



Uttar Pradesh Rajarshi Tandon
Open University

Bachelor of Arts
DCEN-102 (N)
Reading Fiction and Drama

CONTENTS

Block I Fiction- Shashi Deshpande: *That Long Silence*

Unit 1 : Introduction of Indian English Novel.	5-11
Unit 2 : Shashi Deshpande as a Woman Novelist	12-20
Unit 3 : <i>That Long Silence</i> : Title, Theme and Plot	21-31
Unit 4 : <i>That Long Silence</i> : Feminism, Characters ,Structure and Technique	32-41

Block II George Orwell- *Animal Farm*

Unit 5 : Introducing George Orwell	43-48
Unit 6 : <i>Animal Farm</i> : Title, Theme and Plot	49-54
Unit 7 : <i>Animal Farm</i> : Symbolism, Characters, Structure and Technique	55-61

Block III Drama: William Shakespeare- *The Merchant of Venice*

Unit 8: Brief Introduction to British Drama	63-72
Unit 9 : Background study of the play: Analysis of Act I and II	73-80
Unit 10 : Analysis of, Act III, Act IV and V	81-85
Unit 11 : Characterisation and Technique	86-95
Unit 12 : Annotations : Important Passages	96-106

Block IV G.B. Shaw: *Arms and the Man*

Unit 13 : Life and Works of G.B. Shaw and Analysis of Act I	108-112
Unit 14: Analysis of Act II and III	113-116
Unit 15: Title, Theme, Characters and Style	117-124
Unit 16: Annotations: Important Passages	125-131

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INTRODUCTION TO BLOCK I

This block deals with Shashi Deshpande's *That Long Silence*. Shashi Deshpande has emerged as a leading woman novelist on the Indian Literary Horizon. In her works, she depicts women in myriad roles wife, mother, daughter and individual in their own rights. *That Long Silence*, which won Shashi Deshpande the Sahitya Akademi Award in 1990, tells the story of an Indian house wife who maintains silence throughout her life. The novel ends with her resolve to speak her long silence.

This block has been divided into 4 units.

In **Unit 1** we discuss Brief Introduction of Indian English Novel. The Indian English novel is a significant literary phenomenon that has emerged in the Indian sub-Continent since the 19th century.

Unit 2 deals Shashi Deshpande as woman novelist. Shashi Deshpande is a renowned Indian novelist in English known for her insight, feel, and portrayal of inner lives and experiences of Indian women.

Unit 3 deals with *That Long Silence*: Title, Theme and Plot. The title 'That long silence refers to emotional numbness and disconnection experienced by Protagonist Jaya and other characters of the novel. The novel depicts the theme of emotional repression and silence, identity and self discovery of women etc. and the plot revolves around Jaya, a writer and mother who feels disconnected from her life, marriage and creative pursuits.

In **Unit 4** we discuss the topic like feminism, major characters, structure and technique. In short, after studying this block, you will be able to understand the philosophical and realist way of thinking about Indian English novel and develop the analytical power to understand feminine sensibility and narrative technique.

UNIT 1 INTRODUCTION OF INDIAN ENGLISH NOVEL

Structure

- 1.0 Introduction
- 1.1 Objectives
- 1.2 Background to the Indian English Novel
- 1.3 Indian English Novel during the Indian Freedom Struggle
- 1.4 Indian English Novel and the Recent Trends
- 1.5 Women Novelists and Indian English Novel
- 1.6 Narrative Techniques and Styles
 - 1.6.1 Magical realism and symbolism
 - 1.6.2 Realism and Social Commentary
- 1.7 Let Us Sum Up
- 1.8 Questions
- 1.9 Further Readings

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The emergence of the Indian English novel is a captivating episode in literary history, shaped by the intersection of historical, social, and literary forces. Indian English novel emerged prominently during the colonial era and has since blossomed into a varied and profound collection of narratives that mirror the intricate socio-cultural milieu of India.

1.1 OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit you will be able to:

- Understand the background to the Indian English Novel
- Describe Indian English Novel during the Indian Freedom Struggle and Indian English Novel and the Recent Trends
- Familiarize with women Novelists and Indian English Novel
- Know Narrative Techniques and Styles

1.2 BACKGROUND TO THE INDIAN ENGLISH NOVEL

The roots of the Indian English novel can be traced back to the 19th century when British colonial rule significantly impacted Indian languages, literatures, cultures and society at large. English education, introduced by the British, played a pivotal role in shaping a class of educated Indians who were proficient in English. This period saw the emergence of early Indian English writers who predominantly wrote about the clash of cultures, the impact of colonization, and the social changes brought about by British rule.

Some of the important novelists include R. C. Dutt, Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay, Toru Dutt and Rabindranath Tagore. Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay, influenced by Sir Walter Scott gained recognition for his novel *Rajmohan's Wife* (1864), widely acknowledged as one of the earliest Indian novels written in English. He combined his romanticism and nationalism of Bengal and wrote

several novels addressing the social life of Bengal. Some of his famous novels are *Kapalkundal*, *Durgesh Nandini*, *Krishnakanta's Will*, *The Two Rings* and *Rajmohan's Wife*. These novels originally written in Bengali were translated into English. Through his novels, Bankim C. Chatterji exposes the shams and hypocrisies of contemporary social life. Ramesh Chandra Dutt, a man of versatile genius wrote six novels in Bangla. He translated two of them *The Lake of Palms* (1902) and *The Slave Girl of Agra* (1909) into English. *The Lake of Palms* deals with the social themes and advocates the introduction of widow remarriage. *The Slave Girl of Agra* is a historical romance. Toru Dutt authored *Bianca or the Young Spanish Maiden* (1878), marking a significant early contribution to English novels by an Indian woman. Rabindranath Tagore, known primarily as a poet and playwright, also made notable contributions to the early phase of Indian English novels with works such as *Gora* (1910), *The Home and the World* (1916) and *The Wreck* (1921).

1.3. INDIAN ENGLISH NOVEL DURING THE INDIAN FREEDOM STRUGGLE

Indian English novel during the period between 1920s and 1930s experienced a notable rise, delving deeper into themes of Indian identity, socio-cultural issues, and nationalism. The writers of this period like Mulkraj Anand, R. K. Narayan and Raja Rao asserted their cultural distinctiveness and rejected the Western idea of writing a novel in terms of its form and themes. This transition marks a shift from colonial narratives to more indigenous perspectives in literature. Mulkraj Anand portrayed the harsh realities of caste discrimination and poverty in his novel *Untouchable* (1935). Raja Rao's *Kanthapura* (1938) explored the profound influence of Gandhi's philosophy on a South Indian village. R.K. Narayan became renowned for his humorous and insightful portrayals of small-town life, exemplified in novels such as *Swami and Friends* (1935).

Independence of India in 1947 marked a pivotal moment in Indian English literature, catalysing a profound transformation. Writers of this era increasingly grappled with themes central to nation-building, modernity, social change, and the complexities of post-colonial identity. The Indian English novel emerged as a potent medium for articulating diverse regional experiences and perspectives.

Raja Rao continued to exert his literary influence in the post-independence era with *The Serpent and the Rope* (1960), delving deeply into philosophical and spiritual themes against the backdrop of a changing India. R.K. Narayan, celebrated for his wonderful portrayals of Indian society, expanded his narrative scope through novels like *The Guide* (1958), capturing both the humour and pathos of everyday lives amidst societal transformation. Anita Desai, known for her introspective and meticulously crafted novels, explored themes of family dynamics and personal identity in works such as *Clear Light of Day* (1980), offering profound insights into the complexities of the human experience within an Indian context. Salman Rushdie, primarily associated with British literature, made an enduring impact on Indian English fiction with *Midnight's Children* (1981), a ground-breaking work that blended magical realism with a sweeping historical narrative, reshaping the genre and influencing subsequent generations of writers.

Collectively, these literary giants exemplify the richness and diversity of Indian English literature in the post-independence era. Their works not only reflect the complexities of a newly liberated nation but also serve as enduring testaments to the power of novels in capturing the essence of human experience across cultures and generations.

1.4 INDIAN ENGLISH NOVEL AND THE RECENT TRENDS

In recent decades, the Indian English novel has flourished, showcasing a remarkable diversity in genres, styles, and themes. Writers such as Arundhati Roy, celebrated for her debut novel *The God of Small Things* (1997), which won the Booker Prize, and Vikram Seth, known for his epic saga

A Suitable Boy (1993), have not only achieved global recognition but have also profoundly influenced contemporary literature.

Arundhati Roy's *The God of Small Things* intricately weaves together familial drama, social hierarchies, and political upheaval in Kerala, offering a poignant reflection on love, loss, and the complexities of human relationships against the backdrop of post-colonial India. Roy's lyrical prose and bold narrative style have established her as a distinctive voice in world literature.

Vikram Seth's *A Suitable Boy* spans across post-independence India, portraying a panoramic view of a country grappling with its newfound identity, societal norms, and political turmoil. Seth's meticulous attention to detail and character development, combined with his ability to seamlessly blend history and fiction, have made *A Suitable Boy* a classic of modern Indian literature.

Amitav Ghosh is renowned for his sweeping historical narratives, Ghosh's works including *The Shadow Lines* (1988) and the *Ibis Trilogy* (2008-2015) traverse continents and epochs, exploring themes of migration, globalization, and environmental change with unparalleled depth.

Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni, known for her evocative storytelling, has captivated readers with novels like *The Mistress of Spices* (1997) and *The Palace of Illusions* (2008), where she skilfully blends myth, history, and contemporary issues.

Jhumpa Lahiri garnered acclaim with her Pulitzer Prize-winning debut *Interpreter of Maladies* (1999) and continued to delve into themes of identity, immigration, and the complexities of cultural assimilation in novels such as *The Namesake* (2003).

Kiran Desai, the daughter of Anita Desai winner of the Man Booker Prize for *The Inheritance of Loss* (2006). Desai intricately examines the intersections of cultural identity, diaspora, and the transformative impacts of globalization on traditional societies.

Aravind Adiga renowned for his Booker Prize-winning novel *The White Tiger* (2008), explores the stark social and economic disparities of contemporary India in his compelling narratives.

1.5 WOMEN NOVELISTS AND INDIAN ENGLISH NOVEL

Women novelists have made significant contributions to Indian English fiction, enriching the literary landscape with their unique perspectives, thematic explorations, and narrative styles. Their works often delve into personal and societal issues, challenging norms and offering nuanced insights into the complexities of Indian society. Women writers began to emerge in Indian English fiction during the early to mid-20th century, as Indian literature in English gained popularity. Although their numbers were initially small, their impact was significant, reflecting changes in society and the evolving roles of women in India.

Women novelists writing in English explore a wide range of themes deeply rooted in Indian culture and society. They examine gender roles, challenges, and empowerment within families and communities. The women authors also address important social issues like patriarchy, gender discrimination, domestic violence, and the pressures of traditional expectations. They explore how traditional Indian values intersect with modern influences and delve into the experiences of the Indian diaspora. Additionally, they depict personal relationships, portraying the complexities of love, marriage, family dynamics, and generational conflicts. Through their stories, these writers offer profound insights into Indian society, sparking discussions about gender, culture, and human connections.

Anita Desai is celebrated for her introspective and meticulously crafted novels, including *Clear Light of Day* (1980), *Fasting, Feasting* (1999), and *The Village by the Sea* (1982). Her

writings examine the themes of familial bonds, cultural adaptation, and the inner conflicts faced by her female protagonists. Desai's narratives offer profound insights into the complexities of human relationships and the challenges of navigating personal identity within the shifting landscapes of modern India.

Arundhati Roy gained international acclaim with her debut novel *The God of Small Things* (1997), winner of the Booker Prize. She was also shortlisted for the Booker Prize for her novel *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness* (2017). Her writing blends rich prose with a profound exploration of societal norms, political dynamics, and the struggles of marginalized communities, with a particular focus on women's experiences.

Jhumpa Lahiri, renowned for her mastery of short stories, also explores themes of cultural identity, belonging, and the immigrant experience in her novels like *The Namesake* (2003) and *The Lowland* (2013). Her narratives often centre on female protagonists, offering poignant insights into their personal journeys and challenges within the context of migration and cultural adaptation.

Kiran Desai, recipient of the Man Booker Prize for her novel *The Inheritance of Loss* (2006), delves into themes of displacement, globalization, and the profound effects of political turmoil on individuals. Her narrative particularly emphasizes the experiences of women, highlighting their resilience and struggles amidst changing societal landscapes.

Anuradha Roy is recognized for her novels like *An Atlas of Impossible Longing* (2008) and *Sleeping on Jupiter* (2015), where she intricately blends historical contexts with intimate portrayals of women's lives. Her storytelling unfolds against the backdrop of evolving societies and turbulent political environments, providing deep insights into personal challenges and the enduring strength of her characters amidst societal shifts.

Women novelists in Indian English fiction have not only received critical acclaim but have also had a profound impact on literature, both within India and globally. Their works challenge stereotypes, highlight social injustices, and offer alternative perspectives on traditional narratives. They have expanded the scope of Indian literature in English, enriching it with diverse voices and narratives that resonate with readers worldwide.

1.6 NARRATIVE TECHNIQUES AND STYLES

Multi-generational narratives in Indian English novels often serve as intricate tapestries that weave together the past, present, and future of families and communities. These narratives unfold across generations, offering a panoramic view of societal changes, cultural transformations, and the evolution of familial relationships over time. Novelists delve into how traditions, values, and beliefs are passed down from one generation to another, and how they shape individual identities and collective memories. These narratives often reflect on the impact of historical events, political movements, and socio-economic shifts on families and communities across different epochs. Characters evolve through different stages of life, grappling with personal struggles, aspirations, and the complexities of their own identities within the context of their family histories.

Examples of Indian English novels employing multi-generational narratives include Vikram Seth's *A Suitable Boy* which explores the intertwined lives of multiple families in post-independence India, and Rohinton Mistry's *A Fine Balance* which spans several decades to depict the interconnected fates of its characters against the backdrop of political turmoil.

Indian English novels often employ **intimate and introspective prose** to delve deep into characters' inner thoughts, emotions, and personal journeys. This narrative style allows readers to connect intimately with the characters' psychological landscapes and emotional complexities.

For example, in Arundhati Roy's *The God of Small Things*, the prose is rich with intimate details and reflective passages that explore the inner worlds of its characters, particularly the twins Estha and Rahel. Roy uses lyrical language to convey their fears, desires, and the intricate dynamics of their family relationships amidst the backdrop of societal norms and political tensions in Kerala.

Another example is Anita Desai who is celebrated for her introspective and lyrical prose, which delves deep into the inner lives and emotional landscapes of her characters. Her writing style is characterized by its introspective depth, where she explores the complexities of human emotions and relationships with a keen psychological insight. In novels such as *Clear Light of Day* and *Fasting, Feasting*. Desai's lyrical prose evokes vivid imagery and sensory details, transporting readers into the worlds of her characters. She intricately weaves together themes of family dynamics, cultural assimilation, and personal identity, using language that is both reflective and evocative.

Jhumpa Lahiri's *The Namesake* investigates into emotional and cultural themes. Lahiri's prose delicately captures the protagonist Gogol Ganguli's internal conflicts, cultural assimilation, and search for identity as a second-generation immigrant in America. Through introspective passages, Lahiri explores Gogol's evolving relationships with his family, his heritage, and his own sense of belonging in a foreign land.

In these novels, the intimate and introspective prose style enhances the reader's understanding of the characters' inner worlds, motivations, and emotional landscapes, making their journeys and dilemmas deeply resonant and memorable. This narrative technique not only enriches the storytelling but also allows for a nuanced exploration of complex themes such as identity, belonging, and the human condition.

1.6.1 MAGICAL REALISM AND SYMBOLISM

Magical realism and symbolism play significant roles in Indian English novels, allowing authors to explore cultural myths, dreams, and the subconscious in unique and imaginative ways. These literary devices blend elements of the fantastical with the everyday, creating narratives that are both enchanting and thought-provoking.

One notable example of magical realism in Indian English novel is Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children* (1981). This novel intertwines historical events with magical elements, as the protagonist Saleem Sinai, born at the exact moment of India's independence, discovers that he and other children born in the same hour possess extraordinary powers. Rushdie uses magical realism to critique political events, explore national identity, and reflect on the tumultuous history of post-colonial India.

Another example is Kiran Nagarkar's *Cuckold* (1997), which employs magical realism to reimagine historical figures and events from medieval India. The novel blends fantastical elements with a deeply symbolic exploration of power dynamics, love, and betrayal within the royal courts of Rajasthan. The novel based on the Bhakti period saint poet Meerabai focuses on the effect of her sainthood on Moharaj Kumar.

In Arundhati Roy's *The God of Small Things* (1997) symbolism plays a crucial role in enriching the narrative. Roy uses symbolic imagery, such as the river and the moth, to explore themes of love, loss, and social hierarchies in Kerala. The novel's evocative prose and use of symbolism create a dreamlike atmosphere that enhances the reader's engagement with its characters and themes.

These examples show how magical realism and symbolism in Indian English novels make stories more interesting. They let authors explore cultural traditions, shared memories, and the hidden thoughts of their characters. By mixing everyday life with magical elements, these techniques

give readers a special view of the rich and complex world of Indian society and history.

1.6.2 REALISM AND SOCIAL COMMENTARY

Realism and social commentary are powerful tools used in Indian English novels to authentically depict societal issues and provoke empathy among readers. Authors employ this narrative style to shed light on pressing social concerns, portraying the complexities of human experiences with depth and sensitivity.

One compelling example is Rohinton Mistry's novel *A Fine Balance* (1995). Set in 1970s India, Mistry vividly portrays the lives of four characters from different social backgrounds who come together amidst political turmoil and economic hardships. Through their interconnected stories, Mistry addresses themes such as poverty, caste discrimination, political corruption, and the resilience of the human spirit. His realistic portrayal offers a poignant commentary on the social inequalities and injustices prevalent in Indian society.

Another notable work is Aravind Adiga's *The White Tiger* (2008). This novel provides a stark critique of India's class divide and the harsh realities faced by the underprivileged in a rapidly modernizing society. Adiga's protagonist Balram Halwai narrates his journey from a rural oppressed boy to becoming a successful entrepreneur in Delhi, exposing the corruption, exploitation, and moral compromises inherent in India's socio-economic structure. Through Balram's perspective, Adiga offers a scathing commentary on the challenges and moral dilemmas faced by individuals striving for upward mobility in contemporary India.

In both examples, realism and social commentary serve as powerful vehicles for authors to engage readers in thought-provoking discussions about social issues. By portraying characters' lives with authenticity and empathy, these novels not only depict the harsh realities but also inspire readers to reflect on the broader socio-political landscapes and the human condition in India.

Another type of narrative out of which Indian English novel evolves is historical fiction. These novels blend real historical events with fictional narratives, offering insights into the past while engaging readers with compelling storytelling. Here are some notable examples:

The Shadow Lines by Amitav Ghosh explores the impact of historical events like the Partition of Bengal and World War II on the lives of its characters. Ghosh intertwines personal and political histories, examining how borders and conflicts shape identities and relationships. Ghosh's *The Ibis Trilogy* (*Sea of Poppies*, *River of Smoke*, and *Flood of Fire*), spanning from the 1830s to the early 20th century, vividly portrays the Opium Wars, colonialism, and the global trade in the Indian Ocean region. Ghosh's meticulous research and storytelling prowess bring to life a complex era of history.

A Suitable Boy by Vikram Seth, although primarily a family saga, set in post-independence India, provides a panoramic view of the socio-political landscape during the 1950s. It touches upon historical events such as land reforms, religious tensions, and the emergence of a new nation.

Cuckold by Kiran Nagarkar, set in medieval India, reimagines the life of a historical figure, Maharaj Kumar, whose wife engages in a love affair with a poet. Nagarkar blends historical accuracy with imaginative storytelling to explore themes of power, betrayal, and love within the royal courts of Rajasthan.

The Palace of Illusions by Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni reinterprets the Indian epic Mahabharata from the perspective of Draupadi, offering a feminist retelling of the mythological tale. Divakaruni's narrative combines historical myth with personal introspection, making ancient history accessible and relevant to contemporary readers.

These examples illustrate how historical fiction in Indian English novels not only educates readers about specific historical periods but also explores universal themes of identity, power dynamics, and cultural transformations. By blending fact with fiction, these novels enrich our understanding of history while providing engaging narratives that resonate across cultures and time periods.

1.7 LET US SUM UP

The future of Indian English novels will likely see a focus on diverse representations, exploring marginalized voices and regional identities. There will be increased exploration of globalization's impact, diaspora experiences, and intersectional identities. Authors will continue to experiment with narrative forms, blend genres, and address pressing issues such as environmental concerns, social justice, and political commentary. The novels may also reflect on the digital age, influence of technology, and advocate for social change while aiming for continued international recognition and expanding readership worldwide.

1.8 QUESTIONS

1. Discuss the historical background of Indian English Novel.
2. Write a note on the trends of Indian English Novel.
3. Discuss the women novelists of Indian English Novel.
4. Analyse the use of narrative technique and style of Indian English Novel.
5. Write a note on realism and social commentary in Indian English Novel

1.9 FURTHER READINGS

After going through the unit you may like to know more about the novel as a genre or you may like to read some works. Here are a few that you may find interesting:

- Arvind Krishna Mehrotra. *An Illustrated History of Indian Literature in English*. New Delhi: Permanent Block, 2003
- Attia Hossain. *Sunlight on a Broken Column*, London Chatto and Windus, 1961.
- C. D. Narasimhaiah. *The Swan and the Eagle*. Shimla, Indian Institute of Advanced Study, 1969.
- K.R. Srinivasa Iyengar. *Indian Writing in English*. New Delhi: Sterling Publishers, 1985: rpt. 1995.
- Manohar Malgonkar. *Devil's Wind*. New - Delhi: Penguin, 1985.
- Meenakshi Mukherjee. *Twice Bom Fiction*. 2nd Edn. New Delhi: Pencraft International 2001.
- M. K. Naik. *A History of Indian English Literature*. New Delhi: Sahitya Akademi, 1982.
- M. K. Naik and Shyamala A. Narayan. *Indian English Literature .. 1980-2000, A Survey*. New Delhi: Pencraft International,

UNIT 2 SHASHI DESHPANDE AS A WOMAN NOVELIST

Structure

- 2.0 Introduction
- 2.1 Objectives
- 2.2 Shashi Deshpande: Life and Works
- 2.3 Shashi Deshpande's Women Characters
 - 2.3.1 Sarita in *The Dark Holds No Terror*
 - 2.3.2 Jaya in *That Long Silence*
 - 2.3.3 Indu in *Roots and Shadows*
 - 2.3.4 Urmila in *The Binding Vine* (1993)
- 2.4 Major Themes in Deshpande's Novels
 - 2.4.1 Gender Roles and Identity
 - 2.4.2 Marriage and Relationships
 - 2.4.3 Family Dynamics
 - 2.4.4 Identity and Self-discovery
 - 2.4.5 Social and Cultural Change
 - 2.4.6 Empowerment and Agency
 - 2.4.7 Silence and Communication
 - 2.4.8 Women's Mental Health and Emotional Turmoil
 - 2.4.9 The Portrayal of Men as Monsters in Deshpande's Novels
- 2.5 Her language, Style and Techniques
- 2.6 Let Us Sum UP
- 2.7 Questions
- 2.8 Suggested Readings

2.0 INTRODUCTION

Since we are dealing with Shashi Deshpande's novel *That Long Silence* in Block I, through Unit 2, we shall provide you an insight about how Shashi Deshpande uses her art of writing novel as a medium to address the crisis and sensibilities of modern Indian women. This unit deals with Shashi Deshpande's portrayal of women characters, major themes and her language, style and techniques for her novels.

2.1 OBJECTIVES

In this unit, we shall discuss Shashi Deshpande as a woman novelist. We have cited examples from her major novels which will give you an idea of Deshpande's feminist approach of writing her novels. After reading this unit, you will be able to:

- Form an outline about Shashi Deshpande's life and works.
- Discuss Deshpande as a woman novelist.
- Appreciate Deshpande's art of delineating women characters.
- Discuss major themes and issues in Deshpande's novels.

2.2 SHASHI DESHPANDE: LIFE AND WORKS

Indian English literature has, since mid-twentieth century, witnessed the rise of many gifted women novelists who have greatly impacted the genre. These writers frequently delve into a wide range of themes including identity, tradition, modernity, gender roles, and societal shifts in their literary works. Arundhati Roy, Anita Desai, Kiran Desai, Jhumpa Lahiri, Chitra Banerji Diwakaruni along with numerous others have enhanced Indian English novel with their diverse voices, unique perspectives, and exceptional storytelling abilities, shaping a dynamic literary tradition that continues to evolve and captivates readers globally.

Shashi Deshpande, the daughter of the renowned Sanskrit scholar and Kannada dramatist Shriranga, was born in Dharwad, Karnataka, in 1938. She received her early education at a Protestant mission school in Karnataka, later continuing her studies in Bombay and Bangalore. During her school years, she immersed herself in the great British classical novels in English, developing a particular fondness for the works of Jane Austen. She pursued economics in Bombay and graduated in Law from Bangalore, where she earned a Gold Medal. Subsequently, she went on to complete her M.A. in English Literature.

Shashi Deshpande initially ventured into fiction through short stories. Over the years, she published approximately a hundred stories in literary journals, magazines, and newspapers. After her marriage, while living in Bombay (now Mumbai), she undertook a journalism course at Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan and briefly worked as a journalist for the magazine *Onlooker*. It was during this period that she began her writing career, with her first short story appearing in print in 1970. Initially, her stories were featured in magazines such as *Femina* and *Eve's Weekly*. Her debut collection of short stories titled *Legacy* was published in 1978. Since then, she has continued to write immensely popular novels that are now celebrated worldwide and studied in universities wherever Indian literature finds an audience. The works of Shashi Deshpande are as follows:

Novels

The Dark Holds No Terrors (1980),

If I Die Today (1982),

Come Up and Be Dead (1982),

Roots and Shadows (1983),

That Long Silence (1989),

The Binding Vine (1993),

A Matter of Time (1996),

Small Remedies (2000),

Moving on (2004),

In the Country of Deceit (2008),

Shadow Play (2013),
Strangers to Ourselves (2015)

Children's Books

A Summer Adventure (2006),
The Hidden Treasure (2006),
The Only Witness (2006),
The Narayanpur Incident (2000).

Collection of Short Stories

The Legacy and other Stories (1978),
It was the Nightingale (1986),
The Miracle (1986),
It was Dark (from *Collected Stories*, Vol. 2, 2003),
The Intrusion and other stories (1993),
The Stone Woman (from *Collected Stories*, Vol. 1, 2003).

Essays

Writing from the margin and Other Essays (2003)

Memoir

Listen to Me (2018)

Awards and Achievements

Shashi Deshpande has received several awards and honours throughout her illustrious career. Here are some of her notable awards and achievements:

Sahitya Akademi Award: She was awarded the Sahitya Akademi Award in 1990 for her masterpiece *That Long Silence*. The award recognizes her significant contribution to Indian English literature.

Padma Shri: In 2009, Shashi Deshpande was honoured with the Padma Shri, one of India's highest civilian awards.

In addition to receiving major awards, Shashi Deshpande has earned recognition in literary forums and festivals for her substantial contributions to Indian literature. Her works have been extensively translated and studied both within India and internationally, solidifying her position as a prominent figure in contemporary Indian fiction. Her enduring legacy sparks ongoing discussions on gender equality and societal transformation within the realm of modern Indian literature.

2.3 SHASHI DESHPANDE'S WOMEN CHARACTERS

Shashi Deshpande's woman characters are central to her exploration of identity, relationships, and societal roles within the Indian context. Her novels often feature complex and multi-dimensional female protagonists who navigate the complexities of family dynamics, societal expectations, and personal aspirations. Shashi Deshpande's portrayal of woman characters across her novels and short stories is characterized by their depth, complexity, and exploration of societal roles and personal identity. Here are examples of her woman characters from some of her prominent works:

2.3.1 SARITA IN THE DARK HOLDS NO TERROR

Sarita's character is deeply rooted in the psychological conflict stemming from her father's blatant favouritism towards her brother, Manohar. From a young age, Sarita is made acutely aware of her perceived inferiority in her father's eyes due to her gender. This early experience lays the foundation for her lifelong battle with feelings of inadequacy and worthlessness. Throughout the novel, Sarita embarks on a quest for self-acceptance and identity. Her journey is marked by internal turmoil as she grapples with societal expectations imposed upon her as a woman. Sarita's struggles to assert her own worth and capabilities in the face of patriarchal norms form the crux of her character arc.

As the narrative progresses, Sarita undergoes a transformation where she begins to confront and challenge the ingrained biases and constraints placed upon her. Her resilience in the face of adversity and her gradual realization of her own inner strength make her character compelling and inspiring. Through her journey, Sarita evolves from a woman constrained by societal expectations to one who asserts her agency and seeks liberation on her own terms.

Sarita in *The Dark Holds No Terror* emerges as a complex and compelling character whose journey embodies the nuanced struggles faced by women in patriarchal societies. She symbolizes these broader struggles, illuminating the psychological and emotional toll of gender bias and its profound impact on individual lives. Deshpande delves deep into Sarita's inner world, crafting a character that resonates personally and universally, inviting reflection on identity, autonomy, and societal conformity. Sarita's journey from self-doubt to self-acceptance showcases the resilience and strength required to transcend patriarchal prejudices and expectations, portraying a poignant quest for identity and empowerment in a world defined by gender biases and societal pressures.

2.3.2 JAYA IN THAT LONG SILENCE

Shashi Deshpande's Jaya in *That Long Silence* is a character deeply rooted in the complexities of familial and societal expectations, whose journey through the novel serves as a poignant exploration of identity, autonomy, and the quest for self-discovery amidst stifling cultural norms. Jaya is introduced as a middle-class Indian woman, navigating the intricate web of responsibilities and roles prescribed by her upbringing and marriage. Married to Mohan, a successful engineer, Jaya's life initially revolves around her duties as a wife and mother to their two children. Her upbringing and marriage have conditioned her to prioritize familial harmony and societal expectations over her own desires and ambitions.

The core of Jaya's character lies in her internal conflict—a struggle between the roles imposed upon her and her suppressed yearning for personal fulfilment and independence. As the novel unfolds, Jaya experiences a gradual awakening to the limitations of her life and the suffocation of her unfulfilled aspirations. This internal turmoil intensifies as she confronts moments of disillusionment and existential crisis, challenging her sense of identity and purpose.

Jaya's character revolves around her quest for identity and liberation. Her journey is marked by moments of introspection and defiance as she begins to question the societal norms and patriarchal structures that have confined her. Through encounters with others—especially women—who challenge traditional roles, Jaya starts to envision a different life for herself beyond the confines of her marriage and societal expectations.

Central to Jaya's character are the intricate relationships she navigates. Her relationship with Mohan evolves from one of mutual respect and familiarity to a source of conflict and disillusionment as she seeks greater autonomy. Her interactions with her children reflect her conflicting desires to nurture them while also pursuing her own aspirations. Additionally, her bond with her friend Malati serves as a catalyst for self-reflection and empowerment, highlighting the importance of supportive

relationships in her journey towards self-discovery.

Jaya symbolizes the broader societal constraints imposed on women in traditional Indian society. Through her character, Deshpande critiques the patriarchal norms that dictate women's lives, examining the repercussions of societal expectations on individual identity and fulfilment. Jaya's story serves as a mirror reflecting the universal struggles of women grappling with societal pressures and their quest for personal agency and self-realization.

In *That Long Silence* Jaya emerges as a multifaceted character whose journey resonates with themes of identity, autonomy, and societal expectations. Her evolution—from a woman bound by convention to one striving for personal liberation—offers a compelling exploration of the complexities of female experience in a patriarchal society. Jaya's character not only challenges traditional gender roles but also underscores the resilience and courage required to forge one's path amidst societal constraints. Through Jaya, Deshpande crafts a nuanced portrayal of a woman's quest for authenticity and self-empowerment in a world defined by rigid social norms and patriarchal control.

2.3.3 INDU IN ROOTS AND SHADOWS

Indu, the central character in *Roots and Shadows* (1983), navigates the complexities of familial relationships and her own quest for independence. Set against the backdrop of a traditional Brahmin family in South India, the novel portrays Indu's evolving understanding of her place within the family and society. Her rebellion against societal norms and desire for personal fulfilment exemplify Deshpande's exploration of women's agency and self-empowerment. Indu grapples with the constraints placed upon her by societal expectations of women, including her mother's strict adherence to traditional roles. Her father, though more liberal-minded, is largely absent.

As Indu grows older, she begins to question these expectations and desires more from life than the limited roles society has assigned to her. She finds solace in books and education, which offer her a glimpse of a broader world beyond her family's conservative values.

The novel traces Indu's journey through adolescence to adulthood, exploring her relationships with her family, particularly her mother, and her struggle to carve out her own identity. She faces challenges and conflicts, both internal and external, as she tries to reconcile her aspirations with the reality of her circumstances. Ultimately, *The Roots and Shadows* is a poignant exploration of gender roles, tradition, and the quest for personal freedom and fulfillment, told through the eyes of Indu as she navigates the complexities of family, society, and self-discovery.

2.3.4 URMILA IN THE BINDING VINE

In Shashi Deshpande's poignant novel *The Binding Vine*, Urmila, the narrator, grapples with the profound challenges in life. After the heart-wrenching loss of her baby, she finds herself navigating a path filled with unbearable pain. Yet amidst her grief, she unexpectedly becomes intertwined with two vastly different women: her deceased mother-in-law, a frustrated writer, and a young woman lying unconscious in a hospital. Through these quiet yet powerful connections, Urmila embarks on a journey of healing. Shashi Deshpande's compassionate narrative unveils the miracle of human resilience and hope. Despite the web of loss and despair, strands of life, love, and solidarity emerge—the binding vine that transcends time, social divides, and even death itself. With moving prose and profound sensitivity, Deshpande reveals the hidden endurance and grace inherent in the everyday lives of women, their struggle for self discovery and autonomy.

Throughout her literary career, Shashi Deshpande has crafted women characters who defy stereotypes and resonate with readers for their authenticity and depth. These characters embody a range of experiences and challenges, offering poignant insights into the complexities of women's

lives in contemporary India. Deshpande's portrayal of their struggles, resilience, and quest for autonomy continues to shape discussions on gender dynamics and societal norms in Indian literature.

Overall, Shashi Deshpande's portrayal of women characters is marked by sensitivity, empathy, and a profound exploration of their personal and social struggles. Through their stories, she continues to contribute significantly to the discourse on gender, identity, and empowerment in Indian literature.

2.4 MAJOR THEMES IN DESHPANDE'S NOVELS

Shashi Deshpande's novels explore a range of themes and issues that resonate deeply with readers, particularly focusing on the complexities of women's lives in contemporary India. Her women are sensitive to changing times. Here are some major themes and issues in her novels:

2.4.1 GENDER ROLES AND IDENTITY

Shashi Deshpande critically examines traditional gender roles and the evolving identities of women in Indian society. Her characters often navigate the expectations imposed upon them by family, culture, and societal norms. In *The Dark Holds No Terrors* the protagonist Sarita struggles with her identity and the societal expectations placed on her as a woman, particularly as a daughter, wife, and mother.

2.4.2 MARRIAGE AND RELATIONSHIPS

Shashi Deshpande's novels delve into the complexities of marital relationships, often exploring themes of love, intimacy, power dynamics, and the challenges faced by women in negotiating their roles within marriage. She portrays the intricacies of emotional bonds and the often unequal distribution of power between spouses, offering nuanced perspectives on how societal expectations and personal desires intersect within the institution of marriage. Deshpande's characters confront issues such as communication breakdowns, emotional distance, and the quest for individual autonomy while navigating the complexities of domestic life and societal pressures. Through her narratives, Deshpande highlights the evolving dynamics of contemporary marriages in India, prompting readers to reflect on the evolving nature of relationships and the pursuit of fulfilment amidst societal norms. *That Long Silence* portrays Jaya's journey as she reflects on her marriage and confronts the silence and emotional distance that has developed between her and her husband over the years.

2.4.3 FAMILY DYNAMICS

The dynamics within families, including generational conflicts, parental expectations, sibling relationships, and the impact of family history on individual lives, are recurrent themes in Deshpande's novels. She intricately explores how these dynamics shape her characters' identities and decisions, portraying the tensions between tradition and modernity within familial contexts. Deshpande's narratives often depict the interplay of familial bonds, highlighting the complexities of loyalty, duty, and personal autonomy that her characters must navigate. *Roots and Shadows* explores the protagonist Indu's relationships within her Brahmin family and the tensions that arise as she seeks to assert her own identity and ambitions.

2.4.4 IDENTITY AND SELF -DISCOVERY

Many of Deshpande's characters undergo journeys of self-discovery, grappling with questions of personal identity, aspirations, and the search for meaning and fulfillment in their lives. *The Binding Vine* follows Urmila's introspective journey as she confronts her life choices and relationships, grappling with aging and mortality while striving to understand her desires and limitations. Through Urmila's journey, Deshpande delves into issues like gender roles and

expectations as well as identity, self-discovery and struggle for autonomy.

2.4.5 SOCIAL AND CULTURAL CHANGE

Deshpande's novels often reflect on the broader social and cultural changes occurring in contemporary India, including urbanization, globalization, modernization, and their impact on traditional values and identities. In *A Matter of Time*, Deshpande explores the clash between traditional values and modern aspirations through the lives of her characters, highlighting the tensions and compromises they face.

2.4.6 EMPOWERMENT AND AGENCY

Empowerment and the quest for agency are central themes in Deshpande's works, as her characters navigate societal constraints to assert their independence and pursue their aspirations. *The Dark Holds No Terrors* examines Sarita's journey towards self-empowerment and liberation from the oppressive influences of her past and present circumstances. Empowerment and Agency are closely connected concepts- the former means to give individuals the choice, while agency means the capability of the individual.

2.4.7 SILENCE AND COMMUNICATION

The title itself suggests a theme of silence, which permeates the novel on multiple levels. Jaya experiences a profound emotional and psychological silence within herself, stemming from societal pressures and the suppression of her own voice. The narrative explores how this silence affects her relationships and her ability to articulate her thoughts and desires.

Overall, Shashi Deshpande's novels offer profound insights into the inner lives of women in India, addressing universal themes of identity, relationships, empowerment, and societal change with sensitivity and depth. Her narratives challenge stereotypes and encourage readers to reflect on the complexities of human experiences within the context of Indian society. Shashi Deshpande's body of work stands as a testament to her role as a feminist voice in Indian literature, advocating for greater understanding and empathy towards women's struggles and aspirations in a changing society.

2.4.8 WOMEN'S MENTAL HEALTH AND EMOTIONAL TURMOIL

Deshpande's novels often delve into themes of mental health and emotional turmoil, offering a nuanced exploration of the psychological landscapes of her characters. Her protagonists frequently grapple with inner conflicts, societal pressures, and the weight of familial expectations, leading to profound emotional distress. Deshpande's portrayal of mental health issues is both empathetic and realistic, highlighting the silent struggles many face in a patriarchal society.

In *That Long Silence* Jaya's introspection and emotional turbulence reflect her battle with depression and anxiety as she confronts the disintegration of her marriage and the search for her own identity. Similarly, in *The Dark Holds No Terror*, Sarita's journey is marked by deep psychological scars from childhood traumas and the oppressive dynamics of her marital relationship. Deshpande's characters often find themselves at the crossroads of tradition and modernity, struggling to assert their individuality while coping with isolation, self-doubt, and the fear of societal judgment.

Deshpande's insightful treatment of mental health underscores the importance of self-awareness and the need for emotional resilience. Her novels serve as a poignant reminder of the complexities of human emotions and the imperative to address mental health with sensitivity and understanding.

2.4.9 THE PORTRAYAL OF MEN IN DESHPANDE'S NOVELS

In Shashi Deshpande's novels, men are often depicted as monsters in the sense that their

actions, shaped by patriarchal values, can be oppressive, controlling, and abusive, profoundly impacting the lives of the female protagonists. These male characters embody the darker aspects of traditional gender roles and societal expectations, which can lead to emotional and psychological turmoil for the women they are connected to.

In *The Dark Holds No Terror*, Sarita's husband, Manohar, becomes a monstrous figure as his insecurities and jealousy over her professional success lead him to abusive behavior. His night time violence transforms him from a loving partner into a source of terror and pain for Sarita. This duality in his character exposes the hidden dangers within a seemingly normal marriage and the destructive power of male ego and societal pressures.

In *That Long Silence*, Mohan, Jaya's husband, may not be a monster in the traditional sense, but his actions and attitudes contribute to Jaya's emotional suffocation and identity crisis. His insistence on maintaining societal appearances and his lack of emotional support render him a monstrous figure in Jaya's internal world, as he embodies the oppressive norms that stifle her voice and individuality.

In *Roots and Shadows*, the male characters, particularly the patriarchal figures within the family, exert control and impose restrictive norms on the women. Indu's husband, Jayant, also exhibits controlling behaviour that limits Indu's freedom and self-expression. The oppressive nature of these male figures often manifests in ways that are emotionally and psychologically damaging and creating a sense of entrapment for the female characters.

Deshpande's portrayal of men as monsters in her novels serves to critique the deeply entrenched patriarchal systems that perpetuate gender inequality and abuse. By highlighting these oppressive behaviours, she sheds light on the urgent need for societal change and the empowerment of women to break free from the chains of traditional gender roles.

2.5 DESHPANDE'S LANGUAGE, STYLE AND TECHNIQUES

Shashi Deshpande has carved a distinguished niche in contemporary Indian literature as a pioneer woman novelist. Her literary journey spans several decades and has left an indelible mark on the landscape of Indian writing in English. Deshpande's writing style is characterized by its clarity, introspection, and attention to detail. She employs a subtle narrative technique that allows her characters to unfold organically, revealing their inner worlds and personal struggles. Deshpande's contributions to literature have been widely recognized. Her novels continue to be studied in academic contexts and cherished by readers for their enduring relevance and emotional resonance.

Her use of language is evocative yet accessible, making her novels both engaging and thought-provoking. Among her notable works, *The Dark Holds No Terrors* (1980), *That Long Silence* (1988), and *A Matter of Time* (1996) stand out for their thematic richness and narrative depth. These novels explore diverse facets of women's lives, from the psychological impact of familial relationships to the quest for personal autonomy and fulfilment.

2.6 LET US SUM UP

In conclusion, Shashi Deshpande's legacy as a pioneer woman novelist in India is defined not only by her literary craftsmanship but also by her profound insight into the complexities of women's experiences. Through her novels, she has enriched the literary landscape with narratives that challenge, inspire, and illuminate, leaving an indelible mark on readers and future generations of writers. Shashi Deshpande's enduring contributions to literature serve as a testament to her role as a trailblazer in portraying the diverse realities of women's lives in India with empathy and authenticity.

2.7 QUESTIONS

1. How does Shashi Deshpande see married women in modern Indian society? Discuss with reference to the novel prescribed in your syllabus?
2. Discuss important issues Shashi Deshpande raises through her novels?
3. In what ways does Shashi Deshpande challenge traditional gender roles and stereotypes through her characters and narratives?

2.8. SUGGESTED READINGS

- Bala, Dr. Suman (ed) *Women in the Novels of Shashi Deshpande*. New Delhi: Khosla Publication House, 2001.
- Bhatnagar, Parvathi. "Indian Womanhood: Fight for Freedom in Shashi Deshpande's Roots and Shadows". *Indian Women Novelists in English*, Birendra Panday (ed), 2001. (132-141).
- M. Rajeshwar. *Indian Women Novelists and Psycho Analysis: A Study of Neurotic Characters*. New Delhi: Atlantic Publishers and Distributors, 1998.
- Meenakshi Mukherjee, "Women Creative Writers in Indian English Literature". *Between Spaces of Silence*. By Kamini Dinesh (ed). New Delhi: Sterling, 1994, p. 18.
- Sarkar, Piu. *Feminist Perspective Towards Shashi Deshpande Novels*. Isekai Labs LLP-Etail, 2022.

UNIT 3 THAT LONG SILENCE: TITLE, THEME AND PLOT

Structure

- 3.0. Introduction
- 3.1 Objectives
- 3.2 That Long Silence: An Introduction
- 3.3 That Long Silence: Detailed Summary
- 3.4 That Long Silence: Significance of the Title
- 3.5 That Long Silence: Important Themes
 - 3.5.1 Gender Roles and Patriarchy
 - 3.5.2 Marriage and Relationship
 - 3.5.3 Self-Discovery and Identity
 - 3.5.4 Fear and Courage
 - 3.5.5 Female Solidarity and Support
 - 3.5.6 Cultural and Social Critique
- 3.6 That Long Silence: Plot Construction
 - 3.6.1 Non-Linear Narrative Structure
 - 3.6.2 Character-Centric Plot Development
 - 3.6.3 Use of Symbolism
 - 3.6.4 Conflict and Tension
 - 3.6.5 Integration of Subplots
 - 3.6.6 Thematic Depth and Symbolic Closure
- 3.7. Let Us Sum UP
- 3.8 Questions
- 3.9 Suggested Readings

3.0 INTRODUCTION

That Long Silence is a novel written by Indian novelist Shashi Deshpande and it was first published in 1989. *That Long Silence* depicts the women world in an authentic, realistic and credible manner. The story of the novel is a voyage of a woman to discover herself and her empowerment. It depicts the plight of a wife who suffers silently in the name of family. Jaya is the main character of the novel. This unit introduces you the significance of title, theme and plot construction of the novel.

3.1 OBJECTIVES

In this unit, students will read Shashi Deshpande's novel *That Long Silence* under the heads of significance of the title, major themes of the novel and plot construction.

After reading this unit, you will be able to:

- Learn basic facts about the novel.
- Form an outline about the novel *That Long Silence*.
- Discuss different themes that the novel revolves around.

Appreciate Deshpande's art of constructing the plot of the novel.

3.2 THAT LONG SILENCE: AN INTRODUCTION

Basic Facts

- Author: Shashi Deshpande
- Year of Publication: 1989
- Genre : Feminist Fiction/ social novel
- Protagonist : Jaya
- Setting of Time : Late 20th century
- Setting of Place : Mumbai
- Narrative Techniques : First-person narrative technique, flashback technique
- Awards : Sahitya Academy Award of 1990

Outline of the Story: Shashi Deshpande's novel *That Long Silence* is a compelling exploration of a woman's inner world and her struggle for identity within the confines of a patriarchal society. The narrative centres around Jaya, a middle-aged housewife and aspiring writer, who is forced to confront her suppressed desires and silenced voice after her husband Mohan faces a professional crisis. Set against the backdrop of a traditional Indian family, the novel delves deeply into themes of marital discord, societal expectations, and the quest for self-expression. *That Long Silence* stands as a significant work in Indian English literature, offering a nuanced critique of gender roles and the silent suffering of women within a rigid social framework.

3.3 THAT LONG SILENCE: DETAILED SUMMARY

The novel opens with Jaya and her husband, Mohan, relocating to a small, dingy apartment in Dadar, Mumbai. The cramped space and the peeling paint on the walls are a stark contrast to their previous home, symbolizing a significant downgrade in their lifestyle. This move comes in the wake of a corruption scandal involving Mohan at his workplace, marking the start of a turbulent period in their lives. As they unpack their belongings, the sense of crisis and transition is palpable. The small apartment in Dadar feels confining, a physical manifestation of the emotional and psychological constraints Jaya has endured in her marriage. The isolation from their previous life of comfort and stability deepens the chasm between them. Mohan, consumed by his professional downfall, retreats into his own world. He spends hours poring over documents, making frantic phone calls, and sinking deeper into his worries. His preoccupation with the scandal leaves Jaya alone to navigate the unfamiliar terrain of their new home and her own troubled thoughts.

Jaya finds herself confronting memories and feelings she had long buried. The forced move acts as a catalyst, compelling her to reflect on her past and present. She thinks about the choices she has made, the roles she has assumed, and the silence she has maintained throughout her life. The stark surroundings of the apartment amplify her introspection, making her question the path that led her here. As Mohan continues to be absorbed in his crisis, Jaya's sense of isolation grows. The apartment, with its bare walls and meagre furnishings, becomes a place of reflection. She begins to acknowledge her own complicity in maintaining her silence and adhering to societal norms, realizing how she has allowed herself to be diminished over the years. The move to Dadar marks the beginning of Jaya's journey toward self-awareness and empowerment. In the silence of the cramped

apartment, she starts to unravel the layers of her identity, confronting the unresolved issues in her life and marriage.

As Jaya settles into the small apartment in Dadar, the silence and isolation prompt her to reflect on her past. The walls of the apartment, bare and unwelcoming, seem to echo with the memories of her childhood and the influences that have shaped her. She sits by the window, staring at the bustling streets below, and begins to delve into her memories. She remembers her father, a progressive man who valued education and encouraged her to write. He believed in her potential and saw her as more than just a future wife and mother. His support and encouragement instilled in her a love for writing and a desire to pursue her own dreams, *"my father had named me Jaya, 'victory,' but victory had not been mine for a long time. To Mohan, I was Suhasini, 'the well-composed.' But the composure had cracked, letting through anger, despair, and bitterness"*.

In contrast, her mother embodied traditional values, emphasizing the importance of being a good wife and mother. She taught Jaya the virtues of silence and submission, showing her how to maintain harmony in the household by sacrificing her own needs and desires. Her mother's life was a constant reminder of the societal expectations placed on women.

As Jaya examines these dual influences, she realizes the internal conflict they have created within her. On one hand, she wants to honour her father's belief in her potential and pursue her own aspirations. On the other hand, she feels the weight of societal expectations, reinforced by her mother's teachings, to conform to traditional roles and prioritize her family above all else. Jaya experiences a constant tug-of-war between these conflicting influences. Her father's voice, urging her to write and be independent, clashes with her mother's voice, reminding her of her duties as a wife and mother. This duality has left her feeling torn and conflicted, struggling to find a balance between her own desires and the expectations placed upon her. As she reflects on her upbringing, Jaya begins to see how these influences have shaped her current predicament. The duality of her father's encouragement and her mother's traditionalism has left her in a state of perpetual conflict, unable to fully pursue her own aspirations or completely conform to societal expectations. This realization is painful, but it also marks the beginning of her journey towards self-discovery and empowerment.

Jaya understands that to move forward, she must reconcile these conflicting influences and find her own voice. She must learn to embrace her father's belief in her potential while also acknowledging the lessons from her mother. Only then can she break free from the long silence that has defined her life and start living authentically.

In Jaya's marriage to Mohan, traditional gender roles are deeply entrenched. From the very beginning, Mohan expects Jaya to be the ideal wife—supportive, selfless, and always putting the family's needs above her own. The societal expectations are clear and unyielding, dictating that a woman's primary role is to maintain the household and uphold her husband's honour. As the years pass, Jaya learns to hide her own desires and opinions. She becomes adept at maintaining a facade of harmony, presenting herself as the dutiful wife who supports her husband unconditionally. This self-suppression becomes second nature to her, a means of avoiding conflict and preserving the appearance of a happy marriage. *"A pair of bullocks yoked together... it is more comfortable to go in the same direction. To go in different directions would be painful; and what animal would voluntarily choose pain?"* This metaphor captures the essence of Jaya's marriage. She and Mohan move in the same direction out of convenience, avoiding the pain of discord, even if it means sacrificing their individual desires and aspirations.

Jaya's silence becomes a powerful symbol of her oppression. It represents the unspoken and unresolved issues that plague her life and marriage. The "long silence" of the title reflects the years

of unexpressed frustration, unmet needs, and suppressed emotions. It is a silence that weighs heavily on Jaya, stifling her true self and preventing her from finding fulfilment. This realization marks a turning point for Jaya. She begins to understand that her silence, born out of fear, has been more detrimental than the societal expectations she has been trying to meet. The fear of stepping out of her prescribed role has kept her trapped in an unfulfilled existence.

As Jaya delves deeper into her memories, she examines the ways in which her marriage has shaped her. She recalls moments of submission and compromise, where she chose silence over self-expression to maintain peace. The weight of these memories brings her to a painful awareness of how much she has lost of herself in the process. Jaya's marriage to Mohan, with its rigid adherence to traditional gender norms, becomes a microcosm of the larger societal expectations that constrain women. Her struggle to break free from this "long silence" symbolizes the broader fight for female autonomy and self-expression in a patriarchal society. In the silence of her small Dadar apartment, Jaya begins to confront these deeply ingrained patterns. She starts to question the choices she has made and the roles she has assumed. She realizes that she herself is responsible for her condition. This introspection is painful but necessary, marking the beginning of her journey towards reclaiming her voice and identity. As she reflects on her marriage, Jaya realizes that the facade of harmony she has maintained is no longer sustainable. The unspoken issues and unresolved conflicts can no longer be ignored. She understands that to truly find herself, she must break free from the silence and confront the realities of her life and marriage. Thus a new Jaya is born.

In addition to reflecting on her marriage, Jaya's thoughts extend to her relationships with other family members and friends. She recalls her cousin Kusum, whose tragic fate serves as a grim reminder of the consequences faced by women who rebel against societal norms. Kusum's story haunts Jaya, emphasizing the severe repercussions of stepping out of traditional roles. Jaya also thinks about her maid, Jeeja, whose life of hardship and resilience presents a stark contrast to her own. Jeeja's daily struggles for survival highlight the different facets of womanhood, revealing how class and social standing influence the degrees of agency and oppression experienced by women. Through these relationships, the novel delves into the varied experiences of women, illustrating the spectrum of challenges they face. Jaya's reflections on Kusum and Jeeja's lives reveal the complex interplay of gender, class, and societal expectations, enriching her understanding of her own situation. As Jaya examines these connections, she sees the common thread of struggle and resilience that binds women together, despite their differing circumstances. This broader perspective deepens her awareness of the pervasive nature of female oppression and the strength required to challenge it. This realization reinforces Jaya's determination to break her silence and seek a life of authenticity and self-expression, not just for herself but in solidarity with all women who endure similar struggles.

Mukta, Jaya's neighbor, becomes a crucial figure in Jaya's journey of self-discovery. Unlike Jaya, Mukta has chosen to live independently, defying societal expectations by staying single and managing her life on her own terms. Her bold choices and their conversations spark a new perspective in Jaya. Through Mukta, Jaya begins to see the possibility of a different life—one where she can embrace her own desires and make choices that reflect her true self. Mukta's independence challenges Jaya to rethink her own life and consider what it might be like to live authentically and assertively.

As Jaya keeps thinking about her life, she realizes how she has played a part in keeping quiet and following societal rules. She sees how she has let herself to be controlled, preferring to stay safe and fit in, rather than express herself and be true to who she is. This painful but important realization marks a turning point in her journey.

Towards the end of the novel, Jaya decides to break her long silence. She resolves to confront

Mohan and address the issues in their marriage openly. Although the novel does not provide a neat resolution, it ends on a note of hope and determination. Jaya's decision to reclaim her voice and assert her identity signifies her empowerment and a newfound sense of agency.

That Long Silence is a profound exploration of a woman's internal struggle against the forces of patriarchy and tradition. Through Jaya's introspective journey, Shashi Deshpande offers a nuanced critique of the societal expectations that confine women and the personal cost of maintaining silence. The novel is a powerful testament to the importance of self-expression and the courage required to challenge and transcend oppressive norms.

3.4 THAT LONG SILENCE: SIGNIFICANCE OF THE TITLE

The title *That Long Silence* by Shashi Deshpande holds deep significance, reflecting the central themes of the novel. Here are the key aspects of its significance:

Symbol of Suppression

The "long silence" in the novel symbolizes Jaya's extended suppression of her voice, desires, and identity. It represents the societal and familial pressures that have compelled her to stay silent and compliant, sacrificing her true self for the sake of maintaining harmony and acceptance. This silence highlights the constraints of traditional gender roles and patriarchal norms that confine women to passive, subordinate roles. Jaya's internal conflict is defined by this silence as she struggles to balance societal expectations with her own unmet needs. The novel portrays this silence as both a personal and collective experience for women, illustrating how deep societal pressures impact their ability to express their true selves and seek personal fulfillment, "*I had learned it at last—no questions, no retorts, only silence.*"

Metaphor for Inner Conflict

The title *That Long Silence* serves as a metaphor for Jaya's inner conflict and the tension between her public persona and her true self. It represents the prolonged period during which Jaya has repressed her voice, desires, and identity in order to conform to societal and familial expectations. This silence reflects the deep internal struggle she faces as she navigates her role within a patriarchal society and the personal sacrifices she has made. The metaphor of silence underscores the unresolved issues and emotional turmoil that Jaya endures, highlighting the tension between her outward compliance and her inner discontent. Through this metaphor, the novel explores the profound impact of internal conflict on Jaya's journey toward self-discovery and empowerment.

Representation of Gender Roles

In the novel, the "long silence" symbolizes traditional gender roles that dictate a woman's place in society, confining her to passive, subordinate positions. Jaya's internal struggle is characterized by this silence as she grapples with the tension between societal expectations and her own unmet needs. It also mirrors the broader experience of many women expected to be submissive and self-sacrificing, conforming to patriarchal norms without question. The novel uses this silence to highlight both personal and collective challenges, showing how deep societal pressures affect women's ability to express their true selves and pursue personal fulfillment.

Unresolved Issues

The title also emphasizes the unspoken and unresolved issues in Jaya's life and marriage. The silence between Jaya and Mohan, along with her internal silence, points to deep-seated problems that have been neglected or repressed rather than confronted. This lack of communication and unresolved conflict deepens the novel's examination of personal and societal constraints,

highlighting how these unresolved issues significantly impact Jaya's journey toward self-realization.

The Titular Silence and the Relationship

The title signifies the impact of this silence on Jaya's relationships with her husband, family, and friends. It underscores the emotional distance and lack of communication that result from years of unspoken thoughts and feelings. The prolonged silence creates a barrier in her interactions, fostering misunderstandings and estrangement. This impact on her relationships further intensifies Jaya's internal conflict, illustrating how deeply the suppression of her voice has affected both her personal life and her connections with others.

3.5 THAT LONG SILENCE: IMPORTANT THEMES

That Long Silence by Shashi Deshpande explores several important themes, each contributing to a deep understanding of the protagonist's journey and the societal context in which she lives. The novel intricately examines Jaya's quest for self-realization and personal growth, highlighting her shift from passive silence to self-expression and empowerment.

Silence and Voice

The theme of silence versus voice highlights Jaya's struggle to move from being quiet and unnoticed to expressing her true self. Her silence represents how she has had to suppress her own voice and identity. Over the years, she has stayed silent to keep the peace in the family and fulfill her roles as a wife and mother, often ignoring her own needs and desires. The novel also explores family dynamics and how traditional responsibilities affect personal desires. Through Jaya's efforts to resist societal expectations, Deshpande shows the challenges and strength needed to fight against oppression, offering deep insights into identity and personal freedom.

A major part of Jaya's journey in the novel is about finding her voice, breaking her silence, and asserting her individuality. This theme highlights the importance of self-expression and the bravery needed to stand up against oppression. The novel also looks at family dynamics and how traditional roles impact personal desires. Through Jaya's efforts to defy societal expectations, Deshpande reveals the challenges and strength required to confront and overcome oppression, providing valuable insights into identity and personal freedom. Through Jaya, the novelist highlights the intricate interplay of desires and responsibilities experienced by women.

3.5.1 GENDER ROLES AND PATRIARCHY

In Shashi Deshpande's *That Long Silence*, gender roles and patriarchy are central themes that critically examine how societal norms and expectations shape women's lives. The novel portrays the restrictive gender roles imposed on women in Indian society. Jaya's experiences reflect the traditional expectations that confine women to domestic duties and subordinate positions within the family. These roles dictate how women should behave, often requiring them to sacrifice their own aspirations for the sake of family harmony. Jaya's struggle to conform to these roles highlights the limitations placed on women's personal growth and self-expression.

Patriarchy is a pervasive force in the novel, influencing every aspect of Jaya's life. The patriarchal structure dictates the power dynamics within her family and society, marginalizing women and reinforcing male dominance. Jaya's relationship with her husband, Mohan, exemplifies the power imbalance characteristic of patriarchal systems. Her compliance with his expectations and her silence about her own needs reflect the broader societal norms that enforce female subservience.

The novel explores how these gender roles and patriarchal norms affect women's personal identities. Jaya's internal conflict and sense of self are deeply influenced by her adherence to traditional roles. Her journey toward self-realization involves confronting these ingrained

expectations and seeking a more authentic expression of her identity. This process underscores the struggle between maintaining societal approval and pursuing personal freedom.

3.5.2 MARRIAGE AND RELATIONSHIPS

In *That Long Silence*, Shashi Deshpande explores the complexities of marriage and relationships, highlighting how societal expectations impact personal identity. Jaya's marriage to Mohan initially confines her to traditional roles, forcing her to suppress her own desires and ambitions to maintain peace. This silence reflects the broader struggle of women pressured to prioritize family needs over their own. As Jaya faces marital strain and conflict, she begins to question her choices and the constraints of her marriage. This internal conflict drives her journey toward self-realization and personal growth. Ultimately, Jaya's efforts to assert her voice and challenge societal norms illustrate the potential for empowerment and change within relationships. Deshpande's portrayal reveals the deep influence of traditional roles on personal fulfillment and the possibility of redefining one's identity within these constraints.

3.5.3 SELF-DISCOVERY AND IDENTITY

Jaya's journey to self-discovery is marked by deep introspection and reflection on her roles as a wife, mother, and individual. She critically examines the expectations and constraints imposed on her by society and family, questioning the sacrifices she has made for others. As she confronts her own silence and compliance, Jaya strives to understand and reclaim her true identity. This process involves confronting past choices and redefining her sense of self. Through her journey, Jaya begins to challenge the traditional roles that have shaped her life, seeking to break free from the constraints of societal norms. Her evolving self-awareness and newfound empowerment lead her to assert her individuality and pursue a more authentic and fulfilling life, mirroring the evolving socio-cultural landscape of contemporary India.

3.5.4 FEAR AND COURAGE

In *That Long Silence*, fear and courage are central to Jaya's journey. Her fear of breaking societal norms and facing rejection keeps her in a state of passive compliance, prioritizing family stability over personal desires. This fear drives her silence and inaction, as she dreads the potential consequences of challenging traditional roles. However, as Jaya reflects on her life, she gradually finds the courage to confront these fears. Her bravery emerges as she decides to break her silence and assert her individuality, risking personal and familial stability for a more authentic life. This transition from fear to courage is pivotal, allowing Jaya to overcome the constraints of societal expectations and embrace her true self. Deshpande uses Jaya's experiences to illustrate how confronting fear and embracing courage can lead to profound self-discovery and personal empowerment, offering a powerful commentary on the struggle for identity and autonomy.

3.5.5 FEMALE SOLIDARITY AND SUPPORT

In *That Long Silence*, female solidarity and support are subtly explored through Jaya's interactions with other women. While there is a shared understanding of the challenges they face, the support among women is often constrained by societal norms. Kusum's tragic fate highlights the limited support structures available to women who defy traditional roles, serving as a cautionary tale for Jaya. In contrast, Jeeja's resilience offers Jaya a different perspective on overcoming oppression, showcasing a form of silent understanding between women from different socio-economic backgrounds. Jaya's journey toward self-realization is influenced by these experiences, revealing both the potential and limitations of female solidarity. Deshpande uses these dynamics to illustrate the complexities of support among women in a patriarchal society and the impact on personal empowerment. Through various female characters like Kusum, Jeeja, Manda, Aiji, etc. Deshpande has tried to depict the cause of their subaltern position in society.

3.5.6 CULTURAL AND SOCIAL CRITIQUE

In Shashi Deshpande's *That Long Silence*, cultural and social critique is embedded throughout the narrative, offering a critical examination of the norms and structures that shape women's lives. The novel critiques the cultural expectations imposed on women in Indian society. It highlights how traditional values and customs restrict women's roles, confining them to domestic spheres and limiting their opportunities for personal growth. Jaya's experiences reflect the broader cultural pressures that dictate how women should behave, often at the expense of their own desires and aspirations. Deshpande challenges these cultural norms by portraying Jaya's struggle to break free from these constraints and assert her individuality.

On a social level, the novel critiques the patriarchal structures that perpetuate gender inequality. Through Jaya's interactions and reflections, Deshpande exposes the power dynamics within family and society that marginalize women. The societal expectations of women to remain silent and compliant are critiqued as oppressive and unjust. The novel also addresses the limitations of female solidarity, revealing how societal norms can inhibit genuine support and understanding among women.

The novel also critiques the class-based dimensions of female oppression. The experiences of characters like Kusum and Jeeja illustrate how societal and economic factors intersect to shape women's lives. While Jaya's middle-class struggles are different from Jeeja's poverty, both reflect the broader societal constraints that impact women across various social strata.

Ultimately, *That Long Silence* serves as a critique of the societal norms that restrict personal freedom and self-expression. Jaya's journey towards self-awareness and empowerment challenges these norms, advocating for a redefined understanding of identity and autonomy for women. Deshpande uses Jaya's experiences to call for a re-evaluation of cultural and social structures, promoting a vision of greater equality and individual freedom.

3.6 THAT LONG SILENCE: PLOT CONSTRUCTION

Shashi Deshpande's novel *That Long Silence* employs a sophisticated art of plot construction that intricately weaves together various elements to create a compelling narrative about gender roles, self-discovery, and personal empowerment. The design of the plot is crucial in highlighting the protagonist Jaya's internal and external conflicts, and the structure of the novel effectively supports its thematic concerns. Here's a detailed study of Deshpande's art of plot construction in the novel:

3.6.1 NON-LINEAR NARRATIVE STRUCTURE

Deshpande employs a non-linear narrative structure to reflect Jaya's introspective journey. The novel begins with Jaya and her husband Mohan moving to a small, dingy apartment in Dadar, Mumbai, following a corruption scandal involving Mohan. This immediate shift from a comfortable life to a state of crisis sets the stage for Jaya's reflections on her past.

The narrative unfolds through Jaya's recollections and flashbacks, which intersperse with her present-day experiences. This non-linear approach allows readers to understand the depth of Jaya's internal conflict and the events that have shaped her life. It mirrors Jaya's psychological state—her fragmented memories and unresolved issues—enhancing the novel's thematic concerns of silence and self-discovery. For example, Jaya's reflections on her childhood and early marriage are not presented in a chronological order but are woven into the present-day narrative. This structure helps the reader see the evolution of Jaya's character and the development of her internal conflicts.

3.6.2 CHARACTER-CENTRIC PLOT DEVELOPMENT

The plot of *That Long Silence* revolves around Jaya's character development. The narrative is

deeply character-centric, focusing on Jaya's internal struggles and her relationships with others. Her interactions with her husband Mohan, her cousin Kusum, and her maid Jeeja provide insights into her character and the societal pressures she faces. For example, Jaya's relationship with Mohan highlights the traditional gender roles that confine her. Mohan's expectations and the resultant emotional distance in their marriage drive Jaya to introspect and question her own choices.

3.6.3 USE OF SYMBOLISM

Deshpande employs symbolism to enrich the plot and underscore its themes. The title *That Long Silence* itself is a symbol of the suppressed voices and unresolved issues in Jaya's life. The silence between Jaya and Mohan represents the emotional and communicative barriers in their relationship. Example, the dingy apartment in Dadar serves as a physical manifestation of Jaya's internal state—her feelings of entrapment and isolation. It contrasts sharply with her previous life of relative comfort, emphasizing the shift in her circumstances and the ensuing crisis.

3.6.4 CONFLICT AND TENSION

The plot is driven by both external and internal conflicts. Externally, Jaya faces the immediate crisis of relocating due to Mohan's scandal and the ensuing societal judgment. Internally, she grapples with her own suppressed desires, societal expectations, and the role she has been forced to play as a wife and mother. For Example, Jaya's internal conflict is reflected in her memories of her father's progressive ideals and her mother's traditional expectations. This duality creates a tension between her aspirations and the role she has been expected to fulfil.

3.6.5 INTEGRATION OF SUBPLOTS

Shashi Deshpande masterfully integrates subplots into *That Long Silence*, which not only complement but also enhance the main narrative. The subplot offers deeper insights into the themes of womanhood and societal oppression. The stories of Kusum and Jeeja, in particular, provide contrasting perspectives that enrich the reader's understanding of Jaya's journey.

Kusum's subplot shows the severe consequences women face when they defy societal norms. A relative of Jaya, Kusum's life is marked by mental illness and neglect. Her story serves as a warning to Jaya about the dangers of stepping outside traditional and patriarchal boundaries. Kusum's fate is a result of her family's failure to meet societal expectations. Abandoned by her husband and family, Kusum's descent into madness highlights the harsh reality for women without social support. Her tragic end reminds Jaya of the severe punishments for women who break societal rules, prompting Jaya to question her own silent compliance.

Jeeja adds another perspective on womanhood in the novel. Her daily struggles and resilience show a different class-based view of female oppression. Unlike Jaya, who deals with emotional and psychological issues in a secure middle-class environment, Jeeja faces the real hardships of poverty and survival. Jeeja's life is full of hard work and sacrifice. Her efforts to support her family and her practical approach to the various challenges are very different from Jaya's inner conflicts. Despite her hardships, Jeeja shows resilience and practicality that Jaya finds both admirable and humbling. Jeeja's ability to handle her difficult situation with purpose and strength gives Jaya a new model of survival and endurance.

By skillfully weaving the subplots of Kusum and Jeeja into the main narrative, Deshpande deepens the central theme of Jaya's journey toward self-realization. Kusum's story heightens the sense of urgency and danger associated with breaking free from societal expectations, while Jeeja's story offers a grounded perspective on resilience amidst oppression. Together, these subplots create a nuanced portrayal of the varied experiences of women within a patriarchal society. Jaya's interactions with Kusum and Jeeja force her to reflect on her own life choices and the silent

compliance she has upheld. Kusum's tragic fate and Jeeja's determined survival act as catalysts for Jaya's introspection and eventual assertion of her own voice. Through these contrasting stories, Deshpande emphasizes the complex nature of female oppression and the various ways women navigate and resist their circumstances.

By integrating these subplots, Deshpande not only enhances the central theme but also creates a richer, more textured portrayal of the struggles and resilience of women in a patriarchal society.

3.6.6 THEMATIC DEPTH AND SYMBOLIC CLOSURE

The plot's resolution connects back to the main themes of the novel. Jaya's shift towards expressing herself and breaking her silence highlights the themes of female independence and resistance to patriarchal control. The novel ends with Jaya finding a new sense of who she is, marking the end of her long silence and the beginning of a new chapter in her life. For example, in the final scenes, Jaya's reflections and decisions show her move from a life of silence to one where she can openly express her true self. This conclusion fits with the novel's focus on identity, personal power, and freedom.

In summary, the art of plot construction in *That Long Silence* is marked by its non-linear narrative, character-centric development, symbolic elements, and careful integration of conflicts and subplots. These elements work together to create a rich and layered portrayal of Jaya's journey from silence to self-discovery, offering a profound exploration of gender roles, personal identity, and societal expectations.

3.7 LET US SUM UP

In *That Long Silence*, Shashi Deshpande uses the title as a metaphor for Jaya's suppressed voice and identity, reflecting her inner turmoil and societal constraints. The plot traces Jaya's evolution from passive acceptance to self-awareness, revealing the effects of traditional gender roles and patriarchal norms on her life. Themes of silence versus voice, fear and courage, and gender roles are interwoven to highlight the difficulties of challenging societal expectations and asserting one's true self. Through Jaya's experiences, the novel critiques the limitations imposed on women, providing a compelling commentary on the quest for personal freedom and self-expression.

3.8 QUESTIONS

1. What is the significance of the title *That Long Silence*?
2. How does *That Long Silence* question and subvert traditional gender roles and societal expectations? Discuss.
3. How does Deshpande use the motif of silence to explore Jaya's internal conflict?
4. How does Deshpande depict the impact of patriarchy on different generations of women in the novel?
5. How do Jaya's flashbacks to her life before marriage influence her understanding of her current life?
6. How does Jaya describe her married life with Mohan? What are the key moments in their marriage that highlight their relationship dynamics?
7. Identify and discuss the key moments in the novel where Jaya experiences realizations about her life and her silence.
8. In what ways does the plot highlight the conflict between tradition and modernity in Jaya's life?

3.9 SUGGESTED READING

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UNIT 4 : THAT LONG SILENCE: FEMINISM, CHARACTERS, TRUCTURE AND TECHNIQUE

Structure

- 4.0 Introduction
- 4.1 Objectives
- 4.2 That Long Silence: Feminism
 - 4.2.1 Dynamics of Patriarchal Systems and Gender Expectations
 - 4.2.2 Jaya and Mohan within the Institution of Marriage
 - 4.2.3 The Quest for Identity and Self-Actualization
 - 4.2.4 Gendered Silence
 - 4.2.5 Intersectionality and Women
 - 4.2.6 Jaya's Economic Dependence on Mohan
 - 4.2.7 Psychological Struggles and Emotional Health
- 4.3 That Long Silence: Characters
 - 4.3.1 Jaya
 - 4.3.2 Mohan
 - 4.3.3 Rahul
 - 4.3.4 Rati
 - 4.3.5 Kamat
 - 4.3.6 Mukta
 - 4.3.7 Jaya's Mother
 - 4.3.8 Vanita
 - 4.3.9 Mukta's Husband
 - 4.3.10 Dada
- 4.4 That Long Silence: Detailed Analysis of Jaya's Character
- 4.5 That Long Silence: Structure and Technique
 - 4.5.1 Non-linear Narrative Structure
 - 4.5.2 Cyclical Structure
 - 4.5.3 Parallel Narratives
 - 4.5.4 First-Person Point of View
 - 4.5.5 Flashbacks, Memories and Stream-of-Consciousness Technique
 - 4.5.6 The Use of Symbols and Metaphor
 - 4.5.7 Character-Centric Narrative
- 4.6 Let Us Sum UP
- 4.7 Questions
- 4.8 Suggested Readings

4.0 INTRODUCTION

In this unit, we analyse at the outset Shashi Deshpande's attitude on Feminism. Deshpande presents how women's voices are often silenced by cultural norms and gender roles. The depiction of Jaya's relationship with her husband, Mohan, helps to explain the complex gender dynamics in a patriarchal society. Further we introduce you to the role of major and minor characters. In *That Long Silence*, Shashi Deshpande employs a narrative structure that intricately mirrors the protagonist Jaya's journey of self-reflection and the fragmented quality of her experiences and memories. Rather than following a straightforward, chronological sequence, the novel unfolds through a series of reflective passages, flashbacks, and stream-of-consciousness segments.

4.1 OBJECTIVES

In this Unit, we would learn the general idea of feminism and discuss the concept of feminism in *That Long Silence*. The unit provides an introductory note on the major characters of the novel along with detailed analysis on characters of Jaya and Mohan. The unit also discusses the structure and techniques of the novel.

After reading this unit, you will be able to:

- Understand the feministic approach of Shashi Deshpande in *That Long Silence*.
- Discuss major and minor characters of the novel.
- Analyse the structure and technique of the novel.

4.2 THAT LONG SILENCE: FEMINISM

Shashi Deshpande's *That Long Silence* is a well-known book in Indian English literature, often recognized as a feminist novel for its exploration of women's issues. The story focuses on Jaya, a middle-aged woman, who goes on a journey of self-reflection, examining her roles as a wife, mother, and individual. Deshpande uses Jaya's perspective to highlight the various struggles and challenges women face in Indian society, especially within marriage and family. The novel deeply explores Jaya's internal conflicts as she deals with the pressure of societal expectations and her own desire to express herself. Deshpande shows how women's voices are often silenced by cultural norms and gender roles. The depiction of Jaya's relationship with her husband, Mohan, helps to explain the complex gender dynamics in a patriarchal society.

4.2.1 DYNAMICS OF PATRIARCHAL SYSTEMS AND GENDER EXPECTATIONS

Deshpande explores the deeply rooted patriarchal structures that dictate gender roles and expectations in Indian society in her novel *That Long Silence*. Jaya's life is heavily influenced by these norms, which govern her behaviour and decisions. The novel highlights how societal expectations confine women to predefined roles, often suppressing their voices and individuality. Jaya's silence and the repression of her true feelings and desires symbolize the broader silencing of women within a patriarchal context. Deshpande shows how these rigid roles restrict women's opportunities and enforce conformity, hindering them from pursuing their personal ambitions. The narrative also delves into the psychological effects of living in a patriarchal society, as Jaya struggles with internalized beliefs and attempts to break free from the constraints imposed on her.

4.2.2 JAYA AND MOHAN WITHIN THE INSTITUTION OF MARRIAGE

That Long Silence examines the dynamics of marriage and the power imbalances that often exist within it. Jaya's relationship with her husband, Mohan, is marked by a lack of communication

and understanding. Mohan's patriarchal attitude and Jaya's passive acceptance of it reflect the unequal power dynamics in their marriage. The novel critiques the traditional expectations placed on women to be submissive and self-sacrificing, often at the expense of their own happiness and well-being. Jaya's internal conflict and struggle to assert her own needs are compounded by Mohan's dominance, which not only limits her autonomy but also reinforces her secondary status within the marriage. Deshpande portrays the emotional and psychological toll of these dynamics, showing how they perpetuate a cycle of dissatisfaction and unfulfilled desires, *"I am not allowed to voice my discomfort, my wishes are overshadowed by his demands. In this marriage, my silence is not just a choice, but a necessity dictated by his authority."*

4.2.3 THE QUEST FOR IDENTITY AND SELF-ACTUALIZATION

The novel is also an exploration of Jaya's journey towards self-discovery. Throughout her life, Jaya has conformed to societal norms, suppressing her own aspirations and desires to fit into the roles of a dutiful wife and mother. The narrative highlights her internal struggle and the realization that she has lost her sense of self. As Jaya reflects on her life, she acknowledges the profound disconnect between her true identity and the roles imposed upon her, *"I have spent so many years trying to be what others expected of me that I have forgotten who I really am. My silence was not a choice but a way of hiding from myself."* The process of self-exploration involves confronting her suppressed emotions and unfulfilled dreams, leading to a pivotal moment of awakening. Jaya's eventual decision to break her silence is a powerful feminist assertion of her individuality and agency, symbolizing her reclaiming of personal autonomy and self-respect. Through this transformation, Deshpande illustrates the broader theme of women's empowerment and the importance of acknowledging and pursuing one's true self in the face of societal constraints.

4.2.4 GENDERED SILENCE

Silence is a pervasive and intricate motif in the novel, symbolizing the systemic repression of women's voices and agency. Jaya's silence operates on both literal and metaphorical levels, embodying her incapacity to articulate her genuine emotions and the broader cultural phenomenon of women's silencing. Deshpande employs this motif to offer a trenchant critique of the societal indoctrination that inculcates women with the imperative to prioritize others above themselves and to maintain a facade of acquiescence in the face of injustice and subjugation. The silence also denotes the internalization of patriarchal norms, which stifle women's self-expression and assertiveness. Within the narrative, Jaya's silence metamorphoses into a symbol of her emotional and psychological incarceration, mirroring the widespread systemic silencing experienced by women. This recurring theme accentuates the imperative for women to emancipate themselves from these constraints and to assert their voices, thereby reclaiming their identities and narratives in a society that often marginalizes and suppresses them.

4.2.5 INTERSECTIONALITY AND WOMEN

The novel explores how different aspects of identity, like gender, class, and education, intersect and affect people's lives. Although Jaya comes from a privileged background, she still faces societal pressures, but they are different from those faced by women from other economic backgrounds. Her education and status give her some advantages, but they also bring higher expectations to behave like a 'respectable' woman. These intersecting factors make Jaya's journey of self-discovery more complicated, as she has to balance the demands of her social class, gender, and personal goals.

Deshpande uses Jaya's story to show how these various identities can shape and sometimes complicate life choices and a sense of personal power. This adds depth to the feminist themes in the novel, showing that women's experiences are varied and influenced by many factors. It highlights

the need to understand how different forms of identity and social barriers interact, creating specific challenges for women as they seek to understand and assert themselves.

4.2.6 JAYA'S ECONOMIC DEPENDENCE ON MOHAN

Economic dependence on male family members is another significant issue addressed in the novel. Jaya's financial reliance on Mohan makes her vulnerable and restricts her choices, reinforcing her sense of powerlessness, "*I am nothing but a wife and mother to him, my economic dependence a constant reminder of my limited power.*" This economic dependency is not unique to Jaya; it is a common plight for many women, often compelling them to remain in unhappy or abusive relationships due to a lack of financial autonomy. Deshpande poignantly explores how economic dependence undermines women's empowerment and self-respect, portraying it as a systemic issue that perpetuates gender inequality. By highlighting Jaya's struggle with financial reliance, Deshpande emphasizes the critical need for women's economic independence as a means to achieve true self-worth and personal freedom. This aspect of Jaya's experience underscores the broader societal challenge of ensuring that women have the resources and opportunities necessary to assert their own identities and make autonomous life choices.

4.2.7 PSYCHOLOGICAL STRUGGLES AND EMOTIONAL HEALTH

Jaya's internal struggle and depression highlight the often-overlooked issue of women's mental health. The pressure to meet societal expectations, combined with the suppression of her own desires and feelings, severely impacts Jaya's mental and emotional state. Deshpande vividly shows how pretending to be happy while dealing with inner dissatisfaction leads to Jaya's emotional distress. Her struggles are worsened by a lack of support and understanding from those around her, reflecting a common tendency to ignore or stigmatize women's mental health issues. Deshpande stresses the need to recognize and address these problems, advocating for a more compassionate approach that acknowledges women's unique challenges. Jaya expresses her emotional state by saying, "*I feel as though I am living in a fog, where every emotion and thought is muffled, and I cannot find my way out.*"

Thus, through these points, *That Long Silence* provides a comprehensive examination of women's issues, highlighting the various ways in which patriarchal norms and societal expectations impact their lives. The novel provides a powerful commentary for greater awareness and action towards gender equality and women's rights. By laying bare the psyche of Jaya and probing her emotional conflict due to silence, to be silent because ultimately this silence has been responsible for compounding the miseries of women for centuries. Thus Jaya's decision to break her silence is a very significant step towards the solution of her problem. The novelist wants to convey that recognizing the root of the problem ultimately leads to its solution.

4.3 THAT LONG SILENCE: CHARACTERS

In *That Long Silence*, Shashi Deshpande introduces a rich tapestry of characters, each contributing uniquely to the novel's exploration of themes like identity, gender roles, and societal expectations. Through the characters of the novel, the novelist not only portrays the personal struggles of individuals but also critiques the broader social structures that shape and often constrain their lives. The characters' interactions and personal growth serve as a lens through which the novel examines the nuanced realities of Indian society and the intricate dynamics within personal relationships. In the novel, several characters play crucial roles in shaping the narrative and highlighting the central themes. Here is a list of the important characters along with brief descriptions of their roles and significance.

4.3.1 JAYA

Jaya, also known as Suhasini plays the role of protagonist and serves the purpose of narrator as well. Jaya, a middle-aged woman is portrayed as wife to Mohan, and mother to his children. She embarks on an odyssey of self-discovery and introspective reflection. The entire narrative orbits around her contemplations on her existence, interpersonal relationships, and the societal expectations imposed upon her. Her character serves as a conduit for exploring themes of silence, identity, and the constraints imposed by entrenched patriarchal norms.

4.3.2 MOHAN

Mohan, a civil engineer and Jaya's spouse, embodies conventional patriarchal ideals. He anticipates that Jaya will adhere to the traditional roles of a devoted wife and mother. Mohan's character underscores the gender dynamics and disparities in power within their marriage. His behaviour and perspectives greatly impact Jaya's self-perception and her efforts to assert her own identity.

4.3.3 RAHUL

Rahul, the son of Jaya and Mohan, is a troubled youth who has a tense relationship with his parents. His difficulties in school and his choice to eventually leave home underscore the generational conflicts and divergent expectations present in the family. Rahul's character also brings to light Jaya's fears and uncertainties in her role as a mother.

4.3.4 RATI

Jaya and Mohan's daughter, Rati is a more conventional child compared to Rahul, often adhering to her parents' expectations. Her relationship with Jaya is less fraught than Rahul's, but she still represents the pressures and expectations placed on children, particularly in a patriarchal family structure.

4.3.5 KAMAT

Jaya's neighbour and friend, Kamat is an intellectual and an unconventional figure who becomes a confidant for Jaya. His character represents an alternative perspective on life, one that values individuality and self-expression. Kamat encourages Jaya to think independently and critically, playing a crucial role in her journey towards self-realization.

4.3.6 MUKTA

Mukta, Jaya's friend and former neighbor is a widow, who has endured significant hardships, including the loss of her husband and financial instability. Her experiences stand in stark contrast to Jaya's relatively more stable life, shedding light on the issues of women's dependence on men and the diverse challenges women confront. Mukta's resilience and fortitude provide an alternative perspective on womanhood, showcasing a different form of strength and endurance.

4.3.7. JAYA'S MOTHER

Jaya's mother embodies the traditional values and expectations imposed on women. She represents the former generation's mind-set, often emphasizing the importance of a woman's duty to her family over her personal aspirations. Her character provides insight into the cultural and familial pressures that shape Jaya's life.

4.3.8 VANITA

Vanita, a young widow employed by Jaya and Mohan, faces a tragic fate after her husband's death leaves her impoverished. Her plight serves as a poignant illustration of the vulnerability and marginalization experienced by women in society. Vanita's situation highlights the themes of gender

inequality and the stark realities encountered by women who lack male support.

4.3.9 MUKTA'S HUSBAND

Although he does not appear directly in the novel, the consequences of his actions and his death are keenly felt through Mukta's experiences. His character symbolizes the financial and emotional reliance women often have on their spouses, highlighting the severe difficulties they encounter when deprived of such support.

4.3.10 DADA

Dada, Jaya's brother, is another male figure in Jaya's life, representing the protective and sometimes patronizing attitudes of men towards women. His interactions with Jaya highlight the complexities of sibling relationships and the societal expectations placed on women within their families.

4.4. THAT LONG SILENCE: DETAILED ANALYSIS OF JAYA'S CHARACTER

Jaya as a protagonist is a complex and multi-dimensional character. Her journey is central to the narrative, exploring themes of identity, silence, and self-realization. As a middle-aged woman, wife, and mother, Jaya embodies the struggles faced by many women in patriarchal societies. Here is a detailed analysis of her character:

Jaya under the Impression of her Background and Early Life

Jaya hails from a relatively privileged background, having been raised in a traditional Indian family with access to a good education. This educational advantage distinguishes her from many women of her era. While it provides her with a broader outlook on life, it also engenders a sense of frustration, as she feels constrained by societal norms and the limitations imposed upon her.

Divided between Two Worlds

Jaya's life seems divided between her past and present. The past – the private life of Jaya is lost while the present- the public life she lives. Publicly, she fulfils the roles of a dutiful wife and mother, meeting societal expectations. She supports her husband, Mohan, and cares for her children, Rahul and Rati. In contrast, privately, Jaya feels dissatisfied, frustrated, and believes her potential remains unfulfilled. This duality is also reflected in her two names: Jaya, which means "victory," and Suhasini, which means "a woman with a good disposition." These names symbolize the conflict between her personal aspirations and the persona she is expected to publicly uphold. While Jaya signifies her inner strength and desire for self-expression, Suhasini represents the idealized image of a compliant and cheerful woman.

Jaya within Marriage and Relationships

Jaya's marriage to Mohan is a pivotal element of her life and character development. At the outset, she is devoted to her husband and committed to fulfilling her role as a supportive spouse. Over time, however, she becomes increasingly aware of the imbalances in their relationship. Mohan embodies traditional patriarchal values, expecting Jaya to be submissive and accommodating. He discourages her from voicing her opinions or pursuing her interests, mainly her writing reinforcing the societal norm that a woman's primary responsibility is to her family. The novel delves into Jaya's growing awareness of the lack of authentic communication and emotional connection in her marriage. She grapples with the expectations imposed upon her and the sacrifices she has made, which leads to mounting resentment and disillusionment. Her interactions with other characters, such as her children and friends, further underscore her internal struggles and the societal pressures she endures.

Jaya's Journey from Silence to Expressing the Self

In Jaya's character, silence emerges as a predominant theme. The novel portrays her struggle with the silence enforced by societal expectations and her own internalized norms. This silence is evident in her hesitance to express her genuine emotions, fears, and desires. It serves as both a literal absence of communication and a metaphor for the suppression of her identity and self-expression. A key element of the narrative is Jaya's journey towards overcoming this silence. Her introspective journey prompts her to re-evaluate the roles she has assumed and the sacrifices she has made. As she gradually awakens to the necessity of self-expression and authenticity, this transformation is symbolized by her decision to resume writing—a pursuit she had abandoned due to her husband's disapproval.

Jaya's Understanding and Writing of Traditional Role

Jaya's education and her passion for writing are pivotal in her character development. Her academic background gives her a critical lens through which she views the societal norms and expectations that limit her. Yet, this education also fosters a sense of detachment, as she struggles to fully accept the traditional roles imposed on her. Writing becomes a vital outlet for Jaya's repressed thoughts and emotions, allowing her to explore her identity and express her experiences. However, her difficulties in pursuing writing mirror the broader challenge women face in asserting their voices within a patriarchal society. Jaya's engagement with writing reflects her internal conflict between adhering to societal expectations and seeking self-assertion.

Psychological Nuances and Complexity of Jaya's Character

Jaya is depicted with significant psychological depth and complexity in the novel. She is a richly layered character, exhibiting a spectrum of emotions including love, compassion, resentment, and frustration. Her internal monologues and reflections provide insight into her doubts, fears, insecurities, as well as her moments of clarity and resolve. Additionally, her character delves into themes of guilt and responsibility. Jaya frequently grapples with feelings of guilt for not meeting the expectations of those around her, questioning her own role in the compromises she has made. This sense of guilt is further intensified by her awareness of the privileges she holds compared to less fortunate women, adding layers to her self-doubt and frustration.

Jaya's character is a profound exploration of psychological complexity and internal conflict. Shashi Deshpande presents her as a nuanced individual navigating the tension between societal expectations and personal aspirations. Jaya's emotional range, from love and compassion to guilt and frustration, is revealed through her introspections, highlighting the novel's critique of patriarchal norms. Her journey underscores the struggle for self-expression within restrictive gender roles and adds depth to the broader themes of identity and gender dynamics. Jaya's character thus becomes a central figure in the novel's exploration of women's roles and challenges in a patriarchal society.

4.5 THAT LONG SILENCE: STRUCTURE AND TECHNIQUE

In *That Long Silence*, Shashi Deshpande employs a narrative structure that intricately mirrors the protagonist Jaya's journey of self-reflection and the fragmented quality of her experiences and memories. Rather than following a straightforward, chronological sequence, the novel unfolds through a series of reflective passages, flashbacks, and stream-of-consciousness segments.

This non-linear structure allows readers to delve deeply into Jaya's inner world, capturing the complexity of her emotions and the turmoil she faces. By weaving together various narrative techniques, Deshpande effectively portrays the disjointed nature of Jaya's thoughts and feelings,

reflecting the protagonist's struggle to reconcile her past with her present. This approach enhances the reader's understanding of Jaya's psychological depth and the multifaceted nature of her emotional journey.

4.5.1 NON-LINEAR NARRATIVE STRUCTURE

The non-linear structure of the novel allows Deshpande to explore Jaya's past and present simultaneously. The narrative moves back and forth in time, blending memories, past events, and present situations. This technique mirrors the process of introspection, where Jaya reflects on her life, trying to make sense of her experiences and decisions. The fragmented nature of the narrative reflects Jaya's fragmented self and the disjointed aspects of her life as she struggles to reconcile her public persona with her private thoughts and feelings.

4.5.2 CYCLICAL STRUCTURE

In *That Long Silence*, Shashi Deshpande employs a cyclical structure to emphasize the recurring themes and emotional patterns in Jaya's life. The novel begins with Jaya's introspection and dissatisfaction in her present life, then moves through a series of flashbacks to her past experiences and reflections. As the story progresses, it returns to the present, showing how Jaya's past continues to influence her current situation. This cyclical pattern underscores the ongoing nature of Jaya's internal struggles and the persistent impact of societal expectations on her life. The cyclical structure mirrors Jaya's emotional state, reflecting how her unresolved issues from the past keep resurfacing. By looping back to earlier themes and situations, Deshpande highlights the enduring nature of Jaya's conflict and her journey toward self-realization. This approach allows readers to see how the past and present are intertwined, reinforcing the novel's exploration of identity, silence, and self-discovery.

4.5.3 PARALLEL NARRATIVES

In *That Long Silence*, Shashi Deshpande employs a parallel narrative structure to enhance the exploration of Jaya's character and her struggles. The novel alternates between Jaya's present-day reflections and flashbacks to her past, illustrating how past experiences continue to shape her current life. This structure juxtaposes Jaya's current dissatisfaction with her earlier idealistic expectations, highlighting the tension between her personal desires and societal roles. Through contrasting perspectives and mirror characters, such as Mukta, Deshpande underscores the broader themes of gender and societal pressure. Symbolic echoes, like the domestic space and Jaya's relationship with writing, connect past and present, providing a cohesive portrayal of her journey towards self-discovery and empowerment. This parallel narrative approach deepens the reader's understanding of Jaya's internal and external conflicts.

4.5.4 FIRST-PERSON POINT OF VIEW

The story is narrated from Jaya's first-person perspective, which is central to the novel's introspective and confessional tone. This viewpoint provides readers with direct insight into Jaya's inner thoughts, emotions, and struggles. By allowing us to delve deeply into her uncertainties, fears, and gradual self-discovery, the first-person perspective becomes crucial for understanding her personal journey. Additionally, this perspective highlights the theme of silence, as much of Jaya's narrative consists of unspoken thoughts and feelings. This unspoken silence reflects both the societal constraints imposed on her and her own personal reservations.

4.5.5 FLASHBACKS, MEMORIES AND STREAM-OF-CONSCIOUSNESS TECHNIQUE

Flashbacks are a crucial component of the novel's structure. Jaya frequently reflects on her past, recalling specific incidents, relationships, and conversations that have shaped her identity and worldview. These flashbacks provide context for her current situation and help readers understand

the factors that have influenced her sense of self. The use of flashbacks also highlights the themes of regret and introspection, as Jaya often questions the choices she made in the past and their consequences.

Deshpande employs the stream-of-consciousness technique to delve into Jaya's psyche. This technique captures the flow of Jaya's thoughts and feelings, often moving fluidly from one memory or thought to another without clear transitions. This narrative style effectively conveys the complexity of Jaya's internal world, her suppressed emotions, and the mental struggle she faces in coming to terms with her life choices. This combination of first person and third person narrative with flashback technique gives reliability and credibility to the novel.

4.5.6 THE USE OF SYMBOLS AND METAPHOR

Shashi Deshpande uses symbols and metaphors to explore deep themes of silence, identity, and societal pressure. Silence symbolizes the suppression of Jaya's voice and the broader marginalization of women's experiences. It reflects her struggle to express her true self amid societal expectations. Writing represents Jaya's effort to reconnect with her identity and assert her personal power, serving as a metaphor for her journey towards self-discovery. The contrast between her names, Jaya (meaning "victory") and Suhasini (meaning "a woman with a good disposition"), illustrates her internal conflict between her true desires and societal roles. Jaya's domestic space symbolizes the constraints imposed on her and mirrors her emotional and psychological confinement. The "long silence" in the title represents both the period of repression Jaya endures and the broader silence experienced by women in a patriarchal society. Deshpande's use of these literary devices provides a deeper insight into Jaya's struggles and the societal pressures that shape her life.

4.5.7 CHARACTER-CENTRIC NARRATIVE

In *That Long Silence*, Shashi Deshpande adopts a character-centric focus to delve deeply into the life and psyche of Jaya. The novel centres on Jaya's personal experiences, emotions, and internal conflicts, providing an in-depth exploration of her character. By concentrating on Jaya's perspective, the narrative offers a comprehensive look at her struggles with societal expectations, personal identity, and familial roles.

The character-centric approach allows readers to intimately experience Jaya's journey of self-discovery and self-assertion. Through her thoughts, reflections, and interactions with other characters, the novel illuminates the broader themes of gender roles, silence, and empowerment. This focus on Jaya's inner life and relationships enhances the reader's understanding of her challenges and growth, making her personal journey central to the novel's exploration of feminist and psychological themes.

4.6 LET US SUM UP

Shashi Deshpande's *That Long Silence* intricately weaves together feminism, character development, narrative structure, and literary techniques to explore women's lives in a patriarchal society. Feminist themes are central, as the novel critiques traditional roles and examines Jaya's journey towards self-assertion and autonomy. Through characters like Jaya, Mohan, and Mukta, Deshpande highlights gender dynamics and societal expectations. The non-linear and cyclical structure reflects Jaya's fragmented experiences and evolving self-awareness, while symbolism and metaphor—such as the motif of silence—enhance the novel's thematic depth. Overall, the novel offers a profound exploration of identity, societal constraints, and personal growth, making it a significant work in Indian literature.

4.7 QUESTIONS

1. How does *That Long Silence* address the theme of women's empowerment?
2. Analyse the transformation in Jaya's character from a compliant wife to a woman seeking self-expression and fulfilment.
3. How does the non-linear narrative structure of *That Long Silence* contribute to the novel's themes?
4. How does the use of flashbacks and stream-of-consciousness techniques enhance the reader's understanding of Jaya's character?

4.8 SUGGESTED READING

- Bande, Usha. *The Novels of Shashi Deshpande*. Prestige Books, 2002.
- Bhalla, Amrita. *Shashi Deshpande: A Critical Elucidation*. K.K. Publications, 2012.
- Choudhary, Bidulata. *Women and Society in the Novels of Shashi Deshpande*. Creative Books, 1995.
- Deshpande, Shashi. *Writing from the Margin and Other Essays*. Penguin Books India, 2003.
- Pathak, R.S., editor. *The Fiction of Shashi Deshpande*. Creative Books, 1998.
- Sinha, Sumita. *Shashi Deshpande: A Feminist Study of Her Fiction*. Atlantic Publishers & Distributors, 2006.
- Sharma, Siddhartha. *Shashi Deshpande's Fiction: A Critical Study*. Atlantic Publishers & Distributors, 2005.

INTRODUCTION TO BLOCK II

Dear learners! This block aims to make you aware of an imminent novelist of English literature George Orwell. This block is divided into three units from 5th to 7th. The fifth unit focuses on the introduction of the novelist George Orwell. In this unit, we will learn about Orwell and his major contribution to English novels. The sixth unit aims to discuss Orwell's major allegorical novel *Animal Farm* and its title, theme, and plot. The unit also deals with a detailed summary of it. *Animal Farm* (1945) is a beast fable in the form of a satirical allegorical novella by George Orwell. It tells the story of a group of anthropomorphic farm animals, who rebel against their human farmer, hoping to create a society where the animals can be equal, free, and happy. The seventh and last unit of the block focuses on symbolism, characters, structure, and technique of the novel *Animal Farm*. After studying this block, you will be able to understand the philosophical and realist way of thinking and develop the conceptual analytical power to read and enjoy the soul of English philosophical novels.

UNIT 5 : INTRODUCTION TO GEORGE ORWELL

Structure

- 5.0 Introduction
- 5.1 Objectives
- 5.2 Life and Works of George Orwell
- 5.3 George Orwell as a Novelist
- 5.4 George Orwell as an Ironist
- 5.5 Let's Sum Up
- 5.6 Questions
- 5.7 Further Readings

5.0 INTRODUCTION

This important unit will introduce you to a well-known novelist George Orwell. He is famous for the allegorical novella *Animal Farm* (1945) and the dystopian novel *Nineteen Eighty Four* (1949) and earned a unique place in English literature. His art of writing with precision, realism, and wit of prose style express her skill and capacity. The unit is a detailed Introduction to George Orwell the pen name of English novelist Eric Arthur Blair.

5.1 OBJECTIVES

George Orwell was an English novelist, poet, essayist, journalist, and critic. His work is characterized by lucid prose, social criticism opposition to totalitarianism, and support of democratic socialism. Orwell produced literary criticism, poetry, and fiction. After reading this unit, you will be able to

- know the skill and art of George Orwell as a novelist.
 - understand the life and works of George Orwell.
 - make a comprehensive evaluation of the English novel.
- develop a capacity to read or to reread the novel

5.2 LIFE AND WORKS OF GEORGE ORWELL

5.2.1 Life

George Orwell was born on June 25, 1903, in Motihari, India (at that time part of the British Empire). He was an English novelist, essayist, journalist, and critic. He was born to a British colonial civil servant father and a French mother and his real name was Eric Arthur Blair. He spent his early years in India and was sent to England for his education. He attended Eton College, where he faced financial constraints but excelled academically. After finishing his education at Eton, he didn't pursue university due to financial reasons. In the 1920s, Orwell joined the Indian Imperial Police in Burma (present-day Myanmar). However, he resigned from the police force in 1927 due to his increasing dislike of imperialism. Following his resignation, he moved to England and committed himself to writing. Orwell's health began to decline in the late 1940s, and he was diagnosed with tuberculosis. Despite his illness, Orwell continued to write and work on his projects. He married Sonia Brownell in 1949, shortly before his death. He passed away on January 21, 1950, at the age of 46.

5.2.2 His literary works

His early works include "Down and Out in Paris and London" (1933) and "Burmese Days" (1934), which drew from his experiences in poverty and colonialism. His most famous works, "Animal Farm" (1945) and "Nineteen Eighty-Four" (1949), are dystopian novels that criticize totalitarian regimes. "Animal Farm" is an allegorical tale about a group of farm animals who revolt against their owner, a human farmer, while "Nineteen Eighty-Four" depicts a dystopian future where a totalitarian government, led by the figure of Big Brother, exercises total control over society. He was also a prolific essayist, known for his clear and incisive prose. His essays often dealt with political and social issues, such as "Politics and the English Language" and "Shooting an Elephant."

Throughout his life, Orwell was deeply committed to democratic socialism and was critical of both capitalism and Soviet-style communism. He is best known for his works that explore social injustice, totalitarianism, and the abuse of power. Here's an overview of his life and major works. Orwell's works continue to be widely read and studied for their insights into politics, society, and language. Phrases and concepts from his works, such as "Big Brother," "Thoughtcrime," and "Newspeak," have entered the lexicon and are often used to describe authoritarian practices and surveillance. Orwell's commitment to truth and clarity in writing has made him an enduring figure in literature and political thought. His life and works remain influential, inspiring readers and writers to engage critically with issues of power, oppression, and language.

5.3 GEORGE ORWELL AS A NOVELIST

George Orwell, renowned for his acute social commentary and penetrating insights into the human condition, made a significant impact as a novelist. His novels often reflect his concerns about social injustice and the abuse of power. His novels exhibit several distinctive qualities that contribute to their enduring impact and relevance. His novels are renowned for their astute observations of societal and political issues. Whether exploring imperialism in "Burmese Days," the impact of capitalism in "Keep the Aspidistra Flying," or the dangers of totalitarianism in "Nineteen Eighty-Four," Orwell's works offer incisive critiques of power structures and social injustices. The chief qualities of his novels are as follows:

Clear and Accessible Prose: Orwell's writing style is characterized by its clarity, simplicity, and precision. He eschews ornate language in favor of straightforward prose, making his novels easily accessible to a wide audience. This clarity enhances the impact of his messages and allows readers to engage deeply with his ideas.

Allegorical and Symbolic Narratives: In works like "Animal Farm" and "Nineteen Eighty-Four," Orwell employs allegory and symbolism to convey complex themes and ideas. By using animals to represent different societal groups in "Animal Farm" or creating a dystopian future in "Nineteen Eighty-Four," Orwell provides readers with powerful metaphors that resonate beyond the specific contexts of his stories.

Exploration of Individual Freedom and Autonomy: Orwell's novels often center on protagonists who resist conformity and challenge oppressive systems. Characters like Winston Smith in "Nineteen Eighty-Four" and Gordon Comstock in "Keep the Aspidistra Flying" struggle against societal constraints and seek personal autonomy. Through these characters, Orwell explores the importance of individual freedom and the human spirit's capacity for resistance.

Engagement with Timeless Themes: Despite being written in specific historical contexts, Orwell's novels address themes and issues that remain relevant across time and space. Whether examining power dynamics, the nature of truth, the corruption of ideals, or the dangers of authoritarianism, Orwell's works continue to resonate with readers, offering insights into enduring

aspects of the human condition.

Provocative and Thought-Provoking Content: Orwell's novels provoke critical reflection and debate, challenging readers to confront uncomfortable truths about society and human nature. By presenting dystopian scenarios and stark portrayals of social injustice, Orwell compels readers to consider the consequences of unchecked power and the importance of vigilance in defending democratic values.

George Orwell enriched the treasury of English novels with his skill and experience. His major novels are:

"Burmese Days" (1934): Orwell's first novel draws heavily from his experiences as a colonial police officer in Burma. It depicts the tensions and prejudices between the British colonizers and the Burmese natives. The novel explores themes of racism, imperialism, and the moral dilemma faced by individuals caught in oppressive systems.

"A Clergyman's Daughter" (1935): This novel tells the story of Dorothy Hare, the daughter of a clergyman, who suffers from amnesia and wanders through England in search of her identity. Through Dorothy's experiences, Orwell explores the harsh realities faced by the working class in Depression-era (1930s) England. The novel delves into themes of identity, social class, and the struggle for personal autonomy.

"Keep the Aspidistra Flying" (1936) : Orwell's protagonist, Gordon Comstock, is a struggling poet who rejects conventional success and seeks to live a life of artistic integrity. The novel explores the tension between creative ambition and economic necessity. Orwell critiques the materialism and commercialism of society while examining the challenges faced by artists and intellectuals.

"Coming Up for Air" (1939): Set in pre-World War II England, this novel follows George Bowling, a middle-aged insurance salesman who reminisces about his childhood and youth. Bowling embarks on a journey to his hometown, hoping to recapture a sense of nostalgia and authenticity amidst the impending chaos of war. The novel explores themes of memory, nostalgia, and the impact of social change on individual lives.

"Animal Farm" (1945): One of Orwell's most famous works, "Animal Farm" is an allegorical novella that satirizes the Russian Revolution and Stalinist totalitarianism. The story revolves around a group of farm animals who rebel against their owner- human farmer, Mr. Jones, and establish their own egalitarian society. However, the pigs, who seize control of the farm, gradually become corrupt and oppressive, betraying the principles of the revolution. "Animal Farm" explores themes of power, corruption, propaganda, and the perversion of ideals.

"Nineteen Eighty-Four" (1949): Orwell's magnum opus, "Nineteen Eighty-Four," is a dystopian novel set in a totalitarian society ruled by the omnipresent Party and its leader, Big Brother.

The protagonist, Winston Smith, works for the Party's propaganda department but harbours rebellious thoughts against the oppressive regime. The novel explores themes of surveillance, propaganda, censorship, thought control, and the erosion of individual freedom. "Nineteen Eighty-Four" has had a profound influence on literature, popular culture, and political discourse, popularizing concepts such as "Big Brother," "thoughtcrime," and "Newspeak."

In conclusion, George Orwell demonstrated a remarkable ability to illuminate the complexities of human nature and society while offering incisive critiques of authoritarianism and injustice. His novels are characterized by their insightful social commentary, accessible prose, allegorical storytelling, exploration of individual freedom, timeless themes, and provocative content. These qualities contribute to their enduring relevance and their status as literary classics that continue to captivate and provoke readers around the world. His works continue to resonate with readers worldwide, inspiring reflection and dialogue on issues of power, freedom, and the pursuit of truth.

5.4 GEORGE ORWELL AS AN IRONIST

George Orwell can indeed be viewed as an ironist, particularly in his writing style and the themes he explores. Irony is a literary device characterized by the expression of one's meaning by using language that typically signifies the opposite, often for humorous or emphatic effect. Here's how Orwell's use of irony manifests in his works:

Satire : Orwell employs satire extensively in his novels and essays to criticize societal norms, political systems, and human behaviour. In "Animal Farm," for instance, the entire narrative is a satirical allegory of the Russian Revolution and the rise of Stalinism, where the pigs, who initially represent the oppressed, become the oppressors themselves. Similarly, in "Nineteen Eighty-Four," Orwell uses satire to expose the absurdity and dangers of totalitarianism, portraying a dystopian world where truth is manipulated and individual freedom is nonexistent.

Doublethink and Newspeak : "Nineteen Eighty-Four" introduces the concept of doublethink, the ability to hold two contradictory beliefs simultaneously. This is a form of irony, highlighting the irrationality and cognitive dissonance induced by totalitarian regimes. Newspeak, the language of the dystopian regime in "Nineteen Eighty-Four," is designed to eliminate unorthodox thoughts by limiting the range of expressible ideas. The irony lies in the fact that a language meant to restrict freedom of thought is called "Newspeak," suggesting the manipulation of truth through linguistic manipulation.

Deceptive Narratives : In many of Orwell's essays and nonfiction works, he exposes the discrepancies between reality and the narratives propagated by those in power. "Shooting an Elephant," for example, recounts Orwell's experience as a colonial police officer in Burma and the moral dilemma he faces when pressured to shoot an elephant. The narrative serves as an ironic critique of imperialism and the oppressive nature of colonial rule.

Paradoxes of Language : Orwell's essay "Politics and the English Language" is a scathing critique of political language, filled with ironic observations about the degradation of language in public discourse. He points out the use of euphemisms, clichés, and jargon to obscure meaning and manipulate perception, revealing the ironic disconnect between language and truth. In short, George Orwell's use of irony in his writing serves to illuminate the hypocrisy, absurdity, and dangers of oppressive systems and societal norms. Through satire, doublethink, deceptive narratives, and linguistic paradoxes, Orwell challenges readers to critically examine the world around them and question the veracity of prevailing ideologies.

5.5 LET US SUM UP

In this Unit we have

- Introduced you to a well-known British novelist George Orwell.

- Interpreted a remarkable genre of novel Allegory.
- Pick out the various characteristic elements present in the novel of George Orwell.
- told about the style and technique of George Orwell.

5.6 QUESTIONS

Long Answer Type Questions

1. In what ways does Orwell use allegory and symbolism in his novels, particularly in "Animal Farm" and "Nineteen Eighty-Four"?
2. How does Orwell's exploration of power dynamics and authoritarianism in his novels reflect his political beliefs and concerns?
3. Discuss Orwell's portrayal of characters and their development throughout his novels. How does he use characterizations to convey broader themes?
4. Analyze Orwell's narrative style and language choices in his novels. How do they contribute to the overall tone and message of the works?
5. How does Orwell depict societal issues such as class struggle, oppression, and inequality in his novels?
6. Explore the role of satire in Orwell's novels. How does he use satire to critique political systems and human behavior?
7. Discuss the significance of the settings and environments depicted in Orwell's novels. How do they contribute to the atmosphere and themes of the works?
8. Analyze the endings of Orwell's novels, particularly "Animal Farm" and "Nineteen Eighty-Four." What do they signify, and how do they leave an impact on the reader?
9. How have Orwell's novels been received and interpreted over time? How do they continue to resonate with readers today?

Short Answer Type Questions

1. **When was George Orwell born?**

George Orwell was born on June 25, 1903.

2. **What is George Orwell's real name?**

George Orwell's real name was Eric Arthur Blair.

3. **Where was George Orwell born?**

George Orwell was born in Motihari, Bengal Presidency, British India (present-day Bihar, India).

4. **What is George Orwell's most famous novel?**

George Orwell's most famous novel is "Nineteen Eighty-Four" (1984).

5. **What is the significance of "Animal Farm"?**

"Animal Farm" is a political allegory that satirizes the Russian Revolution and Stalinism.

6. **What was George Orwell's occupation before becoming a novelist?**

George Orwell served as a police officer in Burma (now Myanmar) and later worked as a

journalist.

7. What inspired George Orwell to write "1984"?

Orwell's experiences during World War II and the rise of totalitarian regimes influenced "1984."

8. What are some recurring themes in Orwell's work?

Themes of totalitarianism, surveillance, censorship, and the abuse of power are prevalent in Orwell's novels.

9. Did George Orwell coin the term "Big Brother"?

Yes, George Orwell coined the term "Big Brother" in his novel "1984" to represent a totalitarian ruler.

10. How did George Orwell die?

George Orwell died on January 21, 1950, from complications related to tuberculosis.

5.7 FURTHER READING

Singhal, B.L. *George Orwell's Animal Farm*. Vimal Prakashan Mandir. Agra. 2000.

The Oxford Companion to English Literature, ed Margaret Drabble. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996.

The Cambridge Companion to Jane Austen edited by Edward Copeland and Juliet McMaster, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997

These are only suggested as additional reading and are in no way compulsory.

UNIT 6 *ANIMAL FARM*: TITLE, THEME AND PLOT

- 6.0 Introduction
- 6.1 Objectives
- 6.2 Animal Farm: Brief Summary
- 6.3 Animal Farm: Title
- 6.4 Theme of the novel Animal Farm
- 6.5 Plot Construction of the Novel Animal Farm
- 6.6 Let's Sum Up
- 6.7 Questions
- 6.8 Further Readings

6.0 INTRODUCTION

This important unit will introduce you to a well-known allegorical novella *Animal Farm* (1945) that earned a unique place in English literature. The story and art of writing with precision, and realism expressed the skill and capacity of George Orwell. The unit is a detailed Introduction and description of the novel *Animal Farm*.

6.1 OBJECTIVES

Animal Farm is a beast fable in the form of a satirical allegorical novella by George Orwell. It was first published in England on 17 August 1945. It tells the story of a group of anthropomorphic farm animals who rebel against their owner-human farmer, hoping to create a society where the animals can be equal, free, and happy. Ultimately, the rebellion is betrayed and, under the dictatorship of a pig named Napoleon, the farm ends up in a state as bad as it was before. After reading this unit we shall be able to

- know the skill and art of George Orwell as a novelist.
- understand the complete story of the novel Animal Farm.
- make a comprehensive evaluation of the English novel Animal Farm.

develop a capacity to read or to reread the novel

6.2 *ANIMAL FARM*: A BRIEF SUMMARY

"Animal Farm" by George Orwell is a classic allegorical novella that uses animals on a farm to represent the events leading up to the Russian Revolution of 1917 and the Stalinist era of the Soviet Union.

The story begins with the animals of Manor Farm, led by the pigs Old Major, Snowball, and Napoleon, who revolt against their human owner, Mr. Jones, due to his mistreatment. They established their government based on the principles of Animalism, which promotes equality among all animals. They renamed the farm "Animal Farm" and created the Seven Commandments to govern their society, with the most important being "All animals are equal. Initially, the farm prospers under the leadership of the pigs, who are more intelligent than the other animals. However, as time passes, Napoleon becomes power-hungry and manipulative, gradually consolidating control over the farm. He ousts Snowball, his rival, and begins to modify the Seven Commandments to justify his actions, effectively establishing himself as a dictator. Under Napoleon's rule, the pigs live luxuriously while

the other animals work harder than ever, yet receive less food and suffer from hunger and exhaustion. The pigs also form alliances with neighboring humans, despite previously condemning human exploitation. As the pigs become indistinguishable from their former human oppressors, the other animals realize that the revolution has failed to achieve its goals of equality and freedom. The novel ends with the pigs, now walking on two legs and carrying whips, mingling with humans at a dinner party. The other animals look on in horror as they realize that they can no longer distinguish between the pigs and the humans, symbolizing the betrayal of the revolution's ideals. "Animal Farm" serves as a powerful critique of totalitarianism, particularly Stalinism, and highlights the dangers of absolute power and the corruption of revolutionary ideals.

6.3 *ANIMAL FARM*: TITLE

The title "Animal Farm" by George Orwell encapsulates the central concept and setting of the novel. The story is set on a farm where the animals, led by the pigs, overthrow their human owner in pursuit of a utopian society where all animals are equal. However, as the pigs become increasingly power-hungry and corrupt, they betray the principles of equality, ultimately mirroring the oppressive regime they initially rebelled against. The title symbolizes both the physical location of the story and the broader allegorical representation of the farm as a microcosm of society, where individuals or groups seek power and often become corrupt in the process. The title "Animal Farm" by George Orwell carries several layers of meaning that reflect the themes and message of the novel:

Literal Representation: The farm in the story is run by animals, hence the term "Animal Farm" refers to the setting of the novel.

Political Allegory: The title serves as an allegory for the Russian Revolution and the subsequent rise of Stalinism. It represents a society where the ruling class is made up of animals instead of humans, reflecting the idea of a utopian society where animals overthrow their human oppressors but eventually become oppressors themselves.

Symbol of Equality and Rebellion: The title embodies the ideals of equality and rebellion against tyranny. The animals in the farm rebelled against their human owner, Mr. Jones, seeking to establish a society where all animals will be equal.

Irony: The title is also ironic, as the animals' revolution leads to a situation where some animals are more equal than others, highlighting the corruption and hypocrisy that can emerge in any system of governance.

Overall, the title "Animal Farm" encapsulates the novel's exploration of power dynamics, corruption, and the dangers of totalitarianism.

6.4 THE THEME OF THE NOVEL *ANIMAL FARM*

The main theme of George Orwell's "Animal Farm" is the corruption of ideals and the abuse of power. The novel explores how even the most noble and egalitarian ideals can be corrupted by individuals seeking power for themselves. Through the allegorical portrayal of a farm where animals overthrow their human oppressors, Orwell critiques the Soviet Union under Joseph Stalin and by extension totalitarianism in general. The pigs, who initially champion equality and liberation, gradually become oppressive dictators, betraying the principles they once fought for. The novel highlights how power can corrupt individuals and institutions, leading to tyranny and the exploitation of the masses. "Animal Farm" by George Orwell is a political allegory that explores several thematic points, including:

Totalitarianism and Corruption: The novel critiques the rise of totalitarian regimes by depicting how power can corrupt individuals and institutions. The pigs, who initially lead the

rebellion for equality, gradually become authoritarian rulers themselves, mirroring the corruption of real-life totalitarian leaders.

Class Struggle and Social Injustice: Orwell highlights the oppression and exploitation experienced by the working class through the animals' struggle against human tyranny. However, the emergence of a new ruling class (the pigs) perpetuates the same inequalities, illustrating how revolutions can fail to achieve genuine social justice.

Propaganda and Manipulation: The pigs use propaganda and manipulation to maintain control over the other animals. Through slogans like "All animals are equal, but some animals are more equal than others," Orwell demonstrates how language can be used to deceive and control the masses.

The Failure of Utopian Ideals: The novel explores the idealistic vision of a utopian society and its inevitable collapse due to human (or animal) nature. Despite the animals' initial hope for a better future, their revolution ultimately devolves into a dystopian nightmare characterized by oppression and injustice.

Loyalty and Betrayal: Orwell examines the themes of loyalty and betrayal as the animals' allegiances shift throughout the story. Characters like Boxer, who remain loyal to the pigs despite their exploitation, symbolize the naivety and misplaced trust of the working class.

Intellectualism and Ignorance: Orwell contrasts the intellectualism of characters like Snowball with the ignorance and gullibility of the other animals. By controlling education and knowledge, the pigs maintain their power over the masses, highlighting the dangers of ignorance and blind obedience.

The Role of Fear and Violence: Fear and violence are used as tools of oppression throughout the novel, both by the humans and the pigs. The brutal suppression of dissent serves to maintain control and reinforce the hierarchy established by the ruling class.

These thematic points collectively reflect Orwell's critique of authoritarianism, inequality, and the perversion of revolutionary ideals.

6.5 PLOT CONSTRUCTION OF THE NOVEL *ANIMAL FARM*

"Animal Farm" follows the animals of Manor Farm who overthrow their human owner, Mr. Jones, and establish their government, only to see it corrupted by the pigs who become the ruling elite. It follows a straightforward plot structure that evolves through various stages:

Exposition: The novel begins on Manor Farm, where the animals are mistreated and forcibly overworked by their human owner, Mr. Jones. Old Major, an elderly pig, inspires the animals to rebel against their oppressive human masters by spreading the idea of Animalism, a philosophy that advocates for animal equality.

Inciting Incident: Old Major dies, but his ideas ignite a revolution among the animals. Led by the pigs, notably Snowball and Napoleon, they overthrow Mr. Jones and take control of the farm, renaming it Animal Farm.

Rising Action: The animals establish their own set of rules, known as the Seven Commandments, and work together to run the farm. However, the pigs, who assume leadership roles, begin to assert their dominance and gradually bend the rules to their advantage. Snowball and Napoleon emerge as rival leaders, leading to tension and conflict.

Climax: The climax occurs during the Battle of the Windmill, where Snowball is driven off the farm by Napoleon's dogs. This battle represents a turning point in the power struggle between the

two pigs and solidifies Napoleon's control over the farm.

Falling Action: With Snowball gone, Napoleon consolidates his power and becomes increasingly authoritarian. He manipulates the other animals through propaganda and fear tactics, gradually turning Animal Farm into a dictatorship where the pigs enjoy privileges while the other animals suffer.

Resolution: By the end of the novel, the pigs have become indistinguishable from the humans they once rebelled against. The Seven Commandments are altered to justify their exploitation of the other animals, and the initial ideals of the revolution are forgotten. The novel closes with the animals looking through the farmhouse window, unable to distinguish the pigs from the humans they once despised, symbolizing the tragic betrayal of the revolution's Ideals.

In conclusion, Orwell uses the animals and their actions to allegorically represent events and figures from the Russian Revolution of 1917 and subsequent Stalinist era, offering a commentary on the corrupting nature of power and the perversion of revolutionary ideals. Hence it is not only a satire on communism, but totalitarianism anywhere.

6.6 LET'S SUM UP

In this Unit we have

- Introduced you to a well-known British novel *Animal Farm*.
- Interpreted a remarkable genre of novel Allegory.
- Pick out the various characteristic elements present in the novel of George Orwell.
- Discussed the title, theme, and plot of the novel *Animal Farm*.

6.7 QUESTIONS

Long Answer Type Questions

1. How does George Orwell use the allegorical setting of a farm and its animals to explore complex themes such as power, corruption, and totalitarianism in "Animal Farm"?
2. Discuss the role of propaganda in "Animal Farm" and how it is used by the pigs to manipulate and control the other animals on the farm?
3. Analyze the character of Napoleon in "Animal Farm" and how his actions and decisions contribute to the rise of a totalitarian regime on the farm. How does Orwell portray Napoleon as a symbol of dictatorial leadership and the corruption of power?
4. Explore the theme of betrayal in "Animal Farm," focusing on the various instances of betrayal among the animals and how they ultimately serve the interests of the ruling elite. How does Orwell illustrate the destructive consequences of betrayal in a society governed by fear and mistrust?
5. Discuss the significance of the Seven Commandments in "Animal Farm" and how they evolve throughout the novel. What do the changes to the Commandments reveal about the gradual erosion of principles and values in a society ruled by tyranny?
6. Analyze the role of the working class represented by the other animals in "Animal Farm" and how they are exploited and oppressed by the ruling class of pigs. How does Orwell depict the struggle for equality and justice in the face of oppression and exploitation?
7. Explore the theme of language and rhetoric in "Animal Farm" and how it is used as a tool for

manipulation and control by the pigs. How does Orwell illustrate the power of language to shape reality and influence perception?

8. Discuss the significance of the windmill in "Animal Farm" as a symbol of progress and innovation. How do the pigs exploit the idea of the windmill for their own gain, and what does its destruction signify in terms of the disillusionment of the other animals?
9. Analyze the character of Boxer in "Animal Farm" and his unwavering loyalty to the principles of Animalism. How does Orwell use Boxer to highlight the vulnerability of the working class to exploitation and manipulation by those in power?
10. Explore the theme of revolution in "Animal Farm" and how it ultimately leads to the establishment of a new oppressive regime. How does Orwell critique the failure of revolutions to bring about lasting change and the perpetuation of cycles of oppression and tyranny?

Short Answer Type Questions

1. What is the main theme of "Animal Farm"?

The main theme is the corruption of power and the dangers of totalitarianism.

2. How does the title "Animal Farm" reflect the theme?

The title suggests a simple setting, but the farm becomes a microcosm of society, illustrating the complexities of power dynamics and human nature.

3. What is the plot of "Animal Farm"?

"Animal Farm" follows the animals of Manor Farm who overthrow their human owner, Mr. Jones, and establish their own government, only to see it corrupted by the pigs who become the ruling elite.

4. How do the pigs gain control on Animal Farm?

The pigs manipulate the other animals by exploiting their ignorance and by using propaganda, eventually establishing themselves as the ruling class.

5. What is the significance of the commandments in "Animal Farm"?

The commandments represent the ideals of Animalism, but they are gradually altered by the pigs to justify their actions and consolidate power for their selfish motives.

6. How does Orwell use satire in "Animal Farm"?

Orwell uses satire to critique the Soviet Union and totalitarian regimes, depicting the flaws and hypocrisy of those in power.

7. What role does Boxer play in "Animal Farm"?

Boxer symbolizes the loyal, hardworking proletariat who are exploited by the ruling class and ultimately betrayed.

8. How does "Animal Farm" illustrate the failure of revolutions?

The revolution on Animal Farm fails because the pigs become corrupt and oppressive, mirroring historical revolutions where power becomes concentrated in the hands of a few.

9. What message does Orwell convey through the ending of "Animal Farm"?

The ending demonstrates the cyclical nature of power and oppression, suggesting that revolutions can be co-opted by those seeking power, leading to tyranny once again.

10. How does "Animal Farm" remain relevant today?

"Animal Farm" continues to resonate as a warning against authoritarianism and the dangers of unchecked power, making it relevant in various political contexts.

6.8 Further Readings

Singhal, B.L. *George Orwell's Animal Farm*. Vimal Prakashan Mandir. Agra. 2000.

The Oxford Companion to English Literature, ed Margaret Drabble. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996.

The Cambridge Companion to Jane Austen edited by Edward Copeland and Juliet McMaster, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997

These are only suggested as additional reading and are in no way compulsory.

UNIT 7 *ANIMAL FARM*: SYMBOLISM, CHARACTERS, STRUCTURE AND TECHNIQUE

7.0 Introduction

7.1 Objectives

7.2 *Animal Farm*: Symbolism

7.3 *Animal Farm*: Important characters

7.4 *Animal Farm*: Structure and Technique

7.5 Let's Sum Up

7.6 Questions

7.7 Further Readings

7.0 INTRODUCTION

This important unit will introduce you about a well known allegorical novella *Animal Farm* (1945) that earned a unique place in English literature. The story and art of writing with precision, and realism expressed the skill and capacity of George Orwell. The unit is a detailed description of symbolism, characterization, structure and technique.

7.1 OBJECTIVES

Animal Farm is a beast fable in the form of a satirical allegorical and symbolical novella. It was first published in England on 17 August 1945. It is a story of some animals who rebel against their owner human farmer, hoping to create a society where the animals can be equal, free, and happy. Ultimately, the rebellion is betrayed and, under the dictatorship of a pig named Napoleon, the farm ends up in a state as bad as it was before. After reading this unit you shall be able to:

- know the skill and art of George Orwell as a novelist.
- understand the complete story and character of the novel *Animal Farm*.
- make a comprehensive evaluation of the English novel *Animal Farm*.

develop a capacity to read or to reread the novel.

7.2 *ANIMAL FARM*: SYMBOLISM

“*Animal Farm*” by George Orwell is rich with symbolism, reflecting the complexities of politics, power, and human nature. Here are some key symbols in the novel:

The Farm: The farm itself symbolizes a microcosm of society, particularly representing the Soviet Union under Stalin's regime. It's a closed system where the animals, representing different social classes and ideologies, interact and struggle for power.

Old Major's Dream: Old Major's dream of a society where animals live without human oppression symbolizes the ideals of socialism and equality. However, it also serves as a catalyst for the rebellion, showing how idealistic visions can be manipulated for personal gain.

The Seven Commandments: Initially, the Seven Commandments represent the principles of Animalism, akin to the principles of communism. Over time, they are altered and manipulated by the pigs to justify their own power and privilege, symbolizing the corruption of revolutionary ideals.

The Pigs: The pigs, led by Napoleon and Snowball, symbolize the ruling class. Initially, they

are portrayed as the intellectual leaders of the revolution, but they gradually become corrupt and oppressive, representing the betrayal of the working class by those in power.

Boxer: Boxer, the loyal and hardworking horse, symbolizes the working class proletariat. His dedication to the cause, despite his exploitation by the pigs, reflects the resilience and naivety of the working class under oppressive regimes.

The Dogs: The dogs, raised by Napoleon to be his enforcers, symbolize the secret police or military force used by totalitarian regimes to maintain control through fear and violence.

The Windmill: The windmill symbolizes industrialization and progress. Initially built to improve the lives of the animals, it becomes a symbol of false promises and propaganda, as the pigs exploit the animals' labor for their own benefit.

The Farmhouse: The farmhouse, which the pigs eventually move into and adopt human vices, symbolizes the corrupting influence of power. It represents the pigs' transformation from revolutionary leaders to tyrants indistinguishable from the humans they once rebelled against.

In conclusion, "Animal Farm" is a powerful allegory that uses symbolism to explore the dynamics of power, corruption, and the failure of revolutionary ideals.

7.3 *ANIMAL FARM: IMPORTANT CHARACTERS*

There are several important characters in George Orwell's "Animal Farm". These are:

1. Old Major
2. Napoleon
3. Snowball
4. Boxer
5. Clover
6. Benjamin
7. Moses, The Raven
8. Mollie
9. Squealer

Old Major : In Orwell's "Animal Farm", Old Major is a prize pig of Mr. Jones, who gives a speech to the animals against the exploitation of animals by men. He represents Karl Marx and his teachings are used by other pigs to stoke the fire of revolution, which is later manipulated and the fate of animals become worse.

Napoleon : In George Orwell's "Animal Farm," Napoleon is a pivotal character, representing the rise of totalitarianism and corruption. He is a boar large and imposing, with a reputation for intelligence and cunning. His appearance is commanding, and he often carries himself with an air of authority, using his physical presence to intimidate others. Some chief characteristics of his character are given below:

His Personality: He is initially portrayed as a skilled and persuasive orator. He is ambitious, manipulative, and power-hungry. He quickly rises to a position of leadership within the animal community, using his intellect and charisma to sway others to his side. However, beneath his charismatic facade lies a ruthless and calculating nature, willing to do whatever it takes to maintain his grip on power.

His Leadership Style: Napoleon's leadership style is autocratic and authoritarian. He rules by fear and intimidation, employing a group of loyal followers, including his propaganda-spouting pig, Squealer, and his enforcer, the vicious dog pack. He consolidates power by manipulating the other animals' beliefs and controlling access to information. He represents dictators like Josef Stalin and others.

His Manipulative Tactics: Napoleon is adept at manipulating language and using propaganda to maintain control. He twists the principles of Animalism to suit his own agenda, gradually altering the commandments of Animal Farm to justify his actions. He also uses fear-mongering and scapegoating to suppress dissent and maintain obedience among the animals.

His Corruption and Betrayal: As Napoleon consolidates power, he becomes increasingly corrupt, betraying the principles of the revolution for his own gain. He forms alliances with humans, despite initially condemning them, and engages in trade and business dealings that benefit him and his inner circle at the expense of the other animals. His ultimate goal is to maintain his grip on power, and he is willing to sacrifice the well-being of the other animals to achieve this end. He hoards resources for himself and his inner circle, living a life of luxury while the other animals toil and suffer.

His character serves as a cautionary tale about the dangers of unchecked power and the corrupting influence of authoritarianism.

Snowball : Snowball is one of the key characters in George Orwell's "Animal Farm." He represents Leon Trotsky, a key figure in the Russian Revolution and an early leader of the Soviet Union who was eventually exiled and eliminated by Joseph Stalin. Similarly, Snowball is a pig who plays a significant role in the initial rebellion against Mr. Jones and the establishment of Animal Farm, but he is later ousted by Napoleon, who represents Stalin. Some chief characteristics of his character are given below:

Idealistic Revolutionary: Snowball is portrayed as an idealistic and passionate pig who believes in the principles of Animalism, the ideology developed by Old Major. He is instrumental in the planning and execution of the rebellion against Mr. Jones, envisioning a society where all animals are equal and free from human oppression.

Intellectual and Visionary: Snowball is depicted as an intellectual and visionary leader who puts forward various ideas for the improvement of Animal Farm. He is particularly known for his plans to build a windmill, which he believes will make the farm more self-sufficient and improve the lives of all the animals.

Skilled Orator and Organizer: Snowball possesses strong oratory skills and can rally the other animals with his speeches, inspiring them to work towards the common good of the farm. He is also an efficient organizer, leading the animals in battles against the humans and implementing various initiatives to improve the farm's productivity.

Scapegoat and Betrayed Comrade: Despite his contributions to the farm, Snowball becomes a scapegoat for all the problems that arise after the rebellion. Napoleon, jealous of Snowball's popularity and fearful of his ideas, orchestrates a campaign to discredit him, eventually driving him off the farm with the help of his loyal followers.

Symbol of Exile and Opposition: After being chased off the farm by Napoleon's dogs, Snowball represents the opposition to the corrupt leadership of Napoleon. He becomes a symbol of hope for those who believe in the original ideals of the revolution and continue to resist Napoleon's tyranny.

In conclusion, Snowball is a complex character who embodies the spirit of revolution,

intellectualism, and idealism, but who ultimately fall victim to the ruthless power struggles and betrayal that characterize politics in *Animal Farm*. He stands for all the dissenters who dare to speak against a dictatorial regime.

Boxer : Boxer is a central character in George Orwell's novel "*Animal Farm*." He represents the working class and embodies the virtues of hard work, loyalty, and dedication. Some chief characteristics of his character are given below:

Physical Description: Boxer is a large, strong, and powerful horse with a white stripe down his nose. Despite his imposing size, he is gentle and kind-hearted. He is known for his incredible work ethic. He tirelessly devotes himself to the cause of the farm and often repeats his motto, "I will work harder!"

Loyal: Boxer is intensely loyal to the principles of Animalism and to the leadership of Napoleon. He unquestioningly believes in their cause and follows their commands without hesitation. He is not particularly intelligent and tends to trust others without question. He often struggles to understand the complexities of the political manipulations occurring on the farm. He always puts the needs of the farm and his fellow animals above his own. He is willing to work himself to exhaustion for the betterment of the community. Despite his strength, Boxer is compassionate towards weaker animals and often expresses concern for their well-being.

Role in the Novel: Boxer serves as a symbol of the exploited working class, representing the proletariat in Orwell's allegory of the Russian Revolution. His unwavering dedication and eventual betrayal highlight the theme of manipulation and corruption of power. His tragic fate serves as a stark warning about the dangers of blind loyalty and the abuse of power. The scene of Boxer's death, sent to the knacker's instead of the promised retirement, serves as a poignant commentary on the betrayal of the working class by those in power.

Boxer is a complex character whose unwavering loyalty and tragic fate contribute significantly to the themes and messages of Orwell's novel.

7.4 *ANIMAL FARM*: STRUCTURE AND TECHNIQUE

"*Animal Farm*" by George Orwell is a brilliant allegorical novel that uses animals on a farm to represent the overthrow of the last Russian Tsar, Nicholas II, and the Communist Revolution of Russia before World War II. Orwell uses several literary techniques and structural elements to convey his themes effectively:

Allegory: Orwell employs allegory to represent historical events and figures. For instance, the pigs Napoleon and Snowball represent Joseph Stalin and Leon Trotsky respectively, while Old Major symbolizes Karl Marx. This allegorical approach allows Orwell to criticize political ideologies and systems indirectly. Through satire, Orwell critiques the political corruption and manipulation present in both capitalist and communist systems. The characters and events in the novel are exaggerated and distorted to highlight the absurdity and hypocrisy of political power struggles.

Characterization: The characters in "*Animal Farm*" are anthropomorphic animals, each representing a specific human trait or historical figure. By personifying these traits and figures, Orwell creates memorable characters that serve as vehicles for his ideas and criticisms.

Language and Propaganda: Orwell explores the power of language and propaganda in shaping public opinion and maintaining control. The pigs, particularly Squealer, manipulate language to justify their actions and maintain their authority over the other animals. Orwell's use of slogans like "All animals are equal, but some animals are more equal than others" highlights the

height and absurdity of propaganda in totalitarian regimes.

Irony: Throughout the novel, Orwell employs irony to underscore the disparity between the principles of equality and justice espoused by the animals and the reality of their situation under the pigs' rule. The gradual transformation of the farm from an idealistic society to a totalitarian regime is rife with irony, emphasizing the corruption inherent in unchecked power.

Structure: "Animal Farm" is structured as a fable, with a simple and straightforward narrative that belies its complex themes. The novel is divided into chapters that chronicle the animals' revolution, the establishment of the new regime, and its subsequent corruption. The clear and concise structure allows Orwell to effectively convey his message without unnecessary embellishment.

Symbolism: Orwell uses various symbols throughout the novel to represent broader concepts and themes. For example, the windmill symbolizes technological progress and the pigs' manipulation of ideology, while the farmhouse represents the elitism and privilege of the ruling class, who subvert the ideals and selfishly roll in luxury at the cost of the masses.

In conclusion, Orwell's adept use of allegory, satire, characterization, language, irony, structure, and symbolism in "Animal Farm" allows him to explore complex political themes and criticisms in a compelling and accessible manner.

7.5 LET'S SUM UP

In this Unit we have

- Introduced you to a well known British novel *Animal Farm*.
- Interpreted a remarkable genre of novel, Allegory.
- Picked out the various characteristic elements present in novel of George Orwell.
- Discussed the title, theme, and plot of the novel *Animal Farm*.

7.6 QUESTIONS

Long Answer Type Question

1. Explore the significance of the pigs Napoleon and Snowball as symbols of Stalin and Trotsky, respectively, and how their rivalry reflects the power struggles within the early Soviet government.
2. Analyze the role of Boxer the horse as a symbol of the proletariat and the working class, and examine how his ultimate fate represents the exploitation and betrayal of the common people by totalitarian regimes.
3. Discuss the symbolism of the windmill as a representation of industrialization and progress, and analyze how its construction and destruction reflect the failures and betrayals of the revolution's original ideals.
4. How does Orwell use the character of Moses the raven as a symbol of organized religion and its role in pacifying and controlling the masses, and what commentary does this offer on the relationship between religion and political power?
5. Analyze the symbolism of the farmhouse and its transformation into a symbol of elite privilege and corruption under the pigs' rule, and examine how this reflects the betrayal of the revolution's egalitarian ideals.

6. Discuss the role of irony in Orwell's narrative technique in "Animal Farm," particularly in how it underscores the failures of the characters and the system they create.
7. Analyze the use of anthropomorphism in "Animal Farm" and how it contributes to the novel's overall themes and message.
8. How does Orwell employ symbolism in "Animal Farm," particularly in the characters, events, and setting, to convey deeper meanings about power, corruption, and revolution?
9. Analyze the structure of "Animal Farm," including its division into chapters and the pacing of events, and how these elements contribute to the novel's overall impact.

Short Answer Type Question

1. What is the narrative structure of "Animal Farm"?

"Animal Farm" follows a linear narrative structure, chronicling the events on the farm from the rebellion against Mr. Jones to the rise of Napoleon's tyranny.

2. How does Orwell use allegory in "Animal Farm"?

Orwell uses allegory to represent the events of the Russian Revolution and Stalinist era, with characters symbolizing real historical figures and events.

3. What role does irony play in "Animal Farm"?

Irony is pervasive in "Animal Farm," especially in the discrepancies between the animals' ideals of equality and the reality of their oppressive society under Napoleon's rule.

4. How does Orwell use language and rhetoric in "Animal Farm"?

Orwell employs simple, straightforward language to convey complex political ideas, and he uses rhetoric to manipulate the animals' beliefs and control the narrative.

5. What is the significance of the Seven Commandments in "Animal Farm"?

The Seven Commandments represent the ideals of Animalism but are gradually corrupted by the pigs to justify their own power and privilege.

6. Discuss the use of symbolism in "Animal Farm."

Various symbols are used throughout the novel, such as the farm itself symbolizing the Soviet Union, the pigs representing the Communist Party leadership, and the windmill symbolizing the false promises of progress.

7. How does Orwell build tension and suspense in "Animal Farm"?

Orwell builds tension through the animals' increasing awareness of their oppression, the pigs' manipulation of the truth, and the threat of violence lurking beneath the surface.

8. Explain the significance of the ending of "Animal Farm."

The ending, where the pigs become indistinguishable from the humans they once rebelled against, highlights the cyclical nature of tyranny and the failure of revolutions to achieve lasting change.

9. Discuss the role of propaganda in "Animal Farm."

Propaganda is used by the pigs to control the narrative and manipulate the other animals, demonstrating how those in power use language to maintain their authority.

10. How does Orwell use satire in "Animal Farm"?

Orwell employs satire to critique totalitarianism, hypocrisy, and the corruption of power, using the absurdity of animals running a farm to illuminate human folly and injustice.

11. What does Old Major represent?

Old Major symbolizes Karl Marx and Vladimir Lenin, who inspired the Russian Revolution.

12. Who does Napoleon represent?

Napoleon symbolizes Joseph Stalin, the leader of the Soviet Union.

13. What does Snowball represent?

Snowball symbolizes Leon Trotsky, a key figure in the Russian Revolution who was

eventually exiled.

14. What does the farmhouse symbolize?

The farmhouse represents the privilege and luxury of the ruling class.

15. What does the windmill symbolize?

The windmill symbolizes industrialization and technological progress.

16. What do the pigs represent?

The pigs represent the intelligentsia and the ruling elite.

17. What does Boxer represent?

Boxer symbolizes the working class, particularly the loyal, hardworking supporters of the revolution.

18. What do the dogs represent?

The dogs symbolize the secret police and the use of force to maintain control.

19. What does Moses the Raven represent?

Moses represents organized religion, specifically the Russian Orthodox Church, which the Soviet government initially opposed but later tolerated.

20. What does Mollie represent?

Mollie symbolizes the bourgeoisie or the upper class who were reluctant to give up their privileges.

21. What does the Battle of the Windmill represent?

The Battle of the Windmill represents the Battle of Stalingrad during World War II.

22. What does the Seven Commandments represent?

The Seven Commandments symbolize the principles of Animalism, which are gradually corrupted by the ruling pigs to justify their actions.

23. What does the destruction of the windmill represent?

The destruction of the windmill symbolizes the failure of the pigs' leadership and the betrayal of the revolution's ideals.

24. What does Animal Farm symbolize in the broader sense?

Animal Farm symbolizes the Russian Revolution and the subsequent rise of Stalinism, but it also serves as a critique of totalitarianism and the corruption of power in any society.

25. What does the ending of "Animal Farm" suggest?

The ending suggests that the cycle of oppression and exploitation continues, regardless of the initial intentions of the revolutionaries.

7.7 FURTHER READINGS

- Singhal, B.L. *George Orwell's Animal Farm*. Vimal Prakashan Mandir. Agra. 2000.
- The Oxford Companion to English Literature, ed Margaret Drabble. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996),
- The Cambridge Companion to Jane Austen edited by Edward Copeland and Juliet McMaster, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997
- These are only suggested as additional reading and are in no way compulsory

Introduction to Block III

This block deals with William Shakespeare's *The Merchant of Venice*. William Shakespeare was a prominent dramatist during the Elizabethan Period, which spanned from 1558 to 1603. Shakespeare produced most of his known works between 1589 and 1613. His 37 plays were primarily comedies and histories and are regarded as some of the best work produced in these genres. He wrote 17 comedies which include *The Merchant of Venice* and *Much ado About Nothing*. Among 10 history plays are *Henry V* and *Richard III*. *The Merchant of Venice* (1596-1598) has been described as a great commentary on the nature of racial and religious interactions. In this play, Shakespeare has given the anti-Jewish climate in Elizabethan England and Shakespeare's portrayal of Shylock as a negative stereotype, it would be reasonable to assume Shakespeare was an Anti-Semite. However, the rest of the details of the play do not support this. It has been suggested that the real evil is the corrupt value system of the principal Christian characters. Antonio, the merchant of the title, is the worst bigot, Portia is also a racist, but Jews were not her only victims.

This block contains 5 units on *The Merchant of Venice*.

In **Unit 8** we discuss brief Introduction to British Drama. Drama was introduced in England from Europe by the Romans. The origin of the drama is deep-rooted in the religious predispositions of mankind. This 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 ceremonies of people. It was the religious elements that resulted in the development of drama. **Unit 9** deals with the background of the play *The Merchant of Venice* and analyses Act I and Act II. **Unit 10** analyses Act III, IV and V. In **Unit 11** we discuss the topics like major characters, themes, dramatic devices, symbols and setting of the play? In **Unit 12**, we discuss the important passages for annotations

UNIT 8 BRIEF INTRODUCTION TO BRITISH DRAMA

- 8.0 Introduction
- 8.1 Objectives
- 8.2 Definition of Drama
- 8.3 Origin and Development of English Drama
- 8.4 Medieval Drama
 - 8.4.1 Mystery and Miracle Plays
 - 8.4.2 Morality Plays
 - 8.4.3 Interlude
- 8.5 The Elizabethan Drama
- 8.6 The Jacobean Drama
- 8.7 The Restoration Drama
 - 8.7.1 Heroic Tragedy (Heroic Drama)
 - 8.7.2 Comedy
- 8.8 Drama in Victorian Era
- 8.9 Modern British Drama
- 8.10 Post Modern British Drama
- 8.11 Let us sum up
- 8.12 Questions
- 8.13 Further Readings

8.0 INTRODUCTION

This unit will introduce you to the origin and development of English drama. The Romans introduced drama to Britain from Europe, and auditoriums were constructed across the country for this purpose.

8.1 OBJECTIVES

After going through the history of British drama, learners will be able

- To have an overview of the growth and development of English Drama
- To identify the major themes and concerns of literature
- To discuss different forms of drama

8.2 DEFINITION OF DRAMA

Originally, the term drama came from the Greek word meaning “*action*” (Classical Greek: δράμα, *drama*) or “*to act*” or “*to do*”. William J. Long argues, “*drama is an old story told in the eye, a story put into action by living performers*”. Thus, drama is the form of composition, designed for performance in the theatre, in which the actors take role characters, perform certain actions, and utter certain dialogues (Abrams and Harpham, 2015:95).

8.3 ORIGIN AND DEVELOPMENT OF ENGLISH DRAMA

The origin of the drama is deep-rooted in the religious predispositions of humanity. The ancient Greek and Roman dramas were mostly concerned with the religious ceremonials of people. The religious elements resulted in the development of drama. As most of the Bible was written in Hebrew and Latin, common people could not understand its meaning. That is why the clergy tried to find out some new teaching methods and expose the teachings of the 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.

8.4 MEDIEVAL DRAMA

Medieval theatre refers to the theatre of Europe between the fall of the Western Roman Empire and the beginning of the Renaissance. At the beginning of the Middle Ages, the Roman Catholic Church banned theatrical performances, mostly as an attempt to curb the excesses of the Roman theatre.

In the tenth century, the liturgical drama was born in the *Quem quaeritis*. This Latin kernel is based on the story from the New Testament in which Mary Magdalene and her companions discover Christ's empty tomb, and it was performed in the church or cathedral at Easter time. Eventually, the liturgical drama would encompass many stories from many parts of the Bible and be performed at the diverse times of the year, according to local custom.

By about 1250, however, the plays would move outdoors into the churchyard and into open fields, town squares, or the city streets. The plays were also presented in the local vernacular languages, instead of in Latin, as was the mass. This allowed the message of the Bible to be more accessible to the illiterate audience. These new plays in the vernacular based on Bible stories are called mystery plays.

8.4.1 MYSTERY AND MIRACLE PLAYS

In England, the term Miracle and mystery plays is quite often used interchangeably and used indiscriminately for any kind of religious play, but strictly speaking, the term Mystery is applied to the stories, taken from the Scripture narrative, while Miracles are plays dealing with incidents in the lives of Saints and Martyrs. These plays were explicitly designed to teach a moral and improve the behavior of their audience.

Medieval mystery plays focused on the representation of Bible stories in churches as tableaux with accompanying antiphonal songs. They developed from the 10th to the 16th century, reaching the height of their popularity in the 15th century.

8.4.2 MORALITY PLAYS

The Mystery and Miracle Play gave rise to Morality and Interlude. The morality play is a genre of Medieval and early Tudor theatrical entertainment. In their own time, these plays were known as "interludes", a broader term given to dramas with or without a moral theme. Morality plays are a type of allegory in which the protagonist is met by personifications of various moral attributes who tried to prompt him to choose a Godly life over one of evil.

The Moralities, like the Miracles, were adapted to the audience. Comic scenes were introduced to relieve the seriousness of these medieval "problem" plays. The Morality was frankly didactic. The characters typified certain qualities, e.g., Sin, Grace, and Repentance. A number of plays exist in which the transition stages of Morality can be plainly discerned. For examples Comedy and Morality in *Town Tiler and his Wife*, Tragedy, and Morality in *King Cambyses*, and *Apilus and Virginia*, History and Morality in *Bales's King Johan*.

8.4.3 INTERLUDE

The Interludes dealing with the Old Faith gave place to others that set forth the teaching of Reformation, e.g. *Hyche Scorne*, *Lusty Taventres*, *New Custom*, etc. Others concerned the New Learning, *Nature of the Four Elements*, *The Trial of Treasure*. The plays were more popular in Europe during the 15th and 16th centuries.

8.5 THE ELIZABETHAN DRAMA

The term “Elizabethan Drama” adequately covers only the plays written and performed publicly in England throughout the reign of Queen Elizabeth (1558–1603). Elizabethan Drama refers back to the plays produced by the University Wits between the Reformation and the closure of the theatres in 1642. It includes the plays of Robert Green, George Peele, Christopher Marlowe, and many others followed by the monumental work of William Shakespeare.

The constellation of University wits (Christopher Marlowe, John Lyly, George Peele, Robert Greene, Thomas Nashe, Thomas Lodge Thomas Kyd) made the Elizabethan drama more popular with Renaissance humanism and pride of patriotism. They were **precursors of Shakespeare**.

This group of men at Oxford and Cambridge did impact and transform popular drama in the late 16th century especially in terms of improvement in the language and structure of drama, and plays became more complex, coherent, poetic, witty, and overall well-written.

The Elizabethan era is most famous for its theatre as William Shakespeare and many others composed plays that broke free of England's past style of theatre. During the Elizabethan age, proper tragedy and comedy developed. The Renaissance gave rise to a growing interest in man as presented in classical (Greek and Latin) drama, which had examples of both comedy and tragedy. It is the period marking the transition from the medieval to the modern world. The earliest Elizabethan plays include *Gorboduc* (1561) perhaps the first proper English tragedy by Sackville and Norton and Thomas Kyd's (1558–94) revenge tragedy.

The Spanish Tragedy (1592) influenced Shakespeare's *Hamlet*. Shakespeare produced 38 plays, which include tragedies, comedies, and histories. In addition, he wrote "**problem plays**", or "**bitter comedies**", For example, *Measure for Measure*, *Troilus and Cressida*, *A Winter's Tale* and *All's Well that Ends Well*

His early classical and Italianate comedies, like *A Comedy of Errors*, containing tight double plots and precise comic sequences, give way in the mid-1590s to the romantic atmosphere of his greatest comedies, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Much Ado About Nothing*, *As You Like It*, and *Twelfth Night*. After the lyrical *Richard II*, written almost entirely in verse, Shakespeare introduced prose comedy into the histories of the late 1590s, *Henry IV, parts 1 and 2*, and *Henry V*. This period begins and ends with two tragedies: *Romeo and Juliet*, and *Julius Caesar*, based on Sir Thomas North's 1579 translation of Plutarch's *Parallel Lives* which introduced a new kind of drama. It was in his later years, that Shakespeare wrote his greatest plays: *Hamlet*, *Othello*, *King Lear*, *Macbeth*, *Antony and Cleopatra*. In his final period, Shakespeare turned to romance or tragicomedy and completed three more major plays: *Cymbeline*, *The Winter's Tale* and *The Tempest* as well as the collaboration, *Pericles, Prince of Tyre*. Shakespeare collaborated on two further surviving plays, *Henry VIII* and *The Two Noble Kinsmen*, probably with John Fletcher.

8.6 THE JACOBEAN DRAMA

Jacobean drama (the drama of the age of James I (1603-1625) was decadent as compared with the drama of Shakespeare and his contemporaries. In the Elizabethan period, the drama was

patronized by the feudal lords, but from the time of the accession of James-I, dramatists depended on the king, the queen, and the royal domination. The dramatists wholly depended on the royal favour. In this way, the theatre was cut off from common life as it was in the time of Shakespeare.

The Puritan opposition to the drama is also responsible for the decline of drama during this age. Ever since the drama became popular in England, the Puritans waged a war against it. They regarded drama and all forms of entertainment as the devil's work to be avoided by men and women, in order to maintain purity, albeit quite exaggerated. Ultimately these puritans ultimately succeeded the closure of the theatres.

The dramatists cared less for average people and women in the kitchen. They delighted the court. While Beaumont and Fletcher were writing, the theatre was gradually losing its hold on the middle and lower classes. It marked the decline of drama.

The dramatists of the Jacobean age can be divided into classes.

- The dramatists of the old school Thomas Dekker, John Webster, Francis Beaumont and John Fletcher.
- The satiric group Ben Jonson, Middleton, and Tourneur

Ben Jonson (1572/3-1637) is best known for his satirical plays, particularly *Volpone*, *The Alchemist*, and *Bartholomew Fair*. He was also often engaged to write courtly masques, ornate plays where the actors wore masks. He is a master of style and a brilliant satirist. Others who followed Jonson's style include Beaumont and Fletcher, whose comedy, *The Knight of the Burning Pestle* (c. 1607–08), satirizes the rising middle class and especially of those *nouveaux riches* (newly rich) who pretend to dictate literary taste without knowing much about literature at all.

A popular style of theatre during the Jacobean times was the revenge play, which had been popularized earlier in the Elizabethan era by Thomas Kyd (1558–94), and then subsequently developed by John Webster (1578–1632) in the 17th century. Webster's major plays, *The White Devil* (c. 1609 – 1612) and *The Duchess of Malfi* (c. 1612/13), are macabre, disturbing works. Webster has received a reputation for being the Elizabethan and Jacobean dramatist with the most unsparingly dark vision of human nature.

Other revenge tragedies include *The Changeling* written by Thomas Middleton and William Rowley, *The Atheist's Tragedy* by Cyril Tourneur, first published in 1611, Christopher Marlowe's *The Jew of Malta*, *The Revenge of Bussy D'Ambois* by George Chapman, *The Malcontent* (c. 1603) of John Marston and John Ford's *'Tis Pity She's a Whore*. Besides *Hamlet*, other plays of Shakespeare's with at least some revenge elements are *Titus Andronicus*, *Julius Caesar*, and *Macbeth*.

8.7 THE RESTORATION DRAMA

The age of the Restoration (1660-1700 A.D) is a splendid period in the records of English Drama. During the time of the Restoration, 18th-century drama was very critical. Much of the Elizabethan Play writers blended tragedy and comedy, whereas the Restoration dramatists chose to separate the two. The drama of this period can be broken into two categories, comedies, and tragedies

8.7.1 HEROIC TRAGEDY

The Restoration tragedy is classified as a heroic tragedy, which is also called “Heroic Drama.” Dryden was the main supporter of the Tragedy called “Heroic Drama”. These plays were written in the classical model of the rhymed heroic couplet and later in blank verse tragedy.

The theme of the heroic plays was based on the struggle between love and honor, the hero and heroine were cast on the grand scale and their dialogues consisted of elaborate speeches, in rhymed 10-syllabled couplets. There was a hero, a heroine, and a villain. The villain was a dominating character. From 1660 onwards, the plays were male-dominated, but in the 1670s and 1680s, the focus shifted from hero to the heroine. The heroic play flourished for some 20 years and then died a natural death, exhausted by its own excess. Dryden is the major writer of dramatic tragedy. *The Conquest of Granada* is one of the best heroic tragedies, but Dryden's most successful achievement is *All for Love*. Other heroic dramatists were Nathaniel Lee and Thomas Otway.

8.7.2 COMEDIES

This genre refers to English comedies written and performed in the Restoration Period from 1660 A.D. to 1710 A.D. It is an entertainment form, which satirizes the manners and affections of social class. Three types of comedies were popular during the Restoration. These three types are – The Comedy of Humour, Comedy of Manners, and Comedy of Intrigue.

A) The comedy of Humour

The **comedy of humour** is a genre of dramatic comedy that focuses on a character or range of characters, each of whom exhibits two or more overriding traits or 'humours' that dominate their personality, desires, and conduct. This comic technique may be found in Aristophanes, but the English playwrights Ben Jonson and George Chapman popularized the genre in the closing years of the sixteenth century. In the latter half of the seventeenth century, it was combined with the comedy of manners in Restoration comedy.

B) Comedy of Manners

The comedy of Manners was the most popular form of Restoration Drama. These plays were written to typically mock the upper class. Dryden was the first to write Comedy of Manners with his play *Wild Gallant*, which was a failure. He wrote several other comedies of manners, which were successful. *The Way of the world* by William Congreve is an example of the comedy of Manners.

Characteristics of Comedy of Manners

- This genre is characterized by realism (art), social analysis, and satire. It described the manners of the upper class during the Restoration Age.
- The introduction of the actresses for the first time on the stage lowered the morality level.
- The heroine is more important and interesting than the hero in the Comedy of Manners.
- The writers of the comedy of Manners gave much more importance to the wit and polish of their dialogues than to their plot construction.

C) Comedy of Intrigue

The third form of comedy during the Restoration is the comedy of Intrigue. The **comedy of intrigue**, is also known as the **comedy of situation**. It is a genre of comedy in which dramatic action is prioritized over the development of character. This type of comedy has a somewhat complicated plot and usually revolves around romance and adventure.

New genres of the Restoration were *heroic drama*, *pathetic drama*, and *the Restoration comedy*. Notable heroic tragedies of this period include John Dryden's *All for Love* (1677) and *Aureng-zebe* (1675), and Thomas Otway's *Venice Preserved* (1682).

In the 18th century, the highbrow and provocative Restoration comedy lost favour, to be replaced by sentimental comedy, a domestic tragedy such as George Lillo's *The London*

Merchant (1731), and an overwhelming interest in Italian opera.

8.8 DRAMA IN THE VICTORIAN ERA

A change came in the Victorian era with profusion on the London stage of farces, musical burlesques, extravaganzas, and comic operas that competed with Shakespeare productions and serious drama by the likes of James Planché and Thomas William Robertson.

In 1855, the German Reed Entertainments began a process of elevating the level of musical theatre in Britain that culminated in the famous series of comic operas of Gilbert and Sullivan and were followed by the 1890s with the first Edwardian musical comedies. W. S. Gilbert and Oscar Wilde were leading poets and dramatists of the late Victorian period.

The length of runs in the theatre changed rapidly during the Victorian period. As transportation improved, poverty in London diminished, and street lighting made for safer travel at night, the number of potential patrons for the growing number of theatres increased enormously. The plays could run longer and still draw in the audiences, leading to better profits and improved production values. The comedy *Our Boys* in 1875, *H.M.S. Pinafore* in 1878, and Alfred Collier and B. C. Stephenson's 1886 *Dorothy* were the best examples. Edwardian musical comedy held the London stage until World War I and was then supplanted by increasingly popular American musical theatre and comedies by Noël Coward, Ivor Novello and their contemporaries.

8.9 MODERN BRITISH DRAMA

The drama that had suffered a steep decline during the Victorian Age was revived with great force at the beginning of the 20th century and the course of six decades has witnessed many trends and currents in the 20th-century drama. The drama of the Modernist Movement in England was much less innovative in technique than it was in poetry and novel.

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

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

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

Modern plays thrived as a self-conscious break from conventional artistic forms, stepping on naturalistic and realistic principles in the late 19th-early 20th century in Europe. Modern dramatic themes were derived from and reflected soaring technological progress, escalating urban life, changes among social classes, and the leap from agrarian to an industrial economy. Henrik Ibsen (1828-1906) — the father of modern realism, George Bernard Shaw (1856-1950) — a brilliant satirist of social problems, and Eugene O'Neill (1888-1953) — revolutionary in style, came up with social and psychological issues rather than just happenings. Their subject matter and forms were confronted rather than coaxed.

- **Irish Movement**

Irish drama of the early twentieth century was of great contribution to modern British drama. The history of **Irish theatre** begins with the rise of the English administration in Dublin at the start of the 17th century. This small country was to make a disproportionate contribution to drama in English. The Irish dramatists who brought about the Celtic Revival in the literature introduced a new trend in the Modern English Drama. In the hands of Irish dramatists like W.B. Yeats, J.M. Synge, T.C. Murrey etc., Drama ceased to be realistic in character and became an expression of the hopes and aspirations of the Irish people from remote ways to their own times.

Irish drama of the early twentieth century was of great contribution to modern British drama. The theatre was the centre of the Irish Dramatic Movement founded by W.B. Yeats and Lady Gregory in 1899. This theatre enabled playwrights like W.B. Yeats, J.M. Synge, Edward Martine, and later on Sean O'Casey to present marvelous drama

W.B. Yeats (1865-1939) is regarded as one of the great modern Irish dramatists. He is also one of the most subjective writers in modern British drama. If Shaw's drama is described as the drama of ideas, and Oscar Wilde's as the drama of wit; Yeats drama is considered as the drama of images. Throughout his dramatic career Yeats wrote nearly thirty plays.

John Millington Synge (1871 - 1909) is one of the founders of the Irish Dramatic Movement. Though his literary career was very brief; yet he paved the way for the Irish dramatists to constitute a remarkable Irish drama within the general British drama. Most of his plays were written at the time of the Irish struggle for independence.

The first major change in British drama was during the thirties with the performance of Eliot's *Murder in the Cathedral* (1935) through which verse drama had its revival. The remarkable success of this play resides not only in the use of verse but also in the theme. Eliot's drama is also distinguished by its depth and seriousness in the approach to human personality and human relationship.

Eliot's successful use of poetic drama encouraged other playwrights of his generation to break through verse drama; among them W.H. Auden (1907-1973) and Christopher Isherwood (1904 - 1986) who in collaboration wrote a series of poetic drama. Their plays are distinguished with emphasis on socialistic topics and gay sex themes. However, the outstanding success of verse drama after Eliot is to be found in the plays of Christopher Fry (1907-2005). He enriched British drama and theatre with many verse plays; he wrote *The Boy with a Cart* in 1938, but his first real success with the public was *A Phoenix Too Frequent* (1946) a witty one- act comedy.

Noel Coward (1899-1973) is one of those leading dramatists whose plays are mostly comedies of manners. In these comedies he satirises the social conditions of the post-war English society

J.B. Priestly's (1894 - 1984) plays diverted away from the traditions of the comedy of manners to present another type of experimental drama. This type of drama is shown in his two plays *I have Been Here Before* (1937) and *An Inspector Calls* (1945). The basic theme of *An Inspector Calls* is sin and crime.

N.C. Hunter (1908-1971) made his reputation as a traditional dramatist in the school of Chekhovian naturalism. The new wave of the angry young men dramatists with all its changes in English dramaturgy did not affect him. He remained faithful to the traditions of the Chekhovian style of drama and to the formulas of naturalistic drama

8.10 POST MODERN BRITISH DRAMA

British drama of the post-war era developed through the dramatic works of young playwrights

of the late fifties of the twentieth century. Along with Harold Pinter are John Osborne, John Arden, and Arnold Wesker, who fastened their feet firmly as leading dramatists of the angry drama of that period.

Postmodern plays flourished in the mid-20th century in Europe, and focuses on the failure of absolute truth, raising questions rather attempting solutions, standing for the Theatre of The Absurd - a dismissal of realism as well as the concept of well-made play.

Socio-political history had a bombastic impact on the formations of literary genres. World War I unravelled a new path to new literary experiments like — expressionism, surrealism, Dadaism, Freud's psychoanalytical theories, avant-garde movement, and existentialism. Modernism ended with World War II and the era of post-modernism began as a reaction against the modernism termed as the Theatre of The Absurd. Samuel Beckett (1906-1989), Jean Genet (1910-1983), Eugène Ionesco (1909-1994) are the lamp-bearers of absurd drama.

New forms emerged during these periods that are considered the bricks of modernism and postmodernism:

Expressionism : It arose as a reaction against materialism and rapid mechanization aiming at subjective emotions rather than objective reality through distortion, exaggeration or jarring application of formal elements. August Strindberg, Frank Wedekind were notable forerunners of Expressionist drama and outside Germany the noteworthy name in this field is - Eugene O'Neill.

Surrealism :It is the artistic bridge between reality and imagination overcoming the contradictions of conscious and subconscious by creating unreal and bizarre stories full of juxtaposition. Freudian ideas of 'free association' steer readers away from the societal influence and open up the individual mind. It compels readers to reveal the subconscious meaning.

Dadaism : It is a form of artistic anarchy that challenged the social, political, and cultural values of that time. The great paradox of Dada is that it is anti-art, anti-establishment — "*art is alive to the moment, not paralyzed by the traditions or restrictions of established value*".

Experimental :It encourages playwrights to make society or viewers change their attitudes, values, and beliefs on an issue through representing real life by merging strange and disturbing forms — for instance, Antonin Artaud's Theatre of Cruelty — eventually leading to the Theater of Absurd.

Existentialism :The mid-twentieth century philosophy of Jean Paul Sartre — "Existence precedes essence" — focuses on man's complete freedom to determine own existence. Decision form existences which do not occur without extreme stress or struggle. Writers like Kierkegaard, Nietzsche, Camus, Dostoyevsky and Kafka are the pillars of existentialism.

Absurd Drama :The **Theatre of the Absurd** is a post-World War II designation for particular plays of absurdist fiction written by a number of primarily European playwrights in the late 1950s. Logical construction and argument give way to irrational and illogical speech and to the ultimate conclusion—silence

This term refers to the works of such dramatists of the 1950s as Adamov, Beckett, Genet, Ionesco, and Pinter. Their plays did not use formal logic and conventional structure. In such plays, human beings are represented as individuals struggling hard with the irrationality of experience in a state described as Metaphysical anguish. Beckett's *Waiting for Godot*, Pinter's *The Birthday Party* and *Ionesco's Rhinoceros* are the finest examples.

Despite its reputation for nonsense language, much of the dialogue in Absurdist plays is naturalistic. The moments when characters resort to nonsense language or clichés—when words

appear to have lost their denotative function, thus creating misunderstanding among the characters—make the Theatre of the Absurd distinctive. Language frequently gains a certain phonetic, rhythmical, almost musical quality, opening up a wide range of often comedic playfulness. Distinctively Absurdist language ranges from meaningless clichés to vaudeville-style wordplay to meaningless nonsense. John Osborne's (1929-94) *Look Back in Anger* and **Samuel Beckett's** *Waiting for Godot* are the best examples.

Kitchen Sink Drama : The very title of the dram Kitchen - sink drama suggests that the action of these plays is centered mainly on the kitchen sink. The term was used derogatorily. This kind of drama was in vogue in 1950s and it was highly realistic as it portrayed the life of the working class. The plays of Osborne, Wesker, and Owen are examples.

Meta-theatre : The term was used first by Lionel Abel in 1963 to describe serious plays that do not have the qualities as found in tragedies. Such plays as Miller's *Death of Salesman*; Tennessee William's *A Street Car Named Desire* and Robert Bolt's *A Man for All Seasons* are meta theatre.

8.11 LET US SUM UP

Drama is a literary composition, which is performed by professional actors on stage (or theatre), before an audience. It involves conflicts, actions and a particular theme. The origin of the drama is deep-rooted in the religious predispositions of mankind. Special plays were written by the clerics, at first in Latin and later in the vernacular French. The actors spoke as well as acted their parts. These early plays were known as Mysteries or Miracles.

In England, the term Mystery is applied to the stories, taken from the Scriptures, while Miracles are the plays dealing with incidents in the lives of Saints and Martyrs. The Mystery and Miracle Play gave rise to the Morality and Interlude

The English drama reached its height between 1590 and 1614 when Shakespeare was at the peak of his dramatic career. His predecessors -Marlowe, Kyd, Greene, and Lyly paved the way and Shakespeare marched on taking English English drama to a level which could not be surpassed till today. The main features of the English drama of that time are - revenge themes, ghastly melodramatic scenes, inner conflict, hero-villain protagonists, tragic-comedy, presence of ghosts and use of blank verse.

The Jacobean drama was decadent from the drama of Shakespeare and his contemporaries.

In the Elizabethan period, the drama was patronized by the feudal lords, but from the time of the accession of James-I, dramatists depended on the king, the queen and the royal domination. The dramatists wholly depended on the royal favour. In this way, the theatre was cut off from common life unlike in the time of Shakespeare.

The Puritan opposition to the drama is also responsible for the decline of drama during this age.

The Restoration gave rise to the inclusion of new genres in drama, such as heroism and Restoration comedy. The Restoration comedy in England, which had started in the latter half of the 17th century, faded away with the advent of the 18th century.

The drama that had suffered a steep decline during the Victorian Age was revived with great force at the beginning of the 20th century. Andrew Lloyd Webber wrote the majority of musical dramas of the 20th century. Consequently, the dramas traveled to Broadway in New York and around the world. Postmodernism had a serious effect on the existence of English drama, at the end of the 20th century. The twentieth century drama was a naturalistic, realistic, existential, epic, absurd, and impressionistic drama. It was experimental and each dramatist made a mark with his

kind of observations, amendments, and innovations. We are indebted to the 20th century for the growth and development of drama.

8.12 QUESTIONS

- Q.1 Explain the definition of drama.
- Q.2 Write short notes on Mystery and Miracle Plays.
- Q.3 Discuss Elizabethan Drama.
- Q.4 Explain The Restoration Drama with reference to heroic tragedy and comedy.
- Q.5 Write short notes on Interlude and Morality Plays.
- Q. 6 Elaborate Jacobean Drama?
- Q.7 How did the Victorian Era give a contribute to British Drama?
- Q.8 Summarize in brief the Modern British Drama.
- Q.9 Discuss in brief the postmodern British drama.
- Q.10 Summarize the origin and development of British from the medieval period to Modern British Drama.

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UNIT 9 BACKGROUND OF THE PLAY: ANALYSIS ACT I AND ACT II

Structure

- 9.0 Introduction
- 9.1 Objectives
- 9.2 William Shakespeare : Life and Works
- 9.3 Background of the Drama, *The Merchant of Venice*
- 9.4 Summary of the Drama, *The Merchant of Venice*
- 9.5 Analysis of ACT I
- 9.6 Analysis of ACT II
- 9.7 Let us sum up
- 9.8 Questions
- 9.9 Further Reading

9.0 INTRODUCTION

This unit will introduce you to William Shakespeare, a great English dramatist. He was very famous during the Elizabethan and Jacobean ages of British theatre. His extant works, including collaborations, consist of approximately 39 plays, 154 sonnets, two long narrative poems, and a few other verses, some of the uncertain authorship.

9.1 OBJECTIVES

After going through his life and literary works, learners will be able to know Shakespeare was a prolific writer and dramatist during the Elizabethan and Jacobean ages.

Apart this, learners will also study the analysis of the drama, Act I & Act II “The Merchant of Venice”, so that they will be able to know an explication (or interpretation) of work on a specific part of the play.

9.2 WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE: LIFE AND WORKS

William Shakespeare (bapt 26 April 1564 – 23 April 1616) was an English playwright, poet, and actor, widely regarded as the greatest writer in the English language and the world's greatest dramatist. He was born and raised in Stratford upon Avon, Warwickshire. At the age of 18, he married Anne Hathway, with whom he had three children. From 1585 to 1592, he began a successful career in London as an actor, writer, and part-owner of a playing company called the Lord Chamberlain's men.

Shakespeare produced most of his known works between 1589 and 1613. His 37 plays were primarily comedies and histories and are regarded as some of the best work produced in these genres. He wrote 17 comedies which include *The Merchant of Venice* and *Much ado About Nothing*. Among 10 history plays are *Henry V* and *Richard III*. From 1603-1608, he wrote mainly tragedies, among them *Hamlet*, *Othello*, and *King Lear* and *Macbeth*, all considered to be among the finest works in the English language.

In the last phase of his life, he wrote tragicomedies (also known as a romance) and collaborated with other playwrights. Shakespeare also wrote 4 poems, and a famous collection of Sonnets which was first published in 1609.

At age 49 (around 1613), he appears to have retired to Stratford, where he died three years later. He died on 23 April 1616 and was buried in Holy Trinity Church. Throughout the 20th and 21st centuries, his plays remain popular and are studied, performed, and reinterpreted through various cultural and political contexts around the world.

Shakespeare's Plays

The first recorded works of Shakespeare are *Richard III* and the three parts of *Henry VI* written in the early 1590s during a vogue for *historical drama*. Shakespeare's early classical and Italianate comedies, containing tight double plots and precise comic sequences, give way in the mid-1590s to the romantic atmosphere of his most acclaimed comedies. *A Midsummer Night's Dream* is a witty mixture of romance, fairy magic and comic lowlife scenes. Shakespeare's next comedy, the equally romantic *Merchant of Venice*, contains a portrayal of the vengeful Jewish moneylender Shylock which reflects Elizabethan views but may appear derogatory to modern audiences. The wit and wordplay of *Much Ado About Nothing*, the charming rural setting of *As you Like it*, and the lively merrymaking of *Twelfth Night* complete Shakespeare's sequence of great comedies. In the lyrical *Richard* wrote almost entirely in verse, Shakespeare introduced prose comedy into the histories of the late 1590s, *Henry IV, parts 1 and 2*, and

Henry V. His characters become more complex and tender as he switches deftly between comic and serious scenes, prose and poetry, and achieves the narrative variety of his mature work. This period begins and ends with two tragedies: *Romeo and Juliet*, the famous romantic tragedy of sexually charged adolescence, love, and death; and *Julius Caesar*—based on Sir Thomas North's 1579 translation of Plutarch's *Parallel Lives*—which introduced a new kind of drama.

In the early 17th century, Shakespeare wrote the so-called "problem plays" *Measure for Measure*, *Troilus and Cressida*, and *All's Well That Ends Well* and a number of his best known tragedies.

Shakespeare's tragedies often hinge on such fatal errors or flaws, which overturn the order and destroy the hero and those he loves.. In *Othello*, the villain Iago stokes Othello's sexual jealousy to the point where he murders his innocent wife who loves him. In *King Lear*, the old king commits the tragic error of giving up his powers, initiating the events which lead to the torture and blinding of the Earl of Gloucester and the murder of Lear's youngest daughter Cordelia. In *Macbeth*, the shortest and most compressed of Shakespeare's tragedies, uncontrollable ambition incites Macbeth and his wife, Lady Macbeth, to murder the rightful king and usurp the throne until their own guilt destroys them in turn. In this play, Shakespeare adds a supernatural element to the tragic structure. His last major tragedies, *Antony and Cleopatra* and *Coriolanus* contain some of Shakespeare's finest poetry and were considered his most successful tragedies by the poet and critic T. S. Eliot

In his final period, Shakespeare turned to romance or tragicomedy and completed three more plays: *Cymbeline*, *The Winter's Tale*, and *The Tempest*. Shakespeare collaborated on two further surviving plays, *Henry VIII* and *The Two Noble Kinsmen*, probably with John Fletcher.

9.3 BACKGROUND OF THE DRAMA, *THE MERCHANT OF VENICE*

The Merchant of Venice, a comedy in five acts is a **16th-century play written by William Shakespeare**. It was first published in 1600. Then published again in 1619, and then in 1623 in the First Folio, a collection of all of Shakespeare's plays.

The Merchant of Venice is technically classified as a comedy, but it is sometimes referred to as a "problem comedy" (mostly because it's so controversial) or a "tragicomedy," because it shares features in common with comedies but also contains the **kind** of dark elements we typically find in tragedies.

In this play, Shakespeare has given the anti-Jewish climate in Elizabethan England and Shakespeare's portrayal of Shylock as a negative stereotype, it would be reasonable to assume Shakespeare was an Anti-Semite. However, the rest of the details of the play do not support this. It has been suggested that the real evil is the corrupt value system of the principal Christian characters. Antonio, the merchant of the title, is the worst bigot Portia is also a racist, but Jews were not her only victims.

9.4 SUMMARY OF THE DRAMA, 'THE MERCHANT OF VENICE'

Bassanio, a young Venetian of noble rank, wishes to woo the beautiful and wealthy heiress Portia of Belmont. Having squandered his estate, he needs 3,000 ducats to subsidize his expenditures as a suitor. Bassanio approaches his friend Antonio, a wealthy merchant of Venice, who has previously and repeatedly bailed him out. Antonio agrees, but since he is cash-poor – his ships and merchandise are busy at sea to Tripolis, the Indies, Mexico, and England – he promises to cover a bond if Bassanio can find a lender, so Bassanio turns to the Jewish moneylender Shylock and names Antonio as the loan guarantor.

Meanwhile, in Belmont, Portia is awash with suitors. Her father left a will stipulating that each of her suitors must choose correctly from one of three caskets, made of gold, silver, and lead respectively. The last suitor is Bassanio, whom Portia wishes to succeed, having met him before. Bassanio chooses the lead casket and wins Portia's hand.

In Venice, Antonio's ships are reported lost at sea, so the merchant cannot repay the bond. Shylock has become more determined to exact revenge from Christians because his daughter Jessica eloped with Christian Lorenzo and converted. She took a substantial amount of Shylock's wealth with her, as well as a turquoise ring, which Shylock had been given by his late wife, Leah. Shylock has Antonio brought before the court.

At Belmont, Bassanio receives a letter telling him that Antonio has been unable to repay the loan from Shylock. Portia and Bassanio marry, as do Gratiano and Portia's handmaid Nerissa. Bassanio and Gratiano leave for Venice, with money from Portia, to save Antonio's life by offering the money to Shylock. Unknown to Bassanio and Gratiano, Portia sent her servant, Balthazar, to seek the counsel of Portia's cousin, Bellario, a lawyer, at Padua.

The climax of the play is set in the court of the Duke of Venice. Shylock refuses Bassanio's offer of 6,000 ducats, twice the amount of the loan. He demands his pound of flesh from Antonio. Shylock adamantly refuses any compensation and insists on the pound of flesh.

As the court grants Shylock his bond and Antonio prepares for Shylock's knife. Portia says that the contract allows Shylock to remove only the *flesh*, not the blood, of Antonio (see quibble). Thus, if Shylock were to shed any drop of Antonio's blood, his **"lands and goods"** would be forfeited under Venetian laws. She tells him that he must cut precisely one pound of flesh, no more, no less; she advises him that **"if the scale do turn, But in the estimation of a hair, Thou diest and all thy goods are confiscate."**

Defeated, Shylock consents accept Bassanio's offer of money for the defaulted bond. She cites a law under which Shylock, as a Jew and therefore an **"alien"**, having attempted to take the life of a citizen, has forfeited his property, half to the government and half to Antonio, leaving his life at the mercy of the Duke. The Duke spares Shylock's life and says he may remit the forfeiture. Portia says the Duke may waive the state's share, but not Antonio's. Antonio says he is content that the state waives its claim to half Shylock's wealth if he can have his one-half share **"in use"** until Shylock's death. Shylock, re-threatened with death, accepts with the words, **"I am content."** (IV, i).

Bassanio does not recognize his disguised wife but offers to give a present to the supposed lawyer. First, she declines but after he insists, Portia requests his ring and Antonio's gloves. Antonio parts with his gloves without a second thought, but Bassanio gives the ring only after much persuasion from Antonio, as earlier in the play, he promised his wife never to lose, sell or give it. Nerissa, as the lawyer's clerk, succeeds in likewise retrieving her ring from Gratiano, who does not see through her disguise. At Belmont, Portia and Nerissa taunt and pretend to accuse their husbands before revealing they were really the lawyer and his clerk in disguise. After all the other characters make amends, Antonio learns from Portia that three of his ships were not stranded and have returned safely after all.

9.5 ANALYSIS OF ACT I

The Merchant of Venice opens with a depressed and melancholy character. Portia, the wealthy Belmont heiress, is a depressed and unhappy character in the opening scenes. For Portia, this risk-taking can be seen in her love for Bassanio, which will require her to risk her entire inheritance in order for her to win him. For Antonio, the risk is even greater, namely a pound of flesh, representing his very life.

Bassanio represents the gambler who cannot lose. He is the sort of character that will risk everything, and having lost everything, will risk what he does not have. Thus Bassanio tells us, *"In my school days, when I had lost one shaft, / I shot his fellow in the selfsame flight / The selfsame way, with more advised watch, / To find the other forth; and by adventuring both, / I oft found both"* (1.1.140-144). He has often been compared to Jason in the Quest for the Golden Fleece, namely a risk-taker.

Portia as a character is an odd mixture of various traits. She is first presented as the ruler of Belmont, clearly in charge of both herself and those around her. However, we soon discover that she is not in charge, indeed it is *"the will of a living daughter curbed by the will of a dead father"* (1.2.21). Portia's reliance on the wishes of her dead father, therefore, contradicts the image of her as Belmont's ruler. Indeed, like many of the women in Shakespeare's plays, she will be unable to alter the plot around her as long as she is a woman. It is only later in the play, by dressing as Balthasar a man, that she will finally be able to really command events and manipulate the play.

Although Shylock is accused of representing much of what the Christians hate, it is through his conflict with Antonio in particular that Shakespeare pokes holes in the accusations of the Christian men. The most common error is to assume that the merchant referred to in the title is in fact Shylock himself. This is not the case, since Shylock is only a moneylender.

Indeed, the merchant indicated is Antonio. This confusion surrounding Antonio and Shylock is purposeful, for it shows the audience how the Christians are in many ways as awful as the Jews they mock. It also sets the stage for misinterpretation. For example, Shylock states, *"Antonio is a good man"* (1.3.11), referring to the fact that Antonio is *"good"* for the money which Bassanio wishes to borrow. Bassanio takes this statement at face value, and agrees that Antonio is a nice man. The seriousness of the Christian misunderstanding can be seen when Shylock makes the bond with Antonio:

"This kindness will I show.

Go with me to a notary, seal me there

Your single bond, and, in a merry sport,

*If you repay me not on such a day,
In such place, such sum or sums as are
Expressed in the condition, let the forfeit
Be nominated for an equal pound
Of your fair flesh to be cut off and taken
In what part of your body pleaseth me.*

Now Antonio repeats the same mistake made by Bassanio, thinking that Shylock is being "kind" when he agrees to loan the money without interest. Antonio states "***The Hebrew will turn Christian; he grows kind***" (1.3.174). Antonio is so convinced that he will be able to repay his debts that Shylock's request for a pound of his flesh as collateral strikes him as a joke, and therefore is not taken at all seriously.

Shylock's willingness to waive the interest payment brings to light an entirely new set of conflicts within the play. Shakespeare draws on Francis Bacon's statement, "***It is against nature, for money to beget money,***" when he portrays the Christians as unselfish givers of all they have. Shylock defends his taking of interest by quoting the passage where Jacob is given the striped lambs. Antonio immediately rejects this as nonsense, asking, "***Was this inserted to make interest good, / Or is your gold and silver ewes and rams?***" (1.3.90-91). *Shylock replies that, "I cannot tell. I make it breed as fast"* (1.3.92).

This scene further focuses our attention on the use of sheep imagery in connection to money and breeding. Here Shakespeare plays on the words "*use*", "*usury*", and "*ewes*", all of which will be punned throughout the play. All the sheep imagery is on Shylock's side throughout, for he is fleecing the Christians, breeding the ewes. He, therefore, mentions Jacob as his defense for taking interest, and we can note later that Shylock's wife is named Leah, the same name that Jacob's first wife had. Shylock is also able to make his money breed like sheep through the charging of interest. On the other hand, the Christians have Jason and the Golden Fleece. This image is used in connection with Bassanio, the risk-taker, who risks everything to gain everything. The same image will figure later with Antonio, who is represented as a castrated sheep. Thus, the concept is reinforced that Antonio does not make his money breed because he refuses to charge interest.

9.6 ANALYSIS OF ACT II

The virtue of marriage is very important for Shakespeare. Marriage also represents a way to overcome difficulties; for Bassanio, it will remove his debt, for Portia, it will free her from her father's will and for Jessica this will allow her to escape her father.

Given this view of marriage, the choice of the caskets presents a horrifying risk for many of the participants, namely the threat that if they choose the wrong casket they must swear to never propose marriage to a woman afterward.

In fact, Shakespeare creates this very analogy throughout *The Merchant of Venice* and ties it to the ability to make money breed. Thus, in the first act, Shylock mentions that he makes his money breed as fast as ewes and lambs. Antonio will further this metaphor in the final act, when he remarks that he is like a weather or a castrated lamb, and thus unable to breed. For the suitors to Portia, then, swearing to never wed puts them on the same level as Antonio.

Lancelot the clown is one of the more interesting characters. The entire scene mimics the biblical story of Jacob and Esau, though. The Bible tells how Jacob tricked his father into giving him the inheritance by wearing wool so his father would think he was Esau. Lancelot does the same

thing, by bending down and making his father "**know**" him by feeling his head.

Shylock's character starts to emerge very strongly within this act. We see him now not only as a moneylender demanding interest but also as a villain. He shows a marked aversion to fun, demanding that Jessica locks the door and close the windows when he finds out there will be a masque that night. However, contrary to his statement in the first act, Shylock leaves his house to enjoy dinner with Bassanio. Much of this act has, therefore, developed the negative aspects of Shylock's character.

However, the Christian faults are also exposed within this act. The crucial difficulty is that she does not merely run away, but she insists on stealing large amounts of her father's jewels and gold. Thus, when Graziano remarks, "**Now, by my hood, a gentile, and no Jew**" (2.6.51), we can only see it as ironic. Ironic because she is stealing her father's money, so he is essentially implying Christians are thieves.

Jessica's actions also leave unanswered the question of why she is locked up in her father's home. The answer to this comes from an understanding of the relationship between money and breeding. Whereas in the beginning, Antonio is impotent in the sense that his money does not breed, Shylock is not. Shylock further has the advantage of having a daughter. Since the Jewish lineage is passed down via the maternal line, Jessica represents a way for Shylock's family line to continue. Thus, hoarding Jessica and his gold are Shylock's way of guaranteeing his successful breeding. In fact, Solanio makes this connection between daughter and money abundantly clear when he tells us that Shylock ran through the street of Venice crying:

"My daughter! O, my ducats! O, my daughter!

Fled with a Christian! O, my Christian ducats!

Justice! The law! My ducats and my daughter!

A sealed bag, two sealed bags of ducats,"

Thus, for Shylock, the simultaneous loss of his daughter and his money is in a sense the loss of his fertility. Not only does her conversion to Christianity destroy Shylock's family line, it also makes him impotent in a metaphorical sense. Jessica takes two stones with her, which represents the "*testicles*" of Shylock since the stone was often used to mean testicle. Thus, after her theft, Shylock joins Antonio in impotence, having lost his ability to breed. Indeed, the escape of Jessica marks the turning point of Shylock's fortunes, which will lead to his eventual destruction.

It is important that Jessica escapes not dressed as herself but like a man. In fact, there is never a scene on the Venetian streets in which a woman is present. The only way a woman can walk through the street of Venice is to dress as a man, a fact that will reinforce when Portia pretends to be Balthasar and dresses as a man before entering Venice. This is one of the primary differences between the worlds of Venice and Belmont.

The three caskets, each bear inscriptions that tell us about the personalities of the characters who pick them. Gold reads: "**Who chooseth me shall gain what many men desire**" (2.7.5). The silver casket has, "**Who chooseth me shall get as much as he deserves**" (2.7.7). Finally, the dull lead casket bears the inscription, "**Who chooseth me must give and hazard all he hath**" (2.7.9). The Prince of Morocco first chooses gold and gets a death skull. The Prince of Aragon receives the picture of an idiot. This is symbolic, for he is an old man and hence is an idiot for thinking himself deserving of a young woman.

One of the most debated lines is when Portia sends the Prince of Morocco away by saying, "**A gentle riddance. Draw the curtains, go. / Let all of his complexion choose me so**" (2.7.78-79). This

provincial comment stands in contrast with her upbringing and nobility. However, what soon becomes clear is that Portia is a very narrow character in her sense of friends. She chooses Bassanio over the more cosmopolitan suitors because he represents her Christian and Venetian world. Bassanio wins her because of the same thing, namely he alone of the suitors possesses the local characteristics necessary to interpret which casket to choose.

Unlike Portia and Bassanio, Jessica never has to be chosen by a casket. Instead, she tosses her casket out of the window for Lorenzo to catch. Thus her relationship, unlike that of Portia and Bassanio, has no test to make sure it is a good relationship.

The Merchant of Venice is largely a play about interpretation. The suitors to Portia are condemned to sterility because they misread the caskets. Shylock's interpretation of the contract in the "*pound of flesh*" seriously and literally, whereas Antonio thinks Shylock is being "*kind*." Later in the final scene, the outcome of the play - whether it becomes a comedic ending or a tragic one will rest on Portia's interpretation of the law. Thus, the play creates its drama and its plot through the constant interpretation of events and words. Shakespeare frequently uses this crucial aspect in his remaining comedies, and it forms a crucial part of the plot in Much Ado About Nothing.

9.7 LET US SUM UP

William Shakespeare is the best British writer of all time. His many works are about life, love, death, revenge, grief, jealousy, murder, magic, and mystery. He wrote 37 plays. He produced most of his known work between 1589 and 1613. His early plays were mainly comedies and histories and these works remain regarded as some of the best work produced in these genres. He wrote mainly tragedies until about 1608, including *Hamlet*, *Othello*, *King Lear*, and *Macbeth*. In his last phase, he wrote tragicomedies, also known as romances, and collaborated with other playwrights. He wrote three different types of plays:

Histories - about the lives of kings and famous figures from history

Comedies - which end with a marriage

Tragedies - which end with the death of the main character

The **Merchant of Venice** is technically classified as a comedy, but a "tragicomedy," because it shares features in common with comedies but also contains the **kind** of dark elements we typically find in tragedies.

9.8 QUESTIONS

Q.1 Discuss brief Biographical sketch of William Shakespeare.

Q.2 Summarize William Shakespeare's major works in your own words.

Q.3 Write a Summary of the Drama, "The Merchant of Venice."

Q.4 Discuss the analysis of Act I in your own words.

Q.5 Elaborate the analysis of Act II in your own words.

9.9 FURTHER READINGS

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UNIT 10 ANALYSIS ACT III, IV and V

- 10.0 Introduction
 - 10.1 Objectives
 - 10.2 Analysis of ACT III
 - 10.3 Analysis of ACT IV
 - 10.4 Analysis of ACT V
 - 10.5 Let us sum up
 - 10.6 Questions
 - 10.7 Further Readings
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10.0 INTRODUCTION

This unit will introduce you to an analysis of drama, *The Merchant of Venice*, Act III, IV, and V.

10.2 OBJECTIVES

After going through the analysis of drama, “The Merchant of Venice”, Act III, IV & V, learners will be able to know an explication (or interpretation) of work on a specific part of the play.

10.3 ANALYSIS OF ACT III

In Venice, the three months that Antonio has to pay the debt go by quickly, while only days seem to pass in Belmont. As Antonio’s losses mount, Shylock’s villainous plan becomes apparent. “[L]et him look to his bond,” he repeats single-mindedly (III.i.39–40). Despite his mounting obsession with the pound of Antonio’s flesh, however, he maintains his dramatic dignity.

In his scene with the pair of Venetians, Shylock delivers the celebrated speech in which he cries, *"Hath not a Jew eyes? Hath not a Jew hands, organs, dimensions, senses, affections, passions; fed with the same food, hurt with the same weapons, subject to the same diseases, healed by the same means, warmed and cooked by the same winter and summer as a Christian is? If you prick us do we not bleed? If you tickle us do we not laugh? If you poison us do we not die? And if you wrong us, shall we not revenge? If we are like you in the rest, we will resemble you in that. If a Jew wrong a Christian, what is his humility? Revenge. If a Christian wrong a Jew, what should his sufferance be by Christian example? Why, revenge. The villainy you teach me I will execute, and it shall go hard but I will better the instruction."* III.i.49–55).

This passage has been interpreted in many ways, from comedic to villainous to tragic. The passage is difficult to interpret because of Shylock's position in society. As a Jew, he could not have been on the street screaming for revenge, since this would only lead to more persecution. Thus, one interpretation has taken the lines to be comic, in the sense of using comedy as a mask to hide fear. Shylock tries to defend his right to exact the pound of flesh.

Once the play reaches Act III, scene III, it is difficult to sympathize with Shylock. Whatever humiliations he has suffered at Antonio’s hands are repaid when he sees the Christian merchant in shackles. Antonio may have treated the moneylender badly, but Shylock’s pursuit of the pound of flesh is an exercise in naked cruelty. In this scene, Shylock’s narrowly focused rhetoric becomes monomaniacal in its obsession with the bond. *"I'll have my bond. Speak not against my bond,"* (III.iii.4). He insists, and denies attempts at the reason when he says, *"I'll have no speaking. I will*

have my bond" (III.iii.17).

When Antonio tells Solanio that Shylock is getting revenge for his practice of lending money without interest, he seems to miss the bigger picture. Shylock's mind has been warped an obsession not with Antonio alone, but by the persecutions visited on him by all of Christian Venice. He has taken Antonio as the embodiment of all his persecutors so that, in his pound of flesh, he can avenge himself against *everyone*.

The institution of law comes to the forefront of the play in these scenes, and we may be tempted to view the law as a sort of necessary evil, a dogmatic set of rules that can be forced to serve the most absurd requests.

In the thirty-six lines that make up Act III, scene iii, Shylock alludes to revenge in only the vaguest of terms but repeats the word "*bond*" no less than six times. He also frequently invokes the concept of justice. The Law is cast as the very backbone of the Venetian economy, as Antonio expresses when he makes the grim statement that "[t]he duke cannot deny the course of law. . . . / . . . / Since that the trade and profit of the city / Consisteth of all nations" (III.iii.26–31).

This Christian takes on the sheep imagery is interesting because it is so different from Shylock's interpretation. Rather than make money breed, the Christians prefer to risk everything in search of gaining everything.

Portia first begs Bassanio to wait at least a month, hoping to spend time with him before he chooses among the caskets. When he refuses to wait, she plays music for him. Some scholars have noted that each of the rhymes of the song rhyme with lead, thus providing a subconscious hint.

Bassanio refers to the fact that gold denotes greed, and thus is worthless as it was for Midas who could not even eat his food because it turned to gold on him. Silver represents money, or coins, passing among men and therefore Bassanio rejects it as well. The lead casket symbolizes his penchant for risk-taking, and indeed the scroll reads as much, "*must hazard all he has.*" Bassanio is an insider, a risk-taker who likes the threat that leads poses, and a man who espouses the Christian ideal of "*the last shall be first.*"

The fact that Bassanio is able to choose the casket without reading the inscription is in some sense born out by the scroll. The scroll says, "*You that choose not by the view / Chance as fair and choose as true*" (3.2.131-132). However, there is a converse to Bassanio's risk-taking, namely Portia. Portia takes her own risk each time suitor chooses and is forced to give Bassanio all that she has. "*Myself and what is mine is now to you and what is yours converted*" (3.2.166). She does not have a choice in this matter, since it is ordained by her dead father's will. Portia further gives Bassanio a ring, making him promise to wear it forever. This is an inversion of the marriage ceremony, and is her way of testing Bassanio's fidelity and love.

In Shakespeare's time, more often the women were accused of infidelity, tricking their husbands. Portia cleverly reverses this by making Bassanio swear to keep the faith with her. Bassanio requires this interpretation, he is after all a gentleman, and therefore considers monetary issues to be beneath him. This is in opposition even to Antonio, who still regards money as a necessity. Bassanio prefers instead to rely on his breeding for success. He tells Portia, "*I freely told you all the wealth I had / Ran in my veins: I was a gentleman;*" (3.2.253-254).

The women never explicitly appear in Venice is reinforced in this act as well. Portia and Nerissa must first pretend to go to a monastery in order to escape from Belmont, where Lorenzo and Jessica are staying. Portia also contrives to dress them as men in order to go to Venice. She further uses her kinship with Doctor Bellario to give her credibility and allow her to control the actions in the upcoming scenes. It is the fact that Portia still relies on a man for her credibility, and requires a

man's dress in order to alter events in the play.

10.3 ANALYSIS OF ACT IV

Shylock's reasons for wanting to kill Antonio come across as very arbitrary and obscure. He compares his desire to kill Antonio with "*Some men there are love not a gaping pig, / Some that are mad if they behold a cat*" (4.1.46-47). He follows this with the statement, "*So can I give no reason, nor I will not, / More than a lodged hate and a certain loathing / I bear Antonio*" (4.1.58-60).

Shylock starts the play on the opposite extreme, able to make his money breed with interest and his family breed through Jessica. However, Antonio who convinces him not to take interest in this particular bond, and it is later Antonio whom Shylock accuses of allowing Jessica to escape. Thus, for Shylock, Antonio represents the man who made him impotent as well. His hatred towards Antonio can thereby be explained. It is a further irony that in this act, Antonio makes Shylock convert to Christianity, thus removing even that distinction between the two men. In essence, the destroyed Shylock at the end of the play is very similar to the melancholy Antonio in the beginning.

Portia adds to this sense of doubling when she arrives at the court. She asks, "*Which is the merchant here, and which the Jew?*" (4.1.169). Indeed, given the confusion, so many people have with the title, it is often this very question, which is asked. Scholars have tried to attribute her question of blind justice, arguing that Portia does not want to show any favorites. However, on an Elizabethan stage, she would be able to recognize Shylock immediately from his distinctive dress.

Antonio, having received half of Shylock's wealth, essentially takes over for Shylock by using Shylock's money. Scholars have debated the nature of the "merry bond" between Shylock and Antonio. Some have suggested Shylock meant to circumcise Antonio, others think he meant to make Antonio take over his place. The fact that Shylock accepts a Christian condition of taking no interest is supposedly offset by the fact that if Shylock wins, Antonio must act Jewish.

Another interesting interpretation deals with why Antonio must stand trial at all. In the Bible, Paul said that Jewishness is an internal condition, not external. This implies that Shylock is Jewish not because he was born that way, but because he acts that way. Thus Antonio's mistreatment of Shylock violates this explanation of Jewishness by despising Shylock because of his external features. Antonio is judged for this sin.

Throughout this play there is also the concept of the scapegoat. The scapegoat was used as a way of purging a town of its sins by heaping them onto the unfortunate animal instead. The town would drive one goat out of town and sacrifice another. Both men fit this description in *The Merchant of Venice*, with Shylock clearly driven out of society and Antonio representing the goat about to be sacrificed.

One of the great ironies of this play is where Shylock calls Portia, "*A Daniel come to judgment, yea, a Daniel!*" (4.1.218). Daniel was the biblical judge of Susanna, a woman accused of losing her chastity by the Elders. The story is famous because Daniel rules in Susanna's favor, thus rescuing her. In addition to freeing her, he then further convicts the Elders. Shylock's mistake is that he is premature in calling Portia a Daniel, because he is the one who represents the Elders, and Antonio signifies Susanna. This inversion comes only a few lines later, when Portia not only frees Antonio but convicts Shylock of attempted murder.

The relationship between Antonio and Bassanio comes to the forefront in this section. Antonio can literally be seen as a lover of Bassanio, willing to die for him (4.1.260-274). This creates the conflict between Portia and Antonio, a conflict she is willing to test by demanding that Bassanio give her his ring. The fact that Bassanio parts with the ring for Antonio's sake, as does Graziano, implies that Bassanio chooses Antonio over Portia. This of course is unacceptable, as is seen in the

next act where Portia severally chastises Bassanio for loving a man more than he loves her.

The rings have a further meaning, though. They are given by Bassanio and Graziano as a token of respect and friendship to people they deem to be men. Thus, the ultimate symbolism is that the rings are given to friends who are also their wives. This fusion of friendship and marriage is an unusual one and serves to strengthen the relationship between the couples.

10.4 ANALYSIS OF ACT V

One of the most ridiculous moments in this act involves Lorenzo and Jessica, who compare their love with the three disastrous love stories. They invoke Troilus and Cressida, Pyramus and Thisbe, and Dido and Aeneas as their models. This is ironic in the highest degree because all the invoked lovers are failures. For example, Pyramus and Thisbe commit suicide, and Dido kills herself when Aeneas leaves her. This harkens back to the ease with which Jessica handed over the casket in the previous acts. Their love never underwent any form of test, either with the casket or with the rings, which Jessica apparently trades for a monkey (3.1). Thus they in a sense condemn their love to failure like those of the failed lovers.

Much of this scene involves Portia and Nerissa teaching their husbands the value of marriage. The gifts of the rings serve to represent the sanctity and holiness promise of the marriage. Thus, for Bassanio and Graziano giving away the rings is a violation of their marriage contract, a sign that they love Antonio more than they love their wives. The joke that Portia creates is when she says, "*I'll have that doctor for my bedfellow*" (5.1.232), thus implying that Bassanio needs to realize the ring is given to him alone, and that giving it away violates the relationship implicit in their marriage contract.

The twinning and oppositeness of Antonio and Shylock were remarked on earlier in the analysis. This same twinning and oppositeness exist between Belmont and Venice. Belmont represents music and leisure, Venice signifies money and laws. However, as Belmont is of course built upon the money from Venice, it depends on gold and inheritance. This is seen most clearly when the deed from Shylock is handed to Lorenzo, which is similar to the way Portia derives her wealth in Belmont from a dead father's will. Venice produces merchants such as Antonio, whereas Belmont produces Lorenzo, a lazy beggar.

The three pairs of lovers represent the comic ending. But what should be a happy ending is violated and broken by Antonio and Shylock. Both outsiders also have been emasculated by the end. Shylock via the loss of his money and his daughter, Antonio by losing Bassanio to Portia. The lowest level of Antonio's defeat is when Portia hands him his money and ships at the end, essentially telling him to return to Venice and forget about Bassanio.

10.5 LET US SUM UP

The **Merchant of Venice** is technically classified as a comedy, but is a "tragicomedy," because it shares features in common with comedies, but also contains the kind of dark elements we typically find in tragedies. After analysis of Act III, IV & V the learners came to know an explication (or interpretation) of work on a specific part of the drama, The Merchant of Venice.

10.6 QUESTIONS

Q1. Elaborate the analysis of Act III in your own words. (Refer to Answer 10.3)

Q2. Discuss the analysis of Act IV in your own words. (Refer to Answer 10.4)

Q3 Elaborate the analysis of Act III in your own words. (Refer to Answer 10.5)

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UNIT 11 CHARACTERIZATIONS AND TECHNIQUE

Structure

- 11.0 Introduction
- 11.1 Objectives
- 11.2 Major and Minor Characters
 - 11.2.1 Shylock
 - 11.2.2 Portia
 - 11.2.3 Antonio
 - 11.2.4 Bassanio
 - 11.2.5 Jessica
 - 11.2.6 Gratiano
 - 11.2.7 Nerissa
 - 11.2.8 Lorenzo
 - 11.2.9 Minor Characters
- 11.3 Themes
 - 11.3.1 Love versus Material Wealth
 - 11.3.2 Marriage
 - 11.3.3 Mercy versus Justice
- 11.4 Dramatic Devices in *The Merchant Of Venice*
 - 11.4.1 Dramatic Irony
 - 11.4.2 Soliloquy
 - 11.4.3 Aside
 - 11.4.4 Foreshading
 - 11.4.5 Feature of Comedy
- 11.5 Symbols
 - 11.5.1 The Three Caskets
 - 11.5.2 The Pound of Flesh
 - 11.5.3 Leah's Ring
- 11.6 Setting
- 11.7 Genre
- 11.8 Style
- 11.9 Point of View
- 11.10 Tone
- 11.11 Let us sum up
- 11.12 Questions
- 11.13 Further Readings

11.0 INTRODUCTION

This unit will introduce you to the characters of Drama, *The Merchant of Venice*. Learners will also understand Shakespeare's art of characterization and technique with reference to his drama 'The Merchant of Venice'..

11.1 OBJECTIVES

In this unit, learners will be able know the main function of a character in a story and to extend or prolong the plot, make it readable and interesting.

11.2 MAJOR AND MINOR CHARACTERS

There are many types of characters that exist in Literature and each character has own development and function in the drama. Characters guide readers through their stories, helping them to understand plots and ponder themes.

11.2.1 SHYLOCK

Shylock is clearly positioned as the play's antagonist. He is a Jew who lends money to his Christian rival Antonio. When a bankrupt Antonio defaults on the loan, Shylock demands the pound of flesh. This decision is fuelled by his sense of revenge, for Antonio had previously insulted, physically assaulted and spat on him in the Rialto (stock exchange of Venice) dozens of times, defiled the "sacred" Jewish religion. Meanwhile, Shylock's daughter, Jessica, falls in love with Antonio's friend Lorenzo and converts to Christianity, leaves Shylock's house and steals vast riches from him, which add to Shylock's rage and harden his resolve for revenge.

In the end, due to the efforts of Antonio's well-wisher, Portia – Shylock is charged with attempted murder of a Christian, carrying a possible death penalty, and Antonio is freed without punishment. Shylock is then ordered to surrender half of his wealth and property to the state and the other half to Antonio. However, as an act of "mercy", Antonio modifies the verdict, asking Shylock to hand over only one-half of his wealth – to him (Antonio) for his own as well as Lorenzo's need – provided that he keeps two promises. First, Shylock has to sign an agreement bequeathing all his remaining property to Lorenzo and Jessica, which is to become effective after his demise, and second, he is to immediately convert to Christianity. Shylock is forced to agree to these terms, and he exits citing illness. Although critics tend to agree that Shylock is *The Merchant of Venice*'s most noteworthy figure.

Certainly, Shylock is the play's antagonist, and he is menacing enough to seriously imperil the happiness of Venice's businessmen and young lovers alike. Shylock is also, however, a creation of circumstance; even in his single-minded pursuit of a pound of flesh, his frequent mentions of the cruelty he has endured at Christian hands make it hard for us to label him a natural born monster. In one of Shakespeare's most famous monologues, for example, Shylock argues that Jews are humans and calls his quest for vengeance the product of lessons taught to him by the cruelty of Venetian citizens. On the other hand, Shylock's coldly calculated attempt to revenge the wrongs done to him by murdering his persecutor, Antonio, prevents us from viewing him in a primary positive light. Shakespeare gives us unmistakably human moments, but he often steers us against Shylock as well, painting him as a miserly, cruel, and prosaic figure.

11.2.2 PORTIA

Portia is a protagonist of William Shakespeare's *The Merchant of Venice*. A rich, beautiful, intelligent heiress of Belmont, she is bound by the lottery set forth in her father's will, which gives potential suitors the chance to choose among three caskets. If he chooses the right casket, he wins

Portia's hand in marriage. If he chooses the incorrect casket, he must leave and never woo any other woman in marriage. She is shown to think little of various foreign noblemen of similar rank who are most likely to seek her hand in marriage and still less of two suitors who seem to attempt her father's assigned task. Instead, she favours a young, but impoverished Venetian noble, Bassanio, who is also a soldier and a scholar. Bassanio goes on to choose the right casket.

Portia is also fond of wordplay and proverbs frequently quoting and coining them, which was considered a sign of wisdom and sharp wit in the Elizabethan era. Some suggest that the character of Portia was based on Queen Elizabeth herself, who also had a penchant for proverbs.

Quick-witted, wealthy, and beautiful, Portia embodies the virtues that are typical of Shakespeare's heroines—it is no surprise that she emerges as the antidote to Shylock's malice. At the beginning of the play, however, we do not see Portia's potential for initiative and resourcefulness, as she is a near prisoner, feeling herself absolutely bound to follow her father's dying wishes. This opening appearance, however, proves to be a revealing introduction to Portia, who emerges as that rarest of combinations—a free spirit who abides rigidly by the rules. Rather than ignoring the stipulations of her father's will, she watches a stream of suitors pass her by, happy to see these particular suitors go, but sad that she has no choice in the matter. When Bassanio arrives, however, Portia proves herself to be highly resourceful, begging the man she loves to stay a while before picking a chest, and finding loopholes in the will's provision that we never thought possible.

Also, in her defeat of Shylock Portia prevails by applying a more rigid standard than Shylock himself, agreeing that his contract very much entitles him to his pound of flesh, but adding that it does not allow for any loss of blood. Anybody can break the rules, but Portia's effectiveness comes from her ability to make the law work for her.

In her courtroom appearance, she vigorously applies the law, but still flouts convention by appearing disguised as a man. After depriving Bassanio of his ring, she stops the prank before it goes too far, but still takes it far enough to berate Bassanio and Gratiano for their callousness, and she even insinuates that she has been unfaithful.

11.2.3 ANTONIO

Antonio is the protagonist in *The Merchant of Venice*. He is also the title character of the play. He is a middle-aged merchant and an influential, powerful, and wealthy nobleman of Venice. He is kind, generous, and honest to Christians, and is loved and revered by all the Christians.

Antonio is something of a mercurial figure, often inexplicably melancholy and, as Shylock points out, possessed of an incorrigible dislike of Jews. Nonetheless, Antonio is beloved of his friends and proves merciful to Shylock, albeit with conditions.

Although the play's title refers to him, Antonio is a rather lackluster character. He emerges in Act I, scene i as a hopeless depressive, someone who cannot name the source of his melancholy and who, throughout the course of the play, devolves into a self-pitying lump, unable to muster the energy required to defend himself against execution. Antonio never names the cause of his melancholy, but the evidence seems to point to his being in love, despite his denial of this idea in Act I, scene i. The most likely object of his affection is Bassanio, who takes full advantage of the merchant's boundless feelings for him.

Antonio's willingness to offer up a pound of his own flesh seems particularly important, signifying a union that grotesquely alludes to the rites of marriage, where two partners become "*one flesh*."

Further evidence of the nature of Antonio's feelings for Bassanio appears later in the play,

when Antonio's proclamations resonate with the hyperbole and self-satisfaction of a doomed lover's declaration: "*Pray God Bassanio come / To see me pay his debt, and then I care not*" (III 35–36).

Antonio ends the play as happily as he can, restored to wealth, even if not delivered in love. After all, he has effectively disabled him from pursuing his other hobby—abusing Shylock—by insisting that the Jew convert to Christianity. Although a sixteenth-century audience might have seen this demand as merciful. Antonio's reputation as an anti-Semite precedes him, but the only instance in the play when he breaks out of his doldrums is his "*storm*" against Shylock (I.iii.132). In this context, Antonio proves that the dominant threads of his character are melancholy and cruelty.

11.2.4 BASSANIO

Bassanio is a spendthrift who wasted all of his money in order to be seen as a respectable man. To regain his fortune, he is determined to marry Portia, a wealthy, intelligent heiress of Belmont. In order to ask for her hand in marriage, Bassanio and his best friend, Antonio enter into an agreement with the usurer Shylock. He is not the main character of the play but he still plays an important role. Even though his actions do not have a large impact on the play, he is responsible for the driving force behind the plot.

Bassanio serves as a kind of catalyst throughout *The Merchant of Venice*, provoking much of the play's action. At the beginning, Bassanio is a good-natured but an irresponsible young man who has gotten himself into debt by living beyond his means. He hopes to get out of debt by marrying a wealthy heiress. Bassanio shows his reckless nature by banking on this course of action. Bassanio takes his risks in the realm of love and desire. His confidence is ultimately rewarded since Portia falls in love with him. Despite his apparent financial impulsiveness, Bassanio chooses shrewdly when faced with the riddle of the caskets. The superficial beauty of the gold and silver caskets does not fool him, noting that "*the world is still deceived with ornament*" (III.ii.76). Bassanio's success in solving the riddle indicates his worthiness as a suitor for Portia.

Even though Bassanio exploits his friendship with Antonio by constantly borrowing his money, Bassanio's reaction to Antonio's misfortune reveals the love he has for his companion. Bassanio has just achieved his heart's desire by winning Portia's hand in marriage, but when he learns that Antonio defaulted on his loan and owes Shylock a pound of his flesh, Bassanio's focus immediately shifts to finding a way to help Antonio, and he hurries back to Venice. He reassures Antonio by saying, "*The Jew shall have my flesh, blood, bones, and all / Ere thou shalt lose for me one drop of blood*" (IV.i.113-114).

Bassanio remains steadfastly supportive of Antonio throughout the trial. Bassanio proves that he is still somewhat susceptible to social pressure by ultimately giving in to Antonio's urging and handing over the ring. By the end of the play, Bassanio has shown deep care for both Antonio and Portia, and he seems to manipulate situations to serve his own interests.

11.2.5 JESSICA

Jessica is the daughter of Shylock, a Jewish moneylender, in William Shakespeare's *The Merchant of Venice* (c. 1598). In the play, she elopes with Lorenzo, a penniless Christian, and a chest of her father's money, eventually ending up in Portia and Bassanio's household.

In the play's dramatic structure, Jessica has a minor but pivotal role. Her actions motivate Shylock's vengefulness insistence on his "*pound of flesh*" from Antonio. Literary critics have historically viewed the character negatively, highlighting her theft of her father's gold, her betrayal of his trust, and apparently selfish motivations and aimless behaviour.

As pointed the role of Jessica is a relatively minor one. She speaks 660 words over the play's five acts in the dramatic structure of the play. Her elopement with Lorenzo, taking her father's casket

of gold ducats motivates Shylock's vengefulness towards Antonio. She serves as a mirror, highlighting the differences between Shylock's Jewish household and Portia's Christian one and serves as the means by which Shylock is forcibly converted to Christianity

Jessica abandons her father, Shylock, and her Jewish identity in order to marry Lorenzo and convert to Christianity. She makes it clear that she is unhappy living with Shylock, saying things like *"our house is hell"* and *"though I am a daughter to his blood / I am not to his manners"* (II.iii). Lorenzo describes Jessica as *"wise, fair, and true"* (II.vi.56). She reveals her intelligence and independence when she escapes her father's house by disguising herself in male clothing and taking money and other valuables with her. Jessica is aware that she is violating traditional expectations of showing loyalty to her father, but she ultimately chooses Lorenzo in hopes of becoming a loving wife.

At the end, the play suggests that Jessica makes the right decision, as she enjoys a happy marriage and is rewarded with an income and inheritance that Antonio secured for her after Shylock lost the court case.

Jessica is more proactive and takes control of her own destiny. Jessica also functions as a sympathetic Jewish character and therefore as a kind of foil to the villainous Shylock. Lancelot describes her as the *"most beautiful pagan, most sweet Jew"* (II.iii.11-12). Lorenzo, who is a Christian, loves Jessica despite her faith and family origins. Thus, Jessica's beloved suggests that Shylock's cruel and vicious nature is specific to him and does not reflect all Jews.

11.2.6 GRATIANO

Gratiano is a friend of Bassanio's who accompanies him to Belmont. A coarse and garrulous young man, Gratiano is Shylock's most vocal and insulting critic during the trial. While Bassanio courts Portia, Gratiano falls in love with and eventually weds Portia's lady-in-waiting, Nerissa.

Gratiano is a very talkative and witty man. He has a keen sense of humour, an infinite capacity for talk, and a fertile wit. Bassanio expresses the view that the sense in Gratiano's talk may be compared to two grains of wheat hidden in a large heap of chaff (or straw).. Gratiano makes a substantial contribution to the comedy of the play.

Gratiano shows his wit even in the Trial Scene. Here his wit is ironical and sarcastic. Here his wit has an incisive quality that produces a devastating effect on the Jew. He repeats the words which Shylock has originally used when Shylock thought that he had won the case against Antonio. But Gratiano repeats those words in a tone of mockery and ridicule so as to aggravate the mental torture which Shylock is going through on finding that he has completely lost the case. The words Gratiano speaks are: *"O Jew! an upright judge, a learned judge!"* And then *"A second Daniel! I thank thee Jew for teaching me that word."* Indeed, Gratiano's wit here becomes bitter, and even fierce and violent. His wit takes even the form of abuse and denunciation. He calls Shylock a damned, cursed dog. He also says that Shylock was in his previous life a wolf because his desires in his present life are wolfish, bloody, and starved.

Gratiano's visit to Belmont does not prove to be futile. He is able to win Nerissa as his wife. He is, on the whole, a pleasing young man, with considerable knowledge of the world and of human nature. He and Nerissa are, indeed, well-matched and make an excellent pair.

11.2.7 NERISSA

Nerissa is the waiting-maid of Portia, but actually, she is more of a companion to Portia than a maidservant. She is a miniature Portia, though lacking in Portia's beauty and Portia's wealth.

Nerissa strikes us as a highly intelligent woman who understands Portia's nature and character

well. Portia is introduced in a rather melancholy mood. At this time, Nerissa makes some very shrewd remarks by means of which she is able to provide some comfort to her mistress and soothe her troubled mind. She points out to Portia that the latter has every reason to feel happy because of her good fortune, and then she further consoles her by saying that the lottery, which her late father had devised with regard to her marriage, is a sound method by which she would be able to acquire a suitable husband. Here Nerissa also gives evidence of her capacity to speak in an aphoristic style.

Nerissa has a strong sense of humour and is capable of making witty remarks just as she is capable of making wise ones. She fully gets into the spirit of Portia's witty comments on the four suitors who come to Belmont to win her, but who go away without venturing to make a choice of the caskets. She also fully enjoys the comedy of the rings conceived and started by Portia. She takes Gratiano to task for having given away her ring to somebody though he had sworn to keep it always with him. She pretends to disbelieve him entirely when he says that he had given the ring not to any woman, but to a man who had functioned as the judge's clerk in the court at Venice. Here she shows her wit by countering Gratiano's plea, and asserting that he is trying to throw dust into her eyes.

According to a critic, Nerissa is a clever, confidential waiting-woman who has caught something of her mistress's elegance and romance, and she mimics her mistress with emphasis and discretion. Nerissa and Gratiano, says this critic, are as well matched as the incomparable Portia and her splendid lover.

11.2.8 LORENZO

Lorenzo is a Christian young man who is able somehow to capture the heart of Jessica, the daughter of Shylock the Jew. He seems to be a smart and dashing young man with a handsome appearance and an active mind. He must, of course, have taken the initiative in making Jessica's acquaintance and then winning her heart. Indeed, for a Christian to win the heart of a Jewish girl in those days was like , conquering a fort or a citadel because of the bitter antagonism which existed between the two races.

Lorenzo has a keen sense of humour and also a capacity for making witty remarks. When Gratiano describes the silent kind of man, Lorenzo says that he certainly belongs to the class of such silent men because Gratiano himself talks so much that he does not allow him (Lorenzo) to talk at all. *"I must be one of these same dumb wise men"*, says Lorenzo.

Lorenzo expresses a high opinion about Antonio, telling Portia that Antonio is a true gentleman and a dear friend of Bassanio. He also wins Portia's confidence by his apparent good nature and trustworthiness. Portia leaves her house and her property in his charge when she leaves Belmont to preside over the legal proceedings in a Venetian court of law. Lorenzo is a good judge of character too. He not only appreciates the character of a fine gentleman like Antonio and a lovable young woman, namely Jessica, but also understands the temperament and nature of the clown, Launcelot. He rightly calls Launcelot a *"wit- snapper"*. and says that *"the fool hath planted in his memory an army of good words"*, He correctly perceives the fact that Launcelot tries to amuse him and others by his punning and his persistent play upon word.

11.2.9 Minor Characters

Doctor Bellario is a wealthy Paduan lawyer and Portia's cousin. Doctor Bellario never appears in the play, but he gives Portia's servant the letters of introduction needed for her to make her appearance in court.

Balthasar is Portia's servant, whom she dispatches to get the appropriate materials from Doctor Bellario.

The Prince of Morocco seeks Portia's hand in marriage. The Prince of Morocco asks Portia to

ignore his dark countenance and seeks to win her by picking one of the three caskets. He picks the gold chest, which proves to be incorrect.

Duke of Venice is the ruler of Venice, who presides over Antonio's trial. Although a powerful man, the duke's state is built on respect for the law, and he is unable to help Antonio.

- **The Prince of Arragon** is an arrogant Spanish nobleman who also attempts to win Portia's hand by picking a casket. Like the Prince of Morocco, however, the Prince of Arragon chooses unwisely. He picks the silver casket, which gives him a message calling him an idiot instead of Portia's hand.
- **Salarino** is a Venetian man, and friend of Antonio, Bassanio, and Lorenzo. Salarino escorts the newlyweds Jessica and Lorenzo to Belmont, and returns with Bassanio and Gratiano for Antonio's trial. He is often almost indistinguishable from his companion Solanio.
- **Solanio** is also a Venetian man, and frequent counterpart to Salarino.
- **Launcelot Gobbo** is Bassanio's servant. A comical, clownish figure that is especially adept at making puns, Launcelot leaves Shylock's service in order to work for Bassanio.
- **Salarino and Salanio** are (also known as Solanio) friends of Antonio and Bassanio
- **Salerio** is a messenger from Venice. He is the friend of Antonio, Bassanio and others.
- **Tubal** is a Jew in Venice, and one of Shylock's friends.
- **Old Gobbo** is Launcelot's father, also a servant in Venice.
- **Magnificoes of Venice** are the officers of the Court of Justice,
- **Golers** are the servants of Portia.
- **Leonardo** is the slave to Bassanio
- **Stephano** is the servant of Portia.

11.3 THEMES

11.3.1 Love versus Material Wealth

The Christian characters are shown on the surface as valuing relationships over business ventures. For example, Bassanio seems to be careless with money, and yet his will to develop relationships with others (e.g. Portia and Antonio) leads to him becoming extremely rich by the end of the play. Characters who value money and profit relationships, on the other hand, are seen as outcasts and destitute. This is put forward as a Jewish trait. Shylock, for example, laments the loss of material wealth more than the loss of his daughter. This being said, he also rejects wealth in order to seek justice

11.3.2 Marriage

Marriage in the play is associated with a number of different feelings and purposes, as opposed to simply romantic love. Marriage is the chance for Jessica to escape her unhappy household, for example, and provides Bassanio with the opportunity to gain vast material wealth. Marriage in the play is seen as a quest, a venture, in order to secure a better life

11.3.3 Mercy versus Justice

The dispute between Shylock and the Christian characters reaches its climax over the issue of mercy. Whilst Shylock is legally correct, the others expect him to be merciful as this is seen as the way of God in Christianity. However, he insists on getting his pound of flesh, as in his eyes this would ensure that he has justice for wrongdoings against him. In his eyes, this is a far more attractive

proposition.

11.4 DRAMATIC DEVICES IN THE *MERCHANT OF VENICE*

11.4.1 Dramatic Irony

In the court scene (Act 4 Scene 1), the audience knows that the lawyer is actually Portia, but the other characters do not.

11.4.2 Soliloquy

The quality of mercy is not strained (Spoken by Portia, Act 4 Scene1)

11.4.3 Aside

In Act 1 Scene 3, (lines 37-57) Shylock's aside shows that he holds hatred for Antonio, and relishes getting one over him

11.4.4 Foreshadowing

Bassanio's financial carelessness with his estate foreshadows his financial carelessness in lending money from Shylock.

11.4.5 Features of Comedy

a) Playful Language

Puns, quips and vibrant figurative language is written into the text to demonstrate wit.

b) Misunderstandings/ Confusion/ Deception

Humour is derived from characters' shrouded perceptions of reality.

c) Underlying Critique

Shakespeare ridicules some of the issues in society, e.g. Systems of class, love and honour.

d) Happy Ending

Normally involving a marriage.

11.5 SYMBOLS

11.5.1 The Three Caskets

The contest for Portia's hand, in which suitors from various countries choose among a gold, a silver, and a lead casket, resembles the cultural and legal system of Venice in some respects. Like the Venice of the play, the casket contest presents the same opportunities and the same rules to men of various nations, ethnicities, and religions. Also like Venice, the hidden bias of the casket test is fundamentally Christian.

11.5.2 The Pound of Flesh

The pound of flesh that Shylock seeks to lend itself to multiple interpretations: it emerges mostly as a metaphor for two of the play's closest relationships, but also calls attention to Shylock's inflexible adherence to the law. The fact that Bassanio's debt is to be paid with Antonio's flesh is significant, showing how their friendship is so binding it has made them almost one.

Lastly, the pound of flesh is a constant reminder of the rigidity of Shylock's world, where numerical calculations are used to evaluate even the most serious of situations. Shylock never explicitly demands that Antonio dies, but asks instead, in his numerical mind, for a pound in exchange for his three thousand ducats.

11.5.3 Leah's Ring

The ring given to Shylock in his bachelor days by a woman named Leah, who is most likely Shylock's wife and Jessica's mother, gets only a brief mention in the play, but is still an object of great importance. When told that Jessica has stolen it and traded it for a monkey, The lost ring allows us to see Shylock in an uncharacteristically vulnerable position and to view him as a human being capable of feeling something more than anger. Although Shylock and Tubal discuss the ring for no more than five lines, the ring stands as an important symbol of Shylock's humanity, his ability to love, and his ability to grieve.

11.6 SETTING

The Merchant of Venice is set in Italy in the sixteenth century, mainly in Venice. At that time, Venice was an independent city-state. Venetians like Antonio could both make and lose their fortunes by investing in naval trade. Venice was also one of the only European cities with a sizable Jewish population. By contrast, in England, the Jewish population had been officially expelled in 1290 and would not be allowed to legally return until the mid-seventeenth century. Venice had a distinctive political structure in which a council of representatives from the major aristocratic families governed the city. The Doge, or Duke, was elected by the Council to act as its administrative head, but he had a very different relationship to power and authority than a King or Queen would have under English law. The legal loophole Portia cleverly provides is made necessary by the political structure of the play's setting.

11.7 GENRE

The Merchant of Venice is a typical example of a Shakespearean comedy. The conflict at the heart of *Merchant* has the potential to end tragically. After Antonio forfeits his deadly bond, Shylock demands the pound of flesh he has been promised, and he almost succeeds in claiming it after making his argument in court.

Another twist on the typical comedy has to do with Shakespeare's complex and ambiguous treatment of Shylock. Shylock is clearly the play's villain, as indicated by his unrelenting insistence on taking his pound of flesh. Yet, despite the dehumanizing way other characters treat him, Shakespeare portrays Shylock as a complex and sympathetic figure. Shylock's sad end makes the play's final act and the lovers' quarrel at its center seem frivolous.

11.8 STYLE

The different uses of poetry and prose in *The Merchant of Venice* generally follow a division between social classes. Often in Shakespeare's plays, uneducated members of the working class tend to speak in prose, whereas educated members of the merchant class and the nobility tend to speak in verse. The different uses of prose and poetry based on class and emotional intensity set up an implicit hierarchy that privileges verse.

11.9 POINT OF VIEW

In *The Merchant of Venice* Shakespeare uses location and gender to frame point of view, creating a split between male-dominated Venice and woman-controlled Belmont. Belmont, by contrast, represents a place where matters of love and marriage take center stage. The play's first three acts oscillate between the two locations, alternating between the risky business ventures in Venice and the marriage trials in Belmont. Act IV's long courtroom scene brings the Venetian plot to a crisis point. The conflict between Shylock and Antonio comes to its head in this scene, and resolution arrives with the judge ultimately deciding in Antonio's favour. The Belmont-framed plot

has a more complicated structure.

In addition to location and gender, religion also plays an important role in framing point of view. *Merchant* stages a conflict between Christian and Jewish outlooks. Shylock and his daughter Jessica represent the only Jewish characters, the play's religious conflict is out of balance. It seems inevitable, when the Christian point of view wins out. Not only does Jessica steal away from her father to marry Lorenzo, a Christian, but Shylock himself is also ultimately ordered to convert to Christianity. Both Jewish characters disappear from the play before the final act.

11.10 TONE

The overall tone of *The Merchant of Venice* is ambiguous, split between despair and celebration, seriousness and playfulness. The ambiguous tone of the play carries important thematic weight.

11.11 LET US SUM UP

The Merchant of Venice is a 16th-century play written by William Shakespeare. The major conflict driving the plot of *The Merchant of Venice* takes place between Bassanio, who wants to marry Portia to gain the financial means to pay back his debt to Antonio, and Shylock, who wants revenge on Antonio for lending money without interest and for his anti-Semitic insults.

11.12 QUESTIONS

Q.1 Discuss the characteristics of Antonio.

Q.2 Discuss the role of Shylock in "The Merchant of Venice."

Q.3 Write a Character-sketch of Portia. ."

Q.4 Write short notes on the setting, style, genre, and tone of the drama, *The Merchant of Venice*

Q.5 Discuss dramatic devices of drama *The Merchant of Venice*.

Q6. Discuss the symbolism of drama with reference to *The Merchant of Venice*.

11.13 FURTHER READINGS

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UNIT 12 ANNOTATIONS: IMPORTANT PASSAGES

12.0 Introduction

12.1 Objectives

12.2 Annotations: Important Passages

12.2.1 Let me play the fool;----By being peevish?

12.2.2 Nor is the wide world ----- come in quest of her.

12.2.3 Yes, to smell pork----- Drink with you, nor with you.

12.2.4 Ships are but boards, -----not withstanding, sufficient.

12.2.5 Money is your suit;----- I'll lend you thus much moneys?

12.2.6 O father Abraham----- beefs, or goats.

12.2.7 And when you hear ----- with varnished faces.

12.2.8 My daughter! O my ducats!----- and my daughter!

12.2.9 Sh. My own flesh and----- red wine and Rhenish.

12.2.10 Hath not a Jew eye?----- resemble you in that.

12.2.11 Then I'll repent,----- Which I will practise.

12.2.12 And pluck commiseration ----- of tender courtesy.

12.2.13 Some men there----- Of what it like or loathes.

12.2.14 The quality of mercy is----- mercy seasons justice.

12.2.15 What man is there----- me what to believe.

12.3 Let us Sum Up

12.4 Questions

12.5 Further Readings

12.0 INTRODUCTION

This unit will introduce you to some important passages of William Shakespeare's drama '*The Merchant of Venice*'. Through explanation of the passages, you will know that The major conflict of The Merchant of Venice takes place between Bassanio, who wants to marry Portia to gain the financial means to pay back his debt to Antonio, and Shylock, who wants revenge on Antonio for lending money without interest and for his anti-Semitic insults.

12.1 OBJECTIVES

After going through some passages, you will get explanations of these passages and it will help you to understand the drama , The Merchant of Venice more clearly.

12.2 ANNOTATIONS: IMPORTANT PASSAGES

ACT I

12.2.1 (Act I, Sc.I, Lines 80-86)

Let me play the fool;

*With mirth and laughter let old wrinkles come,
And let my liver rather heat with wine
Than my heart cool with mortifying groans.
Why should a man whose blood warm within,
Sit like his grandsire cut in alabaster!
Sleep when he wakes and creepo into the jaundice
By being peevish?*

Reference: These lines have been taken from William Shakespeare's drama, The Merchant of Venice Act I Scene I

Context: These lines are taken from The Merchant of Venice. Antonio's friends have been trying to find reasons for his melancholy. Antonio says that he is by nature a serious and gloomy man. Gratiano in this passage comments upon Antonio's statement.

Explanation: Gratiano says that he would rather be a jester than a kill-joy. He would like to remain happy and gay until his very old age. It is better to drink heavily, even if it is harmful to health than to sink into despair and feel worried about death. He cannot understand why a man in the prime of his life should feel sad and keep quiet as the stone statue of his grandfather. Why should a man be lazy and inactive in spite of youthful energy? Why should he contract diseases like jaundice by remaining continuously ill tempered? Antonio's melancholy seems causeless to Gratiano. He, therefore, condemns it in a witty manner.

12.2.2 (Act I, Sc.I, Lines 167-172)

*Nor is the wide world ignorant of her worth:
For the four winds blow in from every coast
Renowned suitors; and her sunny locks
Hang on her temples like a golden fleece;
Which makes her seat of Belmont Colcho's strand
And many Jasons come in quest of her.*

Reference: These lines have been taken from William Shakespeare's drama, The Merchant of Venice Act . I, Sc.I,

Context: These lines are taken from The Merchant of Venice. Bassanio wants a loan of money from his friend Antonio in order to try his luck at winning Portia. He praises highly the woman whom he wishes to marry for her wealth as well as beauty.

Explanation: Portia's beauty and accomplishments, tells Bassanio, are not a secret from anyone. She is so widely known that men of high rank and position from all the countries and lands go to Belmont, where she lives. She likes Colchis. Just as Jason went to Colchis in order to win the golden fleece, similarly suitors from far and near go to Belmont in order to win fair Portia.

12.2.3 (Act I, Sc.III, Lines 31-35)

*Yes, to smell pork; to eat of the habitation which
Your prophet the Nazarite conjured the devil into.
I will buy with you, sell will, you talk with you,*

Drink with you, nor with you.

Reference: These lines have been taken from William Shakespeare's drama, The Merchant of Venice Act . I, Sc.III.

Context: These lines are spoken by Shylock in Scene III of Act I of The Merchant of Venice. Shylock and Bassanio have been talking about the loan of three thousand ducats for a period of three months for which Antonio is to stand as a surety. Shylock tells Bassanio that he could stand surety for him. Although all Antonio's fortunes 'are at sea' yet Shylock considers him sufficient. But before giving that loan Shylock must see Antonio and speak to him.

Explanation: When Bassanio invites Shylock to dinner, where he could talk to Antonio, Shylock says that he would have commercial dealing with the Christians but would not mix with them socially. He would not dine with a Christian because they eat pork, which is a prohibited food for the Jews. Shylock contemptuously refers to swine as the dwelling place of the devil; he is alluding to the miracle of Jesus Christ, who compelled certain evil spirits to come out of two men and allowed them to enter the bodies of a herd of swine.

12.2.4 (Act I, Sc.III, Lines 21-25)

*Ships are but boards, sailors but men: there be
land-rats and water-rats, water-thieves and
land- thieves. I mean pirates, and then there is
the peril of waters, winds and rocks. The man is
not withstanding, sufficient.*

Reference: These lines have been taken from William Shakespeare's drama, The Merchant of Venice Act . I, Sc.III.

Context: These words are spoken by Shylock to Bassanio in reply to Bassanio's request for a loan. Shylock clearly appears clever and cunning as he exaggerates the dangers to which the ships of Antonio are exposed.

Explanation: Shylock asks Bassanio how he can be certain that, if he gives a loan to Antonio, his money will be safe. True that Antonio is a wealthy merchant, but all his money is invested in ships and merchandise. There can be no certainty that Antonio's ships will return safely to harbour. What are the ships? They are just made of wooden boards. What are sailors? They are just human beings. There are not only thieves on the land like land-rats, but there are also thieves on water like water rats— that is, there are pirates (sea-robbers). Antonio's ships may be seized from sea-robbers. What then is the surety that Shylock's money will be safe? Besides the danger from sea-robbers, there is also the danger from storms and rocks. Antonio's ships may get wrecked. Under these circumstances, if Shylock lends money to Antonio, he will be taking a great risk. And yet, he says, nobody can doubt that Antonio is a man of wealth.

12.2.5 (Act I, Sc.III, Lines 108-118)

*Money is you your suit;
What should I say to you? Should I not say,
Hath a dog money? Is it possible
A cur can lend three thousands ducats? Or
Shall I bend low, and in bondman's key,*

With bated breath and whispering humbleness

Say this----

“Fair sir, you spit on me Wednesday last;

You spurn’d me such a day; another time

You call’d me dog; and for these courtesies

I’ll lend you thus much moneys?”

Reference: These lines have been taken from William Shakespeare’s drama, *The Merchant of Venice* Act . I, **Sc.III**.

Context: These lines are taken from *The Merchant of Venice*. The speaker is Shylock who is addressing Antonio when the latter has requested a loan of three thousand ducats from the Jew.

Explanation: Shylock reminds Antonio of the insults and indignities that the latter has been heaping upon the Jew. Antonio has often called the Jew a dog and has often spat on his clothes. Now Antonio wants a loan from the same Jew. How should the Jew behave now? Asks Shylock. How can a dog or cur lend money? Why should Antonio now expect money from Shylock whom he holds in contempt? Should Shylock bend low to Antonio and offer him the loan respectfully? Should he give him three thousand ducats for having been called a misbeliever, a cut-throat dog, etc.? Should he give him the money for having been insulted, degraded, and spat upon?

12.2.6 (Act I, Sc.III, Lines 149-156)

O father Abraham, what these Christians are,

Whose own hard dealing teaches them suspect

The thoughts of others, Pray you, tell me this;

If he should break his day, what should I gain

By the exaction of the forfeiture?

A pound of man’s flesh taken from a man

Is not so estimable, profitable neither

As flesh of muttons, beefs, or goats.

Reference: These lines have been taken from William Shakespeare’s drama, *The Merchant of Venice* Act . I, **Sc.III**.

Context: These lines, taken from *The Merchant of Venice*, are spoken by Shylock when Bassanio tries to prevent Antonio from signing the bond.

Explanation: Shylock appeals to Abraham and expresses his surprise at the suspicious nature of Christians. He says that because Christians are merciless in their own dealings with others, they regard others also as equally merciless. He asks Bassanio what he can gain by cutting a pound of Antonio’s flesh in case Antonio fails to repay the loan before the fixed date. He adds that a pound of a goat’s flesh or a cow’s flesh is more valuable than a pound of human flesh.

ACT II

12.2.7 (Act II, Sc.IV, Lines 29-33)

And when you hear the drum

And the vile squealing of the wry-neck’d fife,

*Clamber not you up to the casements then.
Nor thrust your head into the casements then.
Nor thrust your head into the public street.
To gaze on Christian fools with varnished faces.*

Reference: These lines have been taken from William Shakespeare's drama, The Merchant of Venice Act . II, Sc.IV

Context: Shylock addresses these words to Jessica in Act II, Scene V of The Merchant of Venice. He has been invited to a feast and he is asking Jessica to guard the house in his absence and shut the windows if she sees a masque of the Christians in the street.

Explanation: Shylock asks Jessica to note his words. When she hears the sound of the drum and the hateful noise of other musical instruments of the Christians she should not climb to the windows and thrust her head out to listen to them. She should shut all the windows of his house so that no sound of the merry-making of the Christians should pour into it. Thus, not to mix with them, Shylock does not even want the sound of the Christians to enter his house.

12.2.8 Act II, Sc.VIII(Lines 15-17)

*My daughter! O my ducats! O my daughter!
Fled with a Christian! O my Christians ducats!
Justice! The law! My ducats, and my daughter!*

Reference: These lines have been taken from William Shakespeare's drama, The Merchant of Venice Act . II, Sc.VIII

Context: These lines are taken from Act II Scene VIII of The merchant of Venice. Salanio tells Salarino about Shylock's turmoil-storm in his mind on finding his daughter has eloped with Lorenzo.

Explanation: In these lines, Shylock laments about his daughter who has eloped with her lover. In his outcry, Shylock seems greatly upset by the loss of both—his daughter and ducats, with perhaps the greatest weight on the latter. In utter despair, he moves about the streets, crying about his loss. The worst part of it is that she has run away with a Christian.

ACT III

12.2.9 Act III, Sc.I (Lines 31-35)

*Sh. My own flesh and blood to rebel:
Sal. There is more difference between thy flesh
And hers than between jet and ivory; more
between your bloods than there is between red
wine and Rhenish*

Reference: These lines have been taken from William Shakespeare's drama, The Merchant of

Venice Act .III, Sc.I

Context: This is a piece of dialogue between Shylock and Salarino in The Merchant of Venice when Jessica has run away from her father's home.

Explanation: Shylock condemns his daughter for having run away from home and having thus defied her own father. Salarino says that there is nothing in common between Shylock and Jessica. She differs from her father as much as the black colour differs from the white or as red wine differs from white wine. In other words, there is a world of difference between Shylock and Jessica, and therefore, if she has run away from home, she has done Shylock no wrong.

12.2.10 Act III, Sc.I (Lines 50-59)

*Hath not a Jew eye? hath not a Jew hands,
Organs, dimensions, senses, affections,
passions? fed with the same food, hurt with the
same weapons, subjects to the same disease, heted
by the same means, warmed and cooled by the
same winter and summer, as a Christian is? If
you prick us do we not bleed? If you tickle us
do we not laugh? If you poison us do we not die
and if you wrong us shall we not revenge if we
are like you in the rest, we will resemble you in that.*

Reference: These lines have been taken from William Shakespeare's drama, The Merchant of Venice Act .III, Sc.I

Context: These lines are spoken by Shylock in Act III, Scene I of The Merchant of Venice. This great, passionate speech of Shylock is a fervent protest against religious discrimination and a plea for treating the persecuted Jews as human beings Shylock here stands as the champion of his oppressed race. Antonio has insulted the Jew, publicly, laughed at him and excited his enemies against the Jew. Now his opportunity for revenge has come and he must utilize it.

Explanation: Shylock pleads that the distinction between a Jew and a Christian is an artificial and stupid one. All men belong to the same human family, and there is not the elemental difference between men. Is a Jew, not fed with the same food as others eat? Is a Jew, not hurt when attacked with a weapon, when others are? Shylock sees no reason why the Jews should be hated. A Jew also is attacked by the same disease, healed by the same remedies, warned by the same summer and cooled by the same winter as a Christian is. They also have a sensation of pleasure and pain. If you hurt them, do they not bleed. The law of cause and effect is absolutely the same with both the Jews and the Christians. Do they not laugh when tickled! They are also liable to be killed by poison as a Christian is. If any wrong is done to them shall they not revenge? When a Christian suffers an injury, he wants revenge. In a similar manner when a Jew suffers an insult, he too wants revenge. They also have the spirit of retaliation and skills certainly take revenge when they have an opportunity.

12.2.11 Act III, Sc.IV(Lines 72-78)

*Then I'll repent,
And wish, for all that, that I had not kill'd them;*

*And twenty of these puny lies I'll tell;
That men shall swear I have within my mind
A thousand raw tricks of these bragging Jacks,
Which I will practise.*

Reference: These lines have been taken from William Shakespeare's drama, The Merchant of Venice Act .III, Sc.IV

Context : Portia speaks these words to Nerissa in The Merchant of Venice when Portia has decided to dress herself in male clothes in order to go to Venice. She will take Nerissa along with her, and Nerissa will also be dressed in male clothes. Portia mocks at the behaviour of young men who boast of their adventures in love and of their bravery.

Explanation: Portia says that, when she is dressed like a man, she too will boast of her conquests over the hearts of women. She will relate stories about women who died for her sake. Then she will express her regret at having let them die. She will tell scores of such petty lies. She says that she will so successfully imitate the talk of men that people will really begin to think of her as a young man, who has recently left school. She adds that she knows hundreds of these crude tricks which boastful young men employ. She, too, will employ those tricks in order to convince people that she is a young man.

ACT IV

12.2.12 Act IV, Sc.I, (Lines 30-33)

*And pluck commiseration of his state
From brassy bosoms and rough hearts of flint.
From stubborn Turk's and Tartars, never train'd
To offices of tender courtesy.*

Reference: These lines have been taken from William Shakespeare's drama, The Merchant of Venice Act .IV, Sc.I

Context: These lines occur in Act IV, Scene I, of The Merchant of Venice written by William Shakespeare. In this famous Trial Scene, we find the Duke requesting the Jew, not to be barbaric in accepting only the flesh and nothing else.

Explanation: The Duke pleads with Shylock to pacify his anger and cruelty. He says that recently Antonio has been the victim of many losses. The royal merchant has been reduced to a sorry plight. His condition is so sad and pathetic that it is bound to give rise to pity and sympathy, even in the cruel and hard-hearted Turks and Tartars who never know what pity is. The Duke appeals to Shylock that he should sympathetically consider the sad losses which have come crowding on Antonio.

12.2.13 Act IV, Sc.I (Lines 47-52)

*Some men there are love not a gaping;
Some, that are mad if they behold a cat;
And others, when the bag-pipe sings in the nose,
Cannot contain: for affection,
Mistress of passions, sways it to the mood*

Of what it like or loathes.

Reference: These lines have been taken from William Shakespeare, drama, The Merchant of Venice Act .IV , Sc.I

Context: These lines are spoken by Shylock in the first scene of Act IV of The Merchant of Venice. After the forfeiture of the bond, Shylock is determined to cut the pound of flesh from Antonio's body. The Duke in the court requests him to give up this intention and asks him why he is so much bent upon it when it is of no use to him. To this Shylock replies that it is his personal choice and nobody can question it.

Explanation: In this famous Trial Scene, Shylock makes a spirited and rational defence of his conduct in repeatedly insisting upon a pound of Antonio's flesh. His arguments are evasive; hatred is instinctive and irrational. Why should one man like a thing and another man hate it? A gaping or a harmless cat can do one no mortal injury; still there are people who hate them. His implication is that Antonio had done him an injury; and even without that, he can hate him.

12.2.14 Act IV, Sc.I (Lines 182-195)

*The quality of mercy is not strained;
It droppeth as the gentle rain from heaven
Upon the place beneath. It is twice blest;
It blesseth him that gives and him that takes:
'T is mightiest in the mightiest; it becomes
The throned monarch better than his crown:
His sceptre shows the force of temporal power,
The attribute to awe and majesty,
Wherein doth sit the dread and fear of kings;
But mercy is above this sceptred sway;
It is enthronèd in the hearts of kings,
It is an attribute to God himself;
And earthly power doth then show likest God's
When mercy seasons justice.*

Reference: These lines have been taken from William Shakespeare's drama, The merchant of Venice Act .IV , Sc.I

Context: This is the first part of Portia's famous "Quality of Mercy" speech addressed to Shylock in The Merchant of Venice in the Trial Scene.

Explanation: Portia says that the feeling of mercy cannot be forced from a human being. Mercy springs as naturally or spontaneously from the human heart as the rain falling from clouds on earth. Mercy yields a double reward— it blesses him to whom mercy is shown, but it also blesses him who shows mercy. The greater the person showing mercy, the higher is the quality of mercy. A king appears to be better by his mercy than by his crown. The king's scepter is a symbol of his earthly power. It is a sign of his majesty and its purpose is to stir fear and awe in the hearts of the subjects. But mercy is a nobler power. The true place for mercy is in the heart of king. Mercy is an essential quality of God Almighty. A human authority acquires a divine character by softening the hardness of justice with mercy.

ACT V

12.2.15 Act V, Sc.I, Lines (203-207)

What man is there so much unreasonable.

If you had pleased to have defend it

With any terms of zeal, wanted the modesty

To urge the thing held as a ceremony?

Nerissa teaches me what to believe.

Reference: These lines are extracted from William Shakespeare's drama, The Merchant of Venice Act .V, Sc.I

Context: These lines are part of Portia's speech to Bassanio in Act V of The Merchant of Venice. Bassanio has tried to explain the circumstances under which he felt compelled to give away Portia's ring to the judge who decided Shylock's case against Antonio. Bassanio has said that the judge would not take anything but the ring and that he found it impossible to resist the judge's demand. Portia pretends not to be satisfied with Bassanio's explanation.

Explanation: Portia says that she cannot believe that the judge could have been so unreasonable as to insist upon getting the ring. She says that if Bassanio had emphatically and forcefully told the judge that the ring was a sacred token of his wife's love, the judge would not then have been so disregarding of Bassanio's sentiments. She adds that she agrees with Nerissa in the latter's view that the two men (Bassanio and Gratiano) gave away the rings to their mistresses in Venice. Portia is counterfeiting anger and is charging her husband with unfaithfulness towards her. All this is, of course, a part of the comedy of rings.

12.3 LET US SUM UP

The Merchant of Venice is **the conflict between self-interest and love**. On the surface level, the major difference between Shylock the Jew and the Christian characters of the play is their level of compassion. The main plot centers on the question of mercy and forgiveness as seen in the relationship between Antonio, the kind Christian, and Shylock, the unrelenting Jew.

The three subplots revolve around the romances of Portia and Bassanio (the most important couple in the play), of Lorenzo and Jessica, and of Gratiano and Nerissa (the least important couple of the play). The characters are, therefore, are tied together by friendship and Christianity. In the end, the play is a romantic comedy that emphasizes the rewards of love, generosity, and harmony. The threads of love, generosity, friendship, and the wise use of money bind plots, which are the reflection of the Elizabethan society.

12.4 QUESTIONS

Q1. Explain the following lines with reference to context. Refer to 13.3.ACT I Passage 1)

Let me play the fool;

With mirth and laughter let old wrinkles come,

And let my liver rather heat with wine

Than my heart cool with mortifying groans.

Why should a man whose blood warm within,

Sit like his grandsire cut in alabaster!

*Sleep when he wakes and creepo into the jaundice
By being peevish?*

- Q2. Explain the following lines with reference to context. Refer to 13.3.ACT I Passage 6

*O Father Abraham, what these Christians are,
Whose own hard dealing teaches them suspect
The thoughts of others. Pray you, tellme this:
If he should break his day, what should I gain
By the exaction of the forfeiture?
A pound of man's flesh taken from a man
Is not so estimable, profitable neither
As flesh of muttons, beefs, or goats.*

- Q3. Explain the following lines with reference to context. Refer to 13.3.ACT II Passage 1

*My daughter! O my ducats! O my daughter!
Fled with a Christian! O my Christians ducats!
Justice! The law! My ducats, and my daughter!*

- Q4. Explain the following lines with reference to context. Refer to 13.3. ACT III Passage 2

*Hath not a Jew eye? hath not a Jew hands,
Organs, dimensions, senses, affections,
passions? fed with the same food, hurt with the
same weapons, subjects to the same disease, heted
by the same means, warmed and cooled by the
same winter and summer, as a Christian is? If
you prick us do we not bleed? If you tickle us
do we not laugh? If you poison us do we not die
and if you wrong us shall we not revenge if we
are like you in the rest, we will resemble you in that.*

- Q4. Explain the following lines with reference to context. Refer to 13.3. ACT IV Passage 3

*The quality of mercy is not strained;
It droppeth as the gentle rain from heaven
Upon the place beneath. It is twice blest;
It blesseth him that gives and him that takes:
'T is mightiest in the mightiest; it becomes
The throned monarch better than his crown:
His sceptre shows the force of temporal power,*

*The attribute to awe and majesty;
 Wherein doth sit the dread and fear of kings;
 But mercy is above this sceptred sway;
 It is enthronèd in the hearts of kings,
 It is an attribute to God himself;
 And earthly power doth then show likest God's
 When mercy seasons justice.*

Q5. Explain the following lines with reference to context. Refer to 13.3. ACT V Passage 1

*What man is there so much unreasonable.
 If you had pleased to have defend it
 With any terms of zeal, wanted the modesty
 To urge the thing held as a ceremony?
 Nerissa teaches me what to believe.*

12.5 Further Readings

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- Nayar, Pramod K. (2015). *A Short History of English Literature*. New Delhi: Cambridge University Press India Pvt.Ltd
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Block Introduction IV

This is the fourth block of this course. This block starts with a description of modern dramatist G.B. Shaw's life and his literary work and critical summary of the play further Arms and the Man. This block contains the idea of modern drama in the context of Europe and then a discussion shall be provided on the modern dramatist G.B. Shaw, so that you can have better understanding of the various characteristics of modern drama through the reading of the one prescribed one plays by this playwright.

This block has four units, which are as the following :

Unit 13 This unit shall introduce you to the Irish dramatist George Bernard Shaw who is generally considered the greatest dramatist to write in Twentieth Century British Literature. In this unit, we discuss the life and works of G.B. Shaw and critically analyse Act I of *Arms and the Man*.

Unit 14 Critically analyses Act II & Act III

In Unit 15, we discuss the topics like title of the play, theme, the major and minor characters, structure and style and the play as an anti-romantic comedy.

Unit 16, discusses the important passages for annotations.

UNIT 13 LIFE AND WORK OF G.B. SHAW AND ANALYSIS ACT-I

Structure

- 13.0 Introduction
- 13.1 Objectives
- 13.2 The Emergence of Modern English Drama
- 13.3 Life and Works of G.B. Shaw
 - 13.3.1 His life
 - 13.3.2 Dramatic works
- 13.4 G.B. Shaw as a Dramatist
- 13.5 Summary of the Act I
 - 13.5.1 Critical Analysis
- 13.6 Let us sum up
- 13.7 Questions
- 13.8 Further Readings

13.0 INTRODUCTION

Earlier in this course, you have been introduced to some of the finest Indian and British writers and their works, such as the fiction of Shashi Deshpande, George Orwell and the drama of Shakespeare. In this block, we will discuss Drama once again and study the play *Arms and the Man* by the British dramatist G.B. Shaw. Before we study the play in detail, we will discuss the emergence of Modern English drama and the life and works of G.B. Shaw. This discussion will be followed by an analytical discussion of Act I of *Arms and the Man* which is prescribed for you.

G.B. Shaw was the greatest Irish dramatist and critic of English Literature. He produced more than fifty-two plays, three volumes of music and drama criticism and one major volume of socialist commentary. Through this unit, you will be able to learn certain important ideas regarding Shaw as the person and the playwright.

13.1 OBJECTIVES

After completing this unit you will be able to:

- discuss the development of Modern Drama in Europe
- discuss the life and works of G.B. Shaw
- assess G.B. Shaw's contribution to modern drama.
- trace the source of the play *Arms and the Man*
- critically analyse Act I of *Arms and the Man*.

13.2 THE EMERGENCE OF MODERN ENGLISH DRAMA

Drama in England has had to endure a struggle against prejudice among large sections of the public and from the state discouragement of a particularly unintelligent order. The degree to which initiative can survive against such difficulties can be seen in a number of instances such as the

history of the triumph of Lilian Baylis at the 'Old Vic' and Sadler's Wells. This introduction is written in 1946 when for the first time the state by its charter to the Arts council of Great Britain gives official and financial support to the arts including the art of drama.

Modern Drama is a period of literature that can be difficult to place within a distinct beginning and end because history is never ending it can be hard to classify as to, when one era starts and finishes, since literature does not change overnight there is no straight lived, apparent transformation of thematic elements in style. Although the beginning of modern drama has no specific start date, Christopher Innes, the author of 'Modern British Drama' provides a timeline of events that follows Modern British Drama's history According to Innes, 1890 marks the beginning of modern British Drama with G.B. Shaw's attack on the immediately previous Victorian era.

Modern drama in the 20th century developed technical experimentations while the symbolists played with the props, color, music and stage designs to playfully deliver their content. The Modern theatre as such is an enormous enterprise strongly characterized by diversity of themes and techniques as well as good variety of genres. Different literary movements and approaches like realism, symbolism, expressionism, poetic drama, impressionism and many other styles have been part of modern theatre.

Of the English theatre in the 20th century this at least can be said that it is better than the English theater in the 17th century. The art of the theatre still works uneasily inside the entertainment industry. It suffers from the inroads of speculators and of commercialism and especially in the provinces it has carried on an uneven competition with the films. There were many towns of a considerable size in England without a professional theatre of any sort. Children often complete their education without seeing a play acted by living and professional actors on a stage. Yet the art of theatre has developed especially during the last two decades. Methods of production have improved and the composition of original plays of merit has been considerable.

Modern drama begins with the most significant and outstanding qualities of realism. It was Henrik Ibsen, the Norwegian dramatist who popularized realism in modern drama. He dealt with the problems of real life in a realistic manner in plays Robertson, Pinero, Bernard Shaw followed realistic manners in their plays. The emergence of realistic technique of acting and stage performance marks the first phase of modernism in drama. Another significant development was poetic drama, which was espoused by T.S. Eliot against the realistic prose drama of modern age.

Modern drama is essentially a drama of ideas rather than action. The modern drama dealing with the problems of life has become more intellectual than ever it was in the history of drama before the modern age. The three classical unities of time place and action are generally maintained in modern drama. Dialogue in modern drama are short and trenchant.

13.3 LIFE AND WORKS OF G.B. SHAW

George Bernard Shaw was an Irish playwright literary critic and socialist propagandist of the 20th century. He was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1925. It is important for you to know about the life and works of G.B. Shaw. This section offers a broad understanding of the dramatist and as is expected to help steer your interest in the play.

13.3.1 HIS LIFE

George Bernard Shaw, was born on 26 July 1856, at Dublin a city known for great dramatists. His parents were originally of English stock and he claimed descent from Macdulf Thane of Fife and from Oliver Crowell, Lord protector of England (1653-58). Preceded by two sisters he was the only son of George Carr Shaw, a civil clerk, turned whole scale corn merchant and Lucinda Elizabeth Gurley, music teacher and singer. The family was of Anglo Irish heritage and was

protestant by religion. As Bernard Shaw's father George Carr Shaw was incapable of earning enough money to provide for his wife and three children who were born to them, G.B. Shaw's mother and Sisters, Elinor Agnes and Lucinda Frances had left Dublin in 1876 to live permanently in London. This incident took place when G.B. Shaw was sixteen. He attended several schools in Dublin but had a dislike for formal education. At the age of fifteen he started working as an office boy and later junior clerk in a firm of estate agents in Dublin for five years.

G.B. Shaw also became a political activist and a leading member of the *Fabian Society*. He was a regular speaker on BBC for several years. G.B. Shaw married Charlotte Payne-Townshend an Irish political activist in 1888 and they lived together till her death in 1943. Shaw passed peacefully on 2nd November 1950 at the age of Ninety five.

13.3.2 HIS LITERARY WORKS

In London, Shaw gave up his job at a telephone company as it was not suited to his taste. In fact, such a job was repellent to his nature. He had literary bent of mind, so he sought to build his career as a writer. He tried assiduously to find a floating in London's intellectual circle. He joined several intellectual debating clubs and societies. His first novel *Immaturity* was completed in 1879. This was followed by four others: *The Irrational Knot* (1880), *Love Among the Artists* (1881), *Cashel Byron's Profession* (1882) and *An Unsocial Socialist* (1883). But the book publishers did not find them fit for publication. However four of his novels appeared in small magazines during 1885-1888. It may be noted that Shaw is not famous as a novelist.

G.B. Shaw continued to make progress as a writer. He became popular in London as writer of newspapers and magazines. He worked as book reviewer, art and music critic for different papers. In 1889, he wrote *Fabian Essays in Socialism*. In 1891 he wrote "The Quintessence of Ibsenism". He was deeply influenced by the Norwegian playwright Henrik Ibsen. In 1925 he was awarded Nobel Prize for literature for his contribution in the realm of drama.

Shaw was a prolific writer and over a writing career spanning more than sixty years, wrote more than fifty plays. Shaw's major plays are: *Widower's House* (1892), *Mrs. Warren's Profession* (1893), *The Arms and the Man* & *Candida* (1894), *The Man of Destiny* (1895), *You Never Can Tell* (1896), *The Devil's Disciple* (1897), *Caesar and Cleopatra* (1898), *Man and Superman* (1901-02), *Major Barbara* (1905), *The Doctor's Dilemma* (1906), *Androcles and the Lion* (1911-12), *Pygmalion* (1911-12), *Heartbreak House* (1916-17), *Back to Methuselah* (1921), *Saint Joan* (1923), *The Apple Cart* (1929) and *In Good King Character's Golden Days* (1939) etc.

13.4 G.B. SHAW AS A DRAMATIST

George Bernard Shaw is very prominent figure in the field of literature for his contribution in dramas of 20th century. Generally, he is known as the second best dramatist in English Literature after William Shakespeare.

T.N. Dickinson says: "Whatever Shaw is, not primarily a dramatist. Before he came to the writing of plays he had expressed himself as lecturer, writer on social and economic topics, novelist and critic." In Shaw's plays, his image emerges as a revolutionist and realist. He always analyzes human motives and causes of action and trying to find out whether they are justified or not. But Shaw is not a philosopher because his plays lack the inconsistency of a philosopher. Shaw is a tester of human values and therefore more interested in man's experiments and efforts towards truth than in any abstract vision of truth. Shaw is very close to the realism which is seen in his criticism, commentary and in playwriting. He would identify human reason with the working of the life force.

Undoubtedly, Shaw is a critic. He searches the object of his criticism for its underlying ideas and subjects these to his test of the logic of events. In his plays, we have middle class bigotry,

aesthetic artists, women pursuing men, rational breaking of moral codes, the problems of wealth, ridiculers of ideas of sports and heroism. His characters by the fact are taking all talking characters. There never has been such a gallery of freely expressive individuals. We can see the romanticism and intellectual contradiction in his plays.

13.5 SUMMARY OF ACT I

The play begins with the bedroom scene. A lady's bed-chamber is in a small town near the Dragoman pass. It is about midnight late in November, 1885. Raina is the lady who stands out on the balcony of her bed-chamber. She wears a fur dressing gown worth three times the room's furniture. Catherine, her mother interrupts Raina's reverie and tells her that there was a great battle going on at Silvintza between the Serbians and the Bulgarians, and Bulgarians have won this battle. Here Catherine Petkoff describes the great victory won by the Bulgarian cavalry. The cavalry charge was led by major Sergius. Hearing this news Raina is thrilled and is very proud of her lover.

Their maid servant Louka enters and tells the rejoicing mother and daughter that all windows and doors must be closed lest escaping soldiers or errant bullets get in. Catherine and Louka leave Raina's room after all the windows and doors are closed.

Being alone in the room Raina takes up his (Sergius') portrait and worships it as if it was the image of God. She feels Sergius is her "Soul's hero" and turns over the pages of a novel. All at once the shutters of the window are thrown open and a man appears in the room and asks Raina not to call out lest she should be shot. He commands her to light a candle. She finds a Serbian army officer of 35 whose torn uniform is bespattered with mud and blood. He frankly tells her that he is a Serbian Soldier. He has away from the battle field, to save his life. He tells that he does not want to get killed. Raina thinks that he is cowardly soldier but he shocks her by saying that all soldiers are cowards. In meantime an officer of Bulgarian army requests to search the room as some people reported seeing a man climb in Raina skill fully hides the Serbian officer behind the curtain and convinces the other soldiers that there is nobody there.

Later the man comes out from behind the curtain to where Raina is. He tells her that he is a Swiss and fighting for the Serbs merely as a professional soldier. Raina sits upon the pistol and jumps with shriek and the man runs like a frightened horse to the other side of the room. The man reveals that his gun has no cartridge in it and that in fact, he generally carries chocolates where there should be cartridges instead. He is a professional soldier and knows that chocolate and food are more important in the long run than bullet.

Raina contemptuously gives him the last of her chocolate creams and he gratefully eats them. Rather than allowing him to take the chance of capture and execution, Raina convinces Bluntschli to rely upon her and her mother's good will. She leaves to enlist the help of her mother and when Raina and her mother Catherine return to the room the man has fallen asleep from stress and exhaustion. They wake him dress him in an old coat of major's and sneak him out safely.

13.5.1 ANALYSIS OF ACT I

In Act I, Shaw's main aim is to dispel romantic notions of bravery and heroism in war as well as in love. He rejects these notions as silly by showing the contrast between different characters. In the beginning, Raina is full of romantic idealism related to war and love. She feels Sergius as a great hero of war which is not in reality. On the other hand, Bluntschli is a practical and professional soldier. He possesses sturdy commonsense and experience of life. At the outset, he appears harsh and unfeeling and threatens Raina with a pistol. But when he finds that the Bulgarian soldiers are going to search the house, he behaves like a gentleman. His threat was false. He did not have even a cartridge in his gun. Unlike Sergius, he is down to earth in his attitude to life. His main concern is

safety and survival in any way. He does not believe in false display of bravery and heroism. In order to keep himself in battlefield he carries chocolates instead of cartridge. By his earthy conduct, he shatters Raina's romantic notion of heroism.

Sergius is a bouncing and blundering fellow. He has a romantic notion of war, but war is a terrible thing in actuality. The cavalry charge reveals his folly mistaken for bravery. Raina thinks of the cavalry charge as an act of bravery whereas Bluntschli dismisses it as an act of stupidity. Raina is proud of her social standing. She has an exaggerated notion of her family culture and her parents are too conscious of property they possess. Nevertheless, Raina is romantically drawn towards both Sergius and war whereas Bluntschli is pragmatic later she displays idealism as well as pragmatism.

The play is characterized by an effective use of anti-climax or burlesque. It is well known that the use of anticlimax is typical comic device by playwright. For example, the escape of fugitive soldier from the war is hardly dignified. His act of sleeping in Raina's bed is unseemly as well as unmanly. His conduct is ridiculous and anti romantic as life is a very precious thing to him which he must protect, at any cost. Killing or being killed in war is no great thing. It must be shunned and Bluntschli demonstrates it. He is prompted by the institution of self-preservation and survival.

13.6 LET US SUM UP

In this unit, we have discussed the life & literary works of G.B. Shaw, emergence of Modern English Drama and summary of Act I of *Arms and The Man*. We then analysed the one summary and discussed how the various characters are introduced. In this unit we also considered how the satire of romantic notions of love and war gradually built by Shaw. We discussed G.B. Shaw as a dramatist .

13.7 QUESTIONS

1. Write a note on Life & Literary works of G.B. Shaw.
2. Discuss G.B. Shaw as a dramatist.
3. Discuss the Salient features of modern British drama.
4. Critically evaluate the Act I of *Arms and the Man*.
5. Give the summary of Act I in your own words.

13.8 FURTHER READINGS

- Raghukul Tilak. *Bernard Shaw: Arms and the Man*, 21st.ed. New Delhi: Rama Brothers India PVT. Ltd. Educational publishers (2009).
- George Bernard Shaw. "Preface to Plays Pleasant," in *Arms and the Man*. London: Longman Group Ltd. (1973).
- A.C. Ward. *Arms and the Man*. Orient Blackswan. Publishing (2014).
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UNIT-14 *ARMS AND THE MAN*: ANALYSIS OF ACT I, II & III

Structure

- 14.0 Introduction
- 14.1 Objectives
- 14.2 Summary of Act II
 - 14.2.1 Analysis of Act II
- 14.3 Summary Act III
 - 14.3.1 Analysis of Act III
- 14.4 Let us Sum up
- 14.5 Questions
- 14.6 Further Readings

14.0 INTRODUCTION

In Unit 13 of this block, we familiarized with the emergence of British Drama and the life and works of G.B. Shaw. Further we discussed G.B. Shaw as a dramatist and the summary of Act I of *Arms and the Man* and analysed this act. In this unit, we will be discussing the summaries of Act II and Act III of the play *Arms and the Man* and analyse these units and then we will discuss the dramatic significance of the coat episode of the play.

14.1 OBJECTIVES

After reading this unit you **should** be able to

- discuss the summary of Act II and III of the *Arms and the Man*
- critically analyse Act II and Act III of the play
- discuss the dramatic significance of “coat episode” of the play

14.2 SUMMARY OF ACT II

Act II begins after four months in the garden of Major Petkoff's house. It is pleasant morning of 6th March 1886. The war between Serbia and Bulgaria has ended. Peace has been negotiated. Catherine is busy in the house while Louka is smoking cigarettes. Raina's father Brig. Petkoff returns from war and sits at the table. Louka cleans the table and bring coffee and wine for Petkoff. Soon Catherine comes to him and they talked about the state of the two nations and their social status.

Nicola the male servant of the house is extremely loyal obedient and disciplined to everybody. He persuades to Louka not to be proud nor act against the owner of the house. She compares herself with the heroine of the play. She has the soul beyond her station. Nicola makes her understand how to deep the hair, naib, cheeks and eye brows. Both of them are greedy. So they declared that they were giving to be betrothed. In fact there was no betrothal agreement between them. Nicola wanted to marry Louka and it was his plan so that nobody might think to flirt and marry with her.

Sergius Saranoff the hero of the war also returned from war. Before he meets to Petkoff, Catherine presses Petkoff to arrange a promotion for their daughter's fiancé, but Petkoff does not

like her proposal and assure that it will not be very likely. Though his charge was brave and worked, it was only through luck. Actually it was a foolish move that only succeeded because of a technical problem in the enemy's machine guns. Nobody will give Sergius a higher rank which would mean even more men to risk. Sergius realizes that his charge was "the cradle and the grave" of his military career, so he resigned from the Bulgarian army. Sergius tells Catherine that he is no longer soldier as soldiering is the cowards art of attacking the weak opponent mercilessly.

Talking to Petkoff, Sergius tells a story of Serbian fugitive's adventure in the bedroom of young Bulgarian lady during midnight where the hosts acted so courteously as if he were a guest. This story perturbed Raina and her mother very much. Sergius and Raina are left alone. They talked so romantically about their "higher love" and mutually worship each other's love with full compliments. Raina convinces Sergius to go for a walk with her and she went inside the house to get ready for a walk. A few moments later Sergius drops his façade of courtly higher love and flirts with Louka, the young and pretty maid servant of Petkoff's. Sergius takes hold of her (Louka) out stretched hand feeling the need of some relief because he thinks that 'higher love' is a 'very fatiguing thing'. Sergius seeks himself this relief by drawing Louka into his embrace.

The flirtatious acts of her fiancé Sergius Saranoff with Louka were watched by Raina. When Raina reached Sergius to go for planned walk she questioned him though zestfully. Have you been flirting with Louka? Sergius then went to her hastily and kissed her hand remorsefully. This Act ends with the arrival of a Serbian Army officer Captain Bluntschli, when Louka comes to Catherine to inform her that Bluntshli has come to return the coat. She feels rather unnerved by his sudden and untimely arrival of Bluntschli. But she receives him very politely and requests him to leave the house at once. Suddenly Raina is on the spot and welcomes him "Oh The Chocolate Cream Soldier". Major Petkoff and Sergius also go in the scene. Recognizing the soldier they greet him warmly and insist that he stay at Petkoff's home. At the combined insistence of all the members of the Petkoff's family, Bluntschli consented not to leave immediately but to stay there.

14.2.1 ANALYSIS OF ACT II

In the Act II, romantic deals of 'higher love' is contrasted with flirtation and the idea high social position with that of the practical wisdom of the servants- Nicola and Louka. In this Act the romantic Byronic Sergius is in contrast with the after breakfast atmosphere. The servants are quarrelling, an ignominious peace has been established as a result of the treaty signed between the two warring countries. It is time for flirting with the female servant disposing the troops and telling vulgar stories about the war. Act II allows free and play to the romantic world of Raina and Sergius and the reference to the concept of 'Higher love', the lofty romantic ideal soon evaporates into a world of betrayal, artificiality and lust when he flirts with Louka in the brief absence of Raina. 'Higher love' in a young lady of 23 is an adolescent hangover; it obviously tires Sergius very quickly- he turns to Louka for relief- while Raina herself realizes it soon after. Shaw introduces an element of suspense and excitement with arrival of Captain Bluntschli with the coat of Petkoff he had worn while escaping in Act I.

The play's farcical or melo-dramatic elements continue in the Act II. The two love stories that begin to unfold- "the high born lady falls in love with a man from bloom of social scale, who turns out to be a prince in disguise" and "the aristocrat who runs away with a survival girls who represents virtue"- are indeed romantic clichés. These stories start to take effect in the second act and will be resolved in the third and inheritance in the third act will reveal Bluntschli to be a noble undisguised and finally worthy of Raina's hand and Sergius will propose to the grounded Louka. Farcical elements are scattered throughout the second act. The woman is pretending ignorance at the anecdote about the Swiss machinery. Major Petkoff welcoming Captain Bluntschli as Catherine attempts to rid herself of him and the extended bit about Nicola's incompetence. The highly stylised

comic occurrences will continue throughout the play highlighting the clash between what the character say and how they really feel.

14.3. SUMMARY OF ACT III

Act III begins shortly after lunch and takes place in the library. At the opening of the act Bluntschli is hard at work on table writing orders. Sergius who sits at the head of the table gnaws the end of his pen with his teeth. Petkoff is more of a hindrance than a help, for he constantly interrupts to see if he can be of any help Catherine is sitting at the stone and Raina is gazing at the Balkan landscape dreamily. Petkoff in turn complains that all he needs to be comfortable is his favourite coat, which he cannot find. Catherine calls Nicola and orders him to bring his Master's coat from the blue closet. Petkoff is so certain that it is not there that he is willing to make a bet of expensive piece of jewellery with her. Bluntschli refuses to bet for as he knows that Catherine is in the right. However Sergius and major Petkoff are about to enter a bet but Nicola suddenly brings the coat. Petkoff is completely astonished and perplexed when Nicola announces that it was indeed hanging in the blue closet. Bluntschli has finished work. Sergius is entrusted with dispatching them and he goes out to carry out the orders. Petkoff asks his wife to come along because she is good at giving commands. Left alone with Raina, Bluntschli expresses his astonishment at any army where "officers send their wives to keep discipline". When Raina asks him what he had thought of her giving him a photo of herself. Bluntschli tells that he knew nothing about her photo. He is not concerned until he learns that Raina inscribed upon it, "To my chocolate cream soldier". In the meantime Bluntschli confesses he pawned the coat, thinking that was the safest place for it. Raina is furious and she accuses him of having a "shop keeping mind." At this point they are interrupted by Louka who brings Bluntschli some letters and telegrams which inform him that his father has died and that Bluntschli had inherited several hotels which he will have to manage, He must leave immediately. As Raina and Bluntschli leave the room, Louka comes in wearing her sleeve in a ridiculous fashion so that her bruise will be obvious. Sergius enters and asks if he can cure it now with a kiss. Louka questions his true bravery, she wonders if he has courage to marry a woman who is socially beneath him, even if he loved the woman. Louka tells Sergius that Raina is really in love with Bluntschli and that it was Raina who helped him escape. Firstly Sergius refuses to believe it but then rages. Louka continue to taunt him about his own infidelities. Sergius oaths to Louka if he ever embrace her again it will be as his fiancée. Sergius sees Bluntschli and immediately challenges him to a duel; then he retracts when Raina comes in and accuses him of making love to Louka merely to spy on her and Bluntschli. As they are arguing, Bluntschli asks for Louka who has been eavesdropping at the door. She is brought in, Sergius apologies to her, kisses her hand and thus they become engaged. Bluntschli asks the permission to become a suitor for Raina's hand and when he lists all of the possession which he has (200 horses, 9600 pairs of sheeps, ten thousands knives and forks etc) permission for the marriage is granted by Petkoff's family and Bluntschli says that he will return in two weeks to marry Raina. At the end Raina gives a loving smile to her "chocolate" cream soldier.

14.3.1 ANALYSIS OF ACT III

Act III co-relates from the first two acts. All characters appears in new roles and attitudes in this act. Pretensions and garbs are thrown off. Allusions give place to reality. The clouds of concealment and snobbery disappear. The sunshine of integrity spreads all over.

Major Petkoff comes to know that Raina and Catherine had helped Bluntschli to escape by giving him his coat. Raina frankly admits that she had been pretending all through. Nicola helps Louka to marry Sergius. Bluntschli appears in full form. He is no longer a chocolate cream soldier. Now he is an efficient successful and professional soldier. He is superior to Sergius as a military man. He is not at all afraid of Sergius' threat to kill him. It may be noted that as an escape in the first

act he appeared shabby and pitiable. That was his condition as a fugitive. But in this act he rises higher in stature as a man, soldier and lover. The false heroism of Sergius disappears into the thin air before the manliness of Bluntschli.

It is, however, a mistake to think that Bluntschli is merely a realist and a hard boiled soldier through & through. He has genuinely romantic temper under the hard shell of pragmatism and professionalism. But he was a bit mistaken about the real character of Raina. He discovers to his surprise that she was not a teen-aged school girl but mature woman. In her heart of hearts she was attracted towards him and helped him to escape even at the risk of her reputation. She could suffer an irreparable damage due to the fact that a fugitive was given shelter in her room. In fact she had fallen for him. What had attracted her most was his spirit of adventure, blunt truth fullness and pragmatic outlook.

The balance in this Act is tilted in favour of Bluntschli. He goes up higher in our estimation while Sergius goes down. He combines profession and business with love. In comparison with Sergius he is an efficient officer, a careful business man and romantic lover.

14.4 LET US SUM UP

In this unit we have discussed summary and analysis of Act II and Act III. In the second Act, Sergius, Nicola and Louka are introduced. Nicola reveals his worldly wisdom- though he appears to be having a soul of servant. Louka is ambitious and aspires to marry a gentleman like Sergius. In the Act III, all the complications are resolved. Raina and Sergius romance comes to end. Louka succeeds in getting Sergius and Raina is to be married to Bluntschli.

14.5 QUESTIONS

1. Summarise the act II of the play *Arms and the Man*.
2. Discuss the story of flirtation between Louka and Sergius.
3. Critically analyse act II of the play *Arms and the Man*.
4. Write a dramatic significance of the coat episode.
5. Critically summarise the Act III of the play *Arms and the Man*.

14.6 FURTHER READINGS

- Raghukul Tilak. *Bernard Shaw: Arms and the Man*, 21st.ed. New Delhi: Rama Brothers India PVT. Ltd. Educational publishers (2009).
- George Bernard Shaw. "Preface to Plays Pleasant," in *Arms and the Man*. London: Longman Group Ltd. (1973).
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UNIT-15 TITLE, THEMES, CHARACTERS AND STYLE

Structure

- 15.0 Introduction
- 15.1 Objectives
- 15.2 Title
- 15.3 Historical Background of the play
- 15.4 Theme
- 15.5 Characters
 - 15.5.1 Catherine Petkoff
 - 15.5.2 Major Petkoff
 - 15.5.3 Raina Petkoff
 - 15.5.4 Louka
 - 15.5.5 Captain Bluntschli
 - 15.5.6 Sergius
 - 15.5.7 Nicola Change the Sequence
- 15.6 Arms and the Man : An Anti Romantic Comedy
- 15.7 Style
- 15.8 Let us sum up
- 15.9 Questions
- 15.10 Further Readings

15.0 INTRODUCTION

In the previous two units we have discussed emergence of British drama, analysed Act I, II & III. In this unit we shall discuss the significance of title, theme of the play and analyse the major and minor characters of the play. In this unit we shall also discuss the style of the play *Arms and the Man*.

15.1 OBJECTIVES

After completing the unit you will be able to discuss the following:

- The significance of the title and theme of the play
- The major as well as the minor characters of the play
- The play as an anti-romantic comedy

15.2 TITLE

The title of the play *Arms and the Man* taken from Dryden's translation of Virgil's epic poem, "The Aenied". In the very first line Dryden translates the Latin words *Arma virumque cano* of the original text as 'Arms and the Man a sing'. Shaw uses the title ironically. Unlike the Roman poet, he attacks military heroism and idealistic glory of war and warriors. His view is that a soldier is not a hero but a coward and his chief concern on the battle field is to preserve his own life by avoiding starvation.

Arms are the secondary preference of a soldier and it is a mere romantic notion that he fights to satisfy patriotic impulses to display his combative valour. Considered from this thematic angle the title is exquisitely apt.

The title of the play thus is indicative one. It expresses the dramatist's satiric intention of exposing the hollowness of war and heroism of soldiers. He wants to show in this play that war is not glorious thing to be fought for its own sake. The false romantic notion is shattered. We must understand the importance of man. War and love should both be approached according to the instincts of man. In this play Man is superior to arms has been proved.

The title *Arms and the Man* is presented by two themes- theme of war and love. These two themes are mingled. Shaw believes that war is evil and not a glorious, while love is good and desirable. Both had become wrapped in romantic illusions which led to disastrous war and also unhappy marriage. The clouds of romantic illusions are shattered when the light of realism rises on the horizon of the play.

The title of the play is constructed of four words of which two *Arms* and *Man* are very significant 'Arms' stands for 'war' and *Man* for soldier. *Arms* i.e. War has dehumanized *Man*. *Man* with a view to concealing his dehumanized state falsely glorifies war under the mask of romantic view. But the moment, this romantic illusion is shattered the 'Man' becomes man i.e. a kind hearted person having fellow-feeling and love for others. Bluntschli who was introduced as 'The Man' is actually the man in the play.

In short, the title *Arms and the Man* is quite appropriate. The play begins with war and ends in love, peace and marriage.

15.3 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF THE *ARMS AND THE MAN*

Arms and the Man is not historical play in the real sense of the phrase simply, it has a historical fact pertaining to the battle of Slivnitza fought between Serbia and Bulgaria in 1885. To bring the war to a close, the Treaty of Peace known as the Treaty of Bucharest was signed on 3rd March 1886. In this war Bulgaria and Russia were on the one side and Serbia and Austria were on the other. These are the certain facts and events which form the background of Shaw's famous play *Arms and the Man*.

15.4 THE THEMES IN THE *ARMS AND THE MAN*

The play *Arms and the Man* is an anti romantic comedy which deals with the two themes- love and war. These two themes are interwoven. Shaw believed that war is evil and marriage desirable and good. Marriage and war both had been covered in romantic illusion which led to disastrous wars and also unhappy marriages. G.B. Shaw exposes that there is no heroism in war and soldiering to him. Soldiering is the coward's act and love is not a romance but a reality of life which feels man's moral passion and man's personal requirements of life.

The romantic view of war is actually based on the idealistic notion that men fight because they are heroes. The soldier who killed maximum number of men is treated as great hero. In the act I of the play, when Raina gets the news of Sergius heroic cavalry charge, she is full of rapture because now she can believe that her betrothed is just as splendid and noble as he looks: "The world is really a glorious world for women who can see its glory and men who can act its romance." She worships his portrait like a priestess and addresses it as the hero of her soul. But soon afterward, she comes into close contact with realities of war when Bluntschli suddenly enters into her bedroom. He tells her what is true about life and war. He says that soldiers are afraid to die and it is their duty to live as long as they can. He again tells her that "Nine soldiers out of ten are born fools. Through Bluntschli,

Shaw tells that food is more useful to a fighting than any weapon of war because food provides sufficient strength to fight heroically. Sergius himself realizes that his ideal of heroism is incompatible with modern method of war. Sergius realises that “Soldering is the coward’s art of attacking the enemies when they are weaker.” When Bluntschli narrates the horror of Sergius romances is completely shattered and he considers war as a fraud, foolish deed and a hollow show.

In *Arms and the Man*, G.B. Shaw takes a realistic view about love and marriage and exposes the hollowness of romantic love. Raina and Sergius have ‘higher love’ for each other. But their higher love fails to tie together. They forget that the other is an ordinary creature of flesh and blood with common human imperfections. This is the fault of all romantic love and Shaw has focussed the searchlight on truth and reason of this fallacy. He has shown the imperfections of both Sergius and Raina.

15.5 CHARACTERS IN THE ARMS AND THE MAN

G.B. Shaw’s art of characterization is unique. His characters are unforgettable. His characters are living human beings with merits and demerits. In the play *Arms and the Man* Shaw presented the characters into two parts: The characters from the upper class and those from the lower class. Catherine Petkoff, Major Paul Petkoff, Raina Petkoff and Srguis belong to upper class characters, while Bluntschli, Louka and Nicola are lower class characters. We have discussed and analysed every character individually.

15.5.1 CATHERINE PETKOFF

Catherine Petkoff is the wife of Major Petkoff and Raina’s mother. Although she is about 40, yet she is extremely energetic woman with black hair and eyes. In her looks she seems to be the daughter of a mountain farmer but there is a determination in her to grow into a lady with polished and sophisticated taste. She is a dominating woman. She is like a dictator in her house.

Mrs. Catherine is quite ingenious and clever and does not hesitate to tell lies when necessary. As soon as she learns of Bluntschli’s coming, she immediately deduces that he has come to return the coat. She knows that his presence can create trouble and so she wants to get rid of him at the earliest. She takes care that Major Petkoff does not learn of Bluntschli’s coming. So one gets the door of the library closed. She is very dreamy and unrealistic about life. She is also sentimental about her love for the country and its strength. She is loving and caring mother. She is always careful about Raina.

In short Catherine seems to be simple lady who is always concerned about the happiness of her family and family member.

15.5.2 MAJOR PETKOFF

Major Petkoff is Raina’s father and major in Bulgarian army. He is about 50 years old, with a cheerful temperament and unpolished manners. He is also one of THE persons who have romantic attitude towards war. He is greatly pleased with the rank of major that has been given to him in the army.

Major Petkoff is not only an easy going and ease loving creature but he is also fond of humour, jest and merriment. He takes joy in making merry and cutting jokes. He says Louka, well the Serbs haven’t run away with you have they? Major Petkoff has a deep love for his family. He in fact dotes upon his wife and loves his daughter very much, it is Catherine who has an upper hand in the family life. He is very much concerned about her health and suggests many things to her. In short the character of Major Petkoff stays relatively static through the play, staying the same humorous slightly confused old man.

15.5.3 RAINA PETKOFF

Raina Petkoff is the heroine of the play *Arms and The Man*. She is the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Petkoff. She is a very beautiful female character in the play. G.B. Shaw presents her as the adorer of natural and romantic beauty. She is a pretty girl of 23 but because of her youthful charm she looks like a school girl of 17.

Raina is a girl of romantic temperament who is lost in the glory of higher love and war. Raina Petkoff is highly romantic girl. She studied Byron and Pushkin. She is inspired by thoughts and feelings of romanticism. She likes to enjoy the beauty of the stars. She adores Sergius as an ideal hero. She loves Sergius as if he is one of the knights of the Ancient days of chivalry. She expresses her love to Sergius by addressing him “My lord! My King.....! when she gets the news of Sergius attack on the enemy, she is over whelmed. Her concept of war, love and Marriage is deeply romantic. She helps a fugitive because of romantic feelings and thoughts.

At the beginning of the play we find Raina betrothed to Sergius. She truly loves Sergius and keeps a beautiful portrait of Sergius which is the centre of attraction to her eyes in her bedroom. She rather worships Sergius than love him. When Sergius returns from war, she calls him, My hero! My king! Then Sergius kisses her forehead and addressing her my queen. Sergius is appreciated by her “How I have envied you Sergius! You have been out in the world, on the field of battle able to prove yourself there worthy of any woman in the world.

Raina’s romantic notion of love is also shattered by Bluntschli and Louka. She comes to know that the person to whom she is betrothed is unfit for her because Sergius flirts with Louka on one hand and on the other hand Sergius is not a soldier but a fool who led his cavalry and made attack on the Serbian battery of gunners. She realizes that war is not a sport or game but a solider and love is not merely a game of hideand seek but a test of one’s mettle.

Thus, G.B. Shaw has presented the character of Modern middle class girl Raina who is fanciful, clever intelligent and clever. No doubt Raina has some merits in her personality and she is pretty, romantic and memorable heroin of the play.

15.5.4 LOUKA

Louka is a young and charming girl who works as a maid servant in the house hold of the Petkoff’s. She behaves in defiant manners and her physical movements, gestures and posture produce the impression of haughtiness and discontent. She is very intelligent and sharp minded girl.

We find her sharpness at the very beginning of the play, when, for example, she secretly tells Raina that one of the shutters had not been bolted at the bottom and that it can be opened with a little push if need to do. As Louka says:

*“If you would like the shutter,
Open , just give them a push like this.”*

Louka is very pretty and witty in her conversation. Sergius asks her “*If you were in love with me, would you spy out of the windows on me.*” She replies, “*Well, you see, sir since you say that you are half a dozen different gentleman all at once, if
should have a great deal to look after.*”

Thus, Louka is beautiful, talented and resourceful who wins her ends with the help of her clever tricks.

15.5.5 CAPTAIN BLUNTSCHLI

Captain Bluntschli is the Man in *Arms and the Man*. He appears on the stage with an

ambiguous identity as the “Man” and in the end, leaves it with Sergius speaking of him, “What a man! Is he a man!” He is the hero of the play. He remains on the stage from the very beginning to the end of the play. First, we hear only his voice in the darkness, then he appears before us as the Man and then in the Act II of the play his real identity is disclosed.

Captain Bluntschli is a Swiss mercenary soldier. His father is a rich hotel-keeper in Switzerland. After his death Bluntschli inherits all his property two hundred horses, seventy carriages, four thousand tablecloths, nine thousand six hundred pairs of sheets and blankets, two thousand four hundred down quilts, ten thousand knives and forks and dessert spoons, Six palatial establishments, two livery stables, a tea garden and private house. It is because of his “incurably romantic disposition” that he “ran away from home twice” when he was a boy. He went into the army instead of into his father’s business. Some chief points of his personality are given below.

- **His Physique :** Bluntschli is a man of thirty-four years. “He is of middling stature and undistinguished appearance with strong neck and shoulders, roundish obtuse looking head covered with short crisp bronze curls, clear quick eyes and good brows and mouth, hopelessly prosaic nose like that of a strong minded baby, trim soldier like carriage and energetic manner....”. He is a professional soldier who fights for the sake of money, not for his love and loyalty to any country. He says of himself, “I am a Swiss, fighting merely as a professional soldier. I joined the Serbs because they came first on the road from Switzerland.”
- **A Realist :** Bluntschli is a thorough realist. He lives quite far away from the dreary world of romantic idealism. His attitude to war, life, love and marriage is out and out realistic. To him war is an evil and marriage a necessity. He knows well the futility of war, which according to him, is nothing but the exploitation of the opponent’s weakness. He also symbolizes the fact that wars are won by presence of mind, not by bullets and bombs. A lady’s night gown can some time be a better weapon than a pistol. To him saving one’s life is one’s first duty. In order to save his own life, he uses all his mind and means, “*Capture only means death, and death is sleep- oh, sleep, sleep, sleep, undisturbed sleep!*”
- **His Bravery :** Bravery is an outstanding trait of Bluntschli’s character. He is brave both in words and acts. He, being a professional soldier, never shirks fighting, but at the same time he never invites risks and dangers. He leaves no stone unturned to avoid fighting, but when it is inevitable he enjoys it. When Sergius challenges him to fight, he gets ready even without knowing the cause of it. And later on the former refuses to fight and asks Bluntschli if he knows why, he replies, “No, but it doesn’t matter. I did not ask the reason when you cried on, and I do not ask the reason now that you cry off. I am a professional soldier: I fight when I have to, and am very glad to get out of it when I haven’t to.”

Bluntschli has all the qualities of a gentleman. He is kind, frank and outspoken. He appears to be unkind and ungentlemanly when in Raina’s room he picks up her cloak and keeps her confined to the room. Towards the end of the play when Sergius asks him, “the cool impartial man” to judge the eaves-dropper (Louka), he frankly says, “I must not judge her. I once listened myself outside a tent when there was a mutiny brewing. It’s all a question of degree of provocation. My life was at stake.” It is due to his gentlemanliness that he defends Raina even at his own cost. When Raina’s character is doubted by Sergius, Catherine and Petkoff, he says, “assure you, my dear Major, my dear Madame, the gracious young lady simply saved my life, nothing else. She never cared two straws for me. Why, bless my heart and soul, look at the young lady and look at me. She, rich, young, beautiful, with her imagination full of fairy princess and noble natures and cavalry charges and goodness knows what! And I, a commonplace Swiss soldier who hardly knows what a decent life is.....”

- **His Wit and Humour :** Captain Bluntschli is not only a man of courage, but also a man of wit and humorous nature. Many of his remarks and statements exhibit that he has a fine sense of humour. When Raina, in her own bedroom, says to him, “** You must trust to our hospitality. You do not know yet in whose house you are. I am a Petkoff, he humorously asks, “A pet what?” The play abounds in his such witty remarks and dialogues. Speaking high of this Chocolate Cream Soldier, S.C. Sen Gupta observes in *Arms and the Man*, Shaw portrays a heroic figure in Captain Bluntschli and contrasts him with the romantic fool, Major Sergius Saranoff fights for success and glory, but Bluntschli joins army out of an unmotivated impulse which he describes as an incurably romantic disposition.

15.5.6 SERGIUS

Major Sergius Saranoff is very important male character in *Arms and the Man*. He stands next to the hero Bluntschli, in importance. According to some critics he deserves the title of hero because of his being originally betrothed to Raina, the heroine of the play. However, his being betrothed to Raina, or being a Major in Cavalry, or a handsome man is not sufficient to enable him to be the hero of the play. Bernard Shaw introduces Sergius as a “Tall romantically handsome man with the physical hardihood, the high spirit, and the susceptible imagination of an untamed mountaineer chieftain”. The ridges of his eye brows curve with an interrogative twist round the projections at the outer corners, his eyes are jealously observant; his nose is thin, keen and apprehensive. His physical appearance is undoubtedly attractive and impressive.

Through Sergius the playwright throws a critical searchlight on emotional and sentimental side of man’s life. As a soldier he represents the emotional phase of human life. And as a lover he symbolizes practicality. Unlike Bluntschli, he is devoted to his country, and fights for the sake of military glory, while as lover he thinks ‘that higher love’ or emotional attachment is only an illusion. Physical gratification is the only reality in love of higher love’ he says to Louka that it is:

“Very fatiguing thing to keep up for any length of time.

One feels the need of some relief after it”.

As a soldier, he is brave and courageous, though not calculating and clever. The battle of Slivnitsa is won solely by Sergius, who according to Catherine, “is the hero of the hour, the idol of the regiment.” Speaking of his bravery and courage Catherine continues. “He defied our Russian commanders-acted without orders- led a charge on his own responsibility- headed it himself was the first man to sweep through their guns. Due to his lacking in military efficiency and etiquettes, he is not promoted while two of the colonels are done to be major-generals. However, he thinks of himself. “I am a brave man My heart jumped like a woman at the first shot; but in the charge, I found that I was brave. Yes that at least is real about me.”

15.5.7 NICOLA

Nicola is the man-servant of the Petkoff’s family. He is a middle-aged man of cool temperament and low but clear and keen intelligence, with the complacency of the servant who values himself on his rank in servitude and the imperturbability of accurate calculator who has no illusions. He is very good servant. His principle is to be absolutely loyal and faithful to the master and his family. He is shrewd judge of character. He understands each person’s real nature. He is a man of sharp wit and loyal nature. He is happy in his life with his present position.

15.6 ARMS AND THE MAN: AN ANTI-ROMANTIC COMEDY

Arms and the Man is the most popular and successful staged drama of G.B. Shaw. It is also an anti-romantic comedy because it exposes the folly and cowardice of soldiers, shatters the romantic

illusions about war and attacks on severely romantic and sentimental love.

Bernard Shaw himself calls *Arms and the Man* an anti-romantic comedy. Shaw himself was anti-romantic by nature. The principal objection raised by Shaw against romantic literature is that it deals with imagery, ideas and artificial emotions. So, Shaw decidedly and intentionally up ated the play *Arms and the Man* in his innovative design of anti-romantic comedy.

In *Arms and the Man*, Shaw wittily humorously and critically exposes the hollowness of romantic and emotional concept of war, love and marriage. At the very beginning, we find that Raina, the heroine of the play loves Sergius romantically. Her joys know no bounds hearing the news that Sergius led the Bulgarians towards victory. We find that Raina harbours idealistic and extravagant notions of war and also about the heroism of her fiancé Sergius. She says, “I am so happy: so, proud”.

She addresses the portrait of Sergius murmuring “My hero, my hero”. Raina thinks that war seems to be an opportunity for man to display their heroism and Sergius seems to be splendid hero. A critic comments on this romantic ecstasy of Raina that “A romantic girl’s romantic view of life”. But very soon this romantic illusion of Raina is shattered by Bluntschli who exposes to Raina the fact of Sergius’ foolish performance on the battle field. Bluntschli opens the eyes of Raina and brings her down to earth from her romantic fantasy world.

Raina, who considered Sergius a great hero, now finds it is her mere illusion. She also becomes sympathetic at the sight of the miserable condition of Captain Blunstchli. She learns that chocolates were more important for a soldier on the battle field than cartridges. When she finds that Blunstchli eating chocolate creams greedily. She out of fun calls him “chocolate cream soldier”. It is Bluntschli who makes her realize that a soldier is not a superman. A soldier is a human being subject to all weaknesses of human nature including fear of death. Bluntschli is the mouth speaker of the dramatist. With him, his anti-romantic attitudes towards war and life attract the heart of Raina.

Sergius, who is full of vanity and pride for winning on accidental battle also gets disillusioned about war. In spite of his apparent success as a soldier he is criticized by his senior officers. He resigns his job being frustrated about profession and impresses his realization to Mrs. Catherine Petkoff-

“Soldiering my dear madam...”

In the same manner, Shaw ridicules and satirizes the romantic attitude of love in *Arms and the Man*. In the play the romantic lovers are like just butterflies sucking honey from flower to flower so even being betrothed Sergius flirts with Louka. Raina put a signed photograph in the pocket of coat given to Bluntschli for his realistic and humanistic attitude to life and for that reason she gave the photograph as a souvenir for her love to her chocolate cream soldier. Similarly, Sergius show his strange fickleness by shifting his romantic feeling for Raina to Louka a maid servant in Raina’s family. Thus, Shaw shows the hollowness of romantic love between Bluntschli and Raina which upholds Shaw’s view of ideal marriage and love.

In conclusion, we may say that *Arms and the Man* is an anti-romantic comedy which admits of no controversy. The purpose is of satirizing romantic notions about war and love in his play *Arms and the Man*.

15.7 STYLE

George Bernard Shaw’s style was unique. In fact, his style was completely free from verbiage or unnecessary waste of words. He presented only those words through the mouth of the characters in his plays, which were absolutely necessarily and which therefore have their maximum effect upon

the listeners. Shaw's style is neither artistic nor graceful but his style demands keen observation and careful study. Brevity and emphasis are the chief characteristics of his style. His style is aggressive in the sense that he never allows his readers to disagree with him on any point of his arguments, he gives no breathing time even to think whether he is right or wrong in his own observation. He takes the readers almost like the whirlwind and sweeps him away by his critical slashes and flashing wit.

Above all it is easily understood, direct, precise and persuasive. It is rhetorical style that smoothly and easily follows the rhythms and accents of speech and is capable of considerable variation. His style is impersonal and incapable of conveying anything but generalized feelings. The limitations of his style faithfully reflect the limitations of his whole dramatic range.

Shaw's style whether it is intellectual or critical or witty or humorous is full of antithesis seeming contradictions in words as well as ideas; full of puns, ironies and satires- all of which are capable of either pleasing or annoying the readers or the audience to an extraordinary degree.

15.8 LET US SUM UP

In this unit, you have learned the appropriateness of the title of the play *Arms and the Man*. You have also learned G.B. Shaw's idea of anti-romantic comedy through this play. This unit also describes the dominant theme of love and war. Apart from this, now you are also familiar with the various characters like Sergius, Bluntschli, Raina, Louka, Nicola, etc. of the play. The romantic illusions of love and war are shattered in the play through discussion and action. Hence, *Arms and the Man* is an anti-romantic play.

15.9 QUESTIONS

- Q.1.** Bring out the significance of the title of Shaw's *Arms and the Man*.
- Q.2.** Critically examine Shaw's treatment of love and war in *Arms and the Man*.
- Q.3.** How can you say that *Arms and the Man* is an anti-romantic comedy?
- Q.4.** Who is the hero of the play- Bluntschli or Sergius? Give arguments in defense of your position.
- Q.5.** Give character sketch of Raina.
- Q.6.** Who is Louka? What is the role of her (Louka) in the play *Arms and the Man*.

15.10 FURTHER READINGS

- Raghukul Tilak. *Bernard Shaw: Arms and the Man*, 21st.ed. New Delhi: Rama Brothers India PVT. Ltd. Educational publishers (2009).
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UNIT-16 ANNOTATIONS: IMPORTANT PASSAGES

Structure

- 16.0 Introduction
- 16.1 Objectives
- 16.2 Annotations: Important Passages
 - 16.2.1 Our gallant splendid----- comes back
 - 16.2.2 Our Patriotism, ----- humiliation or failure.
 - 16.2.3 You can always ----- the old ones grub.
 - 16.2.4 There are only two sorts of soldiers ---- unprofessional
 - 16.2.5 And there was Don Quixote ----- missed fire.
 - 16.2.6 Soldiering my dear Madam ---- equal terms
 - 16.2.7 And how ridiculous! ----- like love
 - 16.2.8 I am a professional ----- an amusement.
- 16.3 Let us Sum Up
- 16.4 Questions
- 16.5 Further Readings

16.0 INTRODUCTION

In the Previous units of this block, you have read about the significance of the title, the theme of the play and the analysis of the major and minor characters of the play. Apart from this, you have also read about the style of the play *Arms and the Man* and the play as an anti-romantic comedy. In this unit, you will read about interpreting important dialogues extracted from the play *The Arms and the Man*. Shaw has dealt with many themes in this play. The dialogues of this play are highly philosophical and present the various ideas not only on love and war but on other important issues. The playwright has dealt with this serious subject humorously and, at the same time, shows the realities about them. The given explanations will help you understand the play's various themes.

16.1 OBJECTIVES

After reading this unit you will be able to

- comprehend the ideas line under the drama of G.B. Shaw.
- know how to write explanation with reference to the context.
- write critical comments after reading these explanations.

16.2 ANNOTATIONS OF THE PASSAGES

16.2.1 “Our gallant splendid Bulgarians with their swords and eyes flashing thundering down like an avalanche and scattering the wretched Serbs and their Dandified Austrian officers like chaff. And you! You kept Sergius waiting a year before you would be betrothed to him. Oh, if you have a drop of Bulgarian blood in your veins, you will worship him when he comes back”.

Reference: This dialogue has been taken from *Arms and the Man*, Act I, dramatized by

George Bernard Shaw, one of the major dramatists of Twentieth Century British drama. Catherine Petkoff has spoken these lines.

Context: In these lines, Catherine is happy over the victory of Sergius in the battle of Silvintza and expresses her happiness to her daughter- Raina.

Explanation: Catherine Petkoff informs Raina about the heroic actions of Sergius and the great victory of Bulgarian soldiers on the battlefield of Silvintza over the Austrian army. Sergius was not only the army in charge but also the fiancé of Raina. Catherine expresses the battle scene and glorifies the action of Sergius and his great victory. She says all those soldiers were brave in the extreme, but Sergius, who led and commanded the whole campaign, was the hardest. The brave Bulgarians charged on Dandified Austrian officers with vigour and enthusiasm and dispersed them just as a strong wind blew away the chaff. Sergius attacked so furiously, swiping out the opponent like an avalanche, and scattered them. Catherine expresses her thoughts proudly and scolds Raina for keeping Sergius waiting for the marriage. She also suggests she should welcome Sergius with reverence when he returns from the war.

Comments:

- The conversation shows two things-
 - a) Shaw presents a romantic idea of attack and victory.
 - b) Catherine adores and is proud of Sergius's valour.
- She shows her deep patriotism for the country. Catherine also shows her role as a caring mother and suggests what is suitable for Raina.
- For Catherine, Sergius is similar to the God of war.

16.2.2 “.... Our Patriotism. Our heroic ideals. I sometimes used to doubt whether they were anything but dreams. Oh, what faithless little creatures girls are! When I buckled on Sergius’s sword he looked so noble, it was treason to think of disillusion or humiliation or failure.”

Reference: This dialogue has been taken from *Arms and the Man* (1894), Act I, dramatized by George Bernard Shaw, one of the major dramatists of Twentieth Century British drama. Raina has spoken these lines to her mother.

Context: In the present dialogue, Raina glorifies her fiancée Sergius's actions after his victory in the battle of Slivnitza. She feels that her ideas of patriotism finally proved to be confirmed.

Explanation: After the splendid victory of Sergius in the battle of Slivintza, Raina manifests her true feelings to her mother, Catherine, about her fiancée’s fighting skills. She also expresses her patriotic feelings. Raina was not very sure about this earlier. Blaming herself, she announces that all the girls are faithless little creatures and says that girls are very unfaithful creatures. Remembering one incident, when Raina buckled the sword’s belt, she states how noble Sergius was. Raina also feels guilty for feeding such thoughts of humiliation or failure about Sergius.

Comments:

- These lines reveal Raina's inner conflict. It also indicates the broken trust/ frail relationship between Raina and Sergius, and at the same time, it shows confidence of Raina.
- She accepted her guilt about Sergius. This shows that Raina is a bold and confident lady. She puts her thoughts about war and speaks about it.
- She shares her thoughts regarding war and heroic deeds. Also, she has no hesitation in expressing her true feeling in front of her mother.

- The language of the dialogue is “simple prosaic modern British language.”

16.2.3 “You can always tell an old soldier by the inside of his holsters and cartridge boxes. The young ones carry pistols and cartridges; the old ones, grub.”

Reference: This dialogue has been taken from *Arms and the Man* (1894), Act I, dramatized by George Bernard Shaw, one of the major dramatists of Twentieth Century British drama. Bluntschli has spoken these lines, referred to as 'the Man' to Raina.

Context- In this dialogue, Bluntschli compares young soldiers with old and experienced ones and tells the indispensable role of food on the battlefield in contrast to pistols and cartridges.

Explanation: This dialogue responds to Raina's mockery of Bluntschli as he carries chocolates in his cartridge box instead of ammunition. Bluntschli is very hungry and wishes he had something to eat now. On hearing this, Raina gives him the box of confectionery. After having the chocolates, he blesses Raina and tells her there is a great difference between young and inexperienced soldiers and experienced old soldiers. One can easily distinguish them by their holster and cartridge box. A pistol and holsters full of cartridges are essential for a young soldier. On the other hand, for an old and experienced soldier, food is more important. They understand the value of eatables on the battlefield in times of emergency. In short, Bluntschli tells Raina about the importance of food on the battlefield just as arms and ammunition.

Comments:

- Through this dialogue, G. B. Shaw has tried to glorify sensible cowardice rather than futile and destructive courage.
- Shaw is known for his hatred towards war; therefore, through the character of the 'chocolate-cream- soldier,' he has tried to justify his views against wars.
- Shaw, through the character of Bluntschli wants to express the idea that modern war cannot be fought for a day even without a strong supply corps. That is why soldiers need to be fed and supplied with the correct ammunition before they can fight. It can be seen through Bluntschli's demand for chocolate.
- Shaw has humorously presented this serious issue.
- The language of the dialogue is “simple prosaic modern British language.”

16.2.4 “There are only two sorts of soldiers: old ones and young ones. I've served fourteen years: half of your fellows never smelt powder before. Why, how is it that you've just beaten us? The sheer ignorance of the art of war, nothing else. (indignantly) I never saw anything so unprofessional.”

Reference: This dialogue has been taken from *Arms and the Man* (1894), Act I, dramatized by George Bernard Shaw, one of the major dramatists of Twentieth Century British drama. Bluntschli has spoken these lines, referred to as 'the Man' to Raina.

Context: In this dialogue, Bluntschli compares young soldiers with old and experienced ones. He discloses the mystery of his defeat to Raina from the young cavalry of Bulgaria.

Explanation: In these lines, Bluntschli tells Raina that there are only two categories of soldiers: old ones and young ones. He further tells her that he has served in the army for fourteen years and have never seen the third category of the soldiers. It is such a long period that half of the soldiers in the Bulgarian army might have never heard about gunpowder before. Through this line, he directly comments on youth and maturity and contrasts experience and inexperience. He further says that they are inexperienced soldiers and once they have passed through the ordeal of a war, all

their heroism smashes. Then Bluntschli talks about the war in which Bulgarians could defeat Serbs as they were unaware of the war skills. Serbians lost the war as because their guns were not properly charged. The question here arises how the Bulgarian army won the battle and beat the Serbs and Austrians, as Bulgarians have insufficient knowledge of warfare. Bluntschli's contempt on this unprofessional attitude of this act in war. The question here arises how the Bulgarian army won the battle and beat the Serbs and Austrians, as Bulgarians have insufficient knowledge of warfare.

Comments:

- Captain Bluntschli is the symbol of present-day conditions.
- Shaw has drawn a complicated picture of youth and maturity.
- Never smelt gunpowder before- it is an English idiom, it is related to the past when the smell of gunpowder hung about a battle field. It is equivalent to present day's "never been under fire before".

16.2.5 And there was a Don Quixote flourishing like a drum major, thinking he had done the cleverest thing ever known whereas he ought to be court marshalled for it. Of all the fools ever let loose on a field of battle, that man must be very maddest.

Reference: This dialogue has been spoken by Bluntschli to Raina in Act-I of the play *Arms and the Man* (1894) written by George Bernard Shaw, who was one of the famous dramatists of the "Modern Age" (1901-1945).

Context: In this dialogue, Bluntschli is probably describing the foolish deed of Sergius on the battlefield, who was behaving like Don Quixote.

Explanation: The dialogue shows Bluntschli's notions about Sergius. Bluntschli compares the foolish act of Sergius to Don Quixote. To present himself as courageous, Don Quixote, the hero of Cervantes' romance, attacked the windmill's sails, thinking it was a giant with long arms. In the same way, Sergius was trying to portray himself as wild and fierce before his enemy, but he was behaving foolishly. He led a cavalry charge against the Serbian artillery, which had a battery of machine guns. This decision of Sergius might have proved catastrophic if Serbs were not supplied with the wrong ammunition. Thus, Sergius got the victory and behaved like a drum major. He thinks that he has done the wisest deed. The fact is that due to this decision, the entire cavalry regiment might have been wiped out. According to Bluntschli, Sergius should be court marshalled for his foolish act on the battlefield.

Comments:

- From the objective point of view, it can be said that through this dialogue, Bluntschli has tried to remove the romantic notion of Raina, who worships Sergius as her hero.
- The dramatist has used "descriptive style" because Bluntschli is describing the cavalry charge of Sergius.
- In the dialogue, the dramatist also uses " comparative style " because Sergius is being compared with Don Quixote.
- The language of the dialogue is "simple prosaic modern British language."

16.2.6 Soldering, my dear madam, is the coward's art of attacking mercilessly when you are strong and keeping out of harm's way when you are weak. That is the whole secret of successful fighting. Get your enemy at a disadvantage, and never on any account, fight him on equal terms.

Reference: This dialogue is spoken by Sergius in Act II of the play *Arms and the Man* (1894)

written by George Bernard Shaw, one of the famous dramatists of Twentieth Century British Drama (1901-1945).

Context: In this dialogue, Sergius is probably describing the veracity of soldiers on the battlefield. He is also describing the secret of successful fighting.

Explanation: The dialogue shows the disillusionment of Sergius, who has just returned from the war. He expresses his frustration by comparing a soldier to a coward and explains that soldiering is like a business or trade. According to him, a soldier is like an opportunist who seeks opportunity by his convenience and uses all means, whether fair or foul, to beat his enemy. He reveals the tactics used on battlefield where soldiers never fight with their enemy equally. The soldier only attacks the enemy mercilessly when he is strong, and his enemy is weak. On the other hand, if his enemy is more robust than him, he avoids fighting. Through this dialogue, Shaw tries to reveal that soldiering is not a glorious job, and he ridicules the romantic notion of war.

Comments:

- From the objective point of view, through the character of Sergius, George Bernard Shaw is giving a realistic picture of war face but using an ironic tone.
- The dramatist has used "Realistic style" because here, the idea of G.B. Shaw regarding soldiering is a matter of discussion.
- The language of the dialogue is "simple prosaic modern British language."

16.2.7 Oh, war! War! War! The dream of patriots and heroes! A fraud, Bluntschli. A hollow sham, like love.

Reference: This dialogue has been taken from *Arms and the Man* (1894), Act III, dramatized by George Bernard Shaw, one of the major dramatists of Twentieth Century British drama. Sergius has spoken these lines to Raina and Bluntschli.

Context: This dialogue shows Sergius's perception regarding war and love, which has become entirely disillusioned. Sergius goes to Bluntschli and challenges him to a duel. Shaw has iconoclastic the concept of love and war through this dialogue.

Explanation: After challenging Bluntschli, Sergius's apparition about war has been completely changed. Sergius realizes that war has no romantic notion about the war in the real world. The world has marked all the wrong notions about patriotism, especially war. Sergius condemns the glorification of war and terms it as a ridiculous act. He says it is a fraud concept, which has been induced as a glorious dream within the patriots and heroes. It is similar to a fake love of modern society. Thus Shaw exposes the romantic notions about both love and war.

Comments:

- The dramatist has used a comparative style in this dialogue because Sergius is comparing love and war, which are more or less the same.
- Sergius's concept of war has turned into a brutal reality of the modern world. Through the words of Sergius, Shaw criticizes the idea of war and presents the ugly truth of war.
- Through Sergius's words, Shaw wants to convey the idea of love and war. For him both are futile. Thus, in the play, the "spiritual love" between Sergius and Raina was proved to be a sham.
- Sergius is the symbol of the false glorification of war.
- The character of Sergius, who was thought to be a conqueror and a national hero, was

actually a coward, an undisciplined soldier and a poor lover.

- The language of the dialogue is “simple prosaic modern British language.”

16.2.8 I am a professional soldier; I fight when I have to, and am very glad to get out of it when I haven't to. You're only an amateur; you think fighting is amusement.

Reference: This dialogue has been taken from *Arms and the Man* (1894), Act III, dramatized by George Bernard Shaw, one of the major dramatists of the Twentieth Century British drama. Captain Bluntschli speaks this dialogue.

Context: In this dialogue, after being challenged to a duel, captain Bluntschli explains the difference between his professional attitude and Sergius' romantic attitude towards fighting.

Explanation: Bluntschli as a soldier, was very realistic and always acted according to the demand and not with emotions. His practical approach made him very professional. He confesses that he always distinguished his personal life from his professional. Where, when, and how to act is well practised by him. He never let his emotion govern him. He said he was a professional soldier, and his actions were always calculated according to the situation's demands. If he has to fight, he fights; if he can quit, he does that too. For him, profession and patriotism are two different things. He blames Sergius for being non-professional during the war. For Sergius, it was related to the emotional connection, like some fear.

Comments

- Through the words of Bluntschli, G.B. Shaw wants to convey his message that nothing is glorifying about war, and it only takes people's lives. So, instead of emotionally attaching to the concept of war, one should be realistic. It will be best for the whole human race.
- The dramatist has used a comparative style because he has compared the romantic and professional attitudes to war.

16.3 LET US SUM UP

In this unit, we have tried to explain certain dialogues with reference to the context and critical comments. Through the explanation of these dialogues we have tried to understand the concept of war as presented in *Arms and the Man* and also the ideas presented by George Bernard Shaw.

16.4 QUESTIONS

Explain the following dialogues with reference to the context:

1. “Well, it's a funny sight. It's like slinging a handful of peas against a window pane; first one comes then two or three close behind him and then all the rest in a lump.
2. “Very fatigue thing to keep up for any length of time, Louka. One feels the need of some relief after it.”
3. “Mockery! Mockery everywhere! everything I think is mocked by everything I do. (He strikes himself frantically on the breast) Coward! Liar! Fool! Shall I kill myself like a man, or live and pretend to laugh at myself.”
4. “I am a professional soldier; I fight when I have to, and am very glad to get out of it when I haven't to. You're only an amateur; you think fighting is amusement.
5. “Soldering, my dear madam, is the coward's art of attacking mercilessly when you are strong and keeping out of harm's way when you are weak. That is the whole secret of successful fighting. Get your enemy at a disadvantage, and never on any account, fight him on equal terms.”

16.5 FURTHER READINGS

- Raghukul Tilak. *Bernard Shaw: Arms and the Man*, 21st.ed. New Delhi: Rama Brothers India PVT. Ltd. Educational publishers (2009).
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