblemen and members of the gentry by the time Henry VIII died in 1547. Thus, the continuation of the Reformation would benefit these people.

In his will, Henry indicated that any of his three children—Edward, Mary, and Elizabeth—could succeed him to the throne, despite the fact that his daughters had previously been ruled illegitimate when he divorced their mothers. At the age of ten, Edward was crowned King Edward VI, although he was too young to inherit the throne. Henry had appointed a huge council of regents to oversee England until Edward reached the age of majority. During Edward's final days, several of his counsellors wanted to hand the kingdom to Jane Grey (1537-1554), the king's distant relative and a supporter of Protestant ideals. They were confident that Mary Tudor, Edward's sister, would revive the Catholic faith because she had always been a Catholic. Jane was crowned queen in 1553, but she was imprisoned

for high treason after just nine days due to the scheme to make her queen. In 1554, she and her husband, Guildford Dudley, were beheaded.

After Jane Grey's nine-day reign, Mary Tudor (1516-1558; reigned 1553-58) ascended to the throne as Queen Mary I in 1553. Mary, like her mother Catherine of Aragon, was pro-Spain and Catholic. She married Philip of Spain (later King Philip II) shortly after being crowned, but Parliament blocked him from assuming the English throne with his bride. Because of her persecution of Protestants, Mary is known as "Bloody Mary." Almost 300 people were burnt at the stake during her brief five-year rule. Many people who refused to forsake Protestant principles continued to worship in underground churches or fled to European countries. Others were drawn into a series of conspiracies against Mary's rule. Protestant leaders considered Elizabeth, the queen's half-sister, as a prospective Protestant replacement. Mary then had Elizabeth arrested and imprisoned in the Tower of London (a royal and aristocracy jail), and afterwards in Woodstock. Five years later, Mary, who was nearing the end of her life, nominated Elizabeth as her successor. Thus, the last Tudor ruler of England assumed the throne on March 17, 1558.

The reign of Queen Elizabeth I (1533-1603; reigned 1558-1603) is known as the Golden Age of England. Elizabeth reinstated the Anglican Church in 1559, assuming the title of Supreme Governor of the Church. She did not refer to herself as Supreme Head, presumably because it was thought that a woman could not lead a church. Nonetheless, she adhered to her father's and brother's religious beliefs. The Elizabethan Book of Common Prayer was based on Cranmer's second version, although it was altered to allow individual worshipers to hold differing opinions on issues such as communion. Elizabeth had a good education. She was fluent in Greek and Latin, and she occasionally surprised foreign ambassadors by understanding statements they made in their own tongues. Elizabeth was a skilled player on the virginal, a keyboard instrument named after her role as the Virgin Queen—Elizabeth refused to marry since she had dedicated her life to her kingdom. Renaissance ideas dominated literature during her lengthy reign. For example, the English playwright William Shakespeare (1564-1616) created some of the world's greatest masterpieces by basing his themes and characters on ancient history and humanism. Members of the governing classes and the clergy were given classical educations, while intellectuals actively studied ancient history.

Following Mary's death, Philip II proposed to marry Elizabeth. When Elizabeth turned down his proposal, he recognised England could never be a Catholic country. For the remainder of the century, England and other Protestant powers were at odds with Spain and the papacy. Protestants in the Low Countries battled against Spanish power and Catholic persecution during the Dutch Revolt. Initially hesitant to get involved, Elizabeth eventually accepted the notion that England, as the dominant Protestant power in Europe, owed it to Protestants elsewhere.

Various conspiracies related to Mary Stuart (1542-1587), Queen of Scots, posed a significant threat to Elizabeth's security (ruled Scotland, 1542–

67). Mary was a Catholic who had fled Scotland after being persecuted by Protestants. For many years, Elizabeth provided Mary with safety in England, despite the fact that Mary was a descendant of King James IV (1473-1513; reigned 1488-1513) of Scotland and Margaret Tudor (1489–1514). However, the uncovering of an assassination plot against Elizabeth in 1586 led to Mary's execution at Fotheringhay Castle in 1587.

The execution of the Catholic queen signalled to Philip that he needed to grab the English throne. He began planning an attack on England with the famed "Invincible Armada," a force of 130 strongly armoured ships with 30,000 troops (see "Spain" section later in this chapter). Even before the Armada could leave, the English sailor Francis Drake (c. 1540-1596) conducted a surprise attack on the Spanish ships stationed in Cádiz, Spain, in 1587. The devastation was so severe that the invasion was postponed for a year. The Spanish Armada set sail from Lisbon in May 1588, but storms forced the fleet to dock in La Corua, northwest Spain. The ships did not re-sail until July. Pandemonium had broken out in England at this point, and Elizabeth's counsellors encouraged her to prepare for the approaching onslaught. English fishermen raced home from all around the world to defend their beloved Gloriana (the nickname given to Elizabeth). Drake, John Hawkins (1532-1595), and Martin Frobisher were among them (c. 1535–1594). Elizabeth evaluated her little land army in Tilbury, which was clearly insufficient to take on the Spanish forces. She inspired the warriors by claiming to have "the heart and stomach of a King" despite having "the physique of a weak and feeble woman."

When the Armada began advancing into the English Channel in early August, the English main fleet used a favourable wind to launch three assaults on the Spanish ships. They did not cause substantial damage, so the Armada stopped at Calais (a French port on the Channel's Dover Strait) on August 6 to await reinforcements. The Spanish fleet commander, Alonso Pérez de Guzmán, duke of Medina-Sidonia, committed a critical error the following night. He illegally anchored the fleet, allowing a squadron of English fireships to set fire to the Armada. As the lighter English warships pursued the heavier Spanish ships, they headed for the open sea. The Armada was defeated when a violent storm, dubbed the "Great Protestant Wind" by the English, rushed through the Channel. Medina-Sidonia withdrew, sailing north around the British Isles. Many Spanish ships sank off the west coast of Ireland, and barely half of the Armada made it back to Spain.

Despite the stunning destruction of the Spanish Armada, which confirmed English dominance over the seas, Elizabeth faced difficulties in the latter years of her reign. She battled to preserve her administration from falling bankrupt in the 1590s. Nonetheless, she lavished money on the "Cult of Gloriana," creating great pageants and spectacles to enchant the English people. Her later years were marked by a conflict involving one of her favourite courtiers, Robert Devereux (1566-1601), Earl of Essex. Essex clashed frequently with two of the queen's most capable ministers, William Cecil (1520-1598) and his son, Robert Cecil (1563–1612). When William Cecil died in 1598, Elizabeth ignored Essex and appointed Robert

Cecil to her top council position. Then, in 1599, Queen appointed Essex as commander of a military force and dispatched him to Ireland to put down Tyrone's Rebellion. Hugh O'Neill (c. 1540-1616), Earl of Tyrone, led this drive to obtain Irish independence from England. Essex, on the other hand, failed badly. He not only refused to obey Elizabeth's orders, but he also made an unlawful truce with the insurgents.

Elizabeth reluctantly withdrew her patronage from Essex when he returned to England. In 1601 he sought to arrange a coup (government overthrow) to depose Cecil's party and install his own party in authority around the queen. He sought assistance from the Irish troops and King James VI of Scotland. The plot, however, failed, and Essex was apprehended. He was tried and sentenced to death. Essex was executed after Elizabeth grudgingly signed the death warrant. Two years later, the queen died. The Tudor dynasty ended because she had no heirs. Despite her many troubles over her long reign, Elizabeth demonstrated an incredible capacity to keep her people's love.

Following Elizabeth was James VI of Scotland, who became King James I of England (ruled 1603–25). He was the son of Mary, Queen of Scots, and Henry Stewart (1545-1567), Henry VII's grandson. Anne of Denmark was James's wife. He enjoyed giving historical and political lectures. However, James' court was less joyful than Elizabeth's since he faced financial issues and his favoured aides were unpopular with political leaders.

James also had to deal with religious strife. He was met by a group of Puritans while riding from Edinburgh to London in 1603, shortly after becoming king (members of the Anglican Church who advocated strict reforms). They were particularly critical of the Anglican Church's "popish," or Catholic, traits. The Puritans presented him with the Millenary Petition, a change request allegedly signed by a thousand of the king's people. They advocated reforms such as simplified rituals, less complex church music, simpler vestments (clergy garments), and more preaching. They also intended to ban wedding rings, which were thought to be papal because Catholics wore them. James convened the Hampton Court Conference in 1604 in order to react to reasonable requests. Puritan leaders met with the king and some Anglican Church executives here. However, hopes for cooperation and compromise were dashed when the Puritans demanded that the church remove bishops (leaders of church districts), whom they saw as popish impediments to true reform. James called the gathering to a halt because he believed bishops were required. The meeting's only surviving legacy was a new translation of the Bible made by both Anglican and Puritan experts and published in 1611. Despite the fact that it was called the King James Bible, James himself had little to do with it.

The executions of Elizabeth I's cousin Mary Stuart (Mary, Queen of Scots) and her favourite courtier, Robert Devereux, Earl of Essex, tainted her forty-five-year reign. Elizabeth, on the other hand, is primarily remembered for her achievements, such as expanding the Anglican



Church and keeping government finances stable. Most importantly, she exemplified the spirit of her people—a drive to endure and thrive in the face of overwhelming challenges. Elizabeth's court became the cultural centre of its period, and her reign was characterised by unparalleled literary brilliance. The epic poem *The Faerie Queen*, dedicated by Edmund Spenser to Elizabeth, and tragedies by William Shakespeare and his contemporaries rank among the greatest works of the Elizabethan period.

During Elizabeth's reign, England also began to emerge as a strong sea power, which eventually led to the British Empire's expansion over the next three centuries. English exploration and discovery began in the preceding century, during Henry VII's reign, with John Cabot's trip from Bristol to Nova Scotia (now Canada) in 1497. Later, his son Sebastian led sea excursions for both England and Spain. Elizabethan seamen John Hawkins and Francis Drake were responsible for the most legendary expeditions. Hawkins established English trade with the Caribbean Sea islands in the New World, and Drake circumnavigated the world between 1577 and 1580. Attempts were made to settle Virginia, the North American area named in Elizabeth's honour (she was called the "Virgin Queen"). Three unsuccessful attempts by English settlers to establish a colony on Roanoke, an island off the coast of Virginia, were made. The final group of colonists unexpectedly vanished. Jamestown, Virginia, was the first successful English colony in North America, founded in 1607 under the reign of Elizabeth's successor, James I. Later, Anglican settlers were drawn to adjacent territories in Virginia, and Puritan colonists (a Protestant faction) sought religious freedom by establishing settlements in New England in the 1620s. The Elizabethan period was a pivotal period in England's long history. It was active from 1558 to 1603. The name derives from the fact that England was ruled by Queen Elizabeth I at the time. The period was known as the "Golden Age" in English history because it was characterised by peace and wealth, as well as the flourishing of art. Unlike many other eras in Europe that saw many battles and struggles for control, this one was comparatively tranquil. There were numerous wars between the Catholic Church and the Protestants prior to the Elizabethan period.

They were courteous with one another at this point in history, which made everything go much more smoothly, with greater concentration on other areas for the nation as a whole. Furthermore, the wars between the crown and parliament had halted. England was a wonderful location to live at the time.

The Spanish Armada entered English territory in August 1588 with the purpose of conquering England by Catholic King Philip II of Spain. If they were successful in their aim, Protestantism and Queen Elizabeth would be defeated. As a result, the English were battling them with all their might for their lives and independence.

As a result, the so-called Invincible Spanish Armada was defeated. Sir Francis Drake, Sir Walter Raleigh, Admiral Hawkins, and Sir Humphrey Gilbert were among the great noblemen and seamen who made significant contributions and played important roles throughout this period. The

Elizabethan Era's Golden Age survived thanks to them and a few more brave men.

The Elizabethan era was also an age of exploration, as it saw the emergence of the English Navy following the defeat of the Spanish Armada. Many advances were made in the field of navigation. Sir Francis Drake's successful circuit of the world emphasised those achievements.

The names William Shakespeare and Elizabethan Theatre are inextricably linked. However, there were other well-known playwrights, such as Christopher Marlowe, whose contemporary works were superior to Shakespeare's.

Initially, plays were performed in the courtyards of inns or in the homes of noblemen until the first theatre, known as "The Theatre," was established in Shoreditch in 1576. Later, more playhouses in London appeared, including Rose and the Hope. The most popular playhouse, however, was The Globe Theatre, which was established in 1599 by the Company of Shakespeare. The theatre was used until 1613, when it was closed due to a cannon that was fired during one of King Henry VIII's performances gaining control of the roof and causing the structure to burn to the ground.

During the Elizabethan period, people blamed incomprehensible happenings on witches, ghosts, and witchcraft. In the majority of cases, women were accused of witchcraft. Then, with the invention of press printing, new concepts and thinking evolved, which became the most powerful tool for increasing one's learning and understanding. New ideas and thinking, as well as information and knowledge about technology, astrology, and science, sparked a renewed interest in supernatural forces, which included witches and ghosts.

During the Elizabethan period, the English Renaissance was at its peak. In truth, many of history's most prominent writers, including Shakespeare, wrote during the Elizabethan period. Other poets and artists created many wonderful masterpieces that we still value today. The Elizabethan era was the most glorious period in English history literature, with many writers such as Edmund Spenser, Sir Philip Sidney, Richard Hooper, Roger Ascham, and Christopher Marlowe flourishing. Poetry, in addition to writing, evolved as a new form of art during this period. Many schools around the world continue to read and view the artists' work, understanding it as a bright time in history for most of the world, but especially England.

The prosperity that came to England during the Elizabethan period was another shining spot in the Elizabethan period. Many of the previous kings' reforms resulted in a lot of trading going on across the Atlantic Ocean. The country of England benefited greatly from this. It was so rich that many people refer to the Elizabethan period as the Utopian period. Utopia was a mythical place that was said to be highly prosperous and a symbol of people's perfection.

Unfortunately, at the end of the Elizabethan period, there were certain issues. Despite the fact that the country had been affluent for many years, Spain persisted in starting a war with England between 1585 and 1604. The war is now known as the Anglo-Spanish War. The conflict has depleted England's economy. England did not recover until after the decline of Queen Elizabeth I. Queen Elizabeth was a firm believer in Protestantism. She was constantly afraid of being slain by Catholics who wanted to replace her with Mary, Queen of Scots. Queen Elizabeth was dubbed the "Virgin Queen" because she never married. She regards herself as married to her country. She was also the last Tudor because she had no children and left no heir.

How would you like to live under someone who told you what you had to do and when you had to do it? This is how a monarchy functions. The Elizabethan age had full of strange rules and practises that were mostly influenced by Queen Elizabeth I's goals and habits.

For example, because Elizabeth was a devout Christian, everyone else in England was forced by law to attend church as well. Several other laws of a similar nature were also enacted. This originates from the form of governance in which everyone's perspectives are ignored while making laws.

In comparison to today, Elizabethan politics and the general treatment of life were quite cruel. In fact, if you were accused of a serious offence, you may face a variety of forms of torture. Many people were tortured in order to learn other people's names if they believed they had the relevant information. For example, one woman, the sole woman subjected to this sort of torture, was placed on a rack. It would stretch you to the point that joints would frequently shatter and dislocate. She was later murdered. She was simply accused of defying the Church of England. A law that would be meaningless in today's court.

The Queen possessed supreme power in Elizabethan times, according to law, heredity, and the belief in the divine right; she was the principal source of patronage and had the final say on all state policy. The monarch's private business was considered the government, and its success was consequently heavily reliant on the ruler's character and political aptitude. Elizabeth I was especially effective because she valued her subjects' goodwill above all else; the abuse of royal prerogative under James and Charles I showed much animosity and led to increased restrictions on royal power. The Elizabethan administration structure was highly centralised, with most decisions being made by the Privy Council, which was selected directly by the monarch.

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## 1.2 SUMMING UP

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Dear learner, let us sum up what we have learned in this chapter. We discussed the brief history of the English throne and how power shifted from one to another. Also, we have discussed the political and monarchic changes in history and how the religious aspect mattered in the



government. We have arrived at a basic understanding of the Elizabethan era and the legacy of Queen Elizabeth. Political ups and downs in the era with the social and political development, literature produced during the era and the major author from the same age. We then took a cursory look at politics and The Rise of Consolidation of Monarchic Ideology.

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### 1.3 IMPORTANT QUESTIONS

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

- The History of the English throne.
- Renaissance in England.
- What makes the Elizabethan age The Golden era in the History of English literature?
- Comment on the emergence of monarchy in England.
- Write an essay on the role of Queen Elizabeth in the history of England.
- Write a critical analysis of Elizabethan literature and its relation to current politics and religion.

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## **HOW SHAKESPEARE'S TEXTS UPHOLD AND AUTHENTICATE ABSOLUTIST MONARCHIC IDEOLOGY**

### **Unit Structure:**

#### 2.0 Objectives

#### 2.1 How Shakespeare's Texts uphold and Authenticate Absolute Monarchic Ideology

#### 2.2 Summing up

#### 2.3 Important Questions

#### 2.4 References

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### **2.0 OBJECTIVES**

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Dear learner, in this chapter, we will discuss 'How Shakespeare's Texts uphold and Authenticate Absolute Monarchic Ideology'. You will develop a basic understanding of the literature produced by William Shakespeare. The chapter will also acquaint you with the politics of literature and how literary texts are the mirror of contemporary society. Besides, you will develop an understanding of Monarchic Ideology. And the relationship between authors and the governing authorities. This chapter examines the connection between literature and politics. It focuses on the idea that literary form is political in and of itself, and it analyses ideas that literature can criticise and change political beliefs by being experienced in terms of its style.

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### **2.1 HOW SHAKESPEARE'S TEXTS UPHOLD AND AUTHENTICATE ABSOLUTE MONARCHIC IDEOLOGY**

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Shakespeare, also known as the Bard of Avon or the Swan of Avon, was an English poet, dramatist, and actor who was born in Stratford-upon-Avon, Warwickshire, England on April 23, 1564, and died on April 23, 1616. He is widely regarded as the greatest dramatist of all time. Shakespeare holds a unique position in international literature. Other poets, such as Homer and Dante, have transcended national boundaries, but no living writer's reputation can compare to Shakespeare's, whose plays, written in the late 16th and early 17th centuries for a small repertory theatre, are now performed and read more frequently and in more countries than ever before. Shakespeare's famous contemporary, the poet and dramatist Ben Jonson, prophesied that he "was not of an era, but for all time," and his prophecy has been fulfilled. Shakespeare lived during a

period when Middle Ages concepts and social structures continued to influence the human mind and behaviour. Queen Elizabeth I was God's representative on earth, and lords and commoners had their proper roles in society beneath her, with responsibilities to God flowing up via her and down to those of lower status. The order of things, on the other hand, was called into doubt. Atheism remained a threat to the majority of Elizabethans' beliefs and way of life, but the Christian faith was no longer monolithic. Martin Luther, John Calvin, a slew of small religious sects, and even the English church itself had questioned Rome's authority. The parliamentary sovereignty was questioned in Parliament; the emergence of capitalism, the redistribution of monastery estates under Henry VIII, the spread of education, and the influx of fresh money from the discovery of new territories all disrupted the economic and social orders.

Official homilies exhorted the people to obedience; the Italian political theorist Niccol Machiavelli was placing emphasis on a new, practical code of politics that caused Englishmen to fear the Italian "Machiavillain" while prompting them to ask what men do, instead of what they should do. Disquisitions in *Hamlet*—on man, belief, a "rotten" state, and times "out of joint"—clearly show an increasing unease and doubt. The translation of Montaigne's *Essays* in 1603 offered such philosophy further currency, range, and elegance, and Shakespeare was among many who studied them, making direct and major references in *The Tempest*. Instead of Aristotle's typical "Why?" question, the question "How?" became the driving force in philosophical investigation. The so-called Gunpowder Plot (1605) demonstrated a determined challenge by a small minority in the nation; James' battles with the House of Commons in succeeding Parliaments, while revealing the might of the "new men," also revealed the administration's shortcomings. Italo Calvino, in his work *The Uses of Literature*, says that "Literature is vital to politics above all when it provides a voice to the voiceless when it gives a name to the nameless, and especially to all that political discourse excludes or threatens to exclude... Literature is like an ear that can hear beyond the chromatic scale to which Politics is sensitive; Literature is like an eye that can see beyond the chromatic scale to which Politics is susceptible."

Shakespeare was able to witness two monarchs up close as one of the heads of the most prominent theatre companies of the day. Both Elizabeth I and James I appreciated plays, and they were staged in royal residences. Following Queen Elizabeth's death in March 1603, James I travelled from Scotland to London. In May, he granted a patent for a new King's Company, which included Shakespeare, Burbage, Hemmings, and Condell, to perform as well for the recreation of our beloved Subjects, as for our Solace and delight when we should think good to see them.

Shakespeare's chronicle history plays are centred on the battle to become king and the issue of a ruler's proper characteristics. Recent critical attention has been drawn to Shakespeare's first historical tetralogy, the *Henriad*, which includes the plays *Richard II*, *Henry IV Part 1* and *2*, and *Henry V*. Contemporary academics have also investigated the issue of kingship in Shakespeare's later works, particularly *Hamlet*, *Macbeth*, and

King Lear. Two of Shakespeare's primary concerns about kingship have emerged from their investigations: the question of the nature and legitimacy of political authority, and the search for an ideal king, one who embodies both mediaeval Christian piety and a more contemporary conception of the monarch as outlined by the Renaissance political philosopher Niccol Machiavelli. Besides these two overarching concerns, contemporary scholars are interested in the monarch's role as the object of both sacred and secular ritual, as well as the study of the disastrous effects of malign rulership—particularly the negative consequences of monarchical absolutism and royal abdication on individuals and nations.

Critics of historical plays commonly note the Renaissance ideal of kingship and the significance of legitimate rule as they investigate the personal, spiritual, and political components of these works. Shakespeare's political theory as it appears in the chronicle history plays and in Elizabethan thought, emphasising the monarch's duty as the protector and benefactor of his or her subjects—the cornerstone of Shakespeare's kingly ideal—has been noticed by George W. Keeton. Leonard Tennenhouse has proceeded in the same vein by explaining the political subtexts of Shakespeare's historical plays, which he sees as a prolonged attempt by the dramatist to construct and legitimise a new sort of ideal ruling authority. Sukanta Chaudhuri has written about the same subject, focused on Henry V. For Chaudhuri, Henry exemplifies this new Renaissance ideal by combining Machiavellian virtù—personal force, strength, and bravery, as well as cunning and duplicity—with Christian compassion and a strong connection to humanity. Barbara Traister provides a counterexample to Shakespeare's image of King John, an individual lacking in the charismatic and sympathetic features of the Lancastrian monarch and hence without a king's so-called "second body"—the aura of majesty that connects the body politic.

Another prevalent critical perspective to Shakespeare's chronicle history plays and some other dramas, most notably King Lear, is to see them as a critique of kingship gone wrong. In order to face the topic of extravagant ceremony in relation to the Renaissance monarchy, Richard F. Hardin described Elizabeth I's coronation, in which the new monarch attempted to elevate her position as a secular ruler above the sacramental role of the Church.

Hardin has observed that in Shakespeare's play Richard II, the ceremonial grandeur and useless self-worship of Richard II serve to contrast this inadequate king with Henry V, whose disdain for the ceremony is matched by his enormous religiosity. The ceremony, in the words of Richard C. McCoy, becomes a "secular pageant"—a garish exhibition that exists in place of actual royal virtue. Other observers have followed suit, pointing out Shakespeare's representation of the monarch's worst traits. Graham Holderness interprets Richard II's appeal to the concept of divine right as a symptom of weakness that leads to his disastrous reign and later self-deposition. Furthermore, Eva Figes has investigated Shakespeare's critique of royal irresponsibility in non-historical plays through the character of



King Lear, whose selfish abandonment of the crown precipitated a horrific civil war.

To explain the politics of Shakespeare's historical plays, we must draw two sorts of comparisons: one compares this particular dramatic form to others that we deem literary: romantic comedy, tragedy, and the court masque. Our goal here is to establish which figures allow the elements of chronicle history to authorise the state in distinctively Elizabethan ways. But this necessitates another form of comparison, one that sees aesthetic methods as political strategies.

To illustrate those theatrical spectacles reflected state power, we shall understand how the people organising materials for the stage also dictated official policies. Let's use Henry VIII and Hamlet as examples to demonstrate this concept. In addition to isolating the political techniques shared by big chronicle history plays and romantic comedies, one may discern why Henry VIII is a different kind of play despite drawing on chronicle history materials. By the same token, Hamlet must be associated with chronicle histories in terms of representational tactics rather than the Jacobean tragedies with which literary tradition has associated it.

Let's not be preoccupied with the progression of literature on the one hand or the history of state institutions on the other. Let's focus in this chapter on the representation of power, specifically the cultural logic or general economy of meaning within which the monarch's body was inscribed and attained worth. The theatre that exalted state power did not follow its own logic or the evolution of any specific author. On the contrary, as the monarch's inherited prerogatives were challenged, first by a fighting group within the aristocracy, and then by dissenting voices outside the oligarchy, literature was forced to utilise radically discontinuous aesthetic tactics in order to stay politically consistent. Indeed, with the accession of James I, a whole set of literary genres fell out of favour, and new forms gave the right means of establishing oneself close to political authority. The chronicle history drama, together with romantic comedy, Petrarchan poetry, prose romance, and other genres, had unparalleled popularity in the 1590s. And, just as obviously as it shared their popularity, the chronicle history play had a role in the extinction of many of these Elizabethan genres; with few exceptions, such plays ceased to be produced after Henry V (1599), with Henry VIII being the most noteworthy exception.

To explain why history plays became essentially unwritable after 1600, let's take a look at what this dramatic form had in common with romantic comedy and Petrarchan poetry, which allowed these genres to target the same audience and ultimately fade away together. Despite their differences, chronicle history employs the same approach to create political order from political strife as romantic comedy used to establish dominant kinship rules. Both depict patriarchal systems in disarray, resulting in two bases for authority and hence two conflicting hierarchies of power, which only the monarch can keep in harmonious discord.

If we consider *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, a play that is unmistakably typical of Shakespeare's romantic comedies, we can see that the problem that authority must solve is a problem with authority itself. It is an issue of authority that has become outdated. At first glance, the law appears arbitrary in that it appears to serve just the father's will. A comic resolution does not necessitate that the law is less arbitrary, because arbitrariness might be an entirely appropriate element of monarchical power. A comedic resolution, on the other hand, necessitates either the independence of the law or the benevolence of the parent. In other words, a more inclusionary order is required. Oberon represents the traditional alternative to patriarchal law, with carnival aspects. As if Titania's portrayal of an unruly lady wasn't enough to establish her as a Fairie, Puck employs this concept of disorder among the Athenians—both lovers and mechanicals who have wandered into the woods. Gender, age, rank, and even species inversions break all of the categories that organised the Elizabethan social order. As a result, relationships take on the horrific proportions of Renaissance lunacy, which arises whenever violations of patriarchal law exist in utter contradiction to governmental authority. However, the romantic comedies show that festival breaks down the hierarchical distinctions that organised Elizabethan society, only to be taken within the social order where it authorises a new type of political authority.

As evidenced by "the story of the night told o'er," Bottom's "dream," and the mechanicals' production of *Pyramus and Thisbe*, this approach of double inversion contains political instability within the framework of the festival where it can be further aestheticized. When Theseus and his companions come across the sleeping couples lying together on the ground, the duke speculates, "No doubt they rose early to observe / The rite of May..." (IV.i.132-3). By labelling the lovers as revellers, Theseus does more than simply legitimise their disobedience of the law; he associates their disorder with the order of art. "I know you two are rival adversaries," he continues to the young men, "but how come there is such lovely harmony in the world...?" (IV. i.142-3) In addition hand, Shakespeare has altered the structure of political power by placing filial disobedience within a range of permitted illegalities. What was once a violation of the father's law is now a scene of peace. When Egeus presses Theseus to punish the young criminals, the duke overrules the father in what many regards as an arbitrary move. While both Egeus and the Duke have been arbitrary in their exercise of authority, the power of legitimate authority is separated from patriarchal rule by the monarch's ability to freely pardon where Egeus, despite the lovers' show of respect, would be penurious and severe.

If Theseus allows some power distortions to exist within the frame works of festival and art, it is also true that the entrance of disorder into the play eventually validates governmental authority. When Theseus brings the May rites into the realm of the permissible, the revellers fall to their knees before him. Together, revellers and dukes form a harmonic political entity in which the monarch's power exists independently of the Patriarch's. The duke's equating of juridical power with patriarchal power creates a new set

of political conditions in which opposing bases of authority are held in balance. This type of authority is preferable to the punitive power he threatened to use at the start of the play. As a result, the entire final act of the play theorises the process of inversion by which art and politics form this mutually authorising relationship. This process is recreated on stage in the guise of an Elizabethan tragedy—Pyramus and Thisbe—that has been turned into a comedy, with crude mechanicals playing a variety of roles ranging from noble lovers to creatures and elements of the natural world.

The popularity of inversions that put the law in conflict with patriarchal authority cannot be properly comprehended unless one considers how Elizabeth employed these forms of authority against one another. It is insufficient to suggest that the transfiguration of power in romantic comedy mirrors Elizabeth's actual way of wielding monarchy and power. To be sure, she used her patronage power to limit the power of ruling dynasties and establish economic authority in opposition to blood authority. However, the data suggest that this method was more than just her own creativity. They show that her distinctive tactics for conveying power were as much influenced by the political climate of the moment as the structure of a comedy like *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.

Henry VIII was given the power to determine succession by Acts of Parliament in 1536 and 1543. His will not only stated that the crown would be passed to Edward, Mary, and Elizabeth in that order, but it also stated that if his children died without issue, the crown would be passed to his younger sister's children in the Suffolk line rather than her older sister's children in the superior hereditary Stuart line. As a result, Henry considered the crown as a piece of property, subject to the same common-law laws against alien inheritance as any other piece of English property. Henry used the civic authority of a property owner to define the monarchy as such a juridical form by utilising his legal prerogative to authorise this line of descent. This tautology pitted the prevalent genealogy principle against the one later used by supporters of Mary Queen of Scots and her dynasty. During Elizabeth's reign, both Catholic and Stuart advocates insisted on the traditional idea of the monarch as two bodies in one, a natural and a supernatural body. Theirs was a monolithic conception of power that regarded the body politic as the perpetual corporate body of the crown. The mystical body cleansed the natural body of attainder; it united the king with his royal forefathers to form them as one and the same corporate person; and the metaphysical body was connected to the king's natural body, they said, like an affair of the heart in a royal marital pre-contract.

Similar reasoning is at work in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, where the law and the father temporarily clash in the play's final act. However, in this case, the division of one kind of authority into two opposing voices is hardly a dramatic issue. It is the humorous answer to a problem that arises when authority takes on an absolute and monolithic shape. Because Elizabeth's rise could be justified by both her father's will and primogeniture, her own presence momentarily united the opposing opinions formed during the succession arguments. Elizabeth was a

conundrum, in other words, because her ascension had resulted in contradicting definitions of monarchical authority. The divergence of Theseus' authority from that of Egeus ends the dramatic struggle of A Midsummer Night's Dream in much the same way.

How Shakespeare's Texts  
Uphold And Authenticate  
Absolutist Monarchic  
Ideology

Indeed, when we return to courtly poetry, we see the same approach for idealising power at work, as the patron is gifted with the characteristics of the reluctant lover. Even though the two modalities of depicting power are brought together in one figure of speech, the puns that characterise the Petrarchan manner of poetry effectively establish a gulf between the power of property and that of blood (via marriage into the aristocracy). There are many more examples in Shakespeare's writing about contemporary politics, be it his tragedies, comedies, histories, tragicomedies or poetry etc. To understand the political reading of Shakespeare in a deeper manner, the learners are advised to read the suggested texts in the references below.

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## 2.2 SUMMING UP

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Dear learner, let us sum up what we have learned in this chapter. We discussed in brief Shakespeare and his writing career. His stand in world literature and his contribution to the history of English Literature. We have arrived at a basic understanding of the Elizabethan age and the politics of the same age and the relation of Shakespeare's literature with contemporary politics. In this chapter, we also discussed Shakespeare's tragedies and comedies to understand the relationship between politics and literature. And lastly, we studied how Shakespeare's Texts uphold and Authenticate Absolute Monarchic Ideology with the importance of Shakespearean texts with illustrations.

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## 2.3 IMPORTANT QUESTIONS

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

- The role of Shakespeare in Elizabethan literature.
- Write a detailed note on the Politics in the writings of Shakespeare.
- What is the essence of Shakespearian Comedies in the Elizabethan age and the depiction of politics in the same?
- Comment on the use of political references in Shakespeare's tragedies.
- Write an essay on Shakespeare and Politics.
- Write a political analysis of Shakespeare's writings.

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Absolutist Monarchic  
Ideology



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## **EMERGENCE AND SPREAD OF COLONIALISM AND IMPERIALISM- HOW COLONIAL IDEOLOGY IS EMBEDDED IN AND TRANSMITTED BY THE CANONICAL TEXTS**

### **Unit structure :**

- 3.0 Objectives
- 3.1 Emergence and Spread of Colonialism and Imperialism- How colonial ideology is embedded in and transmitted by the canonical texts.
  - 3.1.1. What is Colonialism and how did it arise?
  - 3.1.2. Causes for the rise of Colonialism.
  - 3.1.3. How did colonialism emerge?
  - 3.1.4. Causes for the rise of Imperialism.
  - 3.1.5. What caused the emergence of Imperialism?
  - 3.1.6. Orientalism by Edward Said
  - 3.1.7. Canonical text 'Passage to India' by
- 3.2 Important Questions
- 3.3 Reference

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### **3.0 OBJECTIVES**

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- To historicize literature as an institution embedded in cultural politics.
- To highlight how literary texts, mediate dominant ideologies of their times.
- To examine how literary texts indirectly function as an instrument of power.

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### **3.1 EMERGENCE AND SPREAD OF COLONIALISM AND IMPERIALISM - HOW COLONIAL IDEOLOGY IS EMBEDDED IN AND TRANSMITTED BY THE CANONICAL TEXTS.**

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#### **3.1.1. What is Colonialism and how did it arise?**

It was in the late seventeenth century when the Mughal Empire controlled nearly all of the Indian subcontinent. European visitors marveled at the empire's affluence, magnificence and grandeur. Antonio Monserrate, a Portuguese Jesuit missionary, called its cities "second to none either in

Asia or in Europe with regards either to size, population, or wealth.” For centuries, merchants all over the world had traveled to India, keen and impatient to trade for coveted silk, spices, and textiles. And in 1700, India’s economy was larger than all of Western Europe’s put together, making up nearly 25 percent of the global economy. However, by the year 1973, that number had dropped to just 3 percent.

- **How did this happen?**

It involves centuries of war, technological innovation, change, novelty and global trade that sent some economies lofty and brought others crashing down. However, central to this story for India and for so many countries around the world, is the history of colonialism, the practice of controlling another country or area and exploiting and subordinating its people and resources.

In the midst of the late fifteenth century and the years after the World War II, predominantly European empires colonized the huge and immense majority of the world. The French Empire, for example, ruled over territory greater than the size of Europe. Though, the largest of these domains was the British Empire, which, at its pinnacle, covered a quarter of the world. The sun was said to never set on the British Empire, as at least one of its colonies was always in daylight. While, Britain’s most significant colony was India, the borders of which stretched and enlarged from modern-day Afghanistan to Myanmar. So important and beneficial was the colony that it accounted for half of the British Empire’s gross domestic product in 1870.

- **What drove colonialism?**

Empires have existed and remained for thousands of years. In the second century, the Romans controlled territory from Western Europe to the Middle East. Whereas, in the thirteenth century, the Mongols ruled an empire several times larger, which spanned Eurasia. However, the 1500s brought about a new age of empires as progressive and advanced naval technology that allowed countries to enlarge and augment their borders across oceans. Spain and Portugal hastily established colonies around the world. Other European powers for instance, England, France, and the Netherlands, launched and started their own empires by the seventeenth century. And by the end of the twentieth century, both the United States and Japan had claimed overseas lands.

### **3.1.2. Causes for the rise of Colonialism**

- **Industrial Consequences :**

Colonialism ultimately was a result of the Industrial Revolution. Production increased exceedingly because of the new machines. Nevertheless, the rate of local consumption was much lesser as compared to the surplus rate of production. Therefore, the instantaneous need of the European was to search and find the new marketplaces for selling their products. Additionally, it was also important and essential that those

marketplaces be dependable and easy to rule and dominate. The Industrial Revolution, now is also called as the First Industrial Revolution, led to an unprecedented advancement and rise in the rate of population growth.

- **Requirements of Raw Material :**

It is important and essential to sustain low costs of production compared to rival and competing nations in the market. The craving and yearning to construct and create a monopoly in the market and the need to acquire and obtain raw material at cheaper rates were two important and determining factor which made it significant for the European nations to establish clear supremacy and dominance.

- **Investing Surplus Capital :**

The Industrial Revolution added to the wealth of the European capitalist, who were already wealthy and affluent. They began searching and seeking for secure markets to invest their surplus funds. The markets which were in the less developed countries were quite secure from this outlook and viewpoint. Hence, the availability of surplus capital facilitated the rise and growth of colonialism. The history of capitalism is diverse and distinct and has many debated lineages, however, the fully-fledged capitalism is in most cases thought by scholar to have emerged and emanate in Northwestern Europe, particularly in Great Britain and Netherlands, in the 16<sup>th</sup> to 17<sup>th</sup> centuries. Over the 16<sup>th</sup> to 17<sup>th</sup> centuries, capital accumulated and aggregated by a variety of methods at a variety of scales, and connected with many alterations in the concentration of wealth and economic power. Colonialism gradually and evenly became the controlling and dominant economic system all through the world.

- **Sources of Minerals :**

The countries in Asia and Africa had rich and affluent sources of minerals such as gold, silver, diamonds, and coal etc. All these sources attracted and enamored the European merchants to different regions of Asia and Africa.

- **Geographic Importance :**

European Nations had realized and substantiated that the geographic location of some regions in Asia and Africa are advantageous and beneficial for trade. Singapore, Andaman and Nicobar, Aden, Gibraltar and Malta were some such regions where the British established and entrenched their hold.

- **Availability of Labour :**

European merchants required a considerable number of labourers at a very low and cheap rate. The colonies fulfilled and accomplished this need. Thereafter, it contributed to the boom in the slave trade.

- **The Feeling of Racial Superiority:**

The European colonists claimed it to be their responsibility and accountability to civilize the people in both Asia and Africa. This assumed and pretended role of the Europeans resulted and emanated in the conversion of many Asian and African people to Christianity. This eventually also abetted in the development, progress, advancement and growth of colonialism.

### **3.1.3. How did colonialism emerge?**

Western colonialism, a political-economic phenomenon, through which various European nations explored, scrutinized, conquered, settled, oppressed and exploited large areas of the world. The age of modern colonialism began in around 1500, following the European discoveries of a sea route around Africa's southern coast in 1488 and of America in around 1492.

### **3.1.4. Causes for the rise of Imperialism:**

The following are the main causes and factors responsible for the rise of Imperialism.

#### **Industrial revolution :**

The main reason for the rise of Imperialism was Industrial revolution. Industrial revolution in European countries resulted in an immense increase in production. They could not find market in Europe as they followed "Protective Trade Policy". However, due to capitalism, the purchasing power of the people was also low. It also brought in a huge progress and development in the means of transport and communication. The telegraph system connected the whole world and reduced huge distances. The development of railways speeded up the movement of goods among colonies and the mother country, hence it was easier to bring raw materials and to take the finished goods to the markets in the interior parts of the colonies in Asia and Africa.

- **National Security :**

The sense of National Security and self-sufficiency among the European political groups abetted and fomented colonial imperialism. The Presidents or Prime Ministers worked towards the colonial imperialism owing to the influence of business or some other interest.

- **Nationalism :**

Subsequently, the later part of the 19th Century saw acute and intense nationalistic ideals in Europe. Many nations developed pride and self-esteem over their race, culture and language and thereby, started feeling greater and superior to other countries. They felt that acquisition and procurement of colonies would improve and embellish the prestige of their nations. Imperialism became the fashion of the age. The Europeans felt



that it was 'white man's burden' to civilise the backward and uncivilised native people of African and Asia.

- **Balance of Power :**

The idea and notion of Balance of power was one of the prime force accountable for the rise of imperialism. European Nations were compelled to acquire and obtain new colonies to achieve and attain a balance with their neighbours and competitors.

- **Discovery of New Routes :**

The discovery of new routes of African and Asian continents promoted the courage, enthusiasm and spirit of imperialism. The discovery of sea routes preceded the way for the traders and soldiers to take advantage and exploit the ample and sufficient wealth of the countries.

- **State of Anarchy :**

There was no international organisation to enact and enforce laws for nations to maintain and uphold peace, harmony, reconciliation and security among countries before the First World War. Hence, this state of anarchy supported the colonial race.

### **3.1.5. What caused the emergence of Imperialism ?**

The term imperialism means the policy of extending the rule or authority of an empire or nation over foreign countries, or of acquiring and holding colonies and dependencies and reliance. Imperialism results from an intricate cause in which in varying degrees economic pressures, human anger, aggression, selfishness, greed, the search for security, the drive for power and prestige, nationalist emotions, humanitarianism, and many other factors are responsible for the emergence of imperialism. Imperialism, State policy, practice, or advocacy of extending power and dominion, especially by direct territorial acquisition or by gaining political and economic control of other areas.

### **3.1.6. Orientalism by Edward Said :**

Edward Said's 'Orientalism', is a Western scholarly discipline of the 18th and 19th centuries that encompassed and bounded the study of the languages, literatures, religions, philosophies, histories, art, and laws of Asian societies, remarkably ancient ones. More recently, for the most part, through the work of the Palestinian American scholar and Professor of literature, Edward Said, the term has been used disparagingly and unfavourably to refer and point out to the allegedly and purportedly simplistic, stereotyped, degrading and demeaning notions of Arab and Asian cultures mainly held by Western scholars.

Palestinian American scholar and Professor of literature Edward Said's notion of orientalism has been engaged by geographers to exhibit that colonialism is not only a particular set of political-economic practices but also a system of power-knowledge, situated in such a way as to

deploy a set of deeply and profoundly strong, effective and powerful excursive formations, or metanarratives, through which the “Orient” has emerged as a place. That place lies beyond the everyday knowledge grasped in the West, though is broadly implicated and embroiled in the ways in which the West imagines both itself and the other, the oriental.

The term Orientalism as power–knowledge has been carried forward to the present, resituated in present-day relationships and connections among the West and the other, as expressed in an extremely large, boundless and intricate array of cultural practices, socioeconomic relations, and political realities. Most significantly, the present-day construction of the “Middle East,” as a product of Orientalism and a site of violence and savagery, can be mapped and outlined through a geography of difference produced under an orientalist gaze from colonial times until the present. Orientalism has merged itself with the power of Imperialism. Eventually, in the end it became a tool for the politics and used to imperialize Eastern societies.

According to the American scholar Edward Said, orientalism is a method of achieving the power of imperialist societies in colonized countries by researching about their culture and history in the account of the Post-Colonialism Era. The scope of Said's scholarship appointed Orientalism as a basement framework and circumstances in the field of Post-Colonialism culture studies and elucidating the relationship and alliance between Orientalism and Imperialism.

### **3.1.7. Canonical text ‘Passage to India’ by E.M. Forster :**

A Passage to India written by the English author E.M. Forster in the year 1924 is a scorching depiction of the English mismanagement of India, as well as an accusing missal towards many of the racist attitudes the English colonial administration held. The novel by E.M. Forster scrutinizes the many rights and wrongs of Empire and the way in which the native Indian population was oppressed, persecuted and exploited by the English administration. With the exception of Fielding, none of the English believe in Aziz's innocence. The head of the police believes that the Indian character is innately flawed by an intrinsic and deep-rooted criminality. There seems to be little doubt that Aziz will be found guilty for the fact, the word of an English woman is believed over the word of an Indian.

Beyond his consideration for British colonization, Forster is even more worried and disturbed with the right and wrong of human interactions. A Passage to India by E.M. Forster is about friendship. The friendship between Aziz and his English friend, Mrs. Moore, begins in almost mystical circumstances. Both Aziz and Mrs. Moore meet at a Mosque as the light is fading, and hence, they discover a common bond. Such friendships cannot last in the heat of the Indian sun nor under the aegis and support of the British Empire. Edward Morgan Forster escorts us into the minds of the characters with his stream-of-consciousness style. With the passage of time, we begin to comprehend and perceive the missed meanings, the failure to connect. Eventually, we begin to see how these characters are kept apart. E.M. Forster's novel A Passage to India,

emotively and naturally recreates the Raj in India and presents insight into how the Empire was run. Eventually, though, it's a tale of powerlessness, frailty, disaffection and alienation.

### **3.1.8. Conclusion :**

Imperialism adversely and unfavourably affected the colonies. Under foreign rule, native culture and industry were ruined and ravaged. Imported goods wiped out local craft industries. By using colonies as sources of raw materials and markets for manufactured goods, colonial powers held back the colonies from developing industries. Both Imperialism and Colonialism share some similarities –they mean political and economic oppression and domination of the others; howbeit, colonialism shows the great movement of people to the new territory and living as permanent settlers while imperialism is just exercising power and dominance over the conquered regions either through sovereignty or indirect.

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### **3.2 IMPORTANT QUESTIONS :**

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- What were the main causes of Colonialism and Imperialism?
- What were the main reason behind the rise of imperialism and colonialism?
- What caused the emergence of imperialism?
- What were the main reasons for the rapid spread of colonialism and imperialism?
- What are the effects of colonization?
- How did imperialism lead to colonialism?

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## **GENDERING THE SUBJECT AND SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION OF WOMAN**

### **Unit structure:**

- 4.0 Objectives
- 4.1 Gendering the Subject and Social Construction of Woman
  - 4.1.1. What is Social Constructionism and Social construction of gender?
  - 4.1.2. Judith Butler's Gender performativity theory.
  - 4.1.3. The Sex/Gender Distinction and the Social Construction of Reality.
  - 4.1.4. Gender as Socially constructed Phenomenon
  - 4.1.5. Is Sex socially determined, too?
  - 4.1.6. Conclusion
- 4.2. Let's Sum up
- 4.3. Important Questions

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### **4.0 OBJECTIVE**

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- To historicize literature as an institution embedded in cultural politics
- To highlight how literary texts, mediate dominant ideologies of their times
- To examine how literary texts indirectly function as an instrument of power

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### **4.1 GENDERING THE SUBJECT AND SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION OF WOMAN**

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#### **4.1.1. What is Social Constructionism and Social construction of gender?**

Social Constructionism signifies that our realities are based on our experiences, communication, co-operation and interactions with other people. We experience the world through our own opinions, assumptions and point of views. These opinions, assumptions and point of views are constructed through a number of things for instance, culture, mores, tradition, beliefs and values. So, for example, one person might consider a dishwasher as his/her necessity while the other might consider it a luxury. Social constructionism is a theory of knowledge which characterizes the

alliance and association between the objectivity of reality and the capacity of human senses, awareness, understanding and cognition. Particularly it affirms that reality exists as the recapitulation of social perceptions, viewpoint and expression; and that the reality which is perceived and discerned is the only reality worth consideration. This is abetted by the corollaries and upshot that any perceived reality is valid, which means, that reality is subject to manipulation via restraint over social perceptions and expressions.

Whereas the social construction of gender is a theory in feminism and sociology which discusses about the representation and embodiment of cultural origins, mechanisms, consequences and outcomes of gender viewpoint and expression in the context and background of interpersonal and group social interaction. Precisely, the social construction of gender lays down that gender roles are an achieved "status" in a social environment and background, which inevitably and unquestionably categorize people and thus, motivate social behaviours. A related matter in feminist theory is the association among the ascribed and attributed status of assigned sex (male or female) and their achieved status counterparts in gender (masculine and feminine).

#### **4.1.2. Judith Butler's Gender performativity theory :**

American philosopher and gender theorist Judith Pamela Butler's book *Gender Trouble* (1990) made a deep and profound contribution to the field. Butler argued that gender is socially constructed. Therefore, male and female behaviours are constructed and reinforced and strengthened by media and culture. Gender performativity theory by Judith Butler also suggests and puts forward that sexuality is not ascribed to one orientation or predilection. Sexual identity is fluid, it indicates that a person can be heterosexual at one time and bisexual at another.

##### **Essential features of Judith Butler's theory:**

- According to Butler our identity is not fixed (male, female, heterosexual).
- Our identity is made up of a heap of (social and cultural) things which we have earlier conveyed, or which have been said about us. Our identity is made of certain expectations, belief and prospect from us.
- There is not really an inner self in Our identity.
- Gender, unlike other facets of identity, is a performance. For instance, if you perform the needs and requirements of one gender than you are ascribed that gender.
- People can as a result change if they perform the aspects of another gender. (For instance, if a heterosexual female starts performing activities and adopts aspects and attributes of a heterosexual male then her identity changes.)
- The binary divide between masculinity and femininity is a social construct which is built on the binary divide between men and women - which is also a social construction.



- We should challenge the traditional views and outlook of masculinity, femininity and sexuality by instigating gender trouble, annoyance, concern and worry.

#### **4.1.3. The Sex/Gender Distinction and the Social Construction of Reality.**

On the account of social construction there are various distinct senses in which race, gender and like are socially constructed. The very first being the conceptual framework that we take as just "common sense" about gender is only one way of understanding the world. There are, and have been, other ways, in fact there are more better and appropriate ways. Furthermore, there are ideas related and linked with gender that are "merely and simply" constructions. For instance, fictions regarding biological essences and genetic determination are used to strengthen and augment belief in the rightness and certainty of the classifications. This is not to say, howbeit, that gender is not "real." Despite the fact, some ideas about gender are fictions, and these fictional ideas have functioned to create, strengthen and augment gender reality. These categories of people are not just ideas, but are social entities. Such entities are socially constructed in the sense that they are caused by social forces, likewise, for the reason that the conditions for membership in a gender group are social (as opposed to, say, merely physical or anatomical) conditions.

#### **4.1.4. Gender as Socially constructed Phenomenon :**

It is since birth, girls and boys, women and men, are expected by society to play certain roles and behave in certain ways based on traditions, religion, etc. They are shaped by society but continue to follow their roles because of societal pressures of being a woman, Differentiation of roles in the way that men and women speak and employ language, the ways that women are considered and treated in the media and advertising as nurturing, passivity, subordination and submissive or as sexual objects for men's pleasure, and the way that young girls are marketed as sexualized products to fulfil men's cravings and desires, from young age affirms that men and women are different. Women are more often present in ads promoting kitchenware, cooking, cleaning, feminine or childcare-related products. Whereas, masculine roles are usually associated with strength, aggression and dominance. Howbeit, this distinction and variation is a direct result and consequence of being socialized into permeating separate roles, a phenomenon that has created a restrictive and limited interpretation of gender.

Gender role socialization begins at birth and continues throughout the life course and hence it can be said that women and men have been consistently socialized into the spaces that they occupy and the stereotypes that have been assigned to them. As the French existentialist philosopher, Simone de Beauvoir in her 1949 book, 'The Second Sex', mentions that "One is not born, but rather becomes, a woman," revealing and unmasking this formation of gender roles and also the phenomenon of gender itself as a social construct. It symbolizes and represents the logical continuation of

the proofs Beauvoir offers that femininity does not ensue and come into being from differences in biology, psychology, or intellect. Rather, femininity is a construction of civilization, a reflection not of “essential” differences in men and women but of differences in their situation. Situation determines and ascertains character, not the other way around. However, woman is not born fully formed; she is gradually and moderately shaped by her upbringing. Biology does not determine what makes a woman a woman, in fact a woman learns her role from man and others in society. Woman is not born passive, inferior, subordinate, secondary, and nonessential, but it was all the forces in the external world that have conspired to make her so.

The way that women present themselves and the roles they are destined to play is a direct result of societal expectations, prejudice and attitudes that are placed on them since the time they are born. This eventually is based on a conception and idea that people have believed throughout history, the connection of sex and gender. From the minute a child is born and his/her sex is identified, everything is changed, from how the child is treated to how they are observed by the family members as well as the society. It starts with the most artificial of means; colour-coding, society is quick to outfit male infants in blue and girls in pink, even applying these color-coded gender labels while a baby is in the womb. It would be not be wrong to say that Family is the first agent of socialization. There is substantial evidence that parents socialize sons and daughters differently. For instance, as children grow, girls are supposed to play house, they are given barbies and dolls, whereas boys are supposed to play things like construction, hot wheels or war. Boys were made fun if they play with barbies and doll. But, the social construction of gender is not just performing gendered actions or wearing gendered colours as children; it extends into adulthood. It includes and involves the way women are watched and presented in their day-to-day lives.

The moment children are born they are ascribed a gender based on their sex, and since then they become socialized into their roles, however, these roles continue to change for them based on age and society. Admittedly, women now act very different than women twenty years ago. With consistent societal pressures apparent, both women and men exhibit the way they interact in their language and communication, with women being expected to be and treated and considered as passive, decent and polite instead being assertive. The gender binary endeavours to lock men and women into their respective roles, and permits for no exploration, consideration and shows its stereotypes in everything from advertisements to hope and expectations. As a whole if we see gender is a social construct that comes into being when we are born and serves to change, alter or transform our behaviour to conform; nevertheless, acknowledging that this is the case can lead people to augment, expand and break their expectations. Stereotypes and categories can be unlearned and opened up to new possibilities and capabilities. As a result, to use French philosopher, Michel Foucault’s analogy, when we figure out and unravel that the guard is no longer there and watching, hence, we can be freed of appearing and we can finally act.

#### 4.1.5. Is Sex socially determined, too?

- Sex is defined as the biological differences between men and women whereas gender is the fashion in which the society accentuates the sexual differences between both groups.
- When talking about Sex, Anatomical aspects and attributes are considered. They possess six basic components such as chromosome make-up, external genitalia, internal genitalia, gonads hormonal states and secondary sex characteristics. The addition of all of these qualities forms the basis of which the sex category most people fall under i.e. male or female. While in Gender masculine and feminine qualities, behaviour patterns, associated roles and responsibility, etc are considered.
- Sex in general refers to male or female whereas gender refers to masculinity and femininity.
- Sex is a universal term while gender is changeable it alters under the leverage of time, and geographical and socio-cultural settings.

#### 4.1.6. Conclusion :

Discrimination and exploitation against women have been going on since decades, it is not a new phenomenon. The women play the role as caretakers, life givers, nurturers and still they have to face the challenges such as female foeticide, dowry, domestic violence, tortures, physical and mental abuse, rape, sale etc. The gender role also called as sex role of woman has historically been defined and which for the most part implies a degrading, disparaging and negative position of woman. Whereas men and women are biologically and anatomically different, and hence, their social roles are constructed based on this biological differences. Men must share the concern because it is a battle against the socio-economic exploitation. There is so much gender backlog, there is so much gender discrimination, injustice and enmity which is to be solved. Much sex obscurantism to be combated. Hence, in order to end this domination and exploitation meted out towards women, men should come forward and start taking the initiative to examine and change the ways in which their own behaviour might contribute to enable, ignore, or excuse all such forms because women alone cannot stop or resolve the problem of violence and exploitation meted out towards them.

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## 4.2 LET'S SUM UP

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The unit extensively discusses about Gendering the Subject and Social Construction of Woman. Social constructionism affirms that gender is a category that people assess as omnirelevant to social life. Gender as omnirelevant signifies that people can always be judged by whatever they do as a man or as a woman. The gender role of woman has historically been defined and elucidated and which for the most part implies a defamatory, degrading and negative position of woman. Whereas men and women are biologically different, their social roles are constructed based on this biological differences.

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## 4.3 IMPORTANT QUESTIONS

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- How does Social Construction affect gender?
- What is the social construct of women?
- What is an example of social construction of gender?
- What are the main gender roles? Explain in detail.
- What is social construction?
- What makes gender a social construct?
- What influences gender roles in today's society?
- What is Social Constructionism and Social construction of gender?
- Discuss about Judith Butler's Gender performativity theory.

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## **PATRIARCHAL IDEOLOGY AND POWER – HOW IT IS OPERATIONAL IN FAMILY RELATIONSHIP**

### **Unit Structure:**

- 5.0 Objective
- 5.1 Introduction.
- 5.2 Understanding the word “Patriarchy” and its Definition.
- 5.3 Locating Patriarchy in History.
- 5.4 Patriarchy and power
- 5.5 Victims of patriarchal power
- 5.6 How patriarchy is operational in family and affects the familial relationship
- 5.7 Let’s Sum-up.
- 5.8 Questions.
- 5.9 References
- 5.10 Web Sources

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### **5.0 OBJECTIVE**

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1. To understand the concept of Patriarchy
2. Who is responsible to promote patriarchy? Is there any role of women in promoting patriarchy?
3. Historical background of patriarchy
4. How does patriarchy decide gender roles?
5. Who are the victims of Patriarchy?
6. How an Indian family responds to patriarchy?
7. Role of the marriage institution in promoting patriarchy.

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### **5.1 INTRODUCTION**

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In this unit, we will introduce you to the concept of patriarchy and how it works as an ideology of domination. The unit will also focus on the impact

of patriarchy on society and family and how this power structure affects the relationship in the family.

From the ancient days to the present men are considered physically stronger than women and this sense of superiority resulted in the subordination of women at various levels like family, work, society, etc. This sense of superiority has provided an unrecorded power to the men to discriminate against women, children, and those who are dependent on them and weaker than him. Though we cannot say this for every person, most of them are either victims of it or victimizers who use this power to subordinate women or families.

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## 5.2 UNDERSTANDING WORD “PATRIARCHY” AND ITS DEFINITION

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Patriarchy means "the rule of the father" and comes from the Greek πατριάρχης (patriarkhēs), "father or chief of a race" which is a compound of πατριά (Patria), "lineage, descent, family, fatherland" (from πατήρ patēr, "father") and ἀρχή (arkhē), "domination, authority, sovereignty" (<https://en.wikipedia.org/>)

The origin of the word patriarchy indicates that the rule of a father in the family is supreme, the father has been always considered as a chief of a race, and a family who holds domination over all the family members and possesses fatherland, sovereignty, and authority.

The sociologist Sylvia Walby defines patriarchy as "a system of social structures and practices in which men dominate, oppress, and exploit women". Social stratification along gender lines, with power predominantly held by men, has been observed in most societies. (<https://en.wikipedia.org/>)

A famous critic and philosopher Bell Hooks also provided her views about patriarchy. She said, "Patriarchy is a political-social system that insists that males are inherently dominating, superior to everything and everyone deemed weak, especially females, and endowed with the right to dominate and rule over the weak and to maintain that dominance through various forms of psychological terrorism and violence." (Bell Hooks, "Understanding Patriarchy")

In most of all societies of the world, this domination is visible. It seems that every aspect of society has accepted it unanimously and unconditionally. Because of this unanimous acceptance of patriarchy by society, men started to consider that they are in control and this control resulted in domestic violence, abuse, and various kind of cruelty. A famous reporter Jess Hill from The guardian has thrown light on this condition, in one of his articles He says " Men don't abuse women because society tells them it's OK. They do it because society tells them they are entitled to be in control"

From the birth of a male child, his family nurtures him to be a man, they tell him that a male should be manly, his behavior should be manly he is not entitled to cry in the public sphere, he cannot make the display of his weaker side in the public sphere. Society has decided on a typical role for a man, and he has always been told to perform that role without raising a voice against it or without questioning the legitimacy of that action. They have been told to act within the limits of these unrecorded rules. If they start to act beyond these rules or they try to bend these rules they will be considered either weak or womanly. They will carry the same label all over their lives. The symbols will be nothing but the presentation of the hypocrisy of society.

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### 5.3 LOCATING PATRIARCHY IN HISTORY

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The creation of the concept of patriarchy and the discussion over the formulation of this ideology would be interesting too. Gerda Lerner, an American professor and historian attempted to find out the history of the concept of “Patriarchy”. In her book *The Creation of Patriarchy* which was published in 1986 she has attempted to throw light on this concept. This work was the result of many years of hard work by the author. In this work, she has discussed how traditionally the concept of patriarchy got developed and nourished. The research is related to the region of Iraq Western Asia Gerda Lerner's aim behind this was to learn and understand the emergence of the concept of “Patriarchy” and its history, development, and its effects on society. She wanted to learn everything about this age-old ideology that developed million years ago. She believed that men and women are equally responsible for the development of this ideology. In her view, this age-old ideology has been developed by men and women jointly. At the beginning of her research work, she explained, how she started to study the history of this ideology from the Neolithic society which used to gather their food by hunting animals. According to her in this age, labor was divided in an equal manner among men and women. But women always used to get typical work which was related to household, nourishing children, mothering, and economic work of the house, on the other hand, men were always busy hunting and wandering in search of the animal for hunting (food). Lerner has particularly focused on those aspects which became the main reasons for the change in the relationship between men and women, because of the development of the technic of cultivation of land, changing social norms, and the emergence of the tradition of the small structured families.

After some years of evolution of the human race agriculture production became a prominent source of living and gradually men started to feel the need for more labor systematically they started to see women as a source of reproduction and they started to produce more children to increase more hands in labor. Children became an advantage because they started to contribute to agriculture. Their labor became an asset for more agricultural production. In this way because of such kind of assistance, men started to get more leisure time in comparison to women and they started to manage surpluses, and bit by bit they began to boost their physical power. In this



process, they started to collect more wealth and wanted to establish power. To establish power they started warfare with other groups. Many people used to die in this warfare and women have been captured by other groups. They used to treat these captured women as slaves or most of the time they used to treat them as their private property and used to control their sexuality by using power and suppression. In this way, Gerda Lerner has established her view about the beginning of the concept of “Patriarchy”.

Another author and historian Uma Chakravarty also commented on the beginning of “Patriarchy” in history. While talking about the patriarchy in history Uma Chakravarty is mainly focusing on the study of various books like Dharmashastras, Mahabharata, and Manusmriti and she analyzed that, for thousands of years the social system is running according to the rules given in these books which had placed women at a lower level. Also, she has provided a concept which is known as “Brahminical Patriarchy” which is the result of a society that is based on the class and caste system. In this way, we can find references to patriarchy in history and its traces in many religious books. Women from lower castes have always been exploited by higher-class men and even their voices have been suppressed.

We can cite many examples from the various religious scriptures. Like Sita from Ramayana, Draupadi from Mahabharata, Mandodari Ravana’s wife from Ramayana, Ahilya, and Shurpanakha all these characters are examples of subordination of women or they can be considered as the victims of the patriarchal attitude of men and society. They all are the victims of this double standard society, which praises them as goddesses on the one hand, and on the other hand, the same society suppresses them too.

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## 5.4 PATRIARCHAL IDEOLOGY AND POWER

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Ideology and power are two sides of a coin. There are many definitions and interpretations of the word Ideology have been provided by thinkers. A famous Author and thinker Louis Althusser has defined Ideology in his essay “Ideology and ideological state apparatus” he said, “Ideology does not exist in the ‘world of ideas’ conceived as a ‘spiritual world,’” he writes. “Ideology exists in institutions and the practices specific to them. We are even tempted to say, more precisely: ideology exists in apparatuses and the practices specific to them.” Althusser prominently describes the number of these apparatuses mainly he talks about the school, the church, and the family. According to him, these are the prominent places from which ideology can be spread. These are the institutions through which ideology gets spread. These institutions are the main sources of knowledge and discourse creation. Various fashions, discourses, trends, and styles always get spread through these institutions. They can be considered the birthplace of all ideologies.

The above-mentioned institutions can create knowledge and hence they can create power According to Foucault’s understanding, “Power is based on knowledge and makes use of knowledge; on the other hand, power reproduces knowledge by shaping it by its anonymous intentions. Power

creates its field of exercise through knowledge.” Through above mentioned definitions of ideology and power, we can understand that both ideology and power are substitutes for each other.

Patriarchal ideology is also the systematic creation of this discursive structure this ideology also has been instilled in society through this systematic creation of knowledge and discourse.

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## **5.5 VICTIMS OF PATRIARCHAL POWER**

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While understanding patriarchy it is important to understand who the victims of this ideology are?. Only women or men are suffering from the same? While discussing the historical background of the concept “of patriarchy” we have seen that men and women both have an equal share in the creation of this ideology in the same manner both men and women are suffering because of it. Famous author Bell Hooks in her essay says that “Patriarchy is the single most life-threatening social disease assaulting the male body and spirit in our nation. yet most men do not use the word patriarchy in everyday life” (Understanding patriarchy, Bell Hooks) the above-mentioned comment is the real proof of victimhood of men too. In the family women to promotes patriarchy on various levels if her boy is not behaving like other boys in the society she too pushes him to behave like other boys and not to behave too much weak in front of them

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## **5.6 HOW PATRIARCHY IS OPERATIONAL IN FAMILY AND AFFECTS THE FAMILIAL RELATIONSHIP**

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Family always has a great influence on the personality of every person. A person learns everything from family first and after that he/she starts to learn from society. The process of this initial learning in the family always influences the person. But this influence always varies according to gender because of the existence of patriarchal ideology in the family. Males always being taught by their families to remain hard-hearted, emotionless, and strong on the other hand female have always been taught by their families to remain soft-hearted, and lean and they should display their emotions and they should take care of everyone by playing the role of a caretaker. These roles for gender have always been decided by the patriarchal ideology in the family. There are some important factors that we need to discuss regarding how Patriarchy affects human life on various levels and how it is operational in the family and affects the relationship.

### **Decision making :**

In every family, there is an unwritten rule which gives the upper hand in power to a male and subordinates women and other members of that family. The decision maker of every family is always that ‘father figure’ who takes every decision related to the education of children, marriages in the family, decisions related to family planning, decisions related to cultural beliefs of the family so on and so forth.

In many families, women don't have any right to take decisions even if they want to make decisions they need to consult the head of their family, on the other hand, the head of the family can take any decision even without consulting any member of the family. A famous author C.S Laxmi who writes with Pseudonym "Ambai" rightly pointed out this condition in her famous short story "Kitchen in the corner of the house"

In this short story, the author pointed out how women don't get agency in a male-dominated society they don't get to present their opinion in front of the head of their family. In this short story, the author has used the kitchen as a metaphor for oppression. This metaphor of the kitchen hovers around the head of readers in their reading journey of this story.

On one occasion the main character of this story Minakshi the daughter-in-law of the house asks

'Papaji, why don't you extend the verandah outside the kitchen? If you widen it, we could have some chairs out there. If you then build a wash place to the left, you could have a really wide basin for cleaning the vessels. And then beyond that, you could put up some aluminum wire for drying the clothes

Papaji looked for a moment as if he had been assaulted by the words expressing this opinion. Jiji in her turn looked at him, shocked. Daughters-in-law had yet to thus far offer their view in that house. Radha Bhabiji stared fixedly at her plate. Kusuma straightened her veil to hide her agitation. Papaji turned to Kishen. Kishen continued to eat calmly. At last, Papaji cleared his throat and asked, 'Why?'

The basin in the kitchen is extremely small. And the drainage is poor. If the servant woman washes the vessels there, the whole kitchen gets flooded. And, Papaji, if you hang the clothes outside the window, the mountain is hidden.'

Again he looked at Kishan. And that skilled architect agreed with his wife.

What she says is right, Papaji why don't we do it?'

'And when did you go near the kitchen?'

Above mentioned discussion can be considered a typical example of a display of patriarchal power and denial of agency to women. Even the victimization doesn't limit to women only here male character Minakshi's husband Kishan is also getting sidelined because he is supporting his wife he is standing for her. This is not only a picture of only one family

A French author Simone de Beauvoir rightly said that "If the "question of women" is so trivial, it is because masculine arrogance turned it into a "quarrel"; when people quarrel, they no longer reason well."

## **Marriage :**

In India marriage is considered one of the holy customs in human life. In Vedas and Puranas, this custom has given great value. Even it has been included in the sixteen sanskaras. The practical aim of the marriage system is to produce children and to extend the human race. But as an institution, this system also became the main tool of suppression and denial of agency to women. From the beginning of a marriage, a girl has to leave her maternal home and she has to enter into a new family in a fully new atmosphere. There are many examples of suppression of women. A woman who is in a bad marriage can be considered a caged animal. In many Bollywood movies, the representation of women's suppression has been presented. In Anubhav Sinha's movie "Thappad" There is a presentation of marital violence. The protagonist of the movie has been shown as a great model of a typical Indian wife in the beginning, who finds happiness in the happiness and well-being of her husband and performs all the duties of a typical Indian wife but after one slap (Thappad) everything changes. That one slap was like a slap on her very existence.

It doesn't end here, there are many examples of marital rape, child abuse, and sexual abuse which are happening under the umbrella of marriage. The institution of marriage is a great example of the suppression of women from the ages. Women are being oppressed under the name of marriage, tradition and culture. They have been exploited time to time with the help of this institution.

## **Favoritism :**

Favoritism is one of the important aspects of the patriarchy which affects the familial relationship negatively. Even from the birth of a child a male child gets more love and care than a female child. There are multiple examples in society of female foeticide which indicates favoritism towards the male child. Bell hooks a famous feminist critic has shared her own experiences in her essay "understanding Patriarchy" which indicates how this favoritism affects the family relationship and it creates psychological divides among the members of the family.

She says, "When My older brother and I were born with a year separating us in age, patriarchy determined how we would each be regarded by our parents. Both our parents believed in patriarchy. They have been taught patriarchal thinking through religion.

Through the above sentence, we can understand how patriarchy has taken over the control of the human mind and how it got instilled in society with the help of religion.

She further says "as their daughter, I was taught that it was my role to serve, to be weak, to be free from the burden of thinking, to care take and nurture others. My brother was taught that it was his role to be served; to provide; to be strong; to think, strategize, and plan; and to refuse to care take or nurture others.

In this manner from the earlier days of childhood, the ideology of patriarchy works in society and it creates a gender divide and affects human life. It gives more agency to the male gender and denies agency to the female gender. Unquestioned acceptance of the patriarchy by society is one of the harmful customs which affects human life at various levels.

**Agency :**

Agency for women in the family is also another subject that we need to explore here. Though women possess the same qualities as men still they have been denied in many areas they have been restricted in kitchen and household activities. Even in many advertisements, this difference can be seen. In every advertisement which is related to a household product or beauty product, a woman gets the opportunity to act in such advertisements but in advertisements related to the drink or any energy product, they always denied to promote those products. In the movie based on Munshi Premchand's short story "The Chess Players," (Shatranj Ke Khiladi) this difference has been pointed out. In this movie, it has been shown that the spaces have been decided for men and women. Women don't allow to enter Devankhana or the front side of the home. The film delineates that women are far more intelligent than men but still their spaces have been limited they are being restricted to enter devankhana and being warned to not to speak in the middle of a Chess game. Even they have said that they don't need to disturb their husbands while the chess game is going on. If we look at this from a feminist perspective it clearly indicates that women have been denied agency. Though they have been shown more intellectual and active than men.

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## **5.7 LET'S SUM-UP**

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This unit we have dedicated to a very important and burning topic of these days, we haven't only studied patriarchy as a concept but we have seen how patriarchy is operational as a means of domination in every family and in a broader sense how it is controlling the narrative of power in the process of subordination of women and every member who is on the lower position in the ladder of the family.

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## **5.8 QUESTIONS**

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The question in this unit will be asked in long questions format and will be conceptual therefore readers need to understand every concept in detail. Following are some of the sample questions through which readers can get the idea.

1. What is patriarchy ?
2. Patriarchy and power
3. Role of patriarchy in controlling familial Relationships.
4. The historical context of patriarchy
5. Patriarchy as an ideology of domination
6. Subordination of women

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## **REPRESENTING THE ORIENTAL OTHER AND THE LEGITIMATION OF COLONIAL IDEOLOGY**

### **Unit Structure:**

- 6.0 Objective
- 6.1 Introduction
- 6.2 Process of Othering and representation of Oriental Other
- 6.3 Colonial Legitimation
- 6.4 Let's Sum –Up
- 6.5 Important Questions
- 6.6 References
- 6.7 Web Links.

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### **6.0 OBJECTIVES**

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1. To introduce students to various concepts related to orientalism.
2. To enable them to study the concept of orientalism and its impact on Indian society.
3. To make them understand the concept of othering and how colonizers have carried it out.
4. To make them aware of the concept of colonization and its impact on colonized countries.
5. To introduce students to various tactics used by Colonizers in order to legitimize colonization.
6. To make students aware of various aspects of colonial legitimation.

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### **6.1 INTRODUCTION**

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The world has a history of the display of power, those who were powerful and owned strength ruled over the others. Ruling over the other by using power was not a healthy and smooth process. People were exploited, discriminated against, and marginalized they were killed and suffered because of the whimsical attitude of those who owned power. Britishers were the prominent community who ruled over the world. Nearly one-third of the population in this world was under British rule. Many Asian countries were also colonized by British people, and India is one of them.

In the year 1608, the British people first landed in India for the purpose of trade. But after seeing the wealth of India their purpose has been changed and they started to acquire control over India. The process of the colonization of India happened step by step. First, they entered India for the purpose of trade and gradually they started to legitimize their rule in India. The process of legitimation of colonial ideology was a long process. First, they started the process of othering of natives. After that they started to spread their own ideology in order to legitimize their rule for instance, introducing British Education in India, making the English language a mode of education and learning, introducing missionary culture in India, the spread of Christianity in India, etc. In this unit, we will be looking at the process of legitimation of colonial ideology and the process of othering of native people.

### **Orientalism :**

Edward Said a famous philosopher and thinker in his work “Orientalism” talked about what is orientalism and its various features too. Edward Said has given different definitions of Orientalism in his book, firstly “Orientalism is a style of thought based upon an ontological and epistemological distinction made between ‘the orient’ and (most of the time) ‘the occident’.” Said argued that his distinction emphasized the supremacy of the occident versus the process of othering.

Further Edward Said says,

“Orientalism can be discussed and analyzed as the corporate institution for dealing with the Orient – dealing with it by making a statement about it, authorizing views of it, describing it, by teaching it, settling it, ruling over it: in short orientalism as a western style for dominating, restructuring, and having authority over the orient. (Edward Said)

The above-mentioned definition provides us with the idea of the concept of “Orientalism”. Even the definition is decoding the features of the concept. Edward Said called it an institution that controls various factors of the lives of the orient. It is a western style that has been used for domination and restructuring or having authority over the orient.

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## **6.2 PROCESS OF OTHERING AND REPRESENTATION OF ORIENTAL OTHER**

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I think the process of othering is nothing but the political and societal alienation of a man, caste, race, creed or group of people on the basis of their color, religion, region, or place of birth

The process of othering is a systematic political and psychological process. In history, many examples of othering can be found. The othering of native people by the colonizers can be considered a common example.

When colonizers entered another country, they started to consider themselves superior to the colonized. Even though they decided that their

culture is more superior to native culture even they started to compare natives with savages. The colonizers divided the world in two parts their own world which was superior and the world of natives which was inferior or savage. "othering involves two concepts. 1) The Exotic Other – Exotic other represents a fascination with the inherent dignity and the beauty of the primitive/ undeveloped other, as delineated in Yeats's poem Byzantium poems. 2) Demonic other – Demonic other is represented as inferior, negative, savage, and evil as is described in the novels like "Heart of Darkness and Passage to India".

In simple words "Othering is a pattern of exclusion and marginalization based on having identities that are different from the norm."

In the above definition, we can get the idea of the process of othering in other words othering is a particular pattern of marginalization. This marginalization can be found in many novels written by famous authors like E.M. Forster, Rudyard Kipling, Joseph Conrad, etc.

In *The Heart of Darkness* Africans have been presented as barbarians or exotic others, slaves or working-class people they are savages in the eyes of colonizers. On the contrary, colonizers have been shown more sophisticated and cultured. Conrad is presenting Africa as a center point of Darkness as a Heart of Darkness. It shows the attitude of Conrad toward the colonized country. He has presented African natives as uncultured and cannibals. The native men presented in the work have been presented as frenzied and black. The setting of "Heart of Darkness" is in the jungle which indicates the backwardness and wilderness of the people who live there it indicates how the history of Africa is Dark and uncivilized in the eyes of the author and colonizers.

A similar representation can be found in "Kim" a novel written by Rudyard Kipling "Othering" of the orient is also a central theme of this novel though the author seems a little bit sensitive towards Indian society but that sensitivity is not real. Somehow author is trying to boast the superiority of the English through the central character "Kim". Kim has been presented as the symbol of British authority. His behavior and his language always show that difference in his attitude. Kim's attitude was totally British though he was not been nourished by Britishers.

The representation of oriental other can also be found in "A Passage to India" by E.M. Forster. The central theme of the novel suggests to us that eastern and western cannot be friends. For westerners, colonized countries and their people will always remain other.

Forster's creation of India and its people was doubtful. He has shown that Indian People are mysterious and secretive and even the landscape has been shown as bleak. Chandrapore the city caricatured by Forster is not presented as a clean and sophisticated city he is presenting it as a city where there are various caves that make a unique sound. In this way, Forster is presenting the whole country as another by presenting it backward and mysterious. On the other hand, people from Britain are

shown more sophisticated their manners and habits have been shown better in comparison with Indians.

Even Ms. Adela Quested's attitude toward Dr. Aziz shows the prejudiced attitude of colonizers toward colonized. Ms. Adela Quested's accusation and the whole trial against Dr. Aziz is the presentation of the never-changing gap between the colonizers and colonized.

Chinua Achebe in his famous work *An Image of Africa* comments on the "Heart of Darkness" Achebe Says,

"A Conrad student informed me in Scotland that Africa is merely a setting for the disintegration of the mind of Mr. Kurtz. Which is partly the point. Africa as the setting and backdrop which eliminates the African as human factor. Africa as a metaphysical battlefield devoid of all recognizable humanity, into which the wandering European enters at his peril. Can nobody see the preposterous and perverse arrogance in thus reducing Africa to the role of props for the break-up of one petty European mind? But that is not even the point. The real question is the dehumanization of Africa and Africans which this age-long attitude has fostered and continues to foster in the world. And the question is whether a novel which celebrates this dehumanization, which depersonalizes a portion of the human race, can be called a great work of art."— Chinua Achebe, *An Image of Africa*.

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### 6.3 COLONIAL LEGITIMATION

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After having entered into the host countries Britishers started to take over the control of those countries by draining their natural resources and wealth. After that their purpose got changed. They started to see those countries as the future investment and started to control the politics, Economy, and culture of the colonized countries. They started the process of colonial legitimation through various techniques. Like, as legitimation through education, language, legitimation through culture, and religion, and even used oppression and power to legitimize their rule. The process of this legitimation happened step by step. In this chapter, we are going to understand this process of colonial legitimation in detail.

#### **Legitimation Through Education :**

Legitimation of colonization through education was a prominent move of the colonizers. In order to make their existence more legitimized in the host country they started to take the control of the education of that particular country. In India also British introduced English education to produce a well-educated group who will work for them as clerks. Britisher's decision to introduce English education in India was to introduce Indian people to English language and take over the control of their minds and also create a language divide between natives.

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The medium of their education was in English and it created a burden on the mind of those who were very new to this language. Though the English language proved useful at the University level it became an unnecessary burden among the students of lower classes. In this journey of implementation of English education, other native languages became the scapegoats of the English language. Also, English education created a huge difference between the uneducated and educated people and also the new and the old.

Another serious defect of the implementation of English education in India was that British people never understood the social, economic, and political scenario between the two countries, and without understanding it they implemented the education system in India as they implemented it in Britain, but its consequences were not healthy it created a divide between the people who were educated in English language and those who were educated in the native language.

No doubt English education also brought some positive changes with it. Though their aim was to create a class of clerks through English education. But it didn't get full filled rather it backfired to them because English education produced an intellectual group as well, who contributed to bringing social changes in India. Among these thinkers, some of them are very prominent like Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Debendra Nath Tagore, Keshab Chandra Sen, RamkrishnaParamhansa, Swami Dayananda Saraswati, etc. But the main aim of introducing English education in India remained the same. Their object to introducing it in India was to keep this country in their own clutches and destroy the ancient traditional glory of the country.

### **Legitimation through Language :**

Introducing the English language in India was another powerful and strategic instrument that was designed to help the British Empire to oppress colonized masses. The decision made by East India Company was very strategic. By introducing the English language in India they wanted to create a class of Indians "Babus" who could act as mediators between the uneducated masses and the British government and help the British government to control millions of people who were unaware of this "Alien" language. Secretary to the board of control Lord Macaulay, in a nasty 1835 "Minute on Education", urged the Governor General to teach English to a minority of Indians reasoning we must do our best to form a class who may be interpreters between us and the millions whom we govern; a class of persons, Indians in blood and color but English in test in opinions, in morals and in intellects.

Macaulay was undoubtedly a colonial propagandist and xenophobe who strongly assume that there was no 'culture' in advance of Europe. This is confirmed even from his 'minutes of 2nd Feb 1835' where he said, "...a single shelf of a good European library was worth the whole native literature of India and Arabia..." and

"... I certainly never met with any orientalist who ventured to maintain that the Arabic and Sanscrit poetry could be compared to that of the great European nations. But when we pass from works of imagination to works in which facts are recorded and general principles investigated, the superiority of the Europeans becomes absolutely immeasurable. It is, I believe, no exaggeration to say that all the historical information which has been collected from all the books written in the Sanscrit language is less valuable than what may be found in the most paltry abridgments used at preparatory schools in England..." Is it believable that the same man would

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Furthermore, it was from his misguided, yet impudent assessment of Indian civilization that Macaulay recommended, "...We have to educate a people who cannot at present be educated by means of their mother tongue. We must teach them some foreign languages. The claims of our own language it is hardly necessary to recapitulate... Whoever knows that language has ready access to all the vast intellectual wealth which all the wisest nations of the earth have created... we shall see the strongest reason to think that, of all foreign tongues, the English tongue is that which would be the most useful to our native subjects..."

### **Legitimation through Culture and Religion :**

Legitimation through culture was a well-planned and brilliant move of the British government in order to legitimize their rule in India. Britishers started to introduce their culture in various ways. The first attempt to start cultural legitimation in India was to introduce Christianity and spread Christian ideology among the natives of the colonized country. In order to spread Christian ideology in India British people started various movements like the Conversion of native people to Christianity. They started to provide various facilities to those native people who were ready to accept Christianity by leaving their own religion. In order to spread



their literature and ideology among natives they started to build churches and libraries all over the country and started to organize various sermons which were wholly focused on the teaching of Jesus Christ and Christianity. The major aim of those sermons was to establish the centrality of Christianity and Jesus Christ in the mind of the natives.

Another move was to celebrate various religious programs to make the show off of their culture and religion in front of the natives and to attract them through the representation of the false glory of their religion.

In this way, Britisher's high-jacked the whole cultural and religious sphere in India and in other colonized countries by spreading their own religion and culture.

### **Legitimation through power and oppression :**

There were many strategies used by the modern colonial powers in order to take control over the colonized countries. Among these various strategies colonization through suppression is one of them. In Indian history and in the history of many colonized countries we can site the many examples of colonial suppression. "The first war of Indian Independence 1857 can be considered as a prominent example of the same. Another strategy used by colonizers was to "divide and rule" Richard Morrock, a research scholar talked about the four tactics of Divide and rule, which are as follows, "The four basic tactics of "Divide and rule" practiced by western colonialists are: 1) The creation of differences within the conquered population; 2) The augmentation of existing differences; 3) The channeling or exploitation of existing differences; 4) The politicization of these differences so that they carry over into the post-colonial period. While these tactics tend to overlap, and several or all of them are often used simultaneously, it is nonetheless possible to distinguish among them.

Above mentioned four tactics can be considered as the main strategies used by Britishers to use power and suppress colonized people.

In Passage to India by E.M. Forster Britisher's racial attitude reflects much time, following quotation from Passage to India helps us to understand the attitude of Britishers towards the orient.

Forster says, " "Suspicion in the Oriental is a sort of malignant tumor, a mental malady, that makes him self-conscious and unfriendly suddenly; he trusts and mistrusts at the same time in a way the Westerner cannot comprehend. It is his demon, as the Westerner's is hypocrisy." (- E.M. Forster, A Passage to India, Ch. 32)

### **Legitimation through Judiciary System:**

The introduction of the British judiciary system in India was one of the great masterstrokes of British rulers which legitimized their rule over India. The British judicial system in India was introduced in five systematic phases. First, it was introduced in the province of Surat which

was the first city where English people established their colony. After that, it was introduced in Madras and Bombay. The officers who were making decisions related to various disputes among the people were told to resolve every matter according to the British law system but they themselves were not very proficient in British laws so they started to give decisions according to their whims and their own interests. The second phase of the history of the judicial system was the establishment of the Supreme Court at Calcutta under the regulating act, of 1773. It was a landmark in legal developments in India. The third phase in the development of the judicial system or Anglo – Indian legal history was the control of East India Company over India and the introduction of the “Adalat System”

The fourth phase of the colonial judicial system in India was the establishment of the high court in 1861 under the high court act. The fifth phase of the development of the British judiciary in India was the establishment of “The Privy Council” as the highest place for appeal in India. The way this system was established in India. They have taken control of this country. Even after independence, we couldn't change the whole judiciary system we are still in the clutches of the old judiciary system which was introduced by colonizers. Obscenity trials on many authors like, Saadat Hasan Manto, 1964 judgment of the supreme court of India regarding the ban on D.H the language used by the protagonist and the presentation of nudity in the feature film. All these things are the reflection of the old colonial law introduced by the British. This system of British law is still hovering over us and interfering in the judgments. Even the laws related to L.G.B.T.Q have not been getting changed because of the rigid laws introduced by colonizers.

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## 6.4 LET'S SUM UP

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In this chapter, we have studied how colonizers first started the process of othering and then expanded their rule step by step in colonized countries. The process of othering was totally psychological it made native people look demonic in their own native land and this psychological trauma resulted in the subsequent likeness towards western culture because of this likeness towards the culture of English people, natives started to follow English culture. It was like they were carrying the white mask over their black skin. After this process of othering, they started to legitimize their rule in India and other colonized countries. First, they had taken the control of the most prominent area which is education, and after they started to expand their control in other areas through means of power and oppression. The other areas which they controlled were also prominent. Like, Judiciary, religion, culture, Language, etc. The whole process of legitimation of their rule in colonized countries was nothing but the elimination of the native culture, tradition, mythology, education, and native sensibility towards native culture.

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## 6.5 IMPORTANT QUESTIONS

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- 1) What was the process of othering?
- 2) Describe the process of legitimation of British rule in India

- 3) Describe the steps of Judicial Legitimation of British rule in India
- 4) Describe the Legitimation of British rule through education.
- 5) Describe the various step of colonial legitimation.

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## 6.7 WEB LINKS

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# CRITICAL STUDY OF WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE'S MACBETH PART I

## Unit Structure:

- 7.0 Objectives
- 7.1 Introduction
- 7.2 The universal appeal of Shakespeare and his works
- 7.3 The supreme characterisation of Shakespeare
- 7.4 Summary Of Macbeth

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## 7.0 OBJECTIVES

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1. To study the universality of William Shakespeare
  2. The characterisation of Macbeth
  3. To trace the political background during Shakespeare's time
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## 7.1 INTRODUCTION

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The extent, variety and richness of Shakespeare's plays are quite bewildering as one approaches them. Yet he never took the trouble to be original. He is one of the greatest of literary plagiarists. According to the custom of the times, he borrowed freely from plays already in existence and often simply re-shaped other plays. Few of his plots are his own invention. Most of them are based upon Plutarch's Lives, Holinshed's Chronicles, or other popular classical translations. Still, he shines to us through the intervening darkness of over three centuries with a dazzling light. What is the secret of his superiority which is so universally recognized today?

First of all, his superiority lies in the combination of all the gifts, which were scattered or isolated in the works of others, in the extreme diversity of his talents. He could not surpass the pathos and sublimity of the last scenes of Marlowe's *Dr Faustus*, he created no atmosphere of grief and terror so poignant and terrible as that of Webster's *Duchess of Malfi*. None of his plays is as solidly constructed as Jonson's *The Alchemist*: and Fletcher and Dekker often equal him in lyrical intensity. His greatness, his superiority over his contemporaries lies in the combination of all these gifts. While they tended to be stale and stereotyped, Shakespeare is ever-changing; ever-becoming different from what he was before. Says Legouis, "His flexibility was marvellous. He adapted himself to the most diverse material and seemed to use all with equal ardour and joy." His

dramas are so astonishingly various in kind that no one theory fits them and each of them must be studied separately. He is never found twice at the same point. "He shows equal aptitude for the tragic and the comic, the sentimental and the burlesque, lyrical fantasy and character study, portraits of men and women." This diversity exists everywhere in his dramas.

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## 7.2 THE UNIVERSAL APPEAL OF SHAKESPEARE AND HIS WORKS

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Ben Jonson was right when he said that, "he was not of an age, but of all ages, not of one country but of all countries." He is world's immortal poet. He wrote for the Elizabethan stage and audience; but he is read and enjoyed even today not only by Englishmen but by the English speaking people all over the world. His works have been translated into all the important languages of the world; and the films based upon his dramas continue to draw

packed houses. His freshness and appeal seem to grow the more he is read: the mystery of his own Cleopatra seems to belong to him. Shakespearean drama is like an ever-flowing river of life and beauty, all who thirst for art or truth can have their fill from it.

How does he achieve this universality? Aristotle defined universality as the idealising power in art, i.e. the capacity to lift the narrow world of the story to a higher, wider and vaster world. Shakespeare has this power, for in his works he is constantly generalising, constantly moving from the particular to the general. Thus the particular story of a play becomes a part of the general story of mankind and his men and women a part of the panorama of humanity which continues "unbroken from generation to generation." He deals with powerful elemental passions, with joys and sorrows common to all humanity, so that each one of us shares vicariously in the fate of his characters. As human nature, in its essentials, is the same in all ages and climes his works have a universal appeal. Moreover, as his powers matured the conflict became more and more internalised in his art, till he could lay bare before his readers the very soul of his characters. He could pierce to the hidden centres, the secret sources of impulse and passion, out of which arise the issues of life. He has absolute command over the complexities of thought and emotion that prompt action. "He sweeps with the hand of a master the whole gamut of human experience, from the lowest note to the very top of its compass, from the sportive childish treble of Mamilus, and the pleading boyish tones of Prince Arthur to the spectre-haunted terrors of Macbeth, the tropical passion of Othello, the agonised sense and tortured spirit of Hamlet, the sustained elemental grandeur, the Titanic force, the utterly tragic pathos, of King Lear."

His characters have the complexity, the fullness, the variety of humanity itself: hence his works are of interest to all humanity. Their appeal remains unimpaired even after the lapse of centuries. In this way, his works provide clever Psycho-analysis of human nature and are of immense help to man in understanding his own nature and actions. Moreover, throughout

his works we find gems of practical wisdom and philosophical truth, which are as true and valuable today as when they were penned. We go to him not only for countless passages of poetic beauty-passages which generation after generation have loved to read and memorise but also for moral truth and practical guidance in day-to-day affairs of life. Generalised reflections on human life are scattered all over his works. His works are mines of Beauty, Wisdom and Truth, and hence can never grow stale.

A Shakespearean play, especially his tragedy, reaches beyond the facts of human life and suggests the struggle of man against some mysterious powerful forces lurking beyond the world of the senses; his characters often appear to be helpless puppets in the hands of some malignant power driving them to their doom. Universality is achieved by connecting the Dramatic personae with the universe at large. His works thus acquire a cosmic significance, and his personages become the symbol of mankind struggling against the forces of evil. Commenting on this element of universality in his tragedies, A.C. Bradley writes, "The immense scope of his work; the mass and variety of intense experience which it contains... The vagueness of the convulsion both of nature and of human passion: the vastness of the scene where the action takes place, and of the movements of the figures which cross the scene; the strange atmosphere cold and dark, which strikes on us as we enter the scene, enfolding these figures and magnifying their dim outlines like a winter mist; the half realised suggestions of vast universal powers working in the world of individual fates and passions," all these, and much else, contribute to the universality of his plays. His characters, highly individualised though they be, also symbolise the everlasting types and classes of humanity,

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### 7.3 THE SUPREME CHARACTERISATION OF SHAKESPEARE

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"It is principally in this respect that Shakespeare surpasses all his rivals and is Shakespeare" (Legouis). He could endow historical and imaginary, beings with life, intermittently and by flashes, but constantly. They are all alive, they grow, change and evolve before the very eyes of the readers. "In sheer prodigality of output," says E. Albert, "Shakespeare is unrivalled in literature. From king to clown, from lunatic and semi-devil to saint and seer, from lover to misanthrope, all are revealed with the hand of a master." He is entirely objective and impartial and paints the good and the evil, the wicked, and the virtuous with the same loving care. He is like the proverbial sun in this respect, which shines on the just and the unjust alike. Hence follows the vital force that resides in his creations. They live, move and utter speech; they are rounded, entire and capable. His characters are not lifeless and wooden like those of his contemporaries, but living, breathing realities. They have an unfailing humanity which keeps them within the orbit of our sympathy.

Another feature of Shakespeare's art, one which has made him so great, is his knowledge of stagecraft. His art takes realities into account and is not based merely on abstract principles or theories. He cheerfully accepted the



limitations of his stage and made a virtue of necessity. The scenery which his stage lacked is provided in the text of his plays, with the result that nowhere else do we get more of the picturesque poetry of nature, than in his plays. The tastes of the people were coarse and unrefined and they wanted to have a good laugh at the tricks of the clown. Shakespeare did not reject the clown like Marlowe and others but refined and ennobled him. He made of him a popular philosopher and critic and humanised him. Similarly, he refined the super- natural and brought it into the closest relation with character and action.

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## 7.4 SUMMARY OF MACBETH

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### **The Heroism of Macbeth**

King Duncan of Scotland has been kind and considerate towards his subjects and has earned wide popularity and acclaim. But now he has grown old, and two of his nobles are in revolt against him. These two nobles are The Thane of Cawdor and Macdonwald. In their revolt they are aided and abetted by the king of Norway. However, Macbeth, a noted general and a relative of king Duncan, and Banquo, another General noted for his courage and loyalty, fought so bravely that the rebels were soon routed, leaving thousands dead on the battlefield. When King Duncan came to know of their heroism he was highly pleased. He immediately ordered the beheading of the defeated Thane of Cawdor and at once sent messengers to greet Macbeth with this title. He was already Thane of Glamis and he is now also the Thane of Cawdor.

### **The Witches: Their Prophecy**

As soon as the battle is over Macbeth and Banquo return to the king, to tell him of their success in the battle, and to get further instructions. On the way they have to cross a heath where three witches greet them. They greet the two, and address Macbeth as 'the Thane of Cawdor', and prophecy that he would soon be much greater, i.e. the king himself. They also prophecy that though Banquo himself would not be a king, he would be the father of kings. The first prophecy of the witches is fulfilled shortly afterwards, for soon messengers of the king arrive to greet him with his new title. This leads Macbeth to hope that he would also be the king in the near future. He was ambitious and had already discussed the question with his wife. So he now writes an account of the prophecy of the witches to her, so that she may know all before he reaches home.

### **King Duncan: His Kindness**

On their arrival, the old king affectionately greets and embraces Macbeth and Banquo, and in order to honour Macbeth, declares that he would be his guest for the night at his castle in Inverness. He also announces that his eldest son Malcolm would be his heir and successor. Thus he drives another nail in his own coffin, for it is obvious that if Macbeth is to become the King of Scotland, he must act promptly.



## **The Murder**

Therefore, he hurries home to Inverness, pretending that he is going there in order to make proper arrangements for the reception of the king. Lady Macbeth has already received his letter, and though Macbeth hesitates and vacillates, it is decided Duncan would be murdered that very night while sound sleep, the two attendants asleep in his room would first be made drunk and then smeared with blood, and their blood-smeared daggers near them. The deed is accordingly done, and Macbeth also kills the two attendants as if in anger. As Malcolm and Donalbain very prudently run away they are blamed for the murder. They must have bribed the two attendants. However, all this sounds so very unnatural that there are people who are not convinced, and who look at the whole affair with doubts and suspicions.

## **The Ghost**

Macbeth is duly crowned at Sconce. He gives a feast to celebrate the occasion and Banquo is to be the chief guest on the occasion. But Banquo knew of the prophecy of the witches and Macbeth knows that he must suspect that he has played most foully for it. Moreover, he cannot endure the idea of his sons' becoming the future kings. So Macbeth has him murdered that very night as he is coming for the feast. But his son Fleance escapes. During the feast, Macbeth has hallucinations and he sees the ghost of Banquo seated in the empty chair meant for himself. He would have betrayed everything had not Lady Macbeth come to his rescue, and saved the situation by her tact and self-control. But the doubts of the nobles are further aroused.

## **Macbeth and the Witches**

Macbeth decides to meet the witches again and know more from them. They answer his question with a show of apparitions which they raise by their magic powers. The first is of an armed head, which warns Macbeth to beware of Macduff, the second is of a bloody child, which promises that "none of woman born shall harm Macbeth": The third is of a child crowned with a tree in his hand, which promises him safety until Birnam Wood shall move against him. By these visions his fears are allayed, but his eye-balls are then scared by a show of eight kings and the smiling ghost of Banquo, who points to them as his descendants.

## **Forces Against Him**

Macbeth at once decides to follow their advice and be bloody and bold. Macduff had not come at his invitation to Sconce and so now his wife and children are brutally murdered. This sends a wave of horror through the country and increasingly Macbeth is seen to be the blood-thirsty tyrant into which he has degenerated. Macduff runs away to England to join Malcolm who is already there and to whom the friendly king of England has already promised to help with ten thousand soldiers. Soon they are on

the road to Scotland and as they near their homeland, they are joined with large numbers of Macbeth's subjects who are no longer able to endure his tyranny.

### **Lady Macbeth: Her Death**

Macbeth's downfall has begun and he is beset with troubles all around. Lady Macbeth, unable to face the strain, suffers from deep spiritual anguish and sleep-walks in a powerful scene in which she reveals their secrets to the watching maidservant and the Doctor. She dies soon after when her husband needs most her help and support. Macbeth retains some measure of self-control, till he is told by his attendant that Birnam wood was moving towards Dunsinane. In reality, the marching English army had cut down tree-branches and were using them to cover their numbers.

### **The Last Fight**

Entirely unnerved by the news, Macbeth decides to come out of his fort, and fight the enemy, face to face. He has still some hopes left, for he cannot be killed by any man born of woman. A fierce fight rages for a long time, and there is death and destruction all around. Macbeth fights, most ferociously, till he comes across Macduff. Macduff tells him that he was the man not born of woman, for he was taken out of his mother's womb through a Caesarian operation. Macbeth now realises that the witches were "equivocating fiends" and their lies are seeming truths. They deceive by a show of truth.

### **The New King**

Macduff kills Macbeth soon after and carries his head to Malcolm who is now unanimously elected as the future King of Scotland. He invites all those present for his coronation at Scone, and promises to reward them all suitably for their services. The nation heaves a sigh of relief for the tyrant was no more and now their life, their honour, and their property were all safe. Scotland would again be herself after the aberration of Macbeth's short-lived tyranny. Disorder represented by Macbeth has been put down and now order would be established once again by the legitimate king of the land.

### **Important Characters:**

#### **Duncan, King of Scotland**

Duncan is the King of Scotland, an old, gracious, pious and gentle man, who resembles Lady Macbeth's father in his sleep. He is somewhat too trusting, and will be betrayed twice by Thanes of Cawdor he trusted in the space of a very few days. He does not fight on the front line himself, but leaves this duty to others. He is nevertheless quite prepared to pronounce sentence of death on traitors. He promises to improve the fortunes of his victorious generals Banquo and Macbeth just before announcing Malcolm as his heir. He is stabbed to death in his sleep by Macbeth.

## Malcolm

Malcolm is Duncan's eldest son. Almost captured in the battle that rages at the beginning of the play, he is rescued by the captain. He is named Prince of Cumberland and heir to the throne by Duncan once all the fighting is done. On his father's death, he flees to England, unwilling to trust the Scottish nobles. This allows Macbeth to frame him as the murderer. In time he becomes the rallying point of opposition to Macbeth, and with the English king's help assembles a massive army to recover his throne. To test Macduff's loyalty to Scotland, Malcolm pretends to be a thoroughly vile human being to him; he is reassured that Macduff works for his country and not simply out of hatred when Macduff turns from him. He conceives the idea of camouflaging his army's advance with the trees of Birnam Forest. On his victory, he re-titles the thanes as earls, an English title rather than a Scottish one.

## Donalbain

Donalbain is Duncan's second son. After his father's murder, he suggests to Malcolm that they quickly leave. He flees to Ireland, arguing that by going to separate places he and his brother will be safer. He is not returned to join in the battle against Macbeth.

## Macbeth

Macbeth is Thane of Glamis. A superb general, he is a physically powerful man, able in a fight to eviscerate a man with an upward stroke. The predictions of the witches make a great impression on him; though he insists on reasons for being called Thane of Cawdor, the moment it is confirmed the thought of becoming king lodges in his mind. Very close to his wife, he writes to her of the prediction as soon as he can. Though at first he seems willing to let Fortune take care of bringing him to the throne, the thought of murder cannot be hid, and his wife soon pushes him to it. He still over-thinks the matter, finding out all the moral objections to the act, but he cannot adequately answer his wife's incitements to committing it. He is possessed of a powerful imagination that is able to conjure a dagger before his eyes. As he leaves after killing Duncan, he hears a voice predicting that he will never sleep again, a prediction that comes true. He is quick-witted enough to kill Duncan's grooms as his supposed murderers before they can protest their innocence. Deeply insecure, he is a paranoid king, keeping spies in the household of every nobleman. He plans to have Banquo and Fleance killed in the hopes of undoing the witches' prophecy that Banquo's descendants would take the throne. Once king, he becomes far more manipulative than he was, able to convince the murderers that their complaints against him are actually Banquo's responsibility. He hides the murder plot from his Queen, signaling an end to the closeness of their relationship. Courageous though he may be in battle, he is not proof against the supernatural, as evidenced by the apparition of Banquo's ghost. To explain his fit, he explains to his assembled noblemen that he is subject to an epileptic-type condition, but whether this is true or not is uncertain. By this stage an insomniac, he has

lost all hope of redemption, and is determined to do anything that he must to keep himself safe. To this end he visits the witches. He is reassured by the three apparitions they conjure for him, but fails to note the warnings in their shapes which offer a hint of the loopholes in their promises. Hearing of Macduff's flight, he resolves to now act on his first impulses, and he sends his men to sack Fife and murder all of Macduff's family. The reassurances of the witches lead him to discount the desertions in his ranks, but he is nevertheless grown to a state of despair, thinking that his life has gone on long enough. Still, he arms himself, and swears that he will not simply give up. He cares about his wife in her illness, though his concern for her state of mind may apply as much to his own. By the time Malcolm's army begins its approach, he has lost all touch of the fear that afflicted him in the lead-up to his killing Duncan. He alternates between wild rage and deep, nihilistic depression as his wife commits suicide and his enemies arrive at his gate. He is brought to doubt the witches' promises by the moving forest of Birnam, and in his last moments convinced of their falseness when Macduff reveals the circumstances of his birth. He still pulls up his courage, however, and dies fighting.

### **Banquo**

Banquo is a Scottish Thane, Macbeth's co-general in the wars. He spots the witches before Macbeth does, and is not afraid to question them, wishing for a prediction as to his future as well. When the first prediction comes true, he is startled, and worried that it may make Macbeth covet the crown. He is wary of the dark powers' wiliness. The witches and their prophecies remain on his mind, but he reaffirms his loyalty to Duncan when Macbeth subtly tests it. He suspects Macbeth of Duncan's murder, and his accession to king leaves Banquo in hope that his children may yet take the throne. On being attacked by three murderers, his thoughts are for his son Fleance's safety. After his death, he reappears as a ghost and as an apparition.

### **Macduff**

Macduff is the Thane of Fife. Commanded by Duncan to visit him early in the morning at Macbeth's castle, he discovers the King's body. Though he accepts the explanation that Duncan's attendants committed the murder at his sons' instigation, he refuses to attend Macbeth's coronation. Having refused to attend a feast of Macbeth's, he is cast into disgrace, and travels to England to beg King Edward to help Malcolm overthrow the usurper. His wife accuses him of lacking natural human feeling and of being a coward for having fled. A noble and ethical idealist, he is horrified by Malcolm's listing of his own vices, and finally must conclude that the young man is no more worthy of the throne than Macbeth. The revelation that Malcolm was merely testing him leaves him a touch off-kilter. Though he left them in Scotland, he remains fond of his wife and children, and is devastated when he learns that they have been slaughtered on his account. This grief becomes his chief spur against Macbeth. He leads a part of Malcolm's army, but at the battle of Dunsinane soon abandons them while on a single-minded quest to find and kill Macbeth himself.

Finding him, he wastes little time in dialogue, preferring to trust to his sword. He tears Macbeth's last hope from him by revealing that he was the issue of a Caesarean birth, and threatens him with abject humiliation. In the end, he succeeds in beheading him.

### **Lady Macbeth**

Lady Macbeth is a ruthless woman. More openly ambitious than her husband, she does not shy from murder, and pushes Macbeth towards it. She is worried that his kinder side may keep him from going as far as he may. She calls on the powers of darkness to steel her against remorse or misgiving, and concocts the whole plan of how to kill Duncan. When Macbeth backs out of the thought, she brings him around by a combination of mockery, belittling of his manhood, and accusations of cowardice. She drugs the king's attendants herself, and leaves their daggers when Macbeth will see them. She considers committing the murder herself, but she is troubled by Duncan's resemblance to her father, and forbears. Though frightened while waiting for Macbeth to emerge from Duncan's chamber, she is controlled enough to erase all the evidence afterwards. Once Queen, her closeness with her husband begins to fray as he draws away from her, now hiding his plots. She is at first able to stop the feast from disintegrating into chaos when Macbeth sees Banquo's ghost, but in the end realizes that she must rid the room of witnesses. Consciously she does not suffer the remorse that affects Macbeth; but while he can no longer sleep, she begins to sleepwalk, admitting to her guilt and begging for some way to wash away her sins. In the end she is guilt-ridden enough that she commits suicide.

### **References:**

<https://www.playshakespeare.com/macbeth/characters>



## CRITICAL STUDY OF WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE'S MACBETH PART II

### Unit Structure:

#### 8.0 Objectives

- 8.1 Macbeth expresses the Elizabethan concern with political stability and order
- 8.2 Distortion of values in the play – “Fair is foul and foul is fair”

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### 8.0 OBJECTIVES

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- 1. The unit studies political stability and order during the time of the staging of the play.
- 2. The unit also focuses on the power politics in the play.

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### 8.1 MACBETH EXPRESSES THE ELIZABETHAN CONCERN WITH POLITICAL STABILITY AND ORDER

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At the time when the play was written political stability and order were the prime needs of the hour, and the people were horrified at the very thought of a civil war and political disorder. These burning concerns of the day are reflected in the play and they colour the dramatist's treatment of his sources. Order was the crying need of the hour, and the play begins with order but soon there is disorder. Ultimately this disorder is suppressed, though at the cost of much suffering to the people, and a new order is once again imposed by the new King Malcolm. Thus we have the rhythm order-disorder-order.

Political theory stressed the importance of order in the state, and from the Middle Ages it was assumed that this order should be hierarchical, reflecting the hierarchy of heaven, in which it was thought, the various ranks of spiritual beings were placed one above the other, ascending to God himself. The natural structure of society, therefore, was the hierarchy of different social classes with the king at its apex-God's representative on earth. The same principle of order was to be seen in the natural world, rising from the lowest of material substance through the vegetable and animal kingdoms to man as their natural ruler. Animals, plants and even inanimate things were ranked according to their status. The sun was the monarch of the physical heavens, the lion of animals, the eagle of birds. Because all these hierarchies mirrored each other there was thought to be a sympathetic relationship, or 'correspondence', between them so that disturbances in the one were reflected by disturbances in the others. Thus

when king Duncan is murdered it is appropriate that there are sympathetic disturbances in the elements, that the sun is darkened, a falcon is killed by a mousing owl, and Duncan's horses turn not only on each other but against their natural superior, men. As the old man says,

'Tis unnatural,

Even like the deed that's done.

When the play opens there is perfect order in the state. It is disturbed by the revolt of the Thane of Cawdor, but it is soon put down and order is again imposed. Says A.D.F. Macrae, "In Act I, Scene 4 we have a scene of royal order when King Duncan, pleased with his success in the battle, distributes justice and rewards. Great emphasis is placed on the ties that bind a subject to his king. At the end of the scene, Duncan says (of Macbeth):

And in his commendations I am fed

It is a banquet to me. Let's after him

Whose care is gone before to bid us welcome.

It is a peerless kinsman,

Gradually we come to recognise that banquets are an image of order. In Act III, Scene i, Macbeth issues a special invitation to Banquo to a solemn supper and when the supper begins in Scene iv the new king is careful about the formal arrangements and the guests sit according to their 'degree'. An intimation of disorder comes in the form of the murderer with blood on his face, hardly a suitable guest, and when Macbeth rebukes the absent Banquo he brings disorder to the table. The supper is broken up by Lady Macbeth's command:

Stand not upon the order of your going,

But go at once

The unnamed Lord in Act III scene vi prays that

we may again

Give to our tables meat, sleep to our nights.

Free from our feasts and banquets bloody knives.

Do faithful homage and receive free honours.

Throughout the play there occur images of disorder and sickness. From the 'hurly-burly' of the first scene, through the 'revolt' and 'broil' of the battle, to the scene of hallucination, with the witches we are presented with disturbances of a calm and established social order. Macbeth has a 'heat' oppressed brain and is brain-sickly'. In Act III, Scene i, Macbeth tells the murderers that "we wear our health but sickly in his (Banquo's) life" and



in the following scene his wife tries to comfort him, saying "things without all remedy should be without regard." His mind is 'full of scorpions' and he is determined to bring ruin on the universe,

Ere we will eat our meal in fear, and sleep

In the affliction of these terrible dreams

That shakes us nightly.

Two scenes later his lack of inner control becomes public in his 'solemn That shake us nightly. Supper' when his vision of Banquo's ghost reduces him to a nervous wreck so

that he breaks the 'good meeting'. Such symptoms continue throughout the remainder of the play and are shared by Lady Macbeth whose repressed conscience gives way in her sleepwalking scene.

Macbeth's personal condition is reflected in the disorder in nature on the night of Duncan's murder and subsequently in a sickness in the kingdom of Scotland described to Lady Macduff by Ross and to Malcolm by Macduff. The Doctor says in Act V, Scene i, 'unnatural deeds/Do breed unnatural troubles' and his diagnosis describes accurately the situation where the personal disorder of the king who cannot buckle his distempered cause/ within the belt of rule' is reflected in his country and in the world of nature. The evil and disorder represented by Macbeth is destroyed by retributive justice and order is once again imposed. This emergence of order out of disorder is symbolised by the victory of the new king Malcolm.

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## **8.2 DISTORTION OF VALUES IN THE PLAY – “FAIR IS FOUL AND FOUL IS FAIR”**

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### **(A) The Witches :**

In Macbeth as in some other plays, the dramatist has introduced the ghost of Banquo, as well as unnatural, ominous events like those which take place on the night after the murder of Duncan. But, Macbeth is the only play of our dramatist in which he has introduced the witches. There are three witches in the play. They have their Queen Hecate as well as their familiars (attendant spirits) a toad, a cat, etc. They appear and disappear like bubbles of water. They have their cauldron which they use to cast their spells. They are unnatural creatures-neither men nor women-and they symbolise all that is evil in Nature. Indeed, they provide the antithesis to the divinely ordained order of the universe. They meet in storms and can raise tempests; they are unnatural themselves-women with beards-and they work their spells with fragments torn from organic creatures-the thumb of a pilot and the organs of men and animals that make up their charm: they symbolise sterility and death by their 'withered' appearance, with 'choppy' fingers and 'skinny lips' and they reduce their victims to the same condition-as the First Witch plans to revenge the insult done to her by the sailor's wife:

I'll drain him dry as hay.....

Weary sev'n nights nine times nine

Shall he dwindle, peak and pine.

In Holinshed the three women who accost Macbeth and Banquo are described as 'the weird sisters' and identified with the goddesses of 'destinie-weird' meaning 'fatal', in the sense of foreseeing or controlling fate. Shakespeare retains the name but transforms them into the familiar witches of the English, or Scottish, countryside, to whose malice: unexplained disease in their neighbours, or their neighbours' livestock was often attributed. Witches were not thought to be supernatural beings disappear into it themselves, but supposedly gained their powers by selling their souls to Satan, and were then instructed and controlled by familiar spirits, minor devils which often took the form of birds and animals like the familiars who summon Shakespeare's witches at the end of Act I, scene i. It was their (Liii. 79-82); to raise storms and to foretell the future, as do the apparitions, familiars who enabled them to ride in the air (IV. 1.138), or whom the witches also call their "masters".

Two different attitudes or approaches to the witches are superstitious and the sceptical. In Macbeth the Witches owe their fascination and effectiveness to a skilful combination of both these attitudes. They have all the reality and vividness of actual belief, but there are also suggestions that they are the products of the excited imagination, and so hallucinatory in nature, vivid, external presentation of these forces of evil, combined with a study of their psychological sources and effects on the human mind. They have been brought into close connection with both character and action. As D.R. Elworthy points out, "Macbeth is a study of Evil and this study is generalised by the way in which it is interwoven with the supernatural structure of the play. It has been suggested that the trance-like state of Macbeth and Lady Macbeth, and Macbeth's "raptness" when the witches first tempt him and he sees Banquo's ghost, would have indicated to a Jacobean audience that they were the victims of demonic possession. They behave compulsively, as if they were controlled by evil spirits rather than by their own conscious minds. Macbeth's inability to pray is another symptom of this condition and Lady Macbeth's damned spot might have suggested the devil's mark that was to be found on a witch. She actually assumes the role of a witch when she summons the 'spirits that tend on mortal thoughts' to possess her body, and the Doctor's comment that she needs the divine more than the physician might mean that she is in need of exorcism as well as spiritual healing." 'Fiendlike' certainly seems a more apt description of her than 'butcher' does of Macbeth.

The very first words uttered by the witches, "Fair is foul and foul is fair," strike the key-note of the play, in which the values are all topsy-turvy, and in which the chief protagonist, like Milton's Satan, make evil their goal. This perversion of values and ideals is apparent in their own deformity—they should be women but their beards deny it—and in the mutilated fragments of animals and men from which their charms are brewed, and

its sterility in their withered forms and in the blasted heath on which they meet. Their doctrine reverses the natural order of things: "Fair is foul and foul is fair" is the Satanic principle of 'Evil be thou my good'. It echoes in Macbeth's firstwords, he goes on to adopt it in order to gain the throne, and then finds that he cannot escape from it.

The confusion of 'fair' with 'foul' is the play's constant theme; it is emphasised by the heavy irony of Duncan's misjudgment of the two Thanes of Cawdor and, in contrast, by his son's elaborate testing of Macduff. The play is full of false appearances. The world of this play is the world of false values in which Macbeth is guided by deceptive apparitions and hallucinations. His moral sense becomes as confused as are his physical senses when he cannot distinguish the real from the unreal dagger, and it is the latter that directs him to the murder-he follows unreality. After the murder Lady Macbeth attempts to reassure him with the illusory resemblance between the sleeping and the dead, a recurrent idea in the play, but shortly Macduff will summon them from the 'counterfeit' to 'look on death itself. There is repeated reference to the murderer's need for deception and the false appearance that Macbeth thinks to assume temporarily will become a settled practice; by the time he is planning the murder of Banquo it has become a burden:

Unsafe the while that we

Must.....make our faces vizards to our hearts,

Disguising what they are.

He has condemned himself to living a lie. The same moral is suggested by the numerous images of clothing in the play, which are generally connected with the adoption of a new or false role. By the final scenes, the royal robes have become another burden to Macbeth. His title hangs about him 'like a giant's robe/Upon a dwarfish thief.

The witches' doctrine is in fact a self-deceiving one. 'Foul' is not fair, it only appears so; but the first half of their jingle is true, for what should have been 'fair' kingship 'foul', polluted by the means by which it was obtained. The witches equivocate with Macbeth in their initial promise to him of things that do sound so fair, as well as in the prophecies of the apparitions. He achieves the title of king, but finds that he has sold his soul- his 'external jewel' for something that proves worthless. They keep the word of promise to his ear, but break it to his hope. Banquo does not believe in them and he seems not to care for their prophecy at the time, but their poison works on him also and there are suggestions that he too is lured by their prophecy that he would be the founder of a dynasty of kings.

In the case of Macbeth the influence of these instruments of malevolent forces is much more profound. This is seen in the fact that on his very first appearance on the stage, he closely echoes them when he says, "So foul and fair a I have not seen." They tempt him and lead him away from goodness. Macbeth is peculiarly vulnerable to their influence because he hears them voice the desires of his heart and after his initial fear at being

caught out (Act 1, Scene 3, lines 50-51) his mind moves easily along the route they indicate towards "the imperial theme." Nature is continually invoked in speeches by Macbeth and Lady Macbeth and their very sexlessness (Act 1, Scene 3, lines 44-46) seems to correspond with Lady Macbeth's against her own nature: prayer

Come, you Spirits

That tend on mortal thoughts, unsex me here,

And fill me, from the crown to the toe, top full

Of direst cruelty

Macbeth is able to find them when he chooses later on but he wants to hear only what favours himself. Too late he comes to realise that the Witches have their own purposes into which men fit and which men can serve. The equivocation theme which is central to the play operates most obviously through the Witches and they are the most striking voices of unnaturalness and disorder. Lady Macbeth offers no comment on the Witches, the 'metaphysical, aid'. It is Macbeth who needs the Witches to tell him what is in his own mind but is afraid to acknowledge it as his own. The witches utter riddles, which Macbeth in his weakness interprets in his own apparent interest. He is, therefore, deceived not by the witches but by his ill-founded reliance on his own interpretations:

He shall spurn fate, scorn death and bear

His hopes, 'bove wisdom, grace and fear

And you all know security

Is mortal's chiefest enemy

However, the witches cannot be dismissed as mere hallucinations, as products of Macbeth's heated imagination, like the bloody dagger which he sees in the next Act, for Banquo also sees and hears them, is surprised by their unnatural appearance, and, though at the time, he does not start as does Macbeth, later on it is seen that he too is affected by their prophecy.

### **(B) The Ghost :**

Unlike the witches, the ghost of Banquo which appears in the 'Banquet scene' is entirely hallucinatory in character. It is purely a subjective phenomenon. It is an objectification or externalisation of the subjective state of Macbeth. It is a creation of his guilt-obsessed imagination and as Lady Macbeth reminds him very much like the dagger he sees just before the murder of Duncan. That is why none else of the characters sees him It does not speak and it vanishes as soon as Macbeth takes heart and exclaims:

Hence, horrible shadow

Unreal mockery, hence.

Thus Macbeth himself regards it as 'unreal mockery', a shadow, a mere creation of his heated imagination. Shakespeare thus clearly intends the judicious among the audience to take it to be an illusion, a mental hallucination of Macbeth.

Macbeth sees the ghost just after the murder of Banquo. It is a product of his guilt-obsessed imagination, an instrument of divine punishment and justice. According to D F. Macrae, "Macbeth newly established as king, holds a lavish feast to show his authority and at the beginning of the scene we have the ceremony of guests and hosts and civilised order interrupted by the sly appearance of Macbeth's hired killer. The facade of decency has a murderous heart and the appearance of Banquo's ghost is the harsh reminder of Macbeth's wickedness. The ghost is the externalised form of Macbeth's guilt and fear of discovery, invisible to the others but a terrifying reality to Macbeth himself. His wife loyally and resourcefully tries to protect him and shake him out of his obsession but, as she says, Macbeth is quite "unmanned in folly." Macbeth, a man celebrated for his courage in battle, cringes before the creation of his troubled conscience, and almost betrays himself to the assembled guests. Henceforth they are suspicious, and their suspicion goes on increasing as Macbeth marches ahead on his bloody career.

The supernatural in the play has been closely integrated both with character and action. It is not merely a horrible, crude blood-curdling phenomenon which it is in the works of his lesser contemporaries. Shakespeare has given to his audiences what they wanted, but in a much purified and exalted form.



# A CRITICAL STUDY OF MANSFIELD PARKBY JANE AUSTEN PART I

## Unit Structure:

### 9.0 Objectives

#### 9.1 Mansfield Park: An Introduction

#### 9.2 Style in Mansfield Park

#### 9.3 Money vs Morality in Mansfield Park

#### 9.4 Conclusion

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## 9.0 OBJECTIVES

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In the two units that follow, we will examine Jane Austen's critically acclaimed but controversial novel, *Mansfield Park* (1814). The first unit will provide a brief introduction to the plot, genre, and style of the novel and then proceed to discuss one of its important themes, namely, the dialectic between money and morality. In the second unit, we will first consider how the theme of love and marriage is outlined in the novel, and then discuss what *Mansfield Park* represents and the role it plays in shaping the destinies of the Bertrams whose family home it is, but also of the Crawfords, whose lives and fates closely intertwine with that of the Bertrams. Taken together, the two units will provide a comprehensive overview of the distinguishing features of the novel and a detailed analysis of Austen's treatment of the main themes in the book.

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## 9.1 MANSFIELD PARK: AN INTRODUCTION

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*Mansfield Park* made its appearance in three volumes in May 1814. It was preceded by Jane Austen's other reputed works, namely *Sense and Sensibility* (1811) and *Pride and Prejudice* (1813). *Mansfield Park*, which apparently it took 28 months to write, not only went largely unnoticed on publication but its reception has been problematic ever since it was published. Critical commentary on the novel has been varied mostly because there has been little consensus about what Austen's real objective in writing this novel was. In 1917, for example, the critic Reginald Farrer (in the *Quarterly Review*) praised the novel but commented that in *Mansfield Park*, Austen had succumbed to her 'clerical relations' and conventional moral values; that her didactic concerns had overshadowed her other talents as a writer; and that it was therefore the only one of her books that revealed "a radical dishonesty" (Wiltshire lxiii). Similarly, in

1952, another critic, Marvin Mudrick concluded that in *Mansfield Park* Austen had betrayed herself because where her other novels revealed her attitude to life to be ironic and playful, in this novel she had attacked irony and playfulness and thrown in her lot with the dreary and conventional Fanny and Edmund (lxvi-lxvii). These are just two examples that illustrate how *Mansfield Park* has evoked reactions that have not been flattering to Austen's reputation as an accomplished satirist. The litany of complaints against *Mansfield Park* has included factors such as

the dullness of the heroine, the pomposity of the hero, the ponderous handling of the "ordination" theme, the ambivalent and humourless treatment of the theatrical, the novel's clumsy and rather viperish satire, its essential conservatism, its unusual and heavy-handed didacticism, the coldness of its comic irony. (Halperin 6)

The most severe criticism of the novel has been with regard to Austen's representation of its heroine Fanny Price. Farrer, for example remarked that there was no fictional heroine who was "more repulsive in her cast-iron self-righteousness and steely rigidity of prejudice" than Fanny" (Wiltshire lxiii). The American critic Lionel Trilling echoed this sentiment when he made this comment about her: "Nobody, I believe, has ever found it possible to like the heroine of *Mansfield Park*" (lxvi).

These comments make it clear that while have critics may not have denounced *Mansfield Park* as a failure, it has certainly not received the kind of praise and appreciation that Austen's other novels have received on the whole. The following discussion on *Mansfield Park* will provide some idea of what has been responsible for the novel's uneasy reception over the years.

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## 9.2 STYLE IN MANSFIELD PARK

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*Mansfield Park* begins with a discussion about taking Fanny into the Bertram household (consisting of Sir Thomas Bertram, Lady Bertram, their sons Edmund and Tom and daughters Maria and Julia) so as to lighten the economic burden on her poor parents who have more children than they can afford to provide for. Although willingly adopted by the Bertrams at the age of ten, Fanny is nevertheless reminded (especially by her aunt Mrs. Norris) at every turn that she is the poorer cousin and hence not deserving of the same treatment as the Bertram children. With the exception of Edmund, who becomes her confidant and eventually her husband, Fanny is treated with condescension by almost everyone because of her humble background. Given her placid temperament and her acute awareness of her low social status, Fanny accepts the inferior treatment and strives to prove herself worthy of everyone's approval. The plot thickens with the arrival of the Crawfords (who come to live with their half sister and her husband, the Grants), especially with the romantic entanglements that emerge after their interactions with the Bertrams. Edmund is attracted to Mary Crawford while both of the Bertram sisters are attracted to her brother Henry Crawford. Fanny remains a distant observer, though not entirely disinterested since she has strong feelings for Edmund



which she never expresses. She tells no one how little she thinks of Mary as a prospective wife for Edmund or about the inappropriateness of Henry Crawford's simultaneous encouragement of Julia and Maria's attraction to him. Fanny's strong moral code disapproves of everything that goes against her rather rigid ideas of right and wrong, such as the developing romances between Edmund and Mary, Henry's behaviour towards the sisters, or the match between Maria and James Rushworth. She is especially appalled at all those who take advantage of Sir Bertram's absence to consider putting up a play, that too, a romantic one like *Lovers' Vows*, even if for a small and private family audience.

As the novel progresses, the conflict between Mary and Edmund begins to get more complicated with Edmund's decision to become a clergyman, and for Fanny, tension heightens when Henry Crawford makes obvious his desire for her. Knowing what she knows of him, she rejects his proposal to the utter surprise and consternation of everyone, especially Sir Bertram. Given her humble background, Fanny's rejection of a man like Henry is seen as evidence of her ingratitude and arrogance. Fanny is forced to return to her parental home at Portsmouth for a while because Sir Bertram thinks she needs to be taught a lesson. He hopes that she will reconsider Henry's proposal once she realises how lucky she is to have someone like him want her as his wife. To her surprise, Fanny finds herself missing the quiet, calm, and dignified life at Mansfield Park. However, just when she was beginning to have a change of heart about Henry, his affair with the married Maria becomes public. Maria's subsequent divorce from Rushworth is a grave embarrassment for the Bertram family. The novel ends with a victory for Fanny on both counts: on the one hand, her judgement about Henry's character is vindicated while on the other, Edmund finally realises that she, not Mary, will make him the perfect wife. This happy ending, however, has been seen as forced and unconvincing by readers and critics alike. Moreover, Austen has been criticised for turning her back on her usual ironic authorial stance by in the last part of the book:

The pointed irony of the first two and a half volumes of the novel, the generally effective satirical treatment of Mansfield's vapidness, disintegrates in the novel's last eleven chapters and is metamorphosed instead into an idealization of Mansfield at the expense of Portsmouth. Jane Austen knows how vacuous Mansfield really is, but in the last sections of the novel she seems to have ignored or forgotten it. (Halperin 12)

Like most novels of its time, *Mansfield Park* is written in the realistic tradition. It, therefore, pays close attention to details in matters of speech, dress, and behaviour as it records the minutiae of the daily lives of its many intriguing characters. In addition to realism, the novel also incorporates the epistolary genre at certain junctures through the exchange of letters between some of its principal characters. These letters, such as the ones Edmund and Mary write to Fanny, make not only their respective recipients but also the reader privy to the innermost thoughts and emotions of both, the letter-writer and the one reading the letter. It is in the letters written by Edmund and Mary, for example, that we learn of the conflict in

their minds with regard to their relationship even as we get to know what Fanny thinks of their dilemmas.

While the use of letters allows the third person omniscient narrator to give readers a direct and intimate peek into the minds of some of her characters, the episodic nature of the plot fulfils a similar purpose. Examples of some of the important episodes in the novel are the ones that deal with the preparations for the performance of the play *Lovers' Vows*, Mary Crawford's presentation of the gold chain Henry had gifted her to Fanny, the visit to Sotherton, and Fanny's visit to her family home in Portsmouth. The plot dwells on each episode for a length of time before it moves on to another, and for a while, the action comes to a standstill as the characters express their opinions about the subject at hand. These episodes are important because they allow for a steady unveiling of the ideologies of the novel's characters. The dialogues, however, are often lacking in Austen's trademark humour and wit. Not only does this make a dent in her reputation as a master satirist, but also makes it difficult to pinpoint exactly who is being mocked, who is not, and for what exactly. The difficulty in identifying with certainty whose worldview the author supports and whose she does not is one of the reasons for the widely contrasting and not so commendatory reviews of *Mansfield Park*.

More often than not, critics' disappointment with Austen's novel has had to do with her treatment of the novel's themes, not with the themes themselves. Thus, if a novel like *Pride and Prejudice* seems so different from *Mansfield Park* despite its similar focus on love and marriage, it is because the treatment of these themes differs so much in the two novels. *Mansfield Park* sorely lacks what *Pride and Prejudice* has in abundance—humour, wit, irony, and satire—Austen's most celebrated qualities. Few would disagree with Germaine Paulo Walsh's observation that in *Mansfield Park*, "Austen turned her back on this style of writing, and taking on a more sober and excessively moralistic style, wrote her least pleasing, most overtly rationalistic tome, in which irony has no place" (17). Instead of her usual playful humour, what one finds in *Mansfield Park* is "a humour that is increasingly corrective and reproofs that are increasingly pervasive. Wisdom is preferred to wit" (Draffan 372). The result is that the novel is often weighed down by a style of writing that is heavy and almost pedantic, especially in the lengthy sections devoted to discussions on the morality of matters such as career and marriage.

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### 9.3 MORALITY VS MONEY IN MANSFIELD PARK

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The importance of morality and virtue is perhaps highlighted most insistently in the representation of the novel's heroine, Fanny Price, a woman who doggedly holds on to her ideals no matter what. Some critics contend that Austen's true intention was to offer Fanny Price not as a model of virtue to be admired and imitated but as an anti-heroine or as a parody of the kind of virtuous heroines typically found in the pages of the instructive novels popular in those days (Walsh 18). Walsh, however, takes the middle ground in arguing that although there could be some truth to the theory that *Mansfield Park* subverts the novels of instruction written

to be used as handbooks of moral conduct for young women, Fanny Price is not quite the anti-heroine or as unappetising a character as she has been thought to be since “as the book progresses, the reader comes to sympathize more and more with Fanny, to admire her strength of will, purity of heart, and good judgment” (18). In a similar vein, Halperin commends Fanny Price for being so markedly different from the other characters in Mansfield Park:

its leading people are locked into patterns of heartlessness (Sir Thomas Bertram), insipidity (Lady Bertram), avarice (Mrs. Norris), sensuality (Tom Bertram), shallow priggishness (Edmund Bertram), promiscuity (Maria Bertram), jealousy (Julia Bertram), and gluttony (Dr. Grant), to mention but a few of the things wrong with it. Most of these people think and talk almost exclusively of money and feel little beyond their own selfish desires. (6-7)

Certainly, there is some credence to the view that Fanny is not as insipid as she appears to be. Even if she rarely speaks up, she has strong views on everything. When called upon to express herself, she exhibits the moral courage to speak out and act on her convictions at the risk of displeasing others. Perhaps the most significant of such instances is when she stands up to none other than Sir Bertram, her benefactor and a man not easily crossed, steadfastly refusing to change her mind about Henry's proposal. According to Halperin,

Fanny's moral strength is tied to her religious convictions. On several occasions, Austen indicates that Fanny's character, her ability to understand and act in ways that conform with her “duty,” is the result of deep and sustained reflection about moral and religious principles. (19)

Fanny's rejection of Henry Crawford despite his ardent attentions and his status as an eligible bachelor brings to mind the kind of courage that Elizabeth, the heroine of *Pride and Prejudice* shows in refusing first Mr. Collins despite his privileged social status as a clergyman and later, even Darcy, the richest and most eligible bachelor in town. In both instances, Elizabeth stands her ground against those who think her selfish and silly for turning down such valuable offers of marriage. Like Elizabeth, who willingly jeopardises her future by turning down men who do not conform to her ideals, Fanny exhibits a similar strength of character and integrity in rejecting Henry Crawford because she cannot condone his cavalier treatment of Maria Bertram's feelings for him.

Other than the emphasis on Fanny as a virtuous heroine, the religious element in *Mansfield Park* is also found in those parts that focus on Edmund's decision to become a clergyman, something that Fanny supports but which jeopardises his relationship with Mary Crawford. Austen had apparently confided to her sister in a letter that in *Mansfield Park* she was going to deal with a new subject, namely ordination (Wiltshire lxvi). At the time that Austen was writing *Mansfield Park*, the ‘fathers of the Victorians’ were vociferously debating morality and the church in a mood of “Anglican seriousness” (li). *Mansfield Park* was

written against the backdrop of this “project of national renewal that depended upon reforming the ‘manners’ of the leisured and governing classes” (li). However, while some believe that the novel shows that Austen was more sympathetic of Evangelicalism than she had earlier been, others argue that the novel is actually a critique of Evangelicalism rather than an endorsement of it.

It is indeed strange that a novel whose main preoccupation was supposed to be ordination shows itself to be more obsessed with money. With the exception of those like Fanny and Edmund, we see that financial matters are of primary importance to most other characters in the novel. Mary Crawford, in particular, is conflicted about marrying Edmund because she knows that the life of clergyman's will not be economically rewarding. Whether marriage or career, it is their anticipated economic advantages and disadvantages that feature prominently in the debates that the novel's characters engage in. Lady Bertram, for example, tells her niece: "I could do very well without you, if you were married to a man of such good estate as Mr. Crawford. ... it is every young woman's duty to accept such a very unexceptionable offer as this." (Austen 384). Similarly, Sir Bertram's primary objective in sending Fanny back to her parental home for two months is because he thinks her years at Mansfield Park have spoilt her. He hopes that some time at Portsmouth will remind her of the value of wealth and prosperity: "A residence of eight or nine years in the abode of wealth and plenty had a little disordered her powers of comparing and judging. Her Father's house would, in all probability, teach her the value of a good income"(426). These are just some examples of the ways in which Mansfield Park repeatedly and insistently dramatizes the conflict between those who value material prosperity above moral integrity and those who do not.

For those who have money, class consciousness naturally weighs heavily on their minds, and both men and women exhibit an equal determination to ensure that class distinctions are maintained. We see how Mrs. Norris and Lady Bertram treat Fanny, with the overt approval of Sir Bertram despite his benevolence towards her on many occasions. Fanny thus finds herself in a Cinderella-like position, always reminded that she cannot expect to be treated the same as her cousins Maria and Julia. She is less a daughter than a handmaid to Lady Bertram, given how she is expected to be at her beck and call for every little thing. She is allowed to use the East Room only because no one else wants it. She is supposed to be on her feet all day long, and is rarely allowed to rest or participate in any festivities. It is only Edmund who is sensitive to her plight, and intervenes on her behalf. When the topic of a visit to Sotherton is broached and Mrs. Norris suggests it is best that Fanny stay back, she is only allowed to go because Edmund offers to stay back with his mother. The extent to which class consciousness pervades the upper echelons of society is also hinted at when Fanny's brother William confesses to her that going to the Assembly might be a futile exercise since

The Portsmouth girls turn up their noses at anybody who has not a commission. One might as well be nothing as a midshipman. One is

nothing indeed. You remember the Gregorys; they are grown up amazing fine girls, but they will hardly speak to me, because Lucy is courted by a lieutenant. (290)

Fanny assures him that once he becomes a lieutenant, he will not have to be ashamed about such things anymore. If for men, like William, opening the door to privileged social circles is through a respectable career with a high income, for women, upward mobility can only take place through marriage. Thus Henry, for all his other faults, is not insensible of how he can catapult Fanny into a higher social stratum by marrying her, something that the Bertram family cannot do: “What can Sir Thomas and Edmund together do, what do they do for her happiness, comfort, honour, and dignity in the world to what I shall do?” (344). When Henry makes a concerted effort to ensure that William becomes a lieutenant, he is well aware of its social and monetary implications for himself and his family. The impact of Henry’s gesture is not lost on Fanny either, who finds herself even more conflicted about refusing a man who has helped her brother move up the social ladder. This is the reality of Mansfield Park, and although the author does not dwell too much on the darker side of such a class-conscious-ridden society, such instances hint at the serious economic and psychological consequences for those only allowed to look in from the outside.

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## 9.4 CONCLUSION

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In this unit we have derived some understanding of the reception of Mansfield Park and why it has been viewed as problematic despite the general consensus that it is one of Austen’s most complex and intriguing novels. We have also understood the interplay of socio-cultural and economic factors and how the conflict between the value that the characters assign to money and moral character determines who they are, the choices they make, and the happy or unhappy consequences those choices lead to.



## A CRITICAL STUDY OF MANSFIELD PARKBY JANE AUSTEN

### PART II

#### Unit Structure:

10.1 Love and Marriage in Mansfield Park

10.2 Mansfield Park

10.3 Conclusion

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#### 10.1 LOVE AND MARRIAGE IN MANSFIELD PARK

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The importance of social and economic factors in Mansfield Park is amply evident in matters related to love and marriage. We are told, for example, that when marrying Lady Bertram, all that mattered to Sir Bertram was her beauty, while she was only concerned with his wealth and prosperity: “She likes the look of the establishment and he likes the look of her. They are both pompous fools” (Draffan 373). When it comes to his daughter’s marriage, even though Sir Bertram sees Maria’s indifference and coldness towards her fiancé and offers to break off the impending marriage because he does not want her to be unhappy, he does not protest too much when Maria insists on marrying Rushworth because he understands that the match would be advantageous for everyone concerned. Later, when it comes to Fanny, Sir Bertram is furious to know that she has refused Henry partly because he was convinced that Henry was genuinely in love with her but more because he fails to understand why any woman would refuse a man of Henry’s wealth and social status. Readers of Mansfield Park are never allowed to forget the role that money plays in the lives of its characters. Nearly every time a character is introduced, we are informed about what exactly they are worth financially. In fact, the opening lines of the novel underscore the significance of income when we are told that Lady Bertram, with an income of only 7000 pounds, was fortunate to have married a man like Sir Bertram. Further, we are given to understand that this match made it easier for her sisters to find similarly rich men to marry but that they did not fare as well as Lady Bertram because on married a man with “scarcely any private fortune” and the other (Fanny’s mother) fared even worse because she married someone “without education, fortune, or connections” (Austen 4). In these examples, there seems to be a clear connection between economic prosperity and marital bliss.

Such an emphasis on wealth and status as the primary considerations for marriage is also found among some of the younger characters. Maria chooses Rushworth despite her awareness that he is not the right man for her because she feels obliged to marry someone of an equal or superior



economic status than her own. Like with the Bertram's, money matters above all else for Mary Crawford too. The only reason she hesitates to marry Edmund despite her love for him is because she knows he will not earn much in his chosen profession as a clergyman. The importance of money for Mary is evident in many statements she makes, such as this comment about Maria's impending marriage to Rushworth: "Such a match as Miss Bertram has made is a public blessing. . . A large income is the best recipe for happiness I ever heard of" (Austen 248). In fact, before she turned her attentions to Edmund, Mary had thought Tom a suitable match because he had in his favour the following things:

a park, a real park five miles round, a spacious modern-built house, so well placed and well screened as to deserve to be in any collection of engravings of gentlemen's seats in the kingdom, and wanting only to be completely new furnished—pleasant sisters, a quiet mother, and an agreeable man himself—with the advantage of being tied up from much gaming at present, by a promise to his father, and of being Sir Thomas hereafter. (Austen 55)

After a calculative assessment of these benefits, Mary concludes, "It might do very well; she believed she should accept him" (Austen 55). Marriage, then, is a transaction that has nearly everything to do with the monetary advantages it can accrue, and very little to do with love, if at all.

As a staunch realist, Mary's views on marriage are not only cold and rational but also quite cynical. She is convinced not only that marriage is a "manoeuvring business," but that "of all transactions, the one in which people expect most from others, and are least honest themselves." (Austen 53). Mary's idea of marriage as a contract that is rooted in deception is the result of her observations of marriages she has witnessed:

I know so many who have married in the full expectation and confidence of some one particular advantage in the connection, or accomplishment or good quality in the person, who have found themselves entirely deceived, and been obliged to put up with exactly the reverse! What is this, but a take in? (53-54)

Mary's opinion of marriage is duly countered by Mrs. Grant who claims that the partners involved must keep their expectations in check: "There will be little rubs and disappointments everywhere, and we are all apt to expect too much" (54). On the subject of marriage, Sir Bertram believes that men should get married by the age of 24, especially if he has the means for it. It is for this reason that he appreciates Henry's readiness to get married and feels disappointed in Tom's lack of inclination towards marriage. Mansfield Park thus makes readers privy to diverse opinions about marriage, and more often than not, the author rarely intervenes to sanctify the legitimacy of any particular characters' point of view. Yet, there are moments when Austen makes clear where she stands. About the budding romance between Edmund and Mary, Austen satirises the 'love at first sight' phenomenon in her characteristic ironic style:

A young woman, pretty, lively, with a harp as elegant as herself; and both placed near a window, cut down to the ground, and opening on a little



lawn, surrounded by shrubs in the rich foliage of summer, was enough to catch any man's heart. The season, the scene, the air, were all favourable to tenderness and sentiment. (76)

All you need to fall in love is the right ambience, or so the author mockingly implies. Not surprisingly, Edmund finds himself deeply attracted to Mary within a week of hearing and watching her play the harp. Such refreshing instances of irony prevent *Mansfield Park* from descending into a dreary sermon delivered by a lesser author.

What is interesting, however, is that because marriage is considered a necessary obligation by everyone, the younger characters seem to accept that love is required for a happy marriage, at least in principle if not in actual practice. Youngsters like Edmund, Mary, Maria, Julia, Henry, and Rushworth for example, struggle to understand what love truly is and who they are in love with, if at all, and why. Often, they convince themselves that they are in love even when they are not. Austen tells us, for instance, that Rushworth, although attracted to Miss Bertram from the moment he sees her, "soon fancied himself in love" because he was already "inclined to marry" (Austen 44). The 21-year-old Maria, on her part, "was beginning to think matrimony a duty" and a "moral obligation," and it is for this reason that she is quick to accept Rushworth as a "conquest" (44). For Maria, Rushworth's qualifications include that "there was nothing disagreeable in his figure or address," that his income was greater than her father's, and that he has a house in town (44). As Edmund thinks to himself, "If this man had not twelve thousand a year, he would be a very stupid fellow" (46). Yet, Maria and Rushworth delude themselves into believing they are marrying for love, not convenience. Then we have Henry who thinks that love is a game and something that can be easily manufactured. He confides in Mary about his plan to make Fanny fall in love with him, to make "a small hole in her heart" (267). However, even when he begins to develop genuine love and respect for her, his determination to have her consent is mostly because she does not care for him:

He was in love, very much in love; and it was a love which, operating on an active, sanguine spirit, of more warmth than delicacy, made her affection appear of greater consequence, because it was withheld, and determined him to have the glory, as well as the felicity, of forcing her to love him. (Austen 376)

To be fair to Henry, he sympathises with the patronising treatment Fanny is subjected to at *Mansfield Park* better than anyone else. About his decision to marry her, he says to Mary— "And they will now see their cousin treated as she ought to be, and I wish they may be heartily ashamed of their own abominable neglect and unkindness" (Austen 344). But despite having Fanny's best interests at heart, his affair with Maria cannot be condoned, least of all by Fanny herself. That he does not succeed is a triumph for Fanny, who shows her maturity in wondering how anyone, especially Henry's sisters, can expect her to instantly reciprocate his feelings for her:

How then was I to be—to be in love with him the moment he said he was with me? How was I to have an attachment at his service, as soon as it was asked for? His sisters should consider me as well as him. The higher his deserts, the more improper for me ever to have thought of him. And, and—we think very differently of the nature of women, if they can imagine a woman so very soon capable of returning an affection as this seems to imply. (408)

Edmund too echoes Fanny's feelings even if he doesn't otherwise object to Henry as a suitable husband for Fanny. As he puts it to Fanny, "Let him have all the perfections in the world, I think it ought not to be set down as certain, that a man must be acceptable to every woman he may happen to like himself" (408). Both Edmund and Fanny assert a woman's right to accept or reject a man as she sees fit. In *Mansfield Park*, one finds many such instances that highlight the various facets and dimensions of romantic love, whether as an infatuation, as a forced emotion, or as the product of a mature and realistic assessment of a potential lover's character.

The last kind is the one that we find in Edmund and Fanny, the only two characters in *Mansfield Park* who value character more than social and economic advantages. Fanny's instant dismissal of Henry, and Edmund's eventual rejection of Mary occur because they find their respective suitors morally flawed. It is perhaps fitting then that Edmund and Fanny eventually marry each other, however unconvincing it might seem given that Edmund turns to Fanny so soon after he parts ways with Mary, the woman he was ardently in love with the whole time. Edmund was well aware that Mary was highly influenced by the "fashionable world" and by "the habits of wealth," but as he confessed in a letter to Fanny, "I cannot give her up" (Austen 489). That Edmund turns away from Mary to Fanny at the end only illustrates, according to Walsh, that what Austen was trying "to show that real love, the kind of love that can remain strong over the course of one's lifetime, is not based fundamentally in passion or emotion but in the partners' recognition of their respective virtues and their mutual esteem" (21).

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## 10.2 MANSFIELD PARK

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*Mansfield Park*, sometimes described as a country novel, is as much about the house as it is about anything else, and the fate of its principal characters is inextricably linked to it. As Draffan remarks, "There exists at the house a set of values inculcated by Sir Thomas and accepted, albeit passively, by Lady Bertram" (372). *Mansfield Park* is intimidating; its towering presence overshadows everyone, most of all, the timid Fanny: "Mansfield, in its treatment of Fanny, betrays how appallingly inward-looking and insensitive a milieu it is" (374). Yet, even as *Mansfield Park* represents established values that the members of its family and Fanny abide by, it fails in making outsiders like the Grants and especially the Crawfords conform to its moral codes. Even someone like Fanny, for all her desperate efforts to fit in, turns her back on *Mansfield Park* when she refuses to give in to the pressure to marry Henry Crawford. For that matter, even the members of Bertram family openly flout its norms, like when they decide to take advantage of the absence of its arch patriarch Sir

Thomas to perform *Lover's Vows*. The debates over the play and the stance the characters assume with regard to acting in it take up a few pages, but clearly reflect how the different characters, whether insiders or outsiders to *Mansfield Park*, are not always in harmony with its code of ethics.

The struggle of the Bertram children to find love and success, raises questions about whether it is *Mansfield Park* itself that has bred the seeds of their dissent and failure. The Bertrams, especially the Bertram sisters, pride themselves on their social and economic standing, believing themselves to be genteel, cultured, and sophisticated. According to Draffan, it is for this very reason that Henry Crawford finds it possible to charm his way into their hearts: "When Henry flirts with them he confirms them in their belief that they are 'the finest young women in the country and so they are willing victims'" (376). For all their father's efforts to maintain their superiority and status, neither Maria nor Julia find the happy marriages they were thought they were destined for.

IN stark contrast to the austere magnificence of *Mansfield Park* is Fanny's home at Portsmouth. The difference between the two places is highlighted through the eyes of Fanny herself when she returns to her childhood home after her long absence. To her own surprise, *Mansfield Park* gains substantially in stature and affection in Fanny's eyes, while her own parents correspondingly diminish in worth. Fanny sees that her father was "He did not want abilities; but he had no curiosity, and no information beyond his profession; he read only the newspaper and the navy-list; he talked only of the dockyard, the harbour, Spithead, and the Motherbank; he swore and he drank, he was dirty and gross" (Austen 450). Her mother is a greater disappointment; she was a woman "who had no talent, no conversation, no affection towards herself; no curiosity to know her better, no desire of her friendship, and no inclination for her company that could lessen her sense of such feelings" (451-52). It is not just the members of her family but the extended community that also comes in for criticism: "The men appeared to her all coarse, the women all pert, everybody underbred; and she gave as little contentment as she received from introductions either to old or new acquaintance" (457). Seen from Fanny's point of view, *Mansfield Park*, not Portsmouth, is now home. Its dour environment notwithstanding, Fanny now sees it as a place that represents a far more desirable set of values than Portsmouth can ever hope to aspire to: "The elegance, propriety, regularity, harmony—and perhaps, above all, the peace and tranquillity of *Mansfield*, were brought to her remembrance every hour of the day, by the prevalence of everything opposite to them here" (453).

The truth, however, is that *Mansfield Park*, though elegant and peaceful, it is also dry and stuffy just like its owner Sir Thomas and his wife Lady Bertram, who embody "the depersonalisation and deanimation that the place encourages" (Draffan 381). The result is that "stability, tranquillity, and conformity are nourished to such a degree that animation and informality are regarded as undermining forces" (378). Halperin claims that in choosing to shift the action to Portsmouth in the last section of the novel, Austen made a mistake because it showed beyond doubt how

“vacuous” a place Mansfield Park was (12). Fanny’s longing to return to the “superficial allure” of Mansfield Park then, is not a sign of her having moved up in life but a sign of “Mansfield’s corrosion” (Draffan 377). Further, because Mansfield Park represents “vapidity” and Portsmouth, whatever its other failings, represents “life,” Fanny’s discomfort at her family home and her pining for Mansfield Park reveals a regression in her character. Fanny, “who was apparently happy at Portsmouth during the first ten years of her life, has been bred up at Mansfield to appreciate only decorum and restraint. She cannot deal with life, with “noise, disorder, and impropriety” (6, 13). What’s more, that Fanny worries about what Henry Crawford, the man who she rejected on account of his doubtful moral character, will think of her family reveals the extent of Mansfield Park has influenced her: “When Crawford comes to call upon her, Fanny’s chief feeling is shame for her home and family. . . . Fanny knows Crawford’s moral nature, yet elevates him in her mind’s eye over the Portsmouth household” (Halperin 16). If Fanny now judges her family as vastly inferior to a man she holds in esteem, it only shows that “She has indeed become a worthy ambassadress of Mansfield Park” (16).

Not just Fanny, but even Edmund, etched as possessing as strong a moral code as Fanny, who is tainted by Mansfield Park. This is evident in the letters he writes to Fanny and in which he confides how he still longs for Mary despite everything but especially when he claims that he would rather lose Mary for being poor than because of his decision to become a clergyman. This confession reveals a “shallowness” in his character that Fanny is unable to see because “Mansfield has blinded both of them” (Halperin 17). The moral corruption of Mansfield Park, as some critics have called it, also shows itself in the fate of the daughters of the Bertram family. Maria and Julia Bertram, who are brought up to be vain and selfish. Not surprisingly, Maria runs off with Crawford and Julia with Mr. Yates. Although the novel ends well for most of the characters, Sir Bertram finally recognises that something has gone wrong in Mansfield Park, and that he was perhaps responsible for the lack of character in some of his children.

One could argue that Mansfield Park is simply a reflection of the larger social structure it is embedded in. Consider, for example, the rather regressive and facile ideologies about women that inform the broader society that it is situated in. We see how much is made of Mary Crawford because of her beauty, her ability to play the harp, and her strength in riding a horse. In Volume I, chapter 5, Mary, Edmund, and Tom discuss the custom of girls ‘coming out’ at the appropriate age. While Mary waxes eloquent on the subject of how easy it is to identify which young girl was out and who was not, Edmund refuses to tell her whether Fanny was out or not get claiming he does not understand the system: “My cousin is grown up. She has the age and sense of a woman, but the outs and not outs are beyond me” (Austen 56). Tom then narrates the social gaffe he had committed when he mistakenly gave his attention to the youngest of the Miss Syneders who was not yet out and in so doing, had offended the elder sister. The debate between the three young people allows the author to underscore the fickleness of such cultural norms

without seeming to be overtly critical of them. In many such cases, the omniscient narrator stays in the background, letting her characters speak for themselves, rarely intruding to reveal her own position on these matters. Austen's satire, to the extent that it intrudes in the rendition of her characters' dialogues, is generally understated and not always easy to identify, another reason why this novel has earned a motley of critical reviews over the years.

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### 10.3 CONCLUSION

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The brief analysis of *Mansfield Park* provided in the two units illustrates how it is a dense and complex novel that one cannot arrive at easy conclusions about. We see how its characters struggle to make sense of their world and determine the course of their own destiny even if its consequences are not always advantageous to themselves, or pleasing to their family and the society they belong to. The novel takes on themes such as love, marriage, career, religion, and morality, and explores its discrete significations for its different characters. While the novel seems to privilege the values that its heroine Fanny embodies, it also complicates notions of virtue and moral integrity as they are rooted in the social class and culture of the era in which Austen produced her works of fiction. Spatial contexts play a vital role in *Mansfield Park*; its characters cannot remain immune to the influences of the households they belong to or become a part of. Whether they uphold or defy the ideologies of the home and socio-economic classes they are born into, the characters in *Mansfield Park* are presented in sharp contrast and conflict with each other, thereby complicating the novel's presentation of its primary themes. Various descriptions of the novel as radical, revolutionary, uneasy, controversial, unconventional, and subversive — *Mansfield Park* remains one of Jane Austen's most discussed novels for its complex rendition of class, gender, sexuality, and morality as constructs that individuals must negotiate in their quest for meaningful relationships and personal fulfilment and happiness.

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## CRITICAL STUDY OF EMILY BRONTË'S WUTHERING HEIGHTS

### Unit Structure :

- 11.0 Objectives
- 11.1 Introduction - Emily Brontë
- 11.2 Plot Overview- Wuthering Heights
- 11.3 Characters
- 11.4 Themes
- 11.5 Symbols
- 11.6 Critical Assessment of the novel
- 11.7 Summing up
- 11.8 Suggested Reading
- 11.9 Self-check exercises - Questions
- 11.10 References

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### 11.0 OBJECTIVES

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In this chapter, the learner is provided with a brief introduction of the author Emily Brontë and shares some snippets from her life. The learner will be introduced concisely to the one and only work in prose by the author Wuthering Heights as prescribed in the syllabus. The novel is summarized and analyzed critically. By the end of the chapter, the learner will be advanced to understanding the themes used in this famous work and understand the work critically. At the end of the chapter, all the learnings will be summed up in short for the learner, followed by a self-check exercise.

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### 11.1 INTRODUCTION

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Brontë was one of the six children born to Maria Branwell Brontë and the Reverend Patrick Brontë. On July 30, 1818, she was born in Thornton, Yorkshire, England. She had six siblings: Maria, Elizabeth, Charlotte, Anne, and Branwell. She first encountered the moors, a section of the Pennine Chain of mountains, when her family relocated to Haworth when she was two years old. She remained in this location until her death.



Her life was shaped by a number of different factors. Even though Emily Brontë lived a life that was almost absolutely isolated, she had access to literature. Her cleric father, an Irish-born, was also renowned for his poetry and creative mind. Since Emily's mother, a devoted Protestant, passed away when she was just three years old, everything she knew about her came from her siblings and her aunt Elizabeth (Maria's sister), who took care of the kids following Maria's passing. Maria's sister Elizabeth introduced a desire for religion to the family that Brontë immediately rejected.

The surroundings of Brontë's life and work influenced her. Emily read a lot of books. She and the other family members were familiar with both classic writers like Shakespeare, as well as modern romanticists like Scott, Wordsworth, and Byron. Emily Brontë enjoyed reading the articles, reviews, and stories that appeared in Blackwood's Magazine, particularly those that had a Gothic feel to her. The Brontë sisters experienced significant romantic influences as children and from an early age started to imagine a fantasy world. Even as young children, they had a keen sense of imagination and enjoyed writing creatively. When Emily was only a little girl of twelve, she created the mysterious and fantastical Gondal world in a collection of poetry. She also wrote a number of little poems, which Charlotte later discovered by mistake in the fall of 1845. Charlotte recognized in the poems a strange sound that was wild, melancholic, and elevating. At that time, Anne hesitantly wrote some of her own poetry, which had a unique brand of gentle genuine melancholy. The three sisters then made the decision to release a short book of their poems. Poems by Currer, Ellis, and Acton Bell appeared in a small collection in May 1846. It was published by Aylott and Jones. However, the book only generated sales of two.

Now the three sisters started to work on novels. Although she might have had the idea earlier, Emily Brontë began writing *Wuthering Heights* most likely toward the end of 1845. Thomas Cautley Newby agreed to publish *Wuthering Heights* and Anne's *Agnes Grey* together in the summer of 1847. In December 1847, Newby published the two books in three volumes, with *Wuthering Heights* by Ellis Bell (Emily Brontë) taking up two volumes. The only environment she knew and lived in provided the background for her only novel since the village of Haworth was secluded and surrounded by moors. She created motherless characters in *Wuthering Heights* to reflect her own experience. Due to the extremely inventive novel of love and hatred by the modern world, the novel, however, did not gain much praise and attention. Brontë's career came to an abrupt end when she passed away on December 19, 1848.

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## 11.2 PLOT OVERVIEW

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Let's see a quick synopsis of *Wuthering Heights* by Emily Brontë. England in the early 19th century appears to be the setting for the novel *Wuthering Heights*. The tenant, Mr. Lockwood, resides in the Thrushcross Grange estate. He went twice to his landlord, Mr. Heathcliff's house at *Wuthering Heights*, a neighboring mansion. During his second visit,



Lockwood asks questions about Heathcliff and Wuthering Heights from the housekeeper, Nelly. Nelly then recalls a complex storyline involving the Earnshaw and Linton families.

Mr. Earnshaw owned Wuthering Heights. He had three children: Hindley, Catherine, and Heathcliff, whom he had adopted. Hindley is extremely envious of Heathcliff, while his father and sister are very fond of Heathcliff. Hindley is sent to university by Mr. Earnshaw, and in the meantime, Catherine and Heathcliff develop feelings for one another. After Mr. Earnshaw passes away, Hindley and his wife take over as the new owners. Heathcliff is made to live as a servant by Hindley. After giving birth to a son, Hareton, Hindley's wife passes away. During this time, Heathcliff and Catherine begin to take an interest in the Lintons living at Thrushcross Grange. Edgar and Isabella are the two children of the Lintons. During his five-week stay with the Lintons, Catherine and Edgar get close. Despite her continued devotion for Heathcliff, she is more drawn to Edgar's money and attractiveness. Heathcliff, conscious of this fact, flees Wuthering Heights the very same night. While Heathcliff is away, Catherine gets married to Edgar Linton and moves to Thrushcross Grange. Heathcliff returns just a year later, immensely wealthy and admirable but also mysterious and violent. Despite her husband's objections, Catherine is eager to see Heathcliff and does so anyhow. Wuthering Heights is now home to Heathcliff. Since Hindley has turned into a gambler and lost all his wealth, he invites Heathcliff to his home after seeing his wealth.

Soon later, it becomes noticeable that Heathcliff and Isabella are infatuated with each other. But as their relationship progresses, Edgar and Heathcliff become at odds. Edgar opposes each of these. Catherine decides not to eat anything, which causes her to get sick. On the other side, one night, Heathcliff and Isabella elope. Catherine is looked after by Edgar for two months. Catherine is carrying a baby. Just after the wedding, Heathcliff treats Isabella horribly at Wuthering Heights. Edgar is adamant that he will have no kind of relationship with Isabella because he is convinced that Heathcliff married Isabella for the sole purpose of acquiring Thrushcross Grange from the Lintons. Heathcliff visits Thrushcross Grange while Edgar is away because he is worried about Catherine's health. Catherine and Heathcliff profess their undying love for each other. Catherine gives birth to a girl that night, named Cathy, but she passes away a brief time later.

Two days later, Isabella manages to get away from the Wuthering Heights and makes her way out of London. She gives birth to Linton, Heathcliff's son, there. In six months, Hindley passes away. Heathcliff obtains ownership of Wuthering Heights after paying off all of Hindley's debts. Hareton is maintained by Heathcliff in the same state of service that Hindley had previously forced him to.

After a period of twelve years, Cathy has developed into a stunning young woman, but Hareton has become a troubled young adult. Heathcliff insists that Linton move in with him at Wuthering Heights, but Edgar brings him

back to Thrushcross Grange after Isabella's passing. Later, Heathcliff works to bring Linton and Cathy together on purpose. Edgar permits Cathy to meet with Linton at Thrushcross Grange due to his poor health.

On a certain day, Heathcliff convinces Cathy and Nelly into moving back to Wuthering Heights with him and Linton. There, Linton and Cathy are wed. Cathy then flees Wuthering Heights to take care of her father. But Heathcliff brings her back to Wuthering Heights following the passing of her father. Alongside her spouse Catherine, Edgar is buried. Soon after Linton passes away, Heathcliff gains ownership of Thrushcross Grange as well as Wuthering Heights. At Wuthering Heights, Cathy lives forcibly with Heathcliff and Hareton.

The narrative has now returned to the present, when Lockwood has rented Thrushcross Grange. Lockwood returns to London. Everyone is taken aback by the fact that Cathy and Hareton have developed romantic feelings for one another. Heathcliff no longer feels the desire for revenge since he recognises how similar Hareton and Cathy are to the characters in his own love tale. Heathcliff passes away and is buried next to Catherine, on Edgar's opposite side. Finally free of interfering adults, Cathy and Hareton intend to wed and relocate to Thrushcross Grange.

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### 11.3 CHARACTERS

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**Mr. Lockwood-** A man Heathcliff rents Thrushcross Grange from. He serves as the narrative's narrator; Nelly Dean informs him of each of the other characters, which he then conveys to the reader. He is an emotionally detached and slightly self-absorbed young man from the city who is not really interested in the action.

**Nelly Dean-** Housekeeper to the Earnshaws and Lintons homes. Every character (apart from Lockwood) is seen through her eyes because the entire book is written from her point of view. She works at both Wuthering Heights and Thrushcross Grange while growing up with Hindley, Catherine, and Heathcliff. Many people, including Catherine, Isabella, Cathy and even Heathcliff, confide in Nelly. She looks after Hareton as a baby and acts as a mother figure for younger Cathy. Despite being a servant, she is intelligent and insightful. She frequently does more than just witness; she gets deeply involved with the lives of her employers. Many of the characters are so at ease with her that they hold private talks in front of her, which some people may describe her as interfering.

**Heathcliff-** Foster child of Mr. Earnshaw, foster brother of Hindley and Catherine; husband of Isabella, and father of Linton. The ambivalent protagonist of the book is Heathcliff. He is discovered on the street by Mr. Earnshaw, who brings him to Wuthering Heights, where he meets Catherine and they fall in love. With his obscure past and gloomy "gypsy" appearance, he epitomises the outsider. Even if he eventually acquires Wuthering Heights, he never appears to be as at ease there as he is on the moors. Although his love for Catherine is immense, uncontrollable, and precious to him more than anything else, but it is never simple and quite

often causes him to exert control over, degrade, and manipulate practically everyone in his vicinity. Heathcliff is not an obviously evil person despite the numerous terrible things he does; rather, he is a destitute orphan who achieves monetary prosperity but not what he truly desires—the affection of Catherine.

**Catherine Earnshaw-** Daughter of Mr. Earnshaw, Hindley's sister and Heathcliff's real love and foster sister, Edgar's wife, and the mother of Cathy. Catherine, a stunning and fiery woman with dark hair and intense eyes, is a woman torn between a desire for the comfort, stability, and tranquility of ultra-civilized Edgar and a desire to run through the moors with untidy Heathcliff. She has a strong and intense passion for Heathcliff. She can be impulsive, rude, and proud.

**Hindley Earnshaw-** Son of Mr. Earnshaw, foster brother of Heathcliff, Catherine's brother, father of Hareton, and Frances' spouse. His father dies and Hindley inherits Wuthering Heights. He is an obsessive drinker and gambler who collapses following the passing of his wife. He transforms from a playful, kind-hearted boy to an enraged, vengeful, jealous, and destructive man.

**Frances Earnshaw-** Mother of Hareton and the wife of Hindley. A minor character Frances meets Hindley outside of Wuthering Heights. Despite her joyful presence in Wuthering Heights, she passes away shortly after giving birth to her son.

**Hareton Earnshaw-** Hindley and Frances's son and young Cathy's husband. Hareton is a shy, rebellious, illiterate, hard-working, and neglected man who lives and works at Wuthering Heights, where Heathcliff tolerates him and his father neglects him. He should be a gentleman from birth, yet his caregivers deliberately ignore his education. His tough exterior hides a clever, sympathetic, and sensitive spirit.

**Cathy Linton-** Wife and cousins of both Linton Heathcliff and Hareton Earnshaw, and the daughter of Edgar and Catherine. Cathy is a young, beautiful girl with a kind heart. She possesses the courage and passion of her mother and the grace and blonde beauty of her father. She is a complex adolescent who often demonstrates kindness and compassion as well as frequent selfishness and carelessness. She ultimately demonstrates the ability to see through the surface to the purity and beauty underlying, which was a quality her mother lacked.

**Edgar Linton-** Isabella's brother, Catherine's spouse, and Cathy's father. Edgar is the personification of a sweet, caring, and kind country gentleman; he is quite handsome and adores both his daughter and wife. He seems vulnerable at first, but he is actually incredibly strong in a quiet, inward way. He may be harsh and hates Heathcliff, so he's not perfect goodness.

**Isabella Linton-** Mother of Linton, Heathcliff's wife, and Edgar's sister. She is brought up to be a delicate, elegant lady and is beautiful and fair.

She is no equal for Heathcliff, who ultimately marries her for her claim over Thrushcross Grange instead of out of love for her.

**Linton Heathcliff-** Husband of Cathy and the son of Heathcliff and Isabella. Linton is weak, immature, and frail despite his attractive appearance.

**Mr. Earnshaw-** An elegant farmer. Hindley and Catherine are his children. He adopts orphan Heathcliff out of kindness m. Because of his fascination in Heathcliff, he isolates his biological son. He has little authority over any of his children by the time of his death.

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## 11.4 THEMES

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Let us discuss the themes that are clearly evident in the novel.

### Revenge:

'Wuthering Heights' action is largely driven by one or more characters' need for revenge. As a result, circles of revenge appear to go on constantly. By restricting Heathcliff of an education as revenge for taking his position at Wuthering Heights, Hindley distances Heathcliff from Catherine. After that, Heathcliff exacts revenge on Hindley by expelling him from Wuthering Heights and depriving his son Hareton of an education. By weding Cathy to Linton, Heathcliff also plans to exact revenge on Edgar for marrying Catherine.

Heathcliff's revenge is successful, but it doesn't appear to make him really happy. Cathy realises this toward the end of the book and informs Heathcliff that, no matter how unhappy he makes her, her revenge on him is to know that he, Heathcliff, is far more unhappy. It is also interesting that Heathcliff can only ultimately reunite with Catherine in death and allow Cathy and Hareton, who are so similar to Heathcliff and Catherine, to fall in love and get married once he lets go of his need for revenge.

### Class:

Understanding Wuthering Heights requires knowledge of the significance of class in eighteenth and nineteenth-century Britain. People at the time typically entered into a class upon birth and remained there: if your parents were wealthy and well-respected like Edgar's, you would likely fall into that class as well; if your parents were servants like Nelly Dean's, you most likely would as well. The concept of social flexibility—the possibility of improving your class status—was not widely accepted.

However, class differences are frequently switching in Bronte's book, which causes the characters a hard time. This is best illustrated by Heathcliff and Hareton, respectively. Everyone treats Heathcliff differently because no one is aware of his past. He is adopted by Mr. Earnshaw, who raises him as a son, but the elite Lintons reject him. When he disappears for a while and returns wealthy, the other characters have a harder time figuring out how to interact with him as now he has land and

wealth, many of them still think of him as a simple country boy. In a similar vein, Hareton struggles to get respect from his others. Hareton, Hindley's son, deserves to be the one to inherit Wuthering Heights. He should be a gentleman since he has land and status. But since Heathcliff won't educate him, and the majority of people ignore him, his manners—a crucial sign of social class—are rough and harsh. He can only rise to the class level to which he was born once young Cathy assists him with his education.

### **Love and Passion:**

Different types of love are examined in Wuthering Heights. The love that Heathcliff and Catherine have for one another is depicted in the book, and while it is pure and good, it is also extremely destructive. In reality, Catherine and Edgar's relationship is sophisticated and courteous rather than passionate. Theirs is a peaceful, comfortable love that is accepted in society, but it cannot prevent Heathcliff and Catherine's deeper bond.

An absurd exaggeration of Catherine and Edgar's romance is the love between Cathy and Linton. Although Catherine has always seemed a little bit too tough for Edgar, Cathy and Linton's relationship is built on Linton's frailty because he uses Cathy's motherly instincts to win her love. The love between Cathy and Hareton, which appears to balance the characteristics of the other loves on show, comes in last. They possess the desire of Heathcliff and Catherine without the destructiveness, as well as Edgar and Catherine's mutual kindness without the monotony or power difference.

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## **11.5 SYMBOLS**

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**Moors-**The area has symbolic significance due to Wuthering Heights' continual attention on the environment. The majority of this region is made up of moors, which are large, untamed, high, yet rather damp, and barren. Moorland cannot be farmed, and because to its homogeneity, it is challenging to navigate. The moors are an excellent representation of nature's untamed threat as a result. The moorland embodies the love affair with its symbolic meaning since it served as the starting point of Catherine and Heathcliff's relationship as the two played on the moors as kids.

**The Weather-** The wind and storms that frequently hit Wuthering Heights serve as a metaphor for the characters' vulnerability to outside causes. The weather is used as a symbol for nature, which can be depicted as a gloriously powerful force that is capable of overcoming any character.

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## **11.6 CRITICAL ASSESSMENT OF THE NOVEL**

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The Earnshaw's and Lintons' relationships with one another across three generations are the subjects of Wuthering Heights. The story depicts the life of Heathcliff, a mysterious figure. His adoptive family degrades Heathcliff to servant status, and he escapes when the young woman he loves decides to wed someone else. Later, when he is wealthy and well-educated, he returns and begins to exact revenge on the two families he

believes were responsible for his life's downfall. The narrative is really about revenge.

In the very first chapters, Lockwood's strange experience at Wuthering Heights draws us into a world of mystery. Furthermore, as the story progresses, the moors, the wild terrain, and the terrible weather that sweeps the moors are constantly brought to the reader's attention throughout the narrative.

Nelly Dean tells the story for almost the entirety of the book. Nelly Dean is a good narrator who alters her expression to fit the scene she's describing. She controls the speed of her speech effortlessly. The novel's plot is skillfully crafted. The introduction's first three chapters offer a poetic account of a brilliantly created horrifying circumstance in Lockwood's nightmares. The next twenty-seven chapters, which comprise the novel's centre section, are primarily delivered by Nelly Dean and deal with Heathcliff's unhappiness with love as well as his fury and desire for revenge. The final four chapters contrast sharply with the first three. We have sunlight, literacy, and love in place of ghosts and nightmares, snowstorms, and hatred. With the marriage of Hareton and Cathy, the Earnshaws and the Lintons are now one. The love between Cathy and Hareton, reverses the character flaws of the other loves in the narrative.

### Self-Check Exercise 1

1. Discuss the underlying message and setting of the novel.
2. Surf the web and read more about the themes in the novel.

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## 11.7 SUMMING UP

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Dear learner, let us sum up what we have learned in this chapter. In brief, we learned about Brontë's life. To sum up the chapter, those who have not read *Wuthering Heights*, believe it to be a simple, yet emotional, love story. However, this is incorrect, as the story is really one of vengeance. It traces the life of Heathcliff, a mysterious figure. After rising in his adopted household, Heathcliff is degraded to the position of a servant and escapes when the young woman he loves decides to wed someone else. Later, when he is wealthy and well-educated, he returns and begins to exact revenge on the two families he believes were responsible for his life's downfall. Finally, in the end, the successors, i.e., Cathy and Hareton, bring goodness, and their love succeeds.

At the end of the chapter, the learner is given a self-check exercise to help them think about the topic.

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## 11.8 SUGGESTED READING

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[https://www.google.co.in/books/edition/Wuthering\\_Heights/KhMYAAAAYAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1](https://www.google.co.in/books/edition/Wuthering_Heights/KhMYAAAAYAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1)



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## 11.9 SELF-CHECK EXERCISES

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- Self-Check Exercise 1 Refer to the end of Section 2.5.

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## CRITICAL STUDY OF A PASSAGE TO INDIA BY E.M. FORSTER

### Unit Structure:

- 12.0 Objectives
- 12.1 Introduction
- 12.2 Main Characters in the novel
- 12.3 Plot of the novel A Passage to India
- 12.4 Themes of the novel
- 12.5 Critical Analysis
- 12.6 Conclusion

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### 12.0 OBJECTIVES

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1. To study the important themes of the novel A Passage to India
  2. To analyze the important characters in the play
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### 12.1 INTRODUCTION

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A Passage to India is an English-language novel written by the British author E.M. Forster. The novel was published in 1924. It is set in India during the British Raj while the Indian independence movement was going on in the 1920s. The title of the novel was derived from Walt Whitman's poem –Passage to India published in his poetry collection called 'Leaves of Grass' in 1870. The novel is based on Forster's experiences when he was in India in the early 1920s when he worked for Tukojirao III, Maharajah of Dewas as his private secretary. Forster visited India twice in his lifetime. First visit was from 1912 to 1913. From his experiences in India derived from both the visits, Forster wrote and published two works – one a non-fictional account of both the periods called 'The Hill of Devi.' The title was inspired from the famous hill-top temple of the Goddess in Hindu mythology, 'Devi.' The book was set in Dewas, a royal countryside in India and offers useful insight on the internal royal politics of the state when the Maharaja employed Forster.

The second book published by him is a fictional novel – A Passage to India. In this text as well, one can find traces of his experiences of the pre-independence struggling India of the 1920s. The novel depicts the Indian Freedom Struggle and the Non-Cooperation Movement through the lives

of its characters. Racism, Orientalism, Colonialism, Feminism, Casteism, Marxism, amongst others are some of the many themes of the novel. The novel is set in a fictional town named 'Chandrapur' or 'Chandrapore' which was probably inspired from the suburb called 'Bankipur' near Patna in the Indian state of Bihar. The novel is narrated by an omniscient narrator. This novel was an enormous deviation from the regular portrayals of Indians in the Literature of that time. Indians were always shown as 'savages' in most texts. This novel brought the possibility in the Western world that the Orientals can be intellectuals and the Whites can be vicious.

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## 12.2 MAIN CHARACTERS IN THE NOVEL

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The novel has four important characters. Dr. Aziz is an Indian Muslim doctor in a British hospital in Chandrapur, or as it is called by the Anglo-Saxon name, Chandrapore. He is quite emotionally inclined which is also considered as his weakness by other characters. The character is very talkative, and he heavily relies on emotions and intuition over logic despite being a medical professional. He is a widower, and it can be seen that he misses his late wife, but he has also moved on from her death. The next important character is Adela Quested. She is a British headmistress who travels to India with the intention of getting married to Ronny Heaslop. Although she is engaged to him, she is not excited about her prospective wedding. Her character is brave and intelligent, but her weakness is her prudishness. Cyril Fielding is another important character. He is the principal of a government-run college for Indian students in Chandrapur. Later on in the novel, he becomes good friends with Dr. Aziz despite their cultural differences but in the end of the novel these differences act on their friendship and divide them. Fielding is one of the few British characters who is respectful and tolerant towards Indians. He is a mature gentleman who despises his own people who consider Indians as 'savages.'

Next significant character is Mrs. Moore who is the potential mother-in-law of Adela. She is more thoughtful than other British people and is shown to be tolerant and respectful towards Indians like Fielding and unlike her own son, Ronny (Adela's potential husband, Mrs. Moore's son from her first marriage), who is extremely racist and holds derogatory views of Indians. Despite her respectfulness, she is not courageous and chooses to run away when her verdict is of utmost importance in Aziz's case. Professor Narayan Godbole is another character. He is an eccentric Brahmin who believes in equanimity. Other important characters are the racists Mr. and Mrs. Turton (they loathe Fielding for his less bigoted mindset). Major Callendar, another racist and a superior of Aziz, Mr. McBryde, a superintendent, he dislikes Indians but at least accepts views of people like Fielding, Miss Derek, a British woman working for a royal family and has an affair with McBryde, Nawab Bahadur who is accepting of British but an Indian at heart, Hamidullah, a highly educated uncle of Aziz who graduated from Cambridge, Amritrao, Aziz's lawyer who hates British, Mahmoud Ali, who also hates British, Dr. Panna Lal, Aziz's rival

doctor at the hospital, Ralph Moore, the timid second son of Mrs. Moore from her second marriage and Stella Moore, the young daughter of Mrs. Moore from her second marriage, a beautiful woman who later becomes Fielding's wife.

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### 12.3 PLOT OF THE NOVEL A PASSAGE TO INDIA

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The plot revolves around Adela arriving in India for her prospective marriage. She is interested to see the 'real' India and hence for her, Fielding arranges a bridge party where she meets Professor Narayan Godbole. As this party turns out to be quite a disaster due to the Britons' bigotry and Indian's loathing for the British, Fielding arranges another tea party. Before the party, Mrs. Moore and Dr. Aziz meet due to a chance occurrence. Dr. Aziz and Mrs. Moore part as friends when Aziz realises that Mrs. Moore is not prejudiced against Brown skinned people. Mrs. Moore narrates her meeting with Dr. Aziz to Adela who is quite intrigued with his tolerant personality. Hence, she requests Fielding to invite Aziz to the tea party as well. At the tea party, Fielding and Aziz become good friends. Aziz promises the women to give a tour to the infamous cave complex called Marabar Caves (inspired from Barabar caves of Bihar) outside the city. When Ronny arrives and sees Adela unaccompanied with Aziz and Godbole, he rudely breaks up the party.

After a while, Aziz decides to take Mrs. Moore and Adela to the promised tour. To reach the caves, they have to go on a small hike up the mountains. The women, Aziz and a tour guide explore the caves. In the first cave, Mrs. Moore feels claustrophobic and decides to discontinue her exploration. She returns to her taxi-cart down the mountain allowing Aziz and Adela to explore the caves alone with the tour guide.

As Adela and Aziz continue exploring the caves, Adela asks Aziz whether he has more than one wife. Aziz clearly upset by the rude question explores another cave to have some distance from her. Meanwhile, Adela, alone in a cave starts to feel uneasy. After Aziz has composed himself and he comes out, the guide tells him that Adela has left. While looking for her, he finds her field glasses which he pockets. Aziz sees Adela leave with Miss Derek who has arrived with Mr. Fielding in a car. As Aziz greets Fielding, Adela, and Miss Derek leave.

Aziz returns to Chandrapur by train. After his arrival, the authorities arrest him. He is accused of raping Adela. The case gains a lot of public spectacles with varied opinions from the masses. The days until his trial face a lot of racist tension between the Britishers and Indians. In the first hearing, Adela says that after Aziz left, he came back, grabbed her, and she protected herself by swinging her glasses at him. The broken glasses in Aziz's possession confirm the story and is the only evidence with the British against Aziz. Everyone is stunned when Fielding claims for Aziz's innocence. He is seen as a traitor by the Whites, but the Indians welcome him. During the weeks of the trial, Mrs. Moore becomes bitter. It becomes obvious that she believes Aziz to be innocent and to present her from giving her verdict at the next hearing Ronny, her son arranges for her

to leave for England immediately. Mrs. Moore complies without objection. She mysteriously dies during the voyage.

Critical study of a passage  
to India by E.M. Forster

At the next hearing when Adela is asked directly if Aziz raped her, her confusion becomes apparent. It becomes known that just like Mrs. Moore Adela became anxious due to the claustrophobia and became disturbed due to the echoes which in turn made her believe that she was assaulted by Aziz who was upset with her recent remark about polygamy. She admits her mistake and the trial concludes.

In anger, Ronny breaks off his engagement with her and arranges for her to leave for England. Until her departure, she stays with Fielding and once again tells him that the echoes were the cause of her misunderstanding. She leaves, never to return.

Aziz is upset with Fielding because he befriended Adela after she nearly ruined his life. Fielding asks Aziz to not ask Adela for monetary compensation, believing that it is gentlemanly. Afterwards, Fielding also leaves for England. Aziz believes that he has left to marry Adela. Thinking of his betrayal, Aziz moves to Mau, Uttar Pradesh, and vows to never befriend a White.

After two years, Fielding returns with his new wife Stella. Aziz now a Maharaja's physician, becomes friend with him again. But in the last few pages, he explains that although he is friends with Fielding, he still dreams of a free India and that his and Fielding's friendship can never become true until India is freed from external control.

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## 12.4 THEMES OF THE NOVEL

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### English and Indian Friendship –

The novel constantly brings out the crisis of the possibility of true friendship between a White and a Brown. The key crisis in the story emerges due to the White and Brown tensions. Besides, those characters who are tolerant and becomes friends, like Aziz and Fielding, Mrs. Moore, and Aziz, etc. have to constantly battle cultural guilt and community hatred. The author uses this issue as a way to depict the British control and colonialism and shows it from a personal level. In the first half of the novel, Aziz and Fielding represent a liberal humanistic approach. They believe in human beings, not race. Both the characters treat each other with respect due to their individuality, not their respective ethnicity and backgrounds. They trust each other to be frank while having good intentions for the other.

### Unity –

Another obvious theme is unity. Unity, of not only British and Indians, but also of Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs, Christians, etc. Unity of different castes. Unity of different races and geographical backgrounds, etc. Once again, the key conflict derives from the lack of unity amongst the characters. Even characters from the same race as Fielding and Mrs. Moore have to

face severe criticism from their own blood. On the other hand, the minor character of Godbole, yearns for peace of all living things. Through mysticism of Godbole the author presents a picture of spiritual and political unity for the characters which is desperately needed to make the lives of all the different races, better. Mrs. Moore, who is a Christian, realises the smallness of this domination. She loves all living things just what Hinduism and Islam preach and hence it is the oneness of India which affects her so much to make her bitter. Her inferiority as a British might have affected her health.

### **India as 'mysterious' and as a 'muddle' -**

Importantly, both Mrs. Moore and Adela are fascinated when they realise that Indians are not the wild orientals, they thought them to be. Even Fielding, we are told, despite being respectful of Indians, is personally intrigued by their 'mysterious' nature which actually opposes the western thought. This deliberate attempt at making India mysterious was a way of painting Indians as savages. All the white characters actually realise that is not the case. And it becomes a confirmation when Aziz is proven 'not guilty.'

What makes India a 'muddle' is its geographical and cultural landscape. Wildlife which cannot be identified, architecture of varied ethnicities, populations of different linguistics, religions, castes, and class, etc. The whole of India is difficult for the British to identify with that is why everyone is labelled as 'Brown,' which is wrong because Kashmiri Indians are known for their fair skin. But the muddle of India is unacceptable for the West whose identity was never varied. The muddle also affects Aziz's and Fielding's friendship due to the cross-cultural misunderstandings.

By calling India a muddle, it is cleared that all the ancient civilizations, the rich literature the multi-cultural population and individual identity is reduced to a molded clay lump which is inferior to a state with a single identity and religion.

### **Colonialism Vs Orientalism –**

The novel is set during the British Raj. The characters are living in a pyramid where Indians are at the lower level and the British are at the top. The prevailing attitude of the 'white man's burden' (phrase coined by Rudyard Kipling) which says that Indians needed to be civilized can be seen in the behaviour of all the characters, including Fielding. He may be respectful, but he is not stranger to the system. His identification to his bias is what makes him different. Other British characters do not believe that their opinions are biased. Fielding identifies his biases and is willing to work on them. Hence, the British believed that they though they were doing the ultimate 'good' for the uncivilized world they believed India was. The unequal power dynamics enroot every relationship in the novel, from friendship to marriage.



Race, culture, and religion are threaded throughout the novel. Godbole's Hindu mysticism, Mrs. Moore's Christian beliefs and Aziz's Muslim identity are essential in making the story what it eventually becomes. The mental impact of these thoughts was deeply felt through the characters. The public reaction of Aziz's trial is evidence enough how these historically deeply rooted cultures and rituals can cause tension. The trial, any trial, involves two parties against each other. Yet, although it may be not legally recognized, but the background of the parties can wrench the involved people, especially those who are claimed to be guilty. As mentioned above, the author tried his best to show that Unity is essential in a multi-cultural land such as India for accomplishing peace. Ronny who is otherwise a sympathetic, kind person, immediately changes when he confronts a Brown person. The sheer identity crisis of varying cultures can threaten humanity, as it becomes evident through the plot. On the other and, by showing Hinduism and Islam as peaceful religions the author is outrightly stating that these two religions which are also a part of 'oriental' beliefs are actually weaving a massive part of global humanity along with Christianity. Making Christianity as one of the many religions from the one supremacist religions it was his way of showing the importance of individual morality and beliefs and showing that ethics, truth, justice, love, faith, justice can be weaved by religions other than Christianity as well.

### **Gender –**

Gender may not be the biggest theme, but it is still essential. And where it most obvious is with Mrs. Moore's case. She was sure of Aziz's innocence and hence it was planned that she would give her verdict. But Ronny sends her away. Had she been a man, her power would have been different, and her verdict would have had more impact than Fielding's verdict because she was actually a witness. We also constantly see Ronny ill-treat Adela because of her friendship with Aziz. And most importantly of all, it is because of Adela's gender that the trial became the public debacle it eventually becomes. Her femininity is seen as a negative temptation which the Whites believe is too strong for a Brown person like Aziz to fight. A dialogue in the novel says, 'A Dark-skinned man will always love to devour a white-skinned woman.'

### **Justice and Judgement –**

Justice and judgement are heavily intertwined with race and culture. There is no judgement based on evidence here. In fact, although Adela later admits that Aziz did nothing to hurt her, Aziz is still looked at with contempt and Adela is criticized for 'supporting' a Brown man. Justice is driven by the prejudiced judgement which is turn is driven by deeply rooted cultural biases and oriental prejudices. Therefore, the whole judiciary system is made to condemn Indians and rise British.

### **Life, consciousness, existence –**

Every character in the novel is affected by their culture, class, religion, race, ethnicity, etc. In these multiple battles the question pops up whether all these characters have a single unified identity? Where do they all stand as human beings? Mrs. Turton screams at Adela when she admits her mistake, but can it be forgotten that her White home stand on Indian soil and her household is overseen by multiple Indian servants whose identity and freedom she denies? The novel keeps digging up various layers to every character's background but at the surface their considerably basic human identity is lost. At its best, the author tries to save it through Fielding's and Aziz's friendship, which one finds out is already threatened in Aziz's eyes until freedom.

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## **12.5 CRITICAL ANALYSIS**

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### **Postcolonial Analysis –**

A Passage to India, at the time when it was published was a one-of-a-kind novel for its humanistic depiction of Indians. Forster's depiction of India was at first criticized but today scholars look at it as realistic and also romanticized comparatively with the other texts of the time which were popular in the mainstream for depicting Indians as wild and savage. It shows Indians and the cultures in an optimistic and positive light. Most importantly, it establishes an individual identity to Indians which others denied. Moreover, it portrayed the multiple Indian cultures as equally legitimate as Christianity and Western world. The depiction challenges the European/Caucasian society while showing Indians as intellectuals. It amplifies the value of ancient Indian wisdom of mathematics, science, literature, and the arts through the prejudices of the British. The novel subverted typical colonial rules of India but it did not portray the Indian Freedom Struggle and the nationalist movements thoroughly, instead chose to focus on individual identity as opposed to collective identity.

The failed and threatened friendship of Fielding and Aziz as a wider representation of tensions between the West and Orient, where despite the lack of personal prejudices, the community factors always rise crisis. Their failure at having a true friendship shows the damaged and fragmented identity created by the West which has limited their understanding of the powers, truth, and reality of the Orient.

### **Feminist Analysis –**

The novel depicts the traditional Western attitude towards women. Here, the British administrators and the women in their lives represent the whole conservativeness of gender biases of the so-called civilized West. The stereotype is that women need a Knight in shining armor to save them and for Adela, Aziz becomes the unexpected Knight, but his ethnicity makes him the villain instead. If Ronny had been in his place near the caves when Adela became disturbed due to the echo, he would have been hailed as a hero. The Englishwomen demonstrate the 'women are weaker than men' prejudice by not trying to defend themselves and their opinions. The

classic example being Mrs. Moore submitting and obliging to her son Ronny's wish to not give a verdict and leave for England immediately, despite being the only witness to prove Aziz's innocence. On the other hand, the prejudice that women are emotional, and not intellectual is also furthered in the plot due to Adela's irresponsible accusation of Aziz (she did not even think deep enough until Aziz's lawyer Amritrao asked her in the second hearing directly about the rape) and the other women characters being far more racist than men despite the whole truth being uncovered, like Mrs. Turton who created a public verbal altercation on Adela after her confession which freed Aziz. The sexual attitudes are quite conservative unlike the postcolonial attitude in the novel which actually calls for unity, in fact, it is also debated that the female characters only function as pawns in the novel to facilitate men's relationship and to convey the ultimate message of the author. They are merely sexual objects known for their physique. Like Adela, whose whole arc revolves around marriage in the first half and supposed sexual assault in the second half.

In fact, women are far more prejudice than men because at least men have a strong conviction of creating a civilized society (although that is racist too, but their intention is to at least makes things better) while women have no conviction at all. The lack of conviction for women says two things – Firstly, their lack of professional goals rehabilitates and strengthen racist views and secondly, it shows the financial dependence women are forced to have on men. This point can be seen in another way as well. Adela's headmistress profession saved her from being conviction-less and hence her courageous confession which proved that Aziz was innocent proves that financially independent women and educated women (Adela was financially independent, a point not taken seriously) are less racist than others.

Besides, Aziz showing his late wife's photograph to a stranger as Fielding is quite sexist. His opinions about his late wife and his violation for his late wife's choice of *pardah* are prevalent. He may have loved his wife, but he never respected her privacy. Also, Fielding's statement that when all men in the world behave like a brother, *pardah* will go away. This is not a statement to liberate Muslim women from Burqa but a statement about men's viciousness towards women who do not cover themselves in the way which is considered ideal, who are liberal minded and/or who do not depend on a man. His statement clearly shows that it is men who are at fault whenever assault happens. But in the novel Aziz was never guilty and yet Adela's independence as a headmistress directly pits her in trouble. She may not have been raped but her courage to choose to do the right thing and admit her mistake showed her biggest character trait of bravery but also put her in trouble. The people around her were happy when she blamed a Brown man, despite the accusation being false (and many knew that), because a white woman blaming a Brown man for assault brings out the most conservative prejudices about the cultures – That a Brown man is a savage and that a woman is not an intellectual and weak. Hence, her confession, which proved her intellect earned her hatred.

### **Marxist analysis –**

Class consciousness is lacking in the novel. The novel is set in the 1920s. Therefore, it lacks Gandhi's views. The novel's focus on British-Indian relation somehow omits the class consciousness and poverty. It takes into account culture, religion, ethnicity, language, background, geography but not class. Race was a key factor in class differentiation. The view of the orient being inferior to the West implies their automatic subjugation. Hence, even the lowest class of British are higher in status than the richest Indians. The novel presents an imperialistic vision and in turns presents the dominant ideology of the dominant West. This ideology subverted Indians in their own land. The Western religion, western political system, western culture is superior to the Indian political system, Indian religions, Indian political system, and Indian culture. Which is ironic and hypocritical in a way because before British, both England and several regions in India had the similar rule – Monarchy. In fact, the monarchy of kings like Ashok, Akbar, amongst others was more liberating and religiously tolerant than western concepts of monarchy (it can be seen that the Protestant Vs Catholic battle went on for ages and no one was willing to accept the other whereas some Indian kings are known for allowing the practice of multiple religions in their kingdoms).

In the novel, Forster takes both the races to present the inequality in income, the misconception, and the disparity. By portraying the character of a traditional Hindu professor Godbole, the author is depicting class consciousness through the Varna system and caste. Whereas, Aziz, a Muslim who believes that all humans are equal because all are children of Adam believes that all races are equal also. In doing so, he may be liberal minded, but his emotional mindset dominates his logic which throws his status down as the West, again dominates as it believes itself to be the more intellectual of the two.

Therefore, through the novel we can see that overall, the race creates two significant classes – Colonizers and Colonized. Hence, the exploitation of the lower classes is deeply interwoven with the concept of race in the novel. There may be a Varna system and an intellectual vs emotional system to create a pyramid but the biggest binaries which enable the class consciousness and exploitation is through the Colonizer Vs Colonized relation.

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## **12.6 CONCLUSION**

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It is obvious that Forster is condemning the racist beliefs of the both the races about the other. He can be easily called a liberal. The plot is well-structured as well. The author is trying to advocate for ethnic harmony. The long-extended significances of metaphors, settings, characters, themes, etc. depicts a story beyond the superficial tones. Godbole's peaceful beliefs signifies the most underlying moral from the novel – peace beyond religion, race, caste, etc. We can see that the belief in humanity is apparent through Fielding's and Aziz's friendship and the factor it threatens it is the belief of freedom. That's where the novel ends – that no

amount of friendship can be true unless there exists equality and equal amount of freedom for all. Forster putting two differently racial characters together was unique and it was one of the first steps in the activism for peace and brotherhood. Racism still exists today but the only reason two interracial people can be friends and still live without judgement in the world was because of Literature like this. This book along with some others like Heart of Darkness by Joseph Conrad, became the light in the dark tunnel of racism.

Critical study of a passage  
to India by E.M. Forster



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