

ARULMIGU PALANIANDAVAR ARTS COLLEGE FOR WOMEN,

PALANI

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH

LEARNING RESOURCES

SHAKESPEARE

OBJECTIVE TYPE QUESTIONS

General Shakespeare

1. Who is called “The Bard of Avon”? (William Shakespeare)
2. Why did Shakespeare leave Stratford? (To seek fortune in London)
3. How many plays are attributed to Shakespeare in total? (Thirty seven)
4. How many sonnets were written by Shakespeare? (One hundred and fifty four)
5. To whom did Shakespeare dedicate ‘Venus and Adonais’? (The Earl of Southampton)
6. To whom did Shakespeare address his sonnet? (The Fair youth and the Dark lady)
7. Who played the role of women in the Elizabethan theatres? (Men)
8. Where was the Shakespeare buried? (The Stratford church)
9. Name the longest play of Shakespeare:- (Hamlet)
10. How many of Shakespeare’s historical plays are based on Roman history? (Four)
11. What was the chief characteristic of the Elizabethan stage? (Flexibility)
12. In which year was the Globe theatre built? (1594)
13. Where did the Elizabethan theatre stand? (Along the bank of Thames)
14. Which of Shakespeare’s plays is the shortest? (The Comedy of Errors)
15. Among the tragic heroines of Shakespeare, who evokes sympathy the most? (Desdemona)
16. Where were Shakespeare’s plays staged? (The Globe theatre and The Black friars)
17. Who is described as “A maiden never bold; of spirit so still and quiet”? (Desdemona)
18. Where is the word ‘fool’ derived from? (Follies, the Latin word)
19. Which play of Shakespeare is called as ‘a play within a play’? (Hamlet)
20. In which play of Shakespeare do the witches appear? (Macbeth)
21. Name the clowns in 'A Mid -Summer Night's Dream' and in 'Much Ado About Nothing' ? (Bottom, Dogberry and Verges)
22. Who says, 'Better a witty fool than a foolish wit'? (Feste in ‘Twelfth Night’)
23. Whose inflated grief for her dead brother is ridiculed by Feste in ‘Twelfth Night’? (Olivia)
24. In which play of Shakespeare is humour grim and morbid? (Hamlet)
25. Why does Shakespeare use fools in his tragedies? (To achieve comic relief)
26. Who states “Shakespeare has no heroes, but only heroines”? (John Ruskin)
27. Who sees the ghost of Julius Caesar twice in Julius Caesar? (Brutus)
28. Whose ghost is seen by Marcellus and Bernardo in *Hamlet*? (The ghost of Hamlet’s father)
29. Who is described as ‘a woman of infinite variety’ among the women characters in Shakespeare’s plays? (Cleopatra)
30. Who is the greatest Machiavellian villain in Shakespeare’s plays? (Claudius in ‘Hamlet’)

TWELFTH NIGHT

31. What is the cause of the comedy of errors in ‘Twelfth Night’? (Viola's disguise as Cesario)
32. What is the other title of ‘Twelfth Night’? (What You Will)

33. In whose court was the play 'Twelfth Night' played? (Queen Elizabeth)
34. What does 'Twelfth Night' refer to? (The twelfth night after Christmas)
35. Where was the play 'Twelfth Night' set? (Illyria)
36. Name the twins, who escaped from a ship wreck? (Sebastian and Viola)
37. Who saved Viola from the ship wreck? (The captain of the ship)
38. Why did Viola put on the attire of a male? (To become a servant of Duke Orsino)
39. What is the new name picked by Viola to suit her male appearance? (Cesario)
40. Whom did Viola start loving but not revealing? (Duke Orsino)
41. Whom did Duke Orsino start loving? (Countess Olivia)
42. "If music be the food of love, play on". Whose words are they? (Duke Orsino)
43. To what does Duke Orsino compare women? (Roses)
44. Why did Olivia keep herself out from the public view for seven years? (To mourn the death of her brother)
45. Who is Malvolio? (Olivia's steward)
46. What happened at the first meeting of Olivia and Cesario? (Olivia fell in love with Cesario)
47. Who saved the life of Sebastian during the ship wreck? (Antonio)
48. Who is Sir Toby? (Olivia's uncle)
49. What does Olivia send to Cesario through Malvolio? (A Ring)
50. Who could write like Olivia? (Maria)
51. Where did Sebastian and Antonio travel to? (Illyria)
52. How did Olivia mistake Sebastian? (Cesario)
53. Who was the knight in Olivia's household? (Sir Andrew Aguecheek)
54. Who involved Viola in a drunken brawl? (Sir Andrew Aguecheek)
55. Who offered help to Viola in her plight? (Antonio)
56. Whose presence revealed the mystery and saved Antonio from imprisonment? (Sebastian)
57. Whom did Olivia marry? (Sebastian)
58. Whom did Duke Orsino marry? (Viola)
59. How does the play Twelfth Night end with? (A song by Feste)
60. Who is Diana? (The Goddess of chastity)

MACBETH

61. Why was Macbeth held in esteem throughout Scotland? (For his great valour and skill in wars)
62. Who was the thane of Glamis? (Macbeth)
63. Who stopped Macbeth and Banquo during their return from the battlefield? (Three witches)
64. Who predicted that Macbeth will be the king of Scotland? (The third witch)
65. What was the effect of the prophecy on Macbeth? (changed the course of Macbeth's life)
66. What was the nature of Lady Macbeth? (Evil-minded and ambitious woman)
67. What was the name of Macbeth's castle? (Inverness)
68. Who came as a guest to the castle of Macbeth? (King Duncan)
69. Who went to the king's chamber with a dagger? (Lady Macbeth)

70. Who was 'too full of the milk of human kindness to murder the king' according to Lady Macbeth? (Macbeth)
71. Why did Lady Macbeth fail to kill Duncan? (Duncan resembled her father)
72. How did Lady Macbeth accuse for hesitating to kill Duncan? (Cowardice and fickleness)
73. What did Macbeth visualize while advancing towards Duncan? (A dagger hanging in the air)
74. Who took refuge in the English court after the murder of the king? (Malcolm)
75. Who fled to Ireland immediately after the death of the king? (Donalbain)
76. Who was crowned as the king of Scotland after the death of Duncan? (Macbeth)
77. What was the name of the Banquo's son? (Fleance)
78. Why did Macbeth appoint hired assassins? (To murder Banquo and Fleance)
79. What did Macbeth see in the banquet? (The ghost of Banquo)
80. Where did Banquo's ghost sit? (On his reserved seat)
81. Who appeared before Macbeth like a crowned child with a tree in his hand? (The third spirit)
82. Where did Macbeth find the witches again? (Near the heath)
83. Who appeared before Macbeth like an armed head? (The first spirit)
84. Macbeth believed he would never be vanquished until the ----- would move towards Dunsinane. (Birnam woods)
85. Who informed Macbeth that the Birnam wood was moving towards the castle? (A messenger)
86. Why did Macduff flee to England? (To join the army under Malcolm)
87. Why did Lady Macbeth commit suicide? (Remorse of guilt and public hatred)
88. Who severed Macbeth's head? (Macduff)
89. To whom did Macduff present the head of Macbeth? (Malcolm).
90. Who was the sole partner in the wickedness of Macbeth? (Lady Macbeth)

ANTONY AND CLEOPATRA

91. Which theme has been highlighted in Antony and Cleopatra? (Honour, Loyalty, and Betrayal)
92. Who were the other two rulers of Rome with Antony? (Lepidus and Octavius Caesar)
93. Who was Antony's wife? (Fulvia)
94. What was the name of Antony sword? (Phillipan)
95. Who was Cleopatra? (Queen of Egypt)
96. Where is the I Scene of "Antony and Cleopatra" set? (In Alexandria)
97. What gift did Antony give Cleopatra? (A pearl)
98. What is the central theme of Antony and Cleopatra? (Enduring nature of love)
99. What was the argument between Antony and Octavius about? (Antony's escapades to Egypt)
100. Who stood as an insurgent force against Rome? (Pompey)
101. Who served as a mediator between Antony and Ceasar? (Lepidus)
102. With what nickname did Antony call Cleopatra? (Serpent of old Nile)
103. What was the reaction of Cleopatra on hearing Antony's marriage with Octavia? (Fit of rage and jealousy)
104. Where was the opening scene of Antony and Cleopatra set? (Alexandria)

105. Where did Antony decide to go in the beginning of the play? (Rome)
106. What did Cleopatra contribute to Antony's battle with Caesar? (A fleet of ships)
107. Whom did Antony order to kill him? (Eros)
108. What was Tiber to which Antony referred at the beginning of the 'play'? (A River)
109. What was Antony told concerning his wife in the II Scene? (Her death)
110. What was the cause of Caesar's disgust? (Antony abandoning Octavia)
111. Who called Antony an 'old Ruffian'? (Caesar)
112. Who was Antony's trusted lieutenant and close friend? (Enobarbus)
113. Where was the first naval battle fought? (Actium)
114. What did Cleopatra's ships do in the Battle of Actium? (Fled from the Roman fleet)
115. Why did Octavia go to Rome? (To meet Caesar)
116. Who made the speech, "Age cannot wither her...."? (Enobarbus)
117. Who warned Cleopatra not to believe the words of Caesar? (Dolabella)
118. How did Cleopatra kill herself? (With the asp)
119. Where did the last scene of "Antony and Cleopatra" take place? (Cleopatra's Monument)
120. Before his fight with Caesar, what sign of bad fortune did Antony's soldiers encounter? (Strange music)

CRITICISM

121. Which work of Samuel Johnson is considered as the classic document of English literary criticism? (Preface to Shakespeare)
122. Who addresses Shakespeare as 'the Father of English Drama'? (Samuel Johnson)
123. How does Johnson praise Shakespeare's dramas? (Mirror of life)
124. Johnson's judgment of Shakespeare is __ (impartial and objective)
125. Johnson observes that Shakespeare excels in writing __ than __. (comedies, tragedies)
126. What are the three unities? (Unity of Time, Place and Action)
127. What Unity is followed by Shakespeare in his plays? (Unity of Action)
128. How does Shakespeare excel the other dramatists? (By holding a mirror to nature)
129. How does Johnson praise Othello? (Vigorous and Vivacious)
130. Whom does Johnson compare Shakespeare with? (Chaucer and Homer)
131. What is the function of literature, as said by Johnson? (Strengthening morality)
132. What other living being are found along with human beings in *Midsummer Night's Dream*? (Fairies)
133. Which two unities are dismissed by Johnson while analyzing the works of Shakespeare? (Unity of Time and Place)
134. What are the causes for the obscurities in Shakespeare's works? (The age and lack of stagecraft)
135. In which play of Shakespeare is the external conflict explicit? (Macbeth)
136. What are the two conflicts found in Shakespearean tragedy? (External and internal conflict)
137. What does Shakespeare use unnecessarily to express trivial ideas? (Swelling figures)
138. Why are the editions of Shakespeare's works faulty? (No sound principle followed)
139. According to Johnson, which unity need not be followed in historical plays? (Unity

of Action)

140. Shakespeare's characters are the _of common humanity. (genuine progeny)
141. How is the collection of essays on Shakespeare by Wilson Knight titled? (The Wheels of Fire)
142. What does Knight mean by 'the spatial aspects' in Shakespeare's plays? (The atmosphere)
143. What does Macbeth experience throughout the play? (Absolute evil)
144. How does Knight describe the experience of all characters in "Macbeth"? (Paralyzed by fear)
145. How does the evil appear in *Hamlet*? (Ghost and death)
146. How does the evil appear in *Richard III*? (An individual's crime)
147. How does the evil appear in *Othello*? (Hate).
148. What do the continual questions in Macbeth denote? (Amazement and mystery)
149. What two imageries are constant in "Macbeth"? (Blood and fire)
150. How does Macbeth face the world at the end? (Fearless)

GENERAL SHAKESPEARE

The Elizabethan Theatre

Introduction:

Of Shakespeare, his theatre and his audience it could truly be said: "The Drama's laws, the drama's patrons give for we that live to please, must please to live". Shakespeare meant his plays not to be read but to be enacted particularly for audience. The defects and excellences of Shakespeare's works are to the structure of his stage and the tastes of his audience. His plays have been conditioned a great deal by the stage that he wrote for and the world that he lived in. The Elizabethan audience craved for noise and outcry for pomp and pageantry. Shakespeare provided them with plenty of it in every one of his plays.

The structure of the theatre:

Shakespeare's plays were mostly staged at the Globe and Blackfrairs. The theatre of those days was a small round wooden structure. Shakespeare refers to this in *Henry IV* as this wooden 'O'. The first permanent play house 'The Theatre' was constructed by James Burbage in 1575. The play house was open to the sky. The performances were given by daylight. The stage and the boxes by the walls were covered. The rest of the theatre was open to the sky. The plays were staged by daylight. The stage was divided into four parts. The front stage projected far into auditorium. This part of the stage served as a street or battlefield or garden and was open to the sky. The back stage was the part behind the pillars. It served as a large room, a palace hall, and office or a tavern as required. The walls of his part of the stage were hung with tapestry black for tragedy and blue for comedy. At the back of the two side walls were the entrance and the exit for the actors. There was a screened inner stage which served as the bedroom scene in *Othello* and *Macbeth*. It also served as Juliet's tomb and as Prospero's cell. Over the inner stage was the

balcony or the upper stage. It served as the window in Shylock's house from which Jessica threw the casket on the street. It also served as Cleopatra's monument to which the dying Antony was raised to kiss Cleopatra farewell.

Absence of women actress on the stage:

Another significant fact about Elizabethan theatre those women's parts were played by boys. This explains why Shakespeare's plays do not have many women characters. In the tragedies they mostly in the background and some of the women characters like Portia, Nerrisa, Viola and Rosalind appear in the disguise of men.

The Elizabethan Stage:

The Elizabethan theater was a round or octagonal building. This stage had four main parts:

✚ **The Front Stage:** It is a bare platform without a curtain at the fore front. The Elizabethan theater was a round or octagonal building. In Henry V Shakespeare refers to this as 'this wooden o'. The stage was a rectangular platform projecting far into the auditorium. It was also known as the main stage. It was conventionally used for a scene in some open place, such as a wood, a field, a garden, etc. In front and on either side of this platform stood the groundlings or the riff-raff who paid a penny or so for admission. The upper class who paid more sat on tiers of galleries running all round, as in a modern circus. The nobles and gallants sat on the stage itself. Commenting on the actors and throwing orange peel on the groundings.

✚ **The Back Stage:** There was a part curtained off from the front part of the main stage. It was called the back stage. The part behind the pillars, which serve for any "covered" place a room of tavern or an office. The wall round this part of the stage was hung over with tapestry. At both the ends of this wall there were small doors for the entrance and exit actors. The back stage was used by Shakespeare in a variety of ways. It was the room where Henry IV lay dying.

✚ **An Inner Stage:** it served many purpose with the inner stage " It was Juliet's tomb, Prospero's cell, 'from the storm'. There was a 'tiring house' or dressing room, of the actors on either side of the back stage. In its walls have were two doors, by which entrance and exits were made. Sometimes, the dressing room was used as a house, a castle, the wall of a town, etc.

✚ **An Upper Stage:** On the top of the tiring house was the upper stage or balcony which looked down on the main stage. The balcony was used in a variety of ways. The balcony also served as Cleopatra's monument into which she and her women drew up the dying Antony. In Cymbeline Jupiter descends in this way.

Salient Features of Elizabethan Stage:

The Elizabethan Stage had no front curtain. As there was no curtain, the dead had to be carried away before closing the play. This caused an anti-climax. The absence of movable scenery was a blessing in disguise to Shakespeare. Shakespeare could change his scene very quickly. Antony and Cleopatra has forty-two scenes laid all over the Roman empires. The large number of scenes results in diffusion and looseness of construction. At the same time, it also invests the action with sweep and breadth. This was certainly an advantage to Shakespeare.

Owing to lack of painted scenery, Shakespeare could use vivid poetic descriptions to give indications of time. Instead of using a scene to indicate sunrise, Shakespeare exercises his poetic gifts as when Romeo points out the dawn to Juliet:

"Look, love, what envious streaks

Do lace the severing clouds in your east Night's

candles are burnt out, and jocund day

Stands tip-toe on the misty mountain tops

I must be gone and live, or stay and die".

Shakespeare was the absence of actresses. Women's parts were played only by boys on the Elizabethan stage. In most of his comedies, in *Twelfth Night*, *The Merchant of Venice*, the boy actor is dressed as a woman only in the first few scenes. Thereafter the story is developed in such a way that the boy actor can throw away the female dress and wear his own male dress and feel quite at home.

The Elizabethan Audience

The crude taste of the Elizabethan audience was affected by Shakespeare's art. Many of Shakespeare's contemporaries fulminated against the unrefined tastes of the audience. But Shakespeare made a virtue of necessity and in the process of catering to the needs of the audience achieved artistic effects. Thus Shakespeare had to insert comic scenes even in tragedies to satisfy the craving of the audience for mirth and merry-making. Instead of protesting against this compulsion, Shakespeare used comedy artistically in tragedies. He perfected the device of comic relief and introduced the porter in *Macbeth*, the grave-diggers in *Hamlet* and the old countryman in *Antony and Cleopatra* to relieve the intolerable tragic tension.

The Elizabethan Audience: Music and noise:

The Elizabethan audience craved for music. Dramatists like Marston (in his *Antonino* and *Mellida*) introduced songs even in places where they did not serve any dramatic purpose. Shakespeare's songs are always dramatically relevant. They either conjure up an atmosphere as the songs sung in Arden in *As You Like It* or throw light on the character of the singer or listener. As Feste's songs do in *Twelfth Night*.

The Elizabethan audience loved din and bustle. Shakespeare gave them plenty of noise and at the same time made art out of it. Thus, a thunderstorm is used to intensify the abnormality and villainy of Casca and Cassius who, dark thoughts within them, walk the streets of Rome in a terrific thunderstorm in *Julius Caesar*. The alarm-bell is used for the purpose of intensifying excitement in the brawl that ruins Cassio in *Othello*. Its effect is manifested in Othello's immediate order. "Silence that dreadful bell".

Sometimes the players staged their performances in an inn. Shakespeare meant his plays not to be read but to be enacted and that too on a particular stage and for a particular audience. Thus, instead of scorning the audience for their weaknesses, Shakespeare catered to their tastes and in the very process, rose to great artistic heights.

Clowns and Fools in Shakespeare's Plays

Introduction:

The word 'fool' is rather loosely used these days but it is a technical term in Shakespeare's plays. The fool in Elizabethan drama is someone employed to entertain a king or a duke or any other rich person who needs someone to entertain him. The convention in Elizabethan drama is that the fool is the most insightful and intelligent man in the play. He is not to be confused with a clown: in Shakespeare's time 'clown' was a simple rural man – a yokel.

Functions of Fools and Clowns:

- Shakespeare's fools generally appear as servants of principal characters. But, they play an integral and significant function in Shakespeare's plays. They add spice to the comedy by his humour and foolery. They provide dramatic relief as well as heighten the intensity of the tragic scenes in the tragedies.
- The fools have the freedom to speak the truth in a context where none dare do that, for fear of their lives. They act like the chorus in Greek drama, commenting on the characters and the action for the benefit of the audience.
- The fools are the wisest characters in the play. The other characters refer to them as 'the fool' and we usually know him as 'the jester.'

Among Shakespeare's characters, some are often referred to as fools. There are many of them, the most notable of which are characters like Bottom in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and Dogberry in *Much Ado About Nothing*. But, fools that they are in the modern sense of the word, they are not technically true Shakespearean fools.

The significant fools in Shakespeare's plays are Feste, Touchstone, Trinculo and The Fool in King Lear.

Feste, in Twelfth Night:

Feste is probably the most famous of Shakespeare's fools. His job is to entertain by singing and dancing, and making jokes, but he is an important member of Olivia's household because of her respect for him. He moves freely among the other characters and also freelances by disappearing from Olivia's house and singing and dancing for other patrons. He is highly intelligent with an extraordinary command of language. Olivia constantly asks his opinion. He is interesting. Apart from his jester, he plays a major dramatic role in the play. With that role, and his conventional fool role, where he looks in at the action, he is both inside and outside the play, which makes him an almost postmodern character.

Touchstone, in As You Like It:

Touchstone is Duke Frederick's court jester. He is quick witted and an astute observer of human nature. His commentary on the other characters runs continuously throughout the play. He is quite cynical and his comments on the characters are often quite caustic. He is notable for his facility with language. He can twist any argument and he loves to nitpick about everything. He is full of wise sayings and frequently talks about the wisdom of foolishness.

The Fool in King Lear:

The fool in King Lear does not have a name and is called, simply, 'Fool.' He is Lear's constant companion and accompanies him on his journey into madness and eventually death when he, just before Lear's death, is hanged by those who have imprisoned Lear. In this play the fool functions as the inner consciousness of the foolish king, who is foolish while his fool

is wise. The Fool is Lear's alter ego and constantly comments on Lear's relentless folly. Every time Lear does something foolish, like giving up all his power to his daughters, the fool rubs it in. When Lear finally achieves a measure of understanding about how lacking in wisdom he has been there is no need for the Fool, who dies.

Trinculo, in The Tempest:

Trinculo is an exception to the concept of the wise fool: he is Alonso's court jester, who is shipwrecked with the royal party and separated from them. He is extremely stupid and teams up with Alonso's drunken butler Stephano and Prospero's indigenous servant, Caliban, in a plot to stage a coup against Prospero. Trinculo and Stephano are so stupid and ineffectual that their efforts and antics provide some of the best comedy in Shakespeare.

Clowns in Shakespeare's Plays:

Clowns have been entertaining people since medieval times. The court jester played a prominent role as entertainer to kings and peasants alike. The clown's job and purpose was to entertain people ("Jesters"). In Shakespeare's plays, there are also the clowns who are unintentionally funny -like Bottom in *A Mid -Summer Night's Dream* and Dogberry and Verges in *Much Ado about Nothing*. As pointed out by Gordon, the true extremes of clowning were the rustic fool and the Court Jester. All the varieties are the mixtures of the two.

"They were there to make the company or the audience laugh ".

Falstaff and Bottom:

In Shakespeare's plays we come across lasting types of ridiculous humanity who are not exactly fools or clowns. Topping the list of such characters is Sir John Falstaff. He is a great figure of fun. He is witty in himself and evokes the wit of others. He is irresponsible. Bottom, the weaver, is another such classic character. He is preposterously vain and ambitious to play all roles in 'Pyramus and Thisbe'. He is not at all perturbed when his head is transformed into an ass's head. He takes Titania's falling in love with him as a matter of course. Dogberry and Verges, pompous fools parading their legal knowledge and wisely dodging dangers, are exquisite comic characters.

Conclusion:

Shakespeare's fools are integral manifestations of his humour which is generally kindly and tolerant. Shakespeare laughs with the fool and the coxcomb and not at them. He at times, indulges in lash-like satire.

Villains in Shakespeare's Plays

Introduction:

Shakespeare has penned some of the most iconic villains in English literature. Here we round up seven of his most famous murdering usurpers, power-hungry backstabbers and scheming sinners

Tamora in Titus Andronicus:

Tamora, Queen of the Goths, is a cruel and brutal central player in William Shakespeare's revenge tragedy, *Titus Andronicus*. We are introduced to Tamora as a conquered queen, begging the general of Rome, Titus Andronicus, to show her captured sons mercy. When Titus

refuses and instead executes her sons he unleashes a maelstrom of vengeance, as Tamora becomes fuelled by the need to wreak revenge on Titus and his family.

Tamora is patient in her quest for vengeance. She secures herself a powerful position by marrying the weak-willed emperor Saturninus. Tamora's villainy reaches a shocking peak when she orders her two surviving sons to rape and mutilate Titus's daughter Lavinia, cruelly ignoring the innocent girl's pleas for mercy and mocking her distress. Tamora gets her comeuppance. Titus murders her two sons and serves them to her baked in a pie. After unwittingly eating the pie Tamora is stabbed to death.

Angelo in Measure for Measure:

Angelo appears quite unlike any of Shakespeare's other villains. He is a puritanical moral crusader whose righteousness seems almost otherworldly. He appears immune to sins of the flesh. However, the upright Angelo is not as virtuous as he first seems. As temporary leader of Vienna, Angelo proves harsh and unforgiving. He takes a malevolent delight in dishing out severe justice. Angelo asserts his authority is by cracking down on the city's sexual immorality, sentencing the young Claudio to death for impregnating his lover. But when Claudio's virtuous sister Isabella comes to beg for mercy for her brother, Angelo's intense hypocrisy is revealed. Revelations from Angelo's past highlight further his cruel nature. He abandoned his fiancée when her dowry was lost in a shipwreck.

However, Angelo is not entirely incorrigible. He is willing to confess his sins and expresses guilt. None of his immoral plans come to fruition; Isabella is not seduced and Claudio is not executed. Despite his corrupt lust and serious hypocrisy, he is one of Shakespeare's few villains to be granted forgiveness. The Duke of Vienna pardons his crimes and repeals his death sentence, on the condition that he marries the mistress he abandoned.

Richard III in Richard III:

Shakespeare has depicted Richard III as a Machiavellian villain. He had a physical deformity, lusted after his niece and lost his "kingdom for a horse". He has had real sticking power. He is a malicious, deceptive and bitter usurper. He seizes England's throne by nefarious means. He takes delight in his own villainy. He is unabashed in his evil motives. However, Richard is also an undeniably charming and complex figure who sucks in the audience with his immoral logic and dazzling wordplay.

Richard's sins come back to haunt him. Shakespeare provides us a long list of Richard's murder victims, in a roll call of ghosts that visit him on the last night of his life. Immediately after his visitation by spirits – the evening before his downfall and death – Richard appears to be suddenly struck by doubt. He suddenly lacks conviction about his actions: "O no, alas, I rather hate myself/ For hateful deeds committed by myself/ I am a villain".

Goneril and Regan in King Lear:

Goneril and Regan are described by their own father as "unnatural hags". They are two grasping, self-interested and power-hungry daughters of King Lear. Their willingness to betray their father and their honest sister Cordelia causes the collapse of a kingdom and ultimately leads to Lear's descent into madness. In the opening scene the elderly Lear declares his intention to step down as king and divide his realm between his three daughters. In response to this, Goneril and Regan cleverly charm their father, hoping to grasp all they can from his inheritance.

Goneril and Regan's feigned loyalty dissolves rapidly and their willingness to betray their father quickly becomes clear. The sisters' ruthless political manoeuvrings have descended into outright violence. Regan tortures her father's supporter Gloucester, plucking out his eyes and turning him out to wander blindly in the wild. Goneril and Regan's malevolence eventually turns inwards and rips them apart. Fuelled by jealousy at her sister's supposed relationship with Edmund Goneril poisons Regan and then kills herself.

Lady Macbeth in Macbeth:

Lady Macbeth is undoubtedly one of Shakespeare's most fascinating female characters. Driven towards evil by a deep ambition and a ruthless appetite for power, she uses her sexuality and powers of manipulation to exert a corrosive influence over her husband, Macbeth. She is a more compelling character than her husband. She is the driving force behind Macbeth's lust for power. She persuades him to pursue the Scottish throne by violent and deceptive means. After Macbeth murders King Duncan, she reassures him that "what's done, is done". Like many of Shakespeare's villains, Lady Macbeth is eventually consumed by her guilty conscience and driven mad by her murderous actions. She is plagued by episodes of sleepwalking. She wanders through the castle, unable to rid the image of her bloodstained hands from her mind. Finally, she becomes disappointingly absent, eventually committing suicide offstage.

Claudius in Hamlet:

Claudius is Denmark's usurper king and Hamlet's uncle in *Hamlet*. He is a crafty politician determined to maintain his grasp over his kingdom. He is guilty of the ultimate sin – fratricide. He has secretly murdered his brother, the king (Hamlet's father), pouring poison into his ear as he slept, in order to claim his throne and steal his wife. He is plagued by the vengeful ghost of his victim.

Shakespeare has crafted Claudius by giving him a conscience. Unlike Iago, Tamora or Richard III, Claudius takes no pleasure in his wrongdoing. He ultimately falls victim to his own conniving nature, as his wife, Gertrude accidentally drinks from a poisoned chalice Claudius had intended for Hamlet. Claudius, too, meets his bitter end in classic Shakespearean form. Hamlet stabs Claudius with a poisoned sword before forcing him to drink from the poisoned chalice.

Iago in Othello:

Many scholars see Iago as the most inherently evil of all Shakespeare's villains. He relentlessly plots Othello's downfall. He accomplishes this by planting the seed of jealousy in Othello's mind. He plots to turn him against his wife, Desdemona. He constructs a web of lies to make Othello believe in Desdemona's sexual infidelity. Enraged by jealousy, Othello eventually murders Desdemona and then kills himself. Iago's schemes are eventually revealed and he is sentenced to execution.

Women in Shakespeare's Plays

Introduction:

Ruskin's statement that "Shakespeare has no heroes, but only heroines" is an extreme view. But nobody can deny that women form an indispensable part of the world of the Shakespeare.

Classification of women characters:

The range and variety of women characters in Shakespeare tempts most critics to assert that he has comprehensively covered the entire gallery of women in his plays. His portraits of women have never been surpassed. Critics have also taken great pains to classify his heroines. The commonsense Classification, however, would be to differentiate them as clever and assertive like Portia in *The Merchant of Venice*, Beatrice in *Much Ado About Nothing* and Rosalind in *As You Like It*. The next group will be the loving and fanciful like Juliet, Helena, Viola, Ophelia and Miranda. In the third group would come the tragic heroines, Desdemona, Cordelia, Hermione in *Much Ado About Nothing*. The last group would comprise and aggressive and dominant creatures like lady Macbeth, Goneril, Regan and Cleopatra.

Assertive and clever women in the comedies:

Women dominate men in the comedies. The men in the comedies are shallow, sentimental creatures, incapable of independent volition. Women who stand out for their cleverness and their assertiveness, they come out unscathed from the conflicts. Shakespeare's heroines are Viola, Beatrice and Rosalind. The women have practical genius when men lack, when Antonio's life has to be saved. It is Portia in *The Merchant of Venice* raises to the occasion whereas her husband merely wrings his hands in sheer despair. Viola through soft-spoken, succeeds in meeting, whereas the male messengers were all turned away by her.

The women in the comedies are known for their constant attachment to their lovers. Rosalind teases Orlando in a most mischievous manner but swoons on coming to know that her lover has been attacked by a lion. Viola loves Orsino so much that she is prepared to make any sacrifice for his sake. She woos Olivia on his behalf and is even willing to die in order to promote his love for Olivia. Viola is an embodiment of self-effacing love. These women are shy and modest in expressing their love. Portia in *The Merchant of Venice* and Beatrice in *Much Ado About Nothing* adopt roundabout methods to express their love. But these women can express their love forthrightly and even pursue their reluctant lovers. Helena in *All's Well That Ends Well*, for example, is quite bold in pursuit of her love.

Women in the histories:

The English Histories deal with rough strife. Hence there is no place in them for the soft graces of women. The atmosphere of war at home and abroad is not conducive to female happiness. War bereaves the women in the histories either of their husbands or of their children or of their brothers. The men are too busy waging wars to devote any attention to their wives. When they are wooed, the wooing is mechanical and hurried and devoid of passion. The courting of the French princess Katharine by Henry V is only one example of this kind of unsatisfactory wooing. The women of the history plays are all pathetic figures, pushed to the background and left unscarred for.

Women in the tragedies:

The women in the tragedies can be divided into two categories:

✚ Innocent women uncomplaining to their doom, such as Cordelia, Ophelia and Desdemona.

✚ Evil and destructive women such as Goneril, Regan, Lady Macbeth, Cressida etc.

Passive and sentimental women characters:

In the second grouping of Shakespeare's women, Helena in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* is a passive and sentimental young woman. Lysander says of Helena that she "Devoutly dotes, dotes in idolatory on Demetrius when Demetrius tells her that he hates her cries out "And even for that do I love you the more " I am your spaniel "

Passionate and self-sacrificing women characters:

Juliet in *Romeo and Juliet* is Passionate, constant and self-sacrificing love has transformed her. But the physical basis of love does, in no way, make less pure or modest. Even Portia in *The Merchant of Venice* surrenders herself, her wealth and all to Bassanio who she has accepted her as lord and master. Even Portia, the wife of Brutus who asserts her right to share her husband's thoughts and worries, kills herself, being unable to bear her separation from Brutus. Ophelia in *Hamlet* , like hero in *Much Ado About Nothing* shows herself passive in love and pathetic in her helplessness. Miranda in *The tempest* is loving and fanciful, but a passive character in the play.

Creating sympathy among the readers:

Shakespeare's female characters are inferior to his men. Of all Shakespeare's tragic heroines, Desdemona evokes or sympathy the most. Desdemona is described as

"A maiden never bold;

Of spirit so still and quiet, that her
motion Blush'd at herself".

In her extraordinary innocence she was, 'Half the wooer' and almost invited Othello's courting and gave him all her love. Desdemona's love for Othello oversteps brink of idolatry. She cannot bring herself to see any fault in him even when he strikes her publicly in blind rage of jealousy. Emilia had been shocked by Desdemona's Passive submission to Othello's brutality. Her docile reactions only show the strength of her love and the refinement of her nature. When Othello strangles her to death, her last words to Emilia who ask her who has killed her are,

"Nobody :I myself, farewell, / Commend me to my kind lord"

A Strong woman character:

Cordelia's character is positivity combined with pride. She is proud. She is obstinate and she is strong in mind. Cordelia is unadulterated tenderness and live with strength when occasion demands it. She has foresight and practical sense. She exercises influence a strong nature over others. But she is helpless. She does not see things from the stable point of own loss or gain.

Evil and scheming characters:

Among the aggressive and evil women in the gallery of Shakespeare's women characters, Lady Macbeth stands apart.. She possesses a rightful, determined will, and iron stability of resolved. But this in the end proves her ruin. In self-reliance and in intelligence, she is superior to Macbeth as Portia is to Bassanio and Rosalind to Orlando. Her womanliness comes out in her minute reluctance to kill Duncan in his sleep because she her father's face in his. It is also to be seen in her tender concern for Macbeth to the last. She stands out as a contrast to Goneril, Regan in that she suffers the compunctions, visiting of nature. The other two are seen as absolutely remorseless.

In the delineation of the characters of Goneril and Regan, however, Shakespeare appears to be content to assure that there are really incorrigibly wicked people. They are realists. They

give their father the smooth speech which he wants of them. Goneril is a schemer. Regan echoes Goneril. He appears to shrink from acting on her own. Two sisters are different even in their monstrous cruelty. Goneril is cruel with a method and purpose. Regan positively delight in the infliction of pain. Granville-barker has pointed out how the devil of the list comes to the match the devil of cruelty in the two women. In their separate but illicit love for one and the dame man, Edmund, they become reckless, shameless and foolish.

A woman of infinite variety:

The last to be considered among Shakespeare woman Characters but certainly not least of them is Cleopatra, daughter of Ptolemy. Her ability to attract and hold men like Pompey, Julius Ceaser and Antony lies in her skillful wit and feminine changeableness. Enobarbus says of her:

"Age cannot wither her nor custom Stale
her infinite variety".

Thus Shakespeare has portrayed a variety of women in his plays.

Ghosts and Fairies in Shakespeare's Plays

Introduction:

Shakespeare makes dramatic use of the Elizabethan belief in the supernatural agencies. People in Shakespeare's day believed much more in the supernatural than people today. The presence and the power of the unseen were accepted universally.

Supernatural elements in five plays:

Shakespeare could not leave it out of drama which is an imitation of life. The supernatural is in evidence in only of his plays and they are *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Hamlet*, *Macbeth*, *Julius Caesar* and *The Tempest*. In *A Midsummer Night's Dream* the fairies and especially puck, play mischief with mankind but are not evil. In *Hamlet* the ghost has far greater power but it fails to achieve its purpose. The witches in *Macbeth* have greater potentialities for evil. But they drive *Macbeth* to his doom because the evil is already there in his heart. In *Julius Caesar* the unseen power act as portents of calamities and harbingers of death. In *The Tempest* the unseen powers are entirely in the control of Prospero and work towards man's weal.

Appearance of Ghosts and Fairies:

In Shakespeare's play's, he takes care to invest the supernatural manifestations with all the characteristics of popular superstition so that it may be readily accepted by his audience. Shakespeare, however, takes care to keep his supernatural beings as far as possible aloof from man. Their appearance in the plays is strictly limited. Only a few humans come into contact with them off and on. The witches in *Macbeth* appear only at the beginning of the play and in a scene half-way through the drama. The terrifying supernatural phenomenon in *Julius Caesar* appear only on the night before the assassin of Caesar. The ghost of Caesar appears only to Brutus and only twice. But the ghost was more subjective than objective. No other person sees or hears the ghost.

The world of the fairies:

In *A Midsummer Night's Dream* the fairies come into contact only with Bottom the Wever. oberon and Titania, the king and queen of fairies, have power over nature. They

can cover the starry welkin with black fog. When they quarrel, all nature is disturbed. The seasons are altered Mankind suffers. Shakespeare adds many fanciful touches. The Queen's lamps are the glowworm. The fairies compass the globe swifter than the wandering moon. The height of fantasy is achieved when Titania calls her fairy attendance and says,

"Come, a roundel and a fairy song:

Then, for the third part of a minute, hence "

The fairies seek dew drops and haunt pearls in every cowslip's ear. They kill the cankers in flowers.

Puck, the court jester of Oberon is a spirit full of harmless mischief. He can assume different shapes and voices. Puck is proud of his unending mischief. He boasts that he

" sometimes lurks in a gossip's bowl, In very likeness of roasted crab "

The other important play in which Shakespeare makes use of fairies is *The Tempest*. In it, the supernatural beings are entirely under the control of Prospero. Ariel has superhuman powers but he can use them only under prosperous direction. Caliban is a horrible civil creature but Prospero uses as a servant to do all the heavy work for him. Ariel is very much a fairy as those in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. That he is diminutive and is clear from the lines of his song.

Ariel however is different from the fairies of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. In that he serves as the means of redressing the wrong done to one mortal by another.

Shakespeare's treatment of the world of fairies is not only original but revolutionary.

Supernatural elements in Julius Caesar:

The supernatural element is found in *Julius Caesar*. Julius Caesar himself is seen as believer in superstition. He calls on Calpurnia to touch the garment of Antonius when he is running in the race of the Lupercal. Calpurnia was barren and Caesar believed that touching the garment of a Lupercal runner would lead to her fertility. The events of the night before the assassination of Caesar are piled with horror upon horror of the supernatural. The tempest drops fire on the streets of Rome. Alion glares upon Casca and stalks away without harming him. A slave is seen with his hand flaming but his hand is unhurt. Even more bizarre and horrible incidents pile up striking terror in the hearts of the people. Calpurnia's dream is itself a compendium of superstition. Calpurnia also remarks: "When beggars die there are no comets seen

The heaven themselves blaze forth the death of princess"

Julius Caesar himself calls upon the priest to offer sacrifice and watch the omens.

The priest examines the sacrificial animal after it was cut open. They found the heart missing and thou it very bad omen. The plausible explanation given of Calpurnia's dream by Brutus show how much the Roman believed in superstition. In fact the various element of the supernatural give a Roman atmosphere to the play. They serve to anticipate what is to come fate. Even Cassius and Brutus appeared cowed by the omens seen on their march to Philippi. The ghost of Caesar seen twice by Brutus 'sense of impending soon but also a symbol of the continuing power of Julius Caesar even after his death.

Conclusion:

Shakespearean drama admits supernatural agency -witches, ghost, apparitions as well as portents and violation of law. His use of the supernatural as a force in his plays is clear and subtle. He uses the agency of the supernatural to intensify and to illuminate human action, not to determine it. This is clearly seen in Macbeth. Macbeth's secret thoughts which he betrays in his guilty star, have been an invitation to the power of evil. Macbeth has already ventured into a desert and they added to the witches impulse downward.

TWELFTH NIGHT

Detailed Summary:

Orsino, The Duke of Illyria reveals his great love for the rich Countess Olivia who we learn has decided to veil herself for seven years to honor her recently deceased brother's memory. Profoundly impressed by this, the Duke continues his pursuit of Olivia undeterred.

Viola is introduced to us as a survivor of a shipwreck. Her brother was lost at sea but may not be dead. Viola learns from the Sea Captain of their doomed ship that they are now in Illyria, which is ruled by Orsino. The Sea Captain explains to Viola that The Duke of Illyria is pursuing the fair Olivia, a woman who like Viola has lost a brother. Identifying with Olivia's grief, Viola wishes to serve Olivia but when she learns this will be impossible, Viola instead has the Sea Captain disguise her as a boy so she can serve Orsino, The Duke of Illyria.

Sir Toby, Olivia's cousin is introduced. We quickly discover that he drinks a great deal, keeps late hours and is generally rowdy by nature. Maria, Lady Olivia's maid makes this clear to us in her unsuccessful attempts to quieten Sir Toby down. Maria also reveals Olivia's annoyance that Sir Toby has encouraged Sir Andrew Aguecheek to court her.

Sir Andrew Aguecheek is now introduced, quickly revealing himself to be rich but rather dim (unintelligent). Sir Toby has manipulated Sir Andrew into pursuing Olivia so Sir Toby can continue benefiting from Sir Andrew's great wealth. Realizing Olivia will not be courted by him, Sir Andrew makes preparations to leave but Sir Toby convinces Sir Andrew to stay a month longer, no doubt so Sir Toby can use Sir Andrew and his great wealth further...

Viola has successfully disguised herself as a man named Cesario. Her success with Orsino has been so great that she is now a favorite with Orsino who believes Viola to be the man named Cesario. As such, Orsino entrusts Cesario (Viola) to express his love for Olivia.

Cesario, (Viola) deeply divided by her own love for Orsino, nonetheless dutifully represents Orsino.

Olivia's maid is angry with Feste, Olivia's Clown. Feste redeems himself with Lady Olivia by telling her she should not mourn her brother since he is in a better place, namely heaven.

Olivia is pleased, but Olivia's uptight steward, Malvolio is not, regarding Feste as old and lacking in wit.

Olivia gives us an insight into Malvolio's character by saying that he suffers from self-love or is arrogant and vain.

Cesario (Viola) petitions Lady Olivia, eventually gaining her audience. Olivia is quite taken by Cesario but tells him, she cannot return Orsino's affections for her. Olivia would however like to see Cesario (Viola) again, asking him to come back to report to her how Orsino took the news.

Intrigued by Cesario, Olivia sends Malvolio after him to give back a ring Cesario left behind as an excuse to express her affection for him...

Sebastian, the twin brother Viola feared had died at sea, has also survived the shipwreck. Like Viola he mourns the loss of his sibling, believing his sister Viola to be dead. Antonio, the man who saved Sebastian's life is touched by Sebastian's loss and decides to follow Sebastian to the Duke of Orsino's court even though he has many enemies there. Sebastian nobly tries to talk Antonio out of this, but Antonio is eventually accepted by Sebastian to travel with him to the Duke's court.

Malvolio catches up with Cesario (Viola), rudely returning Cesario's ring to him. Cesario is confused, he left no such ring at Lady Olivia's house. Malvolio also conveys Olivia's desire that Cesario return to confirm that Orsino has accepted the fact that she does not love him. Cesario now realizes that the ring is a ploy by Olivia to express her affections for him. Realizing she has charmed Olivia, Cesario remarks that Olivia would do better chasing a dream than a man who really is a woman (Viola) in disguise. Cesario is distressed by this mess and hopes time will undo this tangled web.

Late at night, Sir Toby, Sir Andrew and later Feste the Clown are enjoying some late night drinking and singing. This gets Maria's attention who warns all three men to quieten down lest Malvolio notices. The three men ignore Maria. Malvolio arrives, warning the men that he will speak to Olivia about this noise. The three men ignore him as they did Maria and now Malvolio threatens to make Maria look disrespectful in Olivia's eyes if she does not quieten these three men down.

Maria, resenting Malvolio's heavy-handed arrogance hatches a plan to write a letter, which will convince Malvolio that Olivia loves him. This news quietens down all three men, who each dislikes Malvolio but now are all enthusiastic accomplices in his downfall. Sir Toby, Sir Andrew and Feste will hide near where Malvolio will discover the letter so they can all enjoy what in their eyes is Malvolio's rightly deserved humiliation...

Orsino notices that Cesario (Viola) is in love. Cesario describes this person in terms that precisely describe Orsino but Orsino does not realize this. Cesario warns the Duke that Lady Olivia may not love him but Orsino refuses to even accept such a possibility.

Cesario (Viola) remarks on the unreliability of men in relationships. Cesario starts to reveal "his" own past but quickly becomes vague when Orsino becomes too curious.

Orsino sends Cesario once more to Lady Olivia with a large jewel as a token of his love for her... Maria tells Fabian, Sir Toby and Sir Andrew, all of whom hate Malvolio, that she has penned the letter that will convince Malvolio that Lady Olivia loves him.

Malvolio, meanwhile having not yet found the letter, starts entertaining the idea that Olivia could love him and that he could marry her. Malvolio picks up Maria's counterfeit letter with its instructions that Malvolio be rude to kinsman like Sir Toby. It also suggests that he wear yellow stockings and be cross-gartered to win Olivia's love.

Maria explains to Sir Toby and company, that Lady Olivia hates yellow stockings and cross-gartered fashion and so Malvolio will be humiliated before Lady Olivia. Cesario has another private meeting with Lady Olivia on Duke Orsino's behalf. Sir Toby and Sir Andrew meet Cesario (Viola) and Sir Toby learns from Cesario that he will soon speak with Lady Olivia. In private, Lady Olivia admits to Cesario that she used the ring she sent after him to lure him back to her. Cesario (Viola) tries to put Olivia off him but she is smitten, ignoring all

Cesario's attempts to diminish her enthusiasm for "him"... Knowing Lady Olivia will never love him, Sir Andrew prepares to head for home. The sight of Olivia showing more affection to a youth (Cesario) than him was the last straw.

Fabian and Sir Toby don't deny the affectionate display but argue Olivia did it to spur Sir Andrew to woo her and regain her respect. Sir Toby and Fabian manipulate Sir Andrew into writing a challenge to the youth (Cesario) even though they know a fight between two cowards (Cesario and Sir Andrew) is unlikely. Maria enters, telling Sir Toby and Fabian to watch the spectacle that is Malvolio wearing yellow stockings and being cross-gartered. Sebastian has now reluctantly accepted Antonio as his companion in the streets of Illyria. Antonio explains that his offence in Illyria, which was theft, was one the rest of his city have repaid but he has not and so he is still wanted in Illyria. Sebastian decides to look around, but Antonio fearful of his enemies, decides to head for lodging at a place called "the Elephant." Antonio gives Sebastian his purse (wallet) and directions to this lodging and the two part their separate ways...

Olivia makes plans to once more woo Cesario (Viola). Olivia sees Malvolio with yellow stockings and cross-gartered and considers him mad since he continues to smile no matter what the situation and makes crude, lustful interpretations of Olivia's words.

Learning that Cesario has returned, Lady Olivia has Malvolio put into the care of her servants since in her eyes, Malvolio's behavior is some "midsummer madness." Sir Toby, Maria and Fabian plot to have Malvolio placed in a "dark room," so they can have some fun with him. Sir Andrew arrives with his completed letter challenging Cesario. Sir Toby decides to verbally scare Cesario and Sir Andrew about their opponents instead of sending the letter. Alone with Cesario once more, Lady Olivia makes no progress with Cesario who will not requit (return) her love. Olivia is undaunted by this. Sir Toby scares both Sir Andrew and Cesario into drawing their weapons on each other.

Antonio arrives, pledging to fight Sir Andrew on Cesario's (Viola's) behalf who he thinks is Sebastian since Viola disguised as a man now looks like her twin brother Sebastian. The fight is stopped but Officers recognizing Antonio, capture him. Antonio asks Cesario (Viola) for his purse back but Cesario not recognizing him does not oblige. Antonio thinks Sebastian has betrayed him, not realizing he has asked Cesario (Viola) for his purse, not Sebastian.

Confusion reigns as Sebastian is now mistaken for Cesario when Feste insists Sebastian sent for him and Sebastian is certain he did not (Cesario obviously did). Sir Andrew finds Sebastian and thinking it is Cesario from the earlier "fight" that did not happen, hits Sebastian. Sebastian unlike Cesario is not afraid to return the favor and a fight is only stopped by Sir Toby's intervention. Sir Andrew decides to have Sebastian punished by the law of Illyria despite the fact that he started the fight. Sir Toby and Sebastian are just about to fight when Olivia screams for her uncle, Sir Toby to stop. Olivia now scolds Sir Toby, hoping Sebastian, whom she thinks is Cesario (Viola), will forgive her uncle and not be displeased with her. Sebastian, amazed that this beautiful woman he does not know, loves him, replies to Olivia that he will be ruled by her and the two set off to marry immediately.

In Olivia's house, Malvolio in a darkened room is teased mercilessly by Feste who tries unsuccessfully to convince Malvolio that he is mad. Sir Toby, fearing that his fight with Cesario (actually Sebastian) has put him on thin ice with Olivia, wants Feste's teasing of

Malvolio to stop. Feste has other ideas but eventually lets Malvolio write a letter to Olivia proclaiming his sanity...

Sebastian can barely believe his luck, a beautiful woman (Olivia) loves him and has given him a pearl. Sebastian briefly wonders if he is dreaming before he marries Olivia in a private chapel. Olivia explains that their now secret marriage will be revealed later...

In the final scene, chaos ensues as the identical appearing Cesario (Viola) and Sebastian are each blamed for the other's actions. First Feste blames Sebastian for beckoning him, not realizing it was Cesario who called for him. Cesario spots Antonio the man who saved him from fighting Sir Andrew but was taken prisoner by Orsino's officers in Act III. Antonio again asks Cesario for his wallet back thinking he is Sebastian. Cesario (Viola), who does not know Antonio, does not and so Antonio curses him for his betrayal, not realizing he is talking to Cesario not Sebastian whom he lent his wallet to. We learn that Antonio is an enemy of Illyria and especially of Orsino for plundering his ships as a pirate in the past.

Now a prisoner, Antonio baffles Orsino by telling him that he and Cesario (Viola) have been together night and day for three weeks when who Antonio is really thinking of is Sebastian. Orsino cannot believe this; Cesario has been with him for three weeks. Olivia arrives and we see that Orsino still loves her. The feeling is not mutual... Olivia scolds Cesario (Viola) for neglecting her, revealing that "he" is her husband. Cesario (Viola) amazed by this, pleads "his" innocence to Orsino who "he" truly loves and Orsino thinking his servant betrayed him by taking Olivia for himself, prepares to punish Cesario. Olivia meanwhile despairs that her husband Cesario who really is Sebastian, would leave willingly with Orsino to be punished rather than be with his wife and she too claims betrayal by Cesario (Viola).

Sebastian arrives, apologizing for attacking Sir Toby and Sir Andrew. Orsino seeing both Cesario and Sebastian together is amazed that he sees two copies of the same man. Olivia too is amazed.

Sebastian and Cesario compare notes on how they arrived in Illyria each claiming that their sibling had drowned. Eventually they realize that since they knew the same father they are indeed brother and sister, Cesario revealing "his" real identity as the woman named Viola. Malvolio storms in and the cruel prank against him is revealed by Fabian who confesses. Orsino calls Olivia his sister, and Orsino takes Cesario for his mistress and we presume later his wife with Feste ending the play in song.

Major Themes in “Twelfth Night”

Topsy-Turvy World:

Shakespeare develops the theme of the world turned upside down in *Twelfth Night* through several characters and situations as well as through the title's reference to the celebration of Twelfth Night. In England, Twelfth Night—the last night of the Christmas period—is a holiday celebrated before the feast of the Epiphany (the Christian holy day commemorating Christ's appearance to the Magi). According to tradition, communities choose a "Lord of Misrule" to lead the activities on Twelfth Night. Various kinds of pandemonium, often involving cross-dressing, playing practical jokes, and performing other antics to temporarily disrupt social order, ensue; these also figure prominently in Shakespeare's play. Twelfth Night's alternate title, *What You Will*, also evokes the atmosphere of a free-for-all. While

there is no historical evidence that the play takes place during the winter holidays, the play's title does suggest an overall theme that problems happen when the world goes topsy-turvy. Viola's disguise is a key element in depicting the upside-down world of the play. She herself describes disguise as a "wickedness" (Act 2, Scene 2), and at the end of the play she is very anxious to delay embracing Sebastian and Orsino until she is dressed as a woman again. Viola clearly sees her disguise as a last resort when she finds herself shipwrecked and alone in Illyria, but she engages in it skillfully, even (accidentally) getting Olivia to fall in love with her. Her disguise causes further problems when her identity is mistaken with that of her twin, Sebastian, and vice versa.

Orsino may be viewed as the "Lord of Misrule" in some ways. His pursuit of Olivia and dispatch of Cesario to speak for him sets the plot in motion and leads to further twists. Throughout the play, the audience never sees Orsino engaged in any actual activities a duke might have to perform. He spends all of his time feeling sorry for himself and wallowing in his unrequited love for Olivia. If Orsino were not so distracted, he might have realized Cesario was a woman sooner, thus avoiding many of the complications in the play. Olivia's behaviour is also upside down by Elizabethan standards. Her vow for a lengthy and severe mourning period for her brother's death is unreasonable and out of keeping with social custom. Her refusal to even see Orsino's messengers is disrespectful to one who is theoretically her sovereign (the captain states that Orsino "governs" the region). Olivia's active pursuit of Cesario and her stooping to trickery to bring him back is also highly inappropriate to her station. Olivia asking Sebastian (who she thinks is Cesario) to marry her and keeping a priest on hand for just that purpose are also unexpected. By Elizabethan standards, the woman is supposed to be wooed by the man, not the other way around. Shakespeare uses this reversal of roles in several of his plays. In *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, for example, Helena chasing after Demetrius causes much humor and chaos. In the mixed-up world of the play, the Fool, Feste, proves himself to be one of the wisest characters. He points out to Olivia that she is mourning too much, and he shows Orsino that he is making a mistake in pursuing Olivia. The Fool even jokes with Viola (as Cesario) about her lack of a beard, suggesting he may have seen through her disguise. He is also wise and compassionate enough to recognize Malvolio's genuine suffering in his dark room. He comforts Malvolio with a song and helps him get out of his prison.

Love and Madness:

Shakespeare often ties love and madness in his plays, and *Twelfth Night* is no exception. The world-turned-upside-down theme is echoed on the individual level by various characters' madnesses and the ensuing havoc. Pining for Olivia, Orsino talks about the "fantastical" qualities of love in Act 1, suggesting that lovers imagine things that are not there. In fact Orsino barely knows Olivia and his madness consists of imagining that she has all sorts of qualities she may, in reality, lack. He has built her up into an idealized figure—a kind of passive, easily manipulated, mourning saint, who needs to be saved by his attentions toward her—and he is surprised and annoyed by any divergence from this image on her part. He is frustrated by her steadfast refusal to receive his messengers during her mourning period, therefore viewing Cesario as a possibly useful tool in this regard. Later in the play Orsino is genuinely shocked at the level of Olivia's passion for Sebastian (who Orsino and Olivia think is Cesario) and even more so by Olivia's actively seeking marriage to him. Another aspect of

Orsino's madness is that he has no clue Cesario is a woman, despite a number of verbal and physical hints a more alert and sane man might have noticed.

Certainly Orsino's behaviour as the play goes on suggests something is wrong with him. He is frequently referred to as "changeable," and in one scene (Act 2, Scene 4), he contradicts himself repeatedly. First, he tells Viola that men are not as constant in their affection as women; then, he insists no woman could love him as much as he loves Olivia. He develops very strong feelings for Viola even though he believes her to be a boy, Cesario. In the last act he has come to woo Olivia in person; yet before the scene is over, he has expressed his love for Viola and vowed to marry her. Orsino is a one-man personification of Twelfth Night's theme of love as madness.

When Olivia first falls for Cesario, in Act 1, Scene 5, she says, "Even so quickly may one catch the plague?" She is surprised by the strength and suddenness of her feelings for Cesario, and she stoops to using the trick (one she is later ashamed to admit) of returning a ring he supposedly gave her just so she can get him to come back. Sebastian also brings up the idea of madness when Olivia finds him. She is so loving toward him—a man she has not met before, from his point of view—that he literally questions her sanity, even as he acknowledges no one else at her house behaves as if she were crazy. Olivia's actions are crazier than she knows. She marries Sebastian (thinking he is Cesario), a man she literally does not know. Sebastian wonders for a second if he is mad to marry Olivia under these circumstances, but then he just accepts his good fortune.

Malvolio is proclaimed mad because of his feelings for Olivia. His desire for her, however, has more to do with gaining power and wealth than with loving Olivia herself. When he attempts to woo her in the ridiculous manner (smiling and wearing yellow stockings cross-gartered) indicated by the letter he finds, Olivia can only think that he has gone mad. His madness, however, has the concrete effect of keeping him bound and confined in a dark room until he is rescued.

Folly of Grief:

In *Twelfth Night*, grief comes in two forms: serious and trivial. Yet the play argues that all grief is, to some extent, foolish or a waste of time. Olivia has suffered real loss: both her father and her brother have recently died. But she turns mourning into an overly dramatic, morose, and public demonstration of her private suffering, making the over-the-top vow to receive no visitors for seven years and covering herself up in a dark mourning veil. The Fool aptly reminds her that if she believes her brother is in heaven, she has no need to grieve for him (Act 1, Scene 5).

Malvolio only makes himself an object of scorn and ridicule as he tries to enforce a funereal atmosphere appropriate to mourning at Olivia's house. Viola believes she has lost Sebastian, and Sebastian thinks Viola is dead. Each grieves for the other, but both turn out to be wrong. Their grief was unnecessary. Orsino grieves because Olivia will not see him, but his perfect woman turns out to be someone else entirely—Viola.

The Fool, as is typical in Shakespeare's plays, is one of the wisest characters. Early on, Shakespeare connects suffering and folly in *Twelfth Night*. Malvolio says, "Infirmity, that decays the wise, doth ever make the better Fool," and the Fool responds, "God send you, sir, a speedy infirmity, for the better increasing your folly!" (Act 1, Scene 5). Infirmity, illness, and death may cause grief, but here they increase folly. Throughout *Twelfth Night*, the Fool

reminds the characters—and the audience—of the need for perspective, levity, and consolation. He has the last word in the play. After all the characters have left the stage in Act 5, Scene 1, the Fool sings, "the rain it raineth every day." There are always problems and reasons to grieve, his song suggests, but people go on and live their lives anyway.

Major Characters in "Twelfth Night"

Viola:

Viola survives a shipwreck and believes her brother was killed in it. Grieving, she decides to pretend to be a boy and find employment with Orsino, the Duke of Illyria. Cross-dressing as Cesario, she becomes Orsino's favorite page. She falls in love with him. On his orders she tries to woo Olivia for him. She is so persuasive that Olivia falls in love with her, leading to many complications. Viola accidentally discovers that her brother, Sebastian, did not drown, and they are reunited. When Orsino learns Cesario is really Viola, he realizes he has loved her all along and asks her to marry him.

Orsino:

Orsino, Duke of Illyria, suffers greatly from unrequited love. He has his heart set on winning Olivia, but she will not see him. He sends his new favorite servant, Cesario, to woo her for him. Orsino grows very fond of Cesario, but doesn't realize his servant is actually a woman, Viola. When Viola's true identity is revealed, Orsino understands he is in love with her, not Olivia.

Olivia:

Olivia has suffered through the deaths of her father and brother, and she has vowed to remain in mourning for seven years. In spite of that, she permits Orsino's new servant, Cesario (Viola), to plead Orsino's love to her. Cesario is compelling, and Olivia falls in love with Cesario, not realizing he is really a woman. Olivia pursues Cesario throughout the play. At one point she finds him—or so she thinks—and invites him into her house. He gladly accepts, but Olivia does not realize she has really found Viola's brother, Sebastian. She asks Sebastian to marry her, and he agrees. She doesn't discover her husband is actually Sebastian—not Cesario—until a few hours after the wedding.

Sebastian:

Sebastian is heartbroken because he believes his sister drowned in the shipwreck. He is grateful to Antonio, who saved him and has become almost a surrogate father to him. Sebastian is perplexed when Olivia welcomes him so warmly (she believes him to be Cesario) but is impressed by her beauty and affection and happily agrees to marry her. He does not discover Viola is alive until after the wedding.

MACBETH

Detailed Summary:

Set in medieval Scotland, Macbeth traces the rise and fall of the title character as he gains and loses the throne of Scotland. As the play opens, Macbeth is described as the Thane of Glamis, indicating that he is a Scottish nobleman. (The title of thane was awarded to men favored by the king who were also given land, usually for proven loyalty. Military service to the king was expected of thanes.)

The play's action begins when King Duncan's forces engage in a battle to defeat a rebellion started by a lord named Macdonwald, who enlists the help of the King of Norway. Macbeth, duty-bound to defend his king, fights honorably in this battle and captures another supporter of the rebellion, the Thane of Cawdor. As Macbeth and his friend Banquo travel home from the battle, they meet three witches. These women predict Macbeth will be the next Thane of Cawdor and that he will become king of Scotland. In addition, they prophesy that Banquo's descendants will inherit the throne in years to come.

After the king executes the Thane of Cawdor for treason, he gives the thane's title and lands to Macbeth, which leads Macbeth to believe the witches' predictions. He sends word of these developments to his wife, and Lady Macbeth immediately begins plotting Duncan's demise, which is made easier when Duncan comes to visit Macbeth's castle. Macbeth and Lady Macbeth then start scheming in earnest against Duncan.

While Duncan dines at their castle, Macbeth confers with his wife and raises objections to the murder; his wife dismisses them with scorn. By conversation's end, Macbeth is ready to kill the king. Lady Macbeth takes the lead in plotting the murder. She gets Duncan's guards drunk, and they are unconscious when Macbeth enters Duncan's chamber and kills him. He returns to his own rooms with the daggers in his bloodstained hands. Lady Macbeth goes back to plant the weapons and frame the guards. The following morning, Duncan's body is discovered, and the lords are thrown into an uproar. Macbeth kills the guards before they can speak. He claims to have done this in his rage at Duncan's death. Fearing for their own safety, Duncan's sons flee the country, so Macbeth implicates them in Duncan's murder as well. Macbeth is crowned king of Scotland, while the other thanes speculate about strange events and dark times.

Meanwhile, remembering the witches' predictions, Banquo grows suspicious of Macbeth. Recognizing that Banquo knows he had motive to kill Duncan, and vexed by the thought that Banquo's descendants will reign after him, Macbeth hires murderers to assassinate Banquo and his son Fleance. At a banquet the same night, Macbeth has a vision of Banquo's ghost, and the other lords are alarmed by his erratic behaviour.

Lady Macbeth makes excuses for her husband as best she can, but the seeds of suspicion are sown. Macbeth seeks another meeting with the witches to plan his next move.

At Macbeth's second meeting with the witches, they make three predictions about his future. First, they tell him to beware of Macduff, who has been suspicious of Macbeth since Duncan was killed. Second, they tell him that no man born of woman shall harm him. Third, they say he will be secure until Great Birnam Wood, a nearby forest, comes to Macbeth's castle at Dunsinane Hill. Macbeth, believing the last two predictions are impossible, assumes he is safe. In the meantime, Macduff travels to England to find Malcolm, Duncan's oldest son, and convince him to head back to Scotland to fight for his rightful throne. Macbeth takes this opportunity to send assassins to Fife, where they murder Macduff's wife and son. Macduff is successful in his mission, though, and Malcolm agrees to return to Scotland with an English army of 10,000 men.

Around the time Macbeth begins losing his grip on power, Lady Macbeth loses her grip on reality. She is under a doctor's care because of persistent sleepwalking and hallucinations brought about by her memories of Duncan's murder. The Scottish lords and thanes have united against Macbeth, calling him a tyrant; they are prepared to join with Malcolm's army

when it arrives. The Scottish and English armies meet at Great Birnam Wood and use tree branches as camouflage to approach Dunsinane Hill. While Macbeth prepares for the onslaught at Dunsinane, he learns his wife has died. One of his servants then tells him Birnam Wood appears to be moving toward them. This rattles Macbeth because it fulfills one of the witches' prophecies. Still, he engages in battle, relying on the witches' assurance that no man born of woman will cause him harm. When he meets Macduff on the field, however, he learns Macduff was delivered by surgery, rather than by conventional birth. Macduff kills Macbeth, and Malcolm claims his throne.

Major Themes in “Macbeth”

Blood:

Blood represents the guilt Macbeth and Lady Macbeth share. When Macbeth returns from killing Duncan, his hands are covered with blood, which marks his actions. Lady Macbeth also stains her hands when she returns the daggers to the scene of the crime. For her, the symbolism becomes more permanent, as she hallucinates blood on her hands during the throes of her madness later in the play.

Ghosts:

Ghosts represent the way past actions come back to haunt the present and future, as when Macbeth sees Banquo's ghost seated at the banquet table. It is unclear whether the ghost is actually Banquo or a figment of Macbeth's guilt-ridden imagination. Later, when Banquo's ghost appears again, this time with the witches, he is leading a line of kings—his descendants—which demonstrates that his death will give rise to future monarchs who will rule Scotland.

Storms:

The storms that rage in Macbeth—whenever the witches appear and on the night Duncan is murdered—are symbols of Scotland's unrest, both politically and socially. They also display Shakespeare's belief in "the great chain of being," a symbiotic relationship between a divinely appointed ruler, the people, and all of nature. Shakespeare uses storms and other natural disasters in Macbeth and other plays (Julius Caesar, for example) to foreshadow adverse actions planned against a ruler. The thunder and lightning that accompany the witches' meetings reflect their intentions regarding Macbeth. Their predictions do Macbeth no favors, and his adherence to them leads to his own demise.

Ambition:

Macbeth and Lady Macbeth are driven to kill in the name of satisfying their ambitions. Lady Macbeth is particularly susceptible to the lure of power. Once the witches introduce the idea that Macbeth could be king, it is Lady Macbeth whose thoughts immediately turn to murder, and she plots accordingly. She is the one who pushes Macbeth to take part in killing Duncan. Once he has the throne, Macbeth works on his own to keep it, killing Banquo because he is a perceived threat. This second murder is the one that really arouses the suspicions of the other thanes and lords, which demonstrates how Macbeth's ambition becomes his undoing.

Gender Roles:

Much of the action in the play is driven by women who do not act in conventionally feminine ways. Lady Macbeth defies the expectations of her gender with her ruthless actions. She asks the spirits to "unsex" her so she can carry out her part in Duncan's killing, and when Macbeth expresses any sign of doubt or guilt, she consistently attacks him for being unmanly. At the same time, she uses the expectations the other thanes and lords have for women—delicacy and sensitivity—when Macbeth is in trouble, feigning a fainting spell to create a distraction. Lady Macbeth's ultimate descent into madness serves as the punishment for her actions.

Destiny versus Free Will:

After the three witches introduce their prophecy that he is to become king, Macbeth takes to the suggestion with alarming speed. Until this point, he is loyal to King Duncan and has just fought in battle to stop a rebellion against the king and bring one of the perpetrators, the Thane of Cawdor, to justice. When Macbeth is awarded Cawdor's former title, he chooses to believe the rest of the prophecy; from then on, a lust for power and revenge appears to drive his actions. In this sense, he exerts his will in service of the prophecy. The same can be said of Macbeth's belief in the other visions that "predict" his invincibility. His belief in destiny causes him to act rashly and directly leads to his destruction.

Throughout the play, Shakespeare demonstrates that exercising free will has its consequences. Although the prophesies serve as a powerful catalyst for their actions, both Macbeth and Lady Macbeth show that their minds are divided in their pursuit of power. Lady Macbeth, initially firm in her resolve to act and to influence her husband's actions, eventually becomes racked with guilt, which manifests in hysteria and bizarre actions (her incessant handwashing and sleepwalking). Macbeth, initially goaded by his wife, freely chooses to follow her directives and then begins acting on his own, as when he orders killers to dispatch Banquo, Fleance, and Macduff's family. Macbeth's acts deliver the rewards he seeks (the kingship and power), but guilt gnaws at him, as seen in his fight with Macduff, when he reveals, "My soul is too much charged / with blood of thine already" (Act 5, Scene 8).

Loyalty:

In the end, the thanes and lords who remained loyal to Duncan and his bloodline are rewarded. Malcolm is able to retake the throne and call his brother and Fleance back from exile. Macduff does lose his family, but he is allowed to avenge them when he kills Macbeth. Macduff also keeps his own life and title. Even Banquo will have a line of kings descended from him as his legacy. Macbeth's treachery, however, is punished by his death, but even before that, he loses the trust and faith of his people. Lady Macbeth—whose repressed guilt pushes her into insanity—precedes her husband in death.

Major Characters in "Macbeth"

Macbeth:

Macbeth is a Scottish nobleman who holds three successive titles in the play. Initially serving as Thane of Glamis, he meets three witches who prophesy he will be awarded the title of Thane of Cawdor and later become king of Scotland. When King Duncan makes him Thane of Cawdor as a reward for his role for putting down a rebellion, Macbeth decides the witches must be correct. He kills Duncan and takes the crown for himself. He then has his friend

Banquo killed, as Banquo was the only other person to know the prophecy. When the other thanes become suspicious, they help Duncan's rightful heir raise an army and defeat Macbeth.

Lady Macbeth:

When Lady Macbeth hears of the witches' predictions, she helps her husband murder Duncan and take the throne. Abandoning the characteristics expected of a woman in her position (though she has no problem using them when it suits her purpose), she claims to feel no guilt about the murders that she and Macbeth have committed. She encourages Macbeth to let go of his guilt as well. However, it becomes clear that she still feels guilty, and the memory of Duncan's murder slowly drives her insane.

Witches:

The sisters in this malevolent trio act as the catalyst for the play's action. The predictions they give Macbeth spark his thoughts of becoming king. They meet twice with Macbeth, and it becomes clear during a meeting with their goddess, Hecate, that they are not working in Macbeth's best interests, as they show him visions that are incomplete and lead to his demise.

Banquo:

Banquo is a friend and thane who fights alongside Macbeth in the battle to put down Macdonwald's rebellion. He is with Macbeth when the witches first appear, and they predict that Banquo will never be king but that his descendants will be. He also hears them predict Macbeth's rise to the throne. Later, this makes him suspicious of Macbeth's role in Duncan's murder, and Macbeth knows this. Based on this knowledge and the prediction about Banquo's descendants, Macbeth decides Banquo is a threat and has him killed.

Macduff:

Macduff is the Thane of Fife and a loyal follower of King Duncan. He has suspicions about Macbeth's role in Duncan's death, as seen in his refusal to attend Macbeth's coronation. Later, he tracks Duncan's son Malcolm to England and convinces him to return to Scotland to fight for his birthright and save the country. The cost of his loyalty, though, is his wife and child, whom Macbeth murders while Macduff is away. When Macduff encounters Macbeth on the battlefield, Macduff is the one to kill him.

Duncan:

Duncan is, by all accounts, a good, respectable king. He inspires loyalty in his thanes and rewards them for this, giving Macbeth a new title to honor his performance in battle. After he is murdered, the thanes and lords mourn him and avenge him by uniting against Macbeth.

Malcolm:

Malcolm is King Duncan's older son. Fearing that he and his brother might also be killed—or accused of their father's murder—he flees to England. He has fears about returning to challenge Macbeth but overcomes them when Macduff convinces him how much his country needs him. With an army of 10,000 English soldiers and a thirst for revenge, he returns to Scotland to claim his rightful place as king.

ANTONY AND CLEOPATRA

Detailed Summary:

Mark Antony, one of the three rulers of the Roman Empire, spends his time in Egypt, living a life of decadence and conducting an affair with the country's beautiful queen, Cleopatra. When a message arrives informing him that his wife, Fulvia, is dead and that Pompey is raising an army to rebel against the triumvirate, Antony decides to return to Rome. In Antony's absence, Octavius Caesar and Lepidus, his fellow triumvirs, worry about Pompey's increasing strength. Caesar condemns Antony for neglecting his duties as a statesman and military officer in order to live a decadent life by Cleopatra's side.

The news of his wife's death and imminent battle pricks Antony's sense of duty, and he feels compelled to return to Rome. Upon his arrival, he and Caesar quarrel, while Lepidus ineffectually tries to make peace. Realizing that an alliance is necessary to defeat Pompey, Antony and Caesar agree that Antony will marry Caesar's sister, Octavia, who will solidify their loyalty to one another. Enobarbus, Antony's closest friend, predicts to Caesar's men that, despite the marriage, Antony will surely return to Cleopatra.

In Egypt, Cleopatra learns of Antony's marriage and flies into a jealous rage. However, when a messenger delivers word that Octavia is plain and unimpressive, Cleopatra becomes confident that she will win Antony back. The triumvirs meet Pompey and settle their differences without going to battle. Pompey agrees to keep peace in exchange for rule over Sicily and Sardinia. That evening, the four men drink to celebrate their truce. One of Pompey's soldiers discloses to him a plan to assassinate the triumvirs, thereby delivering world power into Pompey's hands, but Pompey dismisses the scheme as an affront to his honor. Meanwhile, one of Antony's -generals wins a victory over the kingdom of Parthia. Antony and Octavia depart for Athens. Once they are gone, Caesar breaks his truce, wages war against Pompey, and defeats him. After using Lepidus's army to secure a victory, he accuses Lepidus of treason, imprisons him, and confiscates his land and possessions. This news angers Antony, as do the rumors that Caesar has been speaking out against him in public. Octavia pleads with Antony to maintain a peaceful relationship with her brother. Should Antony and Caesar fight, she says, her affections would be painfully divided. Antony dispatches her to Rome on a peace mission, and quickly returns to Egypt and Cleopatra. There, he raises a large army to fight Caesar, and Caesar, incensed over Antony's treatment of his sister, responds in kind. Caesar commands his army and navy to Egypt. Ignoring all advice to the contrary, Antony elects to fight him at sea, allowing Cleopatra to command a ship despite Enobarbus's strong objections. Antony's forces lose the battle when Cleopatra's ship flees and Antony's follows, leaving the rest of the fleet vulnerable. Antony despairs, condemning Cleopatra for leading him into infamy but quickly forgiving her. He and Cleopatra send requests to their conqueror: Antony asks to be allowed to live in Egypt, while Cleopatra asks that her kingdom be passed down to her rightful heirs. Caesar dismisses Antony's request, but he promises Cleopatra a fair hearing if she betrays her lover. Cleopatra seems to be giving thought to Caesar's message when Antony barges in, curses her for her treachery, and orders the innocent messenger whipped. When, moments later, Antony forgives Cleopatra, Enobarbus decides that his master is finished and defects to Caesar's camp.

Antony meets Caesar's troops in battle and scores an unexpected victory. When he learns of Enobarbus's desertion, Antony laments his own bad fortune, which he believes has corrupted an honorable man. He sends his friend's possessions to Caesar's camp and returns to

Cleopatra to celebrate his victory. Enobarbus, undone by shame at his own disloyalty, bows under the weight of his guilt and dies. Another day brings another battle, and once again Antony meets Caesar at sea. As before, the Egyptian fleet proves treacherous; it abandons the fight and leaves Antony to suffer defeat. Convinced that his lover has betrayed him, Antony vows to kill Cleopatra. In order to protect herself, she quarters herself in her monument and sends word that she has committed suicide. Antony, racked with grief, determines to join his queen in the afterlife. He commands one of his attendants to fulfill his promise of unquestioned service and kill him. The attendant kills himself instead. Antony then falls on his own sword, but the wound is not immediately fatal. He is carried to Cleopatra's monument, where the lovers are reunited briefly before Antony's death. Caesar takes the queen prisoner, planning to display her in Rome as a testament to the might of his empire, but she learns of his plan and kills herself with the help of several poisonous snakes. Caesar has her buried beside Antony.

Major Themes in "Antony and Cleopatra"

Honour:

The main characters must decide what honor means and how one demonstrates or acquires it. In the play's opening words, Philo mourns the change that has come over Antony since meeting Cleopatra. "His captain's heart ... is become the bellows and the fan / To cool a gypsy's lust." For Romans, military glory, honor, and "behaving like a good Roman" are synonymous. Honor means courage, ruthlessness in battle, and holding onto power. A man behaving unlike a soldier—in Antony's case, an emperor—is a failure as a man.

In Cleopatra's world the Roman concept of honor as fulfillment of responsibility is incomplete and unsatisfying. People lucky enough to be rich should enjoy life, not behave as others would like or expect. Cleopatra is a powerful queen, but in Act 1, Scene 1, she mocks Antony's sense of duty. Urging him to listen to a messenger from Rome, she suggests, derisively, perhaps Caesar has a job for him to do: "Do this, or this; / Take in that kingdom, and enfranchise that. / Perform't, or otherwise we damn thee." The suggestion is clearly that all of this ambition for ambition's sake is silly, not honorable. Antony outdoes Cleopatra in his willingness to forget duty. "Let Rome in Tiber melt and the wide arch / of the ranged empire fall. Here is my space." Antony's irresponsibility here might trouble even someone without a strict Roman sense of virtue.

At the other extreme is Caesar, whose sense of honor dominates every aspect of his personality. In fact he barely seems to have a personality. As Cleopatra can't conceive of any reason to comport oneself like a Roman, Caesar is flummoxed by Antony's refusal to return to Rome and a proper way of life. Caesar says even if it were acceptable for Antony to fritter away his time in trivial pursuits during peaceful times, he's behaving inexcusably under current circumstances. There is no way to "excuse his foils when we do bear / So great weight in his lightness [absence]" (Act 1, Scene 4).

Enobarbus demonstrates the connection between loyalty and honor. Loyal to his leader, he defends Antony's conduct for most of the play. Indeed he seems to have internalized Antony's feelings about Cleopatra. When Antony brings news they must leave for Rome, Enobarbus jokes, "Why then, we kill all our women. We see / how mortal an unkindness is to them. If

they suffer / Our departure, death's the word." When Antony reveals that Fulvia is dead and that he must deal with the resulting political mess, Enobarbus retorts, "And the business you have broached here cannot be without you, especially that of Cleopatra's, which / wholly depends on your abode" (Act 1, Scene 2). Later Enobarbus is so disgusted he deserts Antony, believing to remain loyal would be dishonourable.

Rome versus Egypt:

Philo's opening speech sets the central conflict of the play: in turning toward Cleopatra, Antony has turned away from his Roman upbringing. Once, says Philo, Antony could be compared to Mars, the Roman god of war. Now his stern "captain's heart" has become "the bellows and the fan / To cool a gypsy's [Egyptian's] lust." One of the three emperors of Rome, a "triple pillar of the world," is now the plaything of a whore.

In Antony and Cleopatra Rome and Egypt are irreconcilably different—at least in the opinion of everyone but the lovers themselves, whose cultural differences are attractions. But for other Romans in the play Egypt is overripe, overfertile; Cleopatra, the symbol of the country she rules, is overfond of pleasure. To Cleopatra, on the other hand, Rome is cold, strict, and reined in—all the traits she wishes Antony didn't have. Egyptians host grand parties: the Roman Maecenas drools at the thought of "Eight wild boars roasted whole at a breakfast, and but twelve persons there" (Act 2, Scene 2). Meanwhile at Pompey's banquet (which Antony brags doesn't come near the typical Egyptian party), abstemious Caesar looks on with disdain as everyone else on board has a grand, but inharmonious, time getting drunk.

In the West, Rome is ruled by men; even Octavia, Caesar's royal sister, is passively dutiful in her role as a bargaining chip. In the East, Cleopatra's court swarms with women and eunuchs. Because a stern, virtuous environment may be less appealing to describe than a lushly sensual one, Shakespeare is lavish with descriptions of Egypt and of Cleopatra. In describing Cleopatra on her barge, Shakespeare says she is more beautiful than Venus, the Roman goddess of beauty.

Both Antony and Cleopatra have internalized the idea that Egypt is Rome's opposite. After 10 years with Cleopatra, Antony has cast off much of the self-discipline he embraced in earlier days. In contrast with the "eight wild boars," Caesar speaks admiringly of Antony's years as a soldier, when he was forced to live on tree bark and horse urine. Cleopatra is furiously anxious at the idea of Antony's returning to Rome, while Antony feels guilty that "The beds i'the East are soft" (Act 2, Scene 6) and thinks Rome may be what he needs to regain the manly skills he has lost.

Antony feels torn, as Cleopatra and Caesar pull him in different directions. One reason the queen and Caesar dislike each other is that each wants dominance over Antony. His visit to Rome deeply disappoints Caesar, as does Antony's leaving Octavia to return to Egypt.

At this point Cleopatra and the East seem victorious—until Caesar's decisive victory sinks Egypt and Cleopatra with it. Rome has triumphed, at least politically. Strangely, East and West merge at the end of the play when Cleopatra commits suicide. She kills herself "after the high Roman fashion," magnificently dressed for the occasion, and wins even Caesar's reluctant approval.

Women with Power:

Cleopatra makes most of the men in this play very nervous—even Antony. To the Romans she is an enticing strumpet with far too much power. As they see it, Cleopatra has lured

Antony off the moral path into a bath of corruption. In Act 1, Scene 1 Philo speaks of Antony "when he is not Antony," the implication being Cleopatra has transformed him into a false version of himself. Antony himself calls Cleopatra a fairy; later, when he believes she has betrayed him, he growls, "The witch shall die" (Act 4, Scene 13).

Enobarbus is the one Roman who seems to respect Cleopatra, at least in the beginning. But he also believes she is literally irresistible to Antony. Her "infinite variety" is one reason Antony is in thrall to her, but Enobarbus believes there is another, less savory, reason. "Vilest things / Become themselves in her, that the holy priests / Bless her when she is riggish." If a loose woman can get even a priest to bless her, she must be an enchantress.

If any woman in the play is unthreatening, it's quiet, cool Octavia. No Roman thinks she's a witch. Caesar thinks of his sister as the "cement" that will keep him allied with Antony. But, the dutiful Octavia cannot control her new husband, and it is unfair to hang Rome's fate on her marriage. Perhaps Caesar already realizes this and is using Octavia to give himself another reason to war with Antony. Whether or not he expects the marriage to work, Caesar views his sister as a weapon, and Octavia couldn't be a worse choice for the task.

Cleopatra's feelings toward the extent of her power are hard to pin down, for her "infinite variety" makes her vacillate between insecurity and pride. Certainly she is obsessed with maintaining her power over Antony. When she decides to go fishing, she envisions herself "betraying" the fishes. "As I draw them up / I'll think them every one an Antony / And say "Aha! You're caught."

Major Characters in "Antony and Cleopatra"

Antony:

Generous, likeable, and warm-hearted, Antony is one of the Roman Empire's three triumvirs. When the play begins, he has been living with Cleopatra and has fathered three children with her. He is a celebrated soldier who has somewhat outlived his reputation; during his time in Egypt he has been living what the Romans consider a degenerate life. His love for Cleopatra outweighs his Roman sense of duty, and he is well aware of avoiding his responsibilities as a triumvir. Indeed his love for Cleopatra is the driving force in his life. Considerably older than Caesar, Antony is touchy when he senses the younger man is trying to dominate him. His insistence on taking a dare of Caesar's—or what he perceives as a dare—leads him to make a catastrophic decision at the Battle of Actium, for he is dangerously impetuous and quick to make judgments. When he realizes how far he has fallen, he is a beaten man.

Cleopatra:

Cleopatra's highly charged sexuality and unpredictability are constants in her character; a deep-seated insecurity about Antony's love—he is married to someone else—underlies her every action with him. She is a woman with a past, having been mistress to both Julius Caesar and Pompey the Great, and she views her sexuality as one of her main political assets. She loves Antony but can't resist teasing him, especially about his Roman connections. Some of the teasing comes from her insatiable need to control him; that she cannot do so makes her even more insecure. But she is also an intelligent, effective ruler, and she is capable of being treacherous, even to Antony. Cleopatra's egotism and her need to upstage others (including Antony) can make her seem exasperating. She is quick to anger and tends to blame any bearer of bad news. But she's infinitely charming and has a good sense of humor. The adoration and devotion of her ladies-in-waiting are signs of her charm. When it becomes

clear suicide is the only way to avoid the humiliation of being Caesar's captive, Cleopatra meets death with composure and shows herself resourceful in managing to kill herself while under Caesar's guard, whose purpose is to prevent her suicide.

Caesar:

Octavius Caesar is an exemplar of Roman virtue—brave, stoic, temperate, correct—and he knows it. He finds Antony's defection from Rome intolerable, partly because he thinks Antony is avoiding his responsibilities and partly because Cleopatra disgusts him. He hates that she had an affair with his uncle, but he hates even more that she has taken Antony away from him. When Antony abandons Octavia, Caesar goes into a rage. Caesar is a rather dour sort. He disapproves of bodily appetites and stays sober when all his friends are drinking. He cannot understand people who don't put the Roman Empire above everything else. He is so competent he ends up doing more than his share of running the Roman Empire (which makes him even angrier at Antony). Not surprisingly, his battle plans are far more thorough and detailed than Antony's; not surprisingly, he is merciless in victory. But the deaths of Antony and Cleopatra soften him somewhat, and the play ends with a hint he may become more tolerant and less one-dimensional as he grows older.

Pompey:

Pompey's driving characteristic is the desire to avenge his father, killed by Julius Caesar. Pompey is confident of victory and certain he is loved by the populace. The triumvirs view him as enough of a threat to sign a peace treaty with him, whereupon he cheerfully invites them to a banquet aboard his ship. Pompey's sense of honor is hard to discern. He believes his cause is just and wants to help the Roman people. But when Menas asks for permission to kill the triumvirate during the banquet, Pompey regretfully turns him down, saying If Menas had killed the three men without telling him, Pompey wouldn't have minded; that Menas raised the question makes the assassination of his guests impossible. Pompey seems more concerned with the appearance of honor than with the substance of it.

Lepidus:

Lepidus is something of a laughing stock to almost everyone who knows him, certainly not someone to be feared or even taken seriously. Even servants mock him, and Caesar shows him little respect. Lepidus's function in the triumvirate seems to be to placate Caesar and Antony. He praises their suggestions but has no ideas of his own. Lepidus's only memorable act occurs when he gets impossibly drunk at Pompey's banquet and has to be carried away. Soon after that, Caesar comes up with a reason to boot him from the triumvirate.

Enobarbus:

Enobarbus has a great deal of integrity and the courage to speak his mind even to Cleopatra. He is perceptive about Antony and understands the strength of his attachment to Cleopatra. He feels comfortable enough around Antony to snap at him once or twice. Intensely loyal, he remains with Antony when other followers have deserted him. When Antony's behavior finally forces even Enobarbus to desert, he regrets his decision so much that he dies of grief.

Octavia:

Octavia's demeanor is too reserved to give a good sense of her personality. She's a woman of virtue and is obedient to her brother, which is how she ends up marrying Antony. Though she can't see much in her new husband, she is a dutiful wife, as Roman ideals require, and she feels torn between him and her brother. She is so troubled by divided loyalties she travels to Rome to intercede for Antony where she learns he has returned to Cleopatra. After a few decorous words of grief, she disappears from the play.

CRITICISM

Preface to Shakespeare / Samuel Johnson

Introduction:

Samuel Johnson's Preface to Shakespeare to his edition of Shakespeare is considered a landmark in Shakespearean criticism. Johnson stubbornly refuses to idolize Shakespeare. He pinpoints Shakespeare's faults but at the same time defends Shakespeare's violation of the three unities. His contention is that 'there is always an appeal open from criticism to nature'. Criticism generally finds fault with living authors and give praise to those who are dead and those who lived long ago.

Shakespeare represents general human nature:

Johnson says that human judgment is not infallible. Sometimes our judgments are based on prejudices and changing fashions. Hence Shakespeare's greatness is due to. Shakespeare is great because he describes general human nature. He avoids depicting particular regions, and temporary fashions. They appeal only to a limited number of people and that too, for a short period only. Shakespeare's characters are 'the genuine progeny of common humanity'. They are swayed by passions and principles that agitate all of us. Shakespeare's plays are full of suggestions for leading a good life. Johnson says that one can collect a system of civil and economical prudence from Shakespeare's works. Being a moralist, Johnson is happy to note that Shakespeare preaches sound ethical values. Shakespeare's greatness contrasts with other dramatists. The characters created by them are not based on common or general human nature.

Shakespeare's attitude to love:

The other dramatists present love as a universal agent. For them, only love is important. Nothing else is significant. This is the finding of the modern psychologist Freud also. Johnson does not attach much importance to love. He admires Shakespeare because, like himself. Shakespeare also views love as only one of passions. If human life is like a rainbow, love is only one of its colours.

In Johnson's point of view, Shakespeare's concept of love is quite true. Only, in a few plays like *Romeo and Juliet* and *Antony and Cleopatra*. Shakespeare shows the overwhelming power of love. In plays like *Julius Caesar* and *Henry IV and V*, love is totally sidelined, but in almost all the plays of Shakespeare, love is at least in the background and sways the characters somehow or other. It is unfortunate that Johnson does not recognize this aspect of love in Shakespeare.

Dramatists in general give an excessive importance to them of love in their plays. A play will centre round a lover, a lady and a rival and the entanglement in their mutual relations. In developing this theme of love and the passion, it gives rise to a dramatist and it will often violate probability, misrepresent life and distort the language. It is not realized that love is only one of many passions of mankind and its influence on the totality of life is extremely limited. Shakespeare, however, understood this fact. He does not give undue prominence to the passion of love and exhibits only what he really saw in real life. He knew also that any passion was a cause of happiness if kept under check and a cause of disaster if it was allowed to become excessive.

Shakespeare power of creating a variety of characters:

Shakespeare has created a stunningly large of variety of characters. The characters created by other dramatists are embodiments of virtue or wickedness. They are incredibly good or bad but Shakespeare's characters are not heroic. They represent common humanity, with all its faults and foibles. This idea was echoed by A.C. Bradley later when he talked about the flaws of Shakespeare's tragic heroes. The dialogue in Shakespeare is also 'level with life'. It is selected from 'common conversation'. Shakespeare's dialogue is thoroughly realistic. His dialogue is pursued with much ease and simplicity. It seems to have been taken from the common conversation of human beings. Shakespeare then deserves praise because his drama is the mirror of life. His character express human sentiments in human language in situations derived from real life.

Johnson defends tragi-comedy:

Shakespeare has also been criticized for his mingling of the comic and tragic elements in his plays. The previous dramatists rigidly fixed plays into comedies and tragedies. He broke down this artificial division. He freely mingled tragic scenes in comedies because he found life to be a mixture of happiness and unhappiness. He inserted comic scenes in tragedies. The use of the comic characters Polonius and the gravediggers in Hamlet is an example of this practice. Shakespeare did this because uninterrupted melancholy displeased the audience. Comic scenes in tragedies afforded much-needed relief to them. Johnson supports Shakespeare's intermixture of levity in tragedies as dramatically appropriate step.

Shakespeare's Excellences:

Johnson observes that Shakespeare is better writer of comedies than of tragedies. His tragedies are the outcome of toil and study, but his comedies are written with instinctive ease and spontaneity, says Johnson. The tragedies are packed with action and the comedies, with thoughts. His plays offer faithful pictures of real life. His characters have a universal appeal. Johnson is all admiration for the languages of the comedies. In general Shakespeare's language is smooth and clear. Occasionally, it is rugged. Similarly most characters are natural. Sometimes their speeches are forced and actions, unbelievable.

Johnson on Shakespearean faults:

Johnson is not only an admirer of Shakespeare but also his faults. This shows his impartiality.

✚ **Shakespeare's primary fault:** He was a mere entertainer. He wanted to please but did not inculcate a moral. Johnson a strict moralist, reprimands Shakespeare for sacrificing virtue to convenience. Johnson seeks to enliven art with morality.

✚ **The Second fault:** Some of his plots are loosely constructed. Shakespeare is inexcusably careless and slovenly. He often misses opportunities of instructing the spectators. The endings of some of his plays are untidy. In many of his plays, the later part is evidently neglected and his catastrophe is improbably produced or imperfectly represented. Shakespeare does not develop his plots properly.

✚ **The third defect:** There are many anachronisms in Shakespeare's plays. He gives to one age or nation without scruple, the customs, institutions and opinions of another, at the expense not only of likelihood but of possibility.

✚ **The fourth defect:** Shakespeare is rather coarse and unrefined in his comic scenes. His tests are gross, and his ladies and gentlemen have little delicacy.

✚ **The fifth defect:** The fifth defect is in narration. Shakespeare effects a disproportionate pomp of diction and a wearisome train of circumlocution and tells the incident imperfectly in many words. They might have been more plainly delivered in a few. Shakespeare's set speeches are cold and weak. He often applies words to things unequally and gives sonorous epithets to trivial sentiments.

✚ **The sixth defect:** Shakespeare's fondness for puns and quibbles. Johnson says that "a quibble was to him the fatal Cleopatra for which he lost the world and was content to lose it". Finally Shakespeare's history plays are not subject to the law of unity as they are neither tragedies nor comedies but in his other works, he preserves the unity of action in the sense that they have a beginning, middle, and end; but Shakespeare neglects Unities of time and place.

Shakespeare's violation of the unities:

The three unities are the unities of time, place and action. The unity of time requires that the action narrated in a drama should not take more than twenty four hours. The unity of place requires that dramatic action be confined to the same place. The unity of action required that all the characters in a drama should revolve round the central characters. There should not be a sub-plot unrelated to the main plot.

Johnson says that the unity of action need not be followed in history plays. Shakespeare neglects the unities of time and place. The unity of time is violated by Shakespeare in plays like *The Winter's Tale*. Many generations are telescoped in this play. The unity of place is violated in *Antony and Cleopatra* with action swinging between Rome and Egypt. Traditionalists hold that even the dragons of *Medea* cannot transport characters to far-off places in three hours.

Johnson defends Shakespeare on the grounds that the theatre-goer is very imaginative. The spectator can imagine the bare stage to be Egypt in the first Act and Rome in the next Act. It is only scrupulous critics like Voltaire who object to Shakespeare's violation of the unities. As long as the theatre-goer is imaginative and adjusts himself to changing scenes and times. Johnson's greatness lies in the flexibility and wholeness of his critical approach.

“Macbeth and the Metaphysic of Evil” from *The Wheels of Fire*

- **Wilson Knight**

Introduction:

Wilson Knight, English literary critic and academic is noted for his path-breaking interpretation of Shakespeare's dramas. He is a myth critic, actor, theatrical director and an outstanding lecturer. *Myth and Miracle, The Wheel of Fire, The Imperial Theme, The Starlit Dome, The Crown of Life, The Imperial Theme, The Mutual Flame, and The Golden Labyrinth* are his famous works. Knight has dealt with a wide range of subjects— Virgil, Milton, Pope, Byron, British Drama in his books.

In his studies of Shakespeare, titled “The Wheels of Fire”, Knight had rejected traditional areas like source study, character analysis and psychology. He had highlighted the Unity in Shakespeare, which according to him is in the poetic use of images and symbols. He further argues that the ‘spatial’ aspects of the plays are very important. By spatial aspects, Knight means ‘atmosphere’—‘an attempt to see the whole play in space as well as time’. Knight has unveiled some features of Shakespeare’s genius.

The Guilty Characters:

In his essay “Macbeth and the Metaphysic of Evil”, Wilson Knight analyzes the character of Macbeth, depicted by Shakespeare. Macbeth presents an experience of absolute evil. The characters in “Macbeth” show a dominant sense of doubt and uncertainty. There is a predominant vision of evil in the play. All the characters are guilty of yielding to evil and are "paralyzed by fear." Knight concludes that, as the play draws to a close, Macbeth is no longer in conflict with himself. He “faces the world fearless”. Balance and harmony replace the disorder of evil.

Macbeth as a vision of evil:

Knight says, “Macbeth is Shakespeare's most profound and mature vision of evil”. In *Hamlet*, the evil appears as ghost and death themes. In *Richard III* evil is in the form of an individual's crime. In *Othello* evil is in the form of ‘hate-theme’. In all these plays there is a gloom of denial. The evil here is a negation of man's positive ideals. In Macbeth “we find not gloom, but blackness: the evil is not relative, but absolute”. This evil is alien to man. It is shown as inhuman and supernatural. Lady Macbeth becomes inhuman in the murder scene.

The Continuing Questions:

Macbeth is set in a desolate and dark universe where all is confusing, and bound by evil. The persons of the play are themselves groping in darkness. The play opens with the witches asking questions, 'When shall we three meet again?' and 'Where the place?'

Amazement and mystery are the two elements in the play from the start, and are reflected in continual questions. The questions in the murder scene are tense and powerful:

Macbeth. How now! What news?

Some of the finest and most heart-rending passages are in the form of questions:

'Will all great Neptune's ocean wash this blood clean from my hand?'

These questions are threads in the fabric of mystery and doubt which haunts us in Macbeth.

Surprise is continual.

· Macbeth does not understand how he can be Thane of Cawdor as the latter is alive at that point. Lady Macbeth is startled at the news of Duncan's visit. There is the general amazement of Lennox, Ross, and the Old Man at the murder of Duncan. Banquo and Fleance are unsure of the hour. No one is sure of Macduff's mysterious movements. The two murderers do not know about the presence of the third murderer. Because of all these a strong sense of mystery and illogicality is created. The reader gropes in darkness, unable to find out a reasonable explanation. They also suffer from doubt and insecurity.

Darkness in the play:

· Darkness permeates the play. The greater part of the action takes place in the murk of the night. From the world of doubts and darkness strange and hideous creatures are born. “Animal disorder symbolism is recurrent in the play and the animals mentioned are for the most part of fierce, ugly, or ill-omened significance”, says Knight. The Hyrcan tiger, the

'armed rhinoceros', the 'rugged Russian bear' and the wolf appear and all these images "culminate in the holocaust of filth prepared by the Weird Sisters in the Cauldron scene".

The fear-filled universe:

· 'We are confronted by mystery, darkness, abnormality, hideousness: and therefore by fear. The word 'fear' is everywhere. Fear is predominant. Everyone is afraid. There is scarcely a person in the play who does not feel and voice at some time a sickening, nameless terror". The impact of the play is similar to nightmare. There is the consciousness of nightmare or delirium. That is why life is here a 'tale told by an idiot', a 'fitful fever' after which the dead 'sleep well.'" "The Weird Sisters are nightmare made real. Macbeth's crime is nightmare projected into action".

Language of the Play

The language is tense, nervous, insubstantial and without anything of the visual clarity of Othello. The horrors in the play have a 'mesmeric attraction' like that of a serpent, even while they repel us.

Imagery:

Blood imagery: The reference to blood is constant in the play. However, there is no brilliance in the imagery. The image is that of smeared blood.

Fire Imagery: However, there is brilliance in the fire-imagery. "...the thunder and lightning that accompany the Weird Sisters", "...the fire of the cauldron".

Poetry of intensity:

The play has poetry of intensity. The intense darkness of the play is shot with imagery of pure light and pure colour. In the same way the moral darkness of the play is shot with imagery of purity and virtue. Macduff speaks about Malcolm's mother as a saintly person who lived 'oftener upon her knees than on her feet, died every day she lived'. The darkness thins towards the end of the play. Bright daylight dawns and the green leaves of Birnam come against Macbeth. A world climbs out of its darkness. The Child is crowned, the Tree of Life in his hand.

The Atmosphere of Macbeth:

It is a world of 'fears and scruples'. "It is a world where 'nothing is but what is not', where 'fair is foul and foul is fair'", comments Knight. Knight stresses two complementary elements in the play. They are the doubts, uncertainties, irrationalities and the horrors, the dark, the abnormalities.

Pure human element in the play:

The two main characteristics of Macbeth's temptation are Ignorance of his own motive, and horror of the deed to which he is being driven. Fear is the primary emotion of the Macbeth universe: fear is at the root of Macbeth's crime. Many minor persons are definitely related to evil. But the major characters also succumb to the evil of Macbeth universe. Banquo is troubled on the night of the murder. He says that his mind is burdened by cursed thoughts. Macduff is also involved. His cruel desertion of his family is emphasized. Even Malcolm is forced to repeat crimes on himself. He catalogues every possible sin, and accuses himself of all.

The Characters:

· All the characters are not 'bad characters'. They are not 'characters' at all, in the proper use of the word. They are but vaguely individualized. All the persons are paralyzed by fear

and a sense of evil in and outside themselves. They lack will-power. Lady Macbeth is not merely a woman of strong will: she is a woman possessed—possessed of evil passion. The central human theme is the temptation and crime of Macbeth. While Macbeth lives in conflict with himself there is misery, evil, fear. When, at the end, he and others have openly identified himself with evil, he faces the world fearless. He does not appear evil any longer. Wading through blood, he has established a harmonious and honest relation with his surroundings. Daylight is brought to Macbeth, as to Scotland, by the armies of Malcolm.

OBJECTIVE TYPE QUESTIONS

General Shakespeare

1. Who is called “The Bard of Avon”? (William Shakespeare)
2. Why did Shakespeare leave Stratford? (To seek fortune in London)
3. How many plays are attributed to Shakespeare in total? (Thirty seven)
4. How many sonnets were written by Shakespeare? (One hundred and fifty four)
5. To whom did Shakespeare dedicate ‘Venus and Adonais’? (The Earl of Southampton)
6. To whom did Shakespeare address his sonnet? (The Fair youth and the Dark lady)
7. Who played the role of women in the Elizabethan theatres? (Men)
8. Where was the Shakespeare buried? (The Stratford church)
9. Name the longest play of Shakespeare:- (Hamlet)
10. How many of Shakespeare’s historical plays are based on Roman history? (Four)
11. What was the chief characteristic of the Elizabethan stage? (Flexibility)
12. In which year was the Globe theatre built? (1594)
13. Where did the Elizabethan theatre stand? (Along the bank of Thames)
14. Which of Shakespeare’s plays is the shortest? (The Comedy of Errors)
15. Among the tragic heroines of Shakespeare, who evokes sympathy the most? (Desdemona)
16. Where were Shakespeare’s plays staged? (The Globe theatre and The Black friars)
17. Who is described as “A maiden never bold; of spirit so still and quiet”? (Desdemona)
18. Where is the word ‘fool’ derived from? (Follies, the Latin word)
19. Which play of Shakespeare is called as ‘a play within a play’? (Hamlet)
20. In which play of Shakespeare do the witches appear? (Macbeth)
21. _____ is a kind of loud thinking on the part of a character? (Soliloquy)
22. ‘Only Time must untangle this tie, Not I’, who says these words in soliloquy? (Viola in *Twelfth Night*)
23. ‘To be or not to be’, whose best known soliloquy is this? (Hamlet)
24. Who indulge in soliloquies in *Macbeth*? (Macbeth and Lady Macbeth)
25. Why does Shakespeare use fools in his tragedies? (To achieve comic relief)
26. Who states “Shakespeare has no heroes, but only heroines”? (John Ruskin)
27. Who sees the ghost of Julius Caesar twice in Julius Caesar? (Brutus)
28. Whose ghost is seen by Marcellus and Bernardo in *Hamlet*? (The ghost of Hamlet’s father)

29. Who is described as 'a woman of infinite variety' among the women characters in Shakespeare's plays? (Cleopatra)
30. How many soliloquies are uttered by Hamlet in *Hamlet*? (Five)

A Midsummer Night's Dream

1. Name the city in which the play *A Midsummer Night's Dream* takes place? (Athens)
2. Where does *A Midsummer Night's Dream* begin? (In the plays of Theseus)
3. How many days are more for the marriage of Theseus at the beginning of the play? (4 days)
4. What does Theseus ask Philostrate to announce to the people? (To celebrate his wedding)
5. In which play does Shakespeare introduce the world of Fairies? (*A Midsummer Night's Dream*)
6. Where did Theseus meet his future bride? (In the war)
7. Where is Theseus fiancé from? (The Amazon)
8. Who is the bride of Theseus? (Hippolyta)
9. Who is chosen to play the lion in the craftsmen's play? (Snug)
10. Which of the young Athenians is first affected by the love potion? (Lysander)
11. Whom does Hermia's father want her to marry? (Demetrius)
12. In whose place do Lysander and Hermia plan to be married? (Lysander's Widowed Aunt)
13. Who is the king of the fairies? (Oberon)
14. How does Puck prevent Demetrius and Lysander from fighting? (By squeezing the love juice into their eyelids)
15. Name the woman, who afraid of fighting in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*? (Helena)
16. Whom does Demetrius love at the end of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*? (Helena)
17. In '*A Midsummer Night's Dream*', what is Bottom turned into? (An ass)
18. Who first thinks of using the love potion on Titania? (Oberon)
19. What does Puck bring to cure the lovers? (Love-in-Idleness, the magic flower)
20. Who tells Demetrius that Lysander and Hermia are planning to elope? (Helena)
21. What food does Bottom crave after Puck's mischief? (Hay)
22. What is the other name of Puck? (Robin Goodfellow)
23. Who bless Theseus and Hippolyta with a magic charm? (Oberon and Titania)
24. What is Bergomask? (A Grotesque dance)
25. What is Nick Bottom's craft? (A weaver)
26. Which short play is staged in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*? (Pyramus and Thisbe)
27. How many songs are sung in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*? (Six)
28. Who does Hermia's father want her to marry? (Demetrius)
29. Whom does Titania start loving, when the love potion is squeezed to her eyelids? (Bottom)
30. What is the central theme of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*? (Love and Marriage)

Othello

1. Who does Roderigo love? (Desdemona)
2. What does Brabantio accuse Othello of doing? (Performing magic on Desdemona)
3. What is Othello's military rank? (The General)
4. Who wants to take revenge on Othello? (Iago)
5. Why does Iago want to have Cassio's job?(Because of his age and experience)
6. What is Cassio's first name? (Michael)
7. What is the tragic flaw of Othello? (Suspicion)
8. How is Othello often referred to? (The Moor)
9. Who does Bianca love? (Cassio)
10. Who becomes the Governor of Cyprus? (Cassio)
11. What upsets Iago at the beginning of *Othello*? (Cassio's promotion)
12. Who gives Desdemona's handkerchief to Iago? (Emilia)
13. What pattern is embroidered on the handkerchief of Desdemona? (Strawberries)
14. What does Iago recognize as Cassio's main flaw? (His inability to hold his liquor)
15. What rank does Cassio hold, before Othello strips it off from him? (The Lieutenant)
16. How old is Iago? (Twenty-eight)
17. What is Braganza's position in Venice? (The Senator)
18. Who made the handkerchief that Othello inherited from his mother? (A sibyl)
19. What attracted Desdemona to Othello? (The story about his past)
20. From whom did Desdemona first hear the "Song of Willow"? (Barbary)
21. What according to Iago is the "green-eyed mother"? (Jealousy)
22. Whom does Cassio wound in the darken brawl? (Montano)
23. Who is the first character to refer Othello by his name? (The Duke)
24. According to Lodovigo's letter, who is to replace Othello as governor of Cyprus? (Cassio)
25. What is Othello holding, as he stands near the sleeping Desdemona? (The light)
26. How does Othello kill Desdemona? (By smothering her)
27. Who enters the room after Othello has killed Desdemona? (Emilia)
28. What event delays Othello's arrival on Cyprus? (Terrible storm)
29. Who does Othello allow to bring Desdemona to Cyprus? (Iago)
30. To Othello, what does the handkerchief symbolize? (Desdemona's love)

Julius Caesar

1. Who does the biggest share of dialogues in Julius Caesar? (Marcus Brutus)
2. What do the Senators fear about Caesar? (Caesar 's plan of making Rome Monarchy)
3. Who has been writing letters in different handwritings to convince Brutus against Caesar? (Gaius Cassius)
4. Who delivered the famous speech, starting as 'Friend, Romans, Countrymen' in *Julius Caesar*? (Mark Antony)
5. Who is responsible for getting the people against the conspirators?(Mark Antony)
6. Who is warned by Caesar's ghost regarding defeat in the battle?
7. Who faced the conspirators in the battle after the death of Caesar?(Antony and Octavius)
8. Who is Octavius in *Julius Caesar*?(Caesar's adopted son)

9. Who killed Cassius in *Julius Caesar*? (His Servant)
10. Whose wife was Portia, who committed suicide in *Julius Caesar*? (Marcus Brutus)
11. Whom does Antony call 'The noblest Roman of them all'? (Marcus Brutus)
12. Where is Caesar returning from in Act I, Scene I? (War with Pompey)
13. Whom do the people honour before Caesar? (Pompey)
14. Who orders Julius Caesar to divorce Cornelia? (Sulla)
15. What is the warning given to Julius Caesar? (To be beware of the Ides March)
16. Who writes a letter of warning to Caesar act to go to the capital? (Artemidorus)
17. When was Julius Caesar assassinated? (15 the March 44BC)
18. In which phase of his dramatic career, did Shakespeare write *Julius Caesar*? (The third phase)
19. The story of Julius Caesar belongs to the _____ history. (Roman)
20. Where does the opening scene of *Julius Caesar* start? (A Street in Rome)
21. Who is described as 'a serpent 's egg', to be 'killed in the Shell'? (Brutus)
22. How many times did Antony offers the crown to Caesar? (Three times)
23. Who talk about the terrible incidents seen at night in *Julius Caesar*? (Cicero and Casca)
24. "Caesar is the head and Antony is a limb". Who says so? (Brutus)
25. Who is a head of the conspirators? (Brutus)
26. Who writes a letter of warning to Caesar not to go to the Capital? (Artemidorus)
27. Who allows Antony to address the Romans in the market-place? (Brutus)
28. Who form the Triumvirate? (Octavius, Antony and Lepidus)
29. Who is the first conspirator to stab Caesar? (Casca)
30. Who is the wife of Julius Caesar? (Calpurnia)

Preface to Shakespeare

1. Which work of Samuel Johnson is considered as the classic document of English literary Criticism? (Preface to Shakespeare)
2. How many years did Johnson spend to produce an edition of Shakespeare's plays? (Nine years)
3. How was Dr. Johnson described in the eighteenth century? (Literary dictator)
4. What sorts of criticism are done by Johnson to Shakespeare? (Historical and Comparative Criticism)
5. Who addresses Shakespeare as 'the Father of English Drama'? (Samuel Johnson)
6. How does Johnson praise Shakespeare's dramas? (Mirror of life)
7. Johnson's judgment of Shakespeare is __ (impartial and objective)
8. What are the tools that Johnson uses to analyze the work of Shakespeare? (Fact, experience, time, nature and universality)
9. According to Johnson, what displeases the audience in a drama? (Excessive melancholy)
10. Johnson observes that Shakespeare excels in writing __ than __. (comedies,

tragedies)

11. What is Shakespeare not so keen on? (In conveying moral truths)
12. What are the three unities?(Unity of Time, Place and Action)
13. What Unity is followed by Shakespeare in his plays? (Unity of Action)
14. How does Shakespeare excel the other dramatists?(By holding a mirror to nature)
15. How does Johnson praise Othello? (Vigorous and Vivacious)
16. Whom does Johnson compare Shakespeare with?(Chaucer and Homer)
17. What is the function of literature, as said by Johnson?(Strengthening morality)
18. What other living being are found along with human being in *Midsummer Night's Dream*? (Fairies)
19. Which two unities are dismissed by Johnson while analyzing the works of Shakespeare? (Unity of Time and Place)
20. What are the causes of faults in Shakespeare's works? (Carelessness and excess of conceits)
21. What are the causes for the obscurities in Shakespeare's works? (The age and lack of stagecraft)
22. In which play of Shakespeare is the external conflict explicit? (Macbeth)
23. What are the two conflicts found in Shakespearean tragedy? (External and internal conflict)
24. What aspects of Shakespeare's tragedies does Johnson complain about? (Meanness and tediousness)
25. What fault does Johnson find in Shakespeare's treatment of characters? (Objectivity and individualized treatment)
26. Which greatness of Shakespeare is unnoticed by Johnson? (Subtleties of characterization)
27. What does Shakespeare use unnecessarily to express trivial ideas?(Swelling figures)
28. Why are the editions of Shakespeare's works faulty?(No sound principle followed)
29. According to Johnson, which unity need not be followed in historical plays? (Unity of Action)
30. Shakespeare's characters are the _____ of common humanity.(genuine progeny)

GENERAL SHAKESPEARE

Shakespeare's Life and Literary Career

William Shakespeare's birth and parentage:

William Shakespeare was born at Stratford-on Avon, provincial market town in Warwickshire April 23, 1564. His middle class parents were natives of Warwickshire. His father John Shakespeare was a well-to-do farmer and glover of the village. His mother Mary Arden came of a noble family. He was educated at King Edward IV's Grammar school, Stratford, at the age of nine. Ben Jonson's criticism is that Shakespeare knew "small Latin and less Greek".

Shakespeare left school at the age of twelve when his father's fortunes began to

decline.

Shakespeare's visit to London:

When William Shakespeare was eighteen, he married Anne Hathaway, eight years his senior. The marriage was not a happy one. They were blessed with three children, Susanna, Hamnet, and Judith. He went to London to seek his fortune. There, drama was gaining popularity through the University Wits. Shakespeare first became an actor. He soon began his career as a playwright. He soon reached the top of the ladder of fame. He retired to his village in 1612 and died on 23rd April 1616.

Shakespeare 'in the workshop':

Shakespeare's dramatic career covers the period of twenty two years from 1590 to 1612. During this period, he wrote thirty seven plays, two poems and one fifty four sonnets. The two love poems "Venus and Adonis", and "Lucrece" were dedicated to the Earl of Southampton. His career as a playwright may be divided into four periods.

The First Phase:

The first period of Shakespeare's dramatic career between 1588 to 1594 was a period of apprenticeship. He altered old plays or worked in collaboration with popular dramatists.

✚ His first independent play was *Love's Labour's Lost*. The plot of the play was unlike the other plays. He mingled comedy and tragedy in this play. The men who refused to recognize the importance of love are made to face life's harder realities.

✚ He wrote next *The Comedy of Errors*, a farce full of fun and frolic. The 'errors' in this play due to the mistaken identity of the twins. The characters in the play and their picturization show that Shakespeare is not so experienced in producing plays.

✚ He wrote *The Two gentlemen of Verona*, a delightful romantic comedy. This play deals with people who change their love with shocking ease and facility. The theme of the play is a re-working of his sonnets. He handed over his mistress to his beloved friend. The same theme had been dealt in this play.

✚ He wrote *Richard III* his first successful historical tragedy. He followed the method of Marlowe's success in *Edward II*. The play is one among the tetralogy, giving a complete picture of the disagreement between the House of Lancaster and the York.

✚ He wrote *Romeo and Juliet* a moving poetic tragedy of love. The last play he wrote in the period of his apprenticeship was *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. It is rich in fantasy, poetry and humour. The play is remarkable for the blend of four different stories. The irrational nature of love is the main theme of the play. The delicate fairies in this play form a foil to the rude mechanicals.

The Second Phase:

During the second period, 1595 to 1600, Shakespeare wrote joyous comedies and his great English plays. In this period, he had shed much of his crudeness and affection. His works became strong. It is in this period, he wrote the most important works.

✚ *Much Ado about Nothing*, *As You Like It* and *Twelfth Night* are the best of the romantic comedies of Shakespeare. They show Shakespeare's unquenchable enjoyment of life. Shakespeare's skill in blending different plots and creating harmonious whole is seen in these play plays.

✚ *The Merchant of Venice* is a comedy with a prominent element of tragedy. The play is remarkable for its subtle, balanced and sympathetic study of characters. The play contains some of the finest poetic passages.

✚ *Richard II, Henry IV Part I and II and Henry V* are the English history plays, which unfold the panorama of the history of England. The Portrait of Henry V as an ideal king marks the climax of this series.

The Third phase:

During the third phase, Shakespeare seems to have undergone some shattering tragic experience. The third period, 1600-1608, is marked by the production of the four great Tragedies are *Hamlet, Macbeth, King Lear and Othello*. These four great tragedies are characterized by Shakespeare's most searching analysis of evil and the fragility of good. The hero of the tragedies of Shakespeare is a man belonging to a high social station.

✚ Hamlet is a prince. His tragic flaw is lassitude or inaction. He is on the brink of madness. He is torn between an urge to kill and the sensitive abhorrence of killing.

✚ Macbeth is a General. His tragic flaw is "vaulting ambition". He has hallucinations often. His ambition caused him to lead a destructive life.

✚ Lear is a King. He suffers from insanity. His tragic flaw is incredulity. He is torn between his passions for his daughters. His inability to categorize his daughter's love and understand the reality subject to his downfall.

✚ Othello is a great warrior and a brave general. His ruin is due to his credulity. His crisis requires calm and cool thinking on the part of the hero, which he lacks. The sufferings of Othello is out of all proportion to his faults.

✚ The Roman Plays: *Julius Caesar, Antony and Cleopatra and Coriolanus*.

✚ The history plays of Shakespeare also depict doomed historical personages.

✚ The Dark Comedies: *All Is Well That Ends Well, Measure for Measure and Troilus and Cressida*. These plays are tragic-comedies. Though they have a happy ending, they are marked by tragic suffering. *All's Well that Ends Well* is a play where the heroine pursues the hero who is far above her in social station. *Measure for Measure* preaches that justice should be tempered by mercy. *Troilus and Cressida* contains two plots the love for Cressida and the war between the Greeks and Trojans.

The Last Phase:

This fourth and last period is marked by Shakespeare's creative activity (1608-1611). The plays belonging to this period are called Dramatic Romances, *Pericles, Cymbeline, The Winter's Tale and The Tempest*. Forgiveness and reconciliation are the dominant notes of these plays. Evil is subdued.

✚ *Cymbeline* deals with the theme of the bringing to life of a woman apparently dead. *Cymbeline* begins in prosperity, but he makes the error of suspecting the innocent and trusting the vicious. He banished Belarius and takes a bad woman for his second wife. The immediate consequence is that he loses his two sons. The later consequence is that he loses his only daughter Imogen, whom he hoped to marry to his step-son. At the same time, a new life is being created through these same lost children.

✚ *The Winter's Tale* deals with the theme of the bringing to life of a woman apparently dead. It depicts about Leontes King of Sicilia who becomes insanely jealous of his wife. Hermione suspects her of intimacy with his friend Polixenes, King of Bohemia. Polixenes warned by Leontes takes flight. Leontes publicly brands Hermione an adulteress and when her baby is born, he orders an assistant to take the child to a waste place and abandon it. The Oracle of Apollo declares Hermione innocent. But Leontes does not believe it

Hermione is carried out, reported as dead. The underling names the baby. Sixteen years later, Folixenes's son Florizel meets Perdita and falls in love with her. Florizel triumphantly weds Perdita.

✚ *The Tempest* is the supreme expression of the magical philosophy of the last plays. Prosperous is driven from his inheritance. Prospero, Duke of Milan absorbed in studies of magic. He is exiled by his brother Antonio and by Alonso king of Naples. He lands his lovely daughter Miranda on a deserted island. A tempest brings his enemies of Milan near. Prospero has wrecked them on the island. Ferdinand sees Miranda and falls in love with her. But Prosperous pretends to frown on the suit. Finally, Antonio and Stephanie king with Miranda as his queen. The magician has a wedding masque for Miranda and Ferdinand. Prospero ends his magic and announces that the next day he will return to his dukedom.

The Elizabethan Theatre and Audience

Introduction:

Of Shakespeare, his theatre and his audience it could truly be said: "The Drama's laws, the drama's patrons give for we that live to please ,must please to live". Shakespeare meant his plays not to be read but to be enacted particularly for audience. The defects and excellences of Shakespeare's works are to the structure of his stage and the tastes of his audience. His plays have been conditioned a great deal by the stage that he wrote for and the world that he lived in. The Elizabethan audience craved for noise and outcry for pomp and pageantry. Shakespeare provided them with plenty of it in every one of his plays.

The structure of the theatre:

Shakespeare's plays were mostly staged at the Globe and Blackfrairs. The theatre of those days was a small round wooden structure. Shakespeare refers to this in Henry IV as this wooden 'O'. The first permanent play house 'The Theatre' was constructed by James Burbage in 1575. The play house was open to the sky. The performances were given by daylight. The stage and the boxes by the walls were covered. The rest of the theatre was open to the sky. The plays were staged by daylight. The stage was divided into four parts. The front stage projected far into auditorium. This part of the stage served as a street or battlefield or garden and was open to the sky. The back stage was the part behind the pillars. It served as a large room, a palace hall, and office or a tavern as required. The walls of his part of the stage were hung with tapestry black for tragedy and blue for comedy. At the back of the two side walls were the entrance and the exit for the actors. There was a screened inner stage which served as the bedroom scene in Othello and Macbeth. It also served as Juliet's tomb and as Prospero's cell. Over the inner stage was the balcony or the upper stage. It served as the window in shylock's house from which Jessica threw the casket on the street. It also served as Cleopatra's monument to which the dying Antony was raised to kiss Cleopatra farewell.

Absence of women actress on the stage:

Another significant fact about Elizabethan theatre those women's parts were played by boys. This explains why Shakespeare's plays do not have many women characters. In the tragedies they mostly in the background and some of the women characters like Portia, Nerrisa, Viola and Rosalind appear in the disguise of men.

The Elizabethan Stage:

The Elizabethan theater was a round or octagonal building. This stage had four main parts:

✚ **The Front Stage:** It is a bare platform without a curtain at the fore front. The Elizabethan theater was a round or octagonal building. In Henry V Shakespeare refers to this as 'this wooden o'. The stage was a rectangular platform projecting far into the auditorium. It was also known as the main stage. It was conventionally used for a scene in some open place, such as a wood, a field, a garden, etc. In front and on either side of this platform stood the groundlings or the riff-raff who paid a penny or so for admission. The upper class who paid more sat on tiers of galleries running all round, as in a modern circus. The nobles and gallants sat on the stage itself. Commenting on the actors and throwing orange peel on the groundings.

✚ **The Back Stage:** There was a part curtained off from the front part of the main stage. It was called the back stage. The part behind the pillars, which serve for any "covered" place a room of tavern or an office. The wall round this part of the stage was hung over with tapestry. At both the ends of this wall there were small doors for the entrance and exit actors. The back stage was used by Shakespeare in a variety of ways. It was the room where Henry IV lay dying.

✚ **An Inner Stage:** it served many purpose with the inner stage " It was Juliet's tomb, Prospero's cell, from the storm". There was a 'tiring house' or dressing room, of the actors on either side of the back stage. In its walls have were two doors, by which entrance and exits were made. Sometimes, the dressing room was used as a house, a castle, the wall of a town, etc.

✚ **An Upper Stage:** On the top of the tiring house was the upper stage or balcony which looked down on the main stage. The balcony was used in a variety of ways. The balcony also served as Cleopatra's monument into which she and her women drew up the dying Antony. In Cymbeline Jupiter descends in this way.

Salient Features of Elizabethan Stage:

The Elizabethan Stage had no front curtain. As there was no curtain, the dead had to be carried away before closing the play. This caused an anti-climax. The absence of movable scenery was a blessing in disguise to Shakespeare. Shakespeare could change his scene very quickly. Antony and Cleopatra has forty-two scenes laid all over the Roman empires. The large number of scenes results in diffusion and looseness of construction. At the same time, it also invests the action with sweep and breadth. This was certainly an advantage to Shakespeare.

Owing to lack of painted scenery, Shakespeare could use vivid poetic descriptions to given indications of time. Instead of using a scene to indicate sunrise, Shakespeare exercises his poetic gifts as when Romeo Juliet points out the dawn to Juliet:

"Look, love, what envious streaks

Do lace the severing cloud in your east Night's
candles are burnt out, and jocund day

Stands tip-toe onto the missy mountain tops

I must be gone and live, or stay and die".

Shakespeare was the absence of actresses. Women's parts were played only by boys on the Elizabethan stage. In most of his comedies, in *Twelfth Night*, *The Merchant of Venice*

, the boy actor is dressed as a woman only in the first few scenes. Thereafter the story is developed in such a way that the boy actor can throw away the female dress and wear his own male dress and feel quite at home.

The Elizabethan Audience

The crude taste of the Elizabethan audience was affected by Shakespeare's art. Many of Shakespeare's contemporaries fulminated against the unrefined tastes of the audience. But Shakespeare made a virtue of necessity and in the process of catering to the needs of the audience achieved artistic effects. Thus Shakespeare had to insert comic scenes even in tragedies to satisfy the craving of the audience for mirth and merry-making. Instead of protesting against this compulsion, Shakespeare used comedy artistically in tragedies. He perfected the device of comic relief and introduced the porter in *Macbeth*, the grave-diggers in *Hamlet* and the old countryman in *Antony and Cleopatra* to relieve the intolerable tragic tension.

The Elizabethan Audience: Music and noise:

The Elizabethan audience craved for music. Dramatists like Marston (in his *Antonino* and *Mellida*) introduced songs even in places where they did not serve any dramatic purpose. Shakespeare's songs are always dramatically relevant. They either conjure up an atmosphere as the songs sung in Arden in *As You Like It* or throw light on the character of the singer or listener. As Feste's songs do in *Twelfth Night*.

The Elizabethan audience loved din and bustle. Shakespeare gave them plenty of noise and at the same time made art out of it. Thus, thunderstorm is used to intensify the abnormality and villainy of Casca and Cassius who, dark thoughts within them, walk the streets of a Rome in a terrific thunderstorm in *Julius Caesar*. The alarm-bell is used for the purpose intensifying excitement in the brawl. That ruins Cassio in *Othello*. Its effect is manifested in *Othello's* immediate order. "Silence that dreadful bell".

Conclusion:

Sometimes the players staged their performances in an inn. Shakespeare meant his plays not to be read but to be enacted and that too on particular stage and for a particular audience. Thus, instead of scorning the audience for their weaknesses, Shakespeare catered to their tastes and in the very process, rose to great artistic heights.

Soliloquies in Shakespeare's Plays

Introduction:

Soliloquy is defined as a "a discourse made by one in solitude "simply thinking aloud". It is a kind of loud thinking on the part of a character when the other characters on the stage are not supposed to hear. It has its origin the chorus of the Greek tragedies which had several functions to perform. It is an important device used by Shakespeare to expose the secret thoughts and feelings of a character.

Soliloquies in *Twelfth Night*:

In *Twelfth Night*, almost all the characters indulge in soliloquies. Viola disguised as a page becomes the object of Olivia's headlong love. Viola is helpless. She says in a soliloquy: 'Only Time must untangle this tie, not I'. She loves Duke Orsine and Orsino loves Olivia. But Olivia has fallen in love with disguised Viola. Viola is in a fix. She cannot wriggle out of

this situation and so appeals to destiny to save her. Malvolio serves as major dome under Olivia is disliked by Maria and sir Toby for his puritanical attitude. They plan to disgrace him by giving to understand that Olivia has fallen in love with him. Malvolio indulges in a self-revelatory soliloquy which shows his scorn of Toby and Marina and also his budding love for Olivia.

Soliloquies in *Hamlet*:

Soliloquies are found in a larger number in Shakespearean tragedies than his comedies. There are many soliloquies in Hamlet which are indicative of the protagonist's growing tension. In the first soliloquy, Hamlet voices his displeasure at the unseemly haste with which his mother re-married her husband's brother. The best known of Hamlet's soliloquies is that beginning, 'To be or not to be' (Act III scene 2) which manifests his orientation towards death. The only factor that pulls him from the brink of self-destruction is his feat of the horrors that might lie beyond death. His comparison of his chronic procrastination with Fortinbras's dynamism is the substance of another famous soliloquy. In Hamlet, for example, Hamlet announces his future plans- a features which has little to do with self-expression. In the last eighteen lines of Hamlet's long soliloquy spoken after the Hecuba speech of the first player, Hamlet puts forth his plan of the mousetrap play: "The play's the thing "Wherein I'll catch the conscience of the king."

Soliloquies in *Macbeth*:

In Macbeth both Macbeth and his wife indulge in soliloquies. The sight of the dagger in the banquet scene prompts Macbeth to soliloquies in a manner which arouses the suspicion of all the listeners. The banquet is wound up abruptly by lady Macbeth to prevent further exposure of her husband. Lady Macbeth who formerly assured her husband that he could wash off his bloodstain with a little water is now walking in sleep, pathetically wringing her hands and gesturing as if she is trying to wash off some stain. She reverses her earlier statement and says that if she dips her blood-stained hands into the sea, her hands will not be cleaned but the sea will become red.

Macbeth's soliloquy later, describing mercy as 'a new born baby' is equally moving.

Soliloquies in *The Tempest*:

The Tempest, the last of Shakespeare's plays contains some memorable soliloquies such as Prospero's gloomy prediction that this world with all its grand scenes will vanish, leaving not a trace behind. It is a pity that Shakespeare's last play closes on this dismal note.

Conclusion:

Thus the soliloquies in Shakespeare's plays serve several different purposes. Each soliloquy has a function to perform depending on the context in which it is uttered. It is an integral part of the play. It helps speed up action. It reveals character. It gives a self-analysis of motive and attitudes. It serves as a commentary on the situations. It bears evidence to Shakespeare's poetic power and feeling for musical expression.

Women in Shakespeare's Plays

Introduction:

Ruskin's statement that "Shakespeare has no heroes, but only heroines" is an extreme view. But nobody can deny that women form an indispensable part of the world of the Shakespeare.

Classification of women characters:

The range and variety of women characters in Shakespeare tempts most critics to assert that he has comprehensively covered the entire gallery of women in his plays. His portraits of women have never been surpassed. Critics have also taken great pains to classify his heroines. The commonsense Classification, however, would be to differentiate them as clever and assertive like Portia in *The Merchant of Venice*, Beatrice in *Much ado about nothing* and Rosalind in *As you like It*. The next group will be the loving and fanciful like Juliet, Helana, Viola, Ophelia and Miranda. In the third group would come the tragic heroines, Desdemona, Cordelia, Hermione in *Much ado about Nothing*. The last group would comprise and aggressive and dominant creatures like lady Macbeth, Goneril, Regan and Cleopatra.

Assertive and clever women in the comedies:

Women dominate men in the comedies. The men in the comedies are shallow, sentimental creatures, incapable of independent volition. Women who stand out for their cleverness and their assertiveness, they come out unscathed from the conflicts. Shakespeare's heroines are Viola, Beatrice and Rosalind. The women have practical genius when men lack, when Antonio's life has to be saved. It is Portia in *The Merchant of Venice* raises to the occasion whereas her husband merely writings his hands I sheer despair. Viola through soft - spoken, succeeds in meeting, whereas the male messengers were all turned away by her.

The women in the comedies are known for their constant attachment to their lovers. Rosalind teases Orlando in a most mischievous manner but swoons on coming to know that lover has been attacked by a lion. Viola loves Orsino so much that she is prepared to make any sacrifice for his sake. She woos Olivia on his behalf and is even willing to die in order to promote his love for Olivia. Viola is an embodiment of self- effacing love. These women are shy and modest in expressing their love. Portia in *The Merchant of Venice* and Beatrice in *Much Ado About Nothing* adopt roundabout methods to express their love. But these women can express their love forthright directness and even pursue their reluctant lovers. Helena in *All's Well That Ends Well*, for example, is quite bold in pursuit of her love.

Women in the histories:

The English Histories deal with rough strife. Hence there is no place in them for the soft graces of women. The atmosphere of war at home and abroad is not conducive to female happiness. War bereaves the women in the histories either of their or of their children or of their brothers. The men are too busy waging wars to devote any attention to their wives. When they are wooed, the wooing is mechanical and hurried and devoid of passion. The courting of the French princess Katharine by Henry V is only one example of this kind of unsatisfactory wooing. The women of the history plays are all pathetic figures, pushed to the background and left unscarred for.

Women in the tragedies:

The women in the tragedies can be divided into two categories:

✚ Innocent women uncomplaining to their doom, such as Cordelia, Ophelia and

Desdemona.

✚ Evil and destructive women such as Goneril, Regan, Lady Macbeth, Cressida etc.

Passive and sentimental women characters:

In the second grouping of Shakespeare's women, Helena in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* is a passive and sentimental young woman. Lysander says of Helena that she "Devoutly dotes, dotes in idolatry on Demetrius when Demetrius tells her that he hates her cries out "And even for that do I love you the more " I am your spaniel "

Passionate and self-sacrificing women characters:

Juliet in *Romeo and Juliet* is Passionate, constant and self-sacrificing love has transformed her. But the physical basis of love does, in no way, make less pure or modest. Even Portia in *The Merchant of Venice* surrenders herself, her wealth and all to Bassanio who she has accepted her as lord and master. Even Portia, the wife of Brutus who asserts her right to share her husband's thoughts and worries, kills herself, being unable to bear her separation from Brutus. Ophelia in *Hamlet*, like Hero in *Much Ado About Nothing* shows herself passive in love and pathetic in her helplessness. Miranda in *The Tempest* is loving and fanciful, but a passive character in the play.

Creating sympathy among the readers:

Shakespeare's female characters are inferior to his men. Of all Shakespeare's tragic heroines, Desdemona evokes or sympathy the most. Desdemona is described as

"A maiden never bold;

Of spirit so still and quiet, that her
motion Blush'd at herself".

In her extraordinary innocence she was, 'Half the wooer' and almost invited Othello's courting and gave him all her love. Desdemona's love for Othello oversteps brink of idolatry. She cannot bring herself to see any fault in him even when he strikes her publicly in blind rage of jealousy. Emilia had been shocked by Desdemona's Passive submission to Othello's brutality. Her docile reactions only show the strength of her love and the refinement of her nature. When Othello strangles her to death, her last words to Emilia who ask her who has killed her are,

"Nobody :I myself, farewell, /

Commend me to my kind lord

".

A Strong women character:

Cordelia's character is positivity combined with pride. She is proud. She is obstinate and she is strong in mind. Cordelia is unadulterated tenderness and live with strength when occasion demands it. She has foresight and practical sense. She exercises influence a strong nature over others. But she is helpless. She does not see things from the stable point of own loss or gain.

Evil and scheming characters:

Among the aggressive and evil women in the gallery of Shakespeare's women characters, Lady Macbeth stands apart.. She possesses a rightful, determined will, and iron stability of resolved. But this in the end proves her ruin. In self-reliance and in intelligence, she is superior to Macbeth as Portia is to Bassanio and Rosalind to Orlando. Her womanliness comes out in her minute reluctance to kill Duncan in his sleep because she her

father's face in his. It is also to be seen in her tender concern for Macbeth to the last. She stands out as a contrast to Goneril, Regan in that she suffers the compunctions, visiting of nature. The other two are seen as absolutely remorseless.

In the delineation of the characters of Goneril and Regan, however, Shakespeare appears to be content to assure that there are really incorrigibly wicked people. They are realists. They give their father the smooth speech which he wants of them. Goneril is a schemer. Regan echoes Goneril. He appears to shrink from acting on her own. Two sisters are different even in their monstrous cruelty. Goneril is cruel with a method and purpose. Regan positively delight in the infliction of pain. Granville-barker has pointed out how the devil of the list comes to the match the devil of cruelty in the two women. In their separate but illicit love for one and the same man, Edmund, they become reckless, shameless and foolish.

A woman of infinite variety:

The last to be considered among Shakespeare woman Characters but certainly not least of them is Cleopatra, daughter of Ptolemy. Her ability to attract and hold men like Pompey, Julius Ceasar and Antony lies in her skillful wit and feminine changeableness. Enobarbus says of her:

"Age cannot wither her nor custom Stale
her infinite variety".

Thus Shakespeare has portrayed a variety of women in his plays.

Fools in Shakespeare's Plays

Introduction:

The fool in Shakespeare is said to be a direct descendant of the devil or the Vice who contributed fun in the Morality plays. The Shakespeare Fool is descended from the court jester who was employed by the king and the rich to while away their leisure with their foolery. Gordon divides the fools in Shakespeare into two classes. They are those who laugh at others such as Touchstone, Feste, Lear's Fool, etc..., and those who are laughed at by others, such as Bottom, Dogberry, Verges, Andrew, Ague cheek, etc....

The fools who laugh at others:

These fools serve to correct the excesses of the other characters. Touchstone, as his name itself indicates, serves as a touchstone to the validity or otherwise of the of the pastoral ideal. He criticizes pastoral life as being lop-sided. To have not been at court is to be "damned like an ill-roasted egg all on one side". The shepherd's life serious limitations:

"In respect of itself, it is a good life; But in
respect that it is a shepherd's Life it is
naught. In respect that
It is solitary, I like it is very well; but In
respect that it is private, it is
a very vile life. It is tedious".

✚ Touchstone thus points out that every fashion of life has its balance of pleasure and pains. Romantic love is equally unmerciful ridiculed by Touchstone. His narration of his

courtship of Jane Smile, with the follies into which led him, and his wooing of Audrey, of whom he hopes shortly to get rid, serve to parody the romantic lovers' protestation of eternal fidelity to each other.

✚ Feste of *Twelfth Night* is a being of far finer clay than the clowns of the earlier comedies. His portion has been chiefly one of blows and buffets, and his stock-in-trade has consisted of a homely monotony of mother-wit. But Feste, as pointed out by Olivia can act up to ideal of his office;

“He must observe their mood on whom he jests, The quality of persons, and the time,

And, like the haggard, check at every

Feather. That comes before his eye”.

Like Touchstone, Feste also exposes the defects of others. He ridicules Olivia's affected mourning for her brother's death, the Duke's sentimental love for Olivia and Malvolio's inflated self-love.

✚ The fool in *King Lear* harps without rest on the egregious folly of Lear in parting with his crown, and in putting his neck under him with illustration of Lear's helpless position.

✚ Falstaff of *Henry IV Part I* also performs the function of the fool Like Feste and Touchstone, Falstaff also exposes the defects of others. His scorn of taking risks in pursuit of honour by Hotspur and Glendower who meet only with life and would not have anything to do with destructive honour:

“What is honour? A word,

What is that word, honour?”.

The fools who are laughed at by others:

Falstaff not only laughs at others but is also laughed at by others. He himself says “ I am not only witty myself but the cause that wit is in other men”. With his shameless lying, he is an inexhaustible sources of honour.

Bottom of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, with his realistic representation of the “tedious brief scene of young Pyramus and his love Thisbe” is laughed at by Theseus and Hippolyta. Through his characterisation of Bottom, Shakespeare is launching at the contemporary playwrights' use of realistic scenery. The gull Aguecheek of *Twelfth Night* and Dogberry and verges, the twin specimens of blundering officialdom in *Much Ado About Nothing* are also laughed at by other characters.

Shakespeare uses the fool in his tragedies to achieve ‘comic relief’ that is to lighten the unbearable tension caused by tragic happenings. Thus the Porter in *Macbeth*, pretending to be the porter of the gates of Hell, the grave digger in *Hamlet*, talking casually about death, and the clown in *Antony and Cleopatra* “joy” of the deadly worm-all these fools. With their jokes, and jests, relieve the mounting tragic tension in the plays.

The clown also serves as a bridge between the sub-plot in some plays. Thus Launcelot Gobbo in *The Merchant of Venice* is the messenger of love between Lorenzo and Jessica. Feste in *Twelfth Night* frequently appears before Duke Orisino and thus connects the sub-plot with the main-plot.

The Fool's chief function is however, that of the Chorus in Greek dramas, commenting on the other characters and voicing the author's own point of view. Touchstone and Lear's

Fool perform this function.

The Super-Natural Elements in Shakespeare's Plays

Introduction:

Shakespeare makes dramatic use of the Elizabethan belief in the supernatural agencies. People in Shakespeare's day believed much more in the supernatural than people today. The presence and the power of the unseen were accepted universally. The popularity of such works as Reginald Scot's 'Discovery of witchcraft, king James's Demonology and Middleton's. The witch in Elizabethan England are standing proofs of this. Supernatural phenomenon was an essential feature in the Greek tragedies. The first reference to the ghost is to be found in Aeschylus Eumenides.

Supernatural elements in fiveplays:

Shakespeare could not leave it out of drama which is an imitation of life. The supernatural is in evidence in only of his plays and they are *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Hamlet*, *Macbeth*, *Julius Caesar* and *The Tempest*. In *A Midsummer Night's Dream* the fairies and especially puck, play mischief with mankind but are not evil. In *Hamlet* the ghost has far greater power but it fails to achieve its purpose. The witches in *Macbeth* have greater potentialities for evil. But they drive *Macbeth* to his doom because the evil is already there in his heart. In *Julius Caesar* the unseen power act as portents of calamities and harbingers of death. In *The Tempest* the unseen powers are entirely in the control of Prospero and work towards man's weal.

Appearance of supernatural elements:

In Shakespeare's play's, he takes care to invest the supernatural manifestations with all the characteristics of popular superstition so that it may be readily accepted by his audience. Shakespeare, however, takes care to keep his supernatural beings as far as possible aloof from man. Their appearance in the plays is strictly limited. Only a few humans come into contact with them off and on. The witches in *Macbeth* appear only at the beginning of the play and in a scene half-way through the drama. The terrifying supernatural phenomenon in *Julius Caesar* appear only on the night before the assassin of Caesar. The ghost of Caesar appears only to Brutus and only twice. But the ghost was more subjective than objective.No other person sees or hears the ghost.

The world of the fairies:

In *A Midsummer Night's Dream* the fairies come into contact only with Bottom the Weaver. Oberon and Titania, the king and queen of fairies, have power over nature. They can cover the starry welkin with black fog. When they quarrel, all nature is disturbed. The seasons are altered Mankind suffers. Shakespeare adds many fanciful touches. The Queen's lamps are the glowworm. The fairies compass the globe swifter than the wandering moon. The height of fantasy is achieved when Titania calls her fairy attendance and says,

"Come, a roundel and a fairy song:

Then, for the third part of a minute, hence "

The fairies seek dew drops and haunt pearls in every cowslip's ear. They kill the cankers in flowers.

Puck, the court jester of Oberon is a spirit full of harmless mischief. He can assume different

shapes and voices. Puck is proud of his unending mischief. He boasts that he "sometimes lurks in a gossip's bowl, In very likeness of roasted crab"

The other important play in which Shakespeare makes use of fairies is *The Tempest*. In it, the supernatural beings are entirely under the control of Prospero. Ariel has superhuman powers but he can use them only under Prospero's direction. Caliban is a horrible civil creature but Prospero uses as a servant to do all the heavy work for him. Ariel is very much a fairy as those in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. That he is diminutive and is clear from the lines of his song.

Ariel however is different from the fairies of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. In that he serves as the means of redressing the wrong done to one mortal by another.

Shakespeare's treatment of the world of fairies is not only original but revolutionary.

Supernatural elements in Julius Caesar:

The supernatural element is found in *Julius Caesar*. Julius Caesar himself is seen as a believer in superstition. He calls on Calpurnia to touch the garment of Antonius when he is running in the race of the Lupercal. Calpurnia was barren and Caesar believed that touching the garment of a Lupercal runner would lead to her fertility. The events of the night before the assassination of Caesar are piled with horror upon horror of the supernatural. The tempest drops fire on the streets of Rome. Alion glares upon Casca and stalks away without harming him. A slave is seen with his hand flaming but his hand is unhurt. Even more bizarre and horrible incidents pile up striking terror in the hearts of the people. Calpurnia's dream is itself a compendium of superstition. Calpurnia also remarks: "When beggars die there are no comets seen

The heaven themselves blaze forth the death of princess"

Julius Caesar himself calls upon the priest to offer sacrifice and watch the omens.

The priest examines the sacrificial animal after it was cut open. They found the heart missing and thou it very bad omen. The plausible explanation given of Calpurnia's dream by Brutus show how much the Roman believed in superstition. In fact the various element of the supernatural give a Roman atmosphere to the play. They serve to anticipate what is to come fate. Even Cassius and Brutus appeared cowed by the omens seen on their march to Philippi. The ghost of Caesar seen twice by Brutus 'sense of impending soon but also a symbol of the continuing power of Julius Caesar even after his death.

Conclusion:

Shakespearean drama admits supernatural agency -witches, ghost, apparitions as well as portents and violation of law. His use of the supernatural as a force in his plays is clear and subtle. He uses the agency of the supernatural to intensify and to illuminate human action, not to determine it. This is clearly seen in *Macbeth*. *Macbeth's* secret thoughts which he betrays in his guilty star, have been an invitation to the power of evil. *Macbeth* has already ventured into a desert and they added to the witches impulse downward.

A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM

Introduction:

A Midsummer Night's Dream is probably written in 1595. It is one of the earliest plays of Shakespeare. Midsummer Day is June 24, St. John Day. It marks the beginning of the summer season. This day was celebrated by the common people with bonfires, processions, games and imprompt plays. This play deals with incidents. They are possible only in a dream. So the title is quite apt. The word 'dream' is added to suggest vagueness of time and place, customary in dreams. Love and marriage is the central theme in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.

The Importance of the Opening Scene:

William Shakespeare has been called a master of opening scenes. The word 'dream' occurs in the opening scene. The play opens in the palace of the Athenian Duke Theseus. Theseus has got engaged to Hippolyta, the Queen of the Amazons. The marriage is to take place on the night of the new moon in the month of May. Theseus had fought a war against the Queen of the Amazons. In the process of winning the war, Theseus had also won Hippolyta's heart. There is only for four days for marriage. The play opens with a talk consoles him by saying that these four days will pass quickly. Soon the new moon will appear in the sky to herald their marriage. Theseus commands Philostrate, his master of the revels, to take all steps to create a festive atmosphere in Athens. Being a great warrior, he is Keen to get married his beloved Hippolyta at the earliest.

Hermia's decision to marry Lysander:

During this time, Lord Egeus requests the Duke to advice his daughter Hermia to marry Demetrius. Hermia has decided to marry the man of her choice Lysander. She has exchanged many love-tokens with him. Under the Athenian law, a girl must marry the man of her father's choice. She fails to do so. She must either become a nun and spend her whole life as a chaste maiden or incur the penalty of death. Hermia would rather become a nun than marry Demetrius. She does not love him at all. At the same time, Lysander points out to the Duke that Demetrius had previously been in love with Helena. She still loves Demetrius but whom Demetrius had forsaken. The Duke insists Hermia to respect Athenian laws and she must revise her decision. He gives her four days to make up her mind in this respect. Finally, Hermia must give her final reply on the night of the new moon when These is would be married to Hippolyta.

An Entertainment Prepared by Some Athenian Artisans:

A group of Athenian artisans are preparing a play about the love of Pyramus and Thisbe before Theseus and Hippolyta on their wedding night. The play is to be performed by Theseus actors in the presence of the Duke and Hippolyta for their entertainment and in honour of their marriage. These artisans include Quimcr, Bottom, Flute, Snout, Snug and Starveling. The play *Pyramus and Thisbe*, chosen them, has its theme of the love and the tragic end of that love. These artisans decide to hold the rehearsal of the play in the wood on the outskirts of the city of Athens.

Lysander and Hermia's plan:

Lysander and Hermia decide to run away and go to a place. It is beyond the jurisdiction of Duke Theseus and the Athenian laws. So they can get married there without incurring and penalty. They decide to meet each other in the wood outside the city where Lysander's aunt

lives there. The Athenian laws are not applicable in the city. They confide their plan to Helena who has always been a very close friend of Hermia's. But she is very dejected because she is in love with Lysander. He does not love her any longer even though he had vowed to remain true to her. Demetrius decides to follow the runaway lovers to the wood. They meet each other in the wood. Helena decides to follow Demetrius.

The Lovers in the Wood:

The wood on the outskirts of Athens is a place where the fairies sometimes hold their revels. Oberon, the king of fairies, visits the wood to hold his revels. At the same time, his wife Titania, the Queen of fairies, is also visiting the same wood in order to hold her revels separately. Oberon and Titania are at present not on good terms with each other. Titania has got a lovely challenging boy, stolen from an Indian household. She has refused to hand over the boy to Oberon. He wants the boy as his own page of honour. Titania's refusal to part with the boy has annoyed Oberon. He plans to punish Titania for his act of disobedience to him. Oberon and Titania meet in the wood at night and they accuse each other of marital infidelity. Titania says that Oberon has had a love-affair with a shepherdess. He has also had a love-affair with Hippolyta, the queen of Amazons. Oberon accuses Titania of having had a love affair with Theseus, Duke of Athens. Titania refuses to hand over the changeling boy to Oberon. Titania has moved away to another part of the forest. Oberon overhears a talk between Demetrius and Helena. Both of them have now arrived in the wood according to their respective plans, separately conceived. Demetrius has come to look for Hermia while Helena has come to try to win Demetrius's heart. Demetrius scolds Helena for having followed him in the wood, while Helena persists in pleading her love for Demetrius. Oberon feels that Demetrius behaves very cruelly towards Helena. He therefore decides to employ a device which he would make Demetrius respond to Helena's love. On the other side, according to their promise, Lysander and Hermia have also arrived in the wood. Feeling tired, Lysander and Hermia decide to spend the night in the wood. So they lie down on the ground and fall asleep.

The part played by love- in-idleness:

Oberon orders his lieutenant Puck to be a mischievous but very active and resourceful fairy. Puck has to bring him Cupid flower which is known as "love-in-idleness". Puck brings the Cupid flower very soon. Oberon gives Puck a little of the juice of this flower and asks him to find out a young man's garments. Puck is asked to apply this love-juice to the eyes of that young gentleman when he has fallen asleep. The juice of this flower has a magical quality. The love-in-idleness makes a man or woman fall in love with the nearby person whether he will be worthy of love or not. Oberon wants that this juice should be applied to the eyes of the sleeping Demetrius. Demetrius wakes up and sees Helena before him. Demetrius would fall instantly in love with Helena and would begin to respond to Helena's love for him. Puck goes to search for a young gentleman wearing Athenian clothes. He finds the sleeping Lysander who is also wearing Athenian garments. Puck applies the love-juice to the eyes of the sleeping Lysander.

In the meantime, Helena has been spurned by Demetrius. She is moving about in the wood till she comes to the spot where Lysander lies asleep. Helena does not notice the presence of Hermia. She is also lying asleep there at a little distance from Lysander. She awakens Lysander and falls immediately in love with her, thus proving unfaithful to Hermia.

So a new complication has arisen on account of Puck's mistake in applying the love-juice to the eyes of wrong man.

Titania's infatuation with Bottom:

Oberon applies the juice of the same flower to the eyes of Titania when she lies asleep. In the meantime, the Athenian artisans have arrived in the wood to hold their rehearsal. When the rehearsal is going on, Bottom plays the role of Pyramus. He moves away and stands behind the bush, waiting for his cue. At that moment, Puck places an ass's head upon the shoulders of Bottom without Bottom's knowledge. When Bottom returns to his friends to continue with rehearsal, they feel scared to see a monster. They all run away in terror. Bottom does not understand why his friends run away from him, because he does not know that he has been transformed into an ass. He is not afraid of anything in the wood and he sings a song. The loud singing of Bottom awakens Titania. She sees Bottom the ass before her and falls in love with him. Titania's passion for Bottom the ass provides amusement to both Oberon and Puck.

When Titania collects flowers in order to crown her lover, Bottom the ass, Oberon approaches her and asks her once again to surrender the changeling boy to her husband. Oberon is reconciled with Titania and he would like to cure her infatuation for Bottom the ass. When Titania falls asleep again, Oberon applies the juice of another flower. It is called Diana's bud. It has the power to nullify the effect of the love-juice which had previously been applied to her eyes. As a result, Titania wakes up, and she becomes normal. She feels disguised to see Bottom is still asleep. Under Oberon's instructions, Puck now removes the ass's head from the body of Bottom.

Lysander and Demetrius in love with Helena:

Oberon now discovers the mistake which Puck had made in applying the love-juice to the eyes of the wrong Athenian gentleman. Therefore he would like to rectify the situation. On finding Demetrius asleep, Oberon now himself applies to the love-juice to Demetrius's eyes. Oberon also arranges matters in such a way that Helena appears before Demetrius just when Demetrius wakes up. Seeing Helena before him, Demetrius falls immediately in love with Helena. He begins to ignore Hermia altogether.

Helena is now being courted by both Lysander and Demetrius, because both of them are under influence of the love-juice. As for Hermia, she feels deeply dismayed and grieved to find that Lysander who had been so passionately in love with her. He has now transferred his affections to Helena. Helena is completely bewildered and puzzled by this change in Lysander. Helena is also feeling amazed by both Demetrius's and Lysander's professions and assertions of love for her. She thinks that they are mocking at her and ridiculing her. Hermia thinks that Helena has employed some trick to win over Lysander's heart and thus bring about a separation between Lysander and Hermia. She therefore begins to scold Helena for having employed some cunning method to wean Lysander away from Hermia. In fact, Hermia becomes furious at this time. She would even like to scratch Helena's eyes with her sharp nails. Helena flees from this spot to escape from the physical attack by Hermia.

The Antidote, Applied to Lysander's Eyes:

As for the two lovers, Demetrius and Lysander, they have begun to throw challenges at each other because they are now both in love with Helena. They have thus become rivals for the hand of Helena in marriage. They agree to fight a duel with each other to decide which of

them has a better claim to Helena. Oberon is invisible to mortal eyes and now orders Puck to see it that the two young gentlemen do not actually fight. Puck darkens the night with clouds and with fog. So that the two men cannot see each other though they still keep challenging each other. Puck thus prevents the two men from fighting . Both the men feel tired of chasing each other vainly, lie down on the ground and falls asleep. Oberon now directs Puck to apply the Antidote to the eyes of sleeping Lysander. When Lysander wakes up, he should become his normal self and should again find himself in love with Hermia.

The Complication Resolved:

Duke Theseus and Hippolyta now arrive in the wood to perform certain rituals connected with the May-day celebrations. Theseus has also brought his hounds with him because he is a great huntsman and because a stag- hunt has been arranged for him by the forest officials. Theseus now happens to see certain persons lying asleep on the ground. Egeus, is also accompanying Theseus at this time. Egeus finds that the person's sleeping on the ground are Demetrius, Lysander, Helena, and Hermia. Theseus awakens then and has brought them in to the wood. They are all feeling somewhat confused as if they had been seeing a dream . As a result of the Antidote having been applied to Lysander's eyes, Lysander has now become normal self, and is again in love with Hermia. But Demetrius continues to be in love with Helena whom he had previously forsaken .

Demetrius now tells the Duke that he no longer loves Hermia and that he would like to marry Helena. Thus the complication had created unpleasantness in the opening scene is now resolved. Duke Theseus tells Egeus that there is now no need to insist of Hermia's marrying Demetrius. The Duke then announces that the marriage of Lysander with Hermia and the marriage of Demetrius with Helena. At the same night Theseus and Hippolyta are to get married. Thus there is a complete reconciliation among human beings as well as among the fairies.

Conclusion:

Bottom wakes up from his sleep in the wood. He remembers that his love with the Queen of fairies, Titania was dream only. He returns to Athens and joins his friends. They were dejected because of his absence. Now they all get ready to present the play in the presence of the Duke at his palace that night. The marriages of Theseus with Hippolyta, of Lysander with Hermia and of Demetrius with Helena have now been performed. All the couples and others connected with the court of Duke Theseus are in delight mood. The artisans come to perform the play about the tragic love of Pyramus and Thisbe on the stage in the presence of the Duke and the others. The time is midnight . Oberon and Titania come to the palace to bless the married couples. Oberon sings a song and the fairies dance to its tune. After the blessings of the fairies, they leave. Puck remains on the stage and he recites the prologue to the play A Midsummer Night's Dream.

A Midsummer Night's Dream as a Comedy

Introduction:

A comedy is defined as the story should have an happy ending. Shakespeare's A Midsummer Night's Dream is celebrated as a romantic comedy. The plot of the drama is woven with three stories. They are

✚ The love of Helena and Demetrius and Lysander and Hermia.

✚ The wedding celebrations of the Duke of Athens, Theseus and the Queen of Amazon Hippolyta and

✚ The story of fairy queen Titania, the fairy king Oberon and the fairies.

Love significance in Comedy:

According to H.B.Charlton, love plays a major role in Shakespeare's comedies. This is particularly true of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* which presents different kinds of love. Theseus is going to marry Hippolyta in four days and his love for Hippolyta is normal and straight forward. The lovers who gather in the wood, none of them is capable of consonant love. First, both Lysander and Demetrius love Hermia jointly. In a trice, thanks to the love on Helena, praising her as a 'princess of white'.

Shakespeare's comedies with humour:

Shakespeare's comedies brim with fun and humour. There is a Fool or a clown in all his comedies who either laughs at or is laughed by others. Feste of *Twelfth Night*, Touchstone of *As You Like It* and Falstaff of *Henry IV* are such characters. But for them the comedies would become tedious. The comedy in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* is provided not by a single person but by a group of people who are engaged in staging the play *Pyramus* and This be before Theseus on his wedding night. The highlight of this comedy is the way they try to concretize everything on the stage to the extent of making it absurd. Bottom plays *Pyramus* and says things which constitute the very quintessence of absurdity. They must inform the audience in advance that the lion on the stage is not a real lion but only Snug, the joiner, disguised as a lion. The sword in *Pyramus's* hand is only a toy sword. Bottom feels that unless such advance Revelations are made, the audience might think the lion and the sword real and get shocked and swoon. Shakespeare believed in creating the necessary atmosphere through suggestive dialogue. Through Bottom Shakespeare is making a dig at those who were particular that everything should be represented physically on the stage.

Bottom's amusing Soliloquy:

Finally, Titania has returned to her normal self and has gone away with Oberon. Bottom wakes up from the slumber into which he had fallen in Titania's arms. Bottom's soliloquy is again amusing. He wonders if he has dreaming in his sleep. He is now his normal self, but it seems to him that in his dream, he had been transformed into an ass. He dares not tell anybody he has seen such a dream. He amuses greatly when he unwittingly inter-changes the functions of the various human senses. Bottom goes on to say that a ballad should be given the title "Bottom's Dream" because his dream has no bottom.

An unforgettable comic touch in the play is the linking of the rude Bottom and the refined Titania, the beast and the beauty. The sight of the fairy fondling the ass- headed. Bottom is comical but what is more comical is the very casual manner in which Bottom reacts to the whole episode, asking fairies to scratch his head and allowing himself to be caressed by the fairy queen, as though it is a matter of course.

Puck's amusing events:

Puck's account to Oberon of how he had played a trick upon the Athenian artisans, how he had changed one of them into an ass, how the others had run away in fear and how Titania had seen the before her and had therefore instantly fallen in love with him. This whole account by Puck is highly amusing. Puck really has a talent for vivid description. This account by him is one of the outstanding passages in the whole play. It is highly amusing.

Oberon's reaction to this account is most favourable. He says that Titania's falling in love with an ass is an event better development than any which he could have devised.

Plots in Shakespeare's romantic comedies:

Shakespeare uses two-tier plots in his romantic comedies. In *A Midsummer Night's Dream* Shakespeare deviates from this set pattern and constructs a four-tier plot. The bottom layer is of course Bottom and his friends. The fairies form the second and the human lovers, the third layers. On the top of all these layers is the royal couple, Theseus and Hippolyta. The excellence of the plot lies in the skillful way. The human lovers come to the forest where they are manipulated by the fairy Puck. The fairy queen is enamoured of Bottom. At the end of the play, the lovers, the fairies and the Bottom troupe all these people assemble in Theseus' place. Thus there is organic unity in the play.

Conclusion:

As in the other comedies, in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* also there is a mixture of verse and prose. Theseus and his wife, the human lovers and the fairies make their speeches in verse. Oberon's description of Titania's flowery bed and Theseus description of his hunting expedition are some of the memorable poetic passages in the play. All speeches of Bottom are in prose. The dialogues in Pyramus and Thisbe are all in verse of the major characters.

UNIT III / OTHELLO

Introduction:

William Shakespeare was recognized in his own time as an eminent writer. His plays are classified into three types. They are comedies, tragedies and histories. The four great tragedies of Shakespeare are *Hamlet*, *Macbeth*, *King Lear* and *Othello*.

The Importance of opening scene in *Othello*:

Othello opens in the powerful city state of Venice. It is late at night. In Venice, Iago feels slighted at the recent promotion of the noble-born Cassio as lieutenant. On the stage, Roderigo expresses his anger against Iago. He charges Iago with ingratitude. Iago has been freely using Roderigo's money but has not helped to promote his love for Desdemona, a daughter of the Venetian senator, Brabantio. He has not informed Roderigo of Desdemona's elopement with Othello, a black-skinned Moor. Iago says that like Roderigo, he has also a grudge against Othello who has passed him over and appointed the inexperienced Cassio, his lieutenant. Iago says that he is waiting for an opportune moment to wreak vengeance on Othello. Till then, he will pretend to be loyal to Othello.

Brabantio's information about Desdemona's elopement:

Iago tells Roderigo that they can upset Othello by setting Brabantio against him. They stand in front of Brabantio's house and shout that his daughter has run away with Othello. First, Brabantio is angry with Roderigo for having disturbed his sleep. However, on discovering that Desdemona is missing, his anger turns against Othello. Gathering his men, the indignant Brabantio marches to the inn where Othello is staying with his newly wedded wife. In order not to be seen inciting trouble, Iago sneaks out early to join his master Othello. The opening scene gives a clear glimpse into Iago's evil motives and double-dealing.

Othello summoned by the Duke:

Iago's double-dealing is further highlighted in this scene. He tells Othello that Roderigo spoke ill of Othello to such an extent that Iago felt like stabbing Roderigo. Thus Iago tries to project himself as Othello's sincere follower. At this time, Othello's lieutenant Cassio comes with some officers, bearing the Venetian Duke's message. Othello is to attend an emergency meeting occasioned by the threat of the Turkish fleet to Cyprus, one of the outposts of the Venetian empire. Othello rushes to the Duke. Brabantio also goes there, intending to appeal to the Duke to punish Othello for having mesmerized and married his daughter.

Othello's gullible nature:

This scene reveals Othello's child-like gullibility. He implicitly believes that Roderigo spoke ill of him. Othello's calm face of Brabantio's storm as well as his being an indispensable prop to the Venetian Duke. This is revealed in this scene.

Brabantio's charges against Othello:

This scene takes place in the Duke's council chamber. The councilors are discussing the contradictory movements of the Turkish fleet. Othello and Brabantio arrive. Brabantio first lodges his bitter complaint that Othello, using magical spells and potions, has separated his daughter from him and married her. Othello quietly narrates the circumstances. They led to Desdemona's falling in love with him. During his visits to her house, he narrated to her about his several adventures. Desdemona's admiration of his exploits soon ripened into admiration of him. This was the only witchcraft that he exercised. Desdemona corroborates Othello's statement. Brabantio is acutely disappointed. He disowns Desdemona. He asks her not to come back home but go with Othello. Before leaving, he warns Othello not to trust Desdemona. She had deceived her father and is sure to deceive Othello also. Next turning to the far more important state business, the Duke appoints Othello general of Cyprus and asks him to go there at once with a fleet to protect it from Turkish invasion. He also permits Othello to have his wife with him. At Othello's request, Iago is to escort Desdemona to Cyprus.

Iago's advice to Roderigo:

All leave except Iago and Roderigo. Having lost all hopes of winning Desdemona, Roderigo wants to commit suicide. Iago laughs at him and says that Roderigo can win Desdemona eventually. Desdemona will soon become fed up with the black Moor and turn to a white man. Hasty marriages are bound to fail soon. Othello is also racially incapable of steadfast love. Iago asks Roderigo to sell all his land and come to Cyprus with enough money to catch Desdemona's eye.

After Roderigo leaves, Iago left alone on the stage and bares his innermost thoughts and feelings. He says that Othello has had an affair with his wife Emilia and the fittest way in which he can take vengeance is to lead Othello to suspect that Desdemona is having an affair with the fair and winsome Cassio. Iago earlier talked of Othello's neglect of him in the matter of promotion now concocts the story that Othello has seduced Iago's wife. Thus Iago tries to convince himself and others that he is justified in taking retaliatory measures.

Desdemona's concern about Othello's Safety:

The scene now shifts from Venice to a sea-port in Cyprus. A turbulent storm at sea has wrecked the Turkish fleet. There is no danger of the Turkish fleet invading Cyprus now. They are all anxiously waiting for Othello's arrival. Cassio's ship arrives first. Later, Desdemona

lands along with Emilia and Iago. Desdemona is concerned about safety. To relieve her tension, she listens to Iago's light-hearted banter. He says that all women are immoral. A charming intelligent woman uses her wit to attract men. A woman who is ugly and foolish will emulate the pranks of fair and intelligent women and secure a band of admirers. Desdemona asks Iago what he thinks of a virtuous woman. Iago replies that such a woman is fit only to 'suckle fools and chronicle small beer'. While talking in this cynical vein, Iago observes Cassio squeezing Desdemona's hand in a friendly manner and uses this as an evidence against Cassio later. Othello arrives and he is rapturously greeted by Desdemona. Iago watches this felicitous scene with envy. He decides to destroy their joy at the earliest. Othello goes out with Desdemona.

Iago tells Roderigo that Desdemona has already got tired of the dark-skinned Othello and turned to the smooth-tongued Cassio. By the way, she has allowed him to deliberately pick a quarrel with Cassio. When the quarrel intensifies, Iago will ring the alarm-bell and set the citizens of Cyprus against Cassio. The scene winds up with Iago's soliloquy in which he expressed his suspicion that Cassio has also seduced his wife. He feels that this is an adequate ground to ruin Cassio.

Public Festival in Cyprus:

This scene is laid in the street of Cyprus. The Turkish fleet having been destroyed by the storm, the island of Cyprus is quite safe. To celebrate this as well as his marriage, Othello orders all to drink, eat and make merry at his expense. The celebration is to last from five in the afternoon, the time of the proclamation, to eleven O'clock that night.

Othello dismisses Cassio:

Iago speaks in a friendly manner with Cassio and encourages him to drink a stout of wine. Cassio knows that he cannot stand too much of drinking and yet he cannot stand too much of drinking and he cannot say no to Iago's invitation. He drinks heavily. As pre-planned by Iago, Roderigo speaks provocatively and beats him to pulp, Montano the previous governor of Cyprus, tries to stop the brawl and gets beaten up. Instructed by Iago, Roderigo rings the alarm-bell which brings Othello out of his bed-room. Othello is evidently sore because his enjoyment of Desdemona has been interrupted. For the first time, he loses his mental balance. He asks the 'honest' Iago what has happened. Pretending to defend Cassio, Iago presents him in the worst possible light. Othello flies into a rage, finding the very officer whose duty is to maintain order creating disorder. He cashier Cassio and leaves in a huff.

Iago's plan to trap Cassio and Desdemona:

After Othello's leaves, Iago advises Cassio not to give in to despair. Instead of appealing to the wrathful Othello directly, Cassio had asked Desdemona to intercede for him with Othello. Without suspecting Iago's intention to tarnish Desdemona, Cassio accepts his plan and pervades to act on it. Next, Iago advises the despondent Roderigo not to think of leaving Cyprus. Iago is very happy because his plan is working out without any hitch. His rival Cassio has been dismissed. Iago's next step is to arrange a meeting between Cassio and Desdemona and then lead Othello to suspect that the two are having a clandestine affair.

Cassio's request to Emilia to arrange a meeting with Desdemona:

Emilia tells Cassio not to feel anxious, as Othello seems to regret his impulsive action and plans to reinstate Cassio at an opportune moment. But, Cassio is in eagerness

particularly about meeting about Desdemona. Emilia agrees to arrange a meeting. If Othello had brought back Cassio on his own accord, the tragedy would have been averted. It is a pity that circumstances are in Iago's favour.

Othello's engagement in business:

In this scene, Iago is seen taking Othello's message to the pilot. He is also planning to meet Othello later on the fortifications. There is suspense as the audience is left guessing how Iago is going to manipulate Othello.

Cassio seeks Desdemona's help:

In this Temptation Scene, Iago succeeds in making Othello believe that Desdemona and Cassio are illicit lovers. This scene opens with Cassio requesting Desdemona to use her good officers to get him reinstated. Desdemona promises to help him. Seeing Othello and Iago coming at a distance, Cassio sneaks out. This is due to his being ashamed of his misconduct on the previous night and unwillingness to face his master. Later, Iago uses this as an evidence of Cassio's clandestine connection with Desdemona.

Iago's cunning to poison Othello's mind:

In all innocence, Desdemona pleads with Othello for the reinstatement of Cassio. Othello is disinclined at the moment and desires to be left alone with Iago. After Desdemona leaves, Iago poisons Othello's mind that Desdemona is unfaithful to him. Desdemona comes to Othello now to invite him to the dinner offered by the Cyprian dignitaries. Othello expresses his unwillingness to attend the party, saying that he has a severe headache. Desdemona solicitously proposes to bind his forehead with her handkerchief. The ill-tempered Othello turns down her ministrations. The kerchief drops to the ground unnoticed. Emilia picks it up and later it is wrested from her by Iago. In a soliloquy, Iago says that he plans to drop the kerchief into Cassio's room. If Othello sees Cassio using that kerchief, his suspicion will surely be committed.

Othello vows to have revenge:

After sometime, Othello joins Iago. He is upset. He demands an 'ocular' proof of Cassio's liaison with Desdemona. Iago tells an unadulterated lie now. He says that once Cassio wanted the affair to be kept secret. Iago also says that he has several times seen Cassio wipe his beard with Desdemona's kerchief. It was Othello's first gift to her. Othello's blood boils. He orders Iago to murder Cassio that very night. He himself would finish off Desdemona.

The handkerchief episode:

Othello asks Desdemona to produce his handkerchief. She tries to evade his question. Othello tells her that the handkerchief, presented to his mother by an Egyptian charmer, has the magical property of rousing the receiver's love for the giver. Lost, the handkerchief will rouse only loathing. Tactlessly, Desdemona chooses this inopportune occasion to advance Cassio's cause and is rudely rebuffed by the suspicious Othello. Desdemona tells Cassio that Othello behaves in a very odd manner and so Cassio has to wait some more time. Cassio gives the handkerchief to his mistress Bianca and asks her to copy its embroidery. Cassio tells her that he found the handkerchief in his room. But Bianca does not trust him. She suspects that the handkerchief might have been presented to him by some other woman. This episode serves as a contrast to the equally silly reason for which Othello suspects his wife.

Iago gives Othello 'proof' of Desdemona's infidelity. Observed by Othello, he draws Cassio in to a conversation about a whore, Bianca. She is in love with the lieutenant. Cassio's

levity as he takes of her is interpreted by Othello as contempt for his own wife's looseness. The case against Desdemona and Cassio is sealed when Bianca appears with the handkerchief. Cassio has found in his lodgings and asked her to copy. When an embassy arrives from Venice to relieve Othello of his duties and establish Cassio as his successor. Othello strikes his wife before the Venetians. He later treats his wife's bedroom as a brothel-keeper.

The murder of Desdemona:

Desdemona is asleep in her bedchamber. Othello enters the bed-chamber with a sense of horror at what Desdemona has done. The beauty and innocence of sleeping Desdemona charm him for moment. He kisses her again and again and weeps. He thinks that once it is done, it can never be undone. But he soon steels himself to execute his vengeance. It is no murder. It is sacrifice to offended justice. It is impossible for him to draw back.

Desdemona wakes up with a start and seeing it to be Othello, asks him to come to bed. He coldly asks her whether she has prayed that night. She says she has. If there is any crime or sin, he says, let her at once beg the mercy of God. He asks her to do it quickly, for he will not kill her unprepared spirit. She is shocked to hear him talk of killing. He is vform about it.

She then begs heaven to have mercy on her but says that she hopes he will not kill her. Yet his look makes her afraid. He asks her to think of her sin. She says that her only sin is to love him truly. For that, he says bitterly she has to die. She She asks him what the matter is. He exclaims that the handkerchief which he gave her as the first token of love has been given by her to Cassio. She denies it utterly. Her protestation of innocence enrages him. She requests Othello to send for Cassio to testify her innocence. He asks her to confess the truth, for she is to die that instant. She then begs the Lord to have mercy on her and on him too. She declares that she has done Othello no wrong and that her love of Cassio went never out of proper bounds. He thinks her to be a hypocrite. He remarks that Cassio had confessed that he has enjoyed her and that Iago has orders to punish him. Desdemona cries aloud that Cassio is betrayed and she has been ruined. Her point is that since Cassio is dead, she cannot establish her character by having him exclaimed. The enraged Othello misunderstands this sentiment and reproaches her for her unshamed love for Cassio.

Othello proceeds to smother her. She begs on her knees to killed on the morrow, to be allowed at least to live that one night. No, he is resolved, he cannot give her even half an hour, not even time for her to say one prayer. In a white heat of passion, he smothers her under her pillows.

Emilia's anguish:

Emilia is knocking at the door aloud. Othello opens the door and let's in Emilia. She reports that Roderigo has been killed and Cassio wounded. Othello is surprised to hear that Cassio is not killed. Desdemona utters feebly the words, " O, falsely, falsely murdered". Shocked to hear her lady's voice, Emilia rushes to her. Desdemona says that she is dying a 'guiltless death'. Emilia asks who has done it, " Nobody ; I myself, farewell: commend me to my kind lord: O, farewell! " With these words, Desdemona dies. A momentary weakness seizes Othello to hide the truth. But the next moment he boldly states that he has killed her.

Emila exclaims that it only shows that her mistress was the more of an angel and he the blacker devil. Othello declares that Cassio has enjoyed Desdemona and Emilia's husband knows it. Terribly, shocked, she exclaims thrice over in great surprise, " My husband !" Now

for the first time she begins to have some idea of the devilish part played by her husband. If her husband said so, she declares, it is the most damnable lie. She is not afraid of Othello. She calls him a gull and dolt and threatens to shout to the whole world how mistress has been wronged.

Death of Emilia:

Emilia is frantic with grief and indignation and curses both Othello and Iago and raises the cry "murder; murder!" Her piercing cry brings to the chamber Montano Gratiano, Iago and others. They are anxious to know what had happened. Emilia asks her husband whether he ever told Othello that her mistress was false with Cassio. Iago says he did. Emilia declares her soul that it is an odious and wicked lie, and that her mistress lies there murdered. They are all terribly shocked at it. In deep distress Othello admits that it was he who killed her. It is pitiable, says, Othello, but Iago knows how intimate Desdemona was with Cassio.

Iago knows that Desdemona gave his handkerchief to Cassio. On hearing that, Emilia bursts out in great grief and horror. Iago threatens her with violence and asks her to be quiet. She cares nothing for him and reveals how she got it by chance and gave it to Iago. Iago often urged her to steal it. It all now becomes clear to Othello and he rushes towards Iago. But Iago strikes his wife and runs for his life. Emilia requests to be placed by the side of her mistress. Like her mistress, she sings the old Willow song. Declaring her to be chaste, and singing her praise, she dies.

The end of Othello:

Othello is disarmed and made a prisoner in the chamber. Montano rushes out after Iago and brings him back a prisoner. Othello is broken with remorse. He has another dagger secretly with him. He strikes Iago down but he is wounded and not killed. Othello's power and strength are gone. The look of the ill-fated Desdemona wrings with him with unbearable torture. He sobs aloud thinking of his dear Desdemona. Cassio is brought in a chair. He tells Othello that handkerchief was dropped for a special purpose in his chamber by Iago. Iago himself confessed it. Further evidence of Iago's guilt accumulates. From the letters in the pockets of Roderigo, it is clear that Iago has used Roderigo as a tool and then himself murdered him. Othello is sad beyond measure to hear from Cassio how he came by the handkerchief. Othello is fully convinced of his gigantic mistake. In hopeless despair he stabs himself to atone for his crime. He dies by Desdemona's side. Cassio is made the Governor of Cyprus. The villain Iago is left in the charge of Cassio.

Conclusion:

The bed chamber scene is the most harrowing and painful scene in literature. Desdemona, Emilia, and Othello lie dead upon the same bed. This tragic loading of the bed is the most harrowing scene in all literature.

Othello as Shakespearean Tragedy

Introduction:

A.C. Bradley defines a Shakespearean Tragedy as a tale of suffering of an character. The tragic hero is an exceptional person. The suffering of this exceptional person- the hero, is also exceptional. He is not a prey to the everyday vexation of life, but he suffers on a heroic scale. The hero, a man of high rank:

The tragic hero of Shakespearean Tragedy is a king or a man, occupying a pre- eminent position in society. Othello is a General known for his military prowess. His brave deeds win Desdemona's love and admiration. When Cyprus, an outpost of the Venetian empire, is in danger of being invaded by the Turkish fleet, the Venetian Duke has none but Othello to help him out of this crisis. The Duke appoints Othello Governor of Cyprus and sends him there forthwith.

The tragic flaw in the character of Othello:

A.C. Bradley says that every tragic hero in Shakespeare is ruined by a flaw inherent in his character. Tragic flaw is a person who is in a great position and will commit a mistake in his life and later he will realize that mistake in his life . He may lose his great rank or position due to his mistake. What is Othello's tragic flaw? It is his credulity, his tendency to believe in appearance. Iago understands Othello's weakness. He states it clearly at the end of the first Act.

"The Moor is of a free and open nature,
That thinks men honest that but seem to be so,
And will as tenderly be led by the nose
As asses are."

For Othello, Iago is a most honest man. Every act of Desdemona is viewed by him with suspicion. It is viewed by some critics that Othello is driven entirely by jealousy, the common failing of husband's. But Desdemona says that her husband is incapable of jealousy:

"Who, he? I think the sun
Where he was born drew all such humours from him."

At the time of death, Othello comments on his weakness:
"....not easily jealous, but being wrought, perplex'd
In the extreme."

While strangling Desdemona, Othello says that he is driven not by sexual jealousy but by the honourable desire to prevent her from corrupting other men in future. The guardian of Venice and Cyprus looks upon himself as a guardian of established morals also.

Another motive of his is burning conviction that Cassio and Desdemona have stained his reputation and they must be punished for their crime. He values reputation so greatly. When he is convinced by Iago that Desdemona is false to him, he cries in anguish.

"Reputation, reputation, reputation! O, I have lost my reputation!

I ' be lost the important part of my self, and

What remains is bestial. My reputation, Iago, my reputation!"

Two kinds of Conflicts in the play:

In Shakespearean Tragedy, there are two conflicts, external and internal. The internal conflict is far more powerful than the external conflict. In Othello, there is not much external conflict. The only external conflict in the play is that between Othello and Brabantio who believes that Othello has exercised unlawful witchcraft to entice his innocent daughter and appeals to the Duke to punish Othello suitably. As Desdemona confesses that she was attracted to Othello by his heroic deeds and not by any magical spells, the Duke has no other option than to bless the couple and send them to Cyprus. The threat posed by the Turkish fleet is another external factor that melts away before long. The powerful storm breaks out wrecks the Turkish fleet and so the external conflict is also dissolved.

So, what is central importance in the play is the conflict that rages in Othello's mind between this love for Desdemona and his hatred generated by her supposed infidelity. As he yields to Iago's subtle insinuations, his better nature disappears and he undergoes an atavistic transformation and the violence and animality of his suppressed Negro culture raise their ugly heads. Like a ferocious, uncivilized barbarian, he strikes Desdemona in public and calls her most loathsome names. In the death scene, his inner conflict becomes very acute. His innate nobility surfaces, as he kisses the sleeping Desdemona and breaks into tears, thinking that he is going to put out this light soon. When he is in danger of being arrested and taken to Venice to be punished suitably, he outwits the guard by stabbing himself and falling down dead by the side of the dead Desdemona. Thus Othello overcomes the external danger at a stroke.

Part played by chance:

Along with the protagonist's tragic flaw, chance also plays a predominant part in bringing about the tragedy. It is quite by chance that Desdemona drops her handkerchief. It is again by chance that Emilia picks it up and hands it to Iago without knowing the diabolic purpose for which he is going to use it. It is a chance occurrence that Cassio appears on the scene after Desdemona's death. Had he come a few minutes earlier, he could have cleared the name of Desdemona, and protected her. Desdemona's pleading with Othello for the sake of Cassio at a time when he is most prejudiced against Cassio is also a chance happening. Thus a series of adverse chance incidents contribute to the tragedy of Othello and Desdemona.

Conflict between good and bad:

In a Shakespearean Tragedy, there is a long-drawn-out conflict between good and bad. Evil is ultimately destroyed but along with evil much that is of precious value is also destroyed. In Othello, the malignant Iago is finally exposed and arrested. But the Noble Moor and the innocent Desdemona have been destroyed. This is a grievous loss. Shakespeare, however, does not cynically end the play with a vacuum. Life continues to flow on serenely, though at a lower level. Othello is dead, but Cyprus is entrusted to the sober and sensible Cassio. Like Tennyson's Brook life as Shakespearean Tragedy goes on for ever, though 'men may come and men may go'.

Conclusion:

Othello's struggle and fall do not leave us crushed, rebellious and desperate. They are something piteous, fearful and mysterious. In his error and fall, we are conscious of the possibilities of human nature. We are, on the whole filled with a feeling of redemption, reconciliation and even exultation, which the great tragedies of all ages have roused.

Character Sketch of Othello

Introduction:

Othello is the most romantic figure among the tragic heroes of Shakespeare. He has a towering and magnetic personality. He is able to attract influence and communal people. He is a gentleman which has shown in every inch of him. His speeches reveal him to be a born poet. Even his casual phrases are full of poetry.

Othello's high rank personality:

Othello is a Moor. When the play opens, he is presented as a renowned military leader. He is one of the strong defending arms in the service of the state. When Cyprus, an

outposts of the Venetian empire, is in danger of being attacked by the Turkish fleet, the Duke at once decides to send him there to protect this island of strategic importance.

Othello's marriage with Desdemona:

Othello has had a chequered military career. He has undergone many hair-raising adventures. It is his vivid narration of these breathtaking adventures that elicits Desdemona's admiration. Desdemona's father Brabantio thinks that Othello has used magical spells and potions to attract his daughter. He does not understand that what attracts Desdemona is Othello's valour and bravery. Though Othello is a proven warrior, he does not resort to violent actions unnecessarily. When Brabantio's men threaten to attack him, he calmly asks the men to sheathe their swords:

"Put up your bright swords

For, the dew will rust them."

Othello does not like to cause unnecessary blood- shed. His act should not be mistaken as cowardice. In the death scene, he recovers his lost stature by recalling his encounter with a Turk. The Turk insulted a Venetian citizen and for this offence was stabbed to death by Othello.

The fundamental tragic trait:

In Othello's character, there is a weakness allied to and flowing from his very magnanimity. He has a child-like simplicity. He is not observant, tends our Ward. He is quite free from introspection, as A.C.Bradley remarks, never given to reflection. Emotion excites his imagination but it clouds and dulls his intellect. In short, his is a one- track mind. His trust is absolute. Hesitation is impossible to him. He is extremely self- reliant. He decides and acts instantaneously with terrible passion.

Othello's fall to Iago's insinuations:

There is a perceptible degeneration in the character of Othello after he yields to Iago's diabolic influence. Othello is a soldier, and is always a man of action. He is never given to think deeply. It is this soldierly inability to think that contributes to his fall. He demands a visual proof of his wife's infidelity but he does not have the patience to enquire Cassio how he is in possession of Desdemona's handkerchief. Once he falls a prey to Iago's insinuations, he begins to behave brutally. In the very presence of Lodovico and other strangers, he strikes Desdemona and humiliates her by calling her names. Misunderstanding Cassio's reference to his mistress Bianca, Othello concludes that Desdemona has descended to the level of a fallen woman. He does not hesitate to call her a strumpet.

Othello's Guilty Conscience:

In the bed chamber scene, Othello smothers Desdemona. He puts out the light and then puts out the light of his life is most heart-rending. He kisses the sleeping Desdemona. His heart melts with sympathy and he weeps. His heart becomes hardened and he strangles her without paying heed to her professions of sincere love. After her death, he realizes how folly and commits suicide. He lies beside the dead Desdemona. His last- minute repentance redeems him.

Othello's intellectual and moral ruin.

Iago begins working on Othello's " free and easy nature" with extraordinary acuteness. With a brilliant piece of acting he brings about the night-brawl. Othello's self control gives away. His passion breaks out, and Cassio is dismissed. Desdemona's deceiving of her father

make the poison work violently on the mind of Othello. His intellectual and moral ruin is thus affected. His peace and tranquility and his occupation are gone. He has seen the handkerchief in Bianca's hand and heard Cassio confesses all. He swoons in grief; on a sudden provocation strikes her in public. Later, he brands her with the foulest of names. His fall is complete. Cassio is murdered by Iago, and Desdemona by Othello. Othello's credibility, frankness, rashness and lack of judgement lead him to his tragic end.

Is Othello Jealous?

Othello is not jealous by nature. He shows clear signs of jealousy. He is too easily convinced of Desdemona's guilt and he proceeds too quickly to exact the penalty. But jealousy is not the leading feature of his character. He kills Desdemona not out of a sense of justice. When he finds that he has grievously erred, he executes a similar sentence on himself. He dies as bravely as he had lived..

Character Sketch of Desdemona

Introduction:

Desdemona is one of the sweetest, greatest and most pathetic heroines in Shakespeare. Her innocence, gentleness, sweetness, lovingness, simplicity and self-surrender to her Lord form the principal traits of her character. Desdemona is the daughter of Brabantio, a Venetian Senator. Othello, a distinguished Moorish general in the service of the State, is a frequent visitor to Brabantio's house. The story of his adventure stirs the imagination of Desdemona. She falls in love with the Moor. She boldly elopes with Othello and marries him. But her boldness is born of love and it deserts her soon after the marriage.

First Impression:

Desdemona is a timid maid. Her father describes her thus, "A maiden never bold of spirit so still and quiet, that her motion Blushed at herself."

The first impression is sustained throughout the play. Othello calls her 'the gentle Desdemona.' She is a lady of exceptional beauty. She has all the grace's of refinement which capture the heart of men. She is the 'divine Desdemona'. Roderigo is one of the numerous suitors of her own country desperately anxious to please her and win her heart. Cassio describes her to the people of Cyprus as " a maid that paragons description and wild fame."

Desdemona's attraction for Othello:

Desdemona strikes one as essentially gentle and modest. Her father talks of her as a maiden never bold. He wonders how she developed the courage to elope with Othello. He foolishly concludes that Othello must have used magical spells and potions to attract her. Brabantio is a poor judge of her character. Desdemona later reveals that she was attracted to Othello not by any witchcraft but by his bravery and valour and by the way he faced dangers without any fear.

The exceptional nature of Desdemona's love:

Love is the central feature of Desdemona's life in the play. Her love is so very exceptional and full of certain qualities that are dangerous. Her love is loss of the heart that of Othello's. Her love is capable of infinite endurance and forgiveness. She does not know how to resist or resent. She becomes a pathetic sufferer and victim. She is not wanting in dignity. When Othello strikes her, she says at ease, "I have not deserved this". She prays for the forgiveness of the hand that smothers her and takes the guilt on herself.

The Quality of her love:

Love evokes in Desdemona a strong freedom, energy of spirit, boldness of action, confidence and decision. Her love makes her bold enough to elope with him. She declines to stay behind with her father, and pleads with the Duke to let her accompany her husband. This forwardness in her is quite surprising for her conventional and timid neighbours. The same boldness and strength are seen again in the pity for Cassio. She pleads for Cassio not imagining that her husband could entertain any four suspicions about her. She refuses to satisfy him about her handkerchief, confident in his love and of her innocence. Even when he strikes her and calls her vile names, her love for him does not waver. She seems so passive during the closing scenes of the play. Her faith and trust in Othello are absolute. He may kill her but he is still her kind Lord. She tries with her dying breath to save him from the consequences of his crime. Her death is a testimony to her undying love.

Desdemona's passiveness:

Desdemona is the embodiment of gentleness. She is passive and cannot assert herself. She is passive and cannot assert herself. She passively suffers all the indignities heaped upon her by her husband. It is her passiveness that sends her to her doom. She is too passive, too helpless and too weak to be the heroine of the tragedy.

Purity and Innocence:

Desdemona's suffering becomes all the more pathetic because of her purity and innocence. They are instinctive in her. All the evil and impurity around her leave absolutely unaffected. She is too innocent to suspect that she is suspected. When Othello brands her with the foulest of names, she only thinks that he is perhaps angry with her because of her father. Desdemona is like a child. She is ignorant of the wickedness of the world. She is so simple that she does not understand the true nature of Iago. She does not understand the true nature of Iago. She does not think that there are any women in the world. They are false to their husbands. She is tactless like a child. It is her innocence that makes her tactless.

The tragic trait in Desdemona:

Desdemona does not know that her husband is never so secure as she is the new life he has entered upon. Hence her fatal persistence is in pleading the cause of Cassio and unconcern about the loss of the handkerchief. To the end, as Walter Raleigh remarks, she simply cannot believe that things are beyond recovery by the power of love. She has less quickness of intellect and less tendency to reflection than other heroines.

UNIT IV / JULIUS CAESAR**Introduction:**

Shakespeare's historical plays may be classified as plays based on English history and on Roman history. His Roman plays are structurally tragedies. Their main theme is the ruin of a soul, as in the other great tragedies. The plot of Julius Caesar deals with the events of the year 44 BC. After Caesar, already a dictator had returned to Rome after a Victorious Campaign Spain.

Triumphant return of Caesar to Rome:

Julius Caesar returns to Rome triumphantly. The working men of Rome are all admiration for Caesar. They are taking a holiday to celebrate Caesar's victory. Though Caesar is admired

and idolized by the working classes, he is disliked by his own officials who are represented in the opening scene by Flavius and Marullus. These two officials are afraid that Caesar, if left unchecked, may become a tyrant. They accuse the working men for their fickle-minded nature. Formerly, they admired Pompey. Now they have transferred their love to Caesar who has killed Pompey and his sons. Shakespeare expresses his contempt for the fickle-minded populace in the opening scene. Shakespeare's annoying habit of punning is also in evidence in this scene, with a cobbler punning on 'sole/soul', 'with awl / will all', 'etc.

Cassius' plan to topple Caesar:

Caesar attends the race traditionally run on the Feast of Lupercal. A soothsayer warns him to beware on the Ides of March 15. Antony offers Caesar the crown three times but Caesar rejects it. Cassius tells Brutus that Caesar is unfit to be the emperor of Rome. For one thing, he is physically weak. He was not able to cross the flooded Tiber and had to be carried to safety by Cassius. Casca adds to this negative portrait of Caesar by saying that Caesar, not being able to stand the bad smell of the mob, swooned.

Cassius tries to make Brutus believe that Brutus is better suited to be the emperor of Rome. Cassius has a grudge against Caesar. So Cassius is planning to topple him. He decides to throw into Brutus' room at night letters written in several hands. As if they came from several citizens emphasizing Brutus' popularity in Rome and Caesar's ambition. Cassius thinks that after reading these letters Brutus will think highly of himself and aspire to become the emperor of Rome.

Portents preceding Caesar's death:

Cicero and Casca are talking about the terrible incidents seen that night. Casca says that he saw a man's left hand burning and himself being insensitive to it. Another terrible sight was a lion stalking the streets of the Capitol. Yet another terrible sight was men burning and walking up and down the streets. Cassius joins Casca and tells him that he is not afraid of these terrible incidents. He tells Casca that Caesar is much more terrible than these portents. Casca informs Cassius that Caesar is going to be crowned by the senators as King on the following day. Cassius says that instead of remaining subject to Caesar, he would rather commit suicide. Casca agrees to help Cassius in bringing about Caesar's downfall. Cassius directs Cinna, another conspirator, to throw certain letters into Brutus' room. Casca and Cassius plan to win over Brutus to their side. This scene is noted for the description of the portents preceding Caesar's death.

Brutus' idealistic nature:

Brutus, thinking of ways and means of checking Caesar, cannot sleep. The conspirators, headed by Cassius meet him. Brutus tells them that they need not take any oath. They are honest men and will remain firm without taking an oath. Though Cassius is for murdering both Caesar and Antony, Brutus says that it is enough if they murder Caesar. Caesar is the head and Antony is a limb. If the head is cut off, the limb cannot act by itself. Also Brutus says that they should murder Caesar in the spirit of a priest making a sacrifice and not like a butcher.

After the conspirators leave, Brutus' wife Portia asks to tell her what he is planning to do. But he evades her enquiry. This scene throws light on Brutus' idealistic nature. Antony, whom Brutus thinks harmless and sores, later proves to be a threat to the conspirators. Cassius, counseling Antony's murder is much more realistic than Brutus.

Decius Brutus convinces Caesar:

Calpurnia, Caesar's wife, tries to prevent his going to the Capitol because of the many ill-omens witnessed in Rome and also because of her terrible dream of Caesar's statue spouting blood. She finally persuades him to stay at home. But Decius Brutus, one of the conspirators, calls to escort Caesar to the Capitol convinces Caesar that the omens are auspicious, and points out that he will appear ridiculous if he stays at home because of his wife's superstitious fears. The rest of the conspirators, headed by Brutus, enter to accompany Caesar to the Capitol. As they are going, Mark Antony joins Caesar's train.

Artemidorous's decision to warn Caesar:

Artemidorous, having learned of the conspiracy, writes a letter of warning to Caesar and plans to hand it to him in the street before he reaches the Capitol. Portia, Brutus' wife who knows of the plot nervously awaits word of its success. In the street she meets the soothsayer who intends to warn Caesar a second time, though he gives no indication on knowing the actual danger.

The Assassination of Caesar:

Caesar, proceeding to the Capitol, is stopped by the soothsayer and Artemidorous. Artemidorous gives his note of warning to Caesar and asks him to read it but the conspirators prevent Caesar from reading it and hurry him to the Capitol. At the Capitol, the conspirators ask Caesar to repeal the banishment of one Publius Clodius. Caesar refuses to do this and is stabbed to death by all the conspirators, including Brutus. Antony joins with the conspirators. Yet on seeing Caesar's dead body, he is overwhelmed by grief. Brutus allows Antony to address the Romans in the market place. Cassius does not like this. He fears that Antony with his powerful oration, may stir the people. After the conspirators leave for the market- place, Antony says that there will soon be a civil war Rome. He is told that Octavius Caesar may at any moment enter Rome.

The Funeral Address of Brutus and Antony:

Brutus addresses the Romans first. He explains to them that Caesar was ambitious and was a threat to the liberty of Rome. So the conspirators killed him. After he finishes and goes away, Antony begins his oration. He asserts that Caesar, through capturing powerful enemies brought much ransom to the country. He was sympathetic towards the poor. Also, he did not take the crown, even though it was offered to him thrice. All this shows that Caesar was not at all ambitious. The mob now leans towards Antony. The mob is inflamed when Antony shows Caesar's wounded body and explains the ' unkindest' cut dealt by Brutus. Finally Antony informs the mob that Caesar has bequeathed all his property to the Romans in this will. The mob now becomes uncontrollably furious. They rush to kill the conspirators

Antony told that Brutus and Cassius have escaped from the city. He is also told Octavius Caesar and Lepidus have just arrived. Antony intends to seek their help to destroy the conspirators. This scene shows the mob indulging in a destructive orgy. The mob mistakes Cinna the poet for Cinna the conspirator. Even, when he explains who he is, the mob wants to tear him for his bad verses. The mob is bent on destroying the houses of the conspirators.

The Triumvirs decide to pool together:

Antony, Octavius and Lepidus as an errand- boy and order him about. At present, the Roman empire is divided among these triumvirs. The triumvirs learn that Brutus and Cassius

bare levying power and preparing for a war. The triumvirs decide to pool together their resources and ready themselves for the impending war. Brutus and Cassius meet. Brutus invites Cassius to his tent where they can discuss their differences of opinion in secret.

Cassius and Brutus Accuse each other:

Cassius accuses Brutus of having ill-treated his friend Lucius Pella by changing him with having taken bribes. Brutus in turn accuses Cassius of being corrupt. Also Cassius refused to lend money to Brutus when the latter was in need of money. Cassius is very much moved to learn that Brutus' wife Portia has to meet Antony's army at Philippi. Brutus' suggestion is ungrounded and yet it is accepted by Cassius. Cassius goes back to his tent. While reading, Brutus sees Caesar's ghost. The ghost says that it will meet Brutus at Philippi. Brutus alone sees Caesar's ghost; the others in the tent do not see it because they are not agitated. The two armies meet at Philippi. Brutus and Cassius exchange angry words with Antony and Octavius. They decide to fight on the following morning. Before going to bed, Brutus tells Cassius that he will not commit suicide under any circumstances. Brutus sends a message to Cassius through Messala, asking Cassius to start the fight simultaneously on the other side of the hill also.

Death of Cassius:

Cassius starts the fight and learns that he has started the fight much too early. Cassius' army is dispersed by Antony's. Cassius' tents are burnt out by the enemies. Cassius runs on his sword and commits suicide. Now Titinius and Messala (Brutus' men) enter. They say that Brutus has defeated Octavius' army. On hearing about Cassius' suicide, Brutus is pained and pays him a glowing tribute. Brutus decides to resume the fight on the following morning. Lucilius, a friend of Brutus, pretends to be Brutus and gets caught. Antony learns later that the real Brutus has not yet been caught. Antony appreciates the self-sacrificing nature of Brutus' soldiers.

Conclusion:

Brutus' army is defeated by Antony's. Brutus does not want to get caught. So he commits suicide. The play ends with Antony paying a posthumous tribute to Brutus.

Character Study of Julius Caesar

Introduction:

Julius Caesar is the hero of the play. It is after him that the play is named. He makes only three brief appearances. He is murdered even before the play is half over. But it is his spirit that triumphs in the end. The Caesar of history is famous for his heroic achievements and greatness of character. But in the play he is represented as having many infirmities, both physical and mental.

Caesar's position in Rome:

Caesar's position in Rome is unrivalled. Thus, Mark Antony says: "When Caesar says, 'Do this' it is performed". Again, Casca commands silence when Caesar is about to open his lips, "Peace ho! Caesar speaks. Bid every noise be still; Peace yet again".

Caesar's Popularity:

To the Roman people Caesar has become the idol of their heart. When Caesar is dead, they cry that Caesar's better parts shall be crowned in Brutus and they propose, 'Let him be Caesar'. Caesar's greatness is shown not by anything he actually does but by the envy he

excites in the minds of the people around him. Even Brutus dreads that his power might become a menace to republican freedom. He has risen to such a height of greatness that the crown is thrice offered to him by Mark Antony though he refused it from motives of policy. Brutus styles him great Julius and the foremost man of all the world. He is Noble Caesar , great Caesar. His blood is the most Noble in all the world and a mighty heart burst when Caesar died.

His boastfulness:

Julius Caesar is vain, boastful, proud and arrogant. He boasts that he is always Caesar and so he has no fear for Cassius. His words in the third person. " Caesar shall forth and Caesar will not come" seem to challenge the very Gods. On many occasions Caesar boasts of his courage and says that he is more dangerous than danger itself.

He is open to flattery:

Caesar is fond of flattery. He feels most flattered when he tells that he hates flatterers. Decius plays upon this weakness. Caesar cannot withstand the clever flattery of Decius. Cassius tells the party of conspirators that Caesar may not come to the Capitol next day as he has superstitious grown of late and terrified by the unaccustomed terror of the night. Decius at once hints at Caesar's love of flattery when he says

" When I tell him he hates him flattery

He says he does, being then most flattered".

Julius Caesar is superstitious. He bids Antony touch Calpurnia in the holy chaste to cure her barrenness. He asks the priests to do sacrifice. He accepts Decius' interpretation of Calpurnia's dream.

His Physical Weakness:

Caesar is weak both mentally and physically. He does not possess a sound body. He himself tells Antony that one of his ears is deaf. He is beaten in the swimming match by Cassius. Once when he was down with fever, his body shook violently. He groaned like a sick girl. He is also subject to fits. According to Casca's mocking account he could not endure the foul breath of the mob and fell down in the market place and foamed at the mouth.

Caesar's admirable qualities:

Caesar is not without admirable qualities. He is not entirely a worthless character. He is courteous to the conspirators when they come to his house. He opens the Senate meeting by inviting appeals for redress. He is an acute observer of human nature. He analyses Cassius' character correctly. He is polite. He receives Brutus and the rest who come to fetch him to the Senate in a polite manner. He always has the general good of Rome in his heart. He considers public business more important than his personal interest. That is why he refuses to look into the petition of Artemidorous warning him of danger. He presents himself as a just a d benevolent ruler in the Senate House. He invites appeals for the redress of grievances. He administers justice firmly. He rightly refuses bthe petition for Metellus.

Caesar is essential to the play. After his death, his spirit takes over and plays a dominant role. It wins in the end over the Republicans, represented by Brutus and Cassius. He is the real hero of the play.

Conclusion:

It is for a dramatic purpose that Shakespeare diminishes the greatness of Caesar. Yet his name figures in the title of the play. This is because the play turns upon Caesar throughout.

Shakespeare wants to emphasize that Caesar dead is a greater force than Caesar alive, with his weak body and arrogant voice. It is of this Caesary spirit that Brutus thinks when he says,

" O Julius Caesar ! thou art mighty yet!

They spirit walks abroad and turns over swords

In our proper entrails."

Even after his death Caesar is dominant over his enemies. His spirit drives the conspirators to their destruction and the idea of caesarism which Julius Caesar represents, triumphs in the end. Thus at the end of the play vwe are liable to agree with Antony that Julius Caesar is the noblest man that ever lived in the tide of time and that he is the real hero of the play of the name.

UNIT V / PREFACE TO SHAKESPEARE

Samuel Johnson

Introduction:

Samuel Johnson's Preface to Shakespeare to his edition of Shakespeare is considered a landmark in Shakespearean criticism. Johnson stubbornly refuses to idolize Shakespeare. He pinpoints Shakespeare's faults but at the same time defends Shakespeare's violation of the three unities. His contention is that 'there is always an appeal open from criticism to nature'. Criticism generally finds fault with living authors and give praise to those who are dead and those who lived long ago.

Shakespeare represents general human nature:

Johnson says that human judgment is not infallible. Sometimes our judgments are based on prejudices and changing fashions. Hence Shakespeare's greatness is due to. Shakespeare is great because he describes general human nature. He avoids depicting particular regions, and temporary fashions. They appeal only to a limited number of people and that too, for a short period only. Shakespeare's characters are 'the genuine progeny of common humanity'. They are swayed by passions and principles that agitate all of us. Shakespeare's plays are full of suggestions for leading a good life. Johnson says that one can collect a system of civil and economical prudence from Shakespeare's works. Being a moralist, Johnson is happy to note that Shakespeare preaches sound ethical values. Shakespeare's greatness contrasts with other dramatists. The characters created by them are not based on common or general human nature.

Shakespeare's attitude to love:

The other dramatists present love as a universal agent. For them, only love is important. Nothing else is significant. This is the finding of the modern psychologist Freud also. Johnson does not attach much importance to love. He admires Shakespeare because, like himself. Shakespeare also views love as only one of passions. If human life is like a rainbow, love is only one of its colours.

In Johnson's point of view, Shakespeare's concept of love is quite true. Only, in a few plays like *Romeo and Juliet* and *Antony and Cleopatra*. Shakespeare shows the overwhelming power of love. In plays like *Julius Caesar* and *Henry IV and V*, love is totally sidelined ,but in almost all the plays of Shakespeare, love is at least in the background and

sways the characters somehow or other. It is unfortunate that Johnson does not recognize this aspect of love in Shakespeare.

Dramatists in general give an excessive importance to them of love in their plays. A play will centre round a lover, a lady and a rival and the entanglement in their mutual relations. In developing this theme of love and the passion, it gives rise to a dramatist and it will often violate probability, misrepresent life and distort the language. It is not realized that love is only one of many passions of mankind and its influence on the totality of life is extremely limited. Shakespeare, however, understood this fact. He does not give undue prominence to the passion of love and exhibits only what he really saw in real life. He knew also that any passion was a cause of happiness if kept under check and a cause of disaster if it was allowed to become excessive.

Shakespeare power of creating a variety of characters:

Shakespeare has created a stunningly large of variety of characters. The characters vcreated by other dramatists are embodiments of virtue or wickedness. They are incredibly good or bad but Shakespeare's characters are not heroic. They represent common humanity, with all it's faults and foibles. This idea was echoed by A.C. Bradely later when he talked about the flaws of Shakespeare's tragic heroes. The dialogue in Shakespeare is also 'level with life'. It is selected from 'common conversation'. Shakespeare's dialogue is thoroughly realistic. His dialogue is pursued with much ease and simplicity. It seems to have been taken from the common conversation of human beings. Shakespeare then deserves praise because his drama is the mirror of life. His character express human sentiments in human language in situations derived from real life.

Johnson defends tragi-comedy:

Shakespeare has also been criticized for his mingling of the comic and tragic elements in his plays. The previous dramatists rigidly fixed plays into comedies and tragedies. He broke down this artificial division. He freely mingled tragic scenes in comedies because he found life to be a mixture of happiness and unhappiness. He inserted comic scenes in tragedies. The use of the comic characters Polonious and the gravediggers in Hamlet is an example of this practice. Shakespeare did this because uninterrupted melancholy displeased the audience. Comic scenes in tragedies afforded much-needed relief to them. Johnson supports Shakespeare's intermixture of levity in tragedies as dramatically appropriate step.

Shakespeare's Excellences:

Johnson observes that Shakespeare is better writer of comedies than of tragedies. His tragedies are the outcome of toil and study, but his comedies are written with instinctive ease and spontaneity, says Johnson. The tragedies bare packed with action and the comedies, with thoughts. His plays offer faithful pictures of real life. His characters have a universal appeal. Johnson is all admiration for the languages if the comedies. In general Shakespeare's language is smooth and clear. Occasionally, it is rugged. Similarly most characters are natural. Sometimes their speeches are forced and actions, unbelievable.

Johnson on Shakespearean faults:

Johnson is not only an admirer of Shakespeare but also his faults. This shows his impartiality.

✚ **Shakespeare's primary fault:** He was a mere entertainer. He wanted to please but did not inculcate a moral. Johnson a strict moralist, reprimands Shakespeare for sacrificing virtue to convenience. Johnson seeks to enliven art with morality.

✚ **The Second fault:** Some of his plots are loosely constructed. Shakespeare is inexcusably careless and slovenly. He often misses opportunities of instructing the spectators. The endings of some of his plays are untidy. In many of his plays, the later part is evidently neglected and his catastrophe is improbably produced or imperfectly represented. Shakespeare does not develop his plots properly.

✚ **The third defect:** There are many anachronisms in Shakespeare's plays. He gives to one age or nation without scruple, the customs, institutions and opinions of another, at the expense not only of likelihood but of possibility.

✚ **The fourth defect:** Shakespeare is rather coarse and unrefined in his comic scenes. His tests are gross, and his ladies and gentlemen have little delicacy.

✚ **The fifth defect:** The fifth defect is in narration. Shakespeare effects a disproportionate pomp of diction and a wearisome train of circumlocution and tells the incident imperfectly in many words. They might have been more plainly delivered in a few. Shakespeare's set speeches are cold and weak. He often applies words to things unequally and gives sonorous epithets to trivial sentiments.

✚ **The sixth defect:** Shakespeare's fondness for puns and quibbles. Johnson says that "a quibble was to him the fatal Cleopatra for which he lost the world and was content to lose it". Finally Shakespeare's history plays are not subject to the law of unity as they are neither tragedies nor comedies but in his other works, he preserves the unity of action in the sense that they have a beginning, middle, and end; but Shakespeare neglects Unities of time and place.

Shakespeare's violation of the unities:

The three unities are the unities of time, place and action. The unity of time requires that the action narrated in a drama should not take more than twenty four hours. The unity of place requires that dramatic action be confined to the same place. The unity of action required that all the characters in a drama should revolve round the central characters. There should not be a sub-plot unrelated to the main plot.

Johnson says that the unity of action need not be followed in history plays. Shakespeare neglects the unities of time and place. The unity of time is violated by Shakespeare in plays like The Winter's Tale. Many generations are telescoped in this play. The unity of place is violated in Antony and Cleopatra with action swinging between Rome and Egypt. Traditionalists hold that even the dragons of Medea cannot transport characters to far-off places in three hours.

Johnson defends Shakespeare on the grounds that the theatre-goer is very imaginative. The spectator can imagine the bare stage to be Egypt in the first Act and Rome in the next Act. It is only scrupulous critics like Voltaire who object to Shakespeare's violation of the unities. As long as the theatre-goer is imaginative and adjusts himself to changing scenes and times. Johnson's greatness lies in the flexibility and wholeness of his critical approach.
