ALAGAPPA UNIVERSITY

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Directorate of Distance Education

B.A. [English]

I - Semester

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LITERARY FORMS

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SYLLABI-BOOK MAPPING TABLE
Literary Forms

Syllabi	Mapping in Book
BLOCK I: Poetry - I **Unit – I -** Lyric **Unit – II -** Ode **Unit – III -** Sonnet **Unit – IV -** Elegy **Unit – V -** Epic	**Unit 1:** Lyric Poetry **(Pages 1-11)** **Unit 2:** Ode **(Pages 12-21)** **Unit 3:** Sonnet **(Pages 22-36)** **Unit 4:** Elegy **(Pages 37-47)** **Unit 5:** Epic **(Pages 48-57)**
BLOCK II: Poetry - II **Unit – VI -** Ballad **Unit – VII -** Mock Epic **Unit – VIII -** Satire **Unit – IX -** Idyll	**Unit 6:** Ballad **(Pages 58-65)** **Unit 7:** Mock-Epic **(Pages 66-80)** **Unit 8:** Satire **(Pages 81-91)** **Unit 9:** Idyll **(Pages 92-106)**
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INTRODUCTION

In literature, the style in which the author expresses himself is known as literary form or a literary genre. Genres in literature may be determined by literary technique, tone, content, or even (as in the case of fiction) length. The differences between genres and categories are flexible and loosely defined, often with subgroups.

The basic types of literary genres are Poetry, Drama, Novel and Essay. However, within Poetry, there exists various sub-genres such as Lyric Poetry, Sonnets, Elegy, Satire, Ballad, Idyll, and so on. Similarly, within novels, there exists Historical, Regional, Sentimental, Psychological, Detective, Gothic and other numerous types of novels. Within dramas, there exists Tragic, Comic, Farces, Absurd plays, and so on. This book, *Literary Forms*, discusses the history and other aspects related to all these genres and sub-genres.

This book is divided into fourteen units that follow the self-instruction mode with each unit beginning with an Introduction to the unit, followed by an outline of the Objectives. The detailed content is then presented in a simple but structured manner interspersed with Check Your Progress Questions to test the student's understanding of the topic. A Summary along with a list of Key Words and a set of Self-Assessment Questions and Exercises is also provided at the end of each unit for recapitulation.

BLOCK - I
POETRY - I

UNIT 1   LYRIC POETRY

Structure

1.0   INTRODUCTION

The term 'lyric' originated from a form of Ancient Greek literature, the lyric, which drew its distinctness from a stringed musical instrument, called a lyre. Aristotle categorized the poetry in three main distinct forms namely, lyrical, dramatic and epic. Lyric poetry is an assortment of stanzas and repetitions, formulating a whole song, or a short and non-narrative poem. A lyric is usually the expression of a speaker, who states his or her own sentiments or views.

Lyrical form of poetry holds great significance in literary works for its musical quality and rhythm, these poems are pleasing to the ear, and are easily put to music.

In this unit, the meaning of lyric poetry, its significance in the literature as a major form of poetry and its development throughout centuries has been explained. The unit will also discuss about the types of lyric poetry and its main parts.

1.1   OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- Discuss the concept and characteristics of lyric poetry

- Describe the parts of a lyric poetry

- Explain the development of lyric poetry as a major form of poetry

- Analyse the various types of lyric poetry

1.2   LYRIC POETRY: AN INTRODUCTION

The word 'lyric' is derived from the Greek word *lyre* which is an instrument used by the Greeks as an accompaniment to a poem. Poets who use lyrical form of poetry exhibit particular temperaments and sentiments by means of words. Such dispositions give out an array of emotions, from extreme to subtle, concerning existence, love, death, or other such life experiences.

A poet writes lyric poetry with an aim to establish a direct contact with the readers. Such kind of poetry expresses a poet's sentiments as he or she expresses his or her state of mind or emotions in it. Most of the lyrical poems are based on sentimental and lofty themes which encourage readers to develop a deeper aspect of looking at life. Readers of these poems are able to relate to the poems as they are based on feelings and emotions and thus, these poems have a universal appeal attached with them.

Characteristics of Lyric Poetry

The following are the main characteristics of lyric poetry:

- In lyric form of poetry, poets write short poems which are generally expressed by one speaker, who articulates either his or her state of mind or thought process of or emotions.

- Formerly, the lyric poetry was sung to the tune of a lyre. Lyric form of poetry is known for its intense emotional content.

- Through such poems, the poet lets out his feelings such as happiness, grief and wonder and so on. However, such intense emotions do not last for a long period of time and which primarily may explain the fact that such poems are of a short length.

- It is also known as an 'untainted form of poetry'.

- Lyric poetry usually denotes a personal expression, which means that the poet states his/her own feelings through it.

- It is also categorized as a formal type of poetry as it conveys to the reader the poet's personal emotions or frame of mind, usually vocalized in the first person.

Construction of a Lyric Poem

A lyric poem is generally constructed in three parts which have been briefly mentioned as follows:

1. The first part of the poem is the part in which the theme of the poem is introduced. After analysing the first part, the reader is able to analyse and form an idea of what he or she is going to witness in the preceding stanzas.

2. The second part of the poem dwells deeper upon the theme of the poem which is introduced in the first part. The poet enlarges the theme and gives the reader a better view of the basis of the poem.

3. The third part of a lyric poem reveals the climax of the theme and the poet thus, draws his or idea to a conclusion.

Lyric poetry is marked with streaks of spontaneity which forms one of its most important attributes. It is so because in such form not much of an effort is required as it is an expression of his or her inner feelings.

History of Lyrical Poetry

Generally, lyric speakers are symbolized as poets who see themselves in a world of loneliness. However, in dramatic lyrics, nevertheless, the speaker of a lyric poem is denoted as speaking to another person in a particular condition or circumstance. John Donne's *Canonization* and William Wordsworth's *Tintern Abbey* are examples of such dramatic lyric poetry.

Although the lyric is spoken in first person, the 'I' in the poem does not necessarily denote the poet of the poem. In some lyric poems, for example *When I consider how my light is spent* a sonnet written by John Milton and *Frost at Midnight* by Samuel Taylor Coleridge, the mention of the known circumstances of the poet's life clarifies that the reader must give due attention to the personal expression.

Even in personal lyrics such as these, however, both the character and expression of the speaker may be solemnized and formed by the author in a way that is favorable to the preferred creative influence. In many lyrics, the speaker is a conventional period-figure, for example, the long-suffering suitor in the Petrarchan sonnet or the courtly, witty lover of the Cavalier poems. Whereas in other kinds of lyrics, the speaker might be an invented figure not much like the poet's character and circumstance.

The genre of lyric poetry understands a large variety of expressions. Some, like Ben Jonson's *To the Memory of ... William Shakespeare* and Walt Whitman's ode on the death of Abraham Lincoln, *O Captain, My Captain* are ceremonial poems emphasizes on a communal expression. There are certain poems which express personal feelings such as Shelley's *To Night*, or Emily Dickinson's *Wild Nights, Wild Nights*.

Famous lyrical poets

Some of the renowned lyrical poets are as follows:

- Sappho: 630 BC – 580 BC
- Percy Bysshe Shelley: 1792 – 1822
- William Wordsworth: 1770 – 1850
- Pindar: 517 BC – 438 BC

- Emily Dickinson: 1830 – 1886
- Robert Frost:1874 – 1963
- Langston Hughes: 1901 – 1967

- Charles Baudelaire: 1821 – 1867
- Robert Burns: 1759 – 1796
- Rabindranath Tagore: 1861 – 1941
- Christina Rossetti: 1830 – 1894
- Sergei Yesenin: 1895 – 1925
- Ivor Gurney: 1890 – 1937

Check Your Progress

1. Why is spontaneity an important attribute of lyric poetry?
2. What are the most common themes of lyric poetry?

1.3 LYRIC POETRY: DEVELOPMENT AND ITS TYPES

In this section, we will discuss the development of lyric poetry and its types.

Development of lyric poetry

Lyric poetry developed throughout various centuries and we will in this section trace its development as an important part of literature.

16th Century

During this period in Britain, an English composer, Thomas Campion composed lute songs and the sonnet gained popularity due to ardent efforts of poets like Sir Philip Sidney, Edmund Spenser and William Shakespeare. French poets like La Pléiade, Pierre de Ronsard, Joachim du Bellay, and Jean-Antoine de Baïf worked with the aim of breaking free from age old traditional French poetry, predominantly Marot and the grands rhétoriqueurs, so they started to imitate classical Greek and Roman poetry forms like the odes. Pindar, Anacreon, Alcaeus, Horace, and Ovid are some well acclaimed names of this school of thought. They also produced Petrarchan sonnet cycles.

In Spain, devotional form of poetry took to the lyric form in order to fulfill religious purposes. Teresa of Ávila, John of the Cross, Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz, Garcilaso de la Vega, and Lope de Vega are some noteworthy poets of this era in Spain. Though Luís de Camões is known across the world for his epic Os Lusíadas, yet his contribution as the greatest Portuguese lyric poet of this period cannot be denied.

In Japan, lyric poetry was known by the name 'naga-uta' ('long song') during this era. Japanese lyric poetry of this time alternated five and seven-syllable lines and concluded with an extra seven-syllable line.

17th Century

During the 17th century, lyrical poetry dominated as a major form of poetry in literature. Works of poets such as John Donne, Andrew Marvell Thomas Carew Ben, Aphra Behn, Jonson, Richard Crashaw, Robert Herrick, George Herbert, Richard Lovelace, John Suckling, John Milton, and Henry Vaughan, helped this form to gain an important place in literature. Readers appreciated such form of poetry as it was short, full of emotions which one could easily connect with.

18th Century

During the period of 18th century, countries such as England and France saw a decline in the lyrical form of poetry. Places of congregation such as the English coffeehouses and French salons, which were frequented by poets, authors and other literary intellectuals witnessed atmosphere of literary conversation which was not amiable to lyric poetry. Poets like Robert Burns, William Cowper, Oliver Goldsmith and Thomas Gray however, were exceptions to this newly formed opinion and their lyrics were not much affected by the general opinion floating around. Some popular 18th century German lyric poets are Novalis, Johann Wolfgang, Friedrich Schiller, von Goethe, and Johann Heinrich Voß. Kobayashi Issa, a poet of Japanese origin gained popularity in lyric poetry during this era. In Diderot's Encyclopédie, Louis chevalier de Jaucourt described lyric poetry of that time as 'a type of poetry totally devoted to sentiment; that's its substance, it's essential object'.

19th Century

In Europe, the lyric, 1842 portrait of William Wordsworth written by Benjamin Haydon appeared as the primary form poetry of the 19th century. It gained so much prominence that it came to be considered as synonymous with poetry. The romantic lyric poetry written during this time comprised first-person explanations of the feelings and emotions of a particular time; however the emotions were extreme but personal.

William Wordsworth is known for his contribution in the field of writing sonnets. Other renowned poets such as John Keats, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, Lord Byron and Percy Bysshe Shelley are other proclaimed names in the field of Romantic lyric poetry. Towards the end of the century, the Victorian lyric became more linguistically self-conscious and defensive in comparison to the Romantic Lyric form of poetry. Alfred Lord Tennyson and Christina Rossetti are some well-known Victorian lyric poets of this era.

This era saw popularity for lyrical poetry. Numerous poetry compilations published in this era are a testimony to this fact. The poetry written by Joseph von

Eichendorff is an example of the German Romantic restoration of the folk-song custom introduced by Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, Johann Gottfried von *Herder*, and Carl Joachim Friedrich Ludwig von Arnim and Bretano's *Des Knaben Wunderhorn*. During the same time, revival of lyric poetry could be witnessed in France also. It was recognized as the leading genre of French poetry.

The rise of lyric poetry in Russia during the early 19th century can be largely attributed to Aleksandr Pushkin. The Swedish poetry was also influenced by the lyric poetry and Per Daniel Amadeus Atterbom, a famous Swedish poet of his time wrote many lyric poems. In Italy poets Giovanni Pascoli, Ugo Foscolo, Giacomo Leopardi and Gabriele D'Annunzio gave a new dimension to lyric poetry.

20th Century

In the beginning of the 20th century, American poetic scene was influenced by rhyming lyric poetry, which was generally an expression of the poet's. Europe and the British colonies also witnessed similar kind of changes in lyric form of poetry. Walter de la Mare, Edmund Blunden, and A E Housman are some prominent lyric poets of The English Georgian era. In India, Rabindranath Tagore was applauded by Yeats for his lyric poetry as he compared Tagore with the troubadour poets.

The 20th century modern poets like H D, T S Eliot, Ezra Pound and William Carlos Williams however, challenged the applicability and appropriateness of the lyric in the modern age. They based their argument on the notion that such form of poetry was too heavily dependent on rhyming language and cared very little about the intricacy of thought. In the era post World War II, the American New Criticism came back to the lyric form of poetry, as they argued that it is a form of poetry in which traditional use of rhyme, meter and stanza is used and was personal in the lyric convention. American poetry witnessed a new form of lyric poetry which included subjects like relations, sex and homely life. Poets like Sylvia Plath and Anne Sexton emerged as the new mainstream lyric poets of the 50s and '60s.

Unfathomable Lyric Poetry of all times

Lyric poetry has been an inseparable part of English literature since time immemorial and some of these poems have been transformed into songs which will never be forgotten for instance, *Auld Lang Syne* written by the Scottish poet, Robert Burns and *To Celia* by the English poet, Ben Jonson. Traditional songs such as *Shenandoah*, *Greensleeves*, *Molly Malone*, *When Johnny Comes Marching Home*, and *Danny Boy* are other prominent examples of lyric poetry which has been moulded to music and taken shape of unforgettable and world acclaimed and loved hymns.

Jim Morrison, Paul Simon, Bob Dylan and Jewel are some well-known contemporary lyric poets. There are a lot of poems written by these poets which have been given form of unforgettable melodious songs.

Types of Lyric poetry

Poets use many types of lyrics while writing lyric poetry and a few of them have been mentioned as follows:

- **Elegy:** An elegy is a sorrowful, gloomy or forlorn poem or song which states sadness with regard to something lost or someone dead. Initially, it used to be written based on a structure, where six foot and five foot lines were used alternatively. However, modern lyric poets do not follow such a pattern while framing elegies, but the mood of the poem nevertheless remains unchanged.

- **Ode:** A lyric poem expressing intense feelings is called an 'ode'. Feelings of the heart for example; affection, admiration, or praise for a person or thing are expressed in such form of poetry. Ode does not restrict itself to a structure or an arrangement. Refrains or repeated lines are however, often used while framing odes. This form of poetry is generally lengthy as compared to other forms of lyrical poetry, and it is primarily focused on optimistic things in life.

- **Sonnet:** A sonnet is poem which is written in fourteen lines. This form of lyrical poetry follows iambic pentameter with five pairs of accented and unaccented syllables. A sonnet's structure, having prearranged syllables and rhyme scheme, makes it similar to a song.

- **Dramatic Monologue:** A dramatic monologue comprises theatrical features; this means that the poem depicts a single speaker communicating to the reader. Any other character usually does not have any dialogues in such a monologue. It is the speaker who forms an important part in dramatic monologue.

- **Occasional Poetry:** Poetry written for particular events for example weddings, anniversaries, birthdays, victories, and dedications is known as 'occasional poetry'. John Dryden's *Annus Mirabilis* and Edmund Spencer's *Epithalamion* written are some examples of occasional poetry.

One main feature of lyric poetry is that it connects with the emotions of a reader and arouses certain emotions which one experiences in day to day life of the people such as the anxiety of death, the sadness disappointments in life, the grief of losing people and so on. It can also inculcate happy feelings such as emotions related to love, friendship, companionship and so on. The following poem is an example of a lyric which is a mixture of happy and sad emotions.

Bread and Music

– by Conrad Aiken

Music I heard with you was more than music,
And bread I broke with you was more than bread;
Now that I am without you, all is desolate;
All that was once so beautiful is dead.

Your hands once touched this table and this silver,

And I have seen your fingers hold this glass.

These things do not remember you, belovèd,

And yet your touch upon them will not pass.

For it was in my heart you moved among them,

And blessed them with your hands and with your eyes;

And in my heart they will remember always,—

They knew you once, O beautiful and wise.

Check Your Progress

3. State one main feature of lyric poetry.

4. What is an 'occasional poetry'?

1.4 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS QUESTIONS

1. Spontaneity is an important attribute of lyric poetry it is so because in such form of poetry not much of an effort is required as it is an expression of poet's inner feelings. Readers can also easily connect with such a form of poetry as they can relate with the themes of such poems.

2. The most common themes of lyric poetry are based on sentimental and lofty themes which encourage readers to develop a deeper aspect of looking at life. Readers of these poems are able to relate to the poems as they are based on feelings and emotions and thus, these poems have a universal appeal attached with them.

3. One main feature of lyric poetry is that it connects with the emotions of a reader and arouses certain emotions which one experiences in day to day life of the people such as the anxiety of death, the sadness disappointments in life, the grief of losing people and so on. It can also inculcate happy feelings such as emotions related to love, friendship, companionship and so on.

4. Poetry written for particular events for example weddings, anniversaries, birthdays, victories, and dedications is known as 'occasional poetry'. John Dryden's *Annus Mirabilis* and Edmund Spencer's *Epithalamion* written are some examples of occasional poetry.

1.5   SUMMARY

- The word 'lyric' is derived from the Greek word *lyre* which is an instrument used by the Greeks as an accompaniment to a poem.

- Poets who use lyrical form of poetry exhibit particular temperaments and sentiments by means of words.

- A poet writes lyric poetry with an aim to establish a direct contact with the readers. Such kind of poetry expresses a poet's sentiments as he or she expresses his or her state of mind or emotions in it.

- Formerly, the lyric poetry was sung to the tune of a lyre. Lyric form of poetry is known for its intense emotional content.

- Lyric poetry usually denotes a personal expression, which means that the poet states his/her own feelings through it.

- Lyric poetry is marked with streaks of spontaneity which forms one of its most important attributes.

- Generally, lyric speakers are symbolized as poets who see themselves in a world of loneliness.

- Although the lyric is spoken in first person, the 'I' in the poem does not necessarily denote the poet of the poem.

- Even in personal lyrics such as these, however, both the character and expression of the speaker may be solemnized and formed by the author in a way that is favorable to the preferred creative influence.

- During the 16th century in Britain, an English composer, Thomas Campion composed lute songs and the sonnet gained popularity due to ardent efforts of poets like Sir Philip Sidney, Edmund Spenser and William Shakespeare.

- In Spain, devotional form of poetry took to the lyric form in order to fulfill religious purposes.

- Japanese lyric poetry of 16th century alternated five and seven-syllable lines and concluded with an extra seven-syllable line.

- During the period of 18th century, countries such as England and France saw a decline in the lyrical form of poetry.

- In Europe, the lyric, 1842 portrait of William Wordsworth written by Benjamin Haydon appeared as the primary form poetry of the 19th century.

- William Wordsworth is known for his contribution in the field of writing sonnets. Other renowned poets such as John Keats, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, Lord Byron and Percy Bysshe Shelley are other proclaimed names in the field of Romantic lyric poetry.

- In the beginning of the 20th century, American poetic scene was influenced by rhyming lyric poetry, which was generally an expression of the poet's.

- The 20th century modern poets like H D, T S Eliot, Ezra Pound and William Carlos Williams however, challenged the applicability and appropriateness of the lyric in the modern age.

- Lyric poetry has been an inseparable part of English literature since time immemorial and some of these poems have been transformed into songs which will never be forgotten.

- An elegy is a sorrowful, gloomy or forlorn poem or song which states sadness with regard to something lost or someone dead.

- A lyric poem expressing intense feelings is called an 'ode'. Feelings of the heart for example; affection, admiration, or praise for a person or thing are expressed in such form of poetry.

- A sonnet is poem which is written in fourteen lines. A sonnet's structure, having prearranged syllables and rhyme scheme, makes it similar to a song.

- A dramatic monologue comprises theatrical features; this means that the poem depicts a single speaker communicating to the reader.

- Poetry written for particular events for example weddings, anniversaries, birthdays, victories, and dedications is known as 'occasional poetry'.

1.6 KEY WORDS

- **Dramatic monologue:** It refers to a monologue which comprises of theatrical features and the main character reveals certain aspects of his or her character while describing a certain event.

- **Elegy:** It refers to a sorrowful, gloomy or forlorn poem or song which states sadness with regard to something lost or someone dead.

- **Lyric poetry:** It refers to a type of formal poetry which expresses a person's feelings and is usually spoken in first person.

- **Sonnet:** It refers to a type of poem which is written in fourteen lines. This form of lyrical poetry follows iambic pentameter with five pairs of accented and unaccented syllables.

1.7 SELF ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

Short Answer Questions

1. What are the main characteristics of lyric poetry?

2. Why is it believed that lyrical poetry has a universal appeal to the readers?

3. Name some of the prominent lyric poets who have contributed significantly to lyric poetry.

4. Write a short note on the history of lyric poetry.

5. Why does ode as a lyric poetry generally focuses on the optimistic aspects of life?

6. Why was lyric poetry criticised in the modern age by poets such as H D, T S Eliot and Ezra Pound?

Long Answer Questions

1. Discuss the development of lyric poetry as a prominent form of poetry.

2. Analyse the purpose behind writing lyrical poetry in detail.

3. Explain the construction of lyric poem.

4. Interpret the main types of lyric poems.

5. Discuss the main theme of the poem Bread and Music by Conrad Aiken.

1.8 FURTHER READINGS

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UNIT 2   ODE

Structure

2.0   INTRODUCTION

The word ode has originated from the ancient Greek word 'ôd' which means a type of lyrical verse or section or song. An ode is an intricately arranged poem which praises or glorifies a happening or a person. They are also written in order to either describe nature intellectually or emotionally or by use of both sentiments.

Greek odes were initially pieces of poetry performed in the company of musical instruments. However, they later came to be recognized as personal lyrical compositions either presented in the form of a song (with or without musical instruments) or just recited (always along with musical instruments). The main instruments brought into use were the 'aulos' and the 'lyre'. The lyre was the most respected and cherished musical instrument of the ancient Greek peoples.

In this unit, the meaning of ode and its types has been analysed. The unit will also discuss the examples of various types of odes used by prominent poets in their works.

2.1   OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- Discuss the meaning of ode and its structure

- Interpret the types of odes

- Analyse the significance of odes in literature

- Explain the examples of different types of odes in literature

2.2 ODE: MEANING AND TYPES

An ode is a form of lyric poetry which is based on a grave theme and follows a definite structure. The style of ode is elevated and is structurally intricate. In the words of an American author, Norman Maclean, 'the term now calls to mind a lyric which is massive, public in its proclamations, and Pindaric in its classical prototype'. Pindar's intricate verses were written in sets of three: moving in a dance tempo to the left, the chorus recited the strophe; moving to the right, the antistrophe; then, standing still, the epode. The Pindaric ode which is also referred to as 'regular ode' and have almost similar form, with the strophes and antistrophes included in the ode, written in a pattern of one stanza, and all the epodes written in another verse.

An ode is a verse written in lyrical form in admiration of an individual, a particular happening or a thing. This form of poetry found its roots in Ancient Greece. Initially, all Greek odes were set to music. This form was later on popularized and adjusted in Renaissance England and led to a new set of conventions. The definition and explanation of ode has however evidently transformed with passing time, as now it is often used usually used to denote a commendation or adoration.

A typical ode has three main parts in its structure:

1. Strophe
2. Antistrophe
3. Epode

Types of Odes

The Ancient Greek poetry talks of three different types of odes which are discussed as follows:

1. **Pindaric ode:** Pindaric ode is named after the famous Greek poet Pindar, who is often accredited for creation of this form of ode poetry. Ode poetry comprises the formal opening of the 'strophe', followed by the imaging verse known as the 'antistrophe'. The meter and length of this is same as that of the strophe. The last and the concluding verse is called the 'epode'. The meter and length of the epode is different in comparison to the previous two sections of the poem. These examples of ode were formerly performed by a chorus and complemented by performers and instruments like the aulos and lyre.

   These odes were written to admire and praise someone or to commend an event. The earlier English odes and the many to follow were even written to laud various arts like music, poetry or intellectual concepts. Romantic poets were accomplished in writing the personal ode of portrayal and obsessive

musing, which is inspired by a characteristic of the outer scene and tries to resolve either a personal emotional problem or one pertaining to humanity in general. Some of the examples are Allen Tate's *Ode to the Confederate Dead* and Wallace Stevens' *The Idea of Order at Key West.*

2. **Horatian ode:** The Horatian ode has found its name from the Roman poet Horace. This ode is a homostrophic ode, which means that each stanza of such an ode form consists of the same meter, rhyme scheme, and length. In addition to this, another feature that differentiates a Horatian ode from a Pindaric ode is that, Horatian odes are also not as formal as the Pindaric odes. Rather, in comparison to Pindaric odes they are more warm and contemplative.

   Horatian odes usually are made of two or four line long verses. In divergence to the desire, far-sighted confidence, and formal language used in Pindar's odes, usually Horatian odes are composed, contemplative, and informal. Horatian odes are even usually homostrophic which means that they are written in a single repeated stanza form. In comparison to Pindaric odes these odes are much shorter. Andrew Marvell's *An Horatian Ode upon Cromwell's Return from Ireland* (1650) and Keats' *Ode to Autumn* (1820) are some good examples of Horatian odes.

3. **Irregular Odes:** Irregular ode is form of lyric poetry which uses rhyme scheme and meter, but the difference between this and the other odes is that it does not have the same verse construction as the Pindaric or Horatian odes. Different parts of this ode do not correspond with each other. Whereas in the other two forms of odes, significant correspondence can be seen. The rhyme scheme of an irregular ode requires just the lines to rhyme anywhere, and not in a specific place.

Irregular ode came into existence in 1656 and it was introduced by an English poet, Abraham Cowley, who copied Pindar's style and matter but did not pay much heed to the repeated pattern of stanzas in each strophic triplet. Rather, he allowed each stanza to form a pattern of its own with flexible line lengths, number of lines, and rhyme scheme. Since that time English ode has been following this structure of irregular stanzas which change freely, according to the subject and mood. William Wordsworth's *Ode: Intimations of Immortality* written in 1807 was the first of this kind.

Check Your Progress

1. What is the rhyme scheme of an irregular ode?
2. What are the parts of ode poetry?

2.3 ODE AND ITS IMPORTANCE IN LITERATURE

The ode form of lyric poetry has been at an exalted position in the history of English literature. Since a long time in history, Pindaric odes have often been written and performed in order to commemorate victories in the athletic field. Later in time, romantic poets started to write English odes to rejoice their powerful emotions and profound adulations. The ode proved to be suitable for both the 18th century as well as the 19th century as these eras were resonate with their love of drama in Ancient Greece and in the Romantic period. Edmund Spenser is known to have written the first identified odes in English which were the *Epithalamium* and *Prothalamium*. In reality, the ode form of lyric poetry actually gained popularity with the arrival of irregular odes written by Abraham Cowley. Romantic poets such as Samuel Taylor Coleridge, William Wordsworth, Percy Bysshe Shelley and John Keats are well known for their famous examples of odes in the English language.

Famous Ode Poets

The following are some of the famous poets who wrote odes:

- Thomas Gray
- John Keats
- Samuel Taylor Coleridge
- William Wordsworth
- Percy Bysshe Shelley
- Pablo Neruda
- Álvaro de Campos
- Dorothy Regan Drake
- William Shakespeare
- Thomas Nashe
- John Donne
- Allen Tate
- Gary Soto
- Ronsard
- Federico García Lorca

Examples of Ode in Literature

Some of the prominent examples of ode in literature are discussed in the following section.

Example 1: *Victory Ode*

– by Pindar

Creatures for a day! What is a man?

What is he not? A dream of a shadow

Is our mortal being. But when there comes to men

A gleam of splendour given of heaven,

Then rests on them a light of glory

And blessed are their days.

Explanation: The above stated example of ode is a translation of the work of a poet who fashioned the whole form, Pindar. It depicts the magnificent theme of triumph and the glory of man.

Example 2: *Epithalamion*

– by Edmund Spenser

Ye learned sisters which have oftentimes

Beene to me ayding, others to adorne:

Whom ye thought worthy of your gracefull rymes,

That even the greatest did not greatly scorne

To heare theyr names sung in your simple layes,

But joyed in theyr prayse.

And when ye list your owne mishaps to mourne,

Which death, or love, or fortunes wreck did rayse,

Your string could soone to sadder tenor turne,

And teach the woods and waters to lament

Your dolefull dreriment.

Now lay those sorrowfull complaints aside,

And having all your heads with girland crownd,

Helpe me mine owne loves prayses to resound,

Ne let the same of any be envide:

So Orpheus did for his owne bride,

So I unto my selfe alone will sing,

The woods shall to me answer and my Eccho ring.

Explanation: *Epithalamion* written by Edmund Spenser is one of the original odes which formed a part of the English language. Originating from Elizabethan England, the very first verse of Spenser's ode shows the enormous themes that he

deals with in his poem. The ode also consists of the reference to the renowned Greek musician and poet, Orpheus, which only reaffirms the ties of Spenser's poetic form to its origins in Ancient Greece.

Example 3: ***The Progress of Poesy***

– by Thomas Gray

Wake up, you little sleep head, awake

And give great joy to life that's found in dreams

From Nature's most sweet sounding streams A thousand turns their twisty journeys take

The dancing flowers, that above them blow

Breathe life and music as they flow Now the vast waves of sound drift along

Deep, beautiful, vast and strong

Through the fields and vales and valleys they glide

And rolling down the mountain side

Daring and carefree the water pours

From the highest edge they jump and falling, they roar.

Explanation: *The Progress of Poesy* written by Thomas Gray is an outstanding example of a traditional Pindaric ode. The strophe and mirroring antistrophe in the poem are strikingly evident. The poet has chosen three line verses each having a rhyme between the first lines which strengthens their connection. The concluding stanza is twice the length of the first ones and includes a somewhat diverse rhyme scheme. This can be called the concluding epode of the poem. Imagery has also been used by the poet. In addition to that, the language used by him glorifies nature and art, which is characteristic of the Pindaric ode.

Example 4: ***Ode on Solitude***

– by Alexander Pope

Sound sleep by night; study and ease,

Together mixed; sweet recreation;

And innocence, which most does please,

With meditation. Thus let me live, unseen, unknown;

Thus unlamented let me die;

Steal from the world, and not a stone

Tell where I lie.

Explanation: *Ode on Solitude* by Alexander Pope is a lovely specimen of a Horatian ode which lives up to the tradition in real spirit. In this ode, four-line stanzas have been used by Pope, which is characteristic of all Horatian odes. In

addition to this, his verses are even homostrophic, which means all stanzas of the poem have identical meter, rhyme scheme, and length. This ode rests on a more reflective and private theme, just as the case is with a typical Horatian ode. Rather than articulating the grandness of the beauty of nature, Pope reflects on the superiority of seclusion and brings about how, owing to that, the speaker gets more time to meditate.

Example 5: *Ode on a Grecian Urn*

– by John Keats

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

Explanation: *Ode on a Grecian Urn* is undoubtedly the most renowned ode in the history of English literature. This is a perfectly written, an irregular ode so though the rhyme been has used throughout, but not in a strict way as in other is done in other forms of ode. John Keats has tried to praise the features of classical Greek art through his ode. Consequently, there cannot be another poetic form is as appropriate as this ode which is a true illustration of classical Greek art itself.

Check Your Progress

3. What is the main theme of the ode, *Victory Ode*?

4. Which type of ode is used by Alexander Pope in *Ode on Solitude?*

2.4 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS QUESTIONS

1. The rhyme scheme of an irregular ode requires just the lines to rhyme anywhere, and not in a specific place.

2. The main parts of ode poetry are opening of the 'strophe', followed by the imaging verse known as the 'antistrophe'. The meter and length of this is same as that of the 'strophe'. The last and the concluding verse is called the 'epode'.

3. The main theme of *Victory Ode* by Pindar is that it depicts the magnificent theme of triumph and the glory of man.

4. *Ode on Solitude* by Alexander Pope is a lovely specimen of a Horatian ode which lives up to the tradition in real spirit. In this ode, four-line stanzas have been used by Pope, which is characteristic of all Horatian odes.

2.5 SUMMARY

- An ode is a form of lyric poetry which is based on a grave theme and follows a definite structure.

- The Pindaric ode which is also referred to as 'regular ode' and have almost similar form, with the strophes and antistrophes included in the ode, written in a pattern of one stanza, and all the epodes written in another verse.

- Pindaric ode is named after the famous Greek poet Pindar, who is often accredited for creation of this form of ode poetry.

- Ode poetry comprises the formal opening of the 'strophe', followed by the imaging verse known as the 'antistrophe'.

- The last and the concluding verse is called the 'epode'. The meter and length of the epode is different in comparison to the previous two sections of the poem.

- Romantic poets were accomplished in writing the personal ode of portrayal and obsessive musing, which is inspired by a characteristic of the outer scene and tries to resolve either a personal emotional problem or one pertaining to humanity in general.

- The Horatian ode is a homostrophic ode, which means that each stanza of such an ode form consists of the same meter, rhyme scheme, and length.

- In divergence to the desire, far-sighted confidence, and formal language used in Pindar's odes, usually Horatian odes are composed, contemplative, and informal.

- Irregular ode is form of lyric poetry which uses rhyme scheme and meter, but the difference between this and the other odes is that it does not have the same verse construction as the Pindaric or Horatian odes.

- Irregular ode came into existence in 1656 and it was introduced by an English poet, Abraham Cowley, who copied Pindar's style and matter but did not pay much heed to the repeated pattern of stanzas in each strophic triplet.

- The ode form of lyric poetry has been at an exalted position in the history of English literature.

- Edmund Spenser is known to have written the first identified odes in English which were the *Epithalamium* and *Prothalamium*.

- Romantic poets such as Samuel Taylor Coleridge, William Wordsworth, Percy Bysshe Shelley and John Keats are well known for their famous examples of odes in the English language.

- *Epithalamion* written by Edmund Spenser is one of the original odes which formed a part of the English language.

- Thomas Gray in *The Progress of Poesy* has used such language which glorifies nature and art and is a characteristic of the Pindaric ode.

- Alexander Pope in *Ode on Solitude* reflects on the superiority of seclusion and brings about how, owing to that, the speaker gets more time to meditate.

- *Ode on a Grecian Urn* is an irregular ode so though the rhyme been has used throughout, but not in a strict way as in other is done in other forms of ode.

2.6 KEY WORDS

- **Irregular Ode:** It refers to a type of ode which has a definite meter and rhyme but does not follow a particular pattern.

- **Horatian Ode:** It refers to a type of ode which has a set meter and rhyme. It is written to praise a person or an object.

- **Ode:** It is an intricately arranged poem which praises or glorifies an event or a person.

- **Pindaric Ode:** It refers to a type of ceremonious ode which has a definite meter and style.

2.7 SELF ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

Short Answer Questions

1. Write a short note on the concept and evolution of odes.
2. What is the rhyme scheme in the *The Progress of Poesy*?
3. How is Pindaric ode different from Horatian ode?
4. What are the three main types of odes?
5. Why are homostrophic verses used in *Ode on Solitude*?

Long Answer Questions

1. Explain the theme of John Keats' *Ode on a Grecian Urn.*
2. Discuss the three triads in Thomas Gray's *The Progress of Poesy.*

3. Analyse the significance of odes in literature.

4. Discuss the issues and themes of Edmund Spenser's *Epithalamion.*

2.8 FURTHER READINGS

Abrahams, M.H. 2011. *A Glossary of Literary Terms*. California: Wadsworth Publishing.

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UNIT 3 SONNET

Structure

3.0 Introduction
3.1 Objectives
3.2 Sonnet: An Introduction
3.3 Answers to Check Your Progress Questions
3.4 Summary
3.5 Key Words
3.6 Self Assessment Questions and Exercises
3.7 Further Readings

3.0 INTRODUCTION

A sonnet is defined as a fixed form verse which consists of fourteen lines that are five-foot iambics. These iambics rhyme according to structured scheme. It originated in the 13th century by the Sicilian school of court poets who were influenced by the Provencal troubadours.

There are two major forms of sonnets which are Petrarchan and Shakespearean sonnet. The Petrarchan sonnet created a huge impact on European poetry. Sonnet is a literary form which is popular in the English literature as it is a short form which can deals with simple themes of love and more complex themes such as life, time, death and eternity too.

In this unit, the emergence of sonnet in the English literature as one of the major themes of English literature has been discussed. The unit will help you to analyse the themes of various sonnets written by renowned poets over the centuries and the importance of sonnets in literature.

3.1 OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- Discuss the development of sonnet as a literary form

- Explain the structure of Petrarchan sonnet

- Analyse the themes of various sonnets written by renowned poets in English literature

- Discuss the changes in the themes of sonnets over the centuries

3.2 SONNET: AN INTRODUCTION

The sonnet form is one of the most enduring literary forms of poetry in English. The sonnet form was introduced by Sir Thomas Wyatt and Henry Howard, Earl of Surrey in the sixteenth century in English. The word sonnet itself was introduced in English language in 1557 as the title of Surrey's poems. This is either directly borrowed from Middle French sonnet or directly from Italian sonetto, literally 'little song'. The root word is also either the Old Provencal diminutive of son 'song, sound,' or Latin sonus 'sound'. In either case, the definition of sonnet has both the attributes.

Sonnet was the most common form of poetry in the late Middle Ages. By the thirteenth century, it had developed as a standardized form. The form consists of fourteen equal lines that follow a set rhyme scheme. The sonnet form was perfected in the fourteenth century during the Italian Renaissance by Francesco Petrarca, the Renaissance scholar and poet. Sir Thomas Wyatt in the sixteenth century translated some of the Petrarchan sonnets in English and is credited with introducing the sonnet form in English literature.

The traditional Italian or Petrarchan sonnet is a fourteen-line poem with an octave and sestet. Usually, these fourteen lines follow the hendecasyllable (a line of verse containing eleven syllables) and Alexandrine (a line of two hemistichs [half-lines] of six syllables each, separated by a caesura) meters. The octave, first eight lines normally ask questions and the sestet, the last six lines answer them. At the end of the eighth line of the Petrarchan sonnet, there is a 'volta' or 'turn', a point in the sonnet where the idea or theme is turned on its head. This will be like a question is answered (or introduced), or the subject matter is further complicated. Usually the volta takes the form of a 'but' statement contradicting or complicating the content of the earlier lines. A Petrarchan sonnet follows the rhyme scheme abba, abba, cdecde, though with some variation, especially within the final six lines.

The first eight lines have interlinked rhyming scheme that also point out the same idea or theme in them. Further, we can understand that the rhyme scheme 'abba' typically starts at a point moving towards another and coming back again to the starting point. This talks about the closely knitted subject matter within the four lines. After the volta along with a change in the idea or theme, the rhyming scheme also takes a turn. The variations of rhyme in the sestet can take the form of cdccdc or cddcee. The theme in the Petrarchan sonnet is usually the unattainable love of the beloved. However, this is mostly unrequited love. As a result, in the sonnet, the lover will be seen praising the beloved and justifies his love for her. The beloved in this sonnet is portrayed as an ideal who also teaches the lover the feeling of love. In one of his famous collection of sonnets 'Rime Sparse (Scattered

Rhymes)', Petrarch talks about his transcendental longings for Laura. These longings are translated into an earthy and impatient expression of physical desire in some of his sonnets. This theme is further exploited by the poets who followed him. The theme later became so entangled with the sonnet form that people started defining sonnet as a love song and it became associated with high poetic diction, vivid imagery, and romantic love.

Let us now look at the development of sonnet as a literary form in literature.

1. Wyatt and Surrey

As mentioned earlier, the sonnet emerged in English literature in the sixteenth century through Thomas Wyatt and his younger contemporary Henry Howard, Earl of Surrey's translation of Petrarchan sonnet into English. The early circulation of their sonnets was in manuscripts only. Their sonnets were first published by Richard Tottel in his *Songes and Sonettes* that is better known as 'Tottel's Miscellany' in 1557. We will now look at Petrarch's *Rime # 140* which was translated by Wyatt and Surrey. The first line of the sonnet is translated as 'The long love that in my thought doth Harbour', 'The love that doth Reign and live within my thought' respectively.

> *THE long love that in my thought I harbour,*
>
> *And in mine heart doth keep his residence,*
>
> *Into my face presseth with bold pretence,*
>
> *And therein campeth displaying his banner.*
>
> *She that melearneth to love and to suffer,*
>
> *And wills that my trust, and lust's negligence*
>
> *Be reined by reason, shame, and reverence,*
>
> *With his hardiness takes displeasure.*
>
> *Wherewith love to the heart's forest he fleeth,*
>
> *Leaving his enterprise with pain and cry,*
>
> *And there him hideth, and not appeareth.*
>
> *What may I do, when my master feareth,*
>
> *But in the field with him to live and die?*
>
> *For good is the life, ending faithfully.*

In this sonnet, the lover is captivated by the beloved. This captivation is further strengthened by the use of military images. The love of the mistress has camped in his heart displaying the banner. This intense love is translated into a carnal desire towards the beloved. However, he is overcome by the chastity of the lady which forces him to be faithful. The beloved teaches him to restrain his passion and also to be reigned by reason and shame. As the beloved is not

reciprocating the love, the lover feels himself to be abandoned by his fearful master and wants to put an end to his life. This is a drama of erotic excitement. The lover is inhabited by a love that causes him to undertake things that involve risk or danger. It also causes him to suffer pain and embarrassment. However, he realizes later that love is beyond this aspect. At another level, that sonnet is an engagement with the aristocratic and humanist system that seems attractive in the beginning but is finally understood as incompatible. In Surrey's translation of the same sonnet, there are some minor changes. The speaker's heart is already captive before the sonnet starts. He insists very strongly upon his own act in this entire episode. Finally, the poem ends with a reminder of good life with the lover, but for Wyatt it ends with a sweet death. Surrey in this translation experimented with the rhyming scheme of 'ababcdcdefefgg' which was perfected later by Shakespeare.

Despite the fact that Wyatt and Surrey introduced this form in English language, it is Shakespeare and Spencer who are credited with the introduction of this form. Both of them have essentially changed the rhyming scheme and stanza structure and along with them the meaning associated with it.

2. William Shakespeare

William Shakespeare is widely known in literary circles as the 'famous playwright of English literature'. He has thirty-seven plays to his credit; all of them with varied themes and characters. In addition, he has also written three narrative poems and 154 sonnets.

The Shakespearean sonnet is divided into four stanzas. The first three are quatrains (four line stanza) followed by a couplet (two line stanza). The form is often named after Shakespeare, not because he was the first to write in this form but because he became its most famous practitioner. It has the following rhyme scheme 'abab, cdcd, efef, gg'. The division of three quatrains and a final concluding couplet offered him greater amount of variety with regard to rhyme and theme than is usually found in its Italian predecessors. All his sonnets typically use iambic pentameter, a ten syllable line where the first syllable is unstressed and the second syllable is stressed.

Shakespeare uses the three quatrains to develop an idea with three different images and finally reach the conclusion in the couplet. The change in mood or theme mostly happens in the beginning of the third quatrain with a final couplet concluding the arguments. But most often, he waits till the couplet ends and usually summarizes the theme of the poem or introduces a fresh look at the theme. Out of these 154 sonnets, the first 126 sonnets written are addressed to a fair young man in his youth and the last 28 sonnets are addressed to a dark lady. Nobody knows that a flesh and blood person exists in reality or not. The themes of the sonnets abound in love, beauty and mortality. This sequence was published in 1609.

Sonnet 18

Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?

Thou art more lovely and more temperate:

Rough winds do shake the darling buds of May,

And summer's lease hath all too short a date:

Sometime too hot the eye of heaven shines,

And often is his gold complexion dimm'd;

And every fair from fair sometime declines,

By chance, or nature's changing course, untrimm'd;

But thy eternal summer shall not fade

Nor lose possession of that fair thou ow'st;

Nor shall Death brag thou wander'st in his shade,

When in eternal lines to time thou grow'st;

So long as men can breathe or eyes can see,

So long lives this, and this gives life to thee.

In this sonnet, the speaker is describing the beauty of the beloved (here the young man). This sonnet is introspection on death and a consolation in the end that the young man will remain immortal through this poem. The sonnet starts with a question on metaphor whether to compare the young man with summer season or not. However, he says that summer has its finest moments but his beloved is far more superior to this season. Further, summer will soon depart just like any other beautiful thing in nature. Likewise, the young man also has a short life which will soon be past. As the lover, it is the speaker's intention to immortalize the beauty in verse and preserve it for future generations to cherish. The sonnet ends with a very bold claim that as long as there are men on this earth, they will read this sonnet and will help the young men to relive their memories. The sonnet is a typical example of romantic intimacy.

3. Edmund Spenser

Edmund Spenser is an English poet. He is known for his epic poem *The Faerie Queene* which is a celebration of the Tudor dynasty. He is known for his experiments in the stanza form. He divided his long poem into nine line stanzas of which the first eight lines are written in iambic pentameter and the last line is in iambic hexameter. It follows the rhyming scheme of 'ababbcbcc'. This stanza is called a Spenserian stanza.

He has also written a sequence of sonnets called *Amoretti*. The main theme of this sonnet is that it tells the story of Spencer's own successful courtship and marriage to Elizabeth Boyle. In this sonnet, he also experimented with the basic form of sonnet. The resultant form is called the Spenserian sonnet. This sonnet is

also divided into three quatrains and a final couplet with iambic pentameter lines. The rhymes are interlinked as in 'ababbcbccdcdee'. The interlinking of rhymes in the three quatrains also tells us that they speak of similar themes and the couplet will offer a conclusion. Let us look at one of his sonnets.

Amoretti, Sonnet No.75

> *One day I wrote her name upon the strand,*
>
> *But came the waves and washed it away:*
>
> *Again I write it with a second hand,*
>
> *But came the tide, and made my pains his prey.*
>
> *Vain man, said she, that doest in vain assay,*
>
> *A mortal thing so to immortalize,*
>
> *For I myself shall like to this decay,*
>
> *And eek my name be wiped out likewise.*
>
> *Not so, (quod I) let baser things devise*
>
> *To die in dust, but you shall live by fame:*
>
> *My verse, your virtues rare shall eternize,*
>
> *And in the heavens write your glorious name.*
>
> *Where whenas death shall all the world subdue,*
>
> *Our love shall live, and later life renew.*

This example is taken from *Amoretti Sonnet No.75*. As we have already observed the sonnet has linked rhyme scheme in the quatrains which suggests the linked rhymes of such Italian forms as *terzarima*. Here, the poet is talking about the transitory nature of human life. This idea is depicted through the use of the metaphor of writing his beloved's name on the beach sand which is then wiped away by the coming tide. When the lover repeats this action, his beloved scorns and scolds him and tells him that it is a futile effort. Her life is also like that name which will be erased from the face of earth when the time comes. As with the Shakespearean sonnet, the speaker or the poet is trying to overcome the temporal aspect of life writing a sonnet. The speaker then turns to writing the sonnet. He says that the body may decay and will turn to dust. But he will not let her memory die. The virtues of his beloved and their mutual love will be made eternal through the poem. This poem will further elevate her status and reserve her place in heaven. This will also be a guiding force for the latter's life.

The earlier sonnets dealt with the love of the lover for his beloved. But in the seventeenth century, the sonnet adopted other themes as well. For example, the metaphysical poets John Donne and George Herbert wrote religious sonnets highlighting their love for God. Both the Shakespearean and Petrarchan rhyme schemes were popular throughout the seventeenth century period. But poets kept on experimenting with newer styles as well.

4. John Milton

John Milton, the famous English poet, is known for his epic poem *Paradise Lost*. He was a civil servant for the Commonwealth of England under Oliver Cromwell. However, like other English poets, he has also written sonnets. Let us go through sonnet No. 19 from his poem, *On His Blindness*.

> *When I consider how my light is spent*
>
> *When I consider how my light is spent,*
>
> *Ere half my days, in this dark world and wide,*
>
> *And that one Talent which is death to hide*
>
> *Lodged with me useless, though my Soul more bent*
>
> *To serve therewith my Maker, and present*
>
> *My true account, lest he returning chide;*
>
> *Doth God exact day-labour, light denied?*
>
> *I fondly ask. But patience, to prevent*
>
> *That murmur, soon replies, "God doth not need*
>
> *Either man's work or his own gifts; who best*
>
> *Bear his mild yoke, they serve him best. His state*
>
> *Is Kingly. Thousands at his bidding speed*
>
> *And post o'er Land and Ocean without rest:*
>
> *They also serve who only stand and wait."*

This sonnet is similar to the Italian form of writing sonnets. The octave is divided into two quatrains and the sestet is divided into two tercets (three line stanza). The rhyming scheme is 'abbaabbacdccdc'. The first eight lines raise questions to God who has created him and has given him immense talent. The last six lines discuss the answer that he receives from God. The speaker of the poem is the author himself.

Milton lost his sight at a very young age. This brings the irony prominent in this sonnet to the fore. Milton tells his readers that he knows his potential but is unable to deal with it. It is because of the fact that his primacy of experience has been lost. He is not able to see anything now. He is very scared to think that he is not using his talent to his fullest potential. He thinks that God will punish him for not using his talent. He is also questioning his creator—God—but knows that he should be careful while doing so. A patient wait has helped him receive the answer. The answer clearly states that God does not want man's gift or work to praise him. God rather expects man to bear his mild yoke. Hence, this sonnet is an exploration of Milton's relationship with God and his faith in God. He refers to the parables that Jesus told in this sonnet. In line 3, he talks about the servant who buried the talent given to him by his master and did not do anything about it. The servant lost

faith in the eyes of his master and was thrown out because of this action. The style of the sonnet has been derived from the Baroque Period.

5. John Donne

John Donne is recognized as one of the prominent metaphysical poets. Metaphysical poets are largely cognizant for their use of metaphysical conceit in their poems. Metaphysical conceit is an extended metaphor that combines two immensely diverse ideas into a single idea, often using imagery. Poems like *The Canonization*, *The Flea* are all examples of the use of this metaphysical style. Donne is known for his unique treatment of love and amorous courtship in his poems. However, later in his life, he became an Anglican priest. During the tenure of his poetic career, he is known for his famous *Holy sonnets*. Here, the lover is mankind and the beloved is God, his creator. Let us go through the explanation of one such sonnet of *Holy Sonnets*.

> *Batter my heart, three-person'd God*
>
> *Batter my heart, three-person'd God, for you*
>
> *As yet but knock, breathe, shine, and seek to mend;*
>
> *That I may rise and stand, o'erthrow me, and bend*
>
> *Your force to break, blow, burn, and make me new.*
>
> *I, like an usurp'd town to another due,*
>
> *Labor to admit you, but oh, to no end;*
>
> *Reason, your viceroy in me, me should defend,*
>
> *But is captiv'd, and proves weak or untrue.*
>
> *Yet dearly I love you, and would be lov'd fain,*
>
> *But am betroth'd unto your enemy;*
>
> *Divorce me, untie or break that knot again,*
>
> *Take me to you, imprison me, for I,*
>
> *Except you enthrall me, never shall be free,*
>
> *Nor ever chaste, except you ravish me.*

In this sonnet, John Donne like Milton has created a dialogue with God. The speaker is aware of his shortcomings. He is very fickle minded and is going astray from the path of God. His heart is craving for worldly pleasures. So he wants God his creator to come and save him. He feels that it is the duty of God, the creator, to save his creation. This, he feels, can only be done by overthrowing God's enemy who is residing in the heart of the speaker. God has to forcibly imprison him to free and purify him. In this sonnet, he mixes the style of the Italian and Shakespearean sonnets into one. The first eight lines of the sonnet have a rhyming scheme of 'abbaabba' that corresponds to the Petrarchan sonnet. But in the last six lines, the rhyming scheme is 'cdcdcc' where you have a concluding

couplet like that of Shakespearean sonnets. The use of violent metaphors like battering, captive, usurped town, and so forth shows the speaker's intense longing for God.

The tradition of writing sonnets went out of date during the Restoration period. However, the tradition of writing sonnets returned during the period of the French Revolution. The penchant for sonnet continued during the Romantic period. For example, William Wordsworth wrote 523 sonnets, John Keats 67 sonnets, Samuel Taylor Coleridge 48 sonnets, and Percy Bysshe Shelley wrote 18 sonnets. These sonnets imbibed the elements belonging to both the Shakespearean and Petrarchan traditions.

6. William Wordsworth

Wordsworth and Coleridge heralded a new era in English Literature with their publication of the *Lyrical Ballads*. This period came to be known as the 'Romantic period'. Wordsworth defined 'poetry' as the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings recollected in tranquillity. *The Prelude* is one of the significant poems written by Wordsworth. In addition, he has written several sonnets as well. Some of his famous poems are *Composed Upon Westminster Bridge*, *The World is Too Much With Us* and *London, 1802*. Let us study one of the ecclesiastical sonnets from the poem, *Inside of King's College Chapel, Cambridge* I which is a historical record of the origin of the Anglican Church till his own time.

> *Tax not the royal Saint with vain expense,*
>
> *With ill-matched aims the Architect who planned—*
>
> *Albeit labouring for a scanty band*
>
> *Of white-robed Scholars only—this immense*
>
> *And glorious Work of fine intelligence!*
>
> *Give all thou canst; high Heaven rejects the lore*
>
> *Of nicely-calculated less or more;*
>
> *So deemed the man who fashioned for the sense*
>
> *These lofty pillars, spread that branching roof*
>
> *Self-poised, and scooped into ten thousand cells,*
>
> *Where light and shade repose, where music dwells*
>
> *Lingering—and wandering on as loth to die;*
>
> *Like thoughts whose very sweetness yieldethproof*
>
> *That they were born for immortality.*

This sonnet is part of the sonnets that talk about the ecclesiastical architecture. In this context, he mentions the types of spiritual church in truth and charity (34–37); in humble altar and low pile (38–41); in cathedral and college chapel (42–45); the eternal city (46–47).

7. Percy Bysshe Shelley

P B Shelley is one of the renowned Romantics. He is known for his powerful poems like *Ode to the West Wind*, *To a Skylark*, and so forth. His sonnet *Ozymandias* is also highly anthologized. Shelley innovated radically, creating his own rhyme scheme for the sonnet *Ozymandias*.

> *I met a traveller from an antique land*
>
> *Who said: Two vast and trunkless legs of stone*
>
> *Stand in the desert . . . Near them, on the sand,*
>
> *Half sunk, a shattered visage lies, whose frown,*
>
> *And wrinkled lip, and sneer of cold command,*
>
> *Tell that its sculptor well those passions read*
>
> *Which yet survive, stamped on these lifeless things,*
>
> *The hand that mocked them, and the heart that fed:*
>
> *And on the pedestal these words appear:*
>
> *"My name is Ozymandias, king of kings:*
>
> *Look on my works, ye Mighty, and despair!"*
>
> *Nothing beside remains. Round the decay*
>
> *Of that colossal wreck, boundless and bare*
>
> *The lone and level sands stretch far away.*

This sonnet mentions a traveller's account of the ruins that he has seen of an ancient city. The traveller recounts that while he was travelling to a place where ancient civilizations once existed, he had seen an abandoned statue in the middle of a desert. From the title, we can make out that the land he has visited is Egypt and thus, the statue exists in a dilapidated condition. There are two stones that look like legs of an individual but there is no trunk attached to the statue. He could only see the face of the statue from which he could see the stern and powerful look of a ruler. The traveller states that the sculptor was skilled enough in depicting the emotions of a ruler on the statue. On the pedestal near the face, there is an inscription that tells anyone who might happen to pass by, basically, 'Look around and see how awesome I am!' But except the statue there is nothing to tell the greatness of his rule and empire. There is just a lot of sand, as far as the traveller can see.

This sonnet acts as a warning to the city/country that he lives in and the king. During Shelly's time, we could see that France's hegemony has ended like that of the empire of Ozymandias. Likewise, the sonnet forebodes a warning that England's rule will also end soon. The king and the nation should not take pride in whatever they have achieved in terms of prosperity and power.

Another important aspect of the sonnet is its point of view. What is said in the poem comes from the writing made by the sculptor on the statue of king

Ozymandias. This is read by an unknown traveller who narrated that to the speaker. This helps in creating a sense of the mystery of history and legend. Everything about the narration is shrouded in mystery. The traveller is unknown. Also, we are not sure whether the traveller has actually seen the statue and interpreted it correctly or not. Moreover, the statue itself is a creation of a sculptor, who might or might not have truly captured the passions of the king. Our best access to the king himself is not the statue, not anything physical, but the king's own words.

8. Gerard Manley Hopkins

G M Hopkins is one of the prominent poets of the Victorian period. However, his experiments with the poetic form have categorized him as a Modern poet. He got converted to Catholicism and became a priest. His religious conviction and reverence for nature is very evident in all his poems. Most of his sonnets were written in sprung rhythm, for example *The Windhover*. He like other English poets experimented with the sonnet form in *Pied Beauty* and *That Nature is a Heraclitean Fire and of the comfort of the Resurrection*. Let us study a sonnet of the poem *God's Grandeur* written by Hopkins.

> *The world is charged with the grandeur of God.*
>
> *It will flame out, like shining ftorn shook foil;*
>
> *It gathers to a greatness, like the ooze of oil*
>
> *Crushed. Why do men then now not reck his rod?*
>
> *Generations have trod, have trod, have trod;*
>
> *And all is seared with trade; bleared, smeared with toil;*
>
> *And wears man's smudge and shares man's smell: the soil*
>
> *Is bare now, nor can foot feel, being shod.*
>
> *And for all this, nature is never spent;*
>
> *There lives the dearest freshness deep down things;*
>
> *And though the last lights off the black West went*
>
> *Oh, morning, at the brown brink eastward, springs—*
>
> *Because the Holy Ghost over the bent*
>
> *World broods with warm breast and with ah! bright wings.*

This sonnet talks about how nature represents Gods glory. This sonnet validates the presence of god and also justifies his existence. Nonetheless, human beings who focus more on material prosperity have started destroying Nature. Nature rejuvenates itself to greet the man daily in the morning. God is also gracious and gives the power of rebirth to Nature.

9. Wilfred Owen

Wilfred Owen is one of the famous English poets who wrote during the period of the First World War. His poems showcase the excruciating experiences of the First World War. He was influenced by his friend and mentor Siegfried Sassoon. Let us read some lines written by Wilfred Owen in the Preface to an anthology of his poems.

> *This book is not about heroes. English Poetry is not yet fit to speak of them.*
>
> *Nor is it about deeds, or lands, nor anything about glory, honour, might, majesty, dominion, or power, except War.*
>
> *Above all I am not concerned with Poetry. My subject is War, and the pity of War…..*

Therefore, sonnets remain as one of the most enduring forms of poetry in contemporary times. The early English practitioners such as Edmund Spenser (who gave his name to the Spenserian sonnet), Michael Drayton, and William Shakespeare (who is also credited with a second form of English sonnet) largely wrote about the theme of love in their sonnets. However, authors such as G M Hopkins have challenged the traditional format of the sonnet form, by varying the rhyme schemes, and rhythm.

Check Your Progress

1. What is the main theme of the Petrarchan sonnet?

2. Define the term 'metaphysical conceit'.

3. What is the theme of the sonnet, *Amoretti?*

4. How has William Wordsworth defined poetry?

5. State one of the aspects of the sonnet *Ozymandias*.

3.3 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS QUESTIONS

1. The main theme in the Petrarchan sonnet is usually the unattainable love of the beloved. However, this is mostly unrequited love. As a result, in the sonnet, the lover will be seen praising the beloved and justifies his love for her.

2. Metaphysical conceit is an extended metaphor that combines two immensely diverse ideas into a single idea, often using imagery.

3. The main theme of this sonnet is that it tells the story of Spencer's own successful courtship and marriage to Elizabeth Boyle.

4. William Wordsworth defined 'poetry' as the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings recollected in tranquility.

5. One of the important aspects of the sonnet *Ozymandias* is its point of view. What is said in the poem comes from the writing made by the sculptor on the statue of king Ozymandias. This is read by an unknown traveller who narrated that to the speaker. It helps in creating a sense of the mystery of history and legend.

3.4 SUMMARY

- The sonnet form was introduced by Sir Thomas Wyatt and Henry Howard, Earl of Surrey in the sixteenth century in English.

- Sonnet was the most common form of poetry in the late Middle Ages. By the thirteenth century, it had developed as a standardized form.

- The traditional Italian or Petrarchan sonnet is a fourteen-line poem with an octave and sestet.

- At the end of the eighth line of the Petrarchan sonnet, there is a 'volta' or 'turn', a point in the sonnet where the idea or theme is turned on its head.

- A Petrarchan sonnet follows the rhyme scheme abba, abba, cdecde, though with some variation, especially within the final six lines.

- Despite the fact that Wyatt and Surrey introduced this form in English language, it is Shakespeare and Spencer who are credited with the introduction of this form.

- The Shakespearean sonnet is divided into four stanzas. The first three are quatrains (four line stanza) followed by a couplet (two line stanza).

- Shakespeare uses the three quatrains to develop an idea with three different images and finally reach the conclusion in the couplet.

- In Sonnet 18 of William Shakespeare, the speaker is describing the beauty of the beloved (here the young man). This sonnet is introspection on death and a consolation in the end that the young man will remain immortal through this poem.

- Edmund Spenser is an English poet. He is known for his epic poem *The Faerie Queene* which is a celebration of the Tudor dynasty.

- He has also written a sequence of sonnets called *Amoretti*. The main theme of this sonnet is that it tells the story of Spencer's own successful courtship and marriage to Elizabeth Boyle.

- John Milton's sonnet, *On his Blindness* is a sonnet is similar to the Italian form of writing sonnets. The octave is divided into two quatrains and the sestet is divided into two tercets (three line stanza).

- John Donne is recognized as one of the prominent metaphysical poets. Metaphysical poets are largely cognizant for their use of metaphysical conceit in their poems.

- Metaphysical conceit is an extended metaphor that combines two immensely diverse ideas into a single idea, often using imagery.

- Wordsworth and Coleridge heralded a new era in English Literature with their publication of the *Lyrical Ballads*. This period came to be known as the 'Romantic period'.

- P B Shelley is one of the renowned Romantics. He is known for his powerful poems like *Ode to the West Wind*, *To a Skylark*, and so forth.

- The sonnet *Ozymandias* mentions a traveller's account of the ruins that he has seen of an ancient city. The traveller recounts that while he was travelling to a place where ancient civilizations once existed, he had seen an abandoned statue in the middle of a desert.

- G M Hopkins is one of the prominent poets of the Victorian period. However, his experiments with the poetic form have categorized him as a Modern poet.

- Wilfred Owen's poems showcase the excruciating experiences of the First World War. He was influenced by his friend and mentor Siegfried Sassoon.

3.5 KEY WORDS

- **Iambic sonnet:** It is defined as a line of verse which has five metrical feet and each consists of one short (or unstressed) syllable followed by one long (or stressed) syllable.

- **Petrarchan sonnet:** It is defined as a sonnet form popularized by Petrarch which consists of an octave with the rhyme scheme abbaabba and of a sestet with one of several rhyme schemes, as cdecde or cdcdcd.

- **Sonnet:** It is defined as a fourteen line poem which is written in iambic pentameter and follows a structured thematic organization with any rhyme scheme.

- **Spenserian stanza:** It is defined as a stanza which consists of eight iambic pentameters and an alexandrine, with the rhyming scheme *ababbcbcc*.

3.6 SELF ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

Short Answer Questions

1. Write a short note on the Romantic period.

2. How has Shakespeare divided his sonnets?

3. Why does William Shakespeare uses the three quatrains in his sonnets?

4. How has Spenser experimented with the basic form of sonnet in *Amoretti?*

5. Write a short note on the sonnet *God's Grandeur.*

Long Answer Questions

1. Discuss the structure and rhyme scheme of Petrarchan sonnet.

2. Explain the theme of Edmund Spenser's *Amoretti.*

3. Analyse the main issues in Shakespeare's Sonnet 18.

4. Discuss the works of John Milton with special reference to his sonnet *On His Blindness.*

5. Analyse the development and importance of sonnets in English literature.

3.7 FURTHER READINGS

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UNIT 4   ELEGY

Structure

4.0   INTRODUCTION

An elegy is a sorrowful piece of poetry, generally written in memory of a lost one for a funeral. An elegy speaks about the movement tale of a person, or a person's loss. It is not a collective story of a group or race of people, which can be observed in epic form of poetry.

Samuel Taylor Coleridge defines elegy 'as a form of poetry natural to the reflective mind. It may treat of any subject, but it must treat of no subject for itself; but always and exclusively with reference to the poet. Elegy presents everything as lost and gone or absent and future'.

In this unit, the development of elegy as a major literary form has been discussed. The characteristics of a traditional elegy and the concept of pastoral elegy as one of the major types of elegy have been highlighted. The various elegies written by great poets have also been analysed in the unit.

4.1   OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- Discuss the meaning and characteristics of an elegy

- Analyse the concept of pastoral elegy

- Explain the development of elegy in English literature

- Interpret the themes of elegies written by renowned authors

4.2 ELEGY: MEANING AND CHARACTERISTICS

The word elegy originated from the Greek word 'elegeia,' which means to lament or to be sorrowful. In Greek and Roman literature, any poem which was written in elegiac meter, meant irregular hexameter and pentameter lines was denoted by the term 'elegy'. However, it was also referred to as the subject matter of conversion and loss regularly articulated in the elegiac stanza form, particularly in themes of love. With this concept in mind, there are certain poems which are referred to as 'elegies' such as *The Wanderer* and *The Seafarer*.

An elegy usually brings comprises of three stages of grief which are as follows:

- Grief

- Praise of the dead

- Consolation towards the loss

In countries such as Europe and England, the term 'elegy' continued to have altering meanings throughout the period of Renaissance. The elegies written by John Donne, in the later part of the sixteenth century and the early part of the seventeenth century, are poems which are based on the themes of love. Even though they are related to the essence of elegy as sorrow, many of them stress upon variability and forfeiture.

In the 17th century, the term 'elegy' meant a formal and sustained laments in verse on the demise of a specific individual which generally concluded with a consolation. The medieval poem, *The Pearl and Chaucer's Book of the Duchess* (elegies in the mode of dream allegory); Alfred Lord Tennyson's *In Memoriam* (1850), and W H Auden's *In Memory of W. B. Yeats* (1940) are some examples of this form of elegy.

There are some instances where the word 'elegy' is also used to represent the gloomy musings on transience for example, Thomas Gray's *Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard* (1757) and the *Duino Elegies* (1912-22) of the German poet Rainer Maria Rilke on the impermanence of poets as well as of the worldly things which form the subject matter of their poems.

The 'dirge', which means a sad song also exhibits sorrow on the event of death of someone in particular, however it is slightly different from an elegy in terms of being short, less formal, and generally characterized as a text to be presented in form of a song; Shakespeare's *Full Fathom Five Thy Father Lies* and William Collins' *A Song from Shakespeare's Cymbeline* (1749) are some good examples of the dirge.

In the existing times, 'threnody' is used primarily as an equivalent of dirge and monody for an elegy or dirge which is offered as the expression of one single individual. John Milton describes his *Lycidas* (1638) in the subtitle as a 'monody' in which the author bewails a learned Friend.

One of the main subtypes of the elegy is the pastoral elegy, which is a representation of both the poet and the person he laments, this individual in the poem is generally also a poet, such as, shepherds (its Latin is 'pastor'). This poetic term was initiated by the Sicilian Greek poet, Theocritus and was later carried on by the Roman Virgil. Pastoral poetry found its advancement in many European countries during the Renaissance and was popular among the masses even during the 19th century.

Characteristics of an Elegy

An elegy is a poem which expresses gloomy thoughts of a person. It is commonly written in praise of the deceased and has an air of sorrow around it. An 'elegy' is very different from 'eulogy' which is an account that is put together in prose. Such an account praises the dead person and is read at his or her funeral for all present to listen. Although an elegy may serve the purpose of a eulogy yet it has certain characteristics which make it distinct from other forms of expression or poetry. The characteristics of a traditional elegy are as follows:

- An elegy begins with a lament of loss of life of a person or loss of a thing.
- The sorrow is followed by the poet's admiration for the person or thing lost. In the second part of the construction generally the lost person's qualities and remarkable performances or activities are endorsed.
- An elegy is a kind of a lyric which centers on expression of sentiments, beliefs or opinions.
- The language and structure of an elegy is formal and ceremonial.
- An elegy may be based on either the transience of life of a person or the attractiveness and magnificence of somebody close to the speaker's heart.
- An elegy may search answers to questions related to the nature of life and death of the body or immorality of the soul.
- Sometimes an elegy also expresses the speaker's resentment or rage about a loss or demise.
- The last or the third stage of the elegy is about its consolidation. This element may be more religious.
- It is of various types such as personal, impersonal or pastoral.

4.2.1 Pastoral Elegy

Pastoral elegy is a poem which dwells upon the combined subject of death and sublime country life. This form of poetry usually includes shepherds who express their emotions. The pastoral elegy takes the pastoral or rural components and connects them to expression of sorrow on a loss. The pastoral form of poetry has numerous significant characteristics, like the solicitation of the contemplate; manifestation of the sorrow or the heartache of the shepherd or the poet; admiration of the dead; an outburst against demise; a particularization of the impacts of that

particular demise on nature; and last but not the least, poet's concurrent acceptance of certainty of death and at the same time his unflinching hope for immortality. Pastoral elegies have also been seen sometimes to have included a mourners' procession, humorous deviations to diverse topics arising from decease, and representation by means of flowers, refrains, and pompous queries.

The pastoral elegy characteristically impacts the reader with its most characteristic form. It revolves around modest rural figures. There is a stark difference between an ordinary pastoral poem and a pastoral elegy, it would be most pertinent to bring about that where in the former the main character of the poem is a shepherd is the at the same time, in pastoral elegy, the dead person is generally re-formed as a shepherd, irrespective of what the deceased person's role or character may have been when he was alive. In addition to that, along with being re-formed as a shepherd, the dead person is usually surrounded by traditional mythological beings, for instance nymphs and fauns and so on.

The pastoral elegy and present-day poetry

The pastoral elegy form of poetry prospered in Europe during the period of Renaissance and the 19th century. In the modern era however, poets like J V Cunningham and Alan Dugan worked towards re-imaging the pastoral elegy and giving it a new form. The recently written pastoral elegies have been transformed in both subject and form. The pastoral elegies of the modern times have been presented in a somewhat more satirical form. However, it does not mean that the original form of pastoral elegy has been lost in time. Some modern poets like, William Carlos Williams and W H Auden still follow the original form of pastoral poetry and they have written poems that withhold its traditional form and characteristics.

Check Your Progress

1. What are the three stages of grief in an elegy?

2. How is elegy different from eulogy?

4.3 ELEGY: HISTORY AND IMPORTANCE

We will in this section discuss about the development of elegy as a literary form and its importance in English literature.

Elegy was a prominent form of lyric poetry during the era of the classical Greek literature. The word elegy is derived from the Greek word 'elegia' which expressed grief, remorse, apprehension. Before the emergence of ode as a literary form, elegy gained a separate existence from a complementary song and was generally written in distichs, which means, in a strophic unit of stanza comprising a line in hexameter and a line in pentameter. Elegies were commonly seen as an expression of grief.

However, later the poets started to use elegies as an expression of other feelings like remorse or delight which was motivated by sensual urge. Not many Greek elegies have been able to sustain the vagaries of time only a few parts have remained, but various Latin elegies written by Tibullus and Propertius are still available in their original form for the benefit of the reader of English literature. *Tristia* by Ovid is a masterpiece of this form of poetry.

The elegies written in the modern European literature era, express gloomy and forlorn feelings after some passionate experiences or they are enthused by reflection on insubstantiality of human existence. For Nicolas Boileau-Despreaux, a French poet, the elegy is mourning in funeral cloth. The original elegies which formed a major part of the English literature contained nothing but lamentations, however, with the changes in time, elegies were no longer considered as poems of lamentations. In Italy, the elegy was cultured from the Middle Ages after the manner of Petrarch. In Germany, the content of elegies has been supernatural right from the start. Here, it would be pertinent to mention two different types of elegies: first which was characterized by an end of the 18th century offering by Goethe and the second by a beginning of the twentieth century offering by Rilke.

Famous Elegy Poets

Some of the famous poets who have written elegies are as follows:

- Thomas Gray: 1716 – 1771
- Rainer Maria: 1875 -1926
- John Donne: 1572 – 1631
- Anna Akhmatova: 1889 – 1966
- Johannes Secundus: 1511 – 1563
- Joachim du Bellay: 1522 – 1560

Importance of Elegy in Literature

The concrete definition of elegy only happened to take form during the 16th century. During the ancient Greek era, any poem written in elegiac verses, which had the potential to deal with a variety of subject matter, like love or war, along with demise was referred to as an elegy. Poetry written in the elegiac form which consisted of alternating hexameter and pentameter stanzas was used for themes which were on a smaller scale as compared to the epic forms of poetry.

Poets from Greece and ancient Rome even made use of elegy for themes which was based on humor and satire. However, with the changes, the definition of elegy took a more limited form. It started to gain prominence as a literary form during the 16th century. Although this of poetry it is not much popular anymore in modern-day literature in its strictest form. However, there are a lot of poems which are written in the memory of their departed loved ones.

Examples of Elegy in Literature

Example 1: *Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard*

– By Thomas Gray, 1750

The curfew tolls the knell of parting day,

The lowing herd wind slowly o'er the lea

The ploughman homeward plods his weary way,

And leaves the world to darkness and to me.

Now fades the glimm'ring landscape on the sight,

And all the air a solemn stillness holds,

Save where the beetle wheels his droning flight,

And drowsy tinklings lull the distant folds;

Save that from yonder ivy-mantled tow'r

The moping owl does to the moon complain

Of such, as wand'ring near her secret bow'r,

Molest her ancient solitary reign.

Explanation: Thomas Gray's *Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard* was written in the memory of his friend, Richard West, is a very well-known example of elegy. The poet laments on the death of his poet friend. He contemplates on the inevitability of life and death consigns all men irrespective of their class and all people are destined towards a fate of oblivion.

Example 2: *O Captain! My Captain!*

– By Walt Whitman, 1891

O Captain! my Captain! our fearful trip is done,

The ship has weather'd every rack, the prize we sought is won,

The port is near, the bells I hear, the people all exulting,

While follow eyes the steady keel, the vessel grim and daring;

But O heart! heart! heart!

O the bleeding drops of red,

Where on the deck my Captain lies,

Fallen cold and dead.

Explanation: Walt Whitman's famous poem, *O Captain! My Captain* is an elegy written in memory of the American President, Abraham Lincoln. In this brilliant piece of work, the poet beautifully brings together a sense of forfeiture, admiration, and comfort in the very first stanza of the elegy. The subject matter provides a comfort to the readers and yet at the same time, it fills ones heart with grief and sadness as it deals with the demise of Abraham Lincoln.

Example 3: *Fugue of Death*

– By Paul Celan, 1948

Black milk of daybreak we drink you at night

we drink you in the morning at noon we drink you at nightfall

drink you and drink you

A man in the house he plays with the serpents he writes

he writes when the night falls to Germany your golden

hair Margarete

Your ashen hair Shulamith we are digging a grave in the

sky it is

ample to lie there

Explanation: This profoundly agonizing elegy is a classic work of art by poet, Paul Celan. In his elegy, the poet remembers those who had lost their lives the Holocaust. Celan was privy and witnessed the same from a ghetto where he lived with his Jewish family. Though addressing a large group of people is not a characteristic feature of a typical elegy, yet Celan's poem identifies the combined agony and hurt of a complete population.

Example 4: *Jack*

– By Maxine Kumin, 2005

I meant to

but never did go looking for him, to buy him back

and now my old guilt is flooding this twilit table

my guilt is ghosting the candles that pale us to skeletons

the ones we must all become in an as yet unspecified order.

Oh Jack, tethered in what rough stall alone

did you remember that one good winter?

Explanation: Maxine Kumin's *Jack* was written in 2005 and can be considered as an example of a contemporary elegy. He has put together all facets of loss in her elegy, however, in a reverse order. The poem begins at a happy note which depicts a scene of satisfaction, but ends on a serious and sad note as the poet, having sold her horse Jack and never coming to know of his whereabouts ever again.

Example 5: *The Role of Elegy*

– By Mary Jo Bang, 2007

The role of elegy is

To put a death mask on tragedy,

A drape on the mirror.

To bow to the cultural

Debate over the aesthetization of sorrow,

Of loss, of the unbearable

Afterimage of the once material.

To look for an imagined

Consolidation of grief

So we can all be finished

Once and for all and genuinely shut up

The cabinet of genuine particulars.

What is elegy but the attempt

To rebreathe life

Into what the gone one once was

Before he grew to enormity.

Explanation: The contemporary poet, Mary Jo Bang published a book, *Elegy*. The book is a collection of numerous sad musings on the death son. The main theme is that the poet ponders over the role of elegy, and concludes that elegy is 'the attempt/to rebreathe life/into what the gone one once was'.

Check Your Progress

3. What is the main theme in *The Role of Elegy* by Mary Jo Bang?

4. Name some of the famous elegy poets.

4.4 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS QUESTIONS

1. The three stages of grief in an elegy are as follows:

   (a) Grief

   (b) Praise of the dead

   (c) Consolation towards the loss

2. An elegy is a poem which expresses gloomy thoughts of a person. On the other hand, 'eulogy' is an account that is put together in prose. It is an account which praises the dead person and is read at his or her funeral for all present to listen.

3. The main theme in *The Role of Elegy* by Mary Jo Bang is that the poet ponders over the role of elegy, and concludes that elegy is 'the attempt / to rebreathe life / into what the gone one once was'.

4. Some of the famous elegy poets are Thomas Gray, Rainer Maria, John Donne, Anna Akhmatova, Johannes Secundus and Joachim du Bellay.

4.5 SUMMARY

- The word elegy originated from the Greek word 'elegeia,' which means to lament or to be sorrowful.

- In Greek and Roman literature, any poem which was written in elegiac meter, meant irregular hexameter and pentameter lines was denoted by the term 'elegy'.

- The elegies written by John Donne, in the later part of the sixteenth century and the early part of the seventeenth century, are poems which are based on the themes of love.

- In the 17th century, the term 'elegy' meant a formal and sustained laments in verse on the demise of a specific individual which generally concluded with a consolation.

- In the existing times, 'threnody' is used primarily as an equivalent of dirge and monody for an elegy or dirge which is offered as the expression of one single individual.

- An elegy is a poem which expresses gloomy thoughts of a person. It is commonly written in praise of the deceased and has an air of sorrow around it.

- An 'elegy' is very different from 'eulogy' which is an account that is put together in prose.

- The 'dirge', which means a sad song also exhibits sorrow on the event of death of someone in particular, however it is slightly different from an elegy in terms of being short, less formal, and generally characterized as a text to be presented in form of a song.

- One of the main subtypes of the elegy is the pastoral elegy, which is a representation of both the poet and the person he laments, this individual in the poem is generally also a poet, such as, shepherds (its Latin is 'pastor').

- An elegy is a kind of a lyric which centers on expression of sentiments, beliefs or opinions.

- An elegy may be based on either the transience of life of a person or the attractiveness and magnificence of somebody close to the speaker's heart.

- An elegy may search answers to questions related to the nature of life and death of the body or immorality of the soul.

- Pastoral elegy is a poem which dwells upon the combined subject of death and sublime country life.

- Pastoral elegies have also been seen sometimes to have included a mourners' procession, humorous deviations to diverse topics arising from decease, and representation by means of flowers, refrains, and pompous queries.

- The pastoral elegy characteristically impacts the reader with its most characteristic form. It revolves around modest rural figures.

- Pastoral elegies have also been seen sometimes to have included a mourners' procession, humorous deviations to diverse topics arising from decease, and representation by means of flowers, refrains, and pompous queries.

- The pastoral elegy form of poetry prospered in Europe during the period of Renaissance and the 19th century.

- Before the emergence of ode as a literary form, elegy gained a separate existence from a complementary song and was generally written in distichs, which means, in a strophic unit of stanza comprising a line in hexameter and a line in pentameter.

- Some modern poets like, William Carlos Williams and W H Auden still follow the original form of pastoral poetry and they have written poems that withhold its traditional form and characteristics.

- Poetry written in the elegiac form which consisted of alternating hexameter and pentameter stanzas was used for themes which were on a smaller scale as compared to the epic forms of poetry.

- The elegies written in the modern European literature era, express gloomy and forlorn feelings after some passionate experiences or they are enthused by reflection on insubstantiality of human existence.

- Poets from Greece and ancient Rome even made use of elegy for themes which was based on humor and satire.

4.6 KEY WORDS

- **Distich:** It is defined as a couplet which consists of successive lines of metre in poetry. It usually comprises of two successive lines that has a same meter.

- **Elegy:** It is defined as a poem which expresses gloomy thoughts of a person and is commonly written in praise of the deceased and has an air of sorrow around it.

- **Eulogy:** It is defined as a piece of writing which praises someone and is usually a tribute to the deceased person.

- **Pastoral elegy:** It is defined as a poem which dwells upon the combined subject of death and sublime country life. It usually includes shepherds who express their emotions.

4.7 SELF ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

Short Answer Questions

1. What is the main theme in *Fugue of Death* by Paul Celan?
2. Write a short note on the concept of elegy as a literary form.
3. How is elegy treated as literary form in the contemporary days?
4. What are the main characteristics of a traditional elegy?
5. How is ordinary pastoral elegy different from pastoral elegy?

Long Answer Questions

1. Interpret the main issues in Maxine Kumin's *Jack.*
2. Discuss in detail the concept of pastoral elegy and its themes.
3. Explain the development of elegy as a literary form.
4. Analyse the importance of elegy in English literature.
5. Discuss the major themes in Thomas Gray's *Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard.*

4.8 FURTHER READINGS

Abrahams, M.H. 2011. *A Glossary of Literary Terms*. California: Wadsworth Publishing.

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UNIT 5   EPIC

Structure

5.0   INTRODUCTION

Epic is defined as a long narrative poem which recounts the heroic deeds of the heroes. It deals with various subjects such as r legends, myths, and histories, philosophical or mythical theories and so on. It has been used as a literary form by people to transmit their traditions to the world.

Epics are born from oral tradition. People pass on the narratives of their culture orally and stir the spirit of warriors in the people. It praises the actions of the heroes, their ancestors and a recollection of their glorious fame and at the same time, gives an account of an ideal heroic behaviour.

In this unit, the concept of epic as a literary form and its characteristics has been discussed. The themes of various epics such as Homer's *Iliad*, Virgil's *Aeneid*, and Alexander Pope's *The Rape of the Lock* have been analysed. The unit will also highlight the aspects related to oral traditional epics.

5.1   OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- Discuss the concept of epic poetry

- Analyse the features of epic poetry

- Describe the aspects associated with oral traditional epics

- Explain the themes of epic poetry by renowned authors

5.2   EPIC POETRY: AN INTRODUCTION

Epic poetry is one of the genres of poetry and a major form of narrative literature. It is one of the oldest forms of poetry as well. An epic is often defined as a lengthy

poem that recounts the adventure of a hero or a great war. The narration is usually in a continuous form. Aristotle has ranked the epic as second only to tragedy.

In order to be called an epic, the poem needs to fulfill the following criteria:

- The poem has to be long and all the lines should be in a particular meter.
- The subject matter of the poem should be serious.
- The language should be formal and the style elevated.
- The hero should be a quasi-divine figure or a semi-god itself.
- The actions of the hero will affect the fate of a tribe, a nation, or (in the instance of John Milton's *Paradise Lost*) the entire human race.

In addition, there are some epic features which are distinct of writers. These features have been drawn from the traditional epics. There are differences between traditional and literary epics. Traditional epics are also called folk epics. They were not written but transferred orally from generation to generation. They were about a tribal or national hero during a warlike age.

Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey* in Greek, in Sanskrit Valmiki's *Ramayana* and Vyas' *Mahabharata*, the Old English *Beowulf*; the French *Chanson de Roland*, German epic *Nibelungenlied* and the Spanish *Poema del Cid* are all examples of traditional epics. There is no written testimony regarding the authors of these oral epics. The Greek epic is attributed to Homer, for example.

Northrop Frye, in his acclaimed book, *Anatomy of Criticism* (1957) talks about how Homer established for his successors the 'demonstration that the fall of an enemy, no less than of a friend or leader, is tragic and not comic,' and that with this 'objective and disinterested element,' the epic acquired an authority based 'on the vision of nature as an impersonal order'.

Literary epics, on the other hand, were written by individual poets but certainly drew inspiration from the traditional form. The Latin epic poem *The Aeneid* written by Virgil, the English epic poem *Paradise Lost* written by John Milton, *Hyperion* by John Keats are examples of literary epics. *The Aeneid* served as the model for *Paradise Lost*. *Paradise Lost* in turn became the fragmentary epic *Hyperion*.

The other distinctive features of an epic which are found in literary works across the world are as follows:

- The epic starts in *media res* that is, in the middle of things.
- The poet invokes the muses in the beginning of the poem to sustain the long poem.
- The poem mentions supernatural events usually attributed to the will and actions of the gods.
- A list of heroes is mentioned in the poem.

- The heroes are always discussed with epithets.
- The use of epic similes is mostly prevalent in the poems.
- The poet remains omniscient throughout the poem.

Many works like Dante's *Divine Comedy* and Spencer's *The Faerie Queene* do not strictly adhere to the traditional or literary epic style but their scale and grandeur is the same. Nowadays, the term epic is applied to literary works follow that model without the verse form. Prose forms like Herman Melville's *Moby-Dick*, James Joyce's *Ulysses*, and so forth are treated as epic poems because of the large-scale treatment of the subject matter. Georg Lukács, Hungarian Marxist philosopher, further uses the term bourgeois epic for all the novels that talks about the social reality of their capitalist age on a broad scale. Lukács said that 'the novel is the epic of a world that has been abandoned by God'.

Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey*

The study of a Western epic will have to start with Homer's epic either *Iliad* or *Odyssey*. In this section, we will look at *Iliad* and the model that it has provided for the later writers to follow.

Iliad is a sustained song of around sixteen thousand lines written in dactylic hexameter. The poem invokes the muses for the successful completion of the poem. Muses in Greek mythology are the nine goddesses, who are the daughters of Zeus and Mnemosyne, and who preside over art and science. They not only act as the poet's inspiration but also give an authoritative tone to the entire poem. The same pattern applies to *Odyssey* as well.

Iliad begins with the *Song of Ilium* and, thus, the audience in its very first line is introduced to Achilles' anger. The hero is a figure of great national importance. He is the Greek warrior and demigod Achilles, who is the son of the sea nymph Thetis and mortal Peleus. The main theme of Odyssey is the wanderings of Odysseus after he leaves the shore of Troy after winning the battle back to his home in Ithaca.

The setting of the epic has a similar magnitude. It takes in its purview the entire world. *Iliad* talks about a world war like scenario in which all the nation states in and around the Aegean (Mediterranean) sea participated. In *Odyssey* also, the hero's journey covers the entire Mediterranean Sea and the places surrounding it. He even goes to the underworld to understand the meaning of life and ultimately finds a safe way home.

The hero's action is also larger than life. The hero performs superhuman deeds or undertakes risks which require supernatural powers to survive. Achilles in *Iliad* kills numerous Trojan soldiers so much so that the river turns red with their blood. Further, he even wounds a goddess. The way in which Odysseus overcomes the hurdles placed by the one-eyed giant Polyphemus, how he gets away from the

tricks of Circe are all examples of his superhuman abilities and finally, how he returns home even after he is opposed by gods and goddesses is very impressive in the poem.

The use of the supernatural element is a distinctive feature of epics. The gods take an active part in the lives of the mortals. For instance, in *Iliad*, there are gods and goddesses who take sides of the two armies.

Apart from these epic features, there are so many aspects which are a part of the oral traditional epics and these are as follows:

- *Iliad* follows a ring structure that is the first and last book has similar events.

- In *Iliad*, words, phrases and sometimes entire passages are repeated by different characters in different scenes. For example, Agamemnon sends Odysseus to Achilles to bring him back to the war. In this scene, Agamemnon asks Odysseus to make certain promises which are repeated by Odysseus to Achilles.

- There are type scenes in *Iliad*. Type scenes are typical scene, that is, there are events that tend to recur and whenever similar events are described it follows a set pattern. For example, when a duel is described, first the participants give a proposal to fight, it is followed by a verbal fight, then different arms are hurled in a sequence and finally one of them is hit brutally and dies.

- The events in *Iliad* follow a minor to major parallelism. This implies that the intensity of the events increases and reaches a culmination in the last books. For example, there are so many duels fought in *Iliad*. It starts with Paris and Menelaus and culminates with Achilles and Hector.

Virgil's *The Aeneid*

Virgil's *The Aeneid* is an example of a literary epic. Virgil was asked to write a grand epic to celebrate the glory of the Augustan age in Rome by Emperor Augustus. He took Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey* as his template and created an epic that surpasses both of them and created an example for others to follow. But he could not complete the epic and in his death bed he wished the manuscript to be burnt. But it was his friend and patron, Maecenas, who did not follow the last wish of Virgil and kept the manuscript for posterity. Just like other traditional epics, Virgil's Aeneas, the hero of the epic, is the son of the goddess Aphrodite. He was prophesised to be the founder of the new Troy which he set out to build and finally laid the foundation of the Roman Empire.

The entire poem is written in spondee hexameter of almost twelve thousand lines. He also starts with the invocation to the muse and then begins to tell about the wanderings of the hero and the war that he has fought for building the empire. Virgil asks the muses for help to complete the long narrative poem.

The poem starts in *media res* at a critical point in the action. Aeneid does not start in the beginning of things. He has already wandered for twelve years and reaches Carthage his penultimate stop where he narrates his wanderings to Dido, the queen of Carthage. He starts with the fall of Troy and how the Greeks treacherously defeat the Trojans because they could not win by force. Then in the fifth book, he moves into the present state of affairs. He goes on to describe Aeneas' travel through the underworld where he learns about his destiny.

The story of the epic, as we have noted, is associated with war or adventure. In the case of *The Aeneid*, it is associated with both war and adventure. The first line of the poem itself talks about it 'Of arms and the man I sing'. Out of the twelve books, the first six books talk about Aeneas' adventure through the Mediterranean for twelve years and the last six books talk about a great war fought between Aeneas' allies and Turnus' allies.

The epic talks about several legendary heroes. In *The Aeneid,* this happens in the seventh book where there is an entire catalogue of the allies of Turnus. This is a significant feature of the epic and so Virgil invokes the muses again. Further, Aeneas is a demigod and his actions will result in the building of the Roman Empire that will change the course of the entire human history.

The Aeneid is also full of epithets like Pius Aeneas, graceful Turnus, and so forth. He also uses epic similes. In one such example, the author compares Aeneas and Turnus with bull fighting for the female which is an extended simile.

Geoffrey Chaucer's *The Canterbury Tales*

Though *The Canterbury Tales* cannot be considered as a true epic, yet it has incorporated several features of an epic. It is also a long narrative poem written in iambic pentameter. The Prologue contains the list of heroes in the poem. All the twenty-nine people are described in detail in this poem. The poem is about a group of pilgrimages visiting Canterbury. The invocation is not there in the traditional sense but you can see that the poem starts with the mention of the April showers and the wind blowing on the earth which is symbolic of the blessings of God.

John Milton's *Paradise lost*

John Milton's *Paradise Lost* can be seen as the true English literary epic. He has used blank verse in this poem. It is a long poem and comprises approximately twelve books of ten thousand lines.

The author starts the epic by stating his argument, or the epic theme. He further invokes the muses to inspire him in his great task of writing. Nevertheless, for Milton the muses are not the Greek daughters of Zeus but the Christian Holy spirit who inspired Moses and other biblical characters. The muse is addressed with the epic question, the answer to which provides the inaugural beginning of the poem.

Just like the earlier lines, the narrative starts in *medias res*. The angels are hurled to hell and he is trying to gather his scattered forces and to determine the path of revenge in the beginning of the poem. Beginning with Book V and right through Book VII, the author through the medium of the angel Raphael, narrates to Adam the events in heaven which have led to this particular situation.

In the first book, we are presented with the catalogue of the principal characters. These characters are described through various means. They are often given set speeches that reveal their diverse temperaments and moral attitudes; for example, the debate in Pandemonium, Book II.

Milton's epic is not narrow in terms of space and time. Although its action focuses on the temptation and Fall of Man, yet it encompasses a broad time span from the creation till the end of the world. Likewise, the spatial scope of *Paradise Lost* is also very vast. The actions in heaven, the revolt in heaven by the rebel angels against God, are narrated to us; we see action on earth that is Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden, in hell where Satan gives his great speech.

The hero of the poem possesses superhuman qualities. According to some critics, the heroes are Adam and Eve, who are the progenitors of the entire human race. If we regard Christ as the protagonist, He is both God and man. If we regard Satan as the hero, then he is an angel. The war is between God and Satan. Satan uses human beings as his arms. The journey and adventure related to journey can be seen in the journey of Satan through chaos to discover the newly created world of human beings.

An epic poem is a ceremonial performance and is narrated in a ceremonial style, which is deliberately distanced from ordinary speech and proportional to the grandeur and formality of the heroic subject and architecture. Hence, Milton's grand style is the use of formal diction and stylized syntax, which are largely based on Latin poetry.

Alexander Pope's *The Rape of the Lock*

The Rape of the Lock written by Alexander Pope is a famous mock-heroic poem. A mock-epic or mock-heroic poem is a kind of parody which imitates, in a sustained way, both the elaborate form and the ceremonious style of the epic genre, but applies it to narrate a commonplace or trivial subject matter. In a masterpiece of this type, *The Rape of the Lock* (1714), Alexander Pope views through the grandiose epic perspective a quarrel which takes place between two families, the Petre and Fermor families over the theft of a lady's curl. The poem includes such elements of traditional epic such as the use of supernatural element, a voyage on board ship, a visit to the underworld, and a heroically scaled battle between the sexes.

Therefore, the epic genre is divided into two types, traditional and literary. The traditional epic provided some features that the later literary writers tried to

incorporate in their works. As epic is an elaborate poem written in a stylised language, not many writers have employed this form unlike the sonnet. Nonetheless, there are many renowned epics written in the English language.

Check Your Progress

1. Why is Geoffrey Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* considered as an epic?
2. What is the main theme of *Odyssey*?
3. State one of the distinctive features of an epic poetry.
4. Why is it considered that the events in *Iliad* follow a minor to major parallelism?
5. What are the two main forms of epic genre?

5.3 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS QUESTIONS

1. Geoffrey Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* is considered as an epic because it is a long narrative poem written in iambic pentameter. The Prologue contains the list of heroes in the poem. The invocation is not there in the traditional sense but you can see that the poem starts with the mention of the April showers and the wind blowing on the earth which is symbolic of the blessings of God.

2. The main theme of *Odyssey* is the wanderings of Odysseus after he leaves the shore of Troy after winning the battle back to his home in Ithaca.

3. The use of the supernatural element is a distinctive feature of epics. The gods take an active part in the lives of the mortals. For instance, in *Iliad*, there are gods and goddesses who take sides of the two armies.

4. The events in *Iliad* follow a minor to major parallelism This implies that the intensity of the events increases and reaches a culmination in the last books. For example, there are so many duels fought in *Iliad*. It starts with Paris and Menelaus and culminates with Achilles and Hector.

5. The two main forms of epic genre are traditional and literary.

5.4 SUMMARY

- Epic poetry is one of the genres of poetry and a major form of narrative literature. It is one of the oldest forms of poetry as well.

- An epic is often defined as a lengthy poem that recounts the adventure of a hero or a great war.

- Traditional epics are also called folk epics. They were not written but transferred orally from generation to generation.

- Literary epics, on the other hand, were written by individual poets but certainly drew inspiration from the traditional form.

- *The Aeneid* served as the model for *Paradise Lost*. *Paradise Lost* in turn became the fragmentary epic *Hyperion*.

- Prose forms like Herman Melville's *Moby-Dick*, James Joyce's *Ulysses*, and so forth are treated as epic poems because of the large-scale treatment of the subject matter.

- *Iliad* is a sustained song of around sixteen thousand lines written in dactylic hexameter. The poem invokes the muses for the successful completion of the poem.

- The way in which Odysseus overcomes the hurdles placed by the one-eyed giant Polyphemus, how he gets away from the tricks of Circe are all examples of his superhuman abilities and finally, how he returns home even after he is opposed by gods and goddesses is very impressive in the poem.

- The use of the supernatural element is a distinctive feature of epics. The gods take an active part in the lives of the mortals.

- In *Iliad*, words, phrases and sometimes entire passages are repeated by different characters in different scenes.

- Virgil's *The Aeneid* is an example of a literary epic. Virgil was asked to write a grand epic to celebrate the glory of the Augustan age in Rome by Emperor Augustus.

- The epic talks about several legendary heroes. In *The Aeneid,* this happens in the seventh book where there is an entire catalogue of the allies of Turnus.

- Though *The Canterbury Tales* cannot be considered as a true epic, yet it has incorporated several features of an epic. It is also a long narrative poem written in iambic pentameter.

- John Milton's *Paradise Lost* can be seen as the true English literary epic. It is a long poem and comprises approximately twelve books of ten thousand lines.

- An epic poem is a ceremonial performance and is narrated in a ceremonial style, which is deliberately distanced from ordinary speech and proportional to the grandeur and formality of the heroic subject and architecture.

- A mock-epic or mock-heroic poem is a kind of parody which imitates, in a sustained way, both the elaborate form and the ceremonious style of the epic genre, but applies it to narrate a commonplace or trivial subject matter.

- *The Rape of the Lock* includes such elements of traditional epic such as the use of supernatural element, a voyage on board ship, a visit to the underworld, and a heroically scaled battle between the sexes.

- The traditional epic provided some features that the later literary writers tried to incorporate in their works.

- As epic is an elaborate poem written in a stylised language, not many writers have employ

5.5   KEY WORDS

- **Epic:** It is defined as a lengthy poem that recounts the adventure of a hero or a great war.

- **Prologue:** It is defined as an opening to the story which connects the background to the main plot.

- **Typical scene:** It is defined as events in an epic that tend to recur and whenever similar events are described it follows set patterns.

- **Spondee:** It is defined as a metrical foot which consists of two long syllables or two stressed syllables in modern times

5.6   SELF ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

Short Answer Questions

1. What is meant by the term '*medias res*'?
2. Why are traditional epics also known as folk tales?
3. Write a short note on the role of muses in epic poetry.
4. What are the various aspects of oral traditional epics?
5. Why is Alexander Pope's *The Rape of the Lock* considered as mock-epic poetry?

Long Answer Questions

1. Discuss the criteria which make a poem an epic poetry.
2. Explain the themes and structure of Virgil's *Aeneid*.
3. Analyse the features of an epic poetry.
4. Why is John Milton's *Paradise Lost* considered as the true English literary epic? Discuss in detail.
5. Explain Homer's *Iliad* as one of the greatest epic.

5.7 FURTHER READINGS

Abrahams, M.H. 2011. *A Glossary of Literary Terms*. California: Wadsworth Publishing.

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NOTES

BLOCK - II
POETRY - II

UNIT 6   BALLAD

Structure

6.0 Introduction
6.1 Objectives
6.2 Ballad: Meaning and Characteristics
6.3 Answers to Check Your Progress Questions
6.4 Summary
6.5 Key Words
6.6 Self Assessment Questions and Exercises
6.7 Further Readings

6.0   INTRODUCTION

A ballad is defined as a short narrative folk song which is often set to a musical form. The word ballad is derived from the French word, 'ballade' which meant danced songs. They were written to accompany dances and thus, consisted of refrains.

A ballad usually focuses on a single episode which narrates a story and the language used is simple, thus, it has a universal appeal. It consists of four lines and follows the rhyme scheme of 'abcb'. Ballads also contain a supernatural element and thus, they are similar to epics too.

In this unit, the concept of ballad as a literary form and its characteristics have been analysed. The unit will discuss two of the most popular ballads in Literature. John Keats's *La Belle Dame sans Merci* and Samuel Taylor Coleridge's *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner* have been discussed in detail. The structure of a traditional ballad has also been highlighted.

6.1   OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- Discuss the meaning and characteristics of a ballad

- Analyse the structure of a ballad

- Explain the themes of famous ballads in English literature

6.2 BALLAD: MEANING AND CHARACTERISTICS

A ballad is a song which tells a story. It was traditionally sung orally and hence, it is either called a folk ballad or traditional ballad. These narrative pieces were composed by a single author and sung to all types (literate and illiterate) of people. Traditionally, these songs were transmitted orally and as a result, the subsequent generation of singers have introduced several changes in these ballads.

In most of the forms, ballad is set to music and has a refrain (a repeated chorus). Ballads have a long history and are found in many cultures. The story which is mentioned in the poem is usually a folk story or a popular story derived from a tragic incident that has happened in the society.

A typical ballad consists of a quatrain which is a four line stanza. The first and the third lines will be in tetrameter in iambic foot and the second and fourth lines will be in trimeter iambic foot. It implies that it usually has eight or six syllables in a line, where the even numbered syllables will be stressed. Similarly, the rhyme scheme is often 'abcb' because of the musical quality of this rhyme pattern, that is, only the second and fourth line will rhyme. This is called the ballad meter or ballad stanza.

The pattern is also followed in literary ballads too. For instance, this is even followed in the literary ballads. One may have a look at the famous ballad, *Lord Thomas and Fair Annet*:

> *'O art thou blind, Lord Thomas?' she said,*
>
> *'Or canst thou not very well see?*
>
> *Or dost thou not see my own heart's blood*
>
> *Runs trickling down my knee?'*

Characteristics of a ballad

The following are some of the characteristics of a ballad:

- A ballad is dramatic, condensed, and impersonal.

- A ballad begins with a brief description or introduction and tells the story without self-reference or the expression of personal attitudes or feelings.

- Formulas (repeated words, phrases, sentences) are also used in the ballad to help the singer remember the course of the song. Some of the examples are stock descriptive phrases, a refrain in each stanza and incremental repetition, in which a line or stanza is repeated, but with an addition that advances the story.

Like the traditional epic, the traditional ballad has greatly influenced the form and style of literary ballad. The literary ballad imitates the form, language, and spirit of the traditional ballad.

While ballads have always been popular, it was during the Romantic movement of poetry in the late eighteenth century that the ballad as a literary form resurfaced and became a popular form. Most of the Romantic poets such as William Wordsworth, Samuel Taylor Coleridge and John Keats also wrote ballads.

In the following section, we will discuss some of the famous ballads in English literature.

La Belle Dame sans Merci

John Keats's poem, *La Belle Dame sans Merci i*s a typical example of a literary ballad as it follows the typical example of a ballad. The poem is divided into twelve quatrains that follow the rhyme scheme of 'abcb'. In each quatrain, the first three lines are of iambic tetrameter and the last line an iambic trimeter, which is just about the traditional ballad meter. This gives the impression that each stanza is self-contained and gives it a slow movement.

> *O what can ail thee, knight-at-arms,*
> *Alone and palely loitering?*
> *The sedge has withered from the lake,*
> *And no birds sing.*

There are multiple voices in the poem such as that of a narrator, knight and the lady, his beloved who is extremely beautiful and a person who is asking the narrator about what happened. None of them are identified in the poem, in keeping with the ballad tradition. The ballad opens with the questions put up to the knight. This stanza is repeated in the twelfth stanza as the refrain. However, the refrain has some minor variations and is an answer to the question in the first stanza.

It provides a good enclosure by bringing the poem back to the beginning. This repetition also emphasises the fate of the unfortunate knight.

The ballad talks about the man who is wandering in the cold hills. He narrates how he was guided by the girl without mercy to that hill like many other men and left alone. The landscape and the trees also represent the inner feelings of the knight.

> *The sedge has withered from the lake,*
> *And no birds sing.*

The entire story is written in a simple language with repetitions and absence of any kind of detail. This is a typical storytelling tradition of the ballad, along with the strong but impersonal emotions therein. Here, the poet shows how the narrator forgets everything in the arms of the beautiful lady.

> *She found me roots of relish sweet,*
> *And honey wild, and manna-dew,*
> *And sure in language strange she said—*
> *'I love thee true'.*

The following lines talk about the beautiful lady who can enchant any man like Circe in the Greek tradition. But, in the end, she leaves them alone because she enjoys doing it.

I saw pale kings and princes too,

Pale warriors, death-pale were they all;

They cried—'La Belle Dame sans Merci

Hath thee in thrall!'

This poem also talks about an encounter that has given the narrator both pleasure and pain. Some critics see it as Keats' rebellion towards pain associated with love. The reason for the death of the person is not mentioned in the poem. It is left to the imagination of the reader. It can be a warning to obsessions as well, be it love or drug or anything else.

And there she lullèd me asleep,

And there I dreamed—Ah! woe betide!—

The latest dream I ever dreamt

On the cold hill side.

The Rime of the Ancient Mariner

The Rime of the Ancient Mariner written by Samuel Taylor Coleridge. It tells the story of a mariner who has returned from a long and arduous journey and shares the terrible events encountered by him on the sea. This poem has a much longer and a much more elaborate plot than the typical folk ballads. But he opens the ballad with an abrupt and impersonal third-person narration of the traditional ballad. The old sailor narrates the story to one of the three guests who were going to a wedding.

It is an ancient Mariner,

And he stoppeth one of three.

The sailor grabs the attention of the guest by his hypnotic eyes.

He holds him with his glittering eye—

The Wedding-Guest stood still,

And listens like a three years' child:

The Mariner hath his will.

He then tells his sad but horrific journey on the ship and how it got caught in the winds and went astray to the Antarctic. He tells them how an albatross guided them to safety from the icebergs that trapped the ship. Then suddenly the sailor decided to shoot the albatross.

With my cross-bow,

I shot the albatross.

At first, the sailors were against the mariner but seeing that there is light wind and the ship is moving in the right direction they changed their mind and supported the mariner.

'Twas right, said they, such birds to slay,

That bring the fog and mist.

But suddenly the winds changed their direction and the ship is in trouble again. They understood their mistake in supporting the mariner in shooting the albatross. The sailors now started blaming the mariner for shooting the albatross. The sailors tie the albatross on the neck of the sailor blaming him for the bad things that are happening on the ship.

Ah! Well a-day! What evil looks

Had I from old and young!

Instead of the cross, the albatross

About my neck was hung.

The ship is near the equator and they have again lost their way on the sea. The ship reaches a place where there are so many slimy creatures. The sailors are not able to continue as the provisions on the ship have also exhausted. All the soldiers except the ancient mariner die of thirst.

Water, water, every where,

And all the boards did shrink;

Water, water, every where,

Nor any drop to drink.

Finally, after a troubled journey of seven days and night, he is saved when he blesses the snakes. He appreciates their beauty and he thanks and praises God. Suddenly, the albatross that was on the neck falls down ending the curse. The sailors who died rise in good spirit and steer the ship towards safety. Now, he wants to do penance and that is why he wants to talk to them who will guide him in his prayers. After he narrates the entire story, he goes back home. The guest who was stopped does not feel like going to the wedding anymore and he also returns and wakes up the next morning as a wiser man.

He went like one that hath been stunned,

And is of sense forlorn:

A sadder and a wiser man,

He rose the morrow morn.

Therefore, ballad is just like an epic which has an oral origin. However, later writers have adapted it to form a literary genre. They follow the same tradition of storytelling in a simple and impersonal tone.

Check Your Progress

1. What is the structure of a typical ballad?

2. What is the rhyme scheme of a ballad?

3. State the premises of Samuel Taylor Coleridge's *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner.*

6.3 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS QUESTIONS

1. A typical ballad consists of a quatrain which is a four line stanza. The first and the third lines will be in tetrameter in iambic foot and the second and fourth lines will be in trimeter iambic foot.

2. The rhyme scheme of a ballad is often 'abcb' because of the musical quality of the rhyme pattern, that is, only the second and fourth line will rhyme.

3. *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner* written by Samuel Taylor Coleridge. It tells the story of a mariner who has returned from a long and arduous journey and shares the terrible events encountered by him on the sea.

6.4 SUMMARY

- A ballad is a song which tells a story. It was traditionally sung orally and hence, it is either called a folk ballad or traditional ballad.

- Traditionally, the songs were transmitted orally and as a result, the subsequent generation of singers have introduced several changes in these ballads.

- In most of the forms, ballad is set to music and has a refrain (a repeated chorus). Ballads have a long history and are found in many cultures.

- The story which is mentioned in the poem is usually a folk story or a popular story derived from a tragic incident that has happened in the society.

- A typical ballad consists of a quatrain which is a four line stanza. The first and the third lines will be in tetrameter in iambic foot and the second and fourth lines will be in trimeter iambic foot.

- A ballad begins with a brief description or introduction and tells the story without self-reference or the expression of personal attitudes or feelings.

- Formulas (repeated words, phrases, sentences) are also used in the ballad to help the singer remember the course of the song.

- Like the traditional epic, the traditional ballad has greatly influenced the form and style of literary ballad.

- The literary ballad imitates the form, language, and spirit of the traditional ballad.

- While ballads have always been popular, it was during the Romantic movement of poetry in the late eighteenth century that the ballad as a literary form resurfaced and became a popular form.

- John Keats's poem, *La Belle Dame sans Merci i*s a typical example of a literary ballad as it follows the typical example of a ballad.

- Keats's poem is an example of typical storytelling tradition of the ballad, along with the strong but impersonal emotions therein.

- Some critics see it as Keats' rebellion towards pain associated with love. The reason for the death of the person is not mentioned in the poem. It is left to the imagination of the reader.

- *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner* written by Samuel Taylor Coleridge. It tells the story of a mariner who has returned from a long and arduous journey and shares the terrible events encountered by him on the sea.

- *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner* has a much longer and a much more elaborate plot than the typical folk ballads.

- Ballad is just like an epic which has an oral origin. However, later writers have adapted it to form a literary genre.

6.5 KEY WORDS

- **Ballad:** It refers to a song which tells a story and consists of short stanzas.

- **Incremental repetition:** It refers to a device used in ballads in which a line is repeated with slight changes and a different context.

- **Refrain:** It refers to a short part of a song which is repeated between the verses.

- **Quatrain:** It refers to a stanza of four lines which rhymes alternately.

6.6 SELF ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

Short Answer Questions

1. What is a ballad?
2. Why is a ballad known as folk or traditional ballad?
3. What is a ballad stanza?
4. Why did the sailors decided to shoot the albatross?
5. What are the different types of formulas used in a ballad?

Long Answer Questions

1. Discuss the characteristics of a ballad.
2. Explain the development of ballad as a literary form.
3. Analyse the structure of a typical ballad.
4. Discuss John Keats's poem, *La Belle Dame sans Merci* as an example of literary ballad.
5. Explain the moral significance of Coleridge's *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner.*

6.7 FURTHER READINGS

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UNIT 7   MOCK-EPIC

Structure

7.0 Introduction
7.1 Objectives
7.2 Mock-Epic: Meaning and Characteristics
      7.2.1   Development of Mock-Epic
7.3 Forms of Mock-Epic
7.4 Answers to Check Your Progress Questions
7.5 Summary
7.6 Key Words
7.7 Self Assessment Questions and Exercises
7.8 Further Readings

7.0   INTRODUCTION

Mock-epic is one of the literary forms in literature which satirizes the classical heroes and epic forms. It exaggerates the qualities of a hero to such an extent that it creates a comical effect. This form was popular especially during the 17th century and during the Augustan and Post-Restoration period.

Mock-epic brings the subject of the classical epics to a trivial form. *Batrachomyomachia* or *the Battle of the Frogs and the Mice* is considered as one of the first forms of mock-epic. The form begins with an invocation to the muse and uses the styles of an epic.

In this unit, the concept of mock-epic poetry, its development and characteristics have been discussed in detail. The unit will also highlight the various forms of mock-epic poetry. The various works of mock-epic authors have also been analysed.

7.1   OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- Discuss the meaning and characteristics of mock-epic poetry

- Analyse the development of mock-epic poetry as a literary form

- Discuss the works of various mock-epic authors

- Explain the various forms of mock-epic poetry

7.2 MOCK-EPIC: MEANING AND CHARACTERISTICS

Mock-epic poetry is a typical form of satire or parody which makes fun of common conventional stereotype heroes and the literature related to such heroes. It is also known as mock-heroic or heroic-comic poetry. Characteristically, mock-heroic work generally will either induce a fool in a hero's role or blow his heroic qualities so much out of proportion and exaggerate them to such a level that they start appearing ridiculous.

In mock-epic, the main protagonist is the central character, who is brave enough to battle with monsters (like Beowulf) and is called heroic. Mock-epic can also be categorized as an epic if it is of sufficient length. However, there may be instances where the protagonist is neither brave nor experiences any real adventures, like some parts of *Don Juan* by Byron (1819-24), and is therefore, known as mock-heroic.

The mock-heroic poetry style is very close to that of the epic style of poetry, especially in the use of inflated, formal language and heightened vocabulary. Nevertheless, a mock-heroic piece of poetry will overstate and amplify to a point of comedown, and such a piece of work generally produces a comical impact.

Mock-heroic poetry consists of such poems in which an average or insignificant subject is described using a very majestic and ceremonial style which is no way appropriate to the character of the subject. Thus, the mismatch created due to the large gap between the subject's character and its explanation leads to a comic effect.

Characteristics of Mock-epic poetry

The genre of mock-epic poetry aims at satirizing the genre of serious epic poetry. Mock-epic poetry not only satirized this genre of poetry but also ridiculed heroic subjects and themes to sarcastically address many other grand themes. Mock-epic poetry is not only limited to the bonds of serious epic poetry. Poets making use of this form to write poetry are free to make their point even in an ironic manner.

The main characteristics of mock-epic poetry are as follows:

- Mock-epic poetry is generally based on a sarcastic tone.
- It is a transformed variety of serious epic poetry in which the subject is presented in an amplified or raised style.
- The genre makes use features like prayer and appeal; skirmishes and epic similes.
- It also implies uses of 'ex-machina'.
- The mock-epic style of poetry follows the formal characteristics of epic poetry having a comical tenacity.

- A mock-epic poem happens to be lengthy and separated by cantos, just as the case with traditional epics.
- The characteristics of the epic, for example formal solicitations, epic similes, and comprehensive accounts of battles, are mocked.
- Mock-epic poetry is connected to parody and satire.

Ex-machina is a form of ancient theatre in which a pre conceived and designed character is introduced into a play to save the hero in an extraordinary fashion. This style is used in mock-epic form of poetry in order to create an exalted and exaggerated effect. The main use of ex-machina approach was used to elucidate a complex plotline that had been adapted by mock-epic poetry as it helped in giving a satiric form to different themes and subjects. Mock poetry has the strength to present a trivial or an inconsequential subject in a contrast form by way of using an elevated style. This style makes this genre of poetry an interesting piece of work for its readers.

7.2.1 Development of Mock-Epic

Traditionally, the mock-heroic style of poetry gained popularity in Italy, in the 17th century, and it got popularized in Great Britain in the post-Restoration era. The earliest example of mock-epic poetry is the *Batrachomyomachia*, attributed to Homer by the Romans and parodying his work. However, the general belief amongst most contemporary scholars is that it seems to be the work of an unknown poet existing during the time of Alexander.

During the 17th century, a lot of criticism was raised against the mock-epic because people believed that the feudal society's traditional values were being expressed through it. Nearer to the sentiments of the modern time and offering new standards among the new categories, mocking literary works were found predominantly effective in criticizing primitive customs and values. In Italy, the poets who carried on writing epic poetry, on the lines set by old rules of Torquato Tasso in his work, *Discorsi del poema eroico* felt outdated due to the response that they got from the general public.

The newly developed form of mock-epic poetry acknowledged the similar metre, vocabulary, rhetoric which was followed in original form of epic poetry. Nevertheless, the transformations that took place in the new genre spun the old epic on its head with regard to the sense, giving the stories a setting of more familiar circumstances and situations, to ridicule the old-style epics and this is how the parody of epic genre came into being.

Some early popular Italian mock-epic poems are: *La Gigantea* by Girolamo Amelonghi (1566), the *Viaggio di Colonia* (*Travel to Cologne*) by Antonio Abbondanti (1625), *L'asino* (*The donkey*) by Carlo de' Dottori (1652) and *La Troja rapita* by Loreto Vittori (1662) and *La presa di San Miniato* by Ippolito Neri (1764).

After Miguel de Cervantes' *Don Quixote* was translated in English, English writers started imitating the exaggerated language used in Romantic poetry and narrative to describe average people and characters. The most expected beginning for the mock-epic poetry, as separate from the picaresque, burlesque, and satirical poem is the witty poem *Hudibras* written by Samuel Butler. This poem is about a 'trew blew' Puritan Cavalier in the period of the Interregnum. The language used in this poem is an imitation of what has been used in Romantic and epic poetry forms. After this initiation by Butler, there was an outburst of poetry in similar form. Poets started to describe a detested subject in the poems using elevated language of heroic poetry and plays.

After the success of *Hudibras*, another form of verse rose to popularity which came to be commonly known as Hudibrastic. This form of poetry is written in closed rhyming couplets in iambic tetrameter, and here the verses are often feminine rhymes or unanticipated combinations. For instance, Butler refers to the time of Civil War in England as a period which 'Made men fight like mad or drunk/For dame religion as for punk/Whose honesty all durst swear for/Tho' not one knew why or wherefore'. The stressed and unanticipated rhymes intensify the humorous impact and intensify the parody. This kind of formal suggestion of mockery and satire showed to detach one kind of mock-epic poetry from another. Jonathan Swift is also known as another most notable practitioner of the Hudibrastic after Butler, as he used this poetic form for nearly his entire poetry creation.

The dominance of mock-heroic poetry in the later Restoration era can be largely attributed to the famous poet, John Dryden. *Mac Flecknoe* by Dryden can perhaps be labeled as 'the authority' of the mock-heroic form of poetry. In *Mac Flecknoe*, the poet incidentally tries to compare Thomas Shadwell with Aeneas by making use of the language of Aeneid in order to give a description of the coronation of Shadwell on the throne of Dullness which earlier belonged to King Flecknoe. The satire of Virgil mocks Shadwell. Dryden's prosody is just like the regular heroic verse: iambic pentameter closed couplets. Rather than being formal, the parody is merely circumstantial and sarcastic.

The mock-heroic form continued to flourish even after Dryden and the century i.e., the period from 1680 to 1780 was marked by uncountable insignificant mock-heroic poems. In addition to this, some authors even attempted to write mock-heroic novels. Alexander Pope contributed significantly to the field of mock-heroic poetry in the later years and his poem, *The Rape of the Lock* is known to the best existing example of this genre till today. There is no doubt that Pope never diverges from copying epic poetry like that of Homer's *Iliad* and Virgil's *Aeneid*. The general form of the poem, created in cantos, trails the epics tradition, along with the precursory 'Invocation of the Muse'.

Epics permanently comprise foretelling which is ordinarily conveyed by a figure from another world. Pope makes mockery of custom through Ariel the sprite, who witnesses some 'dread event' (line 109) imminent on Belinda. These

epic preliminary inclinations give in to the core story, which usually involves some kind of a battle. The battle follows this kind of a patter: getting dressed for the battle (account of the shield of Achilles, preparing for the battle), altar sacrifice/libation to the gods, some battle change (perhaps involving drugs), treason (it is exposed that Achilles' ankle is his weak point), a trip to the Felonious, and the ultimate battle.

Pope has eloquently followed all of these features in that specific way. Each every portion of his literary creation clearly announces Pope's expertise over the mock-heroic genre. So much so that the characteristic apotheosis which forms a part of epics is imitated in *The Rape of the Lock*, as 'the stars inscribe Belinda's name!' (line 150). Undoubtedly, it is the work of a master. Pope appeals a similar mock-heroic style in *The Dunciad* in which again similar heroic poetry language has been used to define lowly or unimportant subjects. In this mock-epic poem, the advancement of Dulness over the earth's face, the rise of foolishness and flavorlessness, has been treated in a manner in which the coming of civilization has been dealt with in the *Aeneid*. John Gay's, *Trivia* and Beggar's *Opera* and Samuel Johnson's, *London* are excellent examples of perfect mock-heroic creations.

By the time Pope emerged as a mock-epic poet, this genre of poetry had already started turning towards the field of parody. The works done by writers like Fielding directed the mock-epic way of novel writing towards a more generic parody novel. The rise of this variety of novel writing led to a slow close of the era of the mock-epic novel, which had begun in the novel by Cervantes.

Famous mock-epic works and authors

Ultimately, the mock-epic genre of poetry reached to all corners of Europe, Russia, Scotland, Bohemia, Poland and France. Some highly popular French mock-epic poems were *Le Vergile Travesti (The disguised Vergil)* by Paul Scarron (1648–52) and *The Maid of Orleans* by Voltaire (1730). Ignacy Krasicki was a well acclaimed Polish mock-heroic poet who wrote works like *Myszeida (Mouseiad)* which he wrote in 1775 and *Monacomachia (The War of the Monks)* which he wrote in 1778 to his credit. Another notable mock-epic work in Polish language is *Organy* written by Tomasz Kajetan Wêgierski published in 1775-77.

Let us have a look at a famous example of mock-epic poetry by Thomas Gray.

Ode on the Death of a Favourite Cat Drowned in
a Tub of Goldfishes

– By Thomas Gray

1. *'Twas on a lofty vase's side,*

   Where China's gayest art had dy'd

   The azure flow'rs that blow;

   Demurest of the tabby kind,

The pensive Selima, reclin'd,
Gazed on the lake below.

2. *Her conscious tail her joy declar'd;*
   The fair round face, the snowy beard,
   The velvet of her paws,
   Her coat, that with the tortoise vies,
   Her ears of jet, and emerald eyes,
   She saw: and purr'd applause.

3. *Still had she gaz'd; but 'midst the tide*
   Two angel forms were seen to glide,
   The Genii of the stream;
   Their scaly armour's Tyrian hue
   Thro' richest purple to the view
   Betray'd a golden gleam.

4. *The hapless Nymph with wonder saw:*
   A whisker first and then a claw,
   With many an ardent wish,
   She stretch'd in vain to reach the prize.
   What female heart can gold despise?
   What cat's averse to fish?

5. *Presumptuous Maid! with looks intent*
   Again she stretch'd, again she bent,
   Nor knew the gulf between.
   (Malignant Fate sat by, and smil'd)
   The slipp'ry verge her feet beguil'd,
   She tumbled headlong in.

6. *Eight times emerging from the flood*
   She mew'd to ev'ry wat'ry god,
   Some speedy aid to send.
   No Dolphin came, no Nereid stirr'd;
   Nor cruel Tom, nor Susan heard.
   A Fav'rite has no friend!

7. *From hence, ye Beauties, undeceiv'd,*

Know, one false step is ne'er retriev'd,

And be with caution bold.

Not all that tempts your wand'ring eyes

And heedless hearts is lawful prize,

Nor all, that glisters, gold.

Explanation: Thomas Gray's, *Ode on the Death of a Favourite Cat Drowned in a Tub of Goldfishes* written in the 18th century is a classic example of the mock-heroic genre of poetry. The poet gives an account of his cat's death by presenting it in the form of human drama. Drawing on classical form, the poet tries to make his subject appear more somber and significant, at the same time demeaning it in the last line of the fourth and fifth stanzas. Gray also gives out a moral in the poem which appears to be funny as it is out of keeping with the poem's subject matter.

Check Your Progress

1. What is meant by the term 'Hudibrastic'?

2. How is mock-heroic poetry similar to epic style of poetry?

3. What was the main use of ex-machina approach in ancient theatre?

7.3 FORMS OF MOCK-EPIC

We will in this section discuss about the various forms of mock-epic poetry.

Italian Romance Epic

The Italian romance epic is perhaps not much to be seen in the contemporary literary awareness as it was one third of a century ago. During the period of 1750–1850, the *Orlando Furioso* and its later competitor, the *Gerusalemme liberata* (*Jerusalem Delivered*, 1581) of Torquato Tasso, was known by almost every cultured and well-read individual, and was extensively and justly respected. A liking for them was stimulated by the popularity of medieval romance which spread its wings after the second half of the 18th century. In, *Dictionnaire philosophique* (1764) written by Voltaire, the author has rated Ariosto much better than Homer. He has made a special mention of the unaffectedness of his work, the richness of his creation, and his accomplishment making the reader interested in the destinies of his characters and yet maintaining a comical distance.

Gibbon mentions in the 70th chapter of *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, talking about to the glorified Petrarch: 'I may hope or presume that the Italians do not compare the tedious uniformity of sonnets and elegies with the sublime compositions of their epic muse, the original wildness of Dante, the regular

beauties of Tasso, and the boundless variety of the incomparable Ariosto.' Goethe, who paid a visit to Ariosto's grave in Ferrara, is highly appreciative of Ariosto in his play, *Torquato Tasso* (1790).

Thus, by the middle of the 19th century, romance as a form of epic became less popular. The derogatory remarks made by Burckhardt in 1860 that Ariosto wasted his aptitudes on trivial things stand testimony to this fact. In Burckhardt's words, 'From a poet of such fame and such mighty gifts we would gladly receive something better than the adventures of Orlando.' In 1884, the comments made by an English reviewer, saying that Tasso's poem is 'now less read, I imagine, than formerly', allocates it only 'a foremost place in the second-class poetry of the world'.

As has been indicated by Schlegel, Ariosto toed the line of his ancestors in developing the heroic narratives which were popular in late medieval Italy, these were generally offered verbally by travelling musicians (cantastorie). The material presented by them was made up of the 'matter of France' (tales of Charlemagne and his paladins) along with the 'matter of Britain' (tales of King Arthur and the Knights of the Round Table). A number of writers before Ariosto created this work in narrative poetry which was widely accepted and enjoyed by readers. There writers embraced the ottava rima poetic form, which was initially used by Boccaccio in his work, *Teseida* (1339–41) and after that related to romance. But they brought together the post-classical work created by them with traditional references in a syncretism which were made even more intricate by Ariosto.

Ariosto took a step further in comparison to his ancestors in the narrative method of interlacement or intertwines. He adopted the practice of continuously breaking one narrative strand and moving to the other, restarting the first strand after some cantos. Some critics were of the opinion that the Furioso was a fresh genre of literature which must not be adjudged by conventional bench marks. Yet some literary scholars, who were restless to distinguish Italy with an exclusive epic of its own, contended that it was a classical epic, with the agreement of the exploits provided by Agramante's war. What Ariosto borrowed from conventional epic has been seen by his earliest observers. Ariosto's work may be preferred by less emotional readers but it cannot be denied that he was one of the greatest representatives of romance epic form of poetry of his period and that to reproduce his enchanted exploits can only augment the liking for mock-epic.

A comparison of Mock-Heroic

The ancestors of mock-epic have been defined by critics by usage of a variety of terms which have been many times used paradoxically, these terms are: burlesque, parody, travesty and so on. Underneath the differences, nevertheless, there is a somewhat strong contrast amongst poems that make use of lordly language in explanation of lowly things, and poetry that uses lowly language to describe enjoy great respect and a high position.

Some scholars have put both in the category of 'burlesque' However, 'burlesque', is potentially confusing term which describes these two types of writing by the language which, overall, is generally applied to them. The comical escalation of lowly things by the use of lofty language is known as 'mock-heroic'; the comical degradation of objects of high esteem through use of lowly language is known as 'travesty'.

The majestic or condescending style needs to be portrayed through decorous and resonant language. On the other hand, the modest style should be unadorned and modest. Scaliger identifies a reasonable or placid style in between both these styles. Imposing and outstanding style is used by mock-heroic in order to absurdly bring things to earth, whereas travesty treats lofty objects in the humble style. This categorized notion of style resembles the conception of categorization of the society.

Mock-heroic

In this form, unheroic subjects and objects are treated with heroic and lofty language. One of the first known examples of such form of writing is the *Batrachomyomachia* or *Battle of the Frogs and Mice*, which was may be written in the 5th century BC. This piece of early literature includes a grandiloquent style description of a battle amid lesser creatures. This work was translated into English by George Chapman in 1624, who had incidentally also translated the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*. These translations allow us to find, amusingly and ingeniously displayed, numerous characteristics of succeeding mock-heroic works.

The casus belli is an Aesopian occurrence. This event brings out the unwise move of a mouse which accepts a ride on a frog's back without applying any wisdom and drowns. This happens when the frog jumps into the water in order to avoid a water-snake. After this occurence, an army of mice resort to avenging this frog's death by taking up arms. The initiation of the battle happens with ostentatious speeches, and the battle turns into a known Homeric form of skirmishes between single troopers, all this is watched by the council of the gods with immense anxiety. All features of the epic are played down. The fighters have been given comical names: the drowned mouse has been named as Psicharpax ('Gather-crum'): 'Surnam'de the Mighty-Minded', son of Troxartes ('Sheare-crust') and Lichomyle ('Lick-mill'), who was the daughter of King Pternotroctes ('Bacon-Xitch-devourer, or gnawer').

The mice wear bean-pods in place of boots and helmets are replaced by nutshells, and needles do the job of spears. On the other hand, frogs adorn mallow-leaves and cockle-shells and use bulrushes. The gods take a decision not to interfere in this happening. It was of because of the lead given by Pallas Athena, who protests that the mice have nibbled at her clothes and she has not been able to sleep because of the unceremonious croaking of the frogs. After a lot of such bickering a big mouse announces to eliminate the frogs. In response to this, Jove

decides to sends two lobsters, which have been given an elaborate description, which scare the mice away.

The tones of the events that take place do not motivate the reader to feel sorry for the fighters. The poem's appeal lies in the ridiculous nonsense chattering of the animals. Just like a comical scrooge always remains a miser, in the same way all that the frogs do has to be, after all, the way frogs do. Whereas, the vain mice must continuously undermine their heroic pretenses by telling us again about their actual lives, for instance their craving for cheese and their fear of the feline and so on.

It is difficult to understand whether the *Batrachomyomachia* articulates a disapproval of the style adopted by Homer or it is just pleasure in absurdity. Nevertheless, this doubt seems to be clarified, with the author being mentioned as the first modern exponent of mock-heroic.

The mock-heroic works of poetry written by Boileau, *Le Lutrin* (1674), and Pope, *The Rape of the Lock* (1712–17) are more prominently known. Unlike Tassoni, it will be not good to criticize Homer as both of have contributed significantly with their respective styles. Both have displayed their faithfulness towards neoclassicism by composing artes poeticae—*Boileau's L'Art poe´tique* (1674) and Pope's 'Essay on Criticism (1711)—which laid down its guidelines.

While the arrangement of the epic machinery for mock-heroic writings first of all suggests a tribute to serious epic, clandestine disapproval of the serious epic is evident in both works. Working upon the model set by Tassoni, who positioned the fictitious clash over the bucket contained in an actual war, Boileau and Pope base their work on actual and trivial incidents.

Pope, on his own, was not uncritical of Homer. Just as the other neoclassical critics, he found that sometimes he used low language as compared to the language used by epic forms. However, Pope was clearly aware of the gap between the primitive society of Homer, with its uncontrolled violence, and his own cultured and nonviolent society: 'It must be a strange Partiality to Antiquity to think with Madam Dacier, "that those Times and Manners are so much the more excellent, as they are more contrary to ours."'

The most remarkable way in which Boileau and Pope deviate from the epic convention is in the way, the use of epic apparatus is used by them. They made use of gods and their messengers which has never been appreciated. Such usages in order to make events happen had faced criticism for a long time, being labeled as clumsy and unbecoming in itself. Besides, this model was also considered unsuitable for poems written by and for Christians. As it has been seen even Boileau rejected the use of Christian figures, like the angels and devils in poetry. In place of this, he began the usage of metaphorical figures.

Thus, it can be said that mock-epic form of writing poetry rewards by awarding importance to basic bodily needs. By doing such, it both mocks epic

and states the truth that epic cannot accommodate. Boileau's cardinals spoil themselves with ham, soup, and wine. Pope intricately defines the ritual of preparing and drinking coffee.

Parody

Parody differs from other forms of inter textuality by not basically bringing up one or more previous texts but by demanding a sarcastic, usually humorous, distance from them. It is not essentially an outbreak on the thing that is being parodied. While parody responds to weaknesses and flaws in its object, it also affirms to the status of its object as a cultural foundation. Parody is a partially creative leeway of the text into another way of expression, such as, sketch or graphic. While it is dependent on its original, it is not simply responsive. As it has been indicated by, a parody has capability of taking shape of a conductor for original creation: a parody's critic must always refer to the previous text so that he can understand whether the parodist has got a grasp of its weak spots, or whether, under the facade of copying, he has accomplished something creative.

It is not necessary for the object of a parody to always be an individual work: it could even be a genre. In Raymond Queneau's *Exercices de style* (1947), the same tale has been narrated in ninety-nine diverse ways, ranging from a sonnet to an official letter. A genre's parody can itself assist in founding a new genre. Cervantes's *Don Quixote* is one of the most well-known such examples, in which the parody of a chivalrous romance encourages the creative exploration of everyday reality. The lowly realm of inns, barbers, prostitutes, and convicts is not just a foil to Don Quixote's delusions, but a virgin terrain in wait of finding a description in literature. It can be seen that parodies are likely to crop up at a point when the creative resources of a genre are closing in to exhaustion.

Since parodies generally are not remembered for a long time, their abundance is easily forgotten. Since many centuries classic plays and well-known successes were usually complemented by parodies and travesties.

The terms 'parody', 'travesty', and 'burlesque' have a lot of commonality amongst each other. It has been an earnest effort of the critics to try and niche a sharp contrast among them. A W Schlegel puts it this way that a parody deals with a petty subject in an elevated manner, while travesty, (its converse), deals with a subject of significance in a comical way. In the 17th and 18th centuries people in the field of literature did not treat 'travesty' as an opposite of parody, rather it was considered as a specific type of parody in which a honorable subject-matter was rendered in an undignified, low, vulgar, or even obscene style.

Check Your Progress

4. What are the various terms associated with the genre of mock-epic poetry?
5. How is parody different from other forms of inter textuality?

7.4 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS QUESTIONS

1. 'Hudibrastic' is a form of poetry which is written in closed rhyming couplets in iambic tetrameter, and here the verses are often feminine rhymes or unanticipated combinations.

2. The mock-heroic poetry style is very close to that of the epic style of poetry, especially in the use of inflated, formal language and heightened vocabulary.

3. The main use of ex-machina approach was used to elucidate a complex plotline that was adapted by mock-epic poetry.

4. The various terms associated with the genre of mock-epic poetry are burlesque, parody, travesty and so on.

5. Parody differs from other forms of inter textuality by not basically bringing up one or more previous texts but by demanding a sarcastic, usually humorous, distance from them. It is not essentially an outbreak on the thing that is being parodied.

7.5 SUMMARY

- Mock-epic poetry is a typical form of satire or parody which makes fun of common conventional stereotype heroes and the literature related to such heroes.

- In mock-epic, the main protagonist is the central character, who is brave enough to battle with monsters (like Beowulf) and is called heroic.

- The mock-heroic poetry style is very close to that of the epic style of poetry, especially in the use of inflated, formal language and heightened vocabulary.

- Mock-heroic poetry consists of such poems in which an average or insignificant subject is described using a very majestic and ceremonial style which is no way appropriate to the character of the subject.

- Mock-epic poetry not only satirized this genre of poetry but also ridiculed heroic subjects and themes to sarcastically address many other grand themes.

- The mock-epic style of poetry follows the formal characteristics of epic poetry having a comical tenacity.

- A mock-epic poem happens to be lengthy and separated by cantos, just as the case with traditional epics.

- Ex-machina is a form of ancient theatre in which a pre conceived and designed character is introduced into a play to save the hero in an extraordinary fashion.

- The main use of ex-machina approach was used to elucidate a complex plotline which was adapted by mock-epic poetry as it helped in giving a satiric form to different themes and subjects.

- Traditionally, the mock-heroic style of poetry gained popularity in Italy, in the 17th century, and it got popularized in Great Britain in the post-Restoration era.

- During the 17th century, a lot of criticism was raised against the mock-epic because people believed that the feudal society's traditional values were being expressed through it.

- The newly developed form of mock-epic poetry acknowledged the similar metre, vocabulary, rhetoric which was followed in original form of epic poetry.

- The dominance of mock-heroic poetry in the later Restoration era can be largely attributed to the famous poet, John Dryden.

- The mock-heroic form continued to flourish even after Dryden and the century i.e., the period from 1680 to 1780 was marked by uncountable insignificant mock-heroic poems.

- Epics permanently comprise foretelling which is ordinarily conveyed by a figure from another world.

- Thomas Gray's, *Ode on The Death of a Favourite Cat Drowned in a Tub of Goldfishes* written in the 18th century is a classic example of the mock-heroic genre of poetry.

- The ancestors of mock-epic have been defined by critics by usage of a variety of terms which have been many times used paradoxically, these terms are: burlesque, parody, travesty and so on.

- In mock-heroic form, unheroic subjects and objects are treated with heroic and lofty language.

- Pope, on his own, was not uncritical of Homer. Just as the other neoclassical critics, he found that sometimes he used low language as compared to the language used by epic forms.

- The most remarkable way in which Boileau and Pope deviate from the epic convention is in the way, the use of epic apparatus is used by them.

- Parody differs from other forms of inter textuality by not basically bringing up one or more previous texts but by demanding a sarcastic, usually humorous, distance from them.

- Parody is a partially creative leeway of the text into another way of expression, such as, sketch or graphic.

- Cervantes's *Don Quixote* is one of the most well-known such examples, in which the parody of a chivalrous romance encourages the creative exploration of everyday reality.

- The terms 'parody', 'travesty', and 'burlesque' have a lot of commonality amongst each other. It has been an earnest effort of the critics to try and niche a sharp contrast among them.

- A W Schlegel puts it this way that a parody deals with a petty subject in an elevated manner, while travesty, (its converse), deals with a subject of significance in a comical way.

7.6 KEY WORDS

- **Burlesque:** It is defined as a literary form which is used to mock the manner of serious works and creates a comical effect.

- **Ex-machina:** It is defined as a form of ancient theatre in which a pre-conceived and designed character is introduced into a play to save the hero in an extraordinary fashion.

- **Mock-epic poetry:** It is defined as a typical form of satire or parody which makes fun of common conventional stereotype heroes and the literature related to such heroes.

- **Parody:** It is defined as a form of mock-epic poetry which imitates the style of a particular artist with intentional exaggeration to create a comic effect.

7.7 SELF ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

Short Answer Questions

1. How does mock-heroic produce a comical impact?
2. Write a short note on ex-machina as a form of ancient theatre.
3. Name some of the famous Italian mock-epic poems.
4. Why is *Mac Flecknoe* considered as 'the authority' of the mock-heroic form of poetry?
5. What is the main theme in Alexander Pope's *The Rape of the Lock*?

Long Answer Questions

1. Discuss the characteristics of mock-epic poetry.
2. 'The genre of mock-epic poetry aimed at satirizing the genre of serious epic poetry'. Analyse the statement.
3. Explain the development of mock-epic as a literary form in Literature.
4. Discuss the various forms of mock-epic poetry.
5. Explain *Battle of the Frogs and Mice* as a form of mock-heroic poetry.

7.8 FURTHER READINGS

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UNIT 8   SATIRE

Structure

8.0   INTRODUCTION

Satire is a defined as a genre of literature which points out the vices, follies and shortcomings of a person or a society. It is means to ridicule a person or a society so that it can improve itself. It is a humourous attack; however, its purpose is to bring out a change in society.

Satire uses wit to draw the attention of the readers and it is considered as one of the most effective source which can help an individual to understand the society. It is perhaps, the oldest form of social study which helps to learn about the issues prevalent in a society.

In this unit, the meaning and types of satire have been discussed. The importance of satire and its main characteristics have been highlighted. The unit will also discuss the techniques and the aims of satire in detail.

8.1 OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- Discuss the meaning and types of satire

- Analyse the importance of satire in literature

- Explain the characteristics of satire

- Examine the techniques and structure of satire

- Discuss the aims of satire

8.2 SATIRE: MEANING AND TYPES

Satire is a literary form of expression which makes use of humour, irony and ridicule people's vices or stupidity. This form of expression mocks at societal problems or people. The aim behind satire is draw attention of the readers and the society at large towards the ill. Satire also helps to bring out an improvement or a reform in a society by making people aware about the problem. Any work of satire would be incomplete without the inclusion of irony and sarcasm. Comparison and contrast, equivalence, parody, and double entendre are other literary tools used by satirists.

Classification of Satire

Satire can be divided into three categories which are as follows:

1. **Horatian satire:** Horatian satire is named after the ancient Roman satirists Horace, who existed in the first century BCE.

   Horace was a writer who found an innovative way to touch upon the problems faced by people at large. He made fun of the prevalent norms of the society in a spirited manner. Horatian satire is supposed to be ingenious and at the same time gentle on the subjects. Horatian satire is not centered on criticizing evils; rather, it mocks general human folly. Horatian satire is presented in such a manner that the reader of this work automatically starts to relate with it. The reader is motivated to laugh at him/her and the society.

2. **Juvenal satire:** Juvenal satire is named after Juvenal who lived during the late first century BCE to early second century AD.

   As compared to Horatian satire which focuses on the whole society, Juvenal satire criticizes public administrators and government establishments. He considered their ideas not just as incorrect, but also thought of them as evil. Thus, it will not be wrong to call Juvenalian satire more scornful and rude. Juvenal has made use of strong irony and scorn. Most of the political satires are also a part of Juvenal satire as it is aimed at provoking change. It is therefore, not as amusing as other types of satire.

3. **Menippean satire:** Menippean satire is named after the ancient Greek parodist Menippus.

   Menippean satire is concentrated to condemn the mental approaches in place of societal rules or particular people. This kind of satire generally mocks at single-minded individuals, for example extremists, penny pinchers, boasters and so on.

8.2.1 Significance of Satire in Literature

Satire as a means of social criticism has been used in the society since time immemorial. The same has been revealed in several diverse primeval cultures,

ranging from Ancient Egypt to Ancient Greece to the Medieval Islamic world. In the modern-day world, satire has been used to mock at government officers and ruling prevalent views. Satire consists of an exclusive capability to defy public sermon and scorn influential people into altering their plans and strategies. In views of some scholars, satire is the most suitable way to comprehend and appreciate a particular culture, because it offers an understanding of the communal spirit of a society and show who had power.

Examples of Satire in Literature

Gulliver's Travels

– By Jonathan Swift

Jonathan Swift's *Gulliver's Travels* is a satire on the nature of human beings. It is particularly an anti-Whig satire. The book is divided into four parts in which Lemuel Gulliver takes different voyages. The voyages give him a different perspective of the world and each voyage gives a chance to Swift to satirise the political system. The book satirised the political ideology, the difference between the Whigs and the Tories and the petty religious matters.

Huckleberry Finn

– By Mark Twain

The satire created by Mark Twain in *Huckleberry Finn* is repeatedly misinterpreted as his real thoughts or sentiments. Mark Twain loathed slavery and expressed his opinion on the slave trade in his work, *Huckleberry Finn*. He pointed out the ways in which the slaves were treated during those days and portrayed the cruel and mean ways of the slave owners. Critics opined that *Huckleberry Finn* promotes the idea of racism; however, he was vehemently against racism.

Animal Farm

– By George Orwell

Animal Farm, a masterpiece written by George Orwell is a satire that openly resonates the happenings which took place during the time of Russian Revolution. The Russians have been replaced by animals on a farm. The leading position amongst these animals has been given to the pigs which are actually representative of communist leaders. These pigs are initially shown to be the supporters of equal rights for all animals, but gradually they start reserving all the benefits only for themselves. As a result of which, all the other animals are completely excluded from all rewards produced at the farm. In the beginning of the story some men are expelled, who actually symbolize the Tsars. The end of the story, however, is quite humorous when men are back on the farm and the animals outside are unable to spell out the variance between the pigs and the men. This satire has been used by Orwell to indicate that after the Russian Revolution, the men who ruled the roost were no more 'equal' to the common people than the Tsars before them.

Check Your Progress

1. State any one characteristic of Horatian satire.

2. Why is satire considered as the most suitable way to comprehend or appreciate a particular culture?

8.3 SATIRE: CHARACTERISTICS AND AIMS

We will in this section discuss the characteristics and aims of satire.

Characteristics of Satire

Ian Johnston, retired instructor at Malaspina University-College, Nanaimo, British Columbia, Canada, suggests supportive data in providing additional clarity in order to outline the usage and characteristics of satire:

- The vital approach in a satire is the wish to make use of accurate and crystal clear language to stagnate an audience to protest.

- There is an effort made by the satirist to describe agonizing or audacious circumstances or stupid or cruel people or groups as forcefully as possible.

- The purpose of satire is to shake and wake people, who in opinion of most satire writers are blind, oblivious, and may be sedated by conventions, societal customs and monotony. The satires are aimed at making people face the truth which is habitually ignored by all.

- A satire is a piece of literary work in which evils or idiocies of human beings are criticized by way of sarcasm, scorn, or humour.

- A person or a group of people behaving in an ethically improper way can be corrected in a number of ways. They can be forced to change their ways by means of either threatening to be punished; or they can be subjected to severe moral lectures. Satire, however is a method in which the wrong doer is targeted in a very different way where people at large are encouraged to see these wrong doers as unreasonable and outrageous, they are provided with literary material which makes them the laughing stock of the group and hence renders them as objects of the group's scorn.

- Good traditional satire is always based on a sense of morality. It aims at fulfilling the moral obligation of correcting societal wrong by exposing it.

- In order to grasp or retain the attention of the reader, there is requirement of subtle and diverse satire. Since generally all satires are dependent on a specific awareness in the reader, skilled satires require certain degree of sophistication in the readers or viewers.

Techniques of Satire

What sets satire apart from other literary forms of is its objectively narrow choice of techniques. The essence of satire is wit; it gives pleasure to its readers as it possesses the ability of presentation of ideas by either combining them or contrasting them. Initially wit meant 'cleverness' but in the contemporary times, it is represented by a speech/writing that gives pleasure by its suddenness.

Lessening; the degradation or devaluing of the subject by dropping his importance or self-respect; belittling are the tactics which helping in producing a perfect satire. Application of following techniques while crafting a satire produces a satire which has the desired impact on its readers:

- Changing the size
- Doing away with all indications of authority such as rank and status. Such things are generally indicated by a person's clothes.
- Use of animal imagery, this diminishes purposeful actions done by people, their lofty aims of which have made them proud and their evil desires which make them ashamed, all to the level of brute instinct.
- Vegetable or mineral imagery
- Exaggeration or mockery
- A satirist, desirous of showing that an insignia is being used for unreasonable conclusions portrays not to comprehend its representative implications; for instance, the flag becomes as important as only another piece of cloth.
- The basic notion of satire is to bring down everything to modest terms: the satirist always tries to invigorate the common sense, plain reason, and simple logic. Satires aim to produce shock effects by inducing counterblast sweeping insult. In words of Johnston, 'It is the least inventive of the satirist's tools. A lengthy invective is sometimes called a diatribe. The danger of pure invective is that one can quickly get tired of it, since it offers limited opportunity for inventive wit'.
- Irony, organized utilization of double meaning: words used in the satire are aimed at conveying a meaning actually contradictory to the verbatim or expected meaning.
- Caricature denotes the technique of overstating for witty and satiric effect on a specific characteristic of the target, so that a laughable or silly impact can be created. The word 'caricature' is usually go to do more with drawing than, with writing (for instance, politically motivated cartoons). Almost all satire depends on, to some extent, the misrepresentation of caricature.
- Reduction and absurdum is a widespread satiric technique, by using which the author consents willingly with the basic approaches or expectations he intends to satirize and, by forcefully sending them to a reasonably ludicrous extreme, reveals the irrationality of the original approaches and expectations.

Sometimes reductions produce dangerous results; either when the reader is unable to recognize the satire at work or when the reader is unable to pinpoint the target clearly.

Structure of Satire

The structure of satire rests on three things which are referred to as the main 'Shapes' of the satire. A satirical piece carved out keep these three fundamentals in mind seldom fails in producing the desired result on its reader or viewer. The three main shapes of a successful satire are as follows:

1. **Monologue**: The satirist in his work is generally seen or perceived to be speaking from behind a delicately veiled facade. The speaker, from behind his mask speaks out his interpretation of a problematic situation or a trouble creator. Taking the description and his or her viewpoint a step further, the speaker even quotes instances, and makes an effort to inflict his opinions on the viewer, reader or listener.

2. **Parody**: The satirist selects a prevailing piece of literature that had been carved keeping in mind a grave purpose. He or she could even pick up a literary form in which a particular popular book or piece of poetry may have been written. They then endeavour to make the work appear absurd by instilling odd and incompatible ideas into it. The aim of the satirist is to make these existing serious notions appear silly and unwise by giving them an inappropriate appearance.

3. **Narrative**: Here the author remains invisible. He takes the help of fiction to speak out his ideas on his or her behalf.

8.3.1 Satire and its Aims

The aim of the satirist is far greater than eliciting instinctive amusement or destructive malice. There is no doubt that at times a satire may not be able to achieve what it is intended to. There may also be cases where the satirist might look as if he or she is unethically biased or he or she may seem to be caught in the feeling of self-righteousness. In some cases, a satire might also be unintelligently comic, spirited, humorous, or outrageous in absence of an actual point. One thing should be kept in mind that a satirist deserves to be called more than a prejudiced supporter or a funny artist, because an actual satirist has to be an ardent supporter, a keen philanthropic, accountable even any individual indulgence or individual resentment. 'The satirist, in short, demands decisions of his reader, not mere feelings'; he 'wishes to arouse [the reader's] energy to action, not purge it in vicarious experience' (Paulson 1967: 15). Either by way of imitation or through conversational art, the satirist aims to incite laughter or sorrow, a worry regarding the guiltless or the self-damaging sucker, or repulsion for the dishonest jack, and continuously either amusement or disdain at the subject.

Just like, with the tiff between tragedy and comedy, even satire invokes emotions and thoughts by constructing strain and inciting struggle, however, in contrast to tragedy and comedy, satire stops just before any settlement with the subject in question. So, as a result just as light is impacted by a prism and results in refraction, the same way satire leaves its subject swerved and rattled. Satire must be aggressively bombastic. Satire has to provide a function without a norm contrary to which readers are unable to make a comparison of its subject. We compliment with pleasure all that is admired by us, or what we enjoy, or what we earn as profit from. On the other hand, we disapprove with annoyance the disgraceful or that which results in unpleasantness. All this is a result of our learnt intelligence of how the world ought or ought not to be. It is not possible for us to perceive anything as preposterous, atrocious, bad, or strange in the absence of a relative intelligence of what is good and auspicious. It is not possible for us to believe that something in the world is not right, without having a notion of what is the actual form for the world to be in and of how it put things in the right manner.

Either openly or indirectly, the satirist tries to influence us in the direction of a perfect substitute, in the direction of a circumstance of what in the satirist view is the ideal situation. It is supposed that the satirist does his job keeping the best interest of the reader in mind and is always in search for perfection or improvement. However, the fact of the matter is that the satirist and the readers or viewers of his work have a common perception of that benchmark. Nevertheless, the satirist is not under any obligation to solve the apparent problem or substitute what is satirically taken down to pieces or exposed with a solution. The responsibility of the satirist is often like that of an overseer; and an overseer is not expected by anyone to work twice over and warn others that something is not right and should be corrected. Satirists, that means, provoke us to set right what is incorrect.

They inspire our requirement for the steadiness of truth by exposing deception, revealing duplicity, smashing misleading misapprehension, and shaking us from our contentment and unresponsiveness. Philip Wylie, who authored the once extremely contentious*, Generation of Vipers* (1942), a satiric tour de force, articulated his joy at a reader's response who had written to his publisher: 'put out the lantern of Diogenes for here by god in the plain light of day is an honest man' (Wylie 1970: xi). Honesty propagates condemnation, and, as has been said by Wylie himself, 'Criticism . . . and the doubt out of which it arises, are the prior conditions to progress of any sort' (Wylie 1970: xiv).

Readers of satire are supposed to leave doubt, to dance to the tune, however, they should never yield saneness or comprehensive decision. Satirists might make use of fiction in order to seek truth but not founding lies. The satirist, in search of a re-establishment of beliefs, supposes readers to get involved in the satire by putting into action their thinking, ethical morals, and perception to the subject. The satirist tries to mark our approach or viewpoint by means of a forceful scheme of misrepresentation or offense that requires our critical judgment. As has been said

NOTES

by Wayne Booth, 'Since the rhetorical intent of these works [innumerable satires and burlesques, from Rabelais through Erasmus and Swift] is evident to every reader, the function of the dramatized spokesman, wh'ether fools, knaves, or sages, is usually quite clear; no one accuses them of mad incoherence'. (1961: 229).

Ultimately, satire criticizes the characteristic unscrupulous conduct or belief of a person, but not just one person who behaves badly or makes a mistake. In his Dictionary (1755), Samuel Johnson makes a roughly appropriate distinction between satire and lampoon as he tries to define the genre of formal verse satire: '[Satire is a] poem in which wickedness or folly is censured. Proper satire is distinguished, by the generality of the reflections, from a lampoon which is aimed against a particular person; but they are too frequently confounded'.

The same disavowal of personal attack is expressed by

Swift's apologist, who defends his satire:

Yet, Malice never was his Aim;

He lash'd the Vice but spar'd the Name.

No Individual could resent,

Where Thousands equally were meant.

His Satyr points at no Defect,

But what all Mortals may correct.

(Verses on the Death of Dr Swift, 459–64)

A number of schemes are applied in construction of satire. At one end is criticism, only just a little distance away from unpolished singular insult of explicit criticism or disapproval. Though some kind of attack or mockery is essential for a piece of literary to be called satiric, satire cannot be produced without intentional skill.

Check Your Progress

3. What is the essence of a satire?

4. State the basic notion of a satire.

8.4 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS QUESTIONS

1. Horatian satire is supposed to be ingenious and at the same time gentle on the subjects. It is not centered on criticizing evils; rather, it mocks general human folly.

2. Satire is considered as the most suitable way to comprehend or appreciate a particular culture because it offers an understanding of the communal spirit of a society and show who had power.

3. The essence of satire is wit; it gives pleasure to its readers as it possesses the ability of presentation of ideas by either combining them or contrasting them.

4. The basic notion of satire is to bring down everything to modest terms: the satirist always tries to invigorate the common sense, plain reason, and simple logic. Satires aim to produce shock effects by inducing counterblast sweeping insult.

8.5 SUMMARY

- Satire is a literary form of expression which makes use of humour, irony and ridicule people's vices or stupidity.

- Satire also helps to bring out an improvement or a reform in a society by making people aware about the problem.

- Horatian satire is supposed to be ingenious and at the same time gentle on the subjects. It is not centered on criticizing evils; rather, it mocks general human folly.

- As compared to Horatian satire which focuses on the whole society, Juvenal satire criticizes public administrators and government establishments.

- Menippean satire is concentrated to condemn the mental approaches in place of societal rules or particular people.

- The essence of satire is wit; it gives pleasure to its readers as it possesses the ability of presentation of ideas by either combining them or contrasting them.

- In the modern-day world, satire has been used to mock at government officers and ruling prevalent views.

- Irony, organized utilization of double meaning: words used in the satire are aimed at conveying a meaning actually contradictory to the verbatim or expected meaning.

- A satirical piece carved out keep these three fundamentals in mind seldom fails in producing the desired result on its reader or viewer.

- Satire consists of an exclusive capability to defy public sermon and scorn influential people into altering their plans and strategies.

- The vital approach in a satire is the wish to make use of accurate and crystal clear language to stagnate an audience to protest.

- The purpose of satire is to shake and wake people, who in opinion of most satire writers are blind, oblivious, and may be sedated by conventions, societal customs and monotony.

- A satire is a piece of literary work in which evils or idiocies of human beings are criticized by way of sarcasm, scorn, or humour.

- Good traditional satire is always based on a sense of morality. It aims at fulfilling the moral obligation of correcting societal wrong by exposing it.

- Satire has to provide a function without a norm contrary to which readers are unable to make a comparison of its subject.

- The basic notion of satire is to bring down everything to modest terms: the satirist always tries to invigorate the common sense, plain reason, and simple logic.

- The satirist, in search of a re-establishment of beliefs, supposes readers to get involved in the satire by putting into action their thinking, ethical morals, and perception to the subject.

- Caricature denotes the technique of overstating for witty and satiric effect on a specific characteristic of the target, so that a laughable or silly impact can be created.

- Satire criticizes the characteristic unscrupulous conduct or belief of a person, but not just one person who behaves badly or makes a mistake.

8.6 KEY WORDS

- **Horatian Satire:** It is defined as a satire which is not centered on criticizing evils; rather, it mocks general human folly.

- **Juvenal Satire:** It is defined as a satire which criticizes public administrators and government establishments.

- **Menippean Satire:** It is defined as a satire which is concentrated to condemn the mental approaches in place of societal rules or particular people.

- **Satire:** It is defined as a literary form of expression which makes use of humour, irony and ridicule people's vices or stupidity.

8.7 SELF ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

Short Answer Questions

1. What are the three main types of satire?
2. Write a short note on the importance of satire in literature.

3. What is the main purpose of a satire?

4. Why is reduction and absurdum considered as the most common satiric technique?

5. How has Jonathan Swift satirised the political and religious beliefs in *Gulliver Travels*?

Long Answer Questions

1. Discuss the treatment of satire in George Orwell's *Animal Farm*.

2. Analyse the characteristics of a satire.

3. What are the different types of techniques of a satire? Discuss in detail.

4. Explain the structure of a satire.

5. Discuss in detail the aims of a satire.

8.8   FURTHER READINGS

Abrahams, M.H. 2011. *A Glossary of Literary Terms*. California: Wadsworth Publishing.

Boulton, Marjorie. 2006. *Anatomy of the Novel*. New Delhi, Kalyani Publishing.

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UNIT 9   IDYLL

Structure

9.0 Introduction
9.1 Objectives
9.2 Idyll: An Overviewo
9.3 Idyll: A Form of Poetry in the Contemporary Times
9.4 Answers To Check Your Progress Questions
9.5 Summary
9.6 Key Words
9.7 Self Assessment Questions and Exercises
9.8 Further Readings

9.0   INTRODUCTION

An idyll is defined as a short poem which depicts the rustic life of people. It was developed by the Alexandrian school of poetry; Theocritus contributed majorly to this form. He was followed by Bion and Moschus during the 3rd century.

Theocritus's idyll depicted a small world and he described simple daily scenes of life unlike Homer who portrayed a larger than life picture to its readers. The idyll form was later revived during the period of Renaissance.

In this unit, the meaning and forms of idyll have been discussed. The unit will also explain the usage of idyll as a literary form in the existing times. The development of idyll as a literary form and the contribution made by Theocritus has been analysed.

9.1   OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- Discuss the meaning of idyll as a literary form

- Explain the forms of idyll

- Interpret the development of idyll as a literary form

- Analyse the usage of idyll as a poetic form in the existing times

9.2   IDYLL: AN OVERVIEW

The origin of Idyllic form of poetry dates back to many centuries and there is apparently no other genre of poetry has had such a wide ranging influence on readers as this form has fascinated the general public. Words like 'Idyllic', 'Pastoral', 'Arcadian' can be used synonymously as they all have the same meaning.

They envelope the reader with an atmosphere of fascination, they encourage relaxed moment and they take us back in time to those fresh and untainted feelings.

However, Pastoral or Idyllic form of poetry has not received much appreciation by the critics and readers. They consider it as a form of poetry which is recognized for its dull creations and unreal feelings. However, scholars have not been able to differentiate between Pastoral, Idyll or Bucolic forms of poetry. There seems to be a basic difficulty of differentiation between the form with subject-matter and shape with substance. With the passage of time, however, Idyll has turned out to be most earnest form of pastoral poetry. Being the most ancient form of pastoral poetry, it provides a more comprehensive and complete sequence of study in comparison to the later changes that took place in pastoral poetry.

The pastoral as a form of poetry was developed by the Greek poet, Theocritus. In the third century B.C. he used to write poems expressing the life of the shepherds of Sicily. The word pastor in Latin language stands for 'shepherd'. Theocritus was later imitated by Virgil in his Latin *Eclogues*. By this, traditional pastoral found a solid base and got strongly established. The model of the pastoral Idyll came to be formed as an intentionally conservative piece of poetry communicating a town composer's sentimental remembrance of the tranquility and plainness of the shepherds' life and that of other pastoral people in a perfect natural background. The literary customs that most of the poets followed in the years that followed were based on Virgil's replications of Theocritus.

A shepherd stretching out beneath a sprawling beech tree and contemplating the pastoral thought, or just puffing away the pipe without an iota of worry of ever getting old, or participating in a pleasant singing competition, or just speaking about his good or bad luck in his love life, or mourning the demise of a companion shepherd. The last type of expression mentioned here, gave rise to the pastoral elegy, which carried on much longer than the other traditional forms.

As has been mentioned above, the other terms repeatedly used in place of pastoral are idyll, from the title of pastorals written by Theocritus; eclogue (which exactly means, 'a selection'), from the title of pastorals written by Virgil; and bucolic poetry, from the Greek translation of the word, 'herdsman'. Traditional poets have generally defined the idyllic existence having characteristics of the mythological golden era.

Christian pastoralists joined the golden era of pagan legend with the Garden of Eden of the Bible. Besides that they even made use (or ill use) of the religious representation of 'shepherd' (as in connection with the priestly or village pastor, and to Christ as the Good Shepherd) in order to provide a lot of pastoral pieces of poetry a Christian array of allusion. During the Renaissance period, the conventional pastoral was also changed to varied humorous and metaphorical practices. *Shepherd's Calendar* written by Edmund Spenser in 1579 propagated the style in world of English poetry. This piece of work comprised mostly all ranges of poetry written in current pastoral form of that era.

The pastoral vision created by the writers of this form was so attractive that the Renaissance poets integrated it into numerous other forms of literary creations. For example, *Arcadia* written by Sir Philip Sidney between 1581 and 1584 was a lengthy idyllic romance carved out in an intricately artful style. (Arcadia was a hilly area in Greece which was substituted by Virgil for Sicily used by Theocritus as his romanticized idyllic setting.)

The pastoral lyric, *The Passionate Shepherd to His Love* written by Christopher Marlowe, and *The Faithful Shepherdess*, the idyllic drama written by John Fletcher are other worthy examples of this last type. Other examples of pastoral love themes are: *As You Like It*, by William Shakespeare, founded on the contemporary idyllic romance. Thomas Lodge's *Rosalynde*, which is set in the woodland area of Arden, the place is a green sanctuary which provides seclusion from the worries and difficulties of normal life where all hostilities are resolved, all complications smoothened, and the course of true love is the only song that can be heard in the air of the atmosphere.

The last significant writing of customary pastorals and a fitting example of the form's intended and elegant display of extraordinary artifice was *Pastorals*, written by Alexander Pope in 1709. In 1714, in the pastoral masterpiece, *Shepherd's Week* by John Gay, the poet wrote a satire of the type by using its graceful principles to the rusticity of genuine countryside ways and language. And in so doing, the author unintentionally presented to the poets of the following times, the real technique to the extremely realistic dealing of pastoral life.

In recent times the term 'pastoral' has been given many new dimensions. William Empson, in his work, *Some Versions of Pastoral*, acknowledged any kind of work as idyllic which opposed humble to difficult or problematic life, to the benefit of the previous: the humble life could be exemplified as that of the shepherd, the kid, or the man toiling to earn a living. In Empson's opinion, this literary approach works as a diagonal way to condemn the morals and hierarchical class structure prevalent in the society during that time.

Empson therefore, relates the 'pastoral' or idyllic' to the literary creations starting from Andrew Marvell's seventeenth-century poem *The Garden* and to Lewis Carroll's Alice *in Wonderland*. However, the term 'pastoral' or 'idyllic' has been applied by various scholars and they consider it as a variety of work which characterizes a kind of pulling away to a distant place that is near the fundamental beats of nature. A kind of a place; where the central character accomplishes a new viewpoint towards the complications, frustrations and struggles of the social world.

Forms of Idyll

Idyll as a form of poetry can be broadly categorized in two forms that are pastoral idyll and proper idyll. These forms have been discussed as follows:

Idyll (Pastoral)

The beginning of the pastoral idyll can be dated back to the joy experienced by human beings in the outside world and in their love for lyrics from the beginning of time. When humans had a wandering life, their main employment was tending to and moving about with the herds that they depended upon for livelihood. Thus, the people of those times protected their herds where these animals grazed on the green pastures along hillsides. In order to enthrall their redundancy and loneliness, they often resorted to songs which, out of requirement, were related with the pleasures and happenings of their unrestricted existence.

The first instances of such life are included in the *Bible*, for instance the *Song of Songs*, which is an urge for love. Its substantial imagery and the vivid appearance is a true example of the pastoral idyll. The first pastorals are said to have emerged in the East from where they moved and found place in all lands and became a part of the literature of almost every existing language. As mentioned earlier, Theocritus is known to be the first pastoral poet in English literature. He carefully worked on the customs and features of pastoral tradition, and gave attention to and enjoyed the shepherds' songs in Sicilian pastures. He thus, provided a concrete shape and its lasting exquisiteness to pastoral idyll. Theocritus was born in Syracuse, in 300 B.C., in an era of sophistication. He was taught by contemporary teachers. Despite the fact, Theocritus, however, was drawn by the attractiveness of Sicilian lands and responded with a new and straight poetic might. The extensive line of copiers, interpreters, and criticizers stand testimony to his artistic genius and poetic prowess. Theocritus setup the idyll as a form art displaying the appeal of the countryside with an ability unparalleled by anyone for ages to follow.

Theocritus' idylls are based on a range of subjects; some of these showcase the life of grass cutters and fishermen; some of them are mythical stories revolving around people and arms. These idylls are loaded with charms and attractions. Besides this, they comprise depictions of the ones who are duty bound to lead and guard the pasturing flocks. These beautifully written idylls revolve around the cheerful pleasure of the herdsmen's lives. The best work of Theocritus' idylls are related to life of herdsmen known as 'pastores'. This is primarily the cause for the confusion between an idyll (pure) and a pastoral idyll.

Normally the terms 'pastoral' and 'idyll' are used in place of each other. In views of the critics, who are not much concerned about the differences between both the types of pastoral generally means anything that stands for something which is rustic and not very commonplace. An idyll in the notion of the critics means a demonstration of a humble, silent, and tranquil life. The reason behind this is that it follows standard law in a dominion away from style and from affluence; such a life is exposed to all the inspirations from nature. Under such circumstances of faulty interpretation, identification of pastoral with idyll is highly possible. However, an expert will never agree with such loose comparisons of terms which

are mandatorily different in their basic nature. On close scrutiny of the vital variances between both it can be seen that the pastoral has been displayed in the world of literature with too sharp a definiteness. Its presence is so intense and so strong, that there is no chance of confusing one concept with the other.

The pastoral form of poetry proposes certain imagery, it brings to the mind portraits of those joyful protectors of the flock whose duty offers them ease and relaxation for song, who adopt the kind of livelihood which leads to musing on the attractiveness of the world all-around and which can be seen, and arouses the poetic spirit.

Idyll (proper)

Having understood the constraint of the pastoral idyll, let us try to understand the features of the proper idyll (or idyll). Theocritus' poems did not come to be known as idyll on their own. The term, however, was awarded by some scholars and it perfectly fits the image of the heroes such as Hercules and of the Dioscuri, as well as the herdsmen such as Daphnis and Menalcas. In traditional form there was no confusion between the terms 'idyll' and 'pastoral'.

The odes of Pindar were called idylls, while in case of Ausonius' the idylls have no pastoral constituent. The usage of idyll became varied only during the modern times. The French literary laureates considered the idyll as particularly pastoral; amongst the Spanish literary circles the idyll does not convey an idea of any sort of pastoral poetry. The Italians however seem to maintaining an intermediate opinion, allowing the idyll to spread its wings without confining it to just pastoral.

Check Your Progress

1. What was the basic model of pastoral idyll?
2. State any one characteristic of Theocritus' idylls.

9.3 IDYLL: A FORM OF POETRY IN THE CONTEMPORARY TIMES

The modern English opinion on the subject may be helpful in shaping a clearer view about the idyll poetry. Recent times have been marked by a number of idylls in prose such as Wabash Idylls, Qtuaker Idylls, and Auld Licht Idylls, while in poetry there are the English *Idylls* of Tennyson, the *Dramatic Idyll*s of Robert Browning, and the *Old World Idylls* of Austin Dobson, and none of them are associated to any kind of pastoral setting.

Chambers' Encyclopedia defines Idyll as 'a term used to denote a species of poem representing the simple scenes of pastoral life. It is, however, an error to suppose that the idyll is exclusively pastoral; . . . After the use made of the word by Tennyson in his *Idylls of the King*, which are epic in their style and treatment, and

romantic and tragic in their incidents, it becomes very difficult to say what may not be called an idyll'.

The kind of idyll (whether pastoral or proper) is actually determined by the temperament or the sentiment it rouses. There are examples of various novels such as *The Cotter's Saturday Night, Paul and Virginia, The Bracebridge Hall Stories* and *Prue and I* are the type of idylls which take the reader into a warm state of harmony and gratification, stirring only calm and serene feelings. Universal usage appears to suggest that the idyll is a small piece of poetry or fiction in which a kind of modest joy is vividly displayed; it has no room for tragic components whatsoever.

The term 'Idyllic' literally means having no displeasure or discontentment. A typical idyll is not set to achieve any outstanding efforts, or satisfy any proud purposes, there is no self-examining and restraint. The only aim of an idyll is to give its reader the comfort of life and present the charm that life holds. It always consists of a magical atmosphere, a certain hint of a fulfilling pleasure. An idyll thus, presents a representation of life as the human spirit desires to be, an exhibition of the preferred instants of worldly gratification.

When an idyll is bound merely to a pastoral scene, it possesses some distinguishing features which separate it from its other close associated forms such as the elegy, the eclogue, and the song. Theocritus divided the pastoral idyll in three forms:

1. All dramatic
2. More dramatic
3. Less dramatic

These forms of idyll are present even today: the monologue, a setting in which the hopeless beau is imagined humming his melody of protest; the second is, the dialogue, in which two or more shepherds are shown to be singing in the absence of a particular subject; and the dialogue with a singing-match. In this particular form one shepherd, meets another and throws upon him the contest of a song; bets are placed, in which a kid is gambled with a lamb or, maybe, a drinking-cup. A referee is chosen, an isolated spot is earmarked, and the tunes are hummed. The lyrics of these songs refer to the dear girls, to the pleasures of life of a shepherd, or plainly to the attractiveness of the outside world. The songs thus, sung arouse the emotions of the reader/listener deep down to the bone.

Such tracks are enchanting as we observe a person through his or her eye or ear as well and along with that all the other senses of the human body. The lover's narration of the gifts that he has in store for his beloved is also characteristic. The list of these gifts is long and includes- fleece and flowers, cheese and wine and honeycomb which cannot even be beaten by the juice and ambrosia of the gods. It may be pertinent to note here that an elegy, on the contrary to an idyll, is related to the gloomier experiences of a person's life. Once completely contemplative, in

the modern day jargon it has been labeled as a poem of mourning and of sorrow. Lycidas displays the pastoral elegy in its most beautiful form.

The French have made many efforts to separate the idyll from the eclogue, but no one has been able to reach a substantial deduction till now. Just as Theocritus' writings were awarded with the title, 'idyll', in the same way that Virgil's poems came to be termed as 'eclogue'. It is essential to observe that the eclogue has been thought to be more closely associated with pastoral in comparison to the idyll's association with pastoral. In fact, it has been the preferred and persistent term used up to the twentieth century for all kind of rural discourse.

Theocritus' idylls possessed a new and visible beauty, did the job of prototypes for Latin Virgil, who imitated the work of Theocritus with an independence which is capable of being addressed by a different genre. Vigil produced idylls in a stained form, in which stringent creative agreement is disturbed. Hidden mentions of historical circumstances, subjective appreciation, exaltation, in the pastorals by Virgil diminish the extraordinary creative excellence, and give a double interest and purpose to the poems. The eclogues written by Virgil can be compared with the old Roman mosaics which depict a scene in Paradise, which holds the face down figure of the donor in one corner. In the following periods of literature there have been eclogues toeing the line of the Virgilian prototypical eclogues in which a number of subjects have been dealt with under pastoral semblance.

In English literature, particularly during the age of Pope, numerous eclogues were written which were actually unrelated the pastoral. They can be best described as dialogues- *A Culinary Eclogue* by William Shenstone; *The Ghaists*, a kirk-yard eclogue by Robert Ferguson; *The Dean and the Squire*, a political eclogue by Mason; *Town Eclogues* by Gay; *Fire, Famine, and Slaughter*, a war eclogue by Coleridge, and finally an absurd parody of the Virgilian eclogue by Mrs Barbauld, *A School Eclogue*, which is the old singing match performed by two school boys, who lay wagers, while a third school boy acts as umpire. Eclogue generally has the connotation of dialogue, but not essentially of the pastoral.

The eclogue, has been considered as a form of art lower than the idyll, it does not seek to be moralistic nor humorous, but can be called an honest artistic construction. It is essential to differentiate prudently between the pastoral and the idyllic monologue from the song. Broadly speaking, the differentiating factor between the idyll and other forms is its imaginative feature. A pastoral idyll might start generally with a kind of opening verses giving details about the place and situation of the song, whereas the actual pastoral song is an apostrophe from the very beginning, the son, come what may, does not present a picture of the singer gives voice to the song.

Another form that the pastoral idyll differentiated from is a poem written about the general state of things, in contrast to such writings a pastoral idyll describes a specific picture about a specific scene. *Jack and Joan* written by Thomas Campion

is a good example, such a generalized descriptive poem which cannot be considered as a pastoral: 'Jack and Joan, they think no ill, But loving live, and merry still; Do their week day's work, and pray Devoutly on the holy day Skip and trip it on the green, And help to chose the Summer Queen; Lash out at a country feast Their silver penny with the best'. It is indeed close to the general description of idyllic content, which is far from being dramatic. It can however be called philosophical in nature, and it deliberates upon the components that contribute sweetness to a pastoral life. Following is an extract from *The Purple Island* by Phineas Fletcher to get a better understanding of idyll poetry.

NOTES

Canto XII:

Thrice, 0, thrice happy shepherd's life and state !

When courts are happiness' unhappy pawns I

His cottage low, and safely humble gate

Shuts out proud fortune and her scorns and fawns;

No feared treason breaks his quiet sleep

Singing all day, his flocks he learns to keep,

Himself as innocent as are his simple sheep.

The relation of pastoral idyll with poetry has been compared to the relation of genre of pictures from Netherland to painting. The components that make the genre of pictures of Teniers, Jan Steen, or Brouwer relaxed and full of festivities are social delights, happiness in plain movement of the dance, pleasure of tobacco, ale, and kisses. These are intricately concentrated to the minutest aspect, penetratingly real and noticeable.

Theocritus' idylls also contain the same determination of detail, and the same conscientious execution of the pettiest problem, the same actuality. There is no doubt that both have the excellence of implementation, but Theocritus' work is extra delicate as compared to the works of other genre painters. They do display truthful and related scenes, but none can claim to be even near his endeavor for creative grouping. His attempt to eternalize beauty can also not be paralleled. Theocritus selects the most attractive and supremely distinguishing instants. The sense of delight in him increases enormously far beyond just social gaiety. It can be called multifaceted, possessing a mystical component which is unaffected awareness of natural attractiveness.

Putting together in combined manner the features of two generic separations, it is not possible to compartmentalize the pastoral idyll into one or the other single category. Pastoral idyll but must be described, overall, as lyric in meaning and dramatic in implementation. The pastoral idyll can be termed as short, small, but evocative and memorable. The immortality possessed by idyll cannot be justified. As in case of tragedy which purifies the one who witnesses it by compassion and admiration, in the same way, in witnessing pastoral idyll the reader is cleansed by

kindness and pleasure. All human beings desire the same peaceful happiness; have the similar desire for love, the identical liberty from stress, jealousy and drive that can be seen in the pastoral idyll.

Idyll as a poetic form charms the sentiment which is profound and enduring in the spirit of a human being. Although this poetry may not have the ability to stir profound spiritual tussle or yield greater and condescending standards of human behaviour, it undoubtedly impacts the ever-essential appeasement of a human with the ease of his individual existence

Examples of Idyll poetry

Example 1: *Ulysses*

– By Alfred Tennyson

It little profits that an idle king,

By this still hearth, among these barren crags,

Match'd with an agèd wife, I mete and dole

Unequal laws unto a savage race,

That hoard, and sleep, and feed, and know not me.

I cannot rest from travel: I will drink

Life to the lees: All times I have enjoy'd

Greatly, have suffer'd greatly, both with those

That loved me, and alone, on shore, and when

Thro' scudding drifts the rainy Hyades

Vext the dim sea: I am become a name;

For always roaming with a hungry heart

Much have I seen and known; cities of men

And manners, climates, councils, governments,

Myself not least, but honour'd of them all;

And drunk delight of battle with my peers,

Far on the ringing plains of windy Troy.

I am a part of all that I have met;

Yet all experience is an arch wherethro'

Gleams that untravell'd world whose margin fades

For ever and forever when I move.

How dull it is to pause, to make an end,

To rust unburnish'd, not to shine in use!

As tho' to breathe were life! Life piled on life

Were all too little, and of one to me

Little remains: but every hour is saved

From that eternal silence, something more,

A bringer of new things; and vile it were

For some three suns to store and hoard myself,

And this gray spirit yearning in desire

To follow knowledge like a sinking star,

Beyond the utmost bound of human thought.

This is my son, mine own Telemachus,

To whom I leave the sceptre and the isle,—

Well-loved of me, discerning to fulfil

This labour, by slow prudence to make mild

A rugged people, and thro' soft degrees

Subdue them to the useful and the good.

Most blameless is he, centred in the sphere

Of common duties, decent not to fail

In offices of tenderness, and pay

Meet adoration to my household gods,

When I am gone. He works his work, I mine.

There lies the port; the vessel puffs her sail:

There gloom the dark, broad seas. My mariners,

Souls that have toil'd, and wrought, and thought with me—

That ever with a frolic welcome took

The thunder and the sunshine, and opposed

Free hearts, free foreheads—you and I are old;

Old age hath yet his honour and his toil;

Death closes all: but something ere the end,

Some work of noble note, may yet be done,

Not unbecoming men that strove with Gods.

The lights begin to twinkle from the rocks:

The long day wanes: the slow moon climbs: the deep

Moans round with many voices. Come, my friends,

'T is not too late to seek a newer world.

Push off, and sitting well in order smite

The sounding furrows; for my purpose holds

To sail beyond the sunset, and the baths

Of all the western stars, until I die.

It may be that the gulfs will wash us down:

It may be we shall touch the Happy Isles,

And see the great Achilles, whom we knew.

Tho' much is taken, much abides; and tho'

We are not now that strength which in old days

Moved earth and heaven, that which we are, we are;

One equal temper of heroic hearts,

Made weak by time and fate, but strong in will

To strive, to seek, to find, and not to yield.

Example 2: *The Passionate Shepherd to His Love*

– By Christopher Marlowe

Come live with me and be my love,

And we will all the pleasures prove

That valleys, groves, hills, and fields,

Woods or steepy mountain yields.

And we will sit upon the rocks,

Seeing the shepherds feed their flocks,

By shallow rivers to whose falls

Melodious birds sing madrigals.

And I will make thee beds of roses

And a thousand fragrant posies,

A cap of flowers, and a kirtle

Embroidered all with leaves of myrtle;

A gown made of the finest wool

Which from our pretty lambs we pull;

Fair lined slippers for the cold,

With buckles of th purest gold;

A belt of straw and ivy buds,

With coral clasps and amber studs:

And if these pleasures may thee move,

Come live with me and be my love.

The shepherds' swains shall dance and sing

For thy delight each May morning:

If these delights thy mind may move,

Then live with me and be my love.

Check Your Progress

3. What is the main aim of an idyll?

4. How has Theocritus divided the pastoral idylls?

9.4 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS QUESTIONS

1. The basic model of the pastoral idyll came to be formed as an intentionally conservative piece of poetry communicating a town composer's sentimental remembrance of the tranquility and plainness of the shepherds' life and that of other pastoral people in a perfect natural background.

2. Theocritus' idylls are based on a range of subjects; some of these showcase the life of grass cutters and fishermen; some of them are mythical stories revolving around people and arms. These idylls are loaded with charms and attractions.

3. The main aim of an idyll is to give its reader the comfort of life and present the charm that life holds.

4. Theocritus has divided the pastoral idylls into three categories which are as follows:

    (a) All dramatic

    (b) More dramatic

    (c) Less dramatic

9.5 SUMMARY

- The origin of Idyllic form of poetry dates back to many centuries and there is apparently, no other genre of poetry has had such a wide ranging influence on readers as this form has fascinated the general public.

- Being the most ancient form of pastoral poetry, it provides a more comprehensive and complete sequence of study in comparison to the later changes that took place in pastoral poetry.

- The model of the pastoral Idyll came to be formed as an intentionally conservative piece of poetry communicating a town composer's sentimental remembrance of the tranquility and plainness of the shepherds' life and that of other pastoral people in a perfect natural background.

- The literary customs that most of the poets followed in the years that followed were based on Virgil's replications of Theocritus.

- Traditional poets have generally defined the idyllic existence having characteristics of the mythological golden era.

- The pastoral vision created by the writers of this form was so attractive that the Renaissance poets integrated it into numerous other forms of literary creations.

- In 1714, in the pastoral masterpiece, *Shepherd's Week* by John Gay, the poet wrote a satire of the type by using its graceful principles to the rusticity of genuine countryside ways and language.

- However, the term 'pastoral' or 'idyllic' has been applied by various scholars and they consider it as a variety of work which characterizes a kind of pulling away to a distant place that is near the fundamental beats of nature.

- Idyll as a form of poetry can be broadly categorized in two forms that are pastoral idyll and proper idyll.

- The beginning of the pastoral idyll can be dated back to the joy experienced by human beings in the outside world and in their love for lyrics from the beginning of time.

- In order to enthrall their redundancy and loneliness, they often resorted to songs which, out of requirement, were related with the pleasures and happenings of their unrestricted existence.

- The first instances of pastoral life are included in the *Bible*, for instance the *Song of Songs*, which is an urge for love.

- Theocritus' idylls are based on a range of subjects; some of these showcase the life of grass cutters and fishermen; some of them are mythical stories revolving around people and arms.

- An idyll in the notion of the critics means a demonstration of a humble, silent, and tranquil life.

- The odes of Pindar were called idylls, while in case of Ausonius' the idylls have no pastoral constituent.

- The French literary laureates considered the idyll as particularly pastoral; amongst the Spanish literary circles the idyll does not convey an idea of any sort of pastoral poetry.

- A typical idyll is not set to achieve any outstanding efforts, or satisfy any proud purposes, there is no self-examining and restraint.

- The only aim of an idyll is to give its reader the comfort of life and present the charm that life holds.

- An idyll thus, presents a representation of life as the human spirit desires to be, an exhibition of the preferred instants of worldly gratification.

- Theocritus' idylls possessed a new and visible beauty, did the job of prototypes for Latin Virgil, who imitated the work of Theocritus with an independence which is capable of being addressed by a different genre.

- Virgil can be compared with the old Roman mosaics which depict a scene in Paradise, which holds the face down figure of the donor in one corner.

- The eclogue, has been considered as a form of art lower than the idyll, it does not seek to be moralistic nor humorous, but can be called an honest artistic construction.

- Another form that the pastoral idyll differentiated from is a poem written about the general state of things, in contrast to such writings a pastoral idyll describes a specific picture about a specific scene.

- Theocritus' idylls also contain the same determination of detail, and the same conscientious execution of the pettiest problem, the same actuality.

- Idyll as a poetic form charms the sentiment which is profound and enduring in the spirit of a human being.

9.6   KEY WORDS

- **Eclogue:** It is defined as a poem which is based on a classical subject.

- **Idyll:** It is defined as a poetry which deals with rural life or pastoral scenes. It provides a sense of peace and contentment.

- **Pastoral elegy:** It is defined as an elegy which deals with the death and ideal rural life.

- **Pastoral poetry:** It is defined as an ancient genre of poetry which deals with the lives of shepherds.

9.7   SELF ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

Short Answer Questions

1. How has Virgil imitated Theocritus style in *Eclogues?*
2. Write a short note on idyll as a literary form.

3. How is idyll different from pastoral idyll?

4. Name some of the famous pastoral works.

5. What is the main theme of *John Gay's Shepherd's Week*?

Long Answer Questions

1. Discuss the contribution of Theocritus in developing idyll as a literary form.

2. Explain the main forms of idyll.

3. Analyse the significance of idyll poetry in the existing times.

4. Examine the characteristics of idyll poetry.

5. 'The term Idyllic literally means having no displeasure or discontentment'. Explain the statement with reference to some of the famous idyll poetry.

9.8 FURTHER READINGS

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| BLOCK - III |
| DRAMA |

UNIT 10 DRAMA AND ITS MAJOR FORMS

Structure

10.0 INTRODUCTION

Drama is defined as a literary form which showcases a fictional representation with the help of dialogue and performance. It is considered as an imitation of an action and it tells the story through dialogues. The word drama is derived from the Greek word which means 'action'.

There are basically two forms of drama which are tragedy and comedy. Drama is unlike poetry or prose. It is an art dependent on many other tools unlike a written text which has to do with words only.

In this unit, the development of drama as a literary form has been discussed in detail. The various forms of drama and the contribution of various authors in developing drama as a major literary form has analysed.

10.1 OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- Discuss the development of drama as one of the major literary forms
- Differenciate between a drama and a play

- Analyse the changes which took place in drama as a literary genre
- Discuss the themes of various dramas by renowned dramatists
- Explain the various forms of drama

10.2 DRAMA: AN OVERVIEW

Drama is an ancient form of art written in prose or verse accompanied by various tools and techniques meant to be staged.

Plays, on the contrary, involve 'multiple art, using words, scenic effects, music, the gestures of the actors, and the organizing talents of a producer'. It is written with the purpose of presenting a fiction or reality in front of people. Its main objective is successful representation of a plot to be viewed by audience. Therefore, the textual portion in a drama is always dependent on love and acceptance of the viewers.

An essential quality of drama is its objectivity. A play whether divided into acts or not, has plot, characters, background, theme, dramatic unities, and techniques and so on. Beside them all, it must aim to please its audience and has to be acted by people in public. Its duration is short and everything has to produce an exemplary effect within the few hours on stage in a play: drama is 'a composite art, in which the author, the actor, and the stage manager all combine to produce the total effect'.

A play must seek perfect economy in choice of words, actions, deliverers of those actions, time, and place, so that all may synthesize into bringing the desired end or effect. The novelist's art is leisurely, but the dramatist's art is too strategic to escape his limitations. He or she is always handicapped. His is a weaver's hand because a play is shaped by both internal and external agencies.

A playwright cannot speak his emotions directly; he or she has to use his characters to express them. The action has to be divided into the share of some characters and every character must act the intended way to achieve the expected end. Then only a drama would be successful. The dramatist's identity, behaviour, character and feelings need not be seeking direct expression. He has to maintain complete objectivity and impersonality.

In England, as a form of literary art, drama began in the Middle Ages. However, it is difficult to trace the exact period of its beginning in the English scene. When the Romans came to England, they set up huge amphitheatres and certainly, plays were being acted in those times. As the Romans left, the culture too came to a standstill. In the Middle Ages minstrels, clowns and tumblers used to sing long heroic poems or epics or ballads in praise of the court. Even their costumes were motley ones and were easily recognised as those welcomed figures at ceremonies, public places, the King's court, or anywhere. They used to boost

the morale and passionately moved all those who heard them: it could be also traced as the inception of drama, yet it was not an organized establishment.

Undoubtedly, there has been an intricate relation between Christianity and plays when it comes to trace the origin or genesis of drama in England. In medieval England, the minstrels at church used to act stories from the Bible after the sessions of sermons would be over. It was done in order to entertain and impart on people the religious sentiments. Drama at this stage was acted and managed by the minstrels and clerics. The common cult of drama was not accepted by the then church and court because it exuded the message of too much freedom in the society, hence the Roman theatres were closed and condemned. Later on this style of acting by a person or two from church developed into a group of people consisting of priests and choir-boys acting biblical themes enthusiastically with words and chorus. These 'liturgical dramas' based on the birth of Christ developed as supporting church and the church promoted them on several festive occasions beside its normal proceedings. Liturgical plays used religious spectacles as their themes. Although church has been the authority to reestablish drama, soon it was felt that the interest in plays were larger than being restricted merely under the precincts of church, or considering it a mere religious activity. Dramatic enterprise proliferated. It also entailed the element of comic and variegated attires.

In England, if we go by the chronology, such religious plays have been valued as the greatest part of the national tradition and culture. They also became precursors of 'morality' and 'mystery plays'. In the morality plays, people acted as virtues and vices. These plays were written by religious authors or church clerics. 'Everyman' is regarded as the most popular morality play till the late 15th century. The morality plays were based on religious lessons and they developed naturally. They mirrored genuine truth and realism and evoked pathos. In style and treatment, they were direct and sincere.

Between the proceedings of the church, a new berth of short and direct play was acknowledged, called the 'Interludes'. These interludes were also based on the popular themes like the morality plays, but they were not allegorical in nature. Most of the times these interludes were enacted to entertain the gentries of the period. These interludes often slipped into depicting a theme, which was not a biblical narrative. *Fulgens and Lucres* is an example of such an interlude, but it is quite developed in its plot-construction. An interlude had more entertaining dialogues, less number of characters, small plot and interesting stories to woo its audience. Especially, meant for the Tudor families, these interludes were the combination of rough humour, complicated action, little instruction where happenings were mostly 'sudden and unexpected.'

At the same time, the English soil was witnessing the production of a new type of drama called 'miracle plays,' the newest in growth of its kind. It was a forceful say which paved way for the modern drama that culminated into the

productions contributed by the University Wits and Shakespeare. It is surprising and strange how native English drama, that started from the clerics acting in the outer precincts of a church, developed into morality, interludes and mystery plays gaining the beauty as well as gaiety of essence, theme, structure, the dramatic unities, the various kinds, pathos, irony, humor and the art of sublimation in the hands of Marlowe and Shakespeare.

Probably the development of drama owed its growth to new scholars from the universities in England and the Renaissance, which forcefully pushed the active and ambitious minds to explore and inculcate the classical literature. The University Wits enunciated the art of drama in the forms of tragedy and comedy both with innovation and tradition in the Elizabethan Age. Then Shakespeare's Age followed together with Ben Jonson's 'comedy of humours'. The Restoration comedy of manners followed next, which tended to be on the verge of obscene, vulgar and socially disreputable that raised brows of common men, especially the Puritans.

Again drama developed its pace in the 18th century with Johnson's historical plays, but they were not that recognizable as their predecessors. In the 20th century, William Butler Yeats brought drama back in the Irish theatre exploring the medieval age with Celtic undercurrents, and many followed his trend.

George Bernard Shaw and Thomas Stearns Eliot were two major 20th century figures who used drama to convey their ideas, exploring different themes. Twentieth century theatre introduced many new styles and trends in modern drama from all over the world. In the 20th century English drama, trends dominated, which were subtle and thought-stimulating such as realism and myth introduced by the psychological studies inspired by Sigmund Freud and Carl Jung (his theory of collective unconscious). With the insight of psychology, they expressed myth and 'a poetic form of realism' based on the search conducted by these two psychologists. They mention and aim at truth common to all humans.

Yeats and Synge with Lady Gregory aimed to portray and develop poetic realism describing the Irish peasant life. The audience did not accept their themes with a pleasant nod and their concept of poetic realism was doubtfully questioned by the spectators.

Following the steps of the Norwegion playwright Henrik Ibsen, who created drama of ideas by using realism, George Bernard Shaw discovered the 'problem play' or 'drama of ideas' in England, where he picked up social issues or drawbacks and tried to give solution to them. It was Shaw who stressed on emancipation of women and promoted the thought of raising the importance of women in our lives rather than treating them as subordinate members of our society. Surprisingly, he himself preferred to stay single.

After the First World War, political theatre became a trend where social and political issues and propaganda became vehicles to reach the masses. The Women's Rights Movement of the 1930s was voiced by 'agitprop', which was a

renowned political theatre. The Dada Movement was related to World War I. Ibsen's idea of 'realism' was related to representation of human behaviour as it was seen in real life: it mirrored the society that a human being observed, what we call the human nature. Such a play concentrated on the present and described every strata of population rather than idealizing or worshiping a hero. They picked up characters from normal life focusing on any gender, race or strata of the society.

Samuel Beckett's *'Theatre of the Absurd'* introduced the existentialist theory that abstract existence played great role in life above everything in it. This type of drama in being was essentially poetic and full of imagination and exhibited the downplay of language. This theatre gave rise to many other types of drama like 'Symbolism, Surrealism, Dadaism, Drama of Cruelty, Expressionism, and so on'.

Dadaism was a protest against colonialism and the subsequent World War I in most of the European nations. It was a movement carried by those literary artists who opposed nationalism. Dadaists were 'anti-art' or avant-garde who went against expressing too pleasing an art or value. There were mainly French, Swiss and German writers involved in this movement. Major dramatists like Yeats to Pinter were an inseparable part of the Symbolist or Aesthetic Movement in theatre. They used underlined symbolism as their plot or structure of a play. From plot to stage everything used to be stylised in a specific mood. The movement took surge in the beginning of the twentieth century to influence all the later generations which followed them.

Surrealist Movement was next to the Aesthetic Movement. Both these trends were founded in the mystic. Surrealist Movement changed the stage set up like the Symbolist Movement. In it, action sounded louder and words were downplayed. Such plays exhibited unsurmised happenings and surprise. Samuel Beckett was an outstanding surrealist. The aim of the *'Theatre of Cruelty'* was to portray 'representational medium' and focussed on dealing with the current situations. They took the responsibility of 'presenting' and 'representing' both.

The art of 'expressionism' in theatre was the gift of the German playwrights. It either gave short, straight sentences, or long, and poetical speeches. Such play would not specify names for characters and dealt with current reality looking forward to a safe and happy future, rather it aimed to incorporate 'spiritual awakening' presenting plot in various episodes.

The modernist approach of Bertold Brecht came up with 'epic theatre' with rejection of realistic theatre. He took inspiration from the Greek form of epic poetry for epic theatre. Jacobus describes it as a dramatic vision arrayed with 'stark, harsh lighting, black stages, placards announcing changes of scenes, bands playing music onstage, and long, discomfiting pauses.' Brecht applied that a play must signify to the audience as its own rather than alienating them to feel detached while watching it. He thought epic theatre plays would relate to people as their part, and be not just its silent spectators. Its theme would be theirs rather than a remote sense or relation to them. It often aimed at presenting a social issue.

10.3 MAJOR FORMS OF DRAMA

We will in this section discuss about the major forms of drama.

Tragedy

The definition and genesis of tragedy goes back to the classical literature of Greece. Aristotle, the master-craftsmen, is held as the father and preceptor of 'classical tragedy'. Tragedy is a form of drama. 'Tragedy is the imitation of an action that is serious, and also, as having magnitude, complete in itself…with incidents arousing pity and terror, with which to accomplish its purgation of these emotions.' (Aristotle, *Poetics*, 6). The origin of drama looks back to the period between 600 and 400 BC. It was during this period that poetry and drama both blossomed: both being complex art forms: both carving enormity of brilliance ever after. The most important dramatists of this period were Aeschylus (525-456 BC), Sophocles (496-406 BC), Aristophanes (c.448-c.380 BC) and Euripides (484-406 BC). They are considered the pillars of Greek concept of art called drama. It is said the drama was conceived from the 'songs and dances of ancient rites and religious festivals connected to the seasons.'

Tragedy sprouted in Athens many years ago and has its base in the choral poetry. It is a Greek concept that Dionysius, the god of nature, died and took rebirth in a cycle each year. Thus, they performed a chorus in the form of hymn to pay tribute to him, named 'dithyramb'. Aristotle described that tragedy was born from this dithyramb, played by a solo actor called Thespis. The story goes that Thespis began to converse with dithyramb. The contextual meaning of the word tragedy is 'goat-song.' This goat was taken as a gift for that song.

Aeschylus, the great dramatist, was the one who initiated the art of tragedy in classical literature. He is considered as the original founder of European play. The subjects of his plays were man's relations with God and man's roles here on earth. His plays carried moral values and judgments profoundly. He produced around ninety plays among them seventy-nine are available in title and seven are expected to be existing too. His renowned drama is *Prometheus Bound* followed by a triology called *Oresteia*. Aeschylus's gift to the drama was addition of a second actor and reduction in the size of chorus.

Sophocles wrote more than hundred dramas among which only seven are available under these names Ajax (c.450 BC), Antigone (c.442 BC), Oedipus Rex (c. 425 BC) and Electra (409 BC). Aeschylus was writing in the period of Greece's Golden Age of democracy, and Sophocles was the product of its climax. Euripides was the youngest among this famous trio of tragic Greek playwrights. As Sophocles added cry over man's fall, while exalting over the resumption of his spirit, Euripides portrayed common human beings with exceptional delineation and extraordinary sympathy, especially for the female.

Tragedy was chiefly concerned with men of importance and it voiced their downfall. But Euripides wrote tragedies and introduced 'tragi-comedies' varying into different types which can be aptly named romantic plays, melodrama or extreme comedies. His famous dramas are *Medea*, *Bacchae*, the *Trojan Women*, *Hecuba*, *Ion*, *Iphigenia in Tauris*, the *Phoenician Women* and *Andromache* beside other two portrayals of ghastliness and dementia called 'Electra and Orestes'.

Apart from Greece, the gift of tragedy travels from the ancient Rome where the name of Seneca (Lucius Annaeus Seneca c. 4 BC-AD 65) finds the place of the first known tragedian. His plays displayed vigorous bloodshed and the element of horror containing a lot of aspects, which technically could not be staged. It was a combination of real life happenings or elements which a stage could not represent, especially the facts related to murder, cutting into pieces, showing heavy things to be carried from one to another, and the likes.

Seneca had a multiple persona who wrote plays, poetry, satire, philosophy and was trained in rhetoric, besides being a politician. He was banished from the kingdom of Claudius in AD 41 for committing adultery with the emperor's niece, whereupon he trained Nero the strategies of statesmanship. When Nero took over as emperor, Seneca was appointed his advisor. Finding Nero not under his guidance, he preferred retirement. His students blamed him of conspiracy and forced him to commit suicide. The tragic life and death of Seneca arouse terror and pity, as they were part of his plays in abundance. The Senecan trend called 'stoicism': an approach to drama which was devised during 3rd century BC in Athens. It was a popularly applied trend in Rome from c. 100 BC to c. AD 200. Stoicism made its influence on the Christian way of thought.

Seneca derived his inspiration from those heroic playwrights of Greece like Aeschylus, Sophocles and Euripides. In England, all his available nine plays were translated during 1559-1581 during the Renaissance and Revival. His tragedies *Medea*, *Oedipus*, *Trojan Women*, *Phoenician Women*, *Agamemnon* and *Phaedra* were motivated by the Greek masters of the Golden Age of classical drama. The master dramatists of the Elizabethan Age have been said to have read and shown their impact on their thinking and delineation of plays. It was his structure which was massively used in the English tragedies. Seneca framed his tragedies in the following ways:

- He constructed his tragedies in five acts

- The hero who meets tragic fall displays no sign of fear toward death, rather he bears death with a strong heart and dignified grace

- A foreboding of death or a '*Cloud of Evil*' is vanquished by the 'defeat of *Reason of Evil*', which yields to '*Triumph of Evil*' and finally as seen in the 'the *Trojan Women*'

- The stage is full of corpses at the end of the play

It was Seneca who became the role model for the Renaissance playwrights in the development of the plot. Thomas Kyd's the *Spanish Tragedy* (1582-92) and Christopher Marlowe's the *Jew of Malta* (1589/90) are specimen of Senecan tragedy. The standards of tragedy define that it would portray a hero of noble belonging whose tragic fall is developed through the structure of the play. The actions of the hero may have ruining consequences, which might not be their own making.

Tragedy states the sequence from high to low. In tragedy, a wrongdoing or vice might be punished. Tragic hero is often a mighty person who is warned through a tragic end that he must not abuse his power. Classical tragedies depict kings, Gods and demi-gods.

In contrast, comedy, which is the oldest form of drama, for it began almost as early as our existence, takes ordinary characters from life. When human society designed a structure where places were allocated or assigned to people of eminence, the emergence of tragedy is stated to have taken birth. Thus, tragedy is linked with the growth of hierarchical order when man began to fight for power and position. As a result of this, they wore the attire of the powerful, claiming themselves to be the powerful judges of humanity. They took providence into their hands and manipulated it into a wrong manner to decide who is right and who is wrong.

Aristotle's (384-322 BC) *Poetics* (c. 335 BCE) studies and evaluates Greek dramatic art and discusses tragedy in comparison to comedy or epic poetry. His estimation founded tragedy like all other types; telling that tragic poetry is a memesis (mirror of life or imitation). He believes tragedy is a serious art which enwraps undeviated accomplishment to serve its purpose.

Poetic mimesis is an action copied as presenting it like a replica undermining universality of theme and ideals unlike history where facts are strewn on paper straightaway. Poetry is a superior art form that exults human soul. The end of tragedy is to achieve 'catharsis' in its viewers or readers, which must create and stimulate emotions like pity and terror. This catharsis should effect on the audience so much that they come out of theatre with a heaving heart, elevated soul and purified conscience with a heightened cognizance towards the behaviour of God and man. Catharsis is the moment in which the hero of the tragedy would suffer some dramatic and damaging change into his fortune.

Although Aristotle himself differed from the idea of disastrous change that was how the tragic heroes would have shown as it is in the episode of *Oedipus* at

Colonus. He divided tragedy into six main parts—fable or plot, characters, diction, thought, spectacle (scenic effect), and melody (music). The former two are the most essential characteristics of a tragic drama. He has explained and analysed these parts and their extent as well as appropriate use in his poetic at length citing instances from the classic tragic plays of the Greek masters of the Golden Era, especially Sophocles. *Poetics* also discusses the art of Aeschylus, Euripides and many other dramatists whose works of art are extinct now. The extract below shows translation from Aristotle's *Poetics*:

> Tragedy is an imitation, not of men, but of action and life, of happiness and misery. And life consists of action, and its end is a mode of activity, not a quality. Now character determines men's qualities, but it is their action that makes them happy or wretched. The purpose of action in the tragedy, therefore, is not the representation of character: character comes in as contributing to the action. Hence the incidents and the plot are the end of the tragedy; and the end is the chief thing of all. Without action there cannot be a tragedy; there may be one without character. . . . The plot, then, is the first principle, and, as it were, the soul of a tragedy: character holds the second place.

According to Aristotle, the plot of a tragic play is an abstract idea of 'an arrangement of incidents' (chapter-6). The story is made of the incidents which are termed raw material by him. The way these raw materials shape up into incidents, which construct a cogent and well organised whole, is called a plot. He asserts that 'the first principle, then, and to speak figuratively, the soul of tragedy is the plot; and second in importance is character'.

He believed that characters add into that dramatic destiny of a tragedy, so they are agents to support the action of the plot 'by character that element in accordance with which we say that agents are of a certain type' (chapter-6). Further, he explained that 'poets do not, therefore, create action in order to imitate character; but character is included on account of the action' (chapter-6). Tragedy means an imitation of an action.

Aristotle paid special attention on explaining plot, which must have a beginning, middle and end. It must be a whole. The plot, therefore, should have 'exposition, conflicts, rising action, climax, falling action and catastrophe (dénouement)' in tragedy. A plot should contain single theme which must deal with the rise and fall of the hero's fortune and all the events should support in weaving that central idea. The hero is more or less a sufferer as things are beyond his control, or not the part of his nature. This is a major difference in the modern and the ancient concept of drama as in the classic tragedy, the plot and action are designed at the cost of the protagonist whereas the modern drama explores the psychological motivation of the hero. About the emotion that his suffering should arouse, Aristotle defines 'pity is aroused by unmerited misfortune, fear by the misfortune of a man like ourselves.' The central character should be endowed with goodness and characteristic flaws '... a man who is highly renowned and prosperous, but one who is not pre-eminently virtuous and just, whose misfortune,

however, is brought upon him not by vice or depravity but by some error of judgment or frailty; a personage like Oedipus.'

The hero should not hurt the moral sentiments of the audience besides maintaining truth, his character and of stable behaviour. His characteristic weakness is called 'hamartia' by Aristotle. The protagonist's series of actions expose him to his tragic fall. These actions might be an outcome of his thoughtlessness or ignorance or improper decision. Although a tragic hero would be of noble and high birth with greatness, his hamartia dilutes his image of perfection. He suggests the three dramatic unities: the unity of time, the unity of place and the unity of action. He also mentions various styles, techniques and dramatic devices like 'reversal' (peripeteia) and 'recognition'(anagnorisis). One by one he mentioned the other five parts of tragedy, but plot to him played the foremost role. His *Poetics* was a product of a century after the death of the classical tragedians of Greece. His time saw unexpected changes in the Greek society and art forms.

10.3.1 English Tragic Plays

The rise of tragedy in England goes back to the Elizabethan Age when *Gorboduc* (1561) by Thomas Sackville and Thomas Norton was acted. English tragedies receive inspiration from Seneca. Gorboduc, the protagonist, is a mythical emperor of ancient England. This play exhibits the use of blank verse for the first time in English drama, the art, which was later developed by Christopher Marlowe.

Drama saw its massive proliferation and development in the Elizabethan England during 1585 and 1642. The demand of drama was very much in the society and every seventeenth day a new play had to be staged. The Elizabethan tragedies follow the Senecan trend of construction and treatment. At this period, drama had just come out of its religious boundaries and saw a new birth of varieties. Therefore, the playwrights imitated the art of their classical masters and perfected it in order to develop their own style. The ten available plays of Seneca were translated. Of which these three Troas, *Thyestes*, and *Hercules Furens* were translated by Jasper Heywood.

Based on Senecan type, Thomas Kyd wrote the *Spanish Tragedy* in blank verse, which suited the stagecraft and used the theme of horror, crime and revenge motif which inspired Shakespeare's tragedies. Christopher Marlowe (1564-93) was the last dramatist among the University Wits from Cambridge whose short tragic life yet radical brilliance created and shaped English tragedy. His major tragedies include *Tamburlaine the Great* (1587), *Dr. Faustus* (1592), the *Jew of Malta* and *Edward II*. Marlowe was ambitious and his plays amply embody this trait.

His *Tamburlaine*, a 14th century herdsman, gains power by being victorious over all his enemies and his lust for power becomes the reason for his tragic fall. He thrives in power, challenging God and men combined with his 'mighty line':

...the ripest fruit of all,

That perfect bliss and sole felicity,

The sweet fruition of an earthly crown.

But contrary to the Christian ideals maintained in his *Tamburlaine*, Marlowe embarked on delineating a character, *Dr Faustus* by using a German traditional tale of a magician who sells his soul to the devil for attaining the universal knowledge. *Tambulaine* depicts the power which is challenged by physical encounters whereas *Faustus* explores the inner, introspective and psychological depths of the theme of the lust of power. Marlowe's description of the dramatic devices such as pathos and irony at the climax of the play is considered matchless:

Ah! Faustus

Now has thou but one bare hour to live,

And then thou must be damned perpetually:

Stand still you ever moving spheres of heaven,

That time may cease, and midnight never come:

Fair Nature's eye, rise, rise afain, and make

Perpetual day, or let this hour be but

A year, a month, a week, or natural day,

That Faustus may repent, and save his soul

O lentelentecurritenoctisequi.

(O, gently gently run you horses of the night.)

Shakespearean tragedy alone holds the foremost place in English letters of all ages as nothing surpasses it. The Elizabethan stage in the 16th century was studded with the oft-quoted dramas of William Shakespeare (1564-1616), an actor and shareholder in the theatre business. As a playwright, his success lay in his qualities which thematically encompassed 'loyalty and disloyalty, and their consequences on human life'. He beautifully paints human passions, and an uncommon discord between reason and feeling where, at last, reason loses its direction and fails. He describes the understanding of his art:

And as imagination bodies forth

The forms of things unknown, the poet's pen

Turns them to shapes and gives to airy nothing

A locan habitation and a name.

(Act V, I, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*)

He was an objective observer of human nature and his characters have freeplay of their own spirits with natural cadence of development. His characters never transcend human barriers of good and evil. They exist in a moral world. His plays were addressed to his audience and he manipulated the resources best to

enrich stagecraft. His major tragedies are *Hamlet* (1603), *Macbeth* (1611), *Othello* (1604), *King Lear* (1606), *Antony and Cleopatra* (1606), and *Coriolanus* (1609). They were all written between 1600 and 1606. His *Richard II* (1595), *Richard III* (1592), *Romeo and Juliet* (1597) and *Julius Caesar* (1599) are excellent historical or romantic tragic dramas. His period of tragedy is diluted with his other genres of plays. His tragedies have powerful diction, poetical outbursts, noble characters, each shows a serious conflict of a soul caught between reason and action, and each of his heroes exhibit a frailty, or prejudice of character. The hero's action is repentant at the dénouement section. The action of his heroes decides the destiny of their country too. His tragedies are deep studies of human psyche and his poetry. His tragic hero's central action and the portrayal of the world where he moves, affects the atmosphere. His plays please different levels of audience.

Hamlet, his early tragic drama, is a self-conscious scholar prince of renaissance who is bright, of sad temperament and contemplative. He sketches the character of a man caught between his actions and overdoing of thinking. Horatio's speech at the end is full of power of imagination:

> *Now cracks a noble heart. Goodnight, sweet prince,*
>
> *And flights of angels sing thee to thy rest. (V, 2)*

Designed successfully for the stage, *Othello* is the story of a black moor who is too much suspicious of his wife: a white and very beautiful lady of noble being. This weakness of his is well exploited by the villain Iago, an iconic character in the history of English dramas, who manoeuvres this frailty of the hero in such a manner that he kills his wife culminating into his suicide too, at the end of the play. And speaks of his misunderstanding pining over which he ended his life:

> *When you shall these unlucky deeds relate,*
>
> *Speak of me as I am; nothing extenuate,*
>
> *Nor set down aught in malice: then must you speak*
>
> *Of one that loved not wisely but too well;*
>
> *Of one that not easily jealous, but being wrought*
>
> *Purplex'd in the extreme. (V, 2)*

His poetry and artistry as a tragedian reaches the extreme of excellence and beauty in *Macbeth*. Macbeth is ambitious which makes him fall prey to avarice and subsequent murder of King Duncan provoked by his wife Lady Macbeth. He becomes the king according to the prophesies of the three witches. He kills many others to hide the secret of his first crime; while at last, he himself is slayed in the battle. His famous soliloquy is eloquent of his feeling of futility after achievements acquired by wrong manner:

> *Life's but a walking shadow, a poor player*
>
> *That struts and frets his hour upon the stage,*

And then is heard no more. It is a tale

Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury,

Signifying nothing. (V, 5)

King Lear, his late tragic play, is about a titular person who becomes insane after dividing his property into two parts for two of his three daughters on the basis of their flattery. His decision brings tragic end to all.

In the period that followed Shakespeare, George Chapman (1559-1634), Beaumont (1584-1616) and Fletcher (1579-1625) wrote tragedies. But the 17th century dramatists wrote tragedies of excesses and unreal world, which partly irritated a certain sect of audience. John Webster's the *White Devil* and the *Duchess of Malfi* is considered tragedies of revenge motif and excess of bloodshed. The great restoration playwright John Dryden (1631-1700) wrote heroic tragedies among which *All for Love* is a repetition of Shakespeare's theme of *Antony and Cleopatra*. However, Dryden has an exclusive gift of mastery of poetry and that is evident in his plays too. In the early 20th century, John Masefield and J. M. Synge (1871-1909) were writing tragedies beside other genres of drama. The Irish National Movement was invoked by W. B. Yeats (1865-1939), J. M. Synge, Sir James Barrie (1860-1937), and Sean O'Casey (1880-1964), writers of great ability. Synge's *Riders to the Sea* (1904) is a moving tragic play.

Norwegian playwright Henrik Ibsen has been the most stupendous force behind the 20th century theatre. George Bernard Shaw composed a satirical tragedy which won the coveted Nobel Prize for literature *Saint Joan* (1923). Shaw was a writer of problem plays, and his *Saint Joan* is also a sequel to expose the odds of the society. However, the use of the theme of a fourteen years old 'maid' who is sacrificed on the blames of blasphemy or anti-God statements, is full of irony and pathos. The climax is terrifying and thought-provoking. Under the cover of verbal wit and raillery, Shaw dealt with a very serious theme here. His tragic play *Candida* is brilliant too. T. S. Eliot (1888-1965) wrote *Murder in the Cathedral* (1935), Edward Albee, Arthur Miller (USA), Eugene O'Neill, and August Strindberg (Sweden) are some of the major thinkers and tragic playwrights of the modern English drama.

10.3.2 English Comic Plays

The word 'comedy' has an ancient and classical background ahead of tragedy, which means an amusing spectacle. The word is a mixture of merry-making and poet or singer. In Aristotle's *Poetics*, he discussed comedy as 'The passage on the nature of comedy in the *Poetics* of Aristotle is unfortunately lost, but if we can trust stray hints on the subject, his definition of comedy (which applied mainly to Menander) ran parallel to that of tragedy, and described the art as a purification of certain affections of our nature, not by terror and pity, but by laughter and ridicule.' (Rev. J. P. Mahaffy, *A History of Classical Greek Literature*, London, 1895) Further, comedy refers to 'the classical sense of the word, then, was "amusing

play or performance,'" which is similar to the modern one, but in the Middle Ages the word came to mean poems and stories generally (albeit ones with happy endings), and the earliest English sense is 'narrative poem' (such as Dante's *Commedia*). Generalized sense of 'quality of being amusing' dates from 1877.' The purpose of comedy is to 'entertain by the fidelity with which it presents life as we know it, farce at raising laughter by the outrageous absurdity of the situation or characters exhibited, and burlesque at tickling the fancy of the audience by caricaturing plays or actors with whose style it is familiar. (Fowler)' *Dionysos* (360-340 BC) is a famous classical Greek comedy.

Aristophanes and Menander were chief writers of comedy plays who laughed at the politicians, philosophers and their contemporary artiste. The art of comedy too is based on its classical Greek structure like tragedy: the first part had chorus, music and dance in flashy costumes, which represented the characters in the play normally called 'parodos'; and, the next phase was 'agon' when the main plot was exposed to the audience through verbal wit or debate; the third phase of comedy play was 'parabasis' when the chorus communicated directly with the viewers, and even spoke on behalf of the playwright; and, the last phase was 'exodos' when the chorus finished the play with another and final song and dance. The performers were professional actors who displayed a vast array of characters ranging from human to non-human representations in motley costumes and painted or masked countenances. Only two or three main actors were there in which one was the protagonist, and the others were not much significant to the plot. Classic comedy did not allow many main actors, so the actors had to carry many roles at the same time. Facial gestures, dresses and make-up were important tools to evoke fun.

Dramas in Athens were performed in the open air theatres. The stage used to be designed particularly for a comedy. The actors could enter the stage from various sides, even from the public arena. During the 5thcentury BCE in Greece, on any festive occasion there would be a panel of ten judges to evaluate the performance of both tragedy and comedy dramas. The following is an extract from Aristophanes' renowned comedy:

Oh would some god, with sudden stroke,

Convert me to a cloud of smoke!

Like politicians' words I'd rise

In gaseous vapour to the skies.'

(50, Act One, Scene One, *The Wasps* by Aristophanes)

The difference between tragedy and comedy is that tragedy depicts the moral or heroic struggle of the protagonist ending in death or destruction whereas comedy aims to amuse through wit, ridicule, farce, satire and ends happily. Comedy exposed vices or frailties of the people or society through humour. Its end is of correction through wit and humour.

In England, Elizabethan dramatists tried their hands in the art of comedy of which the foremost name was that of poet, playwright and politician John Lyly (1553/4-1606) from Oxford. He had a natural gift for comedy which he exhibited best in his books *Euphues*or the *Anatomy of Wit* (1578) and *Euphues and His England* (1580). His style was named 'euphuism.' His chief plays include *Endymion*(1591), *Campaspe*(1584), *Sapho and Phao*(1584), *Gallathea* (1592), *Midas* (1592) and *Mother Bombie* (1594). Most of these pioneer university wits tragedies and comedies served as inspiration to the later Elizabethans, and the writers of the following generations.

Tragedy and comedy complement each other as they blend together in life. And literature is but a just representation of human existence. Shakespearean comedies are often a blend of seriousness and fun. All his comedies indicate or wear a sober thread in its plot. They often tend to be ironical or satirical about elements of life and human nature. Shakespearean comedy has brilliant diction and songs. His dialogues are interspersed with metaphors, word play and clever phraseologies. Its major theme is love and pair romance. Often the characters are disguised or they change their outward appearance to achieve what they are looking for. There are obstacles in the path of these lovers which they overcome by their wit, wisdom and cleverness. His comedies have a more complex plot with multiple threads of sequences and finally untying into a harmonious whole. The characters prove the theme of moral uprightness and virtues at the end of the story, and the evil-minded characters are made to realise that they have been on a wrong path. But all these have a polite way of moulding incidents into a single whole.

His plots for comedies are more twisted and entangled than those of his history or tragic dramas. As it is in his tragedies that none resembles the other exactly in style or pattern, similar approach can be seen in his comedy plays which are all different. Variety of plot styles are intertwined with exuberant and copious flow of twirls in the structure to keep the audience excited and always in wait for the next moment. Usually, the climax of the drama takes place in its third act and the final scene makes the lovers accept or declare their love for each other. The characters, most of the times, hide their identities and feign some other name and role throughout the play cascading into different streams until they meet the final sea and reveal themselves to be what they are in reality. Virtue always leads the play and keeps a watch over cunning as well as deceitful characters. These tricks of false characters are played in order to avoid the schemes and plotting of the villains. For example, the plot of *As You Like It* drives all the important characters into the forest of Arden where they stay in disguised until the cloud of villainy is blown away by the auspicious wind and everything is fine.

Not only that, his female protagonists are specially clever in his comedies and tragi-comedies, who by their sheer wit, clever understanding of the facts, precaution, and wise manipulations of the situation at hand keeping an eye over future, turn the drama into perfect end. His chief comedies are *Twelfth Night*, *As You Like It*, *Love's Labour's Lost*, *Two Gentlemen of Verona*, *Comedy of*

Errors, *Taming of the Shrew*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Tempest*, Much Ado About Nothing and *All's Well That Ends Well*. Shakespeare borrowed his themes frequently from history but shaped them with his original genius which makes his art unrivalled. All his plays of all the three genres use acts and scenes according to the demand of the structure. Shakespeare experimented with themes, stagecraft, dramatic devices, plot construction, diction, poetry, characters and at the same time, assorted tradition with such uniqueness that his dramatic art becomes unquestionable. He was a keen observer and critic of human nature in all his plays. Theseus in *A Midsummer Nights' Dream* says:

> *Lovers and madmen have such seething brains,*
>
> *Such shaping fantasies, that apprehend*
>
> *More than cool reason ever comprehends.*
>
> *The lunatic, the lover and the poet*
>
> *Are of imagination all compact:*
>
> *One sees more devils than vast hell can hold,*
>
> *That is, the madman: the lover, all as frantic,*
>
> *Sees Helen's beauty in a brow of Egypt:*
>
> *The poet's eye, in a fine frenzy rolling,*
>
> *Doth glance from heaven to earth, from earth to heaven;*
>
> *And as imagination bodies forth*
>
> *The forms of things unknown, the poet's pen*
>
> *Turns them to shapes and gives to airy nothing*
>
> *A local habitation and a name. (V, I)*

That is how he perceived and justified all poets. Most of his comedies are placed under the category of romantic comedies. Away from Shakespeare's romantic world of fancifully magnificent and entertaining tales, there was another dramatist in the same age who wrote comedy vigorously to evolve a new style of drama. Ben Jonson (1573-1637) was a robust and powerful moralist who aimed his best to reform the classical comedy in English literature in the 16th and 17th centuries. Thriving through professions unlikely to adorn him with the gift of knowledge that he possessed, Jonson received recognition from eminent universities of England when he began to act in plays.

In comedy, Jonson adhered strictly to depict his own age with realism, romance and maintain the dramatic action with the three dramatic unities of time, place and morally sound theme. He focused on the plot innovation that drama should have a single scene using a single span of a day. He was held as a person strict with the rules of dramatic art:

> *The laws of time, place, persons, he observeth,*
>
> *From no needful rule he swerveth.*

Jonson did not portray the goodness like Shakespeare did: Shakespeare painted the charming *Belmont* or *Forest of Arden* or the playfulness of Puck, but Jonson acquainted his audience with scoundrels and Thames in his play *Bartholomew Fayre*. He introduced comedy of humours and his first successful drama was *Every Man in His Humour* (1598). Jonson loved following classical methods and his characters were called 'humours' where they present aspect of moral nature throughout the play, which is subjected to mockery:

whensome one peculiar quality

Doth so possess a man that it doth draw

All his affects, his spirits and his powers

In their confluctions all to run one way,

This may be truly said to be a humour.'

(*Every Man Out of His Humour*, 1599, Quarto 1600)

Jonsonian 'static' characters or types potently gripped their audience through whom he ridiculed the frailty or weaknesses of the society and human nature. Later on, when corruption, with the rise of the bourgeois, affected social life, Jonson became bitter in his comedies. His outstanding comedies are *Volpone*, *Silent Woman*, *Alchemist* and *Bartholomew Fayre*. The *Alchemist* presents three characters—Subtle, Face and Doll—who are rogues, whereas *Volpone*, or the *Fox* displays avarice on a grand scale.

The Restoration playwrights took him for their model and later on, the master of oratory, the 19th century novelist Charles Dickens revived Jonson's gift to the English letters. Jonson was an original genius and extremely learned craftsman. Among his contemporaries were Philip Massinger (1583-1640) and John Ford (1586-1639) with whose work theatre came to be closed during the period of Civil Wars. Theatres opened again after 1660 when Charles II was restored on the English throne. In comedy, Restoration Era breathes its exuberance and excellence as a period apart from others. There were many types of styles tried by the writers of comedy in this age, but chief exponents of comic plays then were Sir George Etherege (1635–91), William Wycherley (1640–1716) and William Congreve (1670–1729).

Etherege's the *Man of Mode* brought the concept that comedy would not obligate to sketch a moral world, it would often negate romance, but only portray the gentry of the day. It would paint the contemporary ladies and gentlemen as they were their witty repartee and the city life full of 'amorous intrigues.'

Wycherley explored Etherege's style with keener interest and observation. To his immoral and obscene world he blended the dramatic devices of satire and mockery. He successfully exploited his study of MoliPre and Ben Jonson. His famous comedies are the *Country Wife* (1672-3) and the *Plain Dealer* (1674).

The most brilliant among these Restoration writers of comedy plays is William Congreve (1670-1729). He avoided the deep exposition of the society which

Wycherley styled by going back to use of 'surface gaiety', as done by Etherege. Congreve's sparkle was immediately recognized and valued by the audience. He never ended on being too boisterous as he was a very careful artiste. His major contribution is the *Old Bachelor* (1693), *Double Dealer* (1694), *Love for Love* (1695) and *Way of the World* (1700). His specialities as an artist were his wholeness of vision of a narrow world with dexterous accuracy of its delineation of values. In his world, there was no fight between good and evil, but the elegant was victorious over the unsophisticated, wit surpassed the dull and dignity overcame roughness. He does not let sentiment, or morality penetrate his city drawing rooms or sitting parlours where witty conversations, fashionable ladies and gallant gentlemen flirted with each other exposing the vices of London men and manners reckoned as the foremost symbols of culture.

George Farquhar's the *Beaux' Stratagem* (1707) served the purpose of a link between the comedy of manners of his age and the upcoming 18th century novels. John Dryden, the greatest poet, critic and playwright of the period in his *Marriage à la Mode* (1672) gives his estimation of the Restoration comedy:

Why should a foolish Marriage Vow,

  Which long ago was made,

Oblige us to each other now,

  When passion is decay'd.

We lov'd, and we lov'd, as long as we could:

  'Till our love was lov'd out in us both:

But, our Marriage is death when the Pleasure is fled:

  'Twas Pleasure first made it an Oath.

The noteworthy 18th century comedies were John Gay's the *Beggar's Opera* (1728), Richard Steele's *Tender Husband* (1705), George Lillo's *London Merchant* (1731), Oliver Goldsmith's *She Stoops to Conquer* (1773), Richard Sheridan's *Rivals* (1775), *School for Scandal* (1777) and the *Critic* (1779). The art of comedy gradually saw decline in its values and style as it travelled from 16th to 17th and 18th centuries.

The 19th century is known for novel and poetry as theatre did not have any noteworthy participation in literature during that period. The style of probing into a social problem descended onto English drama through Henry Arthur Jones (1851-1929) and Sir A. W. Pinero (1855-1934) of which the later had a sustained and successful career as a playwright. Oscar Wilde (1854-1900) and George Bernard Shaw were the most prominent voices of the period during the first three decades of the 20th century. Wilde's famous comedies are *Lady Windermere's Fan* (1892), *A Woman of No Importance* (1893), *An Ideal Husband* (1895) and the *Importance of Being Earnest* (1895). The *Importance of Being Earnest* is a light humoured play where he has tried to revive the art of Congreve. Harley Granville-Barker (1877-1946) brought out a stark realism of his contemporary

life dealing with issues of society. John Galsworthy (1867-1933) also tried his hand into writing drama; however his novels are more perfect pieces of his art. His works are '*Man of Property and* the *Silver Box* (1906).

The Abbey Theatre in Dublin was thriving with swarms of viewers when Lady Gregory and William Butler Yeats together tried to revive the traditional Celtic folklores combined with fertile imagination and mystical tinge of the Medieval Age in the dawn of the 20th century. Yeats' plays *Countess Cathleen* (1892) and the *Land of Heart's Desire* (1894) recalled mysticism and country tradition of his motherland. John Millington Synge (1871-1909) had a more profound approach towards theatrical artistry in comedy. He expressed his travel experiences through dramatic craftsmanship in comedies like the *Playboy of the Western World* (1907).

All the tragedians and comedy writers were part of promoting the Irish National Movement. George Bernard Shaw (1856–1950) was ahead of all these nationalist artistes who alone raised their voices against the flaws in social structure. He was a staunch moralist and although his plays are categorised as romantic in tradition, he maintained his form of drama to be a vehicle of his sparks that would reach each nook of the stubbed humanity. Shaw had a very successful career as a dramatist. He was an outspoken genius who never feared anyone in his lifetime. He laughed and ridiculed at the oddities of human nature and social behaviour 'in full-throated ease' and suggested possible amendments for the problems with which he dealt in his plays.

His dramas portray 'life force.' Shaw held the ideals of Socialist Fabians to his heart. He lived ideally and showcased ideals in his plays too. He was a lively, witty as well as a brilliant person who displayed these qualities in diction, form, art, themes, moral message and creative intelligence. His verbal wit is put parallel to Congreve's and Wilde's. He possessed an unusual clarity of vision of the social ills, which he mixed with comedy with the excellent touch of irony and command over language. For all his uniqueness, Shaw remains matchless an artist in the history of 20th century English drama. He began as a dramatic critic with his *Our Theatre in the Nineties*. His first play was *Widowers' Houses* (1892) and till 1949, his *Buoyant Billions* was being staged, when he was ninety-three.

Shaw voiced out contemporary themes in his plays mixed with realism and wit. His task was that of an observer and teacher in his plays. His plays are not the mechanical products of sapless age and straining realism, but were absolute entertainers. His gallery of characters does not escape a single profession or walk of life, which does not receive reproof or criticism. He created brilliant dramas incessantly one after another, more than sixty in number, of which the exceptionally charming ones are *Devil's Disciple* (1897), *Mrs. Warren's Profession* (1893), *Arms and the Man* (1894), *Candida* (1894), *You Never Can Tell* (1897), *Caesar and Cleopatra* (1898), *Man and Superman* (1903), *Major Barbara* (1905), *The Doctor's Dilemma* (1906), *John Bull's Other Island* (1904), *Fanny's First Play* (1911), *Pygmalion* (1912), *Back to Methuselah* (1921), *Geneva* (1938), *Saint Joan* (1923), the *Apple Cart* (1929), *Too True to be Good* (1931), *On*

the *Rocks* (1933), the *Millionairess*(1936) and *In Good King Charles's Golden Days* (1938-9).

Shaw fought for the ideas of equality of men and women besides being a democratic liberal and politically ideal mind. His dramas are like those musical shows which engage and leave us into a thoughtfully recharged world.

After Shaw, the major English comedy playwrights were Noël Coward (1899-1973) with his *Hey Fever* (1925), *Private Lives* (1930), *Design for Living* (1932), *Present Laughter* (1942) and *Blithe Spirit* (1941); Samuel Beckett (1906–1989) with his absurdist comedy *Waiting for Godot* (1955); Harold Pinter (1930-2008) with his *Birthday Party* (1958); Tom Stoppard (1937-) with his *Rosencrantz* and *Guildenstern are Dead* (1966). Many of these famous dramatists wrote short plays for radio and television in the later half of the 20th century like Harold Pinter, Samuel Beckett, Tom Stoppard and John Mortimer.

10.3.3 English Tragi-Comedies

In literature, the term 'tragi-comedy,' means a play with serious conflict but happy resolution. There has been no specific definition assigned to the type, however, Aristotle defined this genre of play of serious action ending happily. The Roman dramatist of comedies, Plautus (254 BC to 184 BC) coined this term in his play *Amphitryon* where a character Mercury used 'tragicomoedia.' Plautus declared:

> I will make it a mixture: let it be a tragicomedy. I don't think it would be appropriate to make it consistently a comedy, when there are kings and gods in it. What do you think? Since a slave also has a part in the play, I'll make it a tragicomedy.

In the context of England, the concept of tragi-comedy was a romantic play with no strict regulations to follow the classical unities of time, place and action. It blended all types of characters both high and low, and captured unbelievable or marvellous action. The plays encompassed shades of tragedy and comedy, the two elements we find in our everyday life. William Shakespeare used tragi-comedy with dexterity of graceful dramatic art. His *Merchant of Venice* (1605) is an excellent example of this art category where Antonio's life is saved by the clever Portia, or else it would have been a tragedy where he had to lose his life in the hands of Shylock. His other tragi-comedies include *Winter's Tale* (1611), *Cymbeline* (1623), *Pericles* (1619), *Tempest* (1611), *Two Noble Kinsmen* (in collaboration with John Fletcher 1634) and *Measure for Measure* (1604). The last one is labelled as 'dark comedy' because it depicts grim action. Shakespeare's contemporary Fletcher wrote *Faithful Shepherdess* (1608).

The style of tragi-comedy was that it presented moderate sentiments, moderate passions, moderate amusement, pretension of conflicts and happy conclusion. Together Beaumont and Fletcher composed *Phylaster* (1610) and *A King and No King* (1611).

The drama in the Jacobean Age was considered obscene. It was censured by the puritans and theatres showcasing the plays were closed in 1642 owing to the reaction from the people.

After the restoration of Charles II to the throne of England in 1660, theatres reopened but there were no immediate potent tragi-comedies. In the 18th century, Sir Richard Steele wrote the *Conscious Lovers* (1722). Later, George Lillo's *London Merchant* (1731) and Oliver Goldsmith's *She Stoops to Conquer* (1773) became the famous vehicles of this genre. They called it *Sentimental Comedies*. The 20th century plays by Shaw and Wilde are excellent specimen of tragi-comedies. Shaw explained in his preface to *Major Barbara* (1905) how 'the tragi-comic irony of the conflict between real life and romantic imagination' was essential to the completion of the dramatic art.

Norwegian playwright Henrik Ibsen's *Wild Duck* (1884) is a famous tragi-comedy. Anton Chekhov of Russia was skilled in the art of tragi-comic dramas. In 1962, Edward Albee wrote *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* Thomas Stearns Eliot's dramas in the first half of the 20th century are great proponents of this genre. His *Cocktail Party* (1949) and the *Family Reunion* (1939) extend the style of tragi-comedy.

10.3.4 Farce

The English word farce has its roots in Latin 'farcire' which means 'to stuff' or Old French farce meaning 'to show'. In contemporary times, any play which relies on buffoonery, crude funny situations and such low brow devices to create comedy is labelled as 'farce'. One major difference between comedy and farce is that comedy is more positive in approach where as farce is more pessimistic. In Farce, laughter is aroused through mannerisms, loud behaviour and contrived and highly improbable situations. It mostly turns into burlesque, apart from its tendency to point out larger human problems. It portrays the stupidity of man while picturing his troubles. Farce is a go- between the classical drama form and modern European form.

Farce gained appreciation and retained popularity in France till as late as the seventeenth century. John Heywood, the writer was highly influenced by the farce genre. In his early life Molière too acted in farce, before he became established as a writer.

During the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries short, one-act farces gained popularity in England and America. They were staged along with, five-act tragedy. Many of these performances achieved great success mostly because of the acting of some particular actor in comedy role. In today's contemporary usage, the word farce is associated to any full-length play which deals with some absurd situations. They are mostly based on extra-marital themes, hence they are also called as 'bedroom farce'. Pinero was one of the early exponents of modern farce in England. A full-length farce which is still popular is Charley's Aunt (1892) written by Brandon Thomas. In the 1920s and early 1930s Ben Travers produced many successful farces that were staged at the Aldwch Theatre.

10.3.5 Masque

It is the French word for the English 'mask'. It is a short form for masquerade. The word was first used by Ben Jonson and it appeared in print in *Hall's Chronicle* for 1512 in the context of a dance which had masked figures. The history of the 'masque' as a form of theatre goes back to Italy from where it travelled to England and got special patronage from Queen Elizabeth I and her two immediate successors James I and Charles I. Masque was a form of entertainment that was exclusive to the court. In fact, most of the actors were from nobility, some even from royalty. It was all about spectacle where both drama and action revolved around spectacle.

A masque dealt with characters from mythology or pastorals and was made ornate with songs, dances and extravagant costumes. It was a spectacular entertainment which had both music and poetry with vivid scenery and elaborate costumes. It dates back to primitive folk rituals featuring the arrival of guests, mostly in disguise, carrying gifts. It is part of the folk tradition. The presentation of gifts gave way to flattering speeches, and the wearing of outlandish costumes and masks followed dancing. Wearing disguises was the earliest and simplest form of the mask celebrations.

During Renaissance Italy, Lorenzo de' Medici was responsible for popularising song, dance and scenery in the performances. The French Court saw the rise of *ballet de Cour,* the colourful *mascarade* (from which the word 'masquerade' comes), and the comédie ballet.

In the sixteenth century the 'masque' became popular and this form got the patronage of the Tudor rulers of England. People in masks and elaborate dresses performed before the king, with all the essential requirements like scenery, machinery, and ornate speech. During the Elizabethan period, masques were popular sources of entertainment even for the Queen and these were staged either in the palace or outside. In *Love's Labour Lost* Shakespeare pokes fun at the simple country masque, and uses the element of disguise in *The Tempest*.

By the time court masques were staged for James I and Charles I many innovations and changes had taken place. Ben Jonson was appointed Court Poet in 1603. One of Jonson's notable contributions was the anti-masque, also known as the ante-masque which incorporated the earlier elements of antic or grotesque dancing. First introduced in 1609, the anti-masque was in stark contrast to the main theme. The simplicity of the early masque gave way to the double masque, which employed two different groups of characters. With the passage of time, the literary quality of the masque declined, and the spectacular aspect, like the dancing, in which Charles I and Henrietta Maria became performers, became fashionable. Jonson's last masque was performed in 1634.

The Civil War rang the death knell of the masque tradition and it could never be revived. But Restoration theatre borrowed many of its spectacular effects. It should be mentioned here that Milton's *Comus* (1634) is described as 'a masque' but it is actually a pastoral.

Check Your Progress

5. What was the main subject of Aeschylus plays?

6. Name some of the famous dramas of Euripides.

7. How did Aristotle regarded tragedy as a form of drama?

8. What was the style of tragi-comedy?

9. State any one characteristic of William Shakespeare's tragedy.

10. What is the basic difference between tragedy and comedy?

10.4 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS QUESTIONS

1. An essential quality of drama is its objectivity. Drama is a composite art, in which the author, the actor, and the stage manager all combine to produce the total effect.

2. Samuel Beckett's 'Theatre of the Absurd' introduced the existentialist theory that abstract existence played great role in life above everything in it. This type of drama in being was essentially poetic and full of imagination and exhibited the downplay of language.

3. The Dadaism movement was a protest against colonialism and the subsequent World War I in most of the European nations. It was a movement carried by those literary artists who opposed nationalism.

4. The aim of the 'Theatre of Cruelty' was to portray 'representational medium' and focused on dealing with the current situations. They took the responsibility of 'presenting' and 'representing' both.

5. The subjects of Aeschylus plays were man's relations with God and man's roles here on earth. His plays carried moral values and judgments profoundly

6. Euripides's famous dramas are *Medea*, *Bacchae*, the *Trojan Women*, *Hecuba*, *Ion*, *Iphigenia in Tauris*, the *Phoenician Women* and *Andromache* beside other two portrayals of ghastliness and dementia called 'Electra and Orestes'.

7. Aristotle believed that tragedy is a serious art which enwraps undeviated accomplishment to serve its purpose.

8. The style of tragi-comedy was that it presented moderate sentiments, moderate passions, moderate amusement, pretension of conflicts and happy conclusion.

9. William Shakespeare's tragedies have powerful diction, poetical outbursts, noble characters, each show a serious conflict of a soul caught between

reason and action, and each of his heroes exhibit a frailty, or prejudice of character.

10. The basic difference between tragedy and comedy is that tragedy depicts the moral or heroic struggle of the protagonist ending in death or destruction whereas comedy aims to amuse through wit, ridicule, farce, satire and ends happily.

10.5 SUMMARY

- Drama is an ancient form of art written in prose or verse accompanied by various tools and techniques meant to be staged.

- Plays, on the contrary, involve 'multiple art, using words, scenic effects, music, the gestures of the actors, and the organizing talents of a producer'.

- An essential quality of drama is its objectivity. A play whether divided into acts or not, has plot, characters, background, theme, dramatic unities, and techniques and so on.

- A play must seek perfect economy in choice of words, actions, deliverers of those actions, time, and place, so that all may synthesize into bringing the desired end or effect.

- The common cult of drama was not accepted by the then church and court because it exuded the message of too much freedom in the society, hence the Roman theatres were closed and condemned.

- In the morality plays, people acted as virtues and vices. These plays were written by religious authors or church clerics.

- Probably the development of drama owed its growth to new scholars from the universities in England and the Renaissance, which forcefully pushed the active and ambitious minds to explore and inculcate the classical literature.

- Again drama developed its pace in the 18th century with Johnson's historical plays, but they were not that recognizable as their predecessors.

- George Bernard Shaw and Thomas Stearns Eliot were two major 20th century figures who used drama to convey their ideas, exploring different themes.

- Yeats and Synge with Lady Gregory aimed to portray and develop poetic realism describing the Irish peasant life.

- After the First World War, political theatre became a trend where social and political issues and propaganda became vehicles to reach the masses.

- Samuel Beckett's 'Theatre of the Absurd' introduced the existentialist theory that abstract existence played great role in life above everything in it.

- Dadaism was a protest against colonialism and the subsequent World War I in most of the European nations.

- The modernist approach of Bertold Brecht came up with 'epic theatre' with rejection of realistic theatre.

- The definition and genesis of tragedy goes back to the classical literature of Greece. Aristotle, the master-craftsmen, is held as the father and preceptor of 'classical tragedy'.

- Tragedy sprouted in Athens many years ago and has its base in the choral poetry. It is a Greek concept that Dionysius, the god of nature, died and took rebirth in a cycle each year.

- Aeschylus, the great dramatist, was the one who initiated the art of tragedy in classical literature. He is considered as the original founder of European play.

- Euripides wrote tragedies and introduced 'tragi-comedies' varying into different types which can be aptly named romantic plays, melodrama or extreme comedies.

- Seneca had a multiple persona who wrote plays, poetry, satire, philosophy and was trained in rhetoric, besides being a politician.

- Aristotle's (384-322 BC) *Poetics* (c. 335 BCE) studies and evaluates Greek dramatic art and discusses tragedy in comparison to comedy or epic poetry.

- The rise of tragedy in England goes back to the Elizabethan Age when *Gorboduc* (1561) by Thomas Sackville and Thomas Norton was acted.

- Drama saw its massive proliferation and development in the Elizabethan England during 1585 and 1642.

- Shakespearean tragedy alone holds the foremost place in English letters of all ages as nothing surpasses it.

- The Irish National Movement was invoked by W. B. Yeats (1865-1939), J. M. Synge, Sir James Barrie (1860-1937), and Sean O'Casey (1880-1964), writers of great ability. Synge's *Riders to the Sea* (1904) is a moving tragic play.

- The word 'comedy' has an ancient and classical background ahead of tragedy, which means an amusing spectacle.

- Aristophanes and Menander were chief writers of comedy plays who laughed at the politicians, philosophers and their contemporary artiste.

- Dramas in Athens were performed in the open air theatres. The stage used to be designed particularly for a comedy.

- Tragedy and comedy complement each other as they blend together in life. And literature is but a just representation of human existence.

- In comedy, Jonson adhered strictly to depict his own age with realism, romance and maintain the dramatic action with the three dramatic unities of time, place and morally sound theme.

- In literature, the term 'tragi-comedy,' means a play with serious conflict but happy resolution. There has been no specific definition assigned to the type, however, Aristotle defined this genre of play of serious action ending happily.

- In contemporary times, any play which relies on buffoonery, crude funny situations and such low brow devices to create comedy is labelled as 'farce'.

- Farce gained appreciation and retained popularity in France till as late as the seventeenth century.

- A masque dealt with characters from mythology or pastorals and was made ornate with songs, dances and extravagant costumes.

- One of Jonson's notable contributions was the anti-masque, also known as the ante-masque which incorporated the earlier elements of antic or grotesque dancing.

10.6 KEY WORDS

- **Catharsis:** It refers to the moment in which the hero of the tragedy would suffer some dramatic and damaging change into his fortune.

- **Drama:** It refers to an ancient form of art written in prose or verse accompanied by various tools and techniques meant to be staged.

- **Interludes:** It refers to the proceedings of the church, a new berth of short and direct play.

- **Poetic Mimesis:** It refers to an action copied as presenting it like a replica undermining universality of theme and ideals unlike history where facts are strewn on paper straightaway.

10.7 SELF ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

Short Answer Questions

1. What are miracle plays?
2. How is drama different from a play?
3. What was Bertold Brecht opinion on epic theatre?
4. How does tragedy and comedy complement each other?
5. Write a short note on the Surrealist Movement.
6. How is farce different from comedy?
7. What were the different types of styles used in the 20th century theatre?
8. How did Seneca framed his tragedies?

Long Answer Questions

1. Analyse the intricate relation between Christianity and plays.

2. Discuss the importance of political theatre after the First World War.

3. Describe the role of George Bernard Shaw in developing drama as a major literary form.

4. Explain the development of tragedy as a form of drama.

5. Discuss the importance of catharsis in a tragedy.

6. 'Shakespearean tragedy alone holds the foremost place in English letters of all ages as nothing surpasses it'. Explain the statement with reference to his famous works.

10.8 FURTHER READINGS

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UNIT 11 ONE ACT PLAYS, ABSURD DRAMA AND MELODRAMA

Structure

11.0 INTRODUCTION

The cultural outlooks, ethical natures, religious views, and societal norms together constitute values displayed in a play. Taking into consideration such values that arise from viewing or reading play, care must be taken in differentiating between the outlooks and personalities of distinct characters and those displayed throughout the play as a whole, as these are the values of the playwright. Different periods of time are bound by different norms, values, customs and traditions, which also form the perspectives of the viewer or reader of the play. Not only that, different ways of responding to a particular play are also influenced by the viewer's sex, caste, and customs, religion and ethnic identity.

Another very important factor that determines our liking or dislike for the play is it's literary presentation and theatrical artistry. For example, the structure plot, definition of the theme, portrayal by the characters, language used in the play, richness or plainness of the costumes and setting of the stage. The better the audience understands the central values of the playwright and the better control he has over his theme and ideas, more is the enjoyment for the audience.

In this unit, we will discuss about the various forms of drama and the evolution of each of the form as a literary form. The characteristics of one act play, absurd drama and melodrama have also been analysed.

11.1 OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- Discuss the development and characteristics of one act play
- Explain the concept of 'The Theatre of Absurd'
- Analyse the contribution of Albert Camus in 'The Theatre of the Absurd'
- Discuss the characteristics and components of melodrama

11.2 ONE ACT PLAY: AN OVERVIEW

The beginning of one act plays dates back to the 18th and 19th centuries when they were written and enacted all over to play the part of either 'The Curtain Raisers' or 'The After Pieces'. The main aim of these plays was to entertain the spectators before the beginning of the real performance or theatre. They were even staged after the end of the theatrical performance in order to entertain the audience.

The first ever one act play to be enacted as a 'Curtain Raiser' was called the 'Monkey's Paw' and the irony is that it was enjoyed far more by the audience as compared to the main theatre. This one act play marked the launch of the contemporary one act plays. The foundation of the one act play was possibly laid during the onset of the concept of enactment of drama itself. The play based the God of forest, by Euripides, enacted in ancient Greece; *Cyclops* can be cited as an early example of one act play.

The introduction of detailed stage direction with respect to one act plays can be attributed to the well-known Norwegian dramatist Ibsen, who introduced it for the very first time. Before his contribution, one act plays were written in poetry form. Ibsen transformed the medium of one act plays from poetry to prose. He gave a simple and authentic feel to drama; this made the viewers to be able to relate more with the drama as now it was a lot closer to an ordinary person's daily life. He is the one who gave the contemporary one act play its current form and his model set by him has been extensively followed. George Bernard Shaw and John Galsworthy are two great literary names who were his ultimate followers.

One act plays do not require any kind of extravagant settings or expensive costumes, thus, it can be staged in casual dramatic associations or clubs.

Main Characteristics of One Act Play

A one act play is concluded in only one act, contrary to the other regular plays which are constructed over numerous acts. One act play can be constituted of

one or more scenes. In recent past a sub-genre of one act plays has emerged which is known by the name of 'flash drama', it is a 10 minute long play which has gained immense popularity over the past. Similar to other forms of drama, one act plays also comprise of the same features. These characteristics are discussed as follows:

- **Theme:** A one act play ought to be spun around theme or idea, just like a complete long drama. The author of the play must have clarity of mind in terms of the play's subject. Whether he or she wants to base the play on mystery, revenge or self-realization. Whatever may be the choice of the author but the theme once selected must be clearly visible in the play's plot and story. Just like the characters, plots, and subplots of a long play need to be oriented towards and back the theme of the play. In the same way, one act play is not very different. The only variance can however, be in the execution of subplots which are most likely not a part of one act plays.

- **Plot:** The plot of a one act play is not the same as that of a full-length play. In a multiple act (full-length) play, the plot is made up of successions and arrangement of happenings that take the protagonist on the expedition set by the author, the viewers also move along with the hero of the play in the same pace. On the contrary, however, a one act play is made up of only a one time one important incident. This event forms the decisive place for the protagonist, where he either wins it all or loses everything. The happenings that actually conclude in this event should be integrated within the script without the spectators not being able to see or sense them. All the following happenings must be concluded by the audience to be happening or understood that they will eventually take place.

- **Character:** A one act play is a short duration play, so there is actually just adequate time this to get familiar with only one character and that generally happens to be the hero. During the short duration of the one act play, generally the audience gets to experience the events of the hero over and over again. It leaves very little time for any other events to come to fore. Few individualities of the supporting characters, for example that of the villain, need to be represented so that the story can be propelled forward, but ultimately it is the role of the hero which is most important the story line.

- **Dialogue:** A successful one act play must have as little dialogues as possible. Every line spoken by every character must be written carefully to concentrate on the theme, the happening, and the character of the main character. The dialogues must be concise, but they must have the potential to convey the entire meaning. All extra dialogues must be either removed or carefully restructured.

Other Characteristics of One Act Plays

There are some other characteristics of one act play are as follows:

- One act play consists of only one act, but it may contain one or more than one scenes.

- One act plays are typically authored in a brief style.

- One act plays deal with a particular prevailing state of affairs and their goal is to create a single conclusion.

- One act plays deal with a single theme which is established through a single circumstance to one climax so that maximum impact can be created.

- One act plays deal with routine difficulties of ordinary life for instance matrimony and divorce, wrongdoings and penalties and work conditions.

- Just as in the case of a routine long drama, a one act play also is constituted of a beginning, middle and an end. A one act play may have four stages:

  o **The Exposition:** It is generally short and does the job of the play's prelude.

  o **The Conflict:** It helps in development of the action of the drama. This forms the very strength of the play.

  o **The Climax:** It is the turning point of the one act play. It is the most significant part of the play. This formulates its moment of ultimate interest.

  o **The Denouement**: It is very short and generally overlapping with the climax.

- The beginning of the play marks the very first action.

- The actions once begun are continuous, which means it carries on without any interval.

- Due to short duration of the play, all unnecessary things must be strictly avoided. As the action happens in a short period of time, it presents intricate stage directions to minimize the time taken by the action itself.

- A successful one act play must have the capability of creating the mood, or atmosphere of the play before losing any time.

- The unity of time, place and action must be observed in a one act play.

- A one act play is not dependent on outstanding impacts and regular old dramatic tricks. It purposes to have the ease of plot; deliberation of action and agreement of impression.

- A one act play has limited number of characters. Usually, there are just two or three main characters.

- A character is usually not fully developed in a one act play. Rather than presenting all the diverse facets of a character, the attention is concentrated on just one or two striking characteristics of character. These salient features are highlighted and presented by putting the characters in diverse conditions and situations.

- One act plays are influenced by realism. Commonplace people are depicted as characters in the modern one act plays.

- A one act play throws a question, for which the viewers enthusiastically anticipate the answer.

- The simple language use in a one act play can be understood without pressurizing the senses. The dialogues in the play must not be superfluous they must be focused. Words must be carefully chosen and sentences used must be brief. The language used to form dialogues must be simple, brief and easily understood.

Some important dramatists of one act plays

Some of the significant one act plays by famous playwrights are as follows:

(i) Anton Chekhov: *A Marriage Proposal* (1890)

(ii) August Strindberg: *Pariah* (1889)

Motherly Love (1892)

The First Warning (1892)

(iii) Thornton Wilder: *The Long Christmas Dinner* (1931)

(iv) Eugene Ionesco: *The Bald Soprano* (1950)

(v) Arthur Miller: *A Memory of Two Mondays* (1955)

(vi) Samuel Beckett: *Krapp's Last Tape* (1958)

(vii) Israel Horovitz: *Line* (1974)

(viii) Edward Albee: *The Goat, or Who is Sylvia?* (2002)

Check Your Progress

1. What is the main aim of one act plays?

2. State any one characteristic of a one act play.

11.3 ABSURD THEATRE: AN OVERVIEW

Absurd theatre denotes a literary movement in the field of drama which gained popularity all over European countries beginning from the decade of the 1940s and it lasted till around 1989. Playwrights indulging in absurdist theatre followed

the philosophies propounded by the French-Algerian thinker, Albert Camus. His essay, 'The Myth of Sisyphus', published in 1942 particularly rose to great fame. The philosophy used in this essay written by Camus gave an introduction to the concept of Absurdity. The author in this literary creation of his work argues that a man unnecessarily goes on running in search of meaning and truth. He makes a comparison between man's endeavours to comprehend the world and life's meaning with Sisyphus. Sisyphus is a famous Greek Mythological character who is fated to a life of rolling a heavy rock to the mountain top just to see it roll down to the ground.

Critics are of the opinion that Absurd Drama came to fore as a crusade from the uncertainties and dreads around the Second World War. That era was marked by the deterioration of customs, ethical and civil morals. The effort succeeded in England, Germany, and France, along with the Scandinavian countries. *The Maids* by Jean Genet (1947), *The Bald Soprano* by Eugene Ionesco (1950), *Ping-Pong* by Arthur Adamov (1955), and *Waiting for Godot* by Samuel Beckett (1953) are some of the famous examples of the institutional works of the crusade. The popularity of the crusade suffered a major blow 1989 with Beckett's death, in fact this year marked the close of the movement.

The term, 'Theatre of the Absurd' was devised by Martin Esslin in his book bearing the same title in the year 1962. The book makes mention of the work of a distantly connected cluster of playwrights who first came on the scene during the Second World War and after that. Esslin witnessed these dramatists as providing a creative countenance to the empirical philosophy of Albert Camus. Camus propagated through his essay, 'The Myth of Sisyphus', that life is characteristically pointless. Esslin has stated in, *The Theatre of the Absurd*, that, 'The Theatre of the Absurd has renounced arguing about the absurdity of the human condition; it merely presents it in being—that is, in terms of concrete stage images. This is the difference between the approach of the philosopher and that of the poet'. He further states that 'The hallmark of this attitude is its sense that the certitudes and unshakable basic assumptions of former ages have been swept away, that they have been tested and found wanting, that they have been discredited as cheap and somewhat childish illusions'. Some general features of absurdist plays comprise this overall empirical philosophy attached with a denunciation of descriptive continuousness and the inflexibility of reason, along with a fundamental depreciation of language which is understood as a useless effort to communicate that what is not possible. The broad impact is generally a horrendous or bizarre atmosphere in which the main character is astounded by the frenzied or illogical nature of his environment. Most absurdists also determinedly repel the old-fashioned differentiation of absurdity and tragedy, combining both willingly. By doing this, they create an unpredictable world which appears quite like ours. In this world the emotionally tragic may come right behind those that are absurdly hilarious or vice versa.

Originally, Esslin identified Samuel Beckett, Arthur Adamov, Eugène Ionesco, and Jean Genet as the primary playwrights of the absurd. He also named several 'parallels and proselytes' including Vaclav Havel, Slawomir Mrozek, Tadeusz Rózewicz, Günter Grass, Manuel de Pedrolo, Robert Pinget, Max Frisch, Wolfgang Edward Albee, Ezio d'Errico, Fernando Arrabal, Harold Pinter, Norman Frederick Simpson, Hildesheimer, Jack Gelber, Arthur Kopit, Boris Vian, Dino Buzzati, and Jean Tardieu. In a following publication, the book, Esslin supported Pinter to a place of prominence in the absurdist circle of playwrights. David Lindsay-Abaire, Tom Stoppard, John Guare, Gao Xingjian, and Caryl Churchill are some more names which have been linked with Absurd Drama.

The absurd drama is also known as 'New Theatre'. The New Theatre movement was initially a Paris-based occurrence which was related with tremendously small theaters in the Quartier Latin. Some famous French born absurdists are: Jean Genet, Jean Tardieu, and Boris Vian. Most other absurdists who functioned in France were actually not born there, but their writings were generally in French: Samuel Beckett from Ireland; Eugène Ionesco from Romania; Arthur Adamov from Russia; Alejandro Jodorowsky from Chile and Fernando Arrabal from Spain are some such examples of non-France born absurdists. With increase in influence of the Absurdists, this form of playwriting got extended to various far off countries. Some dramatists were under the direct influence of the Theatre of the Absurd prevalent in Paris and the others were labelled as Absurdist playwrights by critics. Some playwrights regarded by Esslin as Absurd dramatists were James Saunders, Harold Pinter, N. F. Simpson, Tom Stoppard, and David Campton; amongst the Americans were Sam Shepard, Edward Albee, John Guare and Jack Gelber; Tadeusz Różewicz and Tadeusz Kantor, Slawomir Mrożek were amongst Polish Absurd dramatists; Mohit Chattopadhyay and Mahesh Elkunchwar from India have been known to be Absurdists.

Characteristics of Absurd Drama

Absurd drama is based on themes which are centered acts and are not logical, truthful happenings, or traditional personality oriented. Rather they are centered on people stuck in an unfathomable world, the subjects and themes of these plays are illogical. The complex theme of the play is combined with the insufficiency of language to construct significant social relations. In words of Martin Esslin, Absurdism is 'the inevitable devaluation of ideals, purity, and purpose'. The audience of Absurdist drama is expected to 'draw his own conclusions, make his own errors'. Though at the face of it, Absurd drama may appear to be silly and foolish, but it generally has a thing to convey and it is certainly not difficult to grasp. This definition of the word given by Esslin helps us to appreciate the difference between absurd in the literal sense and in sense of the drama: 'Absurd is that which is devoid of purpose... Cut off from his religious, metaphysical, and transcendental roots, man is lost; all his actions become senseless, absurd, useless'.

Features of Absurd Drama

Some of the basic features of absurd drama are as follows:

- Exploration of the relativeness of facts
- Uselessness
- Futile fight of people in order to counter destiny
- Insufficiency of conversation or connection
- Use of small talk and sarcasm
- Non-agreement
- Lack of stability of characters
- Lack of certain plot configuration
- World moving towards devastation
- Personal absurdity of trying to regulate one's fat

11.3.1 Absurd Drama: A Specific Outline

Let us discuss some of the features of absurd drama.

Characters

The characters of the 'Theatre of Absurd' are misplaced and detached. They exist in an inconceivable space, where they disregard sensible strategies and broad viewpoints for these methodologies are insufficient. Various characters seem to be machines trapped in daily practices uttering only in stereotype expressions. Characters are often orthodox, standard or flat.

The extra complicated characters are in a state of disaster as they are encompassed by an inexplicable world. Many plays written by Pinter, for instance, show characters stuck in a surrounded area threatened by a particular power which is beyond the comprehension of the character. *The Room* was the first play written by Pinter – in this play the protagonist, Rose, is intimidated by Riley who enters her secure area. Nevertheless in the drama, the real basis of hazard is not disclosed. This theme of characters where the secure area of a character is jeopardized by an external power has been used in many of his works produced later. *The Birthday Party* is possibly on the most popular drama based on this theme. In *The Visit*, written by Friedrich Dürrenmatt the hero, Alfred, is jeopardized by Claire who is the richest woman in the world but her body is decomposing, she has been shown to have a number of husbands along the length of the drama.

Sometimes the characters pitched in the plays written in the theme of Theatre of the Absurd might also be challenged by the confusion of a world that has been discarded even by science and logic. Berenger, a character in Ionesco's play, for instance, stands against a killer who does not have a motive to kill. The conversation between Berenger and the Killer and the logical urgings on part of Berenger are

unable to convince the killer that it is not right to kill. Characters are sometimes found stuck in a general, or in a meta-fictional vanity, stuck in a fiction.

Sometimes the characters of Absurdist plays are found to exist in mutually dependent pairs, usually both are males or one partner in the pair is a male and the other a female. Such pairing in this form of drama has been termed as 'pseudocouple' by some Beckett philosophers. Both characters of the pair may be almost equal to each other or may be having a resenting mutual dependence, for example, Vladimir and Estragon in *Waiting for Godot*. One character may be visibly overriding and resorting to torturing the less powerful character, for example, Pozzo and Lucky in *Waiting for Godot* or Hamm and Clov in *Endgame*. The association of the characters does not remain same during the play; it may keep shifting intensely throughout, as was the case with the characters in *The Lesson by Ionesco* or *The Zoo Story* by Albee.

Language

Though Absurdist plays are known for their silly language, yet main part of the dialogue of these plays is naturalistic. The times, when characters fall back on silly language or truisms, in situations where words are unable to denote, and which leads to a misapprehension between characters, make Absurd Drama unique. Language has a specific vocal, flowing, musical like characteristic, which generally opens up an extensive range of hilarious liveliness. *The Bald Soprano*, for instance, was motivated by a book of language whose characters exchanged hollow platitudes which could actually not be called real conversation.. Likewise, the characters in *The Bald Soprano* bear monotonous dialogue beset with platitudes in the absence real communication of anything fundamental or a human association. In many other dramas, the dialogue has been found to be is resolutely ancillary. The language of Absurdist Drama is considered lesser than that of tangible poetry and actualized stage descriptions. Many plays by Beckett undervalue language for description's sake. Harold Pinter, who is known for his 'Pinter pause', displays more delicately oblique dialogue. Generally the major stuff to be addressed by characters should be substituted by contraction or dashes.

In the following section, we can have a look at some of the famous extracts of 'Absurd Theatre'.

Example 1

The following conversation between Aston and Davies in *The Caret*aker is characteristic of Pinter:

> ASTON: *More or less exactly what you...*
>
> DAVIES: *That's it … that's what I'm getting at is … I mean, what sort of jobs … (Pause.)*
>
> ASTON: *Well, there's a thing like the stairs … and the … the bells …*

> DAVIES: But it'd be a matter ... wouldn't it ... it'd be a matter of a
> broom ... isn't it?

Example 2

In Harold Pinter's *The Birthday Party* the use of silly or nonsense language has been made roughly. For example, when Goldberg and McCann agonise Stanley with seemingly silly questions and non-agreement:

> GOLDBERG: *What do you use for pajamas?*
>
> STANLEY: *Nothing.*
>
> GOLDBERG: *You verminate the sheet of your birth.*
>
> MCCANN: *What about the Albigensenist heresy?*
>
> GOLDBERG: *Who watered the wicket in Melbourne?*
>
> MCCANN: *What about the blessed Oliver Plunkett?*
>
> GOLDBERG: *Speak up Webber. Why did the chicken cross the road?*

Example 3

As seen in the instances cited above, nonsense in Absurdist drama may be put into use to showcase the boundaries of language in the process of inquiring or satirizing knowledge of truth. In *The Lesson*, by Eugene Ionesco, a professor makes an effort to pressurize a pupil to comprehend his ridiculous language lesson:

> PROFESSOR: *... In Spanish: the roses of my grandmother are as yellow as my grandfather who is Asiatic; in Latin: the roses of my grandmother are as yellow as my grandfather who is Asiatic. Do you detect the difference? Translate this into ... Romanian*
>
> PUPIL: *The ... how do you say "roses" in Romanian?*
>
> PROFESSOR: *But "roses", what else? ... "roses" is a translation in Oriental of the French word "roses", in Spanish "roses", do you get it? In Sardanapali, "roses"...*

Plot

Traditional plot constructions are hardly a deliberation in 'The Theatre of the Absurd'. Plots can comprise the absurd recurrence of platitude and monotony, just like that in *Godot* or *The Bald Soprano*. Generally there is an intimidating external power that is never revealed. Let us take the example of *The Birthday Party*, where, Goldberg and McCann have an altercation with Stanley, agonize him by asking absurd questions, and drag him off at the end, but the reason behind their behavior always remains a mystery. In the later plays, by Pinter, like *The Caretaker* and *The Homecoming*, the threat ceases to come in from the external atmosphere but is present inside the confined area. Such examples can be seen in

the works of other Absurdists also, for example, in *A Delicate Balance by Edward Albee*: Harry and Edna take shelter at their friends' home, Agnes and Tobias since they are scared all of a sudden. The reason for their fear however remains a mystery:

> HARRY: *There was nothing ... but we were very scared.*
>
> EDNA: *We ... were ... terrified.*
>
> HARRY: *We were scared. It was like being lost: very young again, with the dark, and lost. There was no ... thing ... to be ... frightened of, but ...*
>
> EDNA: *We were frightened ... and there was nothing.*

The plots of Absurdist drama are basically based on non-presence, vacuum, emptiness, and unanswered obscurities. This can be clarified more with the example from, *The Chairs,* where an elderly couple greets a big number of visitors into their house, but because all the guests being invisible, the audience can see only empty chairs. Their presence (or rather absence) is represented by empty chairs. Similarly, the *Godot's* exploit is focused on the non-presence of a man known as Godot, for whom the characters continuously keep waiting. In the plays written by Beckett in the later years most characteristics are torn away and leaving behind just a Spartan scene: a woman pacing up and down at a very slow pace.

The plot is carved out in such a way that it may even spin around a mysterious transformation, a paranormal modification or a change in the rules of physical science. For instance, in Ionesco's *Amédée, or How to Get Rid of It*, a duo is faced by a situation where they don't know to handle a dead body which is gradually increasing in size. The identity of the dead body is always kept mysterious by Ionesco and so is the reason behind the person's death. So much so that the reasons behind the body's slow and continuous growth is are also kept hidden. The play is marked with another obscure and absurd thing – the sudden floating away of the dead body and that too without any kind of an explanation. Jean Tardieu's *The Keyhole* is yet another example of an absurd plot in which a lover sees his beloved first removing her clothes then her flesh, through a keyhole.

Plots are also often recurring: for instance, Endgame starts at the ending of the play-when the play starts Clov is heard saying, 'Finished, it's finished, nearly finished, it must be nearly finished'. The themes of sequence, humdrum, and recurrence are visited all along.

Check Your Progress

3. What is the main theory propagated by Albert Camus in his essay, 'The Myth of Sisyphus'?

4. What are the general features of absurd plays?

11.4 MELODRAMA: AN OVERVIEW

The beginning of melodrama is said to have occurred in France in the last part of the eighteenth century and beginning of the nineteenth century. Melodrama came into being during the Romantic literary period. The romantics desired to use art as a medium of expression of their sentiments. Thus, they adopted manifestations like imagery, distinctiveness or environment as a source of mysticism and sensitivity. The newly found melodramatic form of expression elicited sensations by means of using spoken lines which were alternated with melodious augmentation to display a conflict between good and evil, this also included additional special effects for example collisions between trains, horses racing against each other and tremors in the earth causing havoc.

Till date, this genre of drama remains the most thrilling and stimulating farms of theatre display. The distinct characteristics of melodrama are visible in almost every dramatic period ranging between Euripides in ancient Athens to Shakespearean drama.

Popularity of Melodrama

The word melodrama is derived from the French word 'melodrame' which literally means, drama and music combined. Having a deep look at the European socio-cultural environment during the 19th century, one will be able to understand the reasons behind the increasing popularity of melodrama. The phase of Industrial Revolution saw numerous illiterate people from the countryside toiling hard at factories with deafening machinery all day and late till the night. Their working conditions were far from comfortable, generally scorching and overcrowded. Their places of rest were also no different from their work places as they generally slept on factory floors, many huddled up in one room. Due to such grueling work conditions and uncomfortable residences, these working class people, sought emotional and recreational in places like inns, circuses, whorehouses, Churches or performance of dramas. Theatre as a source of entertainment worked out to be quite affordable, hence accessible, for these poor people and they really enjoyed the experiencing the cheap yet welcoming entertainment. Seeing the interest of people in theatre new stages began to be built in order to house bigger and better dramatic performances. The newly built stages were however so huge that it became necessary to exaggerate all effects on them, in order to impact the audience. Transformation of good comical directing and dialogue into comprehensive signs and ranting was just one of the changes to have taken place in the field of performances.

The working class audience needed to shut out the daily hard work and called for color, exploration, passion, excitement, conquest, and victory. The form of melodrama that took shape in the 19th century clearly revealed an idea that the vital aim of drama was to hail well and denounce bad. Famous plays of that era

were based on the tussle between virtue and vice. This fight remained ever powerful and ardent and the end result of this struggle was always the victory of good over evil.

Melodramas of those days were categorized by exciting clashes which led to great ends. There, however, was not too much variety in conclusions as they were limited only to three viz., draw, triumph or defeat. Categorization was one dimensional of good or bad. Plays were often marked by streaks of funny scenes. The drama always included one side character who kept the interest in drama alive.

Characteristics of Melodrama

Stock classification, stress on the contrast between good vs. evil, disorderly or sometimes even absurd plots, periodic construction, routine form, picturesque wonders, musical background, comical respite, unyielding lyrical inclusion, quick action, full and graceful activities and overstated signs and signals are some important components of melodrama which can be seen in almost all melodramas. Let us now have a look at some other characteristics of melodrama which form a vital part of it.

Main Characteristics of Melodrama

The characteristics of melodrama are as follows:

- Overstated and formalized actions and prolonged spoken method communicating strong emotions.

- Typecast, generally single dimensional characters who rarely show any psychological or mental changes.

- Depiction of a social scuffle between good (normally depicting the poor) and bad (normally depicting the rich). The drama usually ends with the victory of good over evil.

- The interaction between audience and performers of the drama is an important part of melodrama. This sort of an involvement adds weight to the message carried by the melodrama.

- Melodramas are usually filled with outstanding happenings such as pursuits, eruptions, combats, encounters. These kind of enthralling events exhibited in a melodrama involve and captivate the audience and makes them forget the nagging worries of their own world.

- The plot of the melodrama being fast moving offers enthusiasm, anticipation and time accord to the audience.

- The circumstances of a melodrama stimulate pity amongst audience. Their hearts are overwhelmed with sorrow for the feeble or victimised poor and good people and detestation for the bad or rich authoritarians.

Features of a Melodrama

Broadly speaking, melodramas are ethical stories which demonstrate a battle between good and bad with the good ultimately coming out victorious. The conclusions of these dramas show societal ethics or fairness winning, after trying hard. Since the stories depicted by melodramas are primarily spun to appease the audience, they are not very close to reality, thus various characters of a melodrama are also not very realistic. This genre of drama was enacted by people known as stock characters. These were the characters founded on set personalities or typecasts. A typically melodrama must have the following features:

1. **A hero:** He is someone who is ethical, upright, good-looking and macho. He lives his life based on his insight and is always one with nature. The hero is, though, a firm believer of justice, yet he does not abide by all mundane societal rules the time.

2. **A heroine:** She is someone who has good and ethical values; she is also very innocent, not spoilt by the bad world. She is usually very attractive and brave, but needs to be saved in the course of the melodrama, always by the hero.

3. **A villain:** He or she is someone who is immoral, deceitful, materialistic, revengeful and dishonest.

4. **An accomplice of the villain:** He or she is someone who is typically foolish and does the work of a comic relief in the melodrama.

5. **A faithful servant:** He or she is someone who is a faithful aide to the hero. He exposes required evidence concerning the villain. Even this character does the job of bringing about comic relief in the melodrama, but he is not displayed as a brainless buffoon.

6. **A maidservant:** He or she is someone who is flirtatious, amusing and faithful aide of the heroine.

Characteristically, the plot of a melodrama has three main components:

- Provocation of the villain to do bad to the hero and the society at large;
- Anguishes that the hero, heroine and society suffer due to the bad done by the villain; and
- he punishment which constitutes the end of the play, where the villain penalized for his bad deeds throughout the melodrama.

Walt Disney's *Robin Hood* is a classic example of a good and effective melodrama. The hero, Robin Hood, is a handsome and courageous man; he raids the wicked and wealthy people in order to give to the poor, desolate and the needy. Little John is his associate who is adorable, humorous and caring. Both are incited to fight bravely against the wicked villain, Prince John and his dirty assistant, Sir Hiss. In his struggles, Robin Hood is able to woo the heroine, Marian, who

joins him in his escapades against the evil. The maidservant, Lady Kluck, is also characteristic of a melodrama and fits in the plot very well. She is trustworthy, funny and all the time flirting with Little John. In the end, the villain and all his associates are punished by imprisonment and Robin Hood is victorious in bringing back happiness and justice to the kingdom.

History of Melodrama

In the contemporary literary world whenever there is mention of melodrama, it is referred to with a sort of disdain and categorized by falseness, pomposity and vulgarity. Certain specialists have gone down to the extent of saying that the period between Richard Brinsley and Bernard Shaw did not witness any drama. This certainly authorizes the point that for nearly hundred years the English theatre ached due to awful dramatic poverty, so much so, that not even one decent play was available for people to witness. Nineteenth century saw the emergence of melodrama in England began flourishing during this time. Some critics are of the view that British drama slowly moved towards decline along this time and it also began to lose its identity as a serious art form. Irrespective of the numerous reasons which caused its waning, many types of plays other than melodramas came into existence, these, however were not as important as melodrama.

Farces, spectacles, and extravaganzas are a few such genres. Out of the newly developed kinds of drama, only melodramas and farces came to be acknowledged as genuine genres of drama. They were known as 'legitimate' and hogged by 'Drury Lane' and 'Covent Garden' theatres. Covent Garden did the first melodrama in England, *A Tale of Mystery*, which Thomas Holcroft adapted from the French René-Charles Guilbert de Pixérécourt's Coelina; ou, L'Enfant du Mystere well, not a single acknowledgment was included in the performance.

Factually speaking, melodrama was at its prime time throughout the nineteenth century, during this time it was primarily dependent on bad French translations. In fact, it was only nearing the close of the century that melodrama began to adopt a British feel to it. The works of Sir Arthur Wing Pinero, Henry Arthur Jones, and Oscar Wilde marked a decline in the popularity of the typical melodrama. The dramas authored by these playwrights were inclined to delve deeper into life's issues, this paved the way to a more thought provoking and more literary recognized drama.

It would be pertinent to mention here that while on its way to popularity and following, melodrama got divided into many kinds, showing the shifting values and concerns of the society in Britain. Society saw many important changes with the commencement of the weakening of aristocracy and increase in strength and importance of a newly found middle class. Different facets of life witnessed many noteworthy changes, where few existing ethics and principles gave way to new ones. These new ethics were more suitable to the attitude and way of life of the rising middle class which was comprised of traders and businessmen. In contrast

to the aristocracy, the people belonging to this class were not very well educated. Owing to their poor educational and cultural upbringing, they preferred going to the theatre in order to relax and have fun instead of spending time musing over high class, sophisticated literary plays.

Pixérécourt, one of the most important nineteenth century French melodrama playwrights, had no hesitation in stating that he was 'writing for those who cannot read'. As a result to that, he came up with 'a melodramatic artistry aimed entirely at an unlettered populace'. Different types of melodrama that emerged and became popular are: the Social, the Gothic or Romantic, the Nautical, and the Domestic melodrama. In spite of the different variety in melodrama, all of them had particular common characteristics with regard to the theme, characters, plot, language, and scenic effects. In order to bring about the harsh ethical bindings of that era, melodrama rested on the dominant theme of good (hero) against bad (villain). Thus, melodramas spun around the rudimentary struggle between virtue and vice. Based on the variation in themes due to the shifting standards of every period, Disher (1954) comments, 'Shakespeare's audiences liked blood, Restoration wits preferred sex, and eighteenth-century exquisites favored sentiment and Victorians demanded morals'.

In contrast to contemporary drama, in which playwrights go right to the bottom of a man's inner self and where there is no real clarity between virtue and vice, and man's character is too complex to be merely understood the way it appears, melodramatic characters just characterize complete virtue or pure vice. Without an exception, the good always stands victorious over evil and evil is always punished in the end. Quite similar to the traditional American movies in which the villain was always defeated by the virtuous hero. Those melodramas were spun around a number of themes, for example, cruelty, revolt, allurement, captivity and failed love stories. In views of Allardyce Nicoll (1966), who has numerable extraordinary dramatic works to his credit, including melodrama, 'excitement, exaltation of virtue and poetic justice appear in all…. spiced with a little pathetic humanitarianism and a dash of ghostliness'. (History, 105).

After understanding melodrama it can be said, that all melodramatic plays end with satisfaction and comfort, if not with joy, as 'heroes prosper while villains die miserably' (Disher, xiv). Other than this, melodramas of earlier times were known to link virtuousness with paucity and immorality with prosperity. This could be taken as an implied suggestion to the wicked acts perceived to be done by the erstwhile influential nobles against servants, slaves and farmers; this was the prevalent theme of the time, undertaken by various European authors. *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* by Thomas Hardy is an apt such example.

The model, naïve and simplistic characters featuring in melodramas were also characteristic only to this genre. These were brought together with regard to glamorized sentimentalism. Although the characters of melodrama have been discussed above, yet making a mention of them again it is worth referring to Marcia

Landy's (1991) take on this that sums up these characters as: The lowly female, the prostitute, the destitute woman harassed due to her abstinence, the ruthless, drunkard and womanizer. The male (hero) and the female (heroine) protagonists were typically portrayed as upright, benevolent, and faithful. They, along with their sidekicks were always ready to give up anything courageously in the name of love and general good of people. The negative character in the melodrama, known as the villain, however, was another key character without whom it would be difficult to give an interesting angle to the play. This character was a sensation for the new quasi-literate audience of the nineteenth century. His sheer arrival evoked the emotions of these people, who hooted him and applauded the hero. The villain or the representative of evil on stage took to many different roles: sometimes he would be a cruel lawbreaker, sometimes he would dawn the guise of a ridiculous killer and at times he would be a clever conspirator.

The same villain's social status also changed according to the change in the melodrama, like a greedy boss, a lustful owner, or a dirty landlord. Adding another interesting feature to the presentation of these various melodramatic negative and positive characters, their looks or external presentation was based on their internal qualities. As a result, the good or the virtuous were given good looks and the bad were made to look ugly. Therefore, ones on stage depicting bad characters were dyed black or made crooked in some or the other way. Melodramas were no doubt full-of-blood and Gothic atmosphere but in spite of that all, always had a scene or more filled with (cheap) humour. In words of Michael Booth (1973), 'Oddly coexisting with intensely melodramatic elements were equally strong components of low comedy and eccentric characterization that provided most of its humour'.

Therefore, the melodrama audience in the nineteenth century not only anticipated but was even very keen to laugh and applaud at appalling humorous scenes which were not related to the play's plot in the real sense. The dramatic grave plots flavored with phony scenes and make belief ends also formed a part of melodrama. The presentation was dependent on mal-structured theatrical positions, characteristically presenting a made-up problem which generally culminated into ease and contentment. In fact, the modern-day TV serials and movies are quite like the melodramas of the 19th century which was based on extremes. In the contemporary world, however, the popularity of melodrama has declined to a large extent. Though the form and genre of melodrama is still dominating in the silver screen part but no one is any more interested in watching such melodrama live in theatres any longer.

Check Your Progress

5. Why are the characters of melodrama different from contemporary drama?
6. State any one characteristic of melodrama.

11.5 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS QUESTIONS

1. The main aim of one act plays was to entertain the spectators before the beginning of the real performance or theatre.

2. One act plays deal with a particular prevailing state of affairs and their goal is to create a single conclusion.

3. The main theory propagated by Albert Camus through his essay, 'The Myth of Sisyphus', that life is characteristically pointless. He argues that a man unnecessarily goes on running in search of meaning and truth.

4. The general features of absurdist plays comprise this overall empirical philosophy attached with a denunciation of descriptive continuousness and the inflexibility of reason, along with a fundamental depreciation of language which is understood as a useless effort to communicate that what is not possible.

5. In contrast to contemporary drama, in which playwrights go right to the bottom of a man's inner self and where there is no real clarity between virtue and vice, and man's character is too complex to be merely understood the way it appears, melodramatic characters just characterize complete virtue or pure vice.

6. Melodramas are usually filled with outstanding happenings such as pursuits, eruptions, combats, encounters. These kind of enthralling events exhibited in a melodrama involve and captivate the audience and makes them forget the nagging worries of their own world.

11.6 SUMMARY

- The beginning of one act plays dates back to the 18th and 19th centuries when they were written and enacted all over to play the part of either 'The Curtain Raisers' or 'The After Pieces'.

- The first ever one act play to be enacted as a 'Curtain Raiser' was called the 'Monkey's Paw' and the irony is that it was enjoyed far more by the audience as compared to the main theatre.

- The introduction of detailed stage direction with respect to one act plays can be attributed to the well-known Norwegian dramatist Ibsen, who introduced it for the very first time.

- One act plays do not require any kind of extravagant settings or expensive costumes, thus, it can be staged in casual dramatic associations or clubs.

- A one act play is concluded in only one act, contrary to the other regular plays which are constructed over numerous acts.

- In recent past a sub-genre of one act plays has emerged which is known by the name of 'flash drama', it is a 10 minute long play which has gained immense popularity over the past.

- A one act play is a short duration play, so there is actually just adequate time this to get familiar with only one character and that generally happens to be the hero.

- One act plays deal with a single theme which is established through a single circumstance to one climax so that maximum impact can be created.

- A one act play is not dependent on outstanding impacts and regular old dramatic tricks.

- One act plays are influenced by realism. Commonplace people are depicted as characters in the modern one act plays.

- Absurd theatre denotes a literary movement in the field of drama which gained popularity all over European countries beginning from the decade of the 1940s and it lasted till around 1989.

- Critics are of the opinion that Absurd Drama came to fore as a crusade from the uncertainties and dreads around the Second World War.

- The term, 'Theatre of the Absurd' was devised by Martin Esslin in his book bearing the same title in the year 1962.

- The absurd drama is also known as 'New Theatre'. The New Theatre movement was initially a Paris-based occurrence which was related with tremendously small theaters in the Quartier Latin.

- Absurd drama is based on themes which are centered acts and are not logical, truthful happenings, or traditional personality oriented.

- The characters of the 'Theatre of Absurd' are misplaced and detached. They exist in an inconceivable space, where they disregard sensible strategies and broad viewpoints for these methodologies are insufficient.

- Sometimes the characters of Absurdist plays are found to exist in mutually dependent pairs, usually both are males or one partner in the pair is a male and the other a female.

- Though Absurdist plays are known for their silly language, yet main part of the dialogue of these plays is naturalistic.

- Traditional plot constructions are hardly a deliberation in 'The Theatre of the Absurd'. Plots can comprise the absurd recurrence of platitude and monotony, just like that in *Godot* or *The Bald Soprano*.

- The beginning of melodrama is said to have happened in France in the last part of the eighteenth century and beginning of the nineteenth century.

- The distinct characteristics of melodrama are visible in almost every dramatic period ranging between Euripides in ancient Athens to Shakespearean drama.

- The interaction between audience and performers of the drama is an important part of melodrama. This sort of an involvement adds weight to the message carried by the melodrama.

- Broadly speaking, melodramas are ethical stories which demonstrate a battle between good and bad with the good ultimately coming out victorious.

- In the contemporary literary world whenever there is mention of melodrama, it is referred to with a sort of disdain and categorized by falseness, pomposity and vulgarity.

11.7 KEY WORDS

- **Absurd Theatre:** It refers to a literary movement in the field of drama which gained popularity all over European countries beginning from the decade of the 1940s and it lasted till around 1989.

- **Melodrama:** It refers to the ethical stories which demonstrate a battle between good and bad with the good ultimately coming out victorious.

- **One act play:** It refers to a play which consists of only one act. It is different from other plays as most of the plays have several acts.

- **Stock Characters:** It refers to the characters founded on set personalities or typecasts.

11.8 SELF ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

Short Answer Questions

1. List the main features of melodrama.
2. What are the four stages in a one act play?
3. Why is absurd drama also known as 'The New Theatre?'
4. What are the three main components of melodrama?
5. Write a short note on the role of villain in melodrama?
6. List the features of absurd drama.

Long Answer Questions

1. Discuss the development and features of one act plays.
2. Analyse the contribution of Albert Camus in 'The Theatre of the Absurd'.
3. Interpret the characteristics of Absurd drama.
4. Explain the importance of melodrama in the existing times.
5. Discuss the style of plot construction of Absurd drama.

11.9 FURTHER READINGS

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BLOCK - IV
FICTION AND ESSAY

UNIT 12 NOVEL

Structure

12.0 INTRODUCTION

A novel is a work of moderately lengthy descriptive fiction. It is generally in the form of prose, which is characteristically printed in the form of a book. The genre 'novel' has been defined as consisting of a nonstop and all inclusive history which dates back to almost two thousand years.

The novel is said to have originated in traditional Greece and Rome, during the era of medieval and early modern romance. Miguel de Cervantes, who wrote *Don Quixote*, the first part of which was published in 1605, has been often called the first noteworthy European novelist of the contemporary era.

In this unit, the meaning and the major types of novels have been discussed in detail. The works of various renowned authors have been analysed. The unit will also discuss about the characteristics of various types of novels.

12.1 OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- Discuss the meaning and types of novels
- Analyse the development of various genres of novel in English literature

- Discuss the contribution of various authors and their works in developing novel as a literary form
- Interpret the characteristics of various forms of novels

12.2 NOVEL AND ITS TYPES

The term 'novella' has been derived from an Italian word which was used for a short story to differentiate it from a novel. The word 'novel' has been in vogue in English ever since the beginning of eighteenth century, for something which happens be someplace in middle. In Ian Watt's *The Rise of the Novel*, written in 1957, that the novel came into existence for the first time in some part of early eighteenth century.

Types of Novels

Novels, which are widely read and enjoyed by millions of readers across the globe, take the reader into a world spun by the author. This fictitious world is very different from the practical world that the reader lives in. Hence, he gets completely engrossed and is transposed to the make belief world created by the author. Some novels however, are inspired by real people's lives so the reader is easily able to relate to them. Authors write about numerous topics so a novel may belong to any one of these genres, for example, historical, picaresque, sentimental, gothic, psychological, epistolary, pastoral, apprenticeship, roman a clef, antinovel, detective, mystery, thriller, dramatic, science fiction, cult or coteries, western, best seller, fantasy and prophecy, proletarian.

In the following section, we will discuss about the types of novels.

Epistolary Novel

The epistolary novel is that genre of novel in which the novelist expresses the story with the help of documents. The most customary way to understand is that an epistolary novel is carved out of series of letters. There are some authors who however enlarge the scope of their resource foundation by using things like newspaper cuttings, diary entries, magazine articles, etc., as resource material. The epistolary novel has been in existence in numerous shapes and comprehensions. The Roman poet, Ovid was the first one to have ever used letters (also known as epistles) in his works. The form however took its true customary shape somewhere in the 1600s and touched the pinnacle of fame in the 18th century.

Some experts of this variety of novels are of the opinion that the epistolary genre is 'particularly suited for the female voice' (Goldsmith vii), a notion learnt by the historical perspective of its rise. Initially, males used to imitate 'female voice' and thus, came up with epistolary text. In the 18th century, the epistolary variety of novels was 'the favored mode of moral instruction for women' (Gilroy and

Verhoeven 2). As women started being educated, they learnt how to read and write. In order to master this newly found talent of theirs, they started to practice writing by writing. 'Newly educated women could easily learn to write letters, and, as epistolary theory became more adapted to worldly culture, women's letters began to be considered the best models of the genre' (Goldsmith viii).

During the time of rise popularity of epistolary novels in markets started in the 18th century, more and more male authors, including Rousseau and Richardson, started to acquire mastery over the method of copying female text seen in previous publications (Goldsmith vii-viii). 'Female letters traditionally focused on domestic life or on love; they spoke in the private voice appropriate to women whose roles were increasingly circumscribed within the constraints of bourgeois ideology' (Gilroy and Verhoeven 2). That is the reason why maximum epistolary narratives are centered on these subjects. The reason behind such a happening could be that the male authors who produced original epistolary novels built their reproductions on the basis of letters written by real women. Epistolary writing has a tradition of having non-fictional features in epistolary novels; examples of such inclusions have been seen far more in epistolary novels than any other genre of fiction.

With respect the genre Linda Kauffman opines that epistolary novelists usually blur 'the lines between fiction and reality by including morsels of information that seem to be about [their] 'real [lives]'" (205). They are known to use events from their actual existence in their plots. The epistolary method involves a kind of breaking of the narrative. The person reading the novel is aware of more than the writer or the reader of the letter, because 'the reader of the epistolary novel is aware that within its boundaries there is another reader' (Campbell 336). The person reading the novel, nevertheless, is not able to know more than what the characters divulge. Thus, it is important for the reader to visualize and comprehend both, the writer as well as the reader. Just as the writer ceases writing the letters the novel also comes to an end.

Thus, epistolary novels 'refuse the kind of closure informing other narratives' (Campbell 333). An epistolary novel always leaves unanswered questions. Letters can be compared with comics in many ways; like in comics the epistolary novels also require their readers to take part in some actions. The writers of the letters, however, do not define these actions in as much a detail as is witnessed by a reader of narrative fiction. McCloud is of the opinion that, 'every act committed to paper by the comic's artist is aided and abetted by a silent accomplice. An equal partner in crime known as the reader' (68). He makes use of an illustration in which one structure in a comic consists of an attacker and an assumed victim, and the very next frame or structure consists of constructions and a shriek. The reader is accused by McCloud of being guilty of committing the murder, in her thoughts. Likewise, in epistolary novels the writer of the epistle may possibly deliberate upon the consequence of a happening or a doing and it is left to the novel's reader to visualize it, to 'commit the crime'.

In the modern era, due to the comprehensive usage of Internet, broadcastings, television and other means of mass media, the customary epistolary novel has practically vanished just like the traditional habit of writing letters. In order to still persist, in some form or the other, the epistolary novel in the modern era tryout different ways with the customary method, and writers make use of blogs, emails, instant messaging (IM), memos, and other electronic forms of communication to tell narrate stories. Present-day epistolary works also consist of travel tickets by various means such as train or plane, duplicate symbols or bills of fare, and contain illustrations or pictures. Similar to the published novel which comprised traditions of the manuscript, and the manuscript echoed spoken traditions which had been in prevalence earlier than that, new expertise though unable to continue it in the same way, but it certainly carries it on in a diverse way.

Ester Milne opines that, 'the epistolary body of email is a figure for thinking through the relations between new and old media'. The new kinds of letters 'borrow iconography, codes of composition and modes of social practice from its predecessor' (Milne 85). Layouts of email reveal earlier methods of communication: the similarity between the present day email and the erstwhile letter lies in the addressed 'to' and the addressee 'from', which is similar in both. The terms 'CC' and 'BCC' used in an email have been derived from the memo form of office communication which was in vogue before advent of the Internet. Other signs of earlier epistles can be seen in the form of paper clips representing 'Attach file'. The paper clip was actually used to attach documents with each other before dispatching them for correspondence. This similarity between the old practice of letter writing and the newer one of sending emails has been best stated by Keskinen, she says, 'the technology of writing implements – whether quill or ball-point pens, typewriters, or computers - undoubtedly have some influence on the particulars of the epistolary genre but do not necessarily change its overall form' (386).

The genre of epistolary novels is considered to be the female genre as these novels are supposed to be for women and also written in the female style of writing. Many literary specialists, though, are of the opinion that this genre of novels is better termed as 'a history of restrictions or failed interactions' (Goldsmith xii). Several scholars see this female genre as a specimen of suppression by men. Even after women got some sort of freedom and began to taste success in domains considered worthy only for men, the traditional past of women of being invisible and helpless still remain stuck to them for a very long time. Epistolary novels finally came a first form expression of women's voice but the irony of it was that it was only as established by men. Men were the ones to put into place rules at a very early stage. The custom of men impersonating women's writing inhibited the freedom of women to be able to utilize the genre by invoking models and determining the 'feminine' characteristics of writing.

According to men in the 1600s, as women began letter writing, women possessed 'superior emotional expressiveness' (Jensen 29). This sole higher

characteristic was not sufficient to be circulated or acknowledged by people as a form of art.

Actually, women's writing was used by male authors as a beginning mark. Menfolk were of the belief that the style of writing gave away the gender of the author. 'The feminine is subjective, disordered, associative, illogical; the masculine is objective, orderly, controlled, logical' (Kauffman 228). By musing over the writings by women and by copying them, male writers 'improve[d]' the 'imperfect' feminine epistolary model (Jensen 30). Men found women's writings devoid of style, so they took upon themselves to make a correction in this regard and while doing so the male writers had no regard for the women writers.

With the increase in popularity of this genre and the increase in number of women beginning to reading, writings by women started to be published by men. Some females however, got their work published secretly, but most of these epistles written by women formed a part of novels authored by men and they were even accredited to those male novelists. Most epistolary novels are stories of love, highlighting distance, concealment, and confidentiality.

12.2.1 Detective Novels

The detective genre of fiction revolves around a crime committed by an unknown person or group of people, which is ultimately solved by the efforts of a detective. These novels are full of clues which keep cropping up throughout the book and readers are challenged to find out the criminal with help of the clues given. Revelation of the actual criminal is made just before the novel is about to finish, so that there is excitement throughout. Introduction of the crime committed is generally done in the beginning of the novel. It generally appears to be a perfectly committed crime with whatsoever no traces anywhere. The detective starts to collect hints and evidences and sometimes he or she seems to be going in the wrong direction it even feels like that she might not be able to solve the crime. Sometimes, in order to build up the suspense and to make the novel more interesting, the author plots to get the wrong person accused. In the end, however, the detective is able to cleverly join all pieces together and pin point the wrong doer. The crime is solved by the detective and the guilty is punished.

History of Detective Genre

It is difficult to ascertain as to which story should be given the title of the first ever detective story of the world. According to some experts, *The Three Apples* in *Arabian Nights* is fit to be called the first ever detective story written. While others differ with this view because the lead character in the story fails in the endeavor of solving the crime, he is not able to find the woman's murderer. Some scholars hold the story *The Three Princes of Serendip*, which is a medieval Persian fairy tale, worthy of the title. In this story the princes have been depicted as the

'detectives' who are able to locate the missing camel more due to luck rather than their intellectual capabilities.

The Murders in the Rue Morgue, written by Edgar Allan Poe in 1841is often said to be the first contemporary detective story, but in reality Das Fräulein von Scuderi, written by E. T. A. Hoffmann was recorded to have been written 20 years before the former. Another claimant to the title of the oldest detective story in the world is *The Secret Cell*, which is said to have been written in 1837 by, William Evans Burton, this is older than Edgar's *Rue Morgue* by about four years. It is the story of a policeman who needs to find the kidnapper of a young girl.

Sherlock Holmes is name which needs no introduction in the genre of detective fiction. He can be easily called the most celebrated fictitious detective to have ever been created. The character of Sherlock Holmes was fashioned, by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle. This character is a combination of Poe's Dupin. This can be seen in the various tricks used by Holmes which are actually original creation of Poe, used by Dupin.

Sherlock Holmes does not actually come to conclusions. It won't be wrong to say that, his logical thinking is shaped into induction, which is not really the same. In logic, to deduce means to come to decisions keeping common statements in mind, while induction is based on precise specimens, e.g., the lipstick mark on a man's collar, scratches on a person's arm, etc. After the success of Sherlock Holmes' detective stories and increase in acceptance of ghost stories and horror fiction towards the end of the 19th century, a new subgenre came to fore which was known as the 'psychic detective', this was based on crimes committed by (probably) paranormal beings, these crime stories were solved in the same way as Sherlock would solve crimes. The most famous character to arise from this subgenre was that of, John Silence or the 'psychic doctor.' Silence was a creation of horror author Algernon Blackwood.

The most famous detective fiction novelist of all times is perhaps Agatha Christie. Agatha Christie's detective novels generally started with the murder. The author worked upon the way the murder was to be committed, she then dwelled upon the murderer and ultimately she came to the motive behind the murder. Christie was of the opinion that less number of words worked best for detective stories. She did not want to bore the reader by repeating one account many times and liked to keep things as brief (but very substantial) as possible.

Besides the brevity of her explanations, the language used in her novels was also simple, repetitive and very easy to comprehend. Another characteristic of Christies's detective novels was her reliance on dialogue. Furthermore, the key frequently depended upon the understanding of the reader about something said by a character.

Reasons for Popularity of Detective Fiction

Industrialization of western society can said to be one of the main reasons behind this genre's popularity. With the advent of industrialization, people started to shift to big cities where they rubbed shoulders with others from various strata of society. It was with migration of enormous number of people into big cities, that crime also started to spread its wings. Before that crime was not really a prevalent part of human society. Big houses and affluent lifestyle of people living in big cities encouraged the miscreants to resort to activities like, felonies, burglaries and attacks. Crime scared people yet at the same time it even fascinated them. This sentiment of masses was exploited by authors to conjure detective stories which were widely accepted.

Characteristics of Detective Novels

Main detective characters of early novels belonging to this genre usually used to be specialized private detectives. Later novels, however, started to have all kinds of detectives for example, crime witnesses, normal people and insurance agents. An average detective hero of a detective novel usually consists of the following characteristics:

- The main characters of detective novels were quite similar to mythical heroes like, Odysseus. These detective heroes always had to fight challenges, enticements, threat etc. They were normally found loyal to a greater authority (usually Truth)

- The protagonist was many times called the "private eyes" which meant that nothing could be missed by his "all-seeing" eyes.

- The detective hero was always a well-educated and cultured person and sometimes affluent too.

- His physical strength was such that no one could ever defeat him in a scuffle.

- He was always quick witted and his abilities to do things like playing cards, racing cars or shooting, were far greater than an average human being.

- His linguistic prowess also could outwit anyone.

12.2.2 Dramatic Novel

Dramatic novel is a piece of literature written in prose. This is presented in the form of dialogue or dramatic story. Stories of dramatic novels involve clash or distinction between characters of the book. Many of these creations are presented before an audience in the form a play on a stage. The dramatic representation of drama novels requires focus on the physical attributes of all characters; various settings to give the viewers a real feel of the environment of the drama. Dialogues for a very important constitute of a dramatic novel as the events of the drama and the message conveyed to the audience is done primarily through the medium of dialogues.

12.2.3 Picaresque Novel (1742-1768)

'Picaresque' as a term means relating to an episodic style of fiction dealing with the adventures of a rough and dishonest but appealing hero. Its origin is from French, and Spanish picaresco, or picáro meaning 'rogue' in the sixteenth century. 'Picaro' means 'rouge' in Spanish. Such a story deals with the escapades of a careless young man who lives by his wits and is hardly a subject to change of character through the succession of adventures which he undergoes. Spanish, writer Cervantes's *Don Quixote* (1605) is its most celebrated example. *Gil Blas* (1715) by Le Sage, a Frenchman, is also a very famous picaresque narrative. This kind of novel is realistic in style, episodic in structure, and often satiric and ironical in tone. This is an episodic recounting of the adventure of a single hero or an anti-hero on the road. In England, the followers of this tradition were many and all presented stories through their own point of view adding some new element in it.

Henry Fielding (1707–1752) is one of the most known figures of English letters. He was a great explorer of human nature and had wide experience of life. His works were lively and strong. Though in his lifetime, he was seen as 'dirty and low' as a writer, he appears to have influenced the following centuries. He had been the pioneer of English novels. His masterpiece *Tom Jones* (1749) is ranked by Maugham among the ten greatest novels of the world. His novels are categorised as novels of reason. He had lively realism, great play of humour, irony and satire; stuck to sanity, to tolerance for human weaknesses, had keen eye for humour, engaging narrative, gift of strong plot and theme, vivid characterisation, comic dialogues and much more. Through Fielding's narrative – a reader is never bored. He had been frank in describing human folly.

Contribution: A sound technique and logical following of life are Henry Fielding's gift to English novels. Fielding influenced the posterity more than any other novelist of his age. As per as developments of novel as a form of art is concerned, Fielding's contribution remain far above his contemporaries. He can be called the father of the modern English novel.

Realism: Fielding is a pioneer of realism in English literature. In fact, the English novel was born with the characteristics of realism. He began novel writing late in reaction to Richardson's Pamela and sentimental novels of morality. It did not mean that he was immoral. His novels too instruct but with comic and humour. His sentiments are put in a right place without exaggeration. His canvas is big with wide range of characterisation. His prose is realistic and at ease. Even tense or pathetic situations are imbued with irony and humour like Ben Jonson. His whole range of character describes reality. His novels are pictures of his age and people. He speaks his truth pungently but through the vein of comic. He has greater philosophy and spirit of the age. He speculates into the nature of man very deeply in an intellectual and moral way.

Humour, Comic and Irony: He is considered one of the greatest humorists of his age. He had been gifted with dramatic devices which because he was earlier a dramatist. In fact, it was for Fielding's political satires that the Licensing Act had been passed. He had followed into Cervantes's footsteps. His humour has a wide range: it may be a humorous fight of his hero on a highway or the pathetic side of human life ironically. His humour is subtle, not boisterous. His humour is not pungent but pleasant and full of irony. *Tom Jones* is considered among world's ten best novels. He considered his Joseph Andrews a 'comic epic in prose'. His parson of Adams is a product influenced by Sancho Panza of *Don Quixote*. Fielding is considered 'cheerful, sunshiny, breezy spirit that prevails everywhere strongly', said Coleridge. He smiled like Chaucer. His humour is soft, mild and unpretentious.

Philosophy and moral: Fielding began writing as parodying *Pamela* by making Joseph Andrews her brother. It was in order to laugh at the exaggerated morality and sentimentality of Richardson. However as compared to *Pamela*, in *Joseph Andrews'*, he shows an intellectual depth with greater human philosophy having broad insight into human nature. His characters are genuine products of higher intellect and observation of morality and ethics. They do not pose but breathe it. It is inherent in their nature. Born in a rich family, Fielding himself had seen quite a lot of human life because of the vicissitudes that he underwent. His characters are generous, good humoured and thoughtful. They act with wisdom and presence of mind.

Gift of solid plot: Fielding is known for strong plot narrative. *Tome Jones, Joseph Andrews, Amelia* and *Jonathan Wilde* are all great examples of well made plot-construction. Coleridge compared him with Sophocles and Ben Jonson in this regard. A strong plot means that a story never falls down the level of interest through different incidents. His novel is considered an 'amazing tour de force of plot–construction'. His novels are comedies.

Art of characterization: Plot moves through incidents and characters. Fielding's characters are though sometimes caricatures like Andrews or Shamela (1941) but they are 'not men but manners, not an individual but the species'. There is a wide variety of characters in his novels. His characters create humour and amuse the readers through their nature and events both. His characters do not attack on anything but their behaviour and its outcome is humorous. Sometimes their activities are humourous like Parson Adams'. His range of characters is compared to that of Chaucer and Jonson.

Fielding's works: *Joseph Andrews* (1742**)** is considered 'a comic epic in prose' by Fielding himself. It is his first published work. It is about Joseph Andrews, the brother of Richardson's *Pamela*, and his adventures. It is a satire. In this novel, he targeted to satirise Richardson's exaggerated morality and sentimentalism portraying it in a man. It tells how Lady Booby aims at the virginity of Andrews and puts him under trial. She tries her best to separate him from Fanny, his beloved but after a

lot of fun – the two are married at the end. Parson Adams is their friend and sabotage throughout his humorous encounters here and there.

Jonathan Wild (1743) is about a real story and a political satire aimed on Robert Walpole. It is considered a loose narrative inspired by his age. It is a great example of irony. Wild, born to a poor family, becomes a Thief–Taker General, who while working on the side of law became dishonest to fill up his own pocket. He is arrested, tried and executed.

Tom Jones (1749) is divided into 18 books, making a thick volume which relates the history of a foundling. It is a comic novel and Fielding's masterpiece for which he has been placed amongst world's greatest novelists. Tom Jones, a ward of Squire Allworthy, falls in love with Sophia and he is a vigorous and lusty youth but honest and soft-hearted. Sophia is his neighbour and from a rich family and the elderly gentleman opposes their love and at last they are united. The novel has portrayal of wide range of nature and it is a social criticism of the English society. Low birth is mocked at where it is proved to be one of the mistakes by those who are of high birth.

Amelia is considered as his last great contribution to the English letters. It is a different story which is pathetic in tone about a patient and virtuous wife whose sufferings are portrayed. It is a domestic and serious novel.

Tobias Smollett (1721–71) is considered a great novelist of the eighteenth century after Richardson and Fielding, though his work is ranked not as great as theirs. His novels are steeped deep in the picaresquian style. *Roderick Random* (1748), *Peregrine Pickle* (1751) and *Humphrey Clinker* (1771) are some of his famous novels. As an artist, he was a realist gifted with a fine flow of narration and colourful events. He was a sharp observer of life and its rough sides, especially of the sea–life. He put brutal and coarse facts of life into fiction devoid of moral and had a course humour. He is not as lively as others of his age but realistic in nature. His novels are full of new situations and events.

Lawrence Sterne (1713–68): Lawrence Sterne was also one of the four notable writers of the eighteenth-century English novel. *Tristram Shandy*, *The Gent* (1759–1767) is his masterpiece which is in nine volumes: a mixture of unconnected incidents, it comprises of fancies, knowledge of human life, humour, pathos and many other important aspects of human life. His plot is considered rather scattered and his story develops late. Sterne is sentimental in his approach. He is still characterised by his streak of sentimentality. His art of characterisation is wide and vivid. His influence on his following generation is on Henry Mackenzi and his uncle Toby is an immortal character.

Check Your Progress

1. What do you understand by the term 'Picaresque'?

2. State the main theme of Henry Fielding's *Jonathan Wild*.

3. Why are dialogues an important part of dramatic novels?

12.3 SOME OTHER FORMS OF NOVELS

We will in this section discuss some of the other major forms of novels.

Sentimental Novel (1740-1780)

The sentimental novel is characterised as novel of character or psychological novel. Samuel Richardson is called the father of sentimental novel. His *Pamela*, or *Virtue Rewarded* (1704) has been written in an epistolary manner which is regarded as the first English novel. Here Richardson has narrated the story of a meek and pious lady of low birth. He has depicted a rustic lady's emotion that carefully fights for her modesty in the presence of a dissolute master. She is, at the end, married to the same man who changes morally. His other work was *Clarissa Harlowe* (1747–48) written in epistles in eight volumes. It is conveyed only through the exchange of letters. It is the story of a tragic heroine Clarissa who is a beautiful and virtuous young lady. She is a neo-rich whose grandfather has left property to her but only if she marries Richard Lovelace, an enemy to their family. Lovelace at one point of time, under his passion of love and hatred for her family, drugs and rapes her. She becomes more adamant and abhors him because he had put her into a brothel. She escapes from there and commits suicide. She makes a will which irrespective of her hatred is passed over to Lovelace. He becomes ashamed to see what way Clarissa returned him his villainy with a good heart and that pains him very much. Lovelace feels ashamed of himself as he comes to know its purport. He goes to Italy fights a duel and knowingly becomes injured and dies. His last novel is *Sir Charles Grandison* (1754) in which the hero is a virtuous Christian gentleman who has been very careful and scrupulous in his love affair.

Richardson's gifts: Samuel Richardson has dealt very keenly into the female psychology. He was a great reader of human behaviour. He was also adept in describing the emotional problems of human life. He made a great effort in liberating novel as a form from a conservative outlook which those who regarded it as a reading for pleasure. He is known for his psychological analysis and introspection and social realism. His stress on morality and sentimentality made him popular across Europe. But he is often considered a writer of lengthy novels; his morality is called smug or prudish. His description of the emotional details of the protagonist's psychology is a quality which makes him an immortal writer.

Lawrence Sterne (1713–68)**:** Sentimental novels depend on emotional response of both the characters and the readers. The plot in a sentimental novel advances in an emotional manner rather than in action. Lawrence Sterne is also a notable writer of this genre. His novel *Sentimental Journey* (1768) is a famous sentimental novel. Sterne's journey through France and Italy is the subject here. It is travel writing: a discussion of personal taste and sentiments of men's manners and morals over classical learning. The narrator is Reverend Yorick whose adventures are recorded in this book. This is an amorous type of tale representing a series of self-

contained episodes. In style, it is more elegant than his *Tristram Shandy*, *The Gent* which is the story of an eccentric Shandy family. The story is about Yorick who travels to France when the country is at wars with his nation; has problem with his passport for which is imprisoned; gets his passport by count in one of his misgivings. Then he goes to Italy after consoling Maria, a character whose influence is there on him. He spends night at an in where he is forced to share with a lady and her servant-maid. Therein at an incident in the night the novel ends because Sterne died finishing it half-way. His close friend John Hall-Stevenson who is identified as Eugenius in the novel finished it with a continuation called 'Yorick's Sentimental Journey Continued: To Which is Prefixed Some Account of the Life and Writings of Mr. Sterne'.

Henry Mackenzie: Henry Mackenzie's *The Man of Feeling* (1771) depicts a series of moral pictures which Harley, the simple-hearted hero observes either by him or someone else speaks about the things related to him. It also has elements of romance. There is a priest also who narrates some episodes to Harley. Harley is an orphan who has clamouring guardians and they advise him to seek a relative with a view to have fruitful chances of inheritance. He moves out to acquire a patron and has several encounters with different men. There are complex episodes of goodness and his love with Miss Walton. At last, he dies having confessed his love to her which revives her. The novel deals chiefly with the rising middle class and their problem of money and inheritance.

Other important novelists: Tobias Smollett's *The Expedition of Humphrey Clinker* (1771), *Frances (Fanny)*, Burney's *Evelina* (1778) are good examples of this type. In *Evelina*, the heroine, intrinsically good and raised in a village, is educated and trained for proper living. Henry Fielding's *Tom Jones* and *Joseph Andrews* are stories of emotional and sentimental people. But they are a subtle comment on excessive emotionalism and sentimentality. These novels focused on the weaker society such as orphans and convicted men. It aimed at softer punishment and not a harsh one. Goethe's *Werther* (1774) and Richardson's *Pamela* are the greatest examples of the Sentimental Novel. The Sentimental Novel gave birth to the following generation of Gothic novel.

12.3.1 Gothic Novel or Novel of Terror and Romance (1717-1850)

In the age of transition, between the changes of the strict classical and realistic depiction of the society into novels of the eighteenth century and the nineteenth century where new liberties were taken regarding this form of art we have Gothic novel which recalls medieval set-up of Italy having elements of romance in it. It deals with cruelty and sins of the hero. It is also associated with the Gothic architectural revival of distant past. It portrays the appreciation of the joys of extreme emotion, mysterious atmosphere, thrill, fearfulness and calmness.

English Gothic writers associated medieval Gothic architecture and creating an atmosphere where darkness dominated day and night. The pictures are full of

terror having harsh laws of human nature enforced on certain characters by torture. It also embodied mysteries fantasy and superstition. Nature ruled such primitive buildings very harshly. The image of anti-hero prevailed in a mysterious, dark atmosphere in the Gothic tales. The movement of classicism and realism prevailed into the eighteenth century English literature and in such a time, the Gothic novel revived romanticism and the middle ages. Thus, it was a reaction against the literature of the eighteenth century.

Horace Walpole (1717–97)**:** Son of the Prime Minister Richard Walpole, Horace Walpole was a famous antiquary and originator of the Gothic Fiction and the harbinger of the great romantic age of English literature like his friend Thomas Grey. Rich and widely travelled, he and his friend Grey both looked beyond their age. The crass realism and mechanical depiction of the then literature forced these intellectuals to rebel against the set norms of poetry, drama and prose. His first novel, *The Castle of Otranto* (1764) was the first Gothic fiction. It was his reaction against the realism, sentimentalism and didacticism of the eighteen century literature. For this he chose a set-up quite distant in age of the twelfth or thirteenth century Italy where mystery, romanticism and supernatural prevailed. It had the element of criminality in it also.

Walpole created a Gothic mansion at Strawberry Hill where Manfred, the lord of the castle, lived with his family. The beginning of the novel marked the wedding day of his sickly son called Conrad and Princess Isabella. After the wedding, Conrad is crushed to death by a huge, gigantic helmet which falls on him from the above. Manfred himself marries Isabella being afraid of his death as the ownership of this castle had to automatically pass on to its real owner not on any member of the family. He divorced his wife Hippolita who could not become mother. Isabella escapes to a church having been helped by Theodore, a peasant to avoid Manfred's physical touch. Manfred ordered to murder Theodore taking the help of a Friar but Theodore is later recognised as the Friar's son by him at the point of his murder. There are people from other kingdom who come to free Isabella. Manfred murders Mattilda in lieu of Isabella. At last, Theodore is revealed as a true Prince of Otranto and he marries Isabella. Manfred is murderous and he is repentant on his acts. It is a mixture of tragedy and comedy: mystery and romance: terror and crime – all. It has elements of supernatural and fantasy. In his presentation of horror, romance and mystery, Walpole is compared to Shakespeare. Though this type of novel is considered an escape from the real world – it had a trail of followers who tried their deft hands on the same line of thought and plot.

Ann Radcliffe (1764–1823)**:** Radcliffe began as an imitator of Horace Walpole but it was she who explored the wider range in the perspectives of the Gothic novel. She was more articulate and successful as a writer. Her famous novels *The Mysteries of Udolpho* (1769) and *The Italian* (1797) are unique of this tradition of fictions. *The Mysteries of Udolpho* has the setting of Italy which is used for a formula or pattern to give the desired background to the story. A beautiful youth is

put into prison by a hard-hearted sadistic villain in a lonely castle. He is rescued by the hero who is not much heroic as traditionally heroes are. His heroes and heroines are almost the same in all of her works with a slight change of complexion and gait but not of heart. There are components in the story to evoke terror like the dungeons, secret vaults, hiding places and all culminate to create the effect of Gothic.

She did not use supernatural elements as Walpole did. She explained what seemed supernatural but it was reckoned as something else at the end of the story when she revealed their truth. She also used the natural description to make her pictures more colourful. She dwelt on scenic beauty and its description more powerfully which Walpole did not. Walpole had widely travelled and had seen such constructed castles in reality and based his world of imagination on what he saw. But Radcliffe had never seen about what she wrote in. So her picture of the Gothic was her own creation based completely on her imagination and fancy. Both she and Walpole lacked the proper knowledge of history. The years referred in her novels cannot be as ascertained as real. She presents a mixture of the eighteenth century didacticism and sentimentalism with romance. In this sense, she differs from Walpole who constructed his world of Gothic fictions with the essence of romanticism only.

Matthew Gregory Lewis (1775–1818)**:** Lewis's *The Monk* (1797) has different elements than Mrs. Radcliff's novels. It is a tale of blood and terror. The story is about Ambrosio who is a pious, revered monk of Spain and his story of decline and downfall. He goes mad after physical lust for his student, Matilda, a woman in disguise of a monk who allures and tempts him to it. But once he comes into the trap of this indulgence and sin, he enjoys his lust fulfilled by a pupil every now and again. He becomes addicted to this fulfilment and makes the innocent Antonia his prey forcefully. Matilda helps him to do so because she is secretly empowered by Satan and a Satan in the female form. She helps him to rape and kill Antonia. She causes Ambrosio's downfall from the beginning. The novel has some other Gothic tales within the story like *Bleeding Nun*. Ambrosio faces Inquisition and prefers an escape like Faustus by selling his soul to Satan. There is a devil which prevents Ambrosio from the final repentance and he has a prolonged, torturous end. Later on, the devil reveals to him that the woman he raped and killed was his own sister.

Other Writers of the Age

Miss Clara Reeve (1729 – 1827)**:** Ms. Reeve's *Champion of Virtue*, later to be *called The Old English Baron*, was inspired by the Gothic tradition. In it, she deals with an historical event like Walpole without the clear picture of history. Charles Robert Maturin (1782–1824) also wrote novels in the Gothic manner. *The Fatal Revenge* (1807) was inspired by Mrs Radcliff. His masterpiece is *Melmoth the Wanderer* (1820) which is considered as the greatest novel bearing the trade name of terror. It has a strong plot and analysis of motifs.

Mary Shelley (1797–1851)**:** Shelley's wife, Mary Shelley wrote *Frankenstein* (1817) which isa tale of terror having the elements of science in it. It is about the devastations caused by a machine man which itself is destroyed at the end. The theme has time and again exhausted by movie-makers and proved to be a successful and entertaining story. She was an only novelist of this period who seems to have inspired the entire generation of science fiction writers of the modern age.

William Beckford (1760-1844)**:** Beckford is considered a novelist of very fertile imagination. His work, *Vathek* (1786) has been set in Arabia and he seems to be inspired by the oriental stories. The story belongs to Vathek, a Caliph and sort of Muslim Faustus who sells his soul to Eblis or the devil. It is his story of life till death and hell which is very much terror-evoking. The description of his a death is a terrific and horrifying picture. The description of blood-shed and crime and is woven with the very texture of the novel. The novel is in the tradition of Gothic fictions.

12.3.2 Historical Novel (1814-2009)

The historical novel is that which uses setting or background from the true history of a period and attempts to convey the spirit, manners, social, economic and political conditions of that age aiming to give realistic and lively descriptions with truthful approach. The historical fact should be true to its existence and the past is made live to the doorstep of the readers. It informs the readers about the period in which it is written. The Wolf Hall by Hillary Mantel of the 21st century deals with the period of Cromwell and King Henry VIII. Thus the tradition of the historical novel has not died.

Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* (1719) was also an attempt in the picaresquian and historical representation of the hero. The German author Benedikte Naubert (1756–1819) wrote around fifty historical novels. In technique, he focused his attention on the person of minor historical significance and explained the incidents and events which they experienced. The same trend was followed by Sir Walter Scott, the greatest of all English novelists of this genre. The historical novels began as a literary form of art in the nineteenth century England by Sir Walter Scott. Though Horace Walpole and Mrs. Radcliffe tried to base their Gothic historically, but their knowledge of history failed to give a true historical charm to their stories. For historical representation of an event or person should be based on true facts.

Sir Walter Scott (1771–1832) was a notable Scottish writer of historical novel. He had explored the works of Shakespeare, the Bible, Spenser, Dryden, Swift, and historical stories greatly. He was the first English writer who had an international career and had his followers in Europe, Australia and North America. He was also a poet and playwright at the same time. Scott had worked throughout his life to revive the history of Scotland. Not only did he revive his country's historical past, but also made it live and presentable to the readers. He had studied his culture

deeply and had lively imagination to support the true facts. In other words, he made history live and walk in his times: he took rather real men from history and the dates and transformed them into an imaginary literature. The stories which were dry and uninteresting as merely had happened once, he made them live and colourful. But he did not transcend his time like Walpole but remained there making the ghosts live in his days. As Prospero controlled spirits, Walter Scott called the dead historical figures to live and breathe. He had explored a lot in history. He was a voracious reader. Since he picked up history as his setting and filled in his ideas to live those men and women, his fictions are called historical romance.

He began by translating works from German and first published his three–volume set of collected ballads, *The Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border*. This at once made him popular. Since then he delved deep into the historical past of Scotland to revive it in the memory of his generation. His historical figures of Scotland were men and women who were not famous. They were minor historical figures. This might be the influence of his age as the entire age of romanticism sought its refuge in humanism and uplift of the society.

As a novelist he had a wide range and his novels are popularly termed as 'Waverley Novel'. They are a long series of publications. He did not write his name on his first venture as a novelist called *Waverley* (1814). Later too, he used this phrase to denote his identification, 'by the author of Waverley', instead of his name. *Waverley* (1814) is a tale of the Jacobite rising of 1745 in the Kingdom of Great Britain. The hero is Edward Waverley who had been bought up in the Tory family and so, he was sympathetic to Jacobite's cause. His novels became very popular. The time when he began writing, he became a popular subject of conversation in England and was a famous name at the Royal family because George, Prince Regent invited and dined with him. He was anxious to see the author of Waverley. Scott's central interest was a subject related to chronicle. He did not centralise the novel on a certain character but on a historical period or event. As a novelist, his range is surprising for he wrote incessantly.

In 1819, he chose a subject that related to England and not specifically Scotland in his Ivanhoe. This novel is about a Jew called Rebecca who is a sympathetic character. The novel came at the time of struggle for the Emancipation of the Jews in England. His *The Bride of the Lammermoor* is based on a real story of two lovers in the backdrop of Lammermuir Hills. In this novel, Lucie Ashton and Edgar Ravenswood promise each other in love but it is later discovered by Lucie's mother that the man is the enemy of their family. She forces her daughter to marry Sir Arthur Bucklaw, a rich inheritor. But Lucie, on her wedding ceremony stabs her groom, becomes mad and dies. Scott was a very famous author throughout his life and career as a novelist. He was popularly read and liked throughout the world. He was granted the title of Baronet for his excessive popularity and was regarded very much everywhere. He became Sir Walter Scott in 1820. In service

to his country, he organised the visit of King George IV to Scotland. He was a man on whom the glory of the importance of Scottish literature rests.

It was in the 1827 that he announced himself as a writer of Waverley novel publications. The following may be considered among his famous novels: *Waverley* (1814), *Guy Mannering* (1815), *The Antiquary* (1816*), Tales of My Landlord* (1816–1818), *Rob Roy* (1818), *Ivanhoe* (1819), *The Abbot* (1820), *Kenilworth* (1821), *The Talisman* (1825), *Scottish Borders, The Fair Maid of Perth* (1828), *Anne of Geierstein* (1829), *Count Robert of Paris* (1831) and *Castle Dangerous* (1831). The name Waverley which Scott chose for his title for the long series of publications is a local government district in the status of borough in Surrey, England. Through his novels Scott aimed at exploring history of the middle ages. Scott had also established a printing press. He was equally famous in the US in his times. Mark Twain, a popular American novelist, ridiculed Scott in his *Huckleberry Finn* by calling a sinking boat as Walter Scott.

There have been critics who have praised and regarded his works optimistically but there were those who wrote against his popularity. In his lifetime, Scott was one of the most famous novelists of the world. He always served his country and men. He often fought for public causes. He never bores the readers by repetition. He did not describe his characters psychologically. He did not portray the troubles inherent in our life. His characters are often accused of being important only in the context of history but he himself condemns them by calling Waverley a 'sneaking piece of imbecility'. He did not care much for plot. But in the words of Leslie Stephen, he 'is the most perfectly delightful story-teller natural by fire-side'.

The period after Scott: Scott laid down the foundation of historical fictions in England but it spread its luminous wings towards countries such as France and Germany influenced by him. In England, Mrs. Anna Eliza Bray came to be known as Scott's successor whose novel, The Protestant (1828) pasteurizes the persecution of the Protestants in the reign of Queen Mary Tudor. G R P James was also a famous minor writer who wrote almost hundred historical novels in the period of 1825 to 1850. William Harrison Ainsworth (1805-1882) was also a popular novelist for two decades who first work was Rockwood (1834). Bulwar Lytton (1803-1873) wrote five historical novels among which *The Last Days of Pompeii* (1834) was the most popular. He stuck to moral instruction and historical truth in all his works. His historical novels therefore, are mere representation of facts and they are not as lively as Scott's. His novels are full of historical accuracy and details.

Some Victorian history novel writers used the theme of history for the sake of sectarian bias. Charles Kingsley's (1819-1875) *Hypatia* (1853) attacked the Roman Catholics. Newman's fiction called *Callista: A Sketch fo the Third Century* represented the same kind. Thackeray's Henry *Esmond* (1852) is also a chronicle novel about the life of the eighteenth century England. Dickens's *A Tale*

of Two Cities and Barnaby *Rudge* are also the novels of this genre. George Eliot's *Romola* describes the life of Italy in the period of Renaissance. In the twentieth century, Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch (1863-1944) wrote *Hetty Wesley* (1903) and *The Splendid Spur* (1889); Jacob Wassermann (1873-1934) wrote *The Triumph of Youth*; Ford Madox Hueffer (1873-1939) wrote *The Fifth Queen* (1908); Ms Phoebe Gay wrote *Vivandiere* (1929).

There were many other minor writers of historical fiction also during the centuries after Scott. In the 21st century, Hilary Mantel (1952-), an Englishwoman wrote *Wolf Hall* (2009) which is an historical novel. It won the Man Booker Prize for literature in 2009. This novel is set in the period from 1500 to 1535, a fictionalised biography which embodies the rapid rise of power of Thomas Cromwell, First Earl of Essex in the court of Henry VIII of England. It illustrates the old Latin saying 'Man is wolf to man'. Some critics have called the historical novel historical romance or romance novel also. The French writer Alexandre Dumas's (1802-1870) *The Three Musketeers* (1844) is a famous historical novel.

12.3.3 Psychological Novel (1890-1950)

The psychological novel is the product of modern outlook chiefly explored by the Georgians—Aldous Huxley, D. H. Lawrence, Virginia Woolf and James Joyce. They were all conscious innovators of the art of novel writing and added particular change of style into the art of narration. They were more interested in exploring human subconscious, a salient gift of the modernity, and noting image atom by atom as it falls to mind. They present the picture of the determination of characters as the subconscious receives images through our conscious. There the plot becomes dwarf to the subject of psychological research. Sometimes it records merely the images one by one as they fall to human consciousness with little or no coherence as in *Mrs. Dalloway* by Virginia Woolf. Such a psychological research is called stream-of-consciousness technique: it is an unbroken flow of perceptions, thoughts, and feelings in the waking mind. (M. H. Abram) it describes long passages of introspection in which the narrator records in detail what passes through a character's awareness. They were all inspired by the psychological theory of Sigmund Freud. They adopted the method for freedom of expression. Their candid expression, put innovatively, breaks all the conventional norms of novel writing.

This form was used for spinning 'contemporary vision of and reality'. The vision was influenced by the theories of Henry Bergson and Freud. Bergson changed the old concept of Time and Freud, of human consciousness. The new concept of Time was that of continuous flow while the conventional one was that of a series of separate incidents. This was the contribution of Bergson and William James's scientific analysis of human consciousness. They believed that a human mind is open – to the past, present and future alike. It is changing still 'continuous, multiple yet one'. According to the theories of Marcel Proust (1871-1922), human mind can be very flexible and is exposed to the present and the recapitulation of the

past simultaneously. It is intuitive. So the old concept of chronological fall of events in order was laid aside now.

The theories of Freud and Jung, the psychologists, explored that the objective science could describe a man better where human consciousness could carry not only his own but all the ancestral experiences, and stressed on its flexibility and multiplicity. This consciousness could travel back and stay at the present observing happenings at the same time. This theory affected the art of characterisation in the modern novel where the conscious handled the nature of man. Its best examples can be cited in David Herbert Lawrence's novels as observed by E.M Forster 'the greatest imaginative writers of the twentieth century'. Technically Lawrence did not go as deep into the exploration of the conscious as Mrs. Woolf or Joyce. His novel, *The Women in Love* is an expression of deep symbolism where the pattern is in harmony but *The White Peacock* displays Jamesian 'point-of-view' technique where the main coherence is the consciousness of one of the characters. His Sons and Lovers, *The Trespasser* and *The Lost Girl* express the conventional flow of events and the conscious and symbolism. He dwelt on man's psychological demands and settled his descriptions there, especially the suppression of sexual urge due to the modern outlook and demands of life. His novels are free and frank expressions of human urge of the subconscious which a man suppresses in order to show control over his purpose of existence in a civilized society. But it is the consciousness with which he is created. His notable fictions are *Aron's Rod* (1922), *Kangaroo* (1923), *The Rainbow* (1915), *The Plumed Serpent* and *Lady Chatterley's Lover*.

More subtle explorer of the subconscious was Dorothy Richardson (1873-1957)'s *Pilgrimage*, a series of twelve novels where the first one called *Pointed Roofs* (1915), was the one which initiated this technique. James Joyce (1882-1941) experimented with the stream-of-consciousness technique most vigourously. He was the most dominating experimentalist, unconventional, complex and precise in details, among the modernists. He was linked with the Aesthetic Movement of the nineties which apparently resulted in his Dubliners (1914) and *A Portrait of the artist as a Young Man* published in The Egoist (1916). His novel is a rebel literature against the conservative Irish life and Roman Catholicism but it reveals that both very strong influence upon him. *A Portrait of the artist as a Young Man* depicts the early to youthful years of Stephen whose wish to pursue education clashes with the traditional background of his family and its present condition. The novel describes his family background, atmosphere and love life and sex at sixteen, clash in the college. It ends declaring him a rebel in all.

The language and style of narration are highly stylistic and technical. Its prose has musical effect. *Ulysses* (1922) is a continuation of Stephen's life embodying motives of 'Art for Art's sake' where Stephen returns from Paris after his mother's death having completed his education and decides where to start his career. The theme of these novels explores the Greek story of Telemachus. But

Leopold Bloom having lost his son in infancy is the real hero here. Joyce was the inventor of the technique called 'epiphany'. He wove mythology and the present together, a method used by Eliot in his *Waste Land* (1922). Finnegan's *Wake* (1939) written after seventeen years of effort is his last novel which depicts a Dublin Publican's life, his family and customers. It is through these that the author presents a complete picture of human life. The very title of the novel represents true Irish connotation of death, funeral and resurrection. It is a complex novel. Such books can be appreciated well-qualified, intellectual and learned class.

Virginia Woolf (1882-1941) was a very famous novelist who exploited the narrative technique Stream-of-Consciousness in each of her fiction. Her novels represent mind's experience. Her characters speak about their inner experience. *Mrs. Dalloway*, the protagonist, recapitulates the time-scheme of one day in the life of an MP's wife. She is describing about a party that is to take place at night when and old friend whom she loved once has just arrived from India. The novel describes only what her conscious follows whether it is past or the present. The narrative looks incoherent and not so comprehensive though it is stylised particularly to display the stream-of-consciousness technique. In her latter novels, there is a message interwoven as in To the Lighthouse, a place on an island where the family of Mrs. Ramsay and a few close acquaintances arrive to celebrate holiday. This method of capturing the unconscious and conscious is quite improved here because it seems to relate itself to the plot in a harmonious manner. She has the gift of moral which Joyce lacked. He other prominent works is *Between the acts*, *The Waves* and *Orlando*. The Waves is called her most articulate exercise of all the artistic potentialities. Her novels show an experimentalist's way of expression with a new style and for this she is regarded amongst most prominent and influencing writers of the modern age.

12.3.4 Science Fiction

The Victorian age was growing in industrialization and scientific researches in its last phase. The trend of loss of faith and questioning gave birth to two tendencies: one to praise and hail the growth of science; and the other, to hold it in sarcasm. There were novelists who explored the genre of science fiction among whom H G Wells (1866-1946) is called the most 'scientifically trained'. He served the taste of those who expected science to do wonders in man's life by his use of scientific descriptions and background. In *Tono-Bungay* (1910), he speaks about business; in The New Machiavelli, he serves the moral purpose; in Joan and Peter, he writes about education; and in *The Soul of a Bishop*, he tells about the religion. All his science fictions were aimed to please the popular taste. *The Shape of Things to Come* (1933) and *The Time Machine* (1895) are influenced by Jules Verne. They describe the future of man. However Mary Shelley's Frankenstein was the originator of science fiction. *Two Men in the Moon, the War of the Worlds, the Wonderful Visit* is also some of his famous science fictions.

Check Your Progress

4. What is a historical novel?

5. State the main theme of James Joyce's *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man.*

6. What do you understand by the term streams of consciousness?

12.4 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS QUESTIONS

1. 'Picaresque' as a term means relating to an episodic style of fiction dealing with the adventures of a rough and dishonest but appealing hero.

2. Henry Fielding's *Jonathan Wild* (1743) is about a real story and a political satire aimed on Robert Walpole. Wild, born to a poor family, becomes a Thief–Taker General, who while working on the side of law became dishonest to fill up his own pocket. He is arrested, tried and executed.

3. Dialogues are an important part of the dramatic novel as the events of the drama and the message conveyed to the audience is done primarily through the medium of dialogues.

4. The historical novel is that which uses setting or background from the true history of a period and attempts to convey the spirit, manners, social, economic and political conditions of that age aiming to give realistic and lively descriptions with truthful approach.

5. *A Portrait of the artist as a Young Man* depicts the early to youthful years of Stephen whose wish to pursue education clashes with the traditional background of his family and its present condition.

6. Stream of consciousness is an unbroken flow of perceptions, thoughts, and feelings in the waking mind.

12.5 SUMMARY

- The term 'novella' has been derived from an Italian word which was used for a short story to differentiate it from a novel.

- Novels, which are widely read and enjoyed by millions of readers across the globe, take the reader into a world spun by the author.

- The epistolary novel is that genre of novel in which the novelist expresses the story with the help of documents.

- An epistolary novel always leaves unanswered questions. Letters can be compared with comics in many ways; like in comics the epistolary novels also require their readers to take part in some actions.

- In the modern era, due to the comprehensive usage of internet, broadcastings, television and other means of mass media, the customary epistolary novel has practically vanished just like the traditional habit of writing letters.

- The genre of epistolary novels is considered to be the female genre as these novels are supposed to be for women and also written in the female style of writing.

- The detective genre of fiction revolves around a crime committed by an unknown person or group of people, which is ultimately solved by the efforts of a detective.

- The detective novels are full of clues which keep cropping up throughout the book and readers are challenged to find out the criminal with help of the clues given.

- Main detective characters of early novels belonging to this genre usually used to be specialized private detectives.

- Dramatic novel is a piece of literature written in prose. This is presented in the form of dialogue or dramatic story.

- 'Picaresque' as a term means relating to an episodic style of fiction dealing with the adventures of a rough and dishonest but appealing hero.

- Henry Fielding (1707–1752) is one of the most known figures of English letters. He was a great explorer of human nature and had wide experience of life.

- Fielding is a pioneer of realism in English literature. In fact, the English novel was born with the characteristics of realism.

- Fielding is known for strong plot narrative. *Tom Jones, Joseph Andrews, Amelia* and *Jonathan Wilde* are all great examples of well made plot-construction.

- Plot moves through incidents and characters. Fielding's characters are though sometimes caricatures like Andrews or Shamela (1941) but they are 'not men but manners, not an individual but the species'.

- The sentimental novel is characterised as novel of character or psychological novel. Samuel Richardson is called the father of sentimental novel.

- English Gothic writers associated medieval Gothic architecture and creating an atmosphere where darkness dominated day and night.

- The historical novel is that which uses setting or background from the true history of a period and attempts to convey the spirit, manners, social, economic and political conditions of that age aiming to give realistic and lively descriptions with truthful approach.

- The psychological novel is the product of modern outlook chiefly explored by the Georgians—Aldous Huxley, D. H. Lawrence, Virginia Woolf and James Joyce.

- The theories of Freud and Jung, the psychologists, explored that the objective science could describe a man better where human consciousness could carry not only his own but all the ancestral experiences, and stressed on its flexibility and multiplicity.

12.6 KEY WORDS

- **Epistolary Novel:** It refers to a genre of novel in which the novelist expresses the story with the help of documents.

- **Detective Novel:** It refers to a novel which revolves around a crime committed by an unknown person or group of people, which is ultimately solved by the efforts of a detective.

- **Dramatic Novel:** It refers to a piece of literature written in prose. This is presented in the form of dialogue or dramatic story.

- **Sentimental Novel:** It refers to a novel which is characterised as novel of character or psychological novel.

12.7 SELF ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

Short Answer Questions

1. Write a short note on epistolary novels.
2. What are the main characteristics of detective novels?
3. Why is James Joyce considered as one of the most dominating experimentalists?
4. What are psychological novels?
5. Name some of the famous works of historical fiction.
6. Why is Fielding considered as a pioneer of realism in English literature?
7. Write a short note on science fiction.

Long Answer Questions

1. Discuss the evolution of detective genre as a major form of novels.
2. Analyse the contribution of Henry Fielding in the development of the novel.
3. Explain the concept of Gothic genre.

4. Discuss the contribution of authors such as Virginia Woolf and D H Lawrence in developing psychological novels.

5. Why is Samuel Richardson known as 'the father of sentimental novel'? Discuss in detail.

12.8 FURTHER READINGS

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UNIT 13 ESSAY

Structure

13.0 INTRODUCTION

An essay is an author's expression of his or personal opinion on a particular topic or occurrence. An essay is non-fictional piece of literature, it is usually personal and in some cases might be narrative. An essay can be written on innumerable topics like: literary criticism of a work, political philosophies, academic influences, daily life interpretations, reminiscences, and author's thoughts and ideas.

The term essay has been defined in a very categorical way; the definition of an essay is somehow unclear. It can be easily confused with that of an article or a short story. Generally all contemporary essays are written in prose, but there are some works of verse that have been termed as essays, e.g., An Essay on Criticism and An Essay on Man written by Alexander Pope. The titles of these works suggest that they are essays but the same are famous poems.

In this unit, we will discuss about the meaning of essay and its types. The components of various essays have been highlighted. The contribution of renowned essayists and their works has also been dealt in the unit.

13.1 OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- Discuss the meaning of essay
- Analyse the various types of essays
- Explain the components and characteristics of essays
- Discuss the works of renowned essayists

13.2 ESSAY: AN INTRODUCTION

An essay is actually a short prose composition which discusses a matter, expresses a viewpoint, persuasive to accept a thesis on any subject, or just entertains. An essay is not the same as from a 'treatise' or 'dissertation' because of its lack of affectation to be a methodical and absolute elucidation. Rather than being addressed to a particular readers, an essay is addressed to general public at large. That is the reason why, the focal subjects on essays are discussed in nontechnical manner. The use devices such as anecdotes, outstanding images, and comedy has also often been seen, they in fact amplify the appeal of the essay.

Formal and Informal Essay

A formal essay, or article, is written on topics which are comparatively not very personal to the author; rather he has an authority over the subject. Being extremely well-informed about the subject, the author explains the same in a methodical manner. Instances of formal essays can be found many academic bulletins or magazines. The target reader of these formal essays is an audience which is reflective and serious.

Informal essays are also known as familiar or personal essays. In the expression of these essays, an intimate tone of the author can be observed. These are focused on everyday things instead of matters related to masses at large or specialized topics. Informal essays are written in a peaceful, self-expressive or at times creative manner. Theophrastus and Plutarch from Greece and Cicero and Seneca from Rome penned down these kind of essays even the genre of informal essays was formally recognized by the name of 'Essais' coined by a French author named Montaigne in 1580. The term 'Essais': technically means attempts and was expected to show the unsure and haphazard fashion of Montaigne's observations on topics related to 'Of Illness' and 'Of Sleeping' quite opposite to formal and methodical essays on similar topics.

Towards the end of the sixteenth century Francis Bacon, inducted the English use of the term in his own essays. Almost all his essays were short debates on topics 'Of Truth', 'Of Adversity', 'Of Marriage and the Single Life'. Though widely written in prose form but there were some authors who used verse to craft essays, Alexander Pope is one such person to have achieved this feat, the 'Essay on Criticism' (1711) and the 'Essay on Man' (1733) are example of verse essays but this version of essays los the little importance that it had in the 18th century.

In the beginning of the 19th century the institution of magazines of new kinds and their slow and steady propagation, gave immense push to essay writing, thus essays became an important part of literature. It was during this time that authors like Thomas De Quincey, Charles Lamb, William Hazlitt, and Robert Louis Stevenson gave essay a position which still remains unsurpassed. They gave specific impetus to the informal or personal essay.

Mark Twain, Emerson, James Russell Lowell, Washington Irving and Thoreau are some prominent American essay writers of the 19th.Magazines, newspapers and other means of print media circulation in the 20th century are flooded with essays on a regular basis, most of these essays are formal essays. George Orwell, James Thurber, E M Forster, E B White, James Baldwin, Susan Sontag, Virginia Woolf, Joan Didion, and Toni Morrison, are some noteworthy essayists of the contemporary literary era.

The essay as literary genre

These views of Aldous Huxley, a leading essayist, put things in the right perspective: Quite similar to the novel, the essay also works as a literary tool to express one's views about anything in the world. Traditionally the essay has been a short literary expression, in fact so short that it is not possible to do justice to everything completely, within the bounds of one essay. On the other hand, an assortment of essays written on the same topic can touch upon nearly as much required, and do it practically in a thorough fashion, just as a novel would do. *Third Book* by Montaigne is the very closely comparable, to a worthy text of the *Comédie Humaine.*

Essays are that variety of literary class the great unevenness of which can be calculated in a very effective manner inside a three-poled referral structure. Out of the three referral poles the first one is subjective pole or documentary pole; the i.e., the objective pole is, facts oriented and the material-specific; and the third pole is of ambiguity, it is more oriented towards being universal. Most essay writers feel comfortable with touching upon only one of the three poles of essay writing. There are, however some who extend their comfort zone to two poles out of the three while framing their thoughts in an essay. Inclusion of all three poles in one essay by a single essayist however is a very rare phenomenon. Some personal or informal essay writers include pieces of contemplative memoirs and who view the world through the spectacle of narrative and depiction. On the other hand, objective essayists do not voice their life's happenings on their own in a direct fashion. Rather, they have a more outward focus and their attention is on some fictitious, empirical or radical theme.

The essay as an instructional tool

In contemporary educational field, essay occupies a very significant place in the realm of formal education. Secondary class students are trained how to formulate essays using structured formats, this improves their writing abilities manifold. Essays are also an important part of higher education system students seeking admission into universities are expected to write an essay on a given topic as a part of their selection process. The formation of an essay gives out the writer's comprehension of the topic and his or her expertise over of the language. Students are expected to elucidate remark on, or evaluate the given topic in an essay form. Academic essays are generally more formal in comparison to literary essays. They may be a demonstration of the personal views of the writer, but the essayist formulates the

presentation in a coherent and actual manner. The use of the first person in personal or informal essays is not permitted.

Let us now have a look at a few more types of essays:

The five-paragraph essay

Almost all students get introduced to essay writing in early years of their schooling and the first of essays that they learn to write is the five paragraph essay. This is a very organized method of essay writing which requires to be begun with an introduction giving statement of the thesis. Next three paragraphs constitute the main body of the essay; each paragraph offers an idea in order to back the thesis. The last or the fifth paragraph is the concluding paragraph, which repeats the thesis in brief and reviews the supporting points written throughout the essay. Though a very systematic way of writing an essay, yet it has been opposed by many scholars and termed as a rigid and dreary approach.

Academic essays

An academic essay is a literary composition which supports one assertion or impression which is helpful in establishing the general purpose of the work. The content of the academic essay should be concentrated upon one main idea or opinion, and there should be an unambiguous relation between the content spread through the essay.

Academic essays may be short or long, long academic essays are generally more expansive. Authors of long and descriptive essays generally give a small summary breakdown of the earlier written works on the same topic. This analysis is known as 'literature review.' These types of long essays may also comprise an opening page containing tight definitions about words and phrases in the title. It has been seen that all facts, the entire reference and supporting text used in an essay, is referred to in the bibliography at the end of the essay. Such reference of the reference material in the essay lets all readers of the essay understand the foundation of the details and excerpts used to back the arguments in the essay. The academic essay assesses the ability of students to showcase their views and opinions in a structured manner. Academic essays are also numerous in varieties, some of which have been discussed below for your better understanding:

Descriptive essays

Descriptive essays are a clear representation of an individual, place, thing, happening, or deliberation. Descriptive essays give out details which enable the reader to form a vivid imagination of the thing being described in the essay.

Narrative essays

Narrative essays are a subjective description; these are sometimes even written in first-person present. The topics touched upon in a narrative essay generally identify more vividly with the narrator's opinion and his subjectivity.

Compare and contrast essays

Compare and contrast essay is aimed at developing a relationship amongst two or more than two people, things, situations and principles. Normally, the reason behind writing a compare and contrast essay is to bring out that apparent dissimilarities or resemblances are insufficient, and that a nearer scrutiny of things discloses their imperceptible, yet important, associations or dissimilarities.

Persuasive essays

The writer's aim behind writing a persuasive essay is influence the reader to agree with a notion or approve of a viewpoint. This essay is written with a motive to persuade the reader about the reasonability of the writer's opinion. That is the reason why persuasive essays are written in a manner which takes hold of and retains the attention of the reader. All opinions expressed by the writer are supported by strong references and details.

Argumentative essays

Argumentative essays are those that address contentious matters e.g., grave issues over which there are large evident disagreements in the society. Literal meaning of the word 'argument' is a situation accompanied by its supportive details. Therefore argumentative essays are written to make a major claim and then offer explanations for opining that the claim to be correct and factual.

Imitation essays

These essays are the kind where the essayist, builds the thesis and outline of his essay imitating another piece of such work but presents the borrowed ideas in his own particular style.

Visual Arts Essay

Essays are not written only in text form, rather a portrayal in the form of an initial illustration or drawing upon which a finished portrait or statue is created, is called a visual arts essay.

Musical Essay

An essay based on the procedure and subject matter of the music, written to guide the listeners of that piece of musical creation is called a musical essay.

Film Essay

An essay written in a cinematic form, consisting of the development of the film's theme or the idea behind the film is called a film essay. This genre of essays is not very widely acclaimed and very few people related to the film industry have ventured this side e.g., the Soviet documentation expert, DzigaVertov, from earlier times and the contemporary filmmakers Michael Moore and Errol Morris.

Check Your Progress

1. What is a formal essay?

2. Why are informal essays also known as personal essays?

3. What are descriptive essays?

13.3 TYPES OF ESSAYS

As discussed, an essay is a short piece of writing reflecting writer's own point of view about a particular subject. They may have diverse elements to focus on, such as, literary criticism, political manifestos, observations of daily life, reflection of an author, recollection, personal philosophies, learned arguments, criticism of life, and events or happenings. The Oxford English Dictionary describes essay as a 'composition of moderate length on any particular subject, or branch of a subject; originally implying want of finish, but now said of a composition more or less elaborate in style, though limited in range'.

A philosophical essay may turn into a treatise in length. It is subjective because it is a literature of self expression (W. H. Hudson). Alexander Pope's (1688-1744) 'An Essay on Criticism' (1711) and 'An Essay on Man' (1734) are essays in verse being an exceptional variation to the form. John Locke's (1632-1704) 'An Essay Concerning Human Understanding' (1690), 'Some Thoughts Concerning Education' (1693), 'Two Treatises on Civil Government' (1689), 'A Letter Concerning Toleration' (1689), and Thomas Malthus' (1766-1834) 'An Essay on the Principle of Population' (1798) are a few great examples of essay.

An essay should be brief, precise, argumentative, fact or philosophy-based, and logically satisfying. It should aim to fulfil or give some understanding of a certain aspect of a subject. Francis Bacon's essays are the best examples of the kind. Also, essay is any short composition in prose that undertakes to discuss a matter, express a point of view, and persuade to accept a thesis on any subject, or simply entertain. (M. H. Abram)

Philosophical, Aphoristic, Political and Didactic Essays

The word 'philosophy' means study of the nature and meaning of the universe of human life. It is also a particular set or system of beliefs resulting from the search for knowledge about life and the universe. Philosophy is also a set of beliefs or an attitude to life that guides somebody's behaviour (Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary). If an essay is concise, clear or abstract having argument or analysis on a particular subject reflecting strong logical currents through it, it is called a philosophical essay. It relates more to an intellectual activity than a physical one. It shows views of a person who has explored a specific subject-matter deeply with a lot of studies and researches. Therefore, a philosophical essay should necessarily

contain such intellectual activity at work in the form of an intelligent discussion on a particular philosophical issue or problem either defending or criticizing it.

In a philosophical essay, the object of the writer is constructive having positive vision defending a cause. That cause may exist already, or may be an assumption. Besides it may be a disagreement or a critical agreement reflecting a philosophical point of view, standing against a purport with a set of logic of the writer. In any of these, a philosophical essay must argue having strong reason and evidence as its background.

Philosophical means related to thinking which is study-based. It requires giving powerful and influencing thoughts. In it a writer may present his own view after a particular research in a particular field. He may follow some established way of thinking also. Thus, a philosophical essay should begin to search and establish a view in the context of a problem. It should take a proper side of argument either in support or against. The problem and the person in its defence or disagreement should focus on a particular point of interpretation based on assumptions sprouting from the problem itself. Its implications, critical assessment and a critical defence with a past, present and future should be part of the essay. Generally it should give proper meaning and support to that particular subject of philosophy or idea. Its range is very wide.

A philosophical essay may turn into a treatise in length. It is subjective because it is a literature of self expression (W H Hudson). Frenchman Michel de Montaigne, followed by Englishman Sir Francis Bacon, has contributed immensely towards modern essay.

Essays are of many kinds: cause and effect, classification and division, compare and contrast, descriptive, dialectic, exemplification, familiar, history, narrative, critical, economics, and logical. Familiar essay is a type in which the essayist addresses a single person and he speaks about himself and a particular subject. In such a type, both heart and brain are used equally. Charles Lamb is regarded as one of the greatest exponent of familiar essays.

Critical essays are those where the subject-matter is impersonal. It is kindred to brain, intellect and intelligence. It is generally an evaluation of a subject or work of art. All the important critics of English letters come in this category. It also aims at theorising literature. We have chiefly two types of critics in English—classic and romantic. But in the post-war period, we have numerous variations in this genre.

Aphoristic essay is a short essay with brilliant exhibition of aphorism: an art of speaking things on a subject with brevity of wit and precision of diction. Sir Francis Bacon is its chief propagator in English literature.

Didactic essay is a type of philosophical essay which is meant to educate or instruct about life and education. Alexander Pope is its chief practitioner in English.

Formal in form, political essays consist of pamphlets, propaganda, manifestos posters and similar items. Apart from the medieval writers, John Milton, Jeremy

Collier, Samuel Johnson, John Stuart Mill, George Orwell, John Ruskin, Daniel Defoe, Herbert Spencer, Jonathan Swift, and Virginia Woolf.

Plato's (429-347 BC) *Republic* (380 BC) argues that knowledge equals virtue and he defends his cause by giving logical support to it. If he states that half of the population should be prepared for army in a nation, he means then only the rest in that nation may go to have a sound sleep and proper development. Aristotle (384-322 BC) argues in his essay 'Poetics' (335 BC) that all art is *mimesis* and he proves the point that all art imitate life. To prove this he gives a long list of arguments which rule the formal ground of any literary writing. Such essays were relevant not only to their own period but to all the times.

Structure: A philosophical essay should have the following components:

- Clarification

- Justification

- Evaluation

Under clarification, it should explain and make a lucid picture of the issue which is a sole problem to be discussed. In justification he can either present another reference and justify that with his own views, or show one's own stand on the issue with strong arguments. At the end of conclusion, there should be evaluation of the given argument, and also that of those presented as references. It should be make critical arguments in order to reach a conclusion most plausible and tentative. A philosophical essay should have a purpose, an argument, facts, negative or positive stand, a unique view, a critical connectivity or chain of thoughts in relativity. It should follow the following pattern—purpose, justification, argument and evaluation.

Plato, Aristotle, Sophocles (496-406 BC), Francis Bacon (1561-1626), John Milton (1608-1674), Sir Thomas Browne (1605-1682), John Donne (1572-1631), John Bunyan, Daniel Defoe, Jonathan Swift, Joseph Addison, Sir Richard Steele, John Locke, Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679), Matthew Arnold (1822-1888), Karl Marx (1818-1883), and Adolf Hitler are writers of philosophical essays.

Bacon's 'Of Truth, Of Adversity, Of Marriage and the Single Life', Addison (1672-1719) and Steele's (1672-1729) 'Tatler and Spectator' (1709) are a few notable philosophical essays.

David Hume (1711-1776), J. J. Rousseau, Adam Smith (1723-1790), Immanuel Kant (1724-1804), Thomas Jefferson (1743-1826) William Hazlitt (1778-1830), Thomas de Quincey (1785-1829), Charles Lamb (1775-1834), R. L. Stevenson, Emerson (1803-1882), Thoreau (1817-1862) are also very famous writers of this genre.

'The Spectator', the 'Story of Salmacis and Hermaphroditus' from Ovid's Metamorphoses (1694), Aristotle's 'Poetics', Plato's 'Republi'c, Francis Bacon's 'Of Reading, Of Studies', 'Elements of the Common Law of England',

'Advancement of Learning, John Locke's 'Glorious Revolution of 1688', and Thomas Hobbes's 'Leviathan' are a few famous essays of philosophy.

'Rights of Man' (1791-92) is one of the greatest classics on democracy, which praises the French Revolution and criticises the English governing system, made up of aristocratic people. It is written by Thomas Paine (1737-1809) as an answer to the British statesman Edmund Burke's notable political essay 'Reflection on the Revolution in France' (1790). In simple, straightforward and vigorous prose here, the author defends the rights of ordinary men by speaking of their natural and civil rights, liberty, forcibly throwing away of a corrupt government, universal society and universal commerce. He was a radical political philosopher who believed in the French ideals of equality, liberty and fraternity among all nations. He emphasizes universal trade and criticizes the idea of English policies in national and international trade. He strongly promotes the idea of reason behind a governing system. He was, in true sense, a revolutionary thinker who justified revolution if the government did not agree to the common interests of man. In both the parts of this political treatise, he fiercely attacks the foul political systems around the world and approbates the new representative government in America and France as an ideal example of democracy.

A philosophical essay is placed under the category of informal essays. Aphoristic essay is usually formal in disposition. James Russell Lowell (1819-1891), Mark Twain, George Orwell (1903-1950), Forster, Toni Morrison (1931-) are a few modern philosophical essayists. However, as an exception, the Romantic poet John Keats' letters may be placed as one of the great philosophic channels to English letters from where his poetical thoughts sprang up and blossomed. They can be reckoned as a monument of someone's record of growth from being into a trans-visitor of another world, away from our sickening life, a philosophy which Keats was desperately up to evolving. The chief correspondents, to whom Keats wrote, were: Benjamin Bailey, George and Thomas Keats, John Hamilton Reynolds, John Taylor, Cowden Clarke, Richard Woodhouse, George and Georgiana Keats, Fanny Brawne, Charles Armitage Brown, Charles Clarke, Charles Wentworth Dilke, Percy Bysshe Shelley, etc. His letters are important because of his development as a poet and the record of his painful life. As Eliot put it, his letters are 'the most notable and most important ever written by any English poet.' They mirror the growth of his art and development of his poetic theory. They portray his life and imagination's most beautiful picture.

Scientific Essay

Scientific essay is objective in style and is devoted to recounting of facts and events as per their real existence. It should be fact-based and that fact should either exist or should have proofs to prove its occurrence in future. In a scientific essay the writer uses certain terminology related to certain branch of study to which the essay explores.

Elements of scientific essay

A scientific essay will always be concerned with a branch of science.

- It will be objective.
- It shall deal with fact and truth.
- It will use the terminology related to a specific branch of science to which it will be subjected.
- It will have limit of pages as it will always be fact-based.
- It will discover or invent an idea/fact/subject/topic, etc.
- It will have references of people, inventions or discoveries related to the subject.
- It comes under the category of formal essays.

Critical Essay

Criticism is a vast panorama if we trace the history of world literatures. In England, this literary genre was revived during the Renaissance when writers and poets looked back to revive old classics and came to imbibe their style as well as emancipated the world by their learning and translations of the Greek and Roman classics. Every age and century paved way for improvisations and gave birth to new ideas. Aristotle remained a sole controller of this 'golden age' which still continues to impress modern theorists. There is long trail of great voices till we reach the post-modernist literary theorists where we mark that criticism is more of a science than literature.

Romantic or Personal Essay

Michel de Montaigne initiated the style of personal essays which the writers of the 19th century carried forward. The most important of them was Charles Lamb ('Essays of Elia'). Personal or romantic essay contains the components of autobiography, pedantry, fancy, sentiment, humour and poetic diction. They are also called subjective essays.

Charles Lamb was a great exponent of romantic essay. Lamb's renown is an attribute to his charming prose faculty. Some critics believe that it is chiefly because of his quality of imitating the Elizabethan prose writers. It is not only his capacity to imitate the Elizabethan writers, but also to amalgamate his essence of personality, in order to make it agreeable and interesting for the generations to come. It is often true that Lamb's use of grammar and classics remind us of his unique attachment to his predecessors, but he is so widely remembered because of his magical art and power of story-telling. They keep his readers mesmerised even to a simple subject like the delineation of eccentric characters like James Elia. The quality lies in his art of representation rather than his imitation solely.

His quality of prose is basically romantic owing to which he looks like a wind drag sometimes near and touching our skin, and sometimes alluring us from distance towards some obscure direction. There is a lilting rhythm in his language which jingles like bell. Keeping his prose lucid but alliterative, he artfully deals in difficult subjects such as depiction of idiosyncrasies of ordinary characters like his brother John. In fact, the art of a storyteller lies in the way he keeps us engrossed in his tale; and Lamb is a master craftsman in this respect whether we go by his prose, or his very manner of putting his matter on paper. His very quaintness is his prime device which casts a prolonged spell on his readers: besides, his words create a structure unlike modern which are somewhat old-fashioned as though while going through his essay, we take a round in the alleys of old Rome or Florence. His essays breathe medieval age. But his use of archaic is so apt and gregarious, that it is a pleasant experience going through his essays and they are equally enjoyable irrespective of age or time. He often becomes metaphorical and poetic in his expressions. His romanticism finds vent in one of his famous 'Elia' says:

> ...set forth in pomp,
>
> She came adorned hither like sweet May.
>
> Sent back like Hollowmass or shortest day

Like this, Lamb enfolds his cousin's character in swarms of colourful rays. Romantic essay embodies the traits of romantic qualities in nature. Lamb is fond of metaphorical language which becomes almost poetic at times: 'Nature hath her unities, which not every critic can penetrate; or, if we feel, we cannot explain them. The pen of Yorick, and of none since his, could have drawn J. E. entire — those fine Shandian lights and shades, which make up his story. I must limp after in my poor antithetical manner, as the fates have given me grace and talent. J. F. then — to the eye of a common observer at least — seemeth made up of contradictory principles. — The genuine child of impulse, the frigid philosopher of prudence — the phlegm of my cousin's doctrine is invariably at war with his temperament, which is high sanguine…'

'Essays of Elia' (1823) is a collection of essays written by the noted English essayist and prose writer, Charles Lamb. As a collection, these essays first started to be published in 'The London Magazine' from the year 1820 and proceeded till 1825. The essays were very popular in his day and their prose, having conversational and subjective note, has captivated a large readership till date. Such was the success and magic of these essays, that it established the repute of Lamb among the frontiers of the Romantic essayists in the English letters. This was called the most fructifying period of Lamb's literary career. Lamb's essays have the quality in chief which is humanity: his depiction of the foul or evil also, brings in fresh energy to the reader. In his hands, small and insignificant turn great and valuable: 'As an Essayist, Charles Lamb will be remembered, in years to come, with Rabelais and Montaigne, with Sir Thomas Browne, with Steele, and with Addison. He unites many of the finest characteristics of these several writers. He

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has wisdom and wit of the highest order, exquisite humour, a genuine and cordial vein of pleasantry, and the most heart-touching pathos. In the largest acceptation of the word he is a humanist. No one of the great family of authors past or present has shown in matters the most important or the most trivial so delicate and extreme a sense of all that is human'.

Other writers of this style are E V Lucas, Leigh Hunt, Hazlitt, Thackeray, De Quincey, and R. L. Stevenson.

Periodical Essay

Joseph Addison (1672-1719) and Richard Steele (1672-1729) founded together the most influential literary periodical of the 18th century, called the *Spectator*. Addison was an English essayist, playwright, poet and politician. He was perhaps the most influential and popular person of the Augustan Age of English literature. Sir Richard Steele was an Irishman, a writer and politician of excellent worth. 'The Spectator' began to be published first from Thursday 1 March 1711. It was published all the six days a week except for Sunday and continued being published till its last issue 555, on December 6, 1712. Each paper or number had to contain 2,500 words in a sheet. All the 555 issues of this literary daily, made seven volumes. This paper was revived in 1714 without the co-authorship of Richard Steele when it came thrice a week for six months. The later publications added the eighth volume where Addison's cousin called Eustace Budgell lent his voice too. In the first issue of this literary magazine, the author is Addison himself who quite satirically sketches his character declaring himself a man of distinguished talents and ostensibly reserved in nature. In the second paper, Steele gives us the introduction of the six revered members of the honourable Spectator Club.

Steele maintained the same sarcastic manner, initiated by Addison in the first issue. In the tenth paper, authored by Addison, we are told the purpose and the kind of readers, to whom this daily is addressed. Both the writers essayed to reach the common mass through simple language of ordinary speech and lucid expression of our day to day businesses. The *Spectator* retains a very high and significant place in English letters for its wide reading in its age, outstanding essays on different social topics, objective style, genteel language and its elevated message. These essays corroborated ethics, good nature, sagacity, sound judgement, propriety, prudence, serenity, high moral, merit and chastity. The writers were keen, poignant, witty, learned and virtuous men whose collective aim was to uplift the morality and sow the seeds of virtue through the spread of their readership. It was so because the moral standards and social values, in the 18th century English town life, were on the verge of extinction. The men and women, mad after fashion and sex, had lost their sense of judgement of good and evil. They were mostly of fallen character. In such a society, the two proprietors of this daily magazine earned a large number of followers and readers by their regular discourse. Mr. Spectator's voice is both Addison and Steele's. He is a gentle, pleasant, scholarly, wise and witty man. The essays instruct elevated moral lessons for a higher human conduct.

They deal with human characters in their ambitions, jealousy, envy, ardour and many other psychological abstractions developing in different social circumstances with their actions and reactions.

They also encompass social ideas regarding shamelessness, mockery, disgrace, decency, insolence, happiness, respect, marriage, and courting. Almost every article of the *Spectator* takes an epigraph from the ancient classics of Roman, Greek or Latin great literature. Many of the essays are criticisms on the 18th century theatre and plays exclusively. Steele created the Spectator Club and rendered a definite structure and plot to this daily. The most heard voice is that of Sir Roger De Coverly, often transcribed 'Coverley' later, who is a bachelor even at the age of fifty-six. He hails countryside and is a man of high social repute in town and country both. Beside his central role, we have many other members of the club, a lawyer, Sir Andrew Freeport who is a rich merchant, Captain Sentry, a clergy and Will. The effect that this paper had on people, assures its high repute and wide circle in its era. Its universal themes and characters make it relevant even today because all it teaches are the best arts of living.

Check Your Progress

4. What is a philosophical essay?

5. Why is scientific essay objective in style?

6. What is an aphoristic essay?

13.4 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS QUESTIONS

1. A formal essay is written on topics that are comparatively not very personal to the author; rather he has an authority over the subject.

2. Informal essays are also known as familiar or personal essays because in the expression of these essays, an intimate tone of the author can be observed. These are focused on everyday things instead of matters related to masses at large or specialized topics.

3. Descriptive essays are a clear representation of an individual, place, thing, happening, or deliberation. Descriptive essays give out details which enable the reader to form a vivid imagination of the thing being described in the essay.

4. Philosophical essay is an essay which is concise, clear or abstract having argument or analysis on a particular subject reflecting strong logical currents through it.

5. Scientific essay is objective in style because it is devoted to recounting of facts and events as per their real existence. It is fact-based and the fact either exists or has proofs to prove its occurrence in future. In a scientific

essay the writer uses certain terminology related to certain branch of study to which the essay explores.

6. Aphoristic essay is a short essay with brilliant exhibition of aphorism: an art of speaking things on a subject with brevity of wit and precision of diction. Sir Francis Bacon is its chief propagator in English literature.

13.5 SUMMARY

- An essay is actually a short prose composition which: discusses a matter, expresses a viewpoint, persuasive to accept a thesis on any subject, or just entertains.

- A formal essay, or article, is written on topics which are comparatively not very personal to the author; rather he has an authority over the subject.

- Informal essays are also known as familiar or personal essays. In the expression of these essays, an intimate tone of the author can be observed.

- Essays are that variety of literary class the great unevenness of which can be calculated in a very effective manner inside a three-poled referral structure.

- In contemporary educational field, essay occupies a very significant place in the realm of formal education.

- An academic essay is a literary composition which supports one assertion or impression which is helpful in establishing the general purpose of the work.

- Descriptive essays are a clear representation of an individual, place, thing, happening, or deliberation.

- Narrative essays are a subjective description; these are sometimes even written in first-person present.

- Compare and contrast essay is aimed at developing a relationship amongst two or more than two people, things, situations and principles.

- The writer's aim behind writing a persuasive essay is influence the reader to agree with a notion or approve of a viewpoint.

- Argumentative essays are those that address contentious matters e.g., grave issues over which there are large evident disagreements in the society.

- An essay written in a cinematic form, consisting of the development of the film's theme or the idea behind the film is called a film essay.

- A philosophical essay may turn into a treatise in length. It is subjective because it is a literature of self expression.

- A philosophical essay should necessarily contain such intellectual activity at work in the form of an intelligent discussion on a particular philosophical issue or problem either defending or criticizing it.

- In a philosophical essay, the object of the writer is constructive having positive vision defending a cause.

- Philosophical means related to thinking which is study-based. It requires giving powerful and influencing thoughts.

- Essays are of many kinds: cause and effect, classification and division, compare and contrast, descriptive, dialectic, exemplification, familiar, history, narrative, critical, economics, and logical.

- Scientific essay is objective in style and is devoted to recounting of facts and events as per their real existence.

13.6 KEY WORDS

- **Academic essay:** It refers to a literary composition which supports one assertion or impression which is helpful in establishing the general purpose of the work.

- **Didactic essay:** It refers to a type of philosophical essay which is meant to educate or instruct about life and education.

- **Essay:** It refers to a short prose composition which: discusses a matter, expresses a viewpoint, persuasive to accept a thesis on any subject, or just entertains.

- **Imitation essays:** It refers to the essays in which the essayist builds the thesis and outline of his essay imitating another piece of such work but presents the borrowed ideas in his own particular style.

13.7 SELF ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

Short Answer Questions

1. Differentiate between formal and informal essays.
2. What are argumentative essays?
3. Write a short note on essay as an instructional tool.
4. What is meant by the term 'literary review'?
5. What are the main components of a philosophical essay?

Long Answer Questions

1. Analyse the importance of essay as one of the major forms of literary genre.
2. Discuss the aim of compare and contrast essay.
3. Why is philosophical essay subjective in nature? Discuss in detail.

4. Explain the emergence of romantic or personal essay.

5. Interpret the elements of a scientific essay.

13.8 FURTHER READINGS

Abrahams, M.H. 2011. *A Glossary of Literary Terms*. California: Wadsworth Publishing.

Boulton, Marjorie. 2006. *Anatomy of the Novel*. New Delhi, Kalyani Publishing.

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UNIT 14 SHORT STORIES, BIOGRAPHY AND AUTOBIOGRAPHY

Structure

14.0 INTRODUCTION

A short story is defined as a piece of prose which can be read on one sitting and creates a single unique effect on the readers. A biography is defined as a detailed description of a person's life. It depicts a person's life experiences. On the other hand, an autobiography is an account of a person's life which is written by that person only.

In this unit, the meaning of short story, biography and autobiography has been discussed. The unit will also explain about the difference between a short story and a novel and biography and autobiography.

14.1 OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- Discuss the meaning of short story and its aims
- Analyse the difference between short story and novel
- Explain the concept of biography and autobiography
- Interpret the difference between biography and autobiography

14.2 SHORT STORY: AN INTRODUCTION

Short story goes back to its tradition from Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey* as a method of oral story-telling. It is as a 'prose tale' that can be read on one sitting covering

the length of half an-hour to two hours and should be limited to 'a certain unique single effect' to which all the details would be subordinate.

It is a literary form in prose. It has elements that a novel also has such as plot, style, technique, theme, characters, and dialogues. Short stories can be romantic, experimental, tragic, and abstractedly philosophical. It can reflect modes of fantasy, realism, naturalism, or can be psychological as *The Duchess and the Jeweller* by Virginia Woolf. Its length is short. It has limits of 7,000 to 9,000 words.

Aims of Short Story

In a short story, the focus of interest is always on the occurrence of events or on the detection of events that have happened. Sometimes they are full of adventure or mystery to charm the popular taste. Sometimes there are stories of character which stress on psychological representation, or stress on moral qualities of the protagonist for example, in Anton Chekhov's stories where nothing else takes place than a conversation between two people or just a meeting or an encounter. An innovative writer Ernest Hemingway's classic short story *A Clean, Well-Lighted Place* captures only 'a curt conversation between two writers about an old man who each day gets drunk and stays on in the café until it closes'. It also includes their inferences of the issue. So a short story is supposed to maintain one classical unity and that is the Unity of Action. The reason that it does so is it being short in duration. It may maintain traits common to novel as well.

Difference between Short Story and Novel

A short story differs from a novel in its dimension. Novel has been estimated by the term 'Magnitude'. This term has been invented by Aristotle in the context of drama. A novel is supposed to be more than hundred pages long. A short story is supposed to cover a maximum of twenty to thirty pages. The length is the most important feature of the short story. Short stories are supposed to be less complex; however, every work of art has exceptions to it. It focuses on one incident having a simple plot, single setting, a small number of characters and has to cover a short span of time. In a short length it has to look unified. Short stories have an exposition, crisis and resolution like novels. They should often give some message — moral or philosophical. Modern short stories occasionally display an exposition or opening of events. However nothing can be certainly remarked as its form varies from writer to writer. When a short story carried a moral message, it was classified as a parable or Fable. Edgar Allen Poe, the famous American short story writer, was responsible for establishing the short story as a genre of literature. He is called the 'father of the modern short story'. He defined short story as a 'prosetale' that can be read on one sitting covering the length of half an-hour to two hours and should be limited to 'a certain unique single effect' to which all the details would be subordinate.

Practitioners

Short story originated as a part of a magazine or periodical in the beginning. Its early practitioners were Washington Irving (1783-1859), Nathaniel Hawthorne (1804-1864) and Edgar Allen Poe (1809-1849) in America; and Sir Walter Scott (1771-1832), Mary Shelley (1797-1851) in England; T. E. Hoffmann (1776-1822) in Germany; Balzac (1799-1850) in France; and Gogol (1809-1852), Pushkin (1799-1837), and Turgenev (1818-1883) in Russia. It was after these noted writers that the form was adopted seriously by other writers. Almost all notable novelists of all European languages have contributed greatly in the realm of short stories. This form has been practised vigorously in the United States. Frank O'Connor (1903-1966) has named short story writing as their 'the national art form'. The famous American short story writers includes authors such as Mark Twain (1835-1910), William Faulkner (1897-1962), Katherine Anne Porter (1890-1980), Eudora Welty (1909-2001), Flannery O'Connor (1925-1964), John O'Hara (1905-1970), J F Powers (1917-1999), John Cheever (1912-1982), and J D Salinger (1919-2010).

Charles Lamb (1775-1834), Sir Walter Scott, R. L. Stevenson (1850-1894), Arnold Bennett, Thomas Hardy, Huge Walpole (1884-1941), Elizabeth Bowen (1899-1973), Sir Rudyard Kipling (1835-1936), H. G. Wells, Oscar Wilde (1854-1900), Virginia Woolf, James Joyce, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle (1859-1930), W W Jacobs (1863-1943), John Galsworthy, Joseph Conrad, D H Lawrence, Aldous Huxley, Walter De La Mare (1873-1956), A E Coppard (1878-1957), H E Bates (1905-1974), and Rhys Davies (1901-1978) are few notable short story writers of England.

Famous Short Stories

The short story as a form originated as anecdote. It was in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries in the English literature, that short story became popular as an individual form of literature. The best short stories in English are Geoffrey Chaucer's *The Canterbury Tales* and Boccaccio's *Decameron* written in the fourteenth century. The former belonged to England and the latter Italy. Antoine Galland's *Translation of the Thousand and One Nights* (*or The Arabian Nights*) in 1710-12, Brothers Grimm's *Fairy Tales* (1824-26), Nikolai Gogol's *Evening on a Farm Near Dikanka* (1831-32), Brown's *Somnambulism* (1805), Irving's *Rip Van Winkle* (1819), and *The Legend of Sleepy Hollow* (1820), Poe's *Tales of the Grotesque and Arabesque* (1840) and Hawthorne's *Twice-Told Tales* (1842), Anton Chekhov's (1860-1904) *Ward No. 6* (1892). In England, Charles Lamb was a famous essayist and short story writer. His *Tales from Shakespeare* is still the part of study curriculum in India. Ernest Hemingway's (1899-1961) novella *The Old Man and The Sea* is regarded as the 'longest story and the shortest novel' of the world and it claimed the Nobel Prize for literature in 1954.

Magical Realism has been a feature in the modern short stories of 1990s. Its chief practitioners are Steven Millhauser (1943-), Robert Olen Butler

(1945-). Tim O'Brien's (1946-) *The Things They Carried* speaks of the Vietnam War. Salman Rushdie's (1947) *Luka and the Fire of Life* (2010) is a recent publication. Jhumpa Lahiri (1967-), Karen Russel (1981-) are recent short story writers. Stories of *Birbal and Akbar* (1542-1605), *Amar Chitra Katha*, tales about religious deities are very popular in India.

Check Your Progress

1. How has Edgar Allan defined the short story?
2. Name some of the famous American short story writers.

14.3 BIOGRAPHY AND AUTOBIOGRAPHY: AN INTRODUCTION

A biography or 'bio,' as it is commonly known is a comprehensive explanation of the life of an individual, authored by a person other than him. It is a detailed piece of intricate material with respect to all details about the person for example, his or her birthplace, academic background, profession, relations and death. A biography is a presentation about all intimate details of the life of the person in concern. It even touches upon the individual's success or failures, contributions to the society, drawbacks or strong point. It is an analysis of the individual's entire personality.

A textual representation of somebody's life is called a biography. A visual or interpretation in the form of a film is called a biopic.

It is reincarnation of an individual's life collected in textual or cinematographic form by a person other than himself. The writer collects all pertinent and fascinating details about the subject and packs them up in the form of a very palatable presentation for the readers to read, learn and enjoy.

Autobiography

Autobiography means the life draft of an individual written by him or her. The suffix 'auto' in the word autobiography means 'self,' hence; an autobiography consists of all the components of a biography but it is written or narrated himself or herself by the writer. Sometimes people even take help of others to write their autobiographies. Though written by another person called a 'ghostwriter, the work is published, however on the name of the individual himself.

Biography and Autobiography: A History and An Overview

An autobiography and a biography is a somewhat detailed description of a specific individual's life, including the endeavour to describe the personality, disposition, and environment of his life. It is also inclusive of the person's life time undertakings, accomplishments and experiences. In the beginning of the establishment of the genre of biographies, ancient Greeks and Romans started to give brief formal written accounts of lives of people.

The most well-known existing instance of such work is the 'Parallel Lives of Greek and Roman' personalities written by the Greek author Plutarch, c. 46-120 A.D. This work was translated by Sir Thomas North in 1579, and the translated version became a source of plays written by William Shakespeare on Roman people. Authors from the medieval ages used to write comprehensive records of the actions and activities of sovereigns and emperors. Besides this, hagiographies were also written which was an account of lives of Christian saints. These writings were generally founded on spiritual folklore instead of hard facts.

Seventeenth century was the time when a fairly reasonably nonspiritual biography came to recognition in England. A detailed account of the life of Izaak Walton is the most illustrious example of such sort, written somewhere in the later part of mid-17th century.

The 18th century was the time when biographies started to emerge on the social scene in full-scale in England. The theory of biography also took the shape of a distinct literary genre during this time. It was during this century that first Samuel Johnson wrote a beautiful biography on the Lives of the English Poets (1779-81) and later, James Boswell wrote a biography on the very 'Life of Samuel Johnson' in 1791. By the turn of the century biographies gained so much popularity that famous male and female wrote at least one biographical title either on the life of a notable individual or on their own lives.

Autobiographical works though are personal accounts of the author's life but the same, however, must not be mistaken with memoirs. In the former, importance is not given only to the author's development of self but the society around and contemporary happenings witnessed by the author also from a part of this private account. Latter, on the other hand is an everyday record of the happenings in the author's life, which is chronicled for personal contentment. Many of such works are sometimes not even published. Diaries of Samuel Pepys and John Evelyn written in the 17th century are examples of such memoirs.

The first ever, fully conceptualized and articulated autobiography is, 'The Confessions of St. Augustine,' this was written in the 4th century. The pattern of this reflective yet delicate transcendent autobiography is based on that which became the fundamental understanding in Christian autobiography: the agonized psychological disaster of the author, and his salvage and transformation upon discovering his Christian identity and sacred calling. Michel de Montaigne's Essays, published in 1580 and the later additions to it, together institute the first pronounced example of autobiographical self-disclosure written for its characteristic importance, instead of spiritual or moral motives.

Other later written illustrious accomplishments in mainly non-spiritual autobiographies are Rousseau's 'Confessions', written between 1764-70, Goethe' "Dichtung und Wahrheit', 'Poetry and Truth', written between 1810-31, and the autobiographies of Benjamin Franklin, Henry Adams, Sean O'Casey, Lillian Hellman, and Gertrude Stein (published in 1933 under the title The Autobiography

of Alice B. Toklas). Many spiritual self-histories for example, John Bunyan's 'Grace Abounding to the Chief of Sinners' (1666), were based on Augustine's instance of spiritual revelation of the self, focused on a disaster and transformation. A significant branch of such non-spiritual autobiographies representing a spiritual crisis settled by the author discovering his own individuality and calling, as a poet or artist rather than as a Christian, also rose to importance. *The Prelude* by Wordsworth published in reviewed form 1850 is a good example of such an autobiography in verse

In recent years, the difference between autobiography and narrative has narrowed down to quite an extent. The reason behind that is that authors make themselves a part of the written work, their own names. The novels and autobiographies authored by them are written in the declared style of fiction. Sometimes they even mix narrative and individual experiences

Difference between Biography and Autobiography

The two customary kinds of literary works which chronicle the pen picture and a person's course of life are biography and autobiography. After understanding the content and style of both, let us now try to appreciate the differences that exist between these similar yet different forms:

Biography is a comprehensive version of someone's life authored by somebody else, whereas an autobiography is a self-written account of a person's life.

Biographies may be authorized, i.e., written with the subject's permission or unauthorized, i.e., written without consent of the subject or his next of kin (in case of his demise). In case of a biography being written without due consent or knowledge of the subject, chances of factual errors or slip-ups increase manifold. On the other hand, autobiographies are written by the person himself so there is less scope of mistakes. Secondly there is no hassle of obtaining authorizations or permissions from the subject or his family.

Biographies are a collection of date which is painstakingly, put together over a long time from various people and sources. As a result of this, a biography portrays a diverse viewpoint to the person who reads. In contrast to this, an autobiography is a self-written account by the subject himself consequently, the author puts across the factual happenings, his opinions, viewpoints and thinking in his personal way, which somehow narrows down the perception presented to the reader as the accounts are fixated and biased opinions of the only the author who is also the subject of the book.

While writing an autobiography, first narratives for example: I, me, we, he, she, etc are used by the writer, which establishes a close connect between the reader and the author. Due to that the reader feels as though he or she has experienced the accounts of the autobiography himself or herself. Contrary to that, a biography is written in third person thus rendering the experience more impersonal comparatively less close.

The aim behind of writing a biography is to familiarize and enlighten the readers about the life and personality of the subject, whereas an autobiography is an expression of one's first hand experiences, personal beliefs, accomplishments, realizations and opinions of the narrator.

Famous autobiographies of all times: *The Story of My Life* by Helen Keller, *An Autobiography* by Jawaharlal Nehru, *The Diary of a Young Girl* by Anne Frank, *Memoirs of the Second World War* by Winston Churchill and *Wings of Fire* by A. P. J. Abdul Kalam.

Famous biographies of all times: Tolstoy's. *A Russian Life* by Rosamund Bartlett, Joseph J Ellis', *His Excellency: George Washington* by Ronald William Clark's and Drew L. Crichton's *Princess Diana- A Biography Of The Princess Of Wales*.

Check Your Progress

3. What is a biopic?
4. Name the first articulated autobiography of English literature.

14.4 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS QUESTIONS

1. Edgar Allan has defined short story as a 'prosetale' that can be read on one sitting covering the length of half an-hour to two hours and should be limited to 'a certain unique single effect' to which all the details would be subordinate.

2. The famous American short story writers includes authors such as Mark Twain (1835-1910), William Faulkner (1897-1962), Katherine Anne Porter (1890-1980), Eudora Welty (1909-2001), Flannery O'Connor (1925-1964), John O'Hara (1905-1970), J F Powers (1917-1999), John Cheever (1912-1982), and J D Salinger (1919-2010).

3. A visual or interpretation in the form of a film is called a biopic.

4. The first ever, fully conceptualized and articulated autobiography is, 'The Confessions of St. Augustine'. The pattern of this reflective yet delicate transcendent autobiography is based on the agonized psychological disaster of the author, and his salvage and transformation upon discovering his Christian identity and sacred calling.

14.5 SUMMARY

- Short story goes back to its tradition from Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey* as a method of oral story-telling.

- Short story is a literary form in prose. It has elements that a novel also has such as plot, style, technique, theme, characters, and dialogues.

- Short stories can be romantic, experimental, tragic, and abstractedly philosophical.

- In a short story, the focus of interest is always on the occurrence of events or on the detection of events that have happened.

- A short story differs from a novel in its dimension. Novel has been estimated by the term 'Magnitude'.

- Short stories are supposed to be less complex; however every work of art has exceptions to it.

- Short stories have an exposition, crisis and resolution like novels. They should often give some message — moral or philosophical.

- The short story as a form originated as anecdote. It was in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries in the English literature, that short story became popular as an individual form of literature.

- A biography or 'bio,' as it is commonly known is a comprehensive explanation of the life of an individual, authored by a person other than him.

- A textual representation of somebody's life is called a biography. A visual or interpretation in the form of a film is called a biopic.

- An autobiography and a biography is a somewhat detailed description of a specific individual's life, including the endeavour to describe the personality, disposition, and environment of his life.

- Autobiographical works though are personal accounts of the author's life but the same, however, must not be mistaken with memoirs.

- The two customary kinds of literary works which chronicle the pen picture and a person's course of life are biography and autobiography.

- The two customary kinds of literary works which chronicle the pen picture and a person's course of life are biography and autobiography.

- The aim behind of writing a biography is to familiarize and enlighten the readers about the life and personality of the subject, whereas an autobiography is an expression of one's first hand experiences, personal beliefs, accomplishments, realizations and opinions of the narrator.

14.6 KEY WORDS

- **Autobiography:** It refers to the life draft of an individual written by him or her.

- **Biography:** It refers to a comprehensive explanation of the life of an individual, authored by a person other than him.

- **Prose:** It refers to a form of writing which is written in an ordinary form and does not consist of a metrical structure.

- **Short Story:** It is as a 'prose tale' that can be read on one sitting covering the length of half an-hour to two hours and should be limited to 'a certain unique single effect' to which all the details would be subordinate.

14.7 SELF ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

Short Answer Questions

1. How is a biography different from a biopic?
2. What is an autobiography?
3. State the aim of writing a biography.
4. Why are first narratives used in an autobiography?
5. Name some of the non-spiritual autobiographies.
6. How is novel different from short story?

Long Answer Questions

1. Discuss the development of short story as a literary form.
2. Anlayse the difference between biography and autobiography.
3. 'Biography is reincarnation of an individual's life collected in textual or cinematographic form by a person other than himself'. Discuss the statement.
4. Explain the concept of magic realism with reference to its use in short stories.
5. Why is Edgar Allan Poe considered as the 'father of the modern short story'? Discuss in detail with reference to his works.

14.8 FURTHER READINGS

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