

**BENGALURU CITY UNIVERSITY**

**OPEN ELECTIVE PAPER VOLUME-III**

**(As per National Education Policy 2020)**

**ENGLISH LITERATURE**

**CREATIVE WRITING – DRAMA**

**III SEMESTER**

**of**

**BA/BA(Music)**

**&**

**IV SEMESTER**

**of**

**BCom/BBA/BSc/BCA**

**Undergraduate Courses**

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## **BENGALURU**

### **FOREWORD**

English Literature - Creative Writing –Drama is an Open Elective paper introduced for III Semester under graduates under National Education Policy. The National Education Policy lays a lot of emphasis on skill development and experiential learning. In its maiden attempt, Bengaluru City University (BCU) has designed the text book with twin objectives of inducing literary sensibility in students and helping students cultivate the creative and artistic skills. The skill of creative writing is the most required skill in the world of literary divergence and multiplicity of cultures.

I congratulate the Text Book Committee on its efforts in the preparation of the material, which discusses a variety of literary pieces, inculcates critical thinking and trains the students in Play writing skills. I hope the text will motivate the teachers and the students to make the best use of it and inspire the younger generation to take up creative ventures.

Prof. Lingaraja Gandhi  
Vice-Chancellor  
Bengaluru City University  
Bengaluru

## **PREFACE**

The Open Elective English Text book for II Semester undergraduate students, **ENGLISH LITERATURE- CREATIVE WRITING** -Drama introduces them to the literary form of Drama. They deal with issues pertaining to human emotions, ethics and social responsibilities. The variety of Drama discussed encourages the students to cultivate literary sensibility and develop a higher sense of imagination. It sensitizes them to social concerns. As critical thinking and decision making are primary skills of higher learning, the text attempts to promote these skills. It also helps students to interpret literature as a form of cultural expression and learn self-expression. It is the third text produced in tune with the requirements of the National Education Policy.

I would like to thank the concerned Chairperson and her team of teachers who have put in all their time and effort into the realization of this textbook. I thank the Vice-Chancellor and the Registrar of Bengaluru City University, for their consistent support.

**Dr. T.N. Thandava Gowda**

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## A NOTE TO THE TEACHER

It is with great pleasure that we present the text book for the Open Elective Course in English, CREATIVE WRITING – Drama as per the requirement of the National Education Policy 2020. The new policy of education emphasizes on experiential learning, skill development and personality enhancement in students and facilitates holistic learning.

Open Elective Course is a new feature of National Education Policy to enable students to make their own choice of the subject they would like to study, apart from the Discipline Specific Core subjects. This indeed offers liberty to students to choose their subject of interest and also prevents narrowing down of their field of study. As students need to become producers of literature and not remain as consumers, a novel idea manifests in the form of this text. The students are expected to learn about the history of Drama, components and devices used in the art, critical analysis and interpretation. Moreover, they are encouraged to create situations and characters using their own imagination and hone their skills of creativity.

As this is a new feature in the text, teachers are required to take the students through the text with emphasis on structure and skills to be cultivated in addition to the discussion of Drama. It is necessary to encourage them to understand, analyze the plays and look through the social prism and be receptive to the refractions that emerge.

The paper carries 3 credits and needs 3 hours of teaching per week.

Evaluation is based on both formative and summative assessments.

Written paper (Examination at the end of the semester) = **60**

Internal assessment (through the semester) = **40**

Total = **100**

As NEP stipulates performance/activity based assessment, teachers can conduct events and activities to award Internal Assessment marks. Group Discussion, Role Play, Seminar, Power Point Presentations, Play writing competitions etc.

can be conducted. Lectures on Analysis and Appreciation of Drama by students can also be conducted to award IA marks.

The Committee expresses its sincere thanks to Dr. Thandava Gowda, Chairman, Board of Studies, Bengaluru City University, for his constant support and encouragement. The Committee also expresses its deep sense of gratitude to Prof. Lingaraja Gandhi, the Honorable Vice-Chancellor of Bengaluru City University for his support.

**Dr. R.V. SHEELA**

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## **CONTENTS**

1. Unit –I	
Definition, History and Components of Drama	.....10
2. Unit-II	
Types of Drama	.....20
3. Unit-III	
Brief Introduction to Select Dramatists	.....36
4. Unit-IV	
Theatre and Society	.....49
5. Unit-V	
Exercises	.....80
6. Question Paper Pattern	.....96
7. Model Question Paper	.....98



# CREATIVE WRITING IN ENGLISH – DRAMA

## Unit 1

### DEFINITION, HISTORY AND COMPONENTS OF DRAMA

Drama is a genre in literature. It is basically a performing art. It pre-supposes an audience and comprises of a written script with dialogues, characters/actors; the purpose was initially entertainment, but later emerged as a serious genre of literature.

The origin of drama can be traced to the times of Aristotle in Greek literature, who is still regarded as an authority on Drama. In fact, the term “Drama” comes from Greek to mean ‘an act, a play and to take action’. The two iconic masks of drama—the laughing face and the crying face—are the symbols of two of the ancient Greek Muses: Thalia, the Muse of comedy and Melpomene, the Muse of tragedy.

Drama as a genre got set as early as in the 5th century, its evolution started with the classic Greek Theatre followed by the Classic Roman Theatre succeeded by Medieval theatre, Elizabethan theatre, Jacobean theatre, Restoration Drama, Modern and Post Modern Drama falling in line one after the other.

The beginnings of the drama were deep-rooted in the religious predispositions of mankind. Same is the case not only with English drama, but with dramas of other nations as well. The ancient Greek and Roman dramas were mostly concerned with religious ceremonials of people. It would not be wrong to state that it was the religious elements that resulted in the development of drama. As most of the Bible was written into Latin, common people could not understand its meaning. That is why the clergy tried to find out some new methods of teaching and expounding the teachings of Bible to the common people. For this purpose, they developed a new method, wherein the stories of the Gospel were explained through the living pictures. The performers acted out the story in a dumb show.

The next development was the actors started with dialogues and acting their parts. Special plays were written by the clerics, at first in Latin and later in the vernacular French. These early plays were known as **Mysteries or Miracles**. The very word *Mystery* shows its ecclesiastical origin, because the clergy

themselves took part in these plays. In England the term Miracle is used indiscriminately for any kind of religion play, the term Mystery is applied to the stories taken from the Scriptures narrative, while Miracles are plays dealing with incidents in the lives of Saints and Martyrs.

During the next stage, the play emerged from the Church into the marketplace. This was when the guilds were entrusted with the performances in the fourteenth century. It was customary for each craft to represent a play according to its particular trade. The work was very seriously taken by the guilds. As this is the origin of English plays, a brief look into Greek theatre and Drama becomes necessary.

For Ancient Greeks, theatre was often both a performance for the audience and a ritual in honour of the gods. The Greeks had a vast system of major and minor gods, as well as numerous legends and myths that explained both the known and unknown world. The polytheistic Greeks loved to use theatre and drama as a way of gaining favour with the gods and teaching their stories. Much of Greek drama was based on ritual, including the formation of a **chorus**, who as group, narrated and commented upon the events being depicted in the play, sometimes incorporating song and dance.

Aristotle (384-322 BC) was a Greek philosopher and scientist. He was the first to analyse and write about the essential elements of drama more than 2,000 years ago, and his work is still widely accepted as the model for modern dramatic form. While ideas have changed slightly over the years, we still discuss Aristotle's concepts when talking about what makes for great dramatic literature.

Like the epic poetry of Homer's *The Odyssey*, these plays were initially word-of-mouth and passed by memorization rather than written down. Thus, various different "scripts" evolved covering similar material and common stories. Later in the Greek Empire, the first dramatists began to write plays, including the famous Greek playwrights Aeschylus, Euripides, and Sophocles, from whom we get our most well-known works of Greek drama.

During the annual Festival of Dionysus in Greece, drama played a huge role, and playwrights were often pitted against each other to gain the most popularity. There were three main types of Greek drama, which included tragedies, comedies, and satyr plays. Tragedies often told the stories of flawed heroes and

their misfortune. Comedies, such as the work of Aristophanes, were typically satiric in nature about man's pride and vanity. Satyr plays were short acts performed between the acts of tragedies as a way to lighten the audience's mood and usually involved characters dressed as mythical satyrs (half-human, half animal).

The pagan, polytheistic drama of the Greeks was not very popular with authorities or audiences deeply aligned with The Christian Church (which controlled much of culture). Theatre still survived with travelling groups of performers that performed at court and in other settings. Like the Greeks, these groups were sometimes ritualistic and tied to religion, specifically putting on plays that would appeal to Christian audiences. This manifested **as mystery plays**, depicting stories from the Bible, and miracle plays, telling the stories of the saints. Similarly, **morality plays**, were used to relate stories in allegorical form that aligned with the church's beliefs. Such plays were sometimes performed alongside ceremonies and religious sermons. As an allegory, they often involved personifications of abstract concepts like Good, Evil, and the Seven Deadly Sins. One of the most famous morality plays, the anonymous *Everyman*, first written in the mid1500s, involved a hero, representing all of mankind, who encounters the character of Death, and learns a lesson about mortal vs. moral concerns in life.

The Renaissance, often seen as the re-awakening of culture outside the domain of the church, helped reconstruct the concept of Theatre, including the development of the stage as a performance space. Renaissance theatres usually consisted of a raised platform in front of the audience with an arch (or proscenium), side wings and backstage areas. During this time, there was a proliferation of structures built solely for such performances. Rather than existing purely as a religious teaching tool, theatre became a way to explore other types of stories, as well as cater to popular audiences of the time.

The drama which had suffered a steep decline during the Victorian Age was revived with great force at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and the course of six decades has witnessed many trends and currents in the 20th-century drama.

English Drama during the Modernist Period (1845-1945) A.D. falls into three categories:

1. The first and the earliest phase of modernism in English Drama is marked by the plays of G.B. Shaw (read *Summary of Candida*) and John Galsworthy, which constitute the category of social drama modelled on the plays of Ibsen.
2. The 2<sup>nd</sup> and the middle phase of Modernist English drama comprise the plays of Irish movement contributed by some elite writer like Yeats. In this phase, the drama contained the spirit of nationalism.
3. The 3<sup>rd</sup> and the final phase of the Modernist English Drama comprise plays of T.S. Eliot and Christopher Fry. This phase saw the composition of poetic dramas inspired by the earlier Elizabethan and Jacobean tradition.

The three categories reflect the three different phases as well as the three different facets of Modern English Drama.

### **Chief Characteristics of Modern Drama**

#### **1. Realism**

Realism is the most significant and outstanding quality of Modern English Drama. The dramatists try to deal with real problems of life in a realistic technique to their plays. They dealt with the problems of marriage, justice, law, administration, and strife between capital and labour in their dramas.

#### **2. Play of Ideas**

Modern Drama is essentially a drama of ideas rather than action. The stage is used by dramatists to give expression to certain ideas which they want to spread in society.

#### **3. Poetic Plays**

T.S. Eliot was the main dramatist who gave importance to poetic plays and was the realistic prose drama of the modern drama.

#### 4. History and Biographical Plays

Another trend, visible in the Modern English drama is in the direction of using history and biography for dramatic technique.

#### **A brief look into the origin and development of Indian Drama**

The history of Indian Drama is traced back to Sanskrit language in India

**Bharata** is traditionally considered to be the father in the history of Indian drama. The history of Indian Drama is deeply rooted in Classical **Sanskrit Theatre**, which is the earliest existing form of drama and theatre. Bharata's *Natyashastra* appears to be the first attempt to devise and contrive the technique or rather art of drama in a systematic manner. The *Natyashastra* advises the reader not only about what is to be portrayed in a drama, but also how the portrayal is to be executed. Bharata Muni recognised 4 main modes: Speech and Poetry, Dance and Music, Actions and Emotions for the success of a drama production. What Aristotle is to Greek, Bharat is to the Indian folk when it comes to the medium, manner, matter of Drama.

#### **Modern Indian Drama**

The modern Indian theatre is a summation of all the theatrical activities which had been taking place for more than 2000 years of the Indian theatrical history. Indian theatre is said to have begun even before the Greek theatre.

Playwriting in India took a rebirth in the early 19th century, it was initially introduced by the British themselves. Later sprung whole lot of modern playwrights in India Micheal Madhusudan Dutt, Nil Darpan, Dinadandhu Mitra etc may be mentioned as early playwrights of Modern Indian Theatre. Rabindranath Tagore Aurobindo and Chattopadhyaya were pioneering modern playwrights who sowed the seeds of modern Indian Drama, following them a long list of playwrights started emerging in India. Among them Badal Sarkar, Mahesh Dattani, Vijay Tendulkar, Girish Karnad etc. were the predominant ones

The colonial period in the history of Indian drama and its evolvment had ushered a radical and almost whirlwind phase for dramatists from all over the

country. Quite understandably, the most renowned drama amongst the British was *Shakuntala* by Kalidasa, which was translated into English by Sir William Jones in 1789. The play was successful enough to etch upon an insightful impression upon such scholars like Goethe and created a ripple of literary sensation. The beginning and the rise of the modern history of Indian drama was hidden within 18th century when the British Empire and its stretch consolidated its stable power in India. Modern theatrical activity originated in Bengal, Karnataka and Kerala also, adding further to the history of Indian drama.

The period after Indian Independence in 1947 marks a significant 2nd stage in the development and history of modern Indian Drama. Prior to 1947, drama scripts were pivoted around Sanskrit plays, English plays and ancient religious-historical epics, deriving much influence from the ancient aspects in the play-acting scenario. Post-independence, the playwrights started exploring more modern and contemporary issues in their works.

### **Elements of Drama**

According to Aristotle, the 6 significant elements of a drama are plot, character, thought, diction, spectacle, and song.

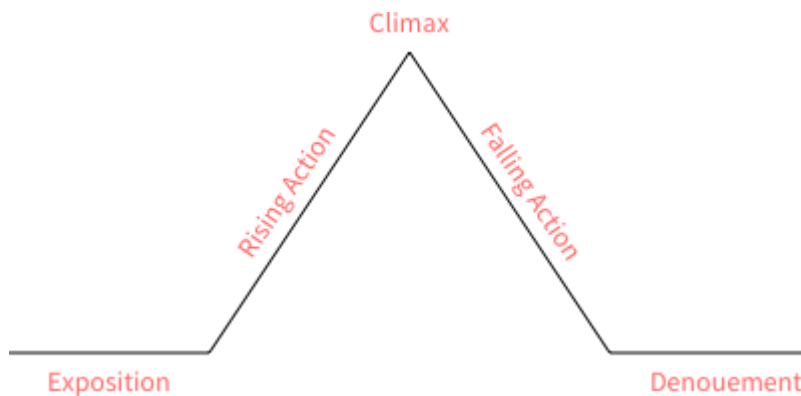
PLOT explains the '*What*,' the main action, which can be described through the character's objectives. The most important aspect of Drama is the plot. Plot is the sequence of interconnected events within the story of a play, novel, film, epic, or other narrative literary work. More than simply an account of what happened, plot reveals the cause-and-effect relationships between the events that occur.

Some additional key details about plot:

- The plot of a story explains not just *what* happens, but *how* and *why* the major events of the story take place.
- Plot is a key element of novels, plays, most works of nonfiction, and many (though not all) poems.
- Since ancient times, writers have worked to create theories that can help categorize different types of plot structures.

## The Difference between Plot and Story

Perhaps the best way to say what a plot is would be to compare it to a story. The two terms are closely related to one another, and as a result, many people often use the terms interchangeably—but they're actually different. A story is a series of events; it tells us *what happened*. A plot, on the other hand, tells us *how* the events are connected to one another and *why* the story unfolded in the way that it did.



The above figure illustrates the different elements of the plot.

1. **Exposition** is the first section of the plot. During the exposition, the audience is introduced to key background information, including characters and their relationships to one another, the **setting** (or time and place) of events, and any other relevant ideas, details, or historical context. In a five-act play, the exposition typically occurs in the first act.
2. The **rising action** begins with the "inciting incident" or "complication"—an event that creates a problem or conflict for the characters, setting in motion a series of increasingly significant events. Some critics describe the rising action as the most important part of the plot because the climax and outcome of the story would not take place if the events of the rising action did not occur. In a five-act play, the rising action usually takes place over the course of act two and perhaps part of act three.
3. The **climax** of a plot is the story's central turning point, which the exposition and the rising action have all been leading up to. The climax is the moment with the greatest tension or conflict. Though the climax is also sometimes called the *crisis*, it is not necessarily a negative event. In a tragedy, the climax will result in an unhappy ending; but in a comedy, the climax usually makes it clear that the story will have a happy ending.

In a five-act play, the climax usually takes place at the end of the third act.

4. Whereas the rising action is the series of events leading up to the climax, the **falling action** is the series of events that follow the climax, ending with the *resolution*, an event that indicates that the story is reaching its end. In a five-act play, the falling action usually takes place over the course of the fourth act, ending with the resolution.
5. **Dénouement** is a French word meaning "outcome." In literary theory, it refers to the part of the plot which ties up loose ends and reveals the final consequences of the events of the story. During the dénouement, the author resolves any final or outstanding questions about the characters' fate, and may even reveal a little bit about the characters' futures after the resolution of the story. In a five-act play, the dénouement takes place in the fifth act.

### Plot Examples from the plays of Shakespeare

*Macbeth*, *Othello*, *Hamlet* and *King Lear* are considered the four major tragedies of Shakespeare.

The development of the plot in Shakespearean Plays is said to be organic and logical. In tragic plays like *Othello* or *Macbeth*, the Protagonist with his tragic flaw takes bad decisions in the **Climax** part of the play. *Othello*'s 'Suspicion' and *Macbeth*'s 'Greed' led to their fall. The most important characters are introduced at the beginning (Exposition) of almost all plays by Shakespeare, and then the **conflict** starts, ultimately leading to falling action and resolution. The audience/readers witness the inner conflict of characters like *Macbeth* and *Othello*. *Macbeth* a commander-in-chief of King Duncan's army is an ambitious man and the effect of meeting the three witches only spurs his ambition to become the king of Scotland, and ultimately it leads to his tragic fall. *Othello*, the moor of Venice suspects the fidelity of his loving wife Desdemona and smothers her to death and finally kills himself. In the play *Hamlet*, Shakespeare introduces Hamlet, Gertrude (Hamlet's mother), and Claudius (Hamlet's uncle) at the beginning of the play. All these three characters are important. The plot gets complicated when Hamlet tries to take revenge for his father's death. Through a series of plans and events Hamlet at last kills Claudius, the murderer of his father. *King Lear* is the story of an old King, who would love to know how much each of his three daughters love him



and then give away their shares of his kingdom. In his foolishness (due to old age) he mistakes his youngest daughter Cordelia though she is loving and genuine and trusts Goneril and Reagan who are selfish and cruel. But it is Cordelia who finally rescues him from his tragic state.

Shakespeare handles his plot deftly and logical connection of events is kept strong through the plays.

CHARACTER (COMMUNITY) is the ‘*Who*’, the protagonist and their relationship to the other characters and to the world they inhabit. The characters maybe a person, animal, object or idea portrayed by the actor(s) in the play. Characters move the action, or plot, of the play forward.

THOUGHT explains ‘*Why*’, the psychology behind the character’s action. Why does a character want what he wants? Thought is the central idea or theme of the play, used by the playwright to illustrate some truth.

DICTION explains ‘*How*’, the dialogue, which in addition to action, is a tactic, characters utilize to achieve their, often opposing, objectives. Diction pertains to the language used by the playwright, including the style, dialect, rhythm and the actual words used by the characters.

SPECTACLE/ setting explains the ‘*Where*’, that which we can see on stage, also known as setting.

SONG / language. It is basically the Rhythm *of speech* or the use of literal music. Both of which are utilized to drive a narrative forward, or delineate character and emotion. The rhythm of speech quite often reveals urgency, mood and culture. Everything the audience hears from the play, including the words, music and sound effects.

Questions:

1. Define Drama.
2. How was drama depicted in Greek times?

3. Briefly trace the beginnings of Drama.
4. What are the different stages of development in Drama?
5. What are 'Miracle' and 'Mystery' plays?
6. Describe how drama was in early Greek times.
7. What are the three phases of modern English drama?
8. Outline briefly the different characteristics of modern drama.
9. Write a note on the origin of Indian drama.
10. What were the major influences on Modern Indian Drama?
11. Explain the chief elements of drama.
12. What are the different components of Plot? Explain

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## UNIT-2 TYPES OF DRAMA

Drama is a composition, either in verse or prose, that tells a story through dialogue and stage directions. Drama contains all the normal plot, elements including rising action, conflict, and falling action. Usually, there is a central character around which the story revolves and secondary characters that help the story play out. While drama is most commonly associated with plays, it also refers to operas, mimes, ballets, or works performed on stage, radio, or television. Dramatic texts are different than novels, poems, or essays because of their collective nature. They are performed together and received by the audience together. It's a group activity.

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

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

### **Types of Drama**

Let us consider a few popular types of drama:

**Comedy** – Comedies are lighter in tone than ordinary works, and provide a happy conclusion. The intention of dramatists in comedies is to make their audience laugh. Hence, they use quaint circumstances, unusual characters, and witty remarks.

**Tragedy** – Tragic dramas use darker themes, such as disaster, pain, and death. Protagonists often have a tragic flaw — a characteristic that leads them to their downfall.

**One Act Play** - A one-act play is a play that has only one act as distinct from plays that occur over several acts. One-act plays may consist of one or more scenes. In recent years the 10-minute play known as flash drama has emerged as a popular sub-genre of the one-act play especially in writing competitions.

**Problem Play**-The problem play is a form of drama that emerged during the 19th century as part of the wider movement of realism in the arts. It deals with contentious social issues through debates between the characters on stage, who typically represent conflicting points of view within a realistic social context.<sup>1</sup>

**Street theatre**-Street theatre is a form of theatrical performance and presentation in outdoor public spaces without a specific paying audience. These spaces can be anywhere, including shopping centres, car parks, recreational reserves, college or university campus and street corners. They are especially seen in outdoor spaces where there are large numbers of people. The actors who perform street plays range from buskers to organised theatre companies, or groups which want to experiment with performance spaces, or to promote their mainstream work. It was a source of providing information to people when there were no sources of providing information like television, radio etc. Nowadays, street play is used to convey a message to the crowd watching it. Street play is considered to be the rawest form of acting, because one does not have a microphone or loud speakers

### **Definition of Comedy**

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

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

### **ELEMENTS OF COMEDY**

1. **Substance:** It refers to the material of the comedy, its text and words. The stories and characters used in a comedy form the pith of it. Use of scathing and penetrating punch words and understandable sentences can help create a winning comedy.

2. **Expression and communication:** This is also a pertinent pillar of any good comedy. The ability of the writer to express and elicit sentiments and feelings of the characters is crucial to get the same investment and response from the readers and audiences. Until the message or text of the comedy is not clear and moving, it will not push the reader into a state of delirious enjoyment. Hence, the ability to express and communicate with the readers is essential to not just make comedy good but in some cases, even divine (E.g. Dante, Oscar Wilde, Shakespeare etc.).
3. **The originality of humour:** If you are trying to copy some one's funny jokes, they won't sound funny coming out of your mouth for sure. Humour needs to be creative and unique as an old joke does not get too many new laughs.
4. **Timing and Rhythm:** This is the most crucial element of any comedy. There is rhythm and pattern of every comedy. Its words work as beats and if the writer misses the beat the comedy loses its impact. The use of exact words at the exact moment of times and situations can be the difference between people laughing because of the writing or on it.
5. **Intelligent writing:** Comedy is a hard genre to do well. It is often said that making some cry or feel desperate is easier than making them forget their miseries and break into a smile and laughter. This necessitates a level of intelligence and keen observation skills. A comedy writer has to force the reader's mind to engage with what he is writing. Only with active and intellectual engagement will a comedy gain and earn deserved laughs. Just crass or abusive representation of other's faults will not cause the reader to laugh at their follies. It needs to be more ingenious and constructive in nature.
6. **Setting:** This refers to the staging and designing of the comedy. As comedy is a direct and lively conversation with the reader, it needs proper and smart staging in order to connect with the readers. Familiar characters and regular everyday situations can really invest the reader in the text of the comedy.

### **The Function of Comedy in Literature**

Comedies are an important genre in literature because they allow for audiences to be uplifted. By posing humorous situations to the audience, they allow for laughter and happiness as the effects of watching them. Because the purposes of

comedies are to amuse and entertain, they may appeal to broader audiences such as young children as well as adults.

Comedy aims to bring laughter and humour to plays/the theatre. Comedy entertains and amuses audiences while also addressing social and personal matters of corruption. For example, comedy uses techniques such as satire and parody in order to poke fun at common human flaws. Often, comedies expose societal and institutional issues in a way that makes the subject less painful to approach.

Comedy types vary from culture to culture, but humour is a universal tool and comedy is an extremely popular method of storytelling. Aside from laughter and humour, comedy brings an awareness to certain truths and important ideas.

### **Types of Comedy**

There are five types of comedy in literature:

1. Romantic Comedy
2. Comedy of Humours
3. Comedy of Manners
4. Sentimental Comedy
5. Tragicomedy

**Romantic Comedy:** A romantic comedy involves a love between people that results in a happy ending. While they may still endure struggles, the couple ultimately achieves a positive conclusion.

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

**Comedy of Humours:** Ben Jonson is the first dramatist who conceived and popularized this dramatic genre during the late sixteenth century. The term humour derives from the Latin word Humour, which means "liquid." It comes from a theory that the human body has four liquids, or humours, which include phlegm, blood, yellow bile, and black bile. It explains that, when human

beings have a balance of these humours in their bodies, they remain healthy.

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

**Comedy of Manners:** This type of comedy is satirical in nature and makes fun of sophisticated society. The Way of the World has all the important characteristics of the comedy of manners. The aim of this comedy is to show the manners of the upper ranks of contemporary society. It satirically presents the aristocratic London society. The purpose is to hit at the follies and foibles of people. Here Congreve has regarded London as his world. The presentation of the high society of London is his soul concern. All the scenes in this play are laid in Lady Wishfort's house, a chocolate house and St. James' Park. All the characters are imbued with the spirit of London life. They are chiefly people of fashion. They are fond of games of love intrigues. This is the true style of the comedy of manners.

**Sentimental Comedy:** A sentimental comedy involves characters that despite being closely tempted to bad or evil, eventually triumph over these forces and have a happy ending. Unlike the comedy of manners, these characters represent the everyday, middle-class versus the upper class.

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

**Tragicomedy:** A tragicomedy utilizes elements from both comedies and tragedies. These plays often begin tragically and end happily.

Shakespeare's play, 'All's Well that Ends Well', perfectly sums up tragic and comic elements, perfectly. This tragicomedy play shows antics of low-born but devoted Helena, who attempts to win the love of her lover, Bertram. She finally succeeds in marrying him, though she decides not to accept him until she wears

the family ring of her husband and bears him a child. She employs a great deal of trickery by disguising herself as Bertram's other, and fakes her death. Bertram discovers her treachery at the end but realizes Helena did all that for him and expresses his love for her.

### **Tragedy Definition**

A tragedy is a genre of drama focusing on stories of human suffering. The drama typically consists of a human flaw or weakness in one of the work's central characters, which then triggers a devastating event or series of events for those in that character's orbit.

Tragedies are most commonly associated with stage plays, but any fictional work—and many non-fictional works too—can include tragic elements. Audiences respond to tragedies for two main reasons: the comfort one can draw from commiserating with another's suffering and the pleasure one can find, however perverse it may sound, watching another's struggles. The genre has a long history in the theatrical world, with its roots in the classic tragedies of antiquity.

The word *tragedy* comes from the Greek *tragodia*, meaning “a formal play or poem with a sad ending.”

### **The History of the Tragedy**

The Athenian tragedies of ancient Greece are the oldest surviving form of the genre. Greek tragedy flourished during the 5th century BCE, when merrymakers staged them every spring as part of a religious festival celebrating Dionysus, the god of wine and ecstasy. During the celebration, three playwrights competed for the title of champion by each presenting three self-written tragedies and one satyr play, a Greek type of tragicomedy. Only one tragedy cycle from these events has survived: Aeschylus's the *Oresteia*. Aeschylus would emerge as one of the preeminent playwrights of the era, along with Sophocles (*Oedipus Rex*, *Antigone*), and Euripides (*Medea*, *The Bacchae*).

When the Roman Republic conquered many areas of Greece, it spread Greece's particular form of theatre—namely, tragedies—across the continent to a larger audience and even more widespread popularity. Roman writers started creating tragedies of their own by the 3rd century BCE. Though extremely celebrated and immensely popular in its day, no Roman tragedy survived into the modern



era. Popular tragedians of ancient Rome included Lucius Accius (Decius, Brutus), Quintus Ennius, and Marcus Pacuvius. Seneca the Younger lived several decades after these playwrights, and he would go on to become perhaps the foremost tragedian of ancient Rome. Several of his works, including *Oedipus* and *Phaedra*, survive.

A few centuries later, in his landmark treatise *Poetics*, Greek philosopher Aristotle defined tragedy as a specific art form. He characterized Greek tragedy as being a complete work, consisting of an introduction, middle, and end, with a powerful plot, formal and poetic language, and depictions of tragic scenarios that draw pity from the audience. The ultimate goal, Aristotle said, is for the audience's experience of pity to lead to an emotional catharsis. So, in the end, tragedy was intended as a sort of purgative experience. Aristotle is just one of many philosophers who, through the ages, has defined tragedy in their own terms. Others include Plato, Saint Augustine, Friedrich Nietzsche, Sigmund Freud, and Albert Camus.

### **Tragedies in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance**

Tragedies for the stage fell out of favour by the Middle Ages, when the Church assumed dominance of much of Western art. Not surprisingly, this era produced plays primarily about moral dilemmas and religious teachings. It wasn't until the Renaissance that writers rediscovered the playwrights of antiquity and the tragedies they wrote. Poets, scholars, and other writers translated these plays for the contemporary audience.

The Renaissance in England ushered in a new era in stage tragedies. There were three types of tragedies generally written and performed during this period: tragedies of circumstance, which involved unfortunate events happening to characters through no fault of their own, such as being born into an ill-fated but noble family; tragedies of miscalculation, in which a character commits an error—sometimes seemingly small—that has major and catastrophic consequences; and revenge plays, in which a character seeks to avenge a suffering by instigating more suffering. William Shakespeare (*Hamlet*, *Titus Andronicus*), Christopher Marlowe (*Doctor Faustus*, *Tambulaine the Great*) and John Webster (*The Duchess of Malfi*, *The White Devil*), all wrote world-famous tragedies during this period.

French dramatist Pierre Corneille continued this tradition into the 17th century, adding his own interpretation of the genre. He felt that all tragedies should have honourable, admirable characters, which would further add to the misfortune of their downfall; centre stories about royalty or government, like wars, marriages, and political assassinations; and avoid rewarding evil behaviour with redemption.

### **Tragedies in the Modern Era**

Despite Aristotle, Corneille, and the Renaissance playwrights declaring formal rules about tragedy, as time went on, the parameters around the genre started to soften. Playwrights felt more emboldened to break the bonds of traditional form, incorporating elements of tragedy into comedies and vice versa, throughout the 19th and 20th centuries and continuing to the present day.

American playwright Arthur Miller argued that domestic environments provided the perfect setting for modern tragedies, and common folk the ideal heroes and heroines. Other differences that gradually distinguished modern from classical tragedies included the incorporation of subplots instead of a laser focus on one primary character's tragedy and a greater emphasis placed on entertainment, rather than imparting a moral lesson or initiating a catharsis for the audience.

Modern tragedies possess more nuance than those of the ancient and classical worlds; rarely are all or most of the principal characters dead by the end of a modern tragedy, as is the case in older tragic works. Modern playwrights interpret tragedy to mean any number of unfortunate circumstances that might befall a character and lead to suffering and profound ruin: the loss of a loved one, the end of a relationship, a financial downturn, mental illness, and, of course, death, to name just a few.

Using this more inclusive definition of tragedy, many modern plays meet the benchmarks of the genre. Popular examples include *Hedda Gabler* by Henrik Ibsen, *Long Day's Journey into Night* by Eugene O'Neill, *A Streetcar Named Desire* by Tennessee Williams, *A View from the Bridge* by Arthur Miller, *Glengarry Glen Ross* by David Mamet, *Rabbit Hole* by David Lindsay-Abaire, and *Sweat* by Lynn Nottage.

## **The Elements of a Tragedy**

A play can include any number of elements that identify it as a tragedy, the most common being a tragic hero, a tragic flaw, and catharsis

### **Tragic Hero**

A tragic hero is a central character whose choices or weaknesses lead to their downfall. They initially possess some admirable or valiant quality, such as bravery, compassion, or decency. But, their bad judgement or moral failings, however momentary, result in a failure that has disastrous consequences.

Tragic heroes include Oedipus in Sophocles's *Oedipus Rex*, whose hubris causes him to fulfil the unthinkable prophecy of murdering his father, marrying his mother, and gouging out his own eyes; and Willy Loman in Arthur Miller's *Death of a Salesman*, who falls short of his own high standards as a husband and father and kills himself so his family will have the financial support provided by the insurance money.

### **Tragic Flaw**

A tragic flaw is a character trait that triggers the tragic hero's defeat. The flaw might be a decision or mistake the character makes or a limitation they possess. For instance, the title character in *'Macbeth'* has the tragic flaw of unbridled ambition, which drives him to join forces with his power-hungry wife and try to murder the king.

In Tennessee Williams's *'A streetcar Named Desire'*, it's Blanche DuBois's emotional fragility—mixed with hearty doses of mental illness and alcoholism—that is her tragic flaw. It shatters under the bullying of her brother-in-law, bringing about her undoing and her ultimate commitment to a mental institution.

### **Catharsis**

Catharsis is a purging or purification of emotions. In Aristotle's definition of tragedy, the audience undergoes a sort of catharsis, but so do the characters. Catharsis is the process of experiencing pity and fear which will ultimately leave an indelible impression in the minds of the audience. Even if the characters don't survive or experience any type of redemption in the end, the

process of catharsis can, emotionally or spiritually speaking, cleanse them of their pain.

Take Othello in Shakespeare's play of the same name. His suicide at the play's end, after he realizes that Iago's deception has led Othello to kill his wife Desdemona, is a catharsis of sorts. The suicide doesn't absolve Othello of culpability, but it does absolve him of his pain.

### **The Function of a Tragedy**

Writers use tragedy to examine how behaviour, choices, states of mind, and factors beyond one's control can damage the psyche and cause suffering, both in and beyond oneself. Suffering is one of the few universal human experiences we all share, and understanding it helps us better understand one another. This naturally leads to empathy, and it can also comfort an audience and make them feel less alone.

Clearly, most people don't like to watch other human beings suffer in real life, but in the context of a fictional tragedy, bearing witness to suffering can be a transformative experience. It can illustrate the depths of another's pain; serve as a cautionary tale of what happens when one makes certain choices or engages certain triggers; and show the natural consequences of cause and effect.

### **ONE ACT PLAY**

The one-act play, as the very name implies, is a play in only one act and differs, on this structural point, from a regular play. This is, however, a very important modern requirement, as it comes to suit the very necessity of the modern age of hurry and speed. It takes a short time for its performance. So, it satisfies a modern man's psychological need by offering entertainment within a short time. At the same time, his business is not at all affected. He works and he enjoys it. His duty and pleasure are rightly balanced. Consequently, the one-act play has become one of the most popular entertainments of the modern age.

It is, however, wrong to suppose that the one-act play is entirely an innovation of modern times. In the early days of the drama, there were short plays, with an artistic unity. Early Miracle and Morality plays, represented in cycles, were short and truly one-act plays. Everyman, an unforgettable specimen of medieval theatre, may well be regarded as one of the most effective one-act plays in the world. Interludes, less serious plays, rather farcical, are also found short and of

one-act. Even some of the early English comedies and a few specific plays of the seventeenth century and the eighteenth are actually one-act plays. The one-act play is, then, by no means a product of the current century, although many admirers of this type of drama have such a view. In fact, the one-act play of today is simply the revival of an old form of dramatic art in a changed situation.

A one-act play is, no doubt, a work of art and, like all true works of art, it, too, represents the grasp and transmission of life- life with all its ups and downs, hopes and fears, successes and failures.

It is, as a regular play, surely mimesis, imitation, or representation of life, according to the dramatic necessity, and may have a happy or sad ending. It has, however, certain characteristics of its own.

First, the scope of the one-act play is much restricted, as its span is limited. Hence, it cannot deal with an entire life. merely seizes upon a fragment of this life and serves to focus the attention of all on that fragment, creating a mood. So, the one-act play deals with a single dramatic situation and attempts to produce a single effect. This is a distinct feature in such a play.

Secondly, the one-act play has no elaborate plot, like a full-length play, as it is performed within a short span of time. It has a sub-plot, too. Its plot is simple and based on a single situation. The unity of the plot is the very core of a one-act play and forms another feature.

Thirdly, again, the canvas of the one-act play is also much circumscribed. Hence, paucity in the number of characters is one of its special features. However, every character of the one-act play has a living role to play. Though he or she has a very short time to stay, he or she must impress the spectators with real human interest.

Lastly, the dialogue of a good one-act play is necessarily precise and pointed. There cannot be any prolonged discussion or any rich soliloquy in it. Every word of a one-act play may develop a situation, reveal a character and create an atmosphere. Brevity and relevancy are always the very basis of such a play.

Of course, the one-act play has a structural aspect. It proceeds, too, through three important stages-exposition, development, and conclusion. But its movement from one stage to another is swift and spontaneous, and the spectator

feels hardly conscious of the same. In this structural movement, a good one-act play does not differ much from a regular play except that the transition from one phase to another is smooth and swift.

The rise of the one-act play is a much-noted feature in the English drama of the present time. There is found a genuine interest in and a general popularity of the modern British one-act play. This is found to achieve the intensity of a high tragedy as well as the hilarity of a pleasant comedy.

In fact, the one-act play, like a regular drama, has two distinct types- tragedy and comedy-, and it shows its proficiency equally in both types, or even in the broad farce or melodrama.

Of the tragedies in one act, J.M. Synge's 'Riders to the Sea' is to be mentioned first. This one-act play takes not more than half an hour for its performance. Yet, it possesses the immensity of a great tragedy. Modelled after great classical tragedies, it remains a minor masterpiece in modern theatre, with a rare universality that is the gift of any great play. 'The Monkey's Paw', adopted from a story of W. W. Jacobs, is a touching tragedy in one act. The tragic appeal is intense here, too. J. A. Ferguson's 'Campbell of Kilmhor' is another effective tragedy, with a patriotic inspiration. Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's Waterloo, Hugh Stewart's 'A Room in the Tower', and H. H. Munro's 'The Death Trap' are some successful one-act plays in this respect.

**PROBLEM PLAY:** The term 'problem play' is applied to plays that treat some social or moral problem and the end of these plays compel the readers to think intelligently on the issue. The term was coined by Sydney.

This is the popular form of drama emerged during nineteenth century and its popularity is increasing rapidly because of the growing complexity in life and great change in the view points. This is a kind of play that directly appeals to thoughtful minds and contributes largely to human progress but for creating dramatic effects, it over-simplifies problems and becomes over-melodramatic. Wrong and injustice inflicted by the society are the chief elements of problem play. The problem playwrights focus on needless torture and suffering imposed by the law of the particular land and firmly adhered to the dictums of justice and equality to all. The major problems tackled in these plays are rampant in the society of that time i.e. crime, injustice, conservatism, economic slavery of women, domestic life and relationship, poverty and revolt of youths.

Disintegration in the life of middle-class families and values originated the problem play in England. Problem play turned into a powerful medium of social criticism and vindicated the right of the individual unfettered by bias and conventions of the society.

## HISTORY OF PROBLEM PLAYS

Problem play, type of drama that developed in the 19th century to deal with controversial social issues in a realistic manner, to expose social ills, and to stimulate thought and discussion on the part of the audience. The genre had its beginnings in the work of the French dramatists Alexandre Dumas and Émile Augier, who adapted the then-popular formula of Eugène Scribe's "well-made play" to serious subjects, creating somewhat simplistic, didactic thesis plays on subjects such as prostitution, business ethics, illegitimacy, and female emancipation. The problem play reached its maturity in the works of the Norwegian playwright Henrik Ibsen, whose works had artistic merit as well as topical relevance. His first experiment in the genre was 'Love's Comedy', (published 1862), a critical study of contemporary marriage. He went on to expose the hypocrisy, greed, and hidden corruption of his society in a number of masterly plays: 'A Doll's House' portrays a woman's escape from her childish, subservient role as a bourgeois wife; 'Ghosts' attacks the convention that even loveless and unhappy marriages are sacred; 'The Wild Duck' shows the consequences of an egotistical idealism; 'An Enemy of the People' reveals the expedient morality of respectable provincial townspeople.

Ibsen's influence helped encourage the writing of problem plays throughout Europe. In England, George Bernard Shaw brought the problem play to its intellectual peak, both with his plays and with their long and witty prefaces

Previously, problem plays were in the form of realistic plays and when romantic and historical themes turned their way to family themes, they gave way to problem plays. T. W. Roberston's (1829 - 71) works are considerable from this point. Later, H. A. Jones and Pinero under the influence of T. W. Roberston, prepared themselves to write new drama of ideas and social purpose. In nineties Ibsen gave great impetus to realistic movement and then Shaw, Galsworthy, Graville- Barker and St. John Hankin carried this serious drama to domestic, social and personal themes.

Now, natural dialogue, new psychological investigations and distinct plot reinforced the interest of the readers and audience and the problem play was established as the drama of early twentieth century.

### **Elements of Problem Play**

Problem plays are a powerful and effective medium of serious thoughts. They give any propaganda a fair thought and impartial representation of conflicting tendencies of the world. They require a high level of dramaturgic skill to maintain the vitality and effectiveness of the problem plays. Some essential requisites of Problem plays are as follows:

#### **High Technical Skill**

Problem play needs high technical skill and ability. Being a new experiment in dramaturgy, it totally discarded the traditional craftsmanship. The problem playwright does not set aside the plot construction, but attempt to unfold social, political and family problems. The problemplaywright also observes the unities of time, place and action to maintain economy and structural compactness to enforce his theme.

#### **Theme through Action and Dialogue**

Although, problem playwrights express the themes through action and dialogue, they do not adopt the conventional devices and transformed them to a great extent. They give a new meaning and an entirely new significance to their themes.

#### **Tackling with Ordinary Human Problems**

These plays deal with ordinary humdrum of life. The problem playwright regards life as unheroic and avoids romantic extravagance and conveys the effect of these common incidents by pause, gestures, trivial actions and glance.

#### **Thought and Action**

Overpowering thought and action are often regarded more effective than physical action. The problem playwright concentrates chiefly on psychological



conflict resulted from the problems of social life. In Ibsen's *A Doll's House*, the action is psychological than physical.

### **Presentation of Interesting Man and Woman**

Problem play portrays interesting individual and complex specimen of humanity. His characters are from courts, offices, homes and workshops who have serious concerns about the society in which they live but unfortunately either they are opposed or victimized by society

### **STREET THEATRE**

Street Theatre probably one of the oldest forms of theatre since it predates the development of theatres and specific performance spaces. It is a form of theatre, which is presented normally in an outdoor space in a public area. The performance is often called a found performance because both the performer and the audience 'find' or, happen upon the space where the performance takes place. Often street theatre performers are called 'buskers' and the audience for a 'busker' often donates money or gifts of food or drink to the performer. These types of street theatre are often performed on the street malls in shopping centres, car parks, or on street intersections or corners. Street theatre also includes moving performances that happen through the street during festivals, or during parades or protests. Street theatre can involve juggling, stilt walking, magic, physical theatre, mime, mask work, circus skills, clowning, work with fire, slapstick, comedy, busking, riding bicycles or unicycles, using simple costumes and props. It normally involves little or no set and no amplification of sound.

Some forms of early Street Theatre include, Ancient Roman Comedy, Medieval Passion, Plays, the *Commedia dell'arte*, the *Carnivale* or, the *Nukkad Natak* (Indian Street Theatre). During the 20<sup>th</sup> Century political and community-based street performance companies like Welfare State International, PETA (in The Philippines), The Sarwanam, Theatre Group (in Nepal) and The Bread and Puppet Theatre Company (founded in 1963 in New York) expanded the nature and focus of Street Theatre.

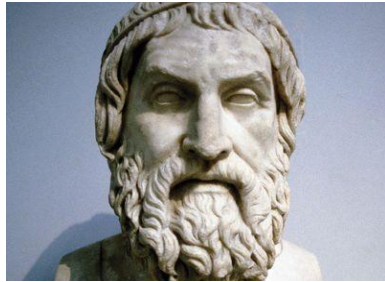
Youngsters raised concerns over a wide range of, social issues — AIDS, human trafficking, child, labour and drinking — through their street plays. "A street play is a very potent form of communication on social issues. Many corporate

houses have tried to use street plays as a mode of advertisement for their products. Such attempts tend to fail because this kind of theatre works for raising awareness on issues like, dowry, child labour, etc," Khushalani said. The first performance by students of Indraprastha University raised the issues of prostitution, human trafficking and the problems faced by sex workers. "We used the data collected by NGOs, and looked at a couple of cases. During our research we noticed that a number of children had been rehabilitated. We found that there were many cases of prostitution. This trend was not limited to Delhi. It is a pan-India phenomenon and was also seen in countries like, Nepal and Bangladesh," Arjuna, an Indraprastha University, student, said. Children of factory workers were part of the second performance. The play spoke about child labour and was based on case studies in Moradabad and Firozabad areas of Uttar, Pradesh. Playwright Anuragh said, "We had, approached an NGO, which works in the, Badarpur area which runs a learning centre for children. Since the play was primarily on child labour, we wanted kids to be part of the performance and received an enthusiastic response from them. They took some time to understand the issue. They participated in the play with the hope that they were doing something for children who were forced to work because of family or social pressures."

Street play is one of the oldest theatre forms where the artists enact in public places with no specific target audience. It is a genre of drama performed with music and dance which is known for its simplicity and creative execution. It serves as a, metaphor that captures an image of moral nature which every layman can relate to. It is also known, as 'nukad natak'. A street play is known for its catchy dialogues, attractive slogans and powerful dramatic elements, like tragedy, humour, mimicry etc. The youths mainly come forward to play this genre. The primary goal of a street play is taking a social message to a large group of people. This helps to create a sense of awareness in the society in which we live. Every street play has a specific public social theme and the actor who performs should possess the skill to exhibit and portrays the theme well. The dialogues are colloquial and should be rendered monotonously with a clear and loud voice. This kind of recitation in high pitch will leave a huge impact in the minds of people. Generally, the duration of the street play is very less. It is not an easy task for any actors to perform in an extensive group. Most of the times, the actors are uniformly dressed in order to bring uniformity in behaviour, mindset and outlook of the people. Lack of proper theatre settings is an added advantage to get connected with people in real life.

## UNIT-3

### BRIEF INTRODUCTION TO SELECT DRAMATISTS



#### 1. SOPHOCLES

**496 to about 406 BCE**

Sophocles was an ancient Greek playwright, born in Colonus near Athens, Greece in 496 B.C.E. His father, Sophilus, was a rich member of a small community, the rural 'Deme'. Sophocles was highly educated. He is one of three Greek tragedians whose plays have lived on. Sophocles wrote 123 plays out of which we have 7 complete plays. These are 'Ajax', 'Antigone', 'The Women of Trachis', 'Oedipus the King', 'Electra', 'Philoctetes' and 'Oedipus at Colonus'. He took part in competitions and even won over the two popular playwrights Aeschylus and Euripides.

His most popular plays also known as the 'Theban Plays' are 'Oedipus' and 'Antigone'. He began his artistic journey in 468 BC, with winning a prize for his play and leaving behind Aeschylus in the competition. When he was sixteen he led the 'paean' which was a chant for the Gods after the Greek victory over the Persians. He brought many innovations to the Greek play style. One of his advances was the introduction of a third actor which gave him the chance of creating and developing his characters in further depth.

He was the Imperial Treasurer from 443 to 442 B.C.E, helping control the funds of the Delian Confederacy for the Athenian Empire. He was also elected as a member of the Board of Generals more than once. He was very religious. He had given up his house for the worship of a God named Asclepius who was the god of medicine, till a proper temple was not constructed. He was also given the title of 'Dexion' for this generosity. Sophocles first wife was Nicostrata with whom he had two sons named Iophon and Sophocles. His second wife was Theoris with whom he had one son who was called Ariston.

His plays involved themes such as the relation between man and the Gods and how man reacts in certain problematic situations and the Heroes of his plays had to overcome various obstacles. He changed the style of having a trilogy and instead made three plays; each with a different plot. This however has produced some inconsistencies in his work. His play 'Electra' (418-414 B.C.E), the character Electra is waiting for her brother, Orestes. His play 'Philoctetus' (409 B.C.E) shows the conflict between man and the society and the cruelties of the society when it no longer need the man. His play 'Oedipus at Colonus' (401 B.C.E.) was produced posthumously and it was the longest play written by him. Sophocles was inspired by human nature and its welfare as we can see from his line in 'Antigone': 'Many are the wonders of the world,' says Sophocles, 'but none is more wonderful than man.'

Sophocles died at the age of ninety one in 406 B.C. He saw in his life many great times and events including the Greek victory in the Persian Wars and the Peloponnesian War. A Eulogy written by a poet in a play called 'The Muses':

**'Blessed is Sophocles, who had a long life, was a man both happy and talented, and the writer of many good tragedies; and he ended his life well without suffering any misfortune.'**

## **2.WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE**



**1564-1616**

William Shakespeare was a renowned English poet, playwright, and actor, born in 1564 in Stratford-upon-Avon. His birthday is most commonly celebrated on 23 April, which is also believed to be the date he died in 1616. Shakespeare was a prolific writer during the Elizabethan and Jacobean ages of British theatre.

Shakespeare's plays are perhaps his most enduring legacy. Shakespeare's poems also remain popular to this day. Altogether Shakespeare's works include 38 plays, 2 narrative poems, 154 sonnets, and a variety of other poems. No original manuscripts of Shakespeare's plays are known to exist today. Thanks to a group of actors from Shakespeare's company that we have about half of his plays. They collected them for publication after Shakespeare died, preserving the plays. These writings were brought together in what is known as the First Folio ('Folio' refers to the size of the paper used). It contained 36 of his plays.

Shakespeare's sonnets were composed between 1593 and 1601, though not published until 1609. That edition, *The Sonnets of Shakespeare*, consists of 154 sonnets, all written in the form of three quatrains and a couplet that is now recognized as Shakespearean. The sonnets fall into two groups: Sonnets 1–126, addressed to a beloved friend, a handsome and noble young man, and sonnets 127–152, to a malignant but fascinating "Dark Lady," who the poet loves in spite of himself. Nearly all of Shakespeare's sonnets examine the inevitable decay of time, and the immortalization of beauty and love in poetry.

Shakespeare's legacy is as rich and diverse as his work; his plays have spawned countless adaptations across multiple genres and cultures. His plays have had an enduring presence on stage and film. His writings have been compiled in various iterations of 'The Complete Works of William Shakespeare', which include all of his plays, sonnets, and other poems. William Shakespeare continues to be one of the most important literary figures of the English language.

Hamlet, Macbeth, King Lear and Othello are considered to be the great tragedies.

### **Comedies**

1. *The Tempest*
2. *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*
3. *The Merry Wives of Windsor*
4. *Measure for Measure*
5. *The Comedy of Errors*
6. *Much Ado About Nothing*
7. *Love's Labour's Lost*

### **Histories**

1. *Richard II*
2. *Henry IV, Part 1*
3. *Henry IV, Part 2*
4. *Henry V*
5. *Henry VI, Part 1*
6. *Henry VI, Part 2*
7. *Henry VI, Part 3*

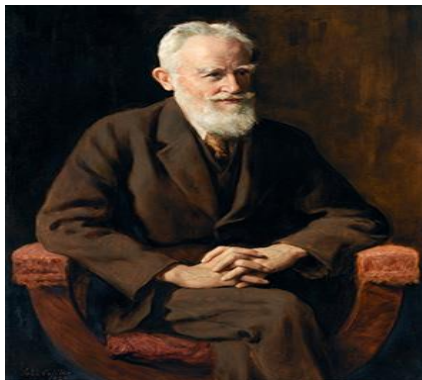
8. *A Midsummer Night's Dream*
9. *The Merchant of Venice*
10. *As You Like It*
11. *The Taming of the Shrew*
12. *All's Well That Ends Well*
13. *Twelfth Night*
14. *The Winter's Tale*
15. *Pericles, Prince of Tyre*
16. *The Two Noble Kinsmen*

8. *Richard III*
9. *Henry VIII*
10. *Edward III* <sup>FF</sup>

### **Tragedies**

1. *Troilus and Cressida*
2. *Coriolanus*
3. *Titus Andronicus*
4. *Romeo and Juliet*
5. *Timon of Athens*
6. *Julius Caesar*
7. *Macbeth*
8. *Hamlet*
9. *King Lear*
10. *Othello*
11. *Antony and Cleopatra*
12. *Cymbeline*

### **3. GEORGE BERNARD SHAW**



**1856-1950**

George Bernard Shaw was born in Dublin, the son of a civil servant. After working as a real estate agent, he moved to London at the age of 20. Before he became established as a leading music and literary critic, five of his novels had been rejected. He belonged to the Fabian Society, a socialist think-tank whose members included the author Virginia Woolf. At the same time, he advocated racial biology and made positive statements about Hitler, Stalin and Mussolini.

George Bernard Shaw, the commentator and theatre critic, became an author to illustrate his criticisms of contemporary British theatre. He made his debut with *Plays Pleasant and Unpleasant* (1898) and asserted that art should be didactic and discuss social issues. Shaw's plays are characterized by satire, provocation and allegories. He wrote more than 60 plays, of which *Pygmalion* (1912) is best remembered today, a witty study of phonetics as well as a clever treatment of middle class morality and class distinction, proved some of Shaw's greatest successes on the stage. *Widower's Houses* and *Mrs. Warren's Profession* savagely attack social hypocrisy, while in plays such as *Arms and the Man* and *The Man of Destiny* the criticism is less fierce. Shaw's radical rationalism, his utter disregard of conventions, his keen dialectic interest and verbal wit often turn the stage into a forum of ideas.

In the plays of his later period discussion sometimes drowns the drama, in *Back to Methuselah* (1921), although in the same period he worked on his masterpiece *Saint Joan* (1923), in which he rewrites the well-known story of the French maiden and extends it from the middle ages to the present.

Other important plays by Shaw are *Caesar and Cleopatra* (1901), a historical play filled with allusions to modern times, and *Androcles and the Lion* (1912), in which he exercised a kind of retrospective history and from modern movements drew deductions for the Christian era. In *Major Barbara* (1905), one of Shaw's most successful «discussion» plays, the audience's attention is held by the power of the witty argumentation that man can achieve aesthetic salvation only through political activity, not as an individual. Shaw is one of two people to have won both an Academy Award and a Nobel Prize for Literature. He was awarded Noble prize in 1925, the committee said that his work was "marked by both idealism and humanity, its stimulating satire often being infused with a singular poetic beauty". Shaw's complete works appeared in thirty-six volumes between 1930 and 1950, the year of his death.

#### 4. BERTOLT BRECHT



**1898-1956**

**Bertolt Brecht**, original name **Eugen Berthold Friedrich Brecht**, (born February 10, 1898, Augsburg, Germany - died August 14, 1956, East Berlin), German poet, playwright, and theatrical reformer whose epic theatre departed from the conventions of theatrical illusion and developed the drama as a social and ideological forum for leftist causes.

Until 1924 Brecht lived in Bavaria, where he was born, studied medicine (Munich, 1917–21), and served in an army hospital (1918). From this period date his first play, *Baal* (produced 1923); his first success, *Trommeln in der Nacht* (Kleist Preis, 1922; *Drums in the Night*); the poems and songs collected as *Die Hauspostille* (1927; *A Manual of Piety*, 1966), his first professional production (*Edward II*, 1924); and his admiration for Wedekind, Rimbaud, Villon, and Kipling.

During this period he also developed a violently antibourgeois attitude that reflected his generation's deep disappointment in the civilization that had come crashing down at the end of World War I. Among Brecht's friends were members of the Dadaist group, who aimed at destroying what they condemned as the false standards of bourgeois art through derision and iconoclastic satire. The man who taught him the elements of Marxism in the late 1920s was Karl Korsch, an eminent Marxist theoretician who had been a Communist member of the Reichstag but had been expelled from the German Communist Party in 1926.

In 1933 he went into exile—in Scandinavia (1933–41), mainly in Denmark, and then in the United States (1941–47), where he did some film work in Hollywood. In Germany his books were burned and his citizenship was

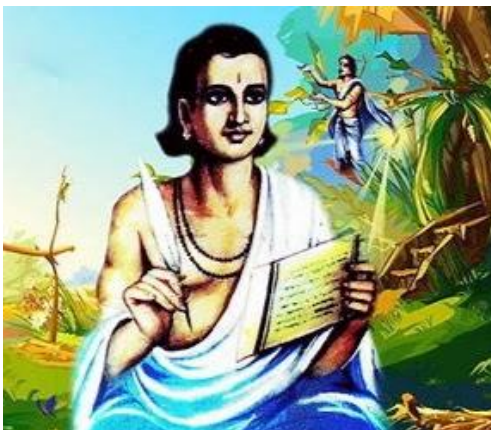


withdrawn. He was cut off from the German theatre; but between 1937 and 1941 he wrote most of his great plays, his major theoretical essays and dialogues, and many of the poems collected as *Svendborger Gedichte* (1939). Between 1937 and 1939, he wrote, but did not complete, the novel *Die Geschäfte des Herrn Julius Caesar* (1957; *The Business Affairs of Mr. Julius Caesar*). It concerns a scholar researching a biography of Caesar several decades after his assassination.

The essence of his theory of drama, as revealed in this work, is the idea that a truly Marxist drama must avoid the Aristotelian premise that the audience should be made to believe that what they are witnessing is happening here and now. For he saw that if the audience really felt that the emotions of heroes of the past—Oedipus, or Lear, or Hamlet—could equally have been their own reactions, then the Marxist idea that human nature is not constant but a result of changing historical conditions would automatically be invalidated. Brecht therefore argued that the theatre should not seek to make its audience believe in the presence of the characters on the stage—should not make it identify with them, but should rather follow the method of the epic poet's art, which is to make the audience realize that what it sees on the stage is merely an account of past events that it should watch with critical detachment.

In 1949 Brecht went to Berlin to help stage *Mutter Courage und ihre Kinder* (with his wife, Helene Weigel, in the title part) at Reinhardt's old Deutsches Theater in the Soviet sector. This led to formation of the Brechts' own company, the Berliner Ensemble, and to permanent return to Berlin.

## 5. KALIDASA



## **150 BCE to 450 CE**

There are hundreds of languages in the world. However, great classical literature which people in all countries find exciting to read is found only in a few languages. One such great language is Sanskrit. It is one of the oldest languages. It is the mother of several Indian languages such as Hindi, Bengali and Marathi in the North. Kannada, Telugu and other languages in the South have also been nourished by it.

A poet who has made a distinct and glorious contribution to this sumptuous Sanskrit literature is Kalidasa. He has pictured in his works the beauty in life and pondered upon how we can give pleasure to others by generous and graceful behaviour. His portrayals are vivid and heart- warming; his word power is unique. In a few words he is capable of bringing out the entire meaning intended. His writings touchingly show up a noble, meaningful mode of life for the people to pursue. His works are an intellectual treat to thinkers and common readers alike.

Who is this Kalidasa? When did he live and where in India was he residing? Much discussion has taken place for a long time. now about his life and times. Not many queries on this score have elicited definite answers. Several legends have sprouted around him. According to one such popular legend, Kalidasa wasn't always so wise and learned. In fact, there was a time he was considered to be one of the stupidest person in the kingdom!

One sunny day, Kalidasa was sitting on a branch of a tree, trying to saw it off. But the dim witted man was sitting on the wrong end of the branch, so when he finally sawed through the branch, down he tumbled! This act of sheer stupidity was observed by some shrewd pundit's minister passing by. Now these pundits wanted to play a trick on the arrogant princess, to teach her a lesson. She was determined to marry someone who would defeat her in a debate about the scriptures. The princess had heaped considerable abuse on them over a period of time, and they were determined to extract their revenge. So, when they chanced upon Kalidasa, they decided to present him to the queen as a suitable match for her. In order to conceal his stupidity, the pundits asked Kalidasa to pretend that he was a great sage, who was observing a vow of silence. He readily agreed, and they presented him to the queen, saying that Kalidasa would only

communicate by way of gestures. When the queen asked him a few questions to test his intelligence, he gesticulated wildly and the astute pundits ‘interpreted’ these gestures as extremely witty answers and retorts. The princess was suitably impressed, and the couple was married without much delay.

The princess later realized that she had married a prized fool. Furious, she threw him out of her palace, and her life. The dejected Kalidasa wandered around, till he came to the bank of the river. He contemplated taking his life when he suddenly saw some women washing clothes on the edge of the river bank. He observed that the stones which the women were pounding with clothes, were smooth and rounded, while the other stones were rough and ragged. This observation hit him like a thunderbolt, and it dawned upon him that if stones could be worn through and change their shape by being pounded upon by clothes, then why couldn’t his thick brains change, by being pounded upon by knowledge! Kalidasa thus grew determined to become the wisest and most learned man in the country, and to achieve this end he started indulging in intellectual pastimes, reading, meditating and praying to his goddess Kali to grant him divine knowledge. His wish was fulfilled. This is one of the most popular legends about Kalidasa. There are several other stories but they lack authenticity.

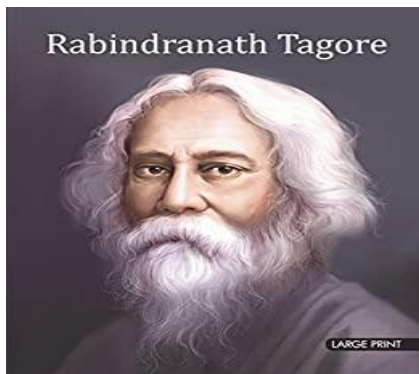
It appears that Kalidasa was at the court of emperor Vikramaditya. The place and time of this king are also not definite. But it can be said with some certainty that Kalidasa lived before the 6th century A.D., i.e., about 1400 years ago. But when exactly he lived before the 6th century is not firmly established. Though a deep affection for the city of Ujjain is discernible in his works, it cannot be said with certainty that he lived there. But we can assume that wherever he may have been born, he had lived at Ujjain. Kalidas, however, had good knowledge of the whole of Bharat. In his poem ‘Meghaduta’, his descriptions of mountains and rivers and cities and villages stretching from Ramagiri in Central India up to Alakanagari in the Himalayas are very beautiful.

In another epic poem ‘Raghuvamsha’, Kalidasa, while portraying the conquests of emperor Raghu, describes the places and peoples, their modes of living, food-habits and trades and professions, rivers and mountains in almost the whole country — Assam, Bengal and Utkal in the East; Pandya and Kerala in the South and Sind, Gandhara and other places in the North-west. Reading these

pen-pictures, one cannot help but conclude that the poet must have had a personal knowledge of these areas. In short, he must have traveled widely across the length and breadth of the land, seen those places, talked to the people and studied their modes of living. Kalidasa possessed that distinct intellect which makes for a great poet.

Kalidasa wrote seven great works. ‘Kumarasambhava’ and ‘Raghuvamsha’ are his two epic poems. ‘Malavikagnimitra’, ‘Vikramorvasi’ and ‘Abhijnana Shakuntala’ are his celebrated plays. ‘Meghaduta’ and ‘Ritusamhara’ are also poetical works of great distinction.

## 5. RABINDRANATH TAGORE



**1861-1941**

**Rabindranath Tagore**, Bengali **Rabīndranāth Ṭhākur**, a Bengali poet, short-story writer, song composer, playwright, essayist, and painter who introduced new prose and verse forms and the use of colloquial language into Bengali literature, thereby freeing it from traditional models based on classical Sanskrit. He was highly influential in introducing Indian culture to the West and vice versa, and he is generally regarded as the outstanding creative artist of early 20th-century India. In 1913 he became the first non-European to receive the Nobel Prize for Literature.

The son of the religious reformer Debendranath Tagore, he early began to write verses, and, after incomplete studies in England in the late 1870s, he returned to India. There he published several books of poetry in the 1880s and

completed *Manasi* (1890), a collection that marks the maturing of his genius. It contains some of his best-known poems, including many in verse forms new to Bengali, as well as some social and political satire that was critical of his fellow Bengalis.

In 1891 Tagore went to East Bengal (now in Bangladesh) to manage his family's estates at Shilaidah and Shazadpur for 10 years. There he often stayed in a houseboat on the Padma River (the main channel of the Ganges River), in close contact with village folk, and his sympathy for them became the keynote of much of his later writing. Most of his finest short stories, which examine "humble lives and their small miseries," date from the 1890s and have a poignancy, laced with gentle *irony*, which is unique to him (though admirably captured by the director *Satyajit Ray* in later film adaptations). Tagore came to love the Bengali countryside, most of all the Padma River, an often-repeated image in his verse. During these years he published several poetry collections, notably *Sonar Tari* (1894; *The Golden Boat*), and plays, notably *Chitrangada* (1892; *Chitra*). Tagore's poems are virtually untranslatable, as are his more than 2,000 songs, which achieved considerable popularity among all classes of Bengali society.

In 1901 Tagore founded an experimental school in rural West Bengal at Shantiniketan ("Abode of Peace"), where he sought to blend the best in the Indian and Western traditions. He settled permanently at the school, which became Visva-Bharati University in 1921. Years of sadness arising from the deaths of his wife and two children between 1902 and 1907 are reflected in his later poetry, which was introduced to the West in *Gitanjali* (*Song Offerings*) (1912). This book, containing Tagore's English prose translations of religious poems from several of his Bengali verse collections, including *Gitanjali* (1910), was hailed by W.B. Yeats and André Gide and won him the Nobel Prize in 1913. Tagore was awarded a knighthood in 1915, but he repudiated it in 1919 as a protest against the Amritsar (Jallianwalla Bagh) Massacre.

From 1912 Tagore spent long periods out of India, lecturing and reading from his work in Europe, the Americas, and East Asia and becoming an eloquent spokesperson for the cause of Indian independence. In the late 1920s, when he was in his 60s, Tagore took up painting and produced works that won him a place among India's foremost contemporary artists.

## 6. GIRISH KARNAD



**1938-2019**

Girish Raghunath Karnad, also known as Girish Karnad is a renowned personality known for his multifaceted life. A popular face of Kannada cinema, he was a person with numerous accomplishments and interests. He was an actor, writer, playwright, actor, scholar, director, academician and Jnanpith Awardee. On his birth anniversary, let's know about some of the interesting facts about him.

Girish Karnad was born on May 19, 1938, in Matheran, Maharashtra. He was raised in a Konkani-speaking family. His father was a doctor and mother, a nurse. His father was posted to Sirsi, Karnataka and was an admirer of theatre. Girish was introduced to creative arts through his parents. He pursued his graduation from Lincoln and Magdalen colleges in Oxford as a Rhodes Scholar. He had a Master of Arts degree in philosophy, political science, and economics. He aspired to establish himself as a poet next to TS Eliot and settle in England

Girish wrote his first play Yayati before moving to England at the age of 22. When his play got published and attained enormous success, he decided to return to India. He is one of the biggest contributors to the Kannada cinema.

The legendary actor marked the screenwriting and acting debut with Pattabhirama Reddy's Samskara (1970). The film was inspired by a novel written by UR Ananthamurthy. It won the President's Golden Lotus Award for

Kannada Cinema (a true pride for the state). He collaborated with Shankar Nag for the film Ondanodu Kaladalli (1978) and later went on to create a cult television series called Malgudi days. He also played the role of Swami's father for the first eight episodes of Malgudi Days.

Girish gave a voice over to APJ Abdul Kalam in the audiobook of former president's autobiography, Wings of Fire. The legendary artist also acted in recent Hindi films such as Tiger Zinda Hai, Shivaay among others. Besides Jnanapith Award, the highest literary award conferred in India, he was also awarded Padma Shri (1974), Padma Bhushan (1992). He died on June 10, 2019 in Bengaluru at the age of 81.

## COMPREHENSION

### I. Choose the correct answer:

1. Sophocles was a \_\_\_\_\_ playwright. (Greek, English)
2. Shakespeare wrote \_\_\_\_\_ plays and sonnets. (38 and 154 or 36 and 150)
3. Pygmalion is a play by \_\_\_\_\_ (Bernard Shaw, Shakespeare)
4. \_\_\_\_\_ is known as 'Adi Kavi'. (Kalidasa, Rabindranath Tagore)
5. Tagore was awarded Noble Prize for Literature for \_\_\_\_\_.  
(Githanjali, Chitra)
6. \_\_\_\_\_ is a Jnanapith awardee. (Tagore, Girish Karnad)

### II. Write short notes on the following:

- |                        |                   |
|------------------------|-------------------|
| 1. William Shakespeare | 5. Girish Karnad  |
| 2. Bernard Shaw        | 6. Bertolt Brecht |
| 3. Kalidasa            |                   |
| 4. Rabindranath Tagore |                   |

## **UNIT- 4 THEATRE AND SOCIETY**

Theatre is the most social form of art and the closest to society. Theatre is a representation of society. Theatre critic Kenneth Tynan once said, “No theatre could sanely flourish until there was an umbilical connection between what was happening on the stage and what was happening in the world.” A theatre is a form of art that plays a significant role in our society. For a story to be loved and appreciated, it must be relatable to its audience; in the same manner, for theatre to be relevant, it must have a symbiotic relationship with society.

“Even though we are all individuals and unique in our own way, we are also the products and the producers of our society and our culture. The society and culture we grow up in, is a part of us: what we do and the attitudes we take will either confirm the way society is or make changes in it. The arts are a visible demonstration and outward realization of our culture. The arts interpret cultural beliefs; often, the words are used synonymously.” Society and art are intertwined. Throughout history, each era has been a representation of the people’s thoughts at that time. The Renaissance, the Enlightenment and etc., are reflections of the thought incumbent in the minds of the people at the time. The works of art produced in those time periods reflect the cultural and societal implications.

Out of all the forms of art, theatre is the closest to society. “Theatre is the most social of the arts. For example, social relationships are in action not only on stage and in the audience, but also in the relationship between what’s happening on the stage and the audience.” When a person is viewing theatre, they watch all the relationships that exist in society played out in front of them. Romeo and Juliet show the relationship between two lovers, and the person watching forms a relationship with what is being portrayed. The person either relates to it because that’s something he is familiar with or hopes to become familiar with. Theatre is surrounded by human relationships. It is set in an environment that is social, and it is presented in a social manner. Theatre is theatre because it is so relevant to society.

Plato argued that the work of art is “thrice removed from the truth.” On the other hand, Aristotle believed poetry to be a universal statement of truth. Looking at the larger picture and replacing poetry with theatre as the form of art, Plato’s argument is aligned with the notion that there must be a symbiosis



between theatre and society. If we look at the theatre today, it is an impersonation of societal happenings. Plays can be differentiated by how their content is reflected as an affiliation to its society and the time period. For example, in May 1968, political events in Paris brought a change in theatre for that particular time period in the neighbouring country. "Students and workers fought together for political change, and students occupied theatres and art galleries. This united action created a belief that society could be changed through the solidarity of the middle and the working classes. The hopes and the ideals of the Paris rebellion inspired young Britons and were incorporated into the aims of the new political theatre." The happenings in society mould what is seen in the theatres or what theatres hope to mould society into. Both are forms of imitation that help each other move forward.

Theatre as a form of art serves two purposes to society: instrumental and aesthetical. Instrumentally, theatre revolutionizes and inspires by portraying what could become of society and what has become of it. Aesthetically, theatre takes us away into a different world of imitation being performed on stage. "Imitation also explains the painful disparity between our ideas and actual disparity." Every person has a dream, a fantasy, or a desire they want to fulfil. Since childhood, we are told to dream, imagine and think about what our futures will be like. When we are older, we realize that reality is quite distant from what we hoped it would be. For some people making fantasies, the reality is easy; they can set their mind onto something and get what they desire provided they have all the resources available. For people who don't have all the resources, the only thing that remains is the dream or desire that they have. Theatre being an imitation and portrayal of society can, is relevant to the remorseless, when it paints a picture of their dream, their desire. Their fantasy is thrice removed from the actual truth, but the fact that the fantasy is still there, is a universal statement of truth. Both the philosophies, combined the instrumental and the aesthete, make theatre relevant to society because it is an imitation of society, it either portrays the change that should be brought about or the change the people wish was brought about.

To analyse theatre and understand why it must be so intertwined with particular societal and cultural inferences to be relevant, it is important to understand the job of a playwright. A translator can be anyone who replaces words of one language with another. A translator simply decodes a message so it can be encoded by the receiver. A playwright, on the other hand, takes a play and

moulds it so it can be relevant to his own society. For example, there are many lessons parents teach their kids. One lesson every parent teaches his or her child is the universal lesson of speaking the truth. In a Christian country, a biblical reference would be used; in a Muslim country, an Islamic story might be used, and in the Far East, perhaps a parable with Buddhist influence. In the same way, Macbeth's universal theme stayed in place.

Theatre can be revolutionary or escapist, the former by instrumental means the latter by aesthetic ones. Either way, it must behave an umbilical connection to the society's current collective mood of thought to flourish fully and make an impact.

### **The Evolution of modern theatre**

Underlying the theatrical developments of the 19th century, and in many cases inspiring them, were the social upheavals that followed the French Revolution. Throughout Europe the middle class took over the theatres and effected changes in repertoire, style, and decorum. In those countries that experienced revolutionary change or failure, national theatres were founded to give expression to the views and values of the middle class, whose aspirations in these cases coincided with a more general movement of national liberation. In western Europe a different pattern of development emerged, varying considerably in each country but having the unified features of a demand for "realism" on the stage, which meant a faithful reflection of the life-style and domestic surroundings of the rising class in both its tragic and its comic aspects; an adjunct to this development was the demand for increased decorum and cleanliness in the auditorium.

In England, where the Industrial Revolution was more advanced than in the other European countries, the middle class had to struggle for its own theatres against the entrenched power of the two patent houses (licensed by the Crown), Drury Lane and Covent Garden, which had enjoyed an almost total monopoly of dramatic theatre since 1660. As early as 1789, attempts were made to evade the legal restrictions on building new theatres. The Reform Bill of 1832, which enfranchised the propertied middle class and established its political power, led to the Theatres Act of 1843, which gave London a "free theatre." The expected flood of new theatre buildings did not occur, and no major building took place for 16 years. This is probably because there were already sufficient illegal theatres in operation when the act was passed. The boulevard theatres of Paris

experienced less trouble in establishing themselves. The rise of the middle-class theatres caused the decline of both the patent houses in London and the Comédie-Française—the national theatre of France.

As the new class came into the theatres, the theatres were cleaned up. Samuel Phelps at The Sadler's Wells Theatre instituted audience controls that drove out the old audience and paved the way for respectability. The Bancrofts, as representative as any of the new movement, took over the run-down Prince of Wales' Theatre, cleaned up the auditorium, and placed antimacassars on the seats. They also dropped the melodrama and attracted a wide audience with the social comedies of Tom Robertson, making a considerable fortune in the process.

Throughout the 19th century, cities throughout Europe and North America exploded in size, and industrial centres attracted labour to their factories and mills. The working class suburbs of cities and the industrial towns created their own demand for entertainment, which led to the construction of large theatres.

Accelerating this change was the growth of the railways. The pattern of theatre was disrupted in England as productions were mounted in London and sent on tour. The old provincial stock companies folded and theatres became touring venues rather than producing houses. A breed of managers arose who made money from the possession of the bricks and mortar property rather than by presenting their own productions. In the United States the Theatrical Syndicate established great fortunes from the New York theatres and the almost unlimited touring circuit that the railways opened up. The change in status from enterprise to industry gave rise to the commercial theatre systems of the West End in London and Broadway in New York City. Improvement in travel in general made it possible to increase the links between the two systems early in the 20th century, and the exchange of productions further extended the possibilities of profitable exploitation.

Modern theatre began around 1885 with the revolt of the younger generation against the material injustices of society. Those in revolt founded so-called independent theatres to present a more critical or scientific view of the workings of society or so called art theatres to rise above vulgar materialism with the establishment of aesthetic standards.

## **Themes of Modern Drama**

### **Realism and Myth**

Sigmund Freud inspired an interest in myth and dreams as playwrights became familiar with his studies of psychoanalysis. Along with the help of Carl Jung, the two psychiatrists influenced playwrights to incorporate myths into their plays. This integration allowed for new opportunities for playwrights to increase the boundaries of realism within their writing. As playwrights started to use myths in their writing, a “poetic form of realism” was created. This form of realism deals with truths that are widespread amongst all humans, bolstered by Realism.

Realism, in theatre, was meant to be a direct observation of human behaviour. It began as a way to make theatre more useful to society, a way to hold a mirror up to society. Because of this thrust towards the “real” playwrights started using more contemporary settings, backgrounds and characters. Where plays in the past had, for the most part, used mythological or stereotypical characters, now they involved the lower class, the poor, the rich; they involved all genders, classes and races. One of the main contributors to this style was Henrik Ibsen.

### **Poetic Realism**

Much of the poetic realism that was written during the beginning of the twentieth century focused on the portrayals of Irish peasant life. John Millington Synge, W.B. Yeats, and Lady Gregory were but a few writers to use poetic realism. Their portrayal of peasant life was often unappealing and many audiences reacted cruelly. Many plays that are poetically realistic often have unpleasant themes running through them, such as lust between a son and his step-mother or the murder of a baby to “prove” love. These plays used myths as a surrogate for real life in order to allow the audience to live the unpleasant plot without completely connecting to it.

## **Women**

The female characters progressed from the downtrodden, useless woman to an empowered, emancipated woman. They were used to pose subversive questions about the social order. Many female characters portray the author's masculine attitudes about women and their place in society. As time passed, though, females began gain empowerment. G.B. Shaw became one of the first English playwrights to follow Ibsen's influence and create roles of real women. Mrs. Warren, Major Barbara, and Pygmalion all have strong female leads. Women first started voting in 1918. Later in the century, females (and males) were both subjected to the alienation of society and routinely were not given names to suggest to the audience the character's worth within the play.

## **Political Theatre and War**

Political theatre uses the theatre to represent "how a social or political order uses its power to 'represent' others coercively." It uses live performances and often shows the power of politics through "demeaning and limiting" prejudices. Political theatre often represents many different types of groups that are often stereotyped – "women, gay men, lesbians, ethnic and racial groups, [and] the poor." Political theatre is used to express one's political ideas. Agitprop, a popular form of political theatre, even had its roots in the 1930s women's rights movement. Propaganda played a big role in political theatre, whether it be in support of a war or in opposition of political schemes, theatre played a big role in influencing the public. The wars also affected the early theatre of the twentieth century.

## **Social Realism**

Social Realism began showing up in plays during the 1930s. This realism had a political conscience behind it because the world was in a depression. These plays painted a harsh picture of rural poverty. The drama began to aim at showing governments the penalties of unrestrained capitalism and the depressions that lax economies created. One of the main contributors to this style.

## **Absurdist Drama**

Absurdist Drama was existentialist theatre which put a direct perception of a mode of being above all abstract considerations. It was also essentially a poetic, lyrical theatre for the expression of intuitions of being through movement, situations and concrete imagery. Language was generally downplayed. (Barnet) Symbolism, Dadaism and their offspring, Surrealism, Theatre of Cruelty, and Expressionism all fall into this category.

## **Epic Theatre**

Epic theatre was created by Bertold Brecht who rejected realistic theatre. He found that such plays were too picture-perfect. Epic Theatre is based on Greek Epic poetry. There are dramatic illusions such as “stark, harsh lighting, blank stages, placards announcing changes of scenes, bands playing music onstage, and long, discomfiting pauses” (Jacobus). Brecht believed that drama should be made within its audiences and he thought that Epic Theatre drama would reinforce the realities that people were facing rather than challenge them. Epic Theatre helped to preserve the social issues that they portrayed.

## **MODERN INDIAN THEATRE**

Against the background of the rich tradition, Indian drama was reborn during British colonial interregnum in 18th and 19th centuries. The impetus came from two sources: the rich heritage of Indian drama and the exposure to Western dramatic classics through English. Translations started appearing simultaneously of Sanskrit classics and Western classics, particularly Shakespeare. Till now drama had not developed as a major literary genre in Indian languages. Drama now began to flourish as a cherished literary genre.

Modern Indian theatre started after the advent of the British in India. The British developed Calcutta in the east, Bombay and Surat in the west and Madras in the south as important centres of trade and administration. They also set up theatres in these cities for their entertainment.

Salient features associated with Modern Indian theatre are:

- ☐ Predominant influence of western notions of drama
- ☐ The Ancient Indian tradition rested on a happy ending of the plays whereas in the western tradition the tragic ending was generally in vogue
- ☐ Modern Indian theatre was a product of certain Indian social developments. The processes of modernization and Renaissance in the Indian society, brought about Socio – cultural changes and these changes were reflected in the field of art and literature
- ☐ The initial thematic content of the modern Indian plays rested on the historical and the mythological themes. Later the social and political themes were also given a place. Along with this, Indian theatre soon began incorporating elements from the classical Sanskrit theatres and folk theatres. This combination brought about many changes in the Indian theatre. For example, plays in the Parsi theatres gave tremendous importance to music, song and dances which was the influence of the traditional folk plays.

●

- The post-independence theatre also incorporated much of the folk and the Sanskrit traditions but, in essence, retained the realist western tradition. Playwrights like Badal Sarkar, Shambhu Mitra, Vijay Tendulkar, B.V.Karant, Ibrahim Alkazi, Girish Karnad and Utpal Dutt etc. made new experiments in the theatrical devices.

The post-independence period witnessed changes in both the style and content of the Indian plays. The Second World War and the partition of the sub-continent had a profound impact on Indian society. The widely shared optimism of a better tomorrow turned out to be an illusion after the attainment of independence

The rapid changes brought about by science and industrialization in the society, affected the value systems of the people. These changes were bound to show up in the world of Indian plays in a variety of ways.

An important change was the increased access, to India, of plays written in foreign languages other than English. Indians were now getting introduced to the plays of Brecht from Germany, Gogol and Chekhov from Russia and Sartre from France. This influenced both the writing and staging of the new plays. The new trend is most visible in the plays of Badal Sarkar in Bengali, Vijay Tendulkar in Marathi and Girish Karnad in Kannada. The new plays displayed receptivity towards new experiments being made in the field. The earlier trend was to write five act plays, with many scenes in one act. This was reduced to three and finally to one. Many scenes in an act used to disturb the continuity and interrupt viewer's pleasure. Therefore, the practice of having many scenes in an act was almost discontinued. The historical plays of the pre-independence period used to focus on invoking national pride. But the new historical plays attempted to understand and analyse history from a new angle. The plays of Uttam Barua (Varja Fuleshwari, assamese), P.Lankesh (Sankranti, kannada), Girish Karnad (Tughlaq, Hindi) became popular.





In the post-independence plays the mythological form was also used to portray complex human emotions and dilemmas. The focus on social plays continued in the post-independence period as well, with a much enlarged canvas to include new social problems and themes. Now, the increasing economic disparity with resultant frustrations, the plight of women in the society, the despondency of the dalits and the depressed, Hindu-Muslim relations, the miseries of the rural life, de-humanization of the city life, hypocrisy of the middle class and the clash between the new and the old values dominated the thematic content of the new social plays. Mahesh Dattani can be treated as a representative old modern Theatre in our country. He has set a new trend in Indian Theatre and socially relevant plots.

Two plays WHERE THERE IS A WILL and NAGAMANDALA are discussed below to provide an insight into Drama as a literary form which has social relevance. Dattani's play focusses on the domestic scenario and explores family relationships exposing human character.

Girish Karnad's play explores a myth and throws light on the beliefs and superstitions, society and culture of Northern part of Karnataka.

## Mahesh Dattani

Mahesh Dattani was born in Bangalore to Gujarati parents. He went to Baldwin Boys High School and then went on to join St. Joseph's College, Bangalore. Dattani is a graduate in History, Economics and Political Science. He completed his post-graduate in Marketing and Advertising Management because he wanted to become a copywriter. He worked with the Bangalore Little Theatre, where his first role was in Utpal Dutt's *Surya Shikhar*.

After reading Edward Albee's play *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* early in his life, he became interested in writing. He was also influenced by Gujarati playwright Madhu Rye's *Kumarni Agashi* and developed an interest in play writing. Mahesh Dattani began his career as a copywriter in an advertising firm. In 1986, he wrote his first full-length play, *Where There's a Will*, and since 1995, he has been working as a full-time theatre professional. He has also worked with his father in the family business.

Dattani is also a film director. His debut film is *Mango Souffle*, adapted from one of his plays. He also wrote and directed the movie *Morning Raaga*.

His works include

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- *Where There's a Will* (1988)
  - *Dance Like a Man* (1989)
  - *Bravely Fought the Queen* (1991)
  - *Final Solutions* (1993)[12]
  - *Do The Needful*
  - *On a Muggy Night in Mumbai* (1998)
  - *Seven Circles Round The Fire* (Radio play for BBC) (*Seven Steps around the Fire*) (1998)
  - *30 Days in September* (2001)
  - *The Girl Who Touched the Stars* (2007)
  - *Brief Candle* (2009)
  - *Where Did I Leave My Purdah* (2012)
  - *The Big Fat City* (2012) Filmography
- 

Director

- *Mango Souffle*
- *Morning Raga*
- *Dance Like a Man* □ *Ek Alag Mausam*

## **WHERE THERE IS A WILL**

Mahesh Dattani's play "Where There's a Will" is a stage play which evinces issues about combating repercussions of family members from interfering too much into one's life thereby over shadowing and corroding one's personality, desires, dreams and ambitions and stream of thought. In the play Where There's a Will Mahesh Dattani satirizes modern contemporary society and its long prevalent problems of generation gap, disrespect for women, domestic violence, consumption of alcohol, avarice for wealth, extra-marital relationships and above all living somebody else's life. As a keen observer of the modern society none of these societal ailments have escaped his attention. The basic nature of a human being is brought to light in this play. It focuses upon two conflicting parties who confront each other for the purpose of gaining money. This play speculates upon some of the critical themes and motifs of the play and attempts

to find some profound insights into the chief characters and their subsequent development in the course of the play.

Ever since his first play in 1988, *Where there's a will*, which was rooted in the Gujarati family, dynamic Dattani has in a sense chronicled the follies and prejudices of Indian society as reflected within the microcosm of the family unit. The most tangible and dynamic reality in middle class Indian lives, Dattani calls the play an exorcism of the patriarchal mindset and skillfully works his narrative around the intrigues of a dysfunctional Indian family. The play is set within the confines of four rooms: two bedrooms, the living room and the dining room. With family relationships as the focus of dramatic representation, Dattani's handling of the performance space suggests to his audiences the variations in significance. Through the connoted design of the will, the relationships between the four main members of a joint family are painfully twisted as the play begins to come alive in performance.

This is a play where Traditional family values clash with unexpected twists in the tale that completely subvert existing stereotypes. The story revolves around a supposedly self-made industrialist, Hasmukh Mehta, the patriarch who is the supreme malcontent with the typical problems of familial expectations, his wife Sonal and a colourless conjugal life, his spendthrift son Ajit, and conniving, clever daughter-in-law Preeti, and last but not the least, his mistress Kiran Jhaveri. All the four belie their names. Hasmukh is a dour faced man who seems unable to smile, Sonal hardly shines, Ajit is not in the least successful in his father's eyes, and Preeti is as unaffectionate as Hasmukh is sour. And yet they are family, yoked together with in choice in the matter, and must function as a unit under the patriarchal order.

Hasmukh makes a unconventional statement "When I was twenty one, the greatest tragedy of my life took place, I got married, the following year Ajit was born, tragedy after tragedy. He has not a single quality I look for in a son: He has made my entire life worthless, long before everything I worked for and achieved will be destroyed!" Immediately after the death, outside the family units, stands Kiran, Hasmukh's mistress, invisible until he dies and his will places her at the centre of the action. The highly dissatisfied Hasmukh is decidedly unhappy with the manner his life has been spent with no one living up to his expectations, the way he had lived up to his father. He must therefore get back at his family and teach them a protracted lesson. It is only by way of

the will that he would attempt to tackle all these obstacles that he has been unable to correct with in his life time. Dattani works this out with the help of his extremely self- centred Hasmukh; where Hasmukh speaks more to the audience directly than with any of the other protagonists, taking them into confidence.

The play piquantly sketches his domineering patriarch who would revenge himself upon his avaricious family by virtually cutting them out of his will, something they will discover only after his death. The colourless relationships between the two couples that comprise the family are developed in elaborate vignettes, portraying two singularly unexciting generations of couples sexually insipid and loveless, who remain in a typically materialistic and money oriented upper middle class mindset; Ajit has to stand up to his father, taking it for granted that the inheritance is already his, and fiercely resists Hasmuk's attempts at moulding him in his own model. While Sonal is proud of her son, her husband thinks he is a disaster, and Preeti, his wife is even worse. But he admits that she is clever, the only person who is a little wary of in the play, with a measure of justification. Kiran Jhaveri , the epitome of the Dattani woman makes her appearance in the very first play that he wrote, Smart ,Shrewd, calculating and worldly wise. Kiran embodies qualities that Dattani staunchly holds a positive and strong personality that are necessary for a woman. Like most women who play gendered roles. Kiran is a victim too, but one who refuses to stay victimized. She becomes part of Hasmukhs life with her eyes wide open, and aware of the benefits that she will derive from the relationship.

Is a part her existence too, as she reveals to Ajit, "I got a husband, my husband got his booze, and your father go - - - well, you know". Hasmukh Mehta exercises hegemonic power over the rest of his family to perpetuate his own conception of the self, which, he has in turn, received from his father. He meets with resistance at all point from the other members of his family;" You still want to play Big Boss. And you can do it through me. In short, you want me to be you "says Ajit, and Hasmukh devices the means to continue this hegemony even from the grave. The will, here, becomes the iconic instrument to power and shapes and reshapes the destiny of the family relationships after his death. But the irony is that Hasmukh, to give the devil his due, transfers this controlling power to a woman and changes the entire fabric of the monolith that he is trying to preserve, immediately opening up the spaces for the individual identity that he has all along sought to deny. Death eases the pain of living says

Hasmukh ‘s ghost;” It feels good to be dead. No more kidney problems, no backaches, no heart beats.” Dattani explores some existential argument;” What is this? A sandalwood garland? - - - when my father died, I used to put fresh flowers every day for a whole month - - - (takes a final look at his picture) so that is how the world will remember me. Until my son locks me up in a trunk ...

“Where There Is a Will (1988) is a comedy with slight farcical touches which yet makes a point about the way patriarchal men invariably fail to exist as true human beings. The plot of this play revolves around the life of Hasmukh Mehta, who is a rich and successful businessman and his family. The action starts with Hasmukh having come home from office. Overhearing his twenty-three year old son and Joint Managing Director of his firm complaining about his father’s refusal to invest in new business ventures thought up by him. In a series of straight addresses or asides to the audience, Hasmukh clarifies that he had thrown away his son Ajit’s project proposals unread because, “If I let him have his way, we would all be papuers. Ajit, he plaintively adds was bankrupt up here (points to his head) the day he was born. God just forgot to open an account for him”. Neither does Hasmukh have any love to spare for his wife Sonal or for his daughter in law Preeti whom he succinctly describes as pretty, charming, graceful and sly as a snake and sums her up as a girl who has an eye on my money. In the course of the scene, we learn that Hasmukh is diabetic and cardiac patient with a history of high blood pressure, high cholesterol, (and) an enlarged heart; And all these go towards explaining why towards the end of the first scene, he dies in bed where his wife discovers his dead body a few minutes later.

This is not the beginning of a tragedy however, for Hasmukh’s ghost lingers on in the house, wandering through its walls (and occasionally setting cross legged on the dining table) keeping on passing acerbic comments on the actions and attitudes of the other (living) characters, though unheard by, and invisible to, them comically, even a member of the audience is not spared from the ghost. Criticism, for at one point soon after, he has passed away and assumed the role of a mock- chorus his ghost sprawls on the dining table and dangles head and arms over its edge in imitation of swinging upside down from a tamarind tree, and points to a spectator in the auditorium and tells him sternly, your shoes need polishing;

The truth that emerges finally is that Hasmukh Mehta had wanted his son to live in his own image, just as he had lived his own life in that of his father's shadow: Kiran I should have hated him, like I should have hated my father, my brothers and my husband. But all I felt for him was pity. Hasmukh (As a ghost) Enough: I say, enough: I paid you to do my work. Not ridicule me! Kiran: Even his attempts at ruling over you after his death, through his will, are pathetic (Hasmukh sticks his fingers into his ears and shuts his eyes) The only reason he wanted to do that is because his father had ruled over his family. All his life he was being a good boy to his father. Sonal: "How little I know him. If I had understood him when he was alive, I would have died laughing". It emerges too that Mrs. Sonal Mehta had lived her life under the total dominance of her sister Minal, "who always decided what we should wear, what games we should play; and, Even at my husband's death sat beside me and told me when to cry.

But the play is not yet over, for in a surprise twist at the end it is revealed that Preeti had actually hastened, if not caused, the death of her father-in-law. Kiran holds this truth against Preeti, not to blackmail her, but to achieve a proper comic resolution by which the wife bonds with the husband, and the family bonds with Kiran and the Ghost of Hasmukh leaves the house forever. Kiran : No, they are not. These are your father-in-law's tablets. They controlled his blood pressure. They kept him alive. (Shows her the tablets in her other hand) These are your vitamins. Now I'll mix them up. (Mixes them and throws them on the bed) can you tell the difference? No, you can't. unless you look very close. The companies names are embossed on the tablets. But a person who is used to taking them every day will not look so close. (Studies Preeti, who is trembling now) The tablets you threw out of the window were the ones for high blood pressure. The tablets I found on his dressing table were your Vitamins (Preeti starts sobbing) When did you exchange them? Oh, you could have done it any time. You had plenty of opportunity. He was right ; you are very clever. Of course you didn't kill him. You just let nature do the work for you. Were you so impatient? Couldn't you wait a few more years? Oh, I'm glad he made his will ! you don't deserve any of his money.

Each of the family members having discovered his or her own identity and finally separate from Hasmukh over the overwhelming self. All of them cheer to that. Hasmukh enters. But he stops at the doorway. The others continue a light animated conversation. Hasmukh. No, I don't think I can enter this house. It



isn't mine - - more. I will rest permanently on the tamarind tree. (Laughter at the table) They are not my family any more. I wish I had never interfered with their lives. They look quite happy together. With Kiran Sitting in my place, Oh, I wish I had been more kind; I wish I had lived (Exits) Sonal: Oh, by the way, Aju, I wanted to tell you our neighbours complained today. Our tamarind tree is over grown and abstracts their electric wires. Why don't you have it trimmed?

Kiran says, "I learnt my lesson from watching my mother to tolerating my father when he came home every day with bottles of rum wrapped up in newspaper. I watched him beating her up and calling her names. I learnt what life was when my mother pretended she was happy in front of me and my brother, so that we wouldn't hate my father. And I learnt when I kept my mother away from my father, so that in return he would remain silent for those three hours when he came home, and before he fell asleep on the dining table, too drunk to harm us anymore. I served him those drinks, waiting for that moment when he would become unconscious and I would say a prayer - - Thank God he was too drunk to impose himself on us! yes, Mrs. Mehta. My father, your husband, they were weak men with false strength. Kiran Jhaveri finds the happiness that had so long eluded her in her past existence as a business executive cum mistress to a rich man and as daughter to a drunkard and wife to another.

The liberation of these characters from the strangle hold of their past is of course also the defeat of Hasmukh Mehta. This domineering husband, heavy father and tyrannical boss is gradually dwarfed and diminished to the point of insignificance. Of course he never quite loses our sympathy for he is given an engaging, comic vitality and verve (both in the flesh as well as a spectra) but we can not help being unused when we hear that his erstwhile family has made plans to cut down the tamarind tree in the garden, his last terrestrial haunt. The truth underlying the comedy is serious enough, the man who would rule over his family ever after his death is exposed at the end to be what he really was comic-tragic weakling who had constantly quested for a father substitute, a man who was rude to everyone because he was insecure himself, an unfaithful husband who didn't really want a mistress - - - [but] a woman who would father him; That Dattani draws upon and exploits the resources of this convention of theatrical is manifest in the way Preeti's substitution of her vitamin pills in the

bottle of her father-in-law's blood pressure tablets is discovered through a series of logical steps.

Preeti's frustration at not having inherited Hasmukh's money leads her to abuse her husband and subsequently to burst into tears. Ajit's concern about the well-being of his pregnant wife leads him to look for tranquillizers and he comes upon his father's tablets in Preeti's vitamin pill bottle. Preeti cleverly sends her husband away from the room before he can inspect the tablets and throws them away together with the bottle out of the window, only to see Kiran pick them up below. Ajit still looking for the tranquillizers finds the tablets his father used to take for his blood pressure (in reality Preeti's ineffectual vitamin pills) and leaves them on the dressing table in Hasmukh's (now Kiran's) bedroom. Later, Kiran comes across this bottle, compares its contents with the tablets in the bottle she had picked up, and deduces Preeti's deed of substitution. What adds a new freshness to the old way of the play is the sparkle of the dialogues and the text its presentation.

The play brings out the complexities in the domestic sphere and exposes the nuances of relationships in traditional Indian society.

## **NAGAMANDALA by GIRISH KARNAD**

**Read the Preface and the excerpt of the play that follows**

### **PREFACE**

Naga- Mandala is based on two oral tales from Karnataka which I first heard several years ago from Professor A. K. Ramanujan. But that is only the least of the reasons for dedicating this play to him.

I wrote Naga- Mandala during the year I spent at the University of Chicago as Visiting Professor and Fulbright Scholar-in- Residence.

I am most grateful to Professor Stuart M. Tave, Dean, Division of Humanities, and Professor C. M. Naim, Chairman, Department of South Asian Languages and Civilizations as well as to the Council for International Exchange of Scholars for having made that visit possible. I am further indebted to Professor Naim for persuading me to put the play into English.

I write in Kannada. English is the language of my adulthood. This translation must therefore be seen only as an approximation to the original. My deepest thanks are due to the colleagues and students who helped with the production of the play at the University Theatre at Chicago, for their many valuable suggestions and textual corrections, as well as to Shri Shankar Nag who first presented the play in Kannada with his group, Sanket.

Bombay, 28 November 1988.

GIRISH KARNAD

## **CHARACTERS**

*(In the order of their appearance)*

THE MAN

THE FLAMES

THE STORY

RANI (*which means QUEEN*)

APPANNA (*which means ANY MAN*)

KURUDAWA (*which means THE BLIND ONE*)

KAPPANNA (*which means THE DARK ONE*)

NAGA (*which means THE COBRA*)

THREE VLLAGE ELDERS

CROWDS

*(Appanna and Naga are played by the same actor.)*

## **PROLOGUE**

*The inner sanctum of a ruined temple. The idol is broken, so the presiding deity of the temple cannot be identified.*

*It is night. Moonlight seeps in through the cracks in the roof and the walls.*

*A man is sitting in the temple. Long silence. Suddenly, he opens his eyes wide. Closes them. Then uses his fingers to pry open his eyelids.*

*Then he goes back to his original morose stance.*

*He yawns involuntarily. Then reacts to the yawn by shaking his head violently, and turns to the audience.)*

**MAN:** I may be dead within the next few hours.

*(Long pause.)*

I am not talking of 'acting' dead. Actually dead. I might die right in front of your eyes.

*(Pause.)*

A mendicant told me: 'You must keep awake at least one whole night this month. If you can do that, you'll live. If not, you will die on the last night of the month.' I laughed out loud when I heard him. I thought nothing would be easier than spending a night awake.

*(Pause.)*

I was wrong. Perhaps death makes one sleepy. Every night this month I have been dozing off before even being aware of it. I am convinced I am seeing something with these eyes of mine, only to wake up and find I was dreaming. Tonight is my last chance.

*(Pause.)*

For tonight is the last night of the month. Even of my life, perhaps? For how do I know sleep won't creep in on me again as it has every night so far? I may doze off right in front of you. And that will be the end of me.

*(Pause)*

I asked the mendicant what I had done to deserve this fate. And he said: 'You have written plays. You have staged them. You have caused so many good people, who came trusting

you, to fall asleep twisted in miserable chairs, that all that abused mass of sleep has turned against you and become the Curse of Death.'

*(Pause.)*

I hadn't realized my plays had had that much impact.

*(Pause.)*

Tonight may be my last night. So I have fled from home and come to this temple, nameless and empty. For years I've been lording it over my family as a writer. I couldn't bring myself to die a writer's death in front of them.

*(Pause.)*

I swear by this absent God, if I survive this night I shall have nothing more to do with themes, plots or stories. I abjure all story- telling, all play- acting.

*(Female voices are heard outside the temple. He looks.)*

*Voices! Here? At this time of night? Lights! Who could be coming here now?*

*(He hides behind a pillar. Several Flames enter the temple, giggling, talking to each other in female voices.)*

**MAN:** I don't believe it! They are naked lamp flames! No wicks, no lamps. No one holding them. Just lamp flames on their

own floating in the air! Is that even possible?

*(Another three or four Flames enter, talking among themselves.)*

**FLAME 3:** *(Addressing Flame 1, which is already in the temple.)*

Hello! What a pleasant surprise! You are here before us tonight.

**FLAME 1:** That master of our house, you know what a skinflint he is! He is convinced his wife has a hole in her palm, so he buys all the groceries himself. This evening, before the dark was even an hour old, they ran out of kusbi oil. The tin of peanut oil didn't go far. The bowl of castor oil was empty anyway. So they had to retire to bed early and I was permitted to come here.

*(Laughter.)*

**FLAME 2:** *(Sneering)* Kusbi oil! Peanut oil! How disgusting! My family comes from the coast. We won't touch anything but coconut oil.

**FLAME 1:** . . . But at least I come here every night. What about your friend, the kerosene flame? She hasn't been seen here for months. She is one of the first tonight.

**FLAME 4:** Actually, from today on I don't think I'll have any difficulty getting out . . . and early.

*(They all laugh.)*

**FLAME 1:** Why? What's happened?

*(The other Flames giggle.)*

**FLAMES:** Tell her! Tell her!

**FLAME 4:** My master had an old, ailing mother. Her stomach was bloated, her back covered with bed sores. The house stank of cough and phlegm, pus and urine. No one got a wink of sleep at night. Naturally, I stayed back too. The old lady died this morning, leaving behind my master and his young wife, young and juicy as a tender cucumber. I was chased out fast.

*(Giggles.)*

**FLAME 3:** You are lucky. My master's eyes have to feast on his wife limb by limb if the rest of him is to react. So we lamps have to bear witness to what is better left to the dark.

*(They all talk animatedly. New Flames come and join them.)*

*(They group and regroup, chattering.)*

**MAN:** (To the audience.) I had heard that when lamps are put out in the village, the flames gather in some remote piece and spend the night together, gossiping. So this is where they gather!



*(A new Flame enters and is enthusiastically greeted.)*

**FLAME 1:** You are late. It is well past midnight.

**NEW FLAME:** Ah! There was such a to- do in our house tonight.

**FLAMES:** What happened? Tell us!

**NEW FLAME:** You know I have only an old couple in my house.

Tonight the old woman finished eating, swept and cleaned the floor, put away the pots and pans, and went to the room in which her husband was sleeping. And what should she see, but a young woman dressed in a rich, new sari step out of the room! The moment the young woman saw my mistress, she ran out of the house and disappeared into the night. The old woman woke her husband up and questioned him. But he said he knew nothing. Which started the rumpus.

**FLAMES:** But who was the young woman? How did she get into your. house?

**NEW FLAME:** Let me explain: My mistress, the old woman, knows a story and a song. But all these years she has kept them to herself, never told the story, nor sung the song. So the story and the song were being choked, imprisoned inside her. This afternoon the old woman took her usual nap after lunch and started snoring. The moment her mouth opened,

the story and the song jumped out and hid in the attic. At night, when the old man had gone to sleep, the story took the form of a young woman and the song became a sari. The young woman wrapped herself in the sari and stepped out, just as the old lady was coming in. Thus, the story and song created a feud in the family and were revenged on the old woman.

**FLAME 1:** So if you try to gag one story, another happens.

**FLAMES:** (All together.) But where are they now, the poor things? . . . How long will they run around in the dark? What will happen to them?

**NEW FLAME:** I saw them on my way here and told them to follow me. They should be here any moment.... There they are! The story with the song!

*(The Story, in the form of a woman dressed in a new, colourful sari, enters, acknowledges the enthusiastic welcome from the Flames with a languid wave of the hand and goes and sits in a corner, looking most despondent. The Flames gather around her.)*

**NEW FLAME:** Come on. Why are you so despondent? We are here and are free the whole night. We'll listen to you.

**STORY:** Thank you, my dears. It is kind of you. But what is the point of your listening to a story? You can't pass it on.

**FLAMES:** That's true.... What can we do? Wish we could help.

*(While the Flames make sympathetic noises, the Man jumps out from behind the pillar and grabs the Story by her wrist.)*

**MAN:** I'll listen to you!

*(The Flames flee helter-skelter in terror. The Story struggles to free herself.)*

**STORY:** Who are you? Let me go!

**MAN:** What does it matter who I am, I'll listen to you. Isn't that enough? I promise you, I'll listen all night!

*(The Story stops struggling. There is a new interest in her voice.)*

**STORY:** You will?

**MAN:** Yes.

**STORY:** Good. Then let me go.

*(He does not.)* I need my hands to act out the parts.

*(He lets her go.)*

There is a condition, however--

**MAN:** What?

**STORY:** You can't just listen to the story and leave it at that. You

must tell it again to someone else.

**MAN:** That I certainly shall, if I live. But first I must be alive to  
. That reminds me. I have a condition, too.

**STORY:** Yes?

**MAN:** I must not doze off during the tale. If I do, I die. All your  
telling will be wasted.

**STORY:** As a self- respecting story, that is the least I can promise.

**MAN:** All right then. Start. (*Suddenly.*) But no! No! It's not  
possible. I take back my word. I can't repeat the story.

**STORY:** And why not?

**MAN:** I have just now taken a vow not to have anything to do  
with themes, plots or acting. If I live, I don't want to risk any  
more curses from the audience.

**STORY:** (*Gets up.*) Good- bye then. We must be going.

**MAN:** Wait! Don't go. Please.

(*Thinks.*)

I suppose I have no choice.

(*To the audience.*)

So now you know why this play is being done. I have no  
choice. Bear with me, please. As you can see, it is a matter of  
life and death for me.

*(Calls out.)*

Musicians, please!

*(Musicians enter and occupy their mat.)*

The Story and the Song!

*(Throughout the rest of the play, the Man and the Story*

*remain on stage. The Flames too listen attentively though*

*from a distance.) (To the Story.) Go on.*

## **SUMMARY**

Rani is a young bride who is neglected by her indifferent and unfaithful husband, Appanna. Appanna spends most of his time with his concubine and comes home only for lunch. Rani is a typical wife who wants to win her husband's affection by any means. In an attempt to do so, she decides to drug her husband with a love root, which she mixes in the milk. That milk is spilled on the nearby anthill and Naga, the cobra drinks it. Naga, who can take the form of a human, is enchanted with her and begins to visit her every night in the guise of her husband. This changes Rani's life completely as she starts to experience the good things in life though she never knows that the person with her is not her husband but the Naga. Soon she becomes pregnant and breaks the news to Appanna. He immediately accuses her of adultery and says that he has not had any physical relationship to make her pregnant.

The issue is referred to the village Panchayat. Rani is then asked to prove her fidelity by putting her hand in the snake burrow and taking a vow that she has not committed adultery. (It is a popular belief that if any person lies holding the snake in their hand, they will be instantly killed by the snake God.) Rani places her hand in the snake burrow and vows that she has never touched any male other than her husband and the Naga in the burrow. She is declared chaste by the village Panchayat. However, her husband is not ready to accept that she is pregnant with his child and decides to find out the truth by spying on the house at night. Appanna is shocked to see the Naga visiting Rani in his form, spending time with her and then leaving the house. Appanna gets furious with

the Naga and indulges in a fight with him. Both of them fight vigorously. Eventually, the Naga dies in the fight. After this incident, Appanna realizes his mistake and accepts Rani along with the child she is carrying.

Please Note: The excerpts of the two plays WHERE THERE IS A WILL and NAGAMANDALA are meant for classroom discussion to enable participation of students in the analysis and interpretation of Drama and to relate them to the social issues and societal concerns. **NOT FOR TESTING**

## UNIT-5 EXERCISES

### EXERCISE: 1

Write two pages of dialogues between a mother and a father who are having a disagreement on buying a mobile as a gift to their son of 12 years. The argument involves each character trying to convince the other whether to buy a basic model or a smart phone.

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[illegible]



[illegible]

## Exercise 2

Create a situation between two men characters and imagine several details of the setting around them. It is raining outside, and the Sun is setting. They have a shade of sorrow on their faces and they are tossing around in the drawing room. Choose any other details you like. Now, write a passage of dialogues in which the characters convey their predicament to the audience.

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[illegible]

### Exercise 3

Write a dialogue of a play where two lovers are trying to express their feelings to each other. They are hesitant but determined to express their love to one another. They want to proceed as life partners in future. Create a situation for them to express their love and approval.

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[illegible]

[illegible]

### Exercise 4

Fire your imagination and create a play on a situation woven around a “RED SAREE”. Create 5 adult characters and set the play in 2020.

[illegible]

[illegible]



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### Exercise 5

Write a play on **Saving Environment**. Use the following heads.

## Plot

## Characters

Symbol

Time of action

Place of action

### Message of the play

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## QUESTION PAPER PATTERN

- |      |  |         |
|------|--|---------|
| I.   | Answer any 5 of the following in 2 or 3 sentences.<br>(questions to be framed from units 1 and 2 only)   | 5x2=10  |
| II.  | Answer any 4 of the following in a page each.<br>(questions to be framed from units 1,2,3 and 4)         | 4x5=20  |
| III. | Answer any 2 of the following in about 2 pages each.<br>(questions to be framed from units 3 and 4 only) | 2x10=20 |
| IV.  | Answer any 2 of the following.<br>(Based on any variety of the exercises)                                | 2x5=10  |

**Total = 60**

### Internal Assessment

- |  |    |
|--|----|
| 1. Internal Assessment Test                  | 10 |
| 2. Completion of exercises                   | 10 |
| 3. Debate/Group Discussion/Seminar/Role play | 10 |
| 4. Power Point Presentation                  | 10 |

**Total = 40**

**Paper Total = 100**

**Model question Paper**  
**Semester-III**  
**Open Elective Course CREATIVE WRITING**

**Time: 2hrs.**

**Max Marks: 60**

- I. Answer any 5 of the following questions in 2 or 3 sentences each:** **5x2=10**
1. What are the two symbols of Drama?
  2. What is a 'Mystery' play?
  3. Mention the chief characteristics of Modern Drama.
  4. Why is the origin of Indian Drama traced back to Bharatha's Natyashastra?
  5. How is the climax of a plot significant?
  6. Define Problem play.
  7. What is a comedy? Give an example.
- II. Answer any 4 of the following in about a page:** **4x5=20**
1. Trace the origin of European Drama.
  2. Which are the significant elements of Drama? Explain.
  3. Discuss the chief characteristics of Modern Drama.
  4. Write a short note on William Shakespeare's contribution to English literature.
  5. Give an account of Tagore's life and his works of art.
- III. Answer any 2 of the following in about 2 pages:** **2x10=20**
1. 'Kalidasa's works of art combine beauty, art and intellect gloriously' Justify the statement.
  2. 'Theatre as an art form serves two purposes to society: Instrumental and Aesthetic'. Substantiate.
  3. Discuss the major themes of Modern Drama.
- IV. Create a situation for a father and son, where the father tries to persuade his son to get into family business, while the son has other plans.** **05**
- Hints:



1. Describe the scene/setting
2. Bring in 1 or 2 more characters into picture
3. Build the dialogues appropriately

**V.** Write a drama in about 3 pages woven around the theme of ‘The Rainbow’.

**05**

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