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DIRECTORATE OF DISTANCE AND CONTINUING EDUCATION

TIRUNELVELI - 627 012, TAMILNADU

B.A ENGLISH (SECOND SEMESTER)

British Drama

(From the Academic Year 2021 - 2022)

Prepared by

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BRITISH DRAMA

Objectives:

1. To make the students develop their communicative skills.
2. To expose them to new avenues of thoughts.
3. To learn diverse cultures and values of each age.
4. To analyse and critically appreciate the dramatic techniques of the dramatists.
5. To expose them to various schools of thoughts.

Course Outcomes:

CO No.	Upon the completion of this course, students will be able to	PSO Addressed	Cognitive Level
CO - 1	Name the various types and sub-genres of drama	A	K1
CO – 2	Explain different dramatic forms and the techniques adopted by each writer of each age	B	K2
CO – 3	Trace out the evolution of British Drama and its impact on audience	C	K4
CO – 4	Learn to comment critically upon the characters and their representative nature	D, C	K3
CO – 5	Assess the literary style and find out the uniqueness of British Drama	E, C	K5

K1 – Remember, **K2** – Understand, **K3** – Apply, **K4** – Analyze, **K5** – Evaluate, **K6** – Create

UNIT I:

Christopher Marlowe: Edward II

Ben Johnson: The Alchemist

UNIT II:

Oliver Goldsmith: The Good-Natured Man

UNIT III:

John Dryden: All for Love

UNIT IV:

T. S. Eliot: Murder in the Cathedral

James Matthew Barrie: The Admirable Crichton

UNIT V:

George Bernard Shaw: Saint Joan

John Osborne: Look Back in Anger

UNIT I

Edward II - Christopher Marlowe

Christopher Marlowe:

Christopher Marlowe was an English playwright, poet, and translator of the Elizabethan era. He was born in Canterbury, England, in 1564. He died young at the age of twenty-nine and his career as a playwright lasted only six years. His work, particularly, the play The Tragicall History of Doctor Faustus, secured his lasting legacy. His achievement had a great impact on William Shakespeare, who was born in the same year as Marlowe and who rose to become the pre-eminent Elizabethan playwright after Marlowe's mysterious early death.

Early Life:

Marlowe was born in Canterbury to shoemaker John Marlowe and his wife Catherine. His date of birth is not known but he was baptized on February 26th, 1564 and is likely to have been born a few days before, making him two months older than William Shakespeare, who was baptized on 26 April 1564 in Stratford-upon-Avon. Marlowe attended The King's School in Canterbury and Corpus Christi College, Cambridge, where he studied on a scholarship and received his Bachelor of Arts degree in 1584. In 1587, the university hesitated to award him his Master of Arts degree because of a rumor that he had converted to Roman Catholicism and would soon attend college elsewhere. These rumors were set to rest and Marlowe was awarded his Master of Arts when the Privy Council intervened on his behalf, praising him for his "faithful dealing"and "good service"to the Queen. The nature of Marlowe's service was not specified by the Council, but its letter to the Cambridge authorities has provoked considerable speculation, particularly the theory that Marlowe was operating as a secret agent working for Sir Francis Walsingham. No direct evidence supports this theory, although the Council's letter itself is evidence that Marlowe had served the government in some secret capacity.

Literary Work:

In spite of his short life, Christopher Marlowe wrote many successful plays in an incredibly short six-year literary career. Some scholars contend that Marlowe started writing for the theater after 1587 while occasionally serving the government. Marlowe's plays are known for the use of blank verse and their overreaching protagonists and controversial themes. His first

play, Dido, Queen of Carthage, was not published until 1594. The play was performed by the Children of the Chapel, a company of boy actors, between 1587 and 1593. His second play was the two-part Tamburlaine the Great (c. 1587; published 1590). This was Marlowe's first play to be performed on the regular stage in London and is among the first English plays in blank verse. Marlowe's most famous play is The Tragicall History of Doctor. It is based on the German Faustbuch, Doctor Faustus. It is seen as the first dramatized version of the Faust legend, in which a man sells his soul to the devil in exchange for knowledge and power.

Outline of the Play:

King Edward II recalls his favorite, Pierce de Gaveston, from exile; Gaveston joyfully returns to England. While hurrying to Westminster to rejoin his monarch, he comes upon the king talking to his courtiers. Secretively, he hides from the royal assemblage and overhears the noblemen discussing his repatriation.

They discuss how Edward, an immature and weak-minded yet stubborn man, nourished for Gaveston an unwholesome and unyielding love, in spite of the fact that Edward's father originally banished the man. The noblemen of England, sworn to uphold the decree of exile, hate the royal favorite. Most passionate in his fury is young Mortimer. Others are not far behind Mortimer in their antipathy, and they threaten the king with revolt if Gaveston remains in England. None but the king's brother Edmund will harbor Gaveston. The fiery discussion ends; the nobles stalk off in haughty displeasure.

Gaveston, still in hiding, rejoices in his knowledge of the king's love, for Edward reveals his pettiness by his unconcern for the welfare of his kingdom as weighed against his desire to clasp Gaveston to his bosom once more. When Gaveston reveals his presence, Edward ecstatically rewards him with a series of titles and honors, the scope of which causes even Edmund to comment wryly that Edward outdid himself. Gaveston claims with a smirk that all he desires is to be near his monarch. To add salt to the kingdom's wounds, Edward sentences the Bishop of Coventry, the instigator of Gaveston's exile, to die in the Tower of London.

This action, coupled with the titles and estates lavishly bestowed upon Gaveston, so incenses the rebellious nobility that under the leadership of the two Mortimers, Warwick, and Lancaster, they plot to kill Gaveston. The Archbishop of Canterbury, protesting the damage inflicted upon the Church by the king's folly, allies himself with the plot. Queen Isabella, who professes to love her lord dearly, complains to the noblemen that since Gaveston's return Edward

snubs her beyond endurance. She agrees that Gaveston must be done away with, but she cautions the angry noblemen not to injure Edward.

When the rebellious nobility seize Gaveston, Edward, yielding to the archbishop's threat to enforce his papal powers against the king, can do nothing but stand by and allow his beloved friend to be carried off. A bitter exchange of words between the king and his lords is tempered by the gentle sentiments of Gaveston as he bids Edward farewell. Driven by childish anger, perhaps incensed by an intuitive knowledge, Gaveston attacks the queen and accuses her of a clandestine association with the younger Mortimer, a charge that she denies. Sensing his advantage, Edward seizes upon the accusation as a wedge to undermine his enemies, and he compels the queen to use her influence to save Gaveston. The queen, because of her love for Edward and her hopes for a reconciliation, resolves to mend the rift by abetting her husband.

At first the nobles disdainfully refuse to hear her entreaties. Then, having prevailed upon young Mortimer's sympathy, she discloses to him a plot whereby Gaveston could be overthrown and the king obeyed at the same time. Mortimer then convinces the other nobles that if Gaveston is allowed to remain in England, he will become so unpopular that the common people will rise in protest and kill him. There is peace in England once more. Edward affects renewed love for his queen and the lords humbly repledge their fealty to Edward. An undercurrent of meanness prevails, however, in the bosom of young Mortimer, whose sense of justice is outraged at the fact that Edward chose such a baseborn villain as his minion. He still believes that it would be a service to his country to unseat Gaveston, and thus he plots secretly.

At the ceremonial in honor of Gaveston's return, the lords cannot stomach the presence of the king's minion. Bitter sarcasm showers upon Gaveston, and young Mortimer tries to stab him. Edward is so outraged at this show of independence by his peers that he vows vengeance for his dear Gaveston's sake. Even the loyal Edmund cannot brook this display of pettiness on the part of his brother; he deserts Edward to join the nobles.

Edward renews the smoldering accusation against Isabella that she is Mortimer's lover. Defeated in battle, the king's forces, with Gaveston in flight, are split up to confuse the enemy. Warwick, Lancaster, and others succeed in capturing the king's minion and order his death, but Arundel, a messenger from Edward, pleads that Gaveston be allowed to say farewell to the king. One of the nobles, unable to scorn the king's wishes, arranges to escort Gaveston to Edward.

With a servant in charge, Gaveston is conducted to a hiding place to spend the night. Warwick, driven by blind hatred and an irrational patriotism, kidnaps the prisoner.

Meanwhile Valois, king of France and Isabella's brother, takes advantage of the revolt in England and seizes Normandy. Edward, displaying the corruption of his statesmanship, dispatches his son, Prince Edward, and Isabella to negotiate a parley with Valois. Arundel reports to Edward that Warwick beheaded Gaveston. Edward, in a wild rage against his lords, swears to sack their lands and to destroy their families. Characteristically, losing his beloved friend, he also declares that henceforth young Spencer will be his favorite. He continues to resist the rebels, and before long Warwick, Lancaster, and Edmund are captured and sentenced to death.

In France, the earl of Gloucester suspects that Isabella is gathering forces to place her son upon the throne. Isabella, in the meantime, is rejected by Valois. Sir John of Hainault rescues the queen and prince by offering to keep the pair at his estate in Flanders until Edward matures sufficiently to rule England. The young prince is already showing signs of royal character and a depth and a magnitude of personality that promise to make him a suitable monarch.

The condemned Mortimer and Edmund escape to France, where Sir John agrees to help them in levying forces to aid Isabella and the prince. Landing at Harwich, the forces of Mortimer and Edmund rout the king, who flees toward Ireland. Stalwart, sincere, and intellectually honest, Edmund, who broke with his brother only after the king drove him too far, relents in his feelings against Edward; he is further disturbed by a suspicion that Isabella is in love with Mortimer. Mortimer becomes a despot in his triumph. Edward is captured and sent to Kenilworth Castle, a prisoner. There he is prevailed upon to surrender his crown to the prince.

With the queen's consent, Mortimer outlines a crafty scheme to kill Edward. He draws up an ambiguous note that orders the king's death in one sense and abjures it in another. When Prince Edward, Isabella, Edmund, and Mortimer argue fiercely to decide upon the prince's protector, the prince reveals his distrust of Mortimer. Edmund, fearing greater disunion, resolves to rescue the imprisoned king. His attempt fails.

Prince Edward is crowned by the Archbishop of Canterbury. Shortly after the coronation the deposed Edward, tortured cruelly in a dungeon, is murdered by Mortimer's hireling, and Edmund is beheaded. Thereupon Edward III, now monarch, orders Mortimer to be hanged and

Isabella, suspected of being the nobleman's accomplice in plotting her husband's death, to be taken to the Tower of London.

'Edward II – as a historical play':

Man's eternal quest is to know the unknown, to see the unseen and is to discover the undiscovered things. That's the very spirit of the Elizabethan age. They have the nostalgia to sink into the historical past and fetch the pearl of spirit undaunted. Thus, Christopher Marlowe, the excellent Elizabethan writer squares the juice of historical background and unlocked them in full-throated ease in his play Edward II. He just poured the 'new wine into old bottles' and stimulates the dozing spectators into frenzied drunkards. So if anyone raises the question 'Edward II – as a historical play'.

Marlowe is not the first Elizabethan to is write the historical play, there are so many university wits to flourish their blossoms. After writing a number of tragedies with gigantic figures, Marlowe were deeply inspired by Shakespeare's Henry VI. So his Edward II is the direct outcome of the historical agenda presented in episodes. But it mainly surpassed Shakespeare in dealing with King Edward II, a king deposed and assassinated one with his weaknesses. It is a marvel still in historical plays; it is modern in its outlook and anti-heroic in its approach. Edward, the king is not important, Edward the man claims our sympathy. It gives Shakespeare the model for his Richard II (1595).

Marlowe's Edward II is the finest flowering of a historical play. The historical fervour and the spirited zeal are well conceived here. Marlowe invites the Elizabethans who bubbled with national pride and looked is the dramatists for information about national heroes and their deeds. Marlowe depicts the narrow bar from the very historical threshold but by the rosy wings of poesy flights to the castle of keatsian world of imagination. Here we see 'the life of sensations rather than of thought! The historical background Edward I reigning England successively from 1272-1307 and banishment of his son's most dissolute friend Gascon – can not be said tracked. Yet, Marlowe does not slavishly follow the chronological order of even. He adopts, abridges, transposes and juxtaposes them to create new situations. Gascon becomes piers Gaveston. He has abridged the time span and omitted certain events to compress the plot. The time span of 27 years following the arrest and execution of Gaveston has been compressed into consecutive scenes. The gap of about three years between the king's murder and execution of Mortimer has been completely eliminated.

Clumsy plot construction characterizes all historical plays. The playwright is interested mainly in episodes. But Edward II has a plot, well unit and it is the direct outcome of Marlowe's realism that a plot has to be coherent. Such scenes grow out of and are a continuation of the previous scene and it has beginning middle and an end.

Marlowe, the poet-playwright creates a tragedy but the tragedy is not his, it is the part of history. The characters are not puppets tied to strings; they are not wooden and flat-line Shavian character. His characters are vividly decorated rather than the historical figures. Like Pygmalion Marlowe injects the new blood to the petrified characters. In actual life Edward was not so great a voluptuary figure as he is presented in the play. Nor did he so ill treat the queen as he is present in the play. To quote Prof. Tout –

> "He has no other wish than to amuse himself… If he
> did not like work he was out very vicious, he stuck
> loyalty to his friends and was fairly harmless, being
> nobody's enemy so much as his own".

Perhaps Gaveston was not so such deliberate Miss Leader of the king as Marlowe has presented him to be. He has attached to the king as his friend from childhood and sincerely loved and admired him.

Edward II of Marlowe shows several other historical digressions and inaccuracies. Marlowe has exercised great freedom in the treatment of Spencers. They were neither needy adventure, nor were they low-born. They were introduced to the king six years after the execution of Gaveston. To add some digressions, Mortimer's downfall in the play is too abrupt and sudden. He was accused of treason and was executed in 1330. the charges against him included that of having procured the late king's murder that of having been –

> "more privy with Queen Isabella, the king's mother, than
> stood either with God's law, or the king's pleasure".

But in spite of an these drawbacks Edward II stands supreme as the historical play. History has been well presented and dramatized. The characters are essentially historical. They speak for themselves. They audience may also mark Edward's weaknesses, his lowness to his wife, his dotage to Gaveston, his haughtiness to his barons and carelessness about the interests of England

and English people. They may also mark the insolence and haughtiness of barons, the selfish and unpatriotic spirit of Mortimer and faithlessness and hypocrisy of the queen.

The play may lack the vigorousness and vitality of Shakespeare's Richard. But to quote Charles Lamb we can say –

"The death scene of Marlowe's king moves pity and terror
beyond any scene, ancient or modern with
which I am acquainted".

History is a platform to Marlowe, to test the limit of human indulgence. Says Wilson, Marlowe manages his stuff from Holinshed's Oromiete but shapes out of the Chronicle History of "disagreeable reign into historical tragedy". Una Ellis Fermor remarks – the excellence of the play lies in Marlowe's delineation of Edward's character, 'he is not a king but a man as a whole, a truly pathetic figure, the victim of maladjustment of circumstances.'

To conclude, Marlowe's Edward II owes to history and is historical. But the the play should not be interrelated as the two words – 'history' and 'historical'. History is only a record of events in the order they took place. But a play is a piece of art, meant to transport the readers to the world of 'beauty and truth'. It is an amalgamation of these two genres.

Characters:

Edward II: Edward is, of course, the play's title character, and the plot more or less corresponds to the course of his actual historical reign (though the play significantly compresses the events of his reign), beginning with his ascension to the throne and ending shortly after his death. That said, Edward is often less compelling as a character than either his lover, Gaveston, or his enemy, Mortimer. This is telling, since one of the primary complaints the English nobility lodge against the king is that he is weak. It's certainly true that Edward has little interest in war, and that he tends to blindly comply with the advice and wishes of his favorites. He is also moodier than a ruler probably ought to be, often swinging between hopeless self-pity and vows of violent revenge. To Edward's credit, however, he seems to know on some level that he is not especially suited to being king. At the very least, he occasionally expresses dissatisfaction with his position, saying he would happily give up his power if that meant he could be with Gaveston. Perhaps the best way of understanding Edward, then, is as a man who values personal happiness and relationships over public life. His devotion to Gaveston and his enjoyment of theater and

pageantry are perfectly normal, although the play's events suggest these traits are not compatible with the strength and cunning required of a medieval ruler. In the end, Edward is overthrown and murdered by his wife Isabella and Mortimer, although his son— Edward III—avenges his death.

Mortimer Junior: Mortimer Junior is a powerful member of the English nobility and, eventually, the lead challenger to Edward II's rule. As Marlowe states outright in the play's full title, Mortimer is extremely "proud," and he views the presence and influence of Gaveston—a commoner—as an affront to his own rightful position and dignity. Further exacerbating Mortimer's resentment is the fact that Gaveston encourages the king to spend money on pageants and plays rather than military matters. Besides being rather militant and hot-tempered himself, Mortimer feels (or at least expresses) a sense of obligation to the former soldiers now in need of pensions. Although Mortimer never makes any secret of his discontent, it is likely Edward's unwillingness to pay ransom for the return of Mortimer Junior's uncle, Mortimer Senior, that pushes him into open rebellion. While Mortimer's initial resistance to Edward II seems to be based on a degree of principle, he grows increasingly less sympathetic as he rises to a position of power. He has Edward murdered, despite Edward's willingness to abdicate the throne, and after becoming the lover of Edward's wife, Isabella, he uses his relationship with her to manipulate both her and her young son Edward III—the new king. The courage and resignation with which he faces his own execution at the end of the play, however, do restore a sense of dignity to him in the play's final moments.

Piers Gaveston: Gaveston is Edward II's companion and (almost certainly) lover. The two men have known each other for some time by the time the play opens, but had recently been separated by Edward's father, the former king, who disapproved of the relationship (this is a historically accurate detail, although Edward I had initially chosen the real Gaveston as a companion for his young son). The play begins with Gaveston receiving a letter from Edward II informing him of his father's death and his own ascension to the throne. Gaveston eagerly complies with the new king's summons to return, in large part because he hopes to use the situation to his own advantage. Ambitious and quick-witted, Gaveston encourages Edward to pursue his interests in poetry and theater— presumably to keep him in a state of happy compliance. Gaveston's tactics pay off in the short term, with Edward raising him from his low-born status and making him Earl of Cornwall, Lord High Chamberlain, and Chief Secretary. However, if Gaveston uses Edward's

favor to his own advantage, it is nevertheless true that he seems to genuinely love the king: alone on stage during his opening monologue, he speaks about "dying" on Edward's "bosom" even at the cost of the "world's" esteem. Gaveston's relationship with Edward also speaks to the broader complexities of his character. For instance, while Mortimer Junior describes Gaveston as being a somewhat foppish man, a description supported by Gaveston's expensive tastes in clothing and entertainment, it is nonetheless also true that Gaveston is unafraid to fight: he repeatedly gets into brawls and duels. If anything, Gaveston seems too quick to resort to physical violence.

Isabella: Isabella is a daughter of the King of France, Edward II's wife, and mother to his son, Prince Edward. She is also one of the play's most ambiguous characters. The historical Isabella was a French princess who became infamous in England for the role she played in Edward's overthrow and (possibly) murder. In Marlowe's version of events, however, Isabella is quite sympathetic, at least initially. She first appears as a loving wife who is genuinely grieved and confused by her husband's preference for Gaveston—not least because Edward, under Gaveston's influence, treats her viciously at times. He repeatedly accuses her, for example, of having an affair with Mortimer Junior long before there is any evidence that she is doing so. Nevertheless, Isabella's willingness to conspire in Gaveston's recall and murder suggests she harbors an underlying ruthlessness. When her husband simply shifts his affections from Gaveston to Spencer Junior, Isabella decisively turns against Edward, taking Mortimer as her lover and supporting his rebellion against her husband. By the time Isabella colludes in Edward's murder and lies about it to her son, she has revealed herself to be a deeply treacherous character. It is never clear, however, whether she was untrustworthy and vengeful all along, or whether frustration with her husband's mistreatment of her is what drove her actions.

THE ALCHEMIST- BEN JOHNSON

Ben Johnson- Life and Works:

Ben Jonson, by name of Benjamin Jonson, (born on June 11, 1572, London, England—died on August 6, 1637, London), English Stuart dramatist, lyric poet, and literary critic. He is generally regarded as the second most important English dramatist, after William Shakespeare, during the reign of James I. Among his major plays are the comedies Every Man in His Humour

(1598), Volpone (1605), Epicoene; or, The Silent Woman (1609), The Alchemist (1610), and Bartholomew Fair (1614).

Ben Jonson frankly followed the current demand for romantic drama, showing no small skill in adopting the full – blooded romantic manner. Even here, in the early years of apprenticeship, he displayed vigorous power of imagination; but romantic drama was not characteristically expressive of the man's personality. After his dismissal by the theatrical manager, Henslowe, a rival manager – William Shakespeare – came forward and helped him to put on his comedy, Every Man in His Humour. It was performed in 1598 by the Lord Chamberlain's Company with William Shakespeare in the cast. Here Jonson for the first time struck the anti – romantic note, and sought to establish a satirical comedy of manners framed in a definite plan. He saw clearly enough that despite the splendid, exuberant power of the Shakespearean drama, there was no underlying theory or convention, and that its tendency to guide and control.

In the prologue to Every Man in His Humour (1599), Jonson puts forward his plan of reform, clouting to "sport with human follies, not with crimes". The word "humour", as used by Jonson, implied some oddity of disposition, especially with regard to the manners of the day. Jonson had invented a kind of topical comedy involving eccentric characters, each of whom represented a temperament, or humor, of humanity. Here is the same care for clearness and definition are observed; but the moral aim of the satirist is somewhat too obvious; and the machinery creaks at times rather painfully.

Jonson's comedies, such as Cynthia's Revels (1600) and The Poetaster (1601 satirized other writers, especially the English dramatists Thomas Dekker and John Marston. The writers patched their public feuding; in 1604 Jonson collaborated with Dekker on The King's Entertainment and with Marston and George Chapman on Eastward Ho in 1605. When Marston and Chapman were imprisoned for some of the views espoused in Eastward Ho, Jonson voluntarily joined them.

Jonson continued to write for the commercial theater along with writing for the court. During this period he produced two historical tragedies, Sejanus (1603) and Catiline (1611), and the four brilliant comedies upon which his reputation as a playwright primarily rests: Volpone (1606), Epicene, or the Silent Woman (1609), The Alchemist (1610), and Bartholomew Fair (1614). The best is Volpone which is a comical and sarcastic portrait of a wealthy but selfish old

man who keeps his greedy would-be heirs hanging on his wishes, each thinking that he will inherit Volpone's wealth. Volpone is no common miser, he glories less in the hoarding of his treasure than in its acquisition; and he revels in the hypocrisies of those who are ever ready to fawn upon the rich man, fooling them to the top of the their bent. The play is extraordinarily claver, and brilliantly constructed. Its defects lie in certain hardness, and in lack of humanity.

Jonson sought to advance English drama as a form of literature, attempting to make it a conscious art through adherence to classical forms and rules.his is the plays more "correct"—that is, they are more carefully patterned after the drama scheme of the ancient Greek and Roman writers. He protested particularly against the mixing of tragedy and comedy and was an effective advocate of the principles of drama established by Aristotle, which he praised at the expense of the flexibility and improvisational qualities of dramatists such as Shakespeare. However, only later did critics begin to prefer the deeper genius of writer and to realize that mechanical "correctness"is not the highest aim of a play or poem.

Outline of the Play:

The Alchemist is a comedy by the English playwright Ben Jonson which is considered his best comedy. An outbreak of plague in London forces a gentleman, Lovewit, to flee to the country, leaving his house under the sole charge of his butler, Jeremy. Jeremy uses the opportunity to use the house as the headquarters for fraudulent acts. He transforms himself into 'Captain Face', and enlists the aid of Subtle, a fellow conman and Dol Common, a prostitute. The play opens with a violent argument between Subtle and Face concerning the division of the riches which they have. Their first customer is Dapper, a lawyer's clerk who wishes Subtle to use his supposed necromantic skills to summon a "familiar"or spirit to help in his gambling ambitions. Their second gull is Drugger, a tobacconist, who is keen to establish a profitable business. After this, a wealthy nobleman, Sir Epicure Mammon arrives, expressing the desire to gain himself the philosopher's stone which he believes will bring him huge material and spiritual wealth. He is accompanied by Surly, a skeptic and debunker of the whole idea of alchemy. Surly however, suspects Subtle of being a thief. Mammon accidentally sees Dol and is told that she is a Lord's sister who is suffering from madness. Subtle contrives to become angry with Ananias, an Anabaptist or Puritan, and demands that he should return with a more senior member of his sect. Drugger returns and is given false and ludicrous advice about setting up his shop; he also brings news that a rich young widow (Dame Pliant) and her brother (Kastril) have arrived in London.

Both Subtle and Face in their greed and ambition seek out to win the widow. Lovewit interrogates the neighbours as to what has been going on during his absence. Face is now the plausible Jeremy again, and explains that there cannot have been any visitors to the house – he has kept it locked up because of the plague. Surly, Mammon, Kastril and the Anabaptists return. Face tells Subtle and Dol that he has confessed to Lovewit, and that officers are on the way; Subtle and Dol have to flee, empty handed. The victims come back again. Lovewit has married the widow and has claimed Mammon's goods; Surly and Mammon depart disconsolately. The Anabaptists and Drugger are summarily dismissed. Kastril accepts his sister's marriage to Lovewit. Lovewit pays tribute to the ingenuity of his servant, and Face asks for the audience's forgiveness.

Act wise Summary:

The Prologue:

The prologue begins by addressing "Fortune," wishing away the two hours that the play will take to perform and hoping to do justice to its author. It announces the play's scene, London, with "no country's mirth is better than our own."It also is the best place to find whores and lowlifes. Many sorts of people, of many different humors, are to grace the stage. The writer, apparently, wishes not to attack these characters and the real people they represent, but to "better" them—the traditional aim of satire. He also hopes that no one will be displeased with the "fair correctives" the play is about to offer. He alerts us that no one who can "apply" lessons has anything to fear.

The prologue finishes with an ambiguous metaphor: there are people who can sit near to "the stream" to find things "they think or wish were done."Yet these involve such "natural follies" that even the people who "do" them might see them and not "own" them—not recognize the follies as their own.

Act I, Scene I:

The scene, as in almost every following scene, is Lovewit's house. The play opens with a blazing argument between Subtle and Face, which Dol Common is trying desperately to calm. The reason for the argument is not entirely clear, but the basic point is that both Subtle and Face feel the superior conman and the most important in the success of their "business"; neither feels duly appreciated by the other. Subtle claims that he is responsible for Face being in the position

he is in—only a short time ago, he tells him, he was only the “good / Honest, plain, livery-three-pound-thrum”(a servant whose clothing is very cheaply made) who worked in his master’s house. Subtle claims that he has taught Face everything he knows, and that Face should therefore be grateful—without Subtle, he still would have been a mere housekeeper.

Face claims, conversely, that Subtle’s status as the titular “Alchemist” is dependent on Face’s bringing in the gulls to be gulled. Furthermore, Face claims that he got Subtle sufficient credit to buy the paraphernalia of alchemy, and that Face built him the furnace. Subtle retaliates by restating that it is only through his own alchemical expertise that Face has learned how to be a conman. Each believes that the other would be nothing without him.

Face threatens to publish the details of Subtle’s trickeries at St. Paul’s Cathedral, and he claims that they are so manifold that it would be plausible for him to write a book. His final threat is that he will have Subtle arrested under the “statute of sorcery.”

Dol eventually breaks up the argument, bringing the two down to earth by reminding Face that his word will not be taken by anyone, and likewise taking Subtle down a peg or two. She forces him to acknowledge that she and Face both play their parts in the cons; the venture is “tripartite.”She then forces the two conmen to swear that they will “labor, kindly, in the common work” which they do, rather unwillingly. They then praise Dol as “Dol Singular” (meaning that she is the best of all), only to be interrupted by the bell ringing.

Subtle worries initially that it will be the master, Lovewit, at the door, but Face gives us the key information that he will not return until the plague has left London. He will send an order to “air” the house before his return—the conmen should have, according to Face, a safe two weeks.

Dol looks out of the window to see who has rung the bell, and it is Dapper, a “fine young quodling” whom Face met in the Dagger Inn in Holborn last night. There is a hurried costume change as Subtle gets “his robes” on, and Face finishes the scene by beginning the con, shouting (so that Dapper hears) to Subtle as if he is about to leave the house, as Dapper has not yet appeared.

Act 1, Scene 2:

Dapper meets Face, now “Captain Face,” just as, he pretends, he is leaving the house. Dapper apologizes for his lateness (he clearly arranged to meet Face at the house when they met at the Dagger Inn the night before), saying that he lent his watch to a friend of the sheriff’s.

Subtle enters, dressed in a doctor's robes, and Dapper is amazed to see the "cunning man."Dapper asks how he has responded to the "matter" in question, but Face implies that Subtle is not keen to proceed, and that Face himself would be keen to have it off his hands. Clearly Dapper wants something performed that would be illegal under the statute of sorcery, and Face is exploiting the precarious legal position to the full to make him uncomfortable.

Dapper promises that he will keep his mouth shut, and Face agrees to approach the Doctor about the case again. The "Doctor," silent at the other side of the room, tells Face that he would do much for his love, "but this / I neither may nor can."Face pleads that Dapper is no ordinary guy and certainly is no ordinary cheat, but the Doctor remains unmoved. Face instructs Dapper to offer the Doctor money, and then–when he will not accept–makes as if to storm out. Suddenly the Doctor calls him back in, accepting Dapper's money, and he pulls Face to one side.

Their conversation is clearly heard by Dapper, who, it transpires, has come to the Alchemist to get a "gambling fly" or "spirit" which will allow him to win at betting. Why, the Doctor asks Face, does he want to help Dapper when, if the Doctor grants his request, Dapper will undo everyone by winning all the money in the town? After clarifying that this is indeed what Dapper wants to do, the two go back into another (perfectly audible) private conference. The Doctor reveals that Dapper is "of the only best complexion / The Queen of Fairy loves" which means that, as one favored by the Queen of the Fairies, he is liable to make even more money.

Suddenly Dapper, who has been listening throughout, is drawn back into the conversation and forced to admit that he has overheard. Dapper promises to send the Captain and the Doctor half of the ten thousand pounds he will win, and the Doctor agrees to give him the familiar spirit and introduce him to his aunt, the Queen of Fairies.

There is a knock on the door outside, and Face bundles Dapper out the back way, arranging with him to put vinegar in his nose, mouth, and ears, bathe his fingers' ends, wash his eyes, cry *hum* and *buz*, and return at one o'clock to meet the Queen.

Act 1, Scenes 3 and 4:

After Face's exit, Subtle welcomes Abel Drugger (sometimes called "Nab"), a tobacconist who, like Dapper, was sent by "one Captain Face."Face has apparently told Dapper (according to his initial, stumbling monologue) that the Doctor "knows men's planets."In short,

Dapper wants astrological advice about the feng shui of the new tobacconist's shop he is about to open: where to place his boxes, where his pots, where the door and windows should be, and so on.

Face enters, fresh from escorting Dapper outside. He greets Drugger warmly, for he provides Face, apparently, with the best, highest-quality tobacco. Immediately the "Doctor" decides that Abel is a "fortunate fellow" and predicts that he will soon come into great riches and will be made a sheriff. Subtle then, according to the "metoposcopy" he claims to work by, reads Drugger's skin color, forehead, ear, teeth, and nails in order to ascertain that he was born on a Wednesday.

Subtle then performs a rapid feng shui treatment on the plan of Drugger's shop, positioning the doors and providing the names of spirits who can "fright flies from boxes."He then predicts that Drugger will deal "much with minerals" and may even have a chance at acquiring the Philosopher's Stone. Drugger, like Dapper before him, is coerced into leaving money for the Doctor for his services, though not before he has produced his almanac so that the Doctor can cross out his unlucky days. The Doctor promises to have it done by afternoon, and Drugger excitedly leaves.

After he has left, the conmen come out of character for the first time since Act 1, Scene 1. Face makes a short speech, provocatively pointing out to Subtle that the two gulls who have just come through the doors were arranged and brought in by him alone.

As the argument looks set to rekindle itself, Dol enters, and the two immediately attempt to look nonchalant. Dol has been sending the "fish-wives" away from the door (presumably they are gulled characters who are constantly present near the door, but never seen by the audience). Dol has seen Sir Epicure Mammon heading this way. Subtle gleefully describes having waited for him since sunrise. Mammon, he tells us, is so convinced that he will have the Philosopher's Stone that he is already behaving as if he does have it and the wealth it would produce.

Act 2, Scenes 1, 2, and 3:

Sir Epicure Mammon begins Act 2, Scene 1, with a lengthy speech. In heightened poetic language, he compares the Blackfriars house to "the rich Peru," "the golden mines," and "Great Solomon's Ophir." Surly from the start is lagging behind (he is, naturally, surly) and calls into question Mammon's assumptions that he will end up rich. Mammon is in this excited state because today is the day the Philosopher's Stone is due to be ready. Surly warns him only to

believe in things when he sees them with his own eyes. When Mammon talks about the effects of the “great med’ cine,” Surly says he will believe it, but only “when I see’t.”

Mammon has extravagant plans to cure all diseases, become immortal, and have sex with several different wives at once (he will, he says, encounter “twenty a night”). He also possesses, he says to Surly, several relics already: “dragon’s teeth” and “a piece of Jason’s fleece. They are very unlikely genuine, but Mammon of course believes they are.

Face enters, dressed as Lungs, the bellows-man (who blows air into the furnace), and he tells Mammon that the stone has gone “red,” a very good sign that it is nearly fully alchemized. Mammon promises him extensive riches if the stone does indeed form correctly. This is plainly ironic because Face is already making money from the very idea of the stone. Mammon indulges in further lengthy descriptions of his future lifestyle when he is very rich—the rich clothes he will wear, the fine foods he will eat, and the status he will be afforded in the world.

Subtle enters as the “Alchemist” and is treated very respectfully by Mammon, who addresses him as “Father.”According to Mammon, Surly has been brought along “in hope … to convert him” to believing in the Alchemist. Immediately Subtle worries Mammon by suggesting that he might be covetous (see “A note on alchemy” in this Classic Note) and that the stone may therefore not form. Face and Subtle then baffle Mammon with a torrent of dense, scientific language which neither Mammon nor Surly understands. (The speakers probably do not understand it, either.)

Face exits to “change the filter” and bring Subtle the “complexion of glass B,” two imaginary adjustments to what might well be an imaginary furnace. Face returns with the bad news that glass B is black, which unsurprisingly needs a financial investment of ten pounds from Mammon to buy “some three ounces of fresh materials,” which will provide a better chance of developing the stone. Mammon, excited by this, decides to bring all of the metal from his house to the Blackfriars so that it is ready to be converted into gold.

Subtle expounds the theory of alchemy at length, explaining to the cynical Surly that objects are always in flux and that, in the way that an egg can become a chicken, base metal is waiting to be transformed into gold. The speech is a tour de force, though Surly is not convinced, and he calls alchemy “a pretty kind of game … to cheat a man.”Surly points out that all Subtle’s “terms” (his scientific language) are only words that mean nothing to the layman; besides, there is no evidence of anything that the alchemy has achieved—just a storm of words. Subtle is

slightly perplexed by this accurate argument, and he tells Surly that “all the knowledge / of the Egyptians” was “writ in mystic symbols,” and the “Scriptures” likewise speak “oft in parables.”

Suddenly Dol enters, and Mammon is immediately besotted. Subtle sends Face in to see what is going on, and when Face returns, Mammon questions him in the absence of Subtle. Dol is pretending to be, as Face reveals to Mammon, a “rare scholar” who has “gone mad” studying a scholar called Broughton, and who has come to the Doctor to be cured. Surly is not convinced, feeling sure that this is “a bawdy house.”Mammon is desperate to meet this scholar, and Face promises to set up a meeting. Surly remains cynical, and Face persuades Surly to meet “Captain Face” at the Temple Church in half an hour.

The scene ends with a touching moment when Mammon reveals his own total lack of self-worth. “Wilt thou … be constant to thy promise?”he asks Face, “And wilt thou … praise me? / And say I am a noble fellow?”When Face agrees, Mammon is so excited and moved by the prospect of being praised that he exclaims, “Lungs, my Lungs! I love thee!” and, handing over still more money to Face, exits.

Act 2, Scenes 4, 5, and 6:

Face and Subtle are delighted that Mammon has been further conned, and they compare him to a fish that has taken the bait and will now be “twitched”–pulled out of the water and killed. The two also talk about the metal that Mammon is going to send them, including his “andirons”(fire-irons) and his “iron shoeing-horn.”Face is about to lrave for the Temple Church to meet Surly when there is a knock at the door. It is Ananias, Subtle’s “Anabaptist” to whom he is going to sell Mammon’s metal.

The two change characters again. Subtle “in a new tune, new gesture, but old language” takes on the mantle of a highly religious old man, temperamental and intimidating. Another whirl of scientific language baffles Ananias, who says he understands “no heathen language”(ungodly language). Ananias is a religious fundamentalist, and he takes it to an extreme: even Greek (the language of the New Testament) is heathen, as is every language but Hebrew (the language of the Old Testament, akin to the language spoken by Jesus).

Subtle reacts vehemently to the suggestion that his alchemical language is heathen, and he prompts Face to define several alchemical terms, asking Ananias angrily, “This’s heathen Greek to you?” after the complicated definitions. Subtle is deeply intimidating, and he briskly asks Ananias, “what are you, sir?”

Ananias has come from Tribulation Wholesome, to whom Subtle purportedly will sell some orphans' metal, which will be turned into gold for the Anabaptists. Ananias, in an interesting admission, says that the Brethren will only "deal justly" and give the real value of the metal if the orphans' parents are "sincere professors"(of their understanding of Christianity). Ananias then tells Subtle that the Brethren (the Anabaptists) will not give him any more money for the Philosopher's Stone until they can see some results—the same problem that Surly posed in the previous scene.

This is no good to Subtle, who cannot provide any visible results and who therefore seizes on the biblical source of Ananias's name ("the varlet / That cozened the Apostles!") to justify a hastily improvised fury. Ananias is thrown out, and Subtle makes the final comment of the scene: this rage will fetch the Brethren back and "make 'em haste towards their gulling more."

Suddenly Face appears unexpectedly with Drugger, who wants a sign for his shop. Subtle does not really know what to suggest, and Face makes helpful suggestions: "What say you to his constellation, Doctor?"This provokes Subtle into a hilarious wordplay representation of "Abel Drugger": a bell, a man called Dee (presumably suggesting John Dee, the famous occultist) in a rug gown, and a "dog snarling Er," thus A-bell Dee-rug-er. Drugger hands over some more tobacco for the service. He also mentions "a rich young widow" whom he wants to marry.

Subtle and Face are immediately interested and, when Drugger mentions that this widow (Dame Pliant) "strangely longs to know her fortune," they persuade Drugger to bring the widow to the house. Her brother (Kastrill), Drugger tells them, is determined that she will marry–at least marrying a knight. When Drugger mentions that Kastrill is determined to be an "angry boy" and quarrel, Face immediately claims that the Doctor "is the only man" to teach him. Drugger exits to fetch them. As he leaves, Face asks him to bring a length of damask.

The two argue about who will marry the widow, and they agree to see her before making a decision. They also agree that Dol will not be told about it. Suddenly Subtle remembers that Face is supposed to be meeting Surly at the Temple Church, and Face rushes off.

Act 3, Scenes 1 and 2:

Tribulation, Pastor of the Anabaptists, returns to the house with Ananias, who was thrown out by Subtle in the previous act. Tribulation tells Ananias that religious saints have to bear such "chastisements." Ananias, aggressive as ever, says he does not like Subtle because he

is a “heathen.” Tribulation agrees but repudiates Ananias’s suggestion that the “sanctified cause / should have a sanctified course” with the neat half-line, “Not always necessary.” Sometimes, Tribulation argues, the “heathen” children can be “instruments even of the greatest works.” Moreover, Tribulation continues, since Subtle is constantly around fire and furnaces, it is natural that he has become a bit like the devil. Besides, the Brethren really need all the money they will make from him. Ananias greets this rather contrived argument like a religious epiphany, and they knock on the door.

Subtle carries on with his fury from the last scene, forcing the Anabaptists to plead with him and offer some form of compromise before the financial conversation can really begin. Tribulation promises that the Brethren did not intend “to give you the least grievance, but are ready / to lend their willing hands to any project … you direct,” though it is only when he tells Subtle “the Saints / Throw down their purse before you” that Subtle is finally convinced.

Subtle gives a lengthy speech detailing the good the Philosopher’s Stone will bring to the Brethren: curing illness, making the old young again, restoring beauty, turning people’s metal to gold, and–through all of these charities–winning converts to Anabaptism. Subtle also advertises the possibility of being rich enough to raise an army to conquer the world in the name of Anabaptism. Ananias and Tribulation are delighted at this prospect of the Church militant.

Throughout this scene Ananias makes odd and angry corrections of Subtle, which threaten to provoke Subtle’s wrath but are quickly diverted by Tribulation, until Ananias launches into a furious rant against “traditions” seemingly for no reason other than because the word “tradition” has just been spoken.

Eventually Subtle promises Tribulation that the stone will be ready in fifteen days, and he extracts one hundred marks from the Brethren for the orphans’ goods (which Mammon, presumably, has already had delivered into the cellar). When Tribulation balks at this sum, he is reassured, “you’ll make six millions of ‘em!”As Tribulation and Ananias exit to view the orphans’ goods, Subtle promises he can “cast” or melt them down, then remold the pewter into gold coins. Tribulation is not sure whether casting of money is legal under Christian law, however, and he resolves to check with the Brethren.

A knock at the door makes Subtle rapidly dispatch the Anabaptists into another room to “view the parcels.”

Act 3, Scenes 3, 4, and 5:

The knock on the door is from Face, returning from the Temple Church with the news that Surly has not turned up. Yet Face has met, while out, a Spanish Don who has come with lots of rich goods. Face has persuaded him to come back to the house and sleep with Dol. Subtle exits to get Dol ready for this meeting ("she must prepare perfumes") and to get rid of the Anabaptists. Face reflects on how much money has already been made today.

Dol enters, and Face tells her about the Spanish Don. Midway through their conversation, Subtle enters with the Anabaptists' money, wishing they could sell the orphans' goods a second time. Face suggests that Drugger might buy them. Subtle asks Face how he found this Spanish Don, and Face refuses to tell him, saying only "I ha' my flies abroad."Another knock on the door interrupts them. Dapper has returned to meet his "aunt," and Dol is dispatched to get into her "queen of Fairy" costume.

Suddenly Drugger and Kastrill are at the door, too, and while Subtle and Dol are preparing to gull Dapper, Face has to occupy the three gulls in the room. Drugger brings tobacco (having forgotten the damask) and introduces Kastrill, who aggressively informs Face that he has come to check out the Blackfriars house to see if it is good enough for his sister. Immediately Face cons him into fear and awe of the Doctor, who Face claims is an expert in quarrelling. Face then cleverly praises Dapper in order to intimidate Kastrill.

Face then prompts Drugger to recount the time Drugger drank too much and was sick, and the time he had to pay too much taxes and his hair fell out. He is pretending (of course, Face heard Drugger tell the story) that the Doctor told Face the story. Kastrill is impressed, and he exits with Drugger to fetch his sister.

Face has Dapper hand over a lot of money before meeting the Fairy Queen, and together with Subtle (who is now dressed "like a Priest of Fairy"), the conmen blindfold Dapper and encourage him to throw away all his worldly possessions–his purse, his handkerchiefs, his ring, his silver bracelet–which they then take.

Dol enters with a cithern, and the conmen pretend the fairies have arrived. Dapper, blindfolded, is viciously pinched because "the fairies" claim he has not thrown everything away. With the conmen making the noise of fairies ("ti ti ti ti") and pinching him, Dapper finally "throws away" a paper with a coin in it, and then a "half crown of gold" that he wears on his wrist, which his love gave him before she left him.

During this ridiculous scene, Dol suddenly sees Mammon at the window. While Subtle continues to talk to Dapper about the Fairy Queen, Face changes onstage into his "Lungs" costume. Subtle gags Dapper with a piece of gingerbread (often, in modern productions, a piece that he finds on the floor), and they lock Dapper in the privy until they can get rid of Mammon.

Act 4, Scenes 1 and 2:

Subtle has left to change into his Doctor's robes, and Face (as Lungs) greets Mammon, who is here to meet with Dol. Face tells Mammon that the Doctor would be furious if he knew of the meeting, so he warns him to keep his voice down when he is talking to Dol–for the Doctor, he says, is working at the furnace. Face tells Mammon he has been praising him to Dol, and he then leaves to bring her. Mammon gives himself a pep talk, advising himself to "heighten thyself' and "talk to her all in gold."

Dol enters with Face, pretending to be a "great lady"(i.e., "noble"), and her conversation with Mammon is an odd mixture of pecuniary puns and obscene double meanings (Mammon leans to "kiss [her] vesture" at one point). Face provides ironic commentary on the scene, and Mammon's language rises to higher and higher peaks. At one point, Dol Common resembles an "Austriac Prince," with the Valois nose and the Medici forehead, all symbols of Renaissance nobility.

Mammon talks to Dol about her studies (she is, remember, posing as a mad student of Broughton's works under the Doctor). Excited by her displayed nobility ("It is a noble humor"), he gives her a diamond ring. He brags that he is the "lord of the philosopher's stone," telling Dol she is its "lady."His fantasies climb as he dreams aloud of removing her from the Blackfriars house and taking her off to "a free state" where they will eat the most glorious foods, such as "shrimps … in a rare butter, made of dolphins' milk."

Face returns to tell Mammon he is too loud, and he takes the two of them offstage to a "fitter place," warning him not to mention Broughton.

Subtle comes back into the room after Dol and Mammon have left to announce that the widow has arrived and that she is pretty. Face realizes he will have to change out of his Lungs costumes and back into his "captainship" as Captain Face. He angrily suggests that Subtle will have "the first kiss, 'cause I am not ready."Both conmen seem keen to marry the widow.

As Kastrill enters, Subtle immediately has him quarrel, and unsurprisingly he is appalled at Kastrill's "ill logic"and lack of true quarrelling "grammar."This critique intimidates and

impresses Kastrill, who resolves to learn quarrelling from the Doctor. Subtle is in the middle of his quarrelling lecture when he suddenly sees Dame Pliant, the widow, and kisses her several times, which delights Kastrill. He then takes her hand and relates her fortune: she is to marry "a man of art,"perhaps the Doctor himself.

Face enters and interrupts. He is invited to kiss Dame Pliant. Immediately he and Subtle talk aside, and Face reveals that "The count is come,"and either Subtle or Face must occupy him. Both of them want to stay with the widow, however, but eventually Subtle takes her and Kastrill upstairs to look at something that will reveal more to them.

Act 4, Scenes 3 and 4:

There is another argument, increasing in ferocity, about whether Subtle or Face should have the Widow. Face even offers Subtle money in order that he can have the widow (Subtle refuses), and it is only when Subtle threatens to tell Dol about what Face wants that the argument ceases, begrudgingly.

Surly enters, dressed as a Spaniard, and he speaks in Spanish to the conmen, neither of whom seems to understand him. The two conmen mock and laugh openly at the costume, thinking that he cannot understand English. They feel his pockets and tell him mockingly that he shall be "cozened"–thinking the Spaniard will not know the word. When Surly talks of his "Señora," they remember that he is here to sleep with Dol, who is otherwise occupied with Mammon. This poses something of a problem, and the argument instantly flares back up.

Face argues that the Widow should be given over to the Don. Subtle, backtracking, tries to get money out of him, as Face had earlier suggested, for "Subtle's share" in the widow. Face, his interest in the widow now removed in favor of giving her to the Don, threatens to call Dol, and Subtle now has to concede. Subtle is furious, calling Face a "terrible rogue," but the two shake hands on the deal (further evidence of their mutual distrust). Face leaves to bring Dame Pliant and Kastrill, and Subtle takes Surly up to the bathroom. As he leaves, he tells the audience that he intends to sleep with the widow regardless and thus revenge himself on "this impetuous Face."

Face re-enters with Dame Pliant and Kastrill, who seems delighted at the idea that his sister will be a "Spanish Countess."Subtle enters, and Dame Pliant shocks the assembled company by saying she will "never brook a Spaniard."Subtle's attempt at persuasion is to say, "you must love him or be miserable," and Kastrill's attempt is stronger: "you shall love him, or

I'll kick you."Subtle and Face then paint a picture of Dame Pliant as a Countess, finely dressed and traveling in pomp with eight horses and coaches to hurry her through London, tempting her further.

Surly now enters unexpectedly, and Face has to cover (with, perhaps, a hidden aggressive comment to Subtle): "the doctor knew he would be here, by his art!"He picks up Dame Pliant and carries her out to the garden. Subtle sees the opportunity to get rid of Mammon, takes Kastrill out to continue "our quarrelling lesson," and then sends Face to get Mammon.

Act 4, Scenes 5, 6, and 7:

Dol enters "in her fit of talking." Mammon has mentioned Broughton, which he was told not to mention, and her (pretend) madness has been activated. Mammon panics, and he desperately tries to get her to talk sense, but she will not. Face enters, dressed as Lungs, and he asks Mammon what happened.

Subtle shouts from offstage, "What's to do there?"and the tension escalates toward a terrific entry at which the characters "disperse," leaving only Mammon to pathetically ask, "Where shall I hide me?"Subtle pretends fury and stamps on Mammon's weak suggestion that "There was no unchaste purpose," telling him that his behavior will "retard / The work, a month at least." Suddenly there is "a great crack and noise within," and Lungs enters to report that the furnace, with all its glasses and scientific equipment, has been destroyed. Subtle says nothing but "falls down as in a swoon."

There is a knock on the door, and Face tells Mammon, who stands "readier to depart" than the "fainted" Subtle, that Dol's brother is at the door. Dol's brother is as furious, Face tells Mammon, as Dol is mad, and he advises Mammon to escape as quickly as possible. Subtle "seems to come to himself" and rails against the sin and vice that has ruined his work. Face warns Mammon again that he is grieving Subtle and will grieve Dol's brother more. Mammon agrees to leave. As he is going, Face persuades him to give "a hundred pound" to charity in penance for what he has done–and Face will "send one to you to receive it."

The door closes, Mammon exits, and–just like that–Subtle is back on his feet. The two of them are delighted that "so much of our care" is "now cast away."The conmen resolve now to sort out the matter of the Spanish Don and the Widow; it seems as if things have just become much easier. (They haven't.) As the two conmen exit, Surly and Dame Pliant enter. Surly, now

speaking as himself, attempts to explain to her what is going on in this "nest of villains," but she does not really understand him. Surly tells Pliant that he himself will deal with "these household-rogues."

At that, Subtle enters and continues to mock the Spanish Don by speaking in English, but he is astonished when, having announced that he will pick the Don's pockets, the Don answers back in English: "Will you, Don bawd and pickpurse?" Surly immediately fights Subtle, who shouts, "Help! Murder!" As Face enters, Surly bitterly and verbosely delivers a long speech about the con he has uncovered. During this speech, Face makes a quiet exit, and–when Subtle tries to do the same–Surly restrains him.

Face returns with Kastrill, telling him that "now's the time, if ever you will quarrel." Face sets Kastrill, delighted to be quarrelling, onto the unsuspecting Surly, who is baffled. Face tells Kastrill that the *real* Spanish Count is indeed on the way, and that this is an imposter. Kastrill, encouraged by Face, verbally attacks him.

Just as things are settling down, Drugger enters unexpectedly. Face bravely incorporates him into the plans, telling him to "make good what I say" and accusing Surly of cheating Drugger out of tobacco. Drugger plays along, to Surly's consternation, and when Kastrill refuses to stop "quarrelling," Surly seems on the verge of escaping.

Ananias, elated because casting dollars has been declared lawful by his fellows, now arrives through the door. He immediately delivers the final blow to Surly's resistance, attacking his Spanish costume as "profane, lewd, superstitious and idolatrous."Understandably, Surly escapes.

Kastrill is pleased with himself for quarrelling so well, and he runs after Surly to make good his threats to stop him from returning. Face sends Drugger off to borrow another Spanish suit (presumably to make good on his theory to Kastrill that the real Spanish Don is on the way), and he dispatches Ananias to confer with his brethren about a safe place to undertake the casting of money.

Face mocks Subtle for being "so down upon the least disaster" and makes him grudgingly admit that Subtle would not have coped in that situation without Face. Just when it seems that this chaotic scene has been returned to order, Dol enters with the biggest shock of the play. Lovewit, the master of the house, has returned, and he is standing outside with forty neighbors.

Panic ensues. Face silences Subtle and Dol and makes a plan. He will change back into Jeremy Butler, they will pack their gold and goods into trunks, and they will escape to Ratcliff, where he will meet them tomorrow. But first, Subtle will shave him, for Jeremy Butler, unlike Captain Face, was clean-shaven.

Act 5, Scenes 1, 2, and 3:

Lovewit stands outside the house with the Neighbors, who complain to him of all the people who have been going in and out of the house. When Lovewit asks where Jeremy the Butler has been, they say they have not seen him for five or six weeks. Lovewit, worried, sends for a locksmith, and then knocks one more time.

Face, now "clean-shaven as Jeremy," opens the door and tells Lovewit to back away from the door because the plague has been in the house. Lovewit asks Face if he has had the plague, and when he says he has not, Lovewit asks who has—only Face had been left in the house. "The cat,"replies Face, somewhat bemused, but Lovewit is suspicious. When he repeats what the neighbors have just said, Face denies it outright, without explanation.

This may be a stalemate, but Surly and Mammon arrive, complaining bitterly about the treatment they have had from the conmen, barging past Lovewit to hammer on the door. Lovewit questions them, and they talk of "Subtle and his Lungs."Face tries to laugh it off as madness, but Surly is suspicious, as well: "This's a new Face?" he asks. Surly and Mammon exit, promising to return with a search warrant.

"What means this?"asks Lovewit. Face continues to deny all knowledge, but the Neighbors claim to recognize Surly and Mammon. Kastrill now enters and furiously knocks on the door, and he shouts for his sister, who is still inside the house. Before long, he is joined by Ananias and Tribulation. "The world's turned Bedlam," says Lovewit, and at that, the final straw breaks the camel's back. Dapper, having been forgotten in the privy, shouts, "Master Captain, master Doctor!"Inside, Subtle runs to try to shut him up.

Face tries to improvise an answer, telling Lovewit that it is the voice of a spirit, but this is no good. Lovewit marches Face inside and instructs the neighbors to depart. "I am an indulgent master," Lovewit says, and he instructs Face to reveal all. Face asks him to pardon "th'abuse of your house," and he promises to help Lovewit "to a widow that … will make you seven years younger."Amazingly, Lovewit seems pleased, and the two exit together.

Act 5, Scenes 4 and 5:

Back inside Lovewit's house, Subtle berates Dapper for allowing his gag to crumble away in his mouth—"the fume did overcome me," Dapper says pathetically, having spent the last hour in a toilet. Face returns, and tells Subtle that he has succeeded in getting rid of Lovewit for tonight. Subtle rejoices at this news, calling Face "the precious king / Of present wits."

Dol enters "like the Queen of Fairy," and Subtle forces Dapper to his knees. The conmen indulge in a brief and rather rushed meeting between Dapper and his supposed aunt. Dapper kisses her velvet gowns, Dol strokes his head, and she gives him his spirit in a purse to wear about his neck. Subtle instructs Dapper to bring "a thousand pound / Before tomorrow night," and as Dapper swears he will, Face, from another room, tries to end proceedings. Dapper is swiftly dispatched by Subtle to sell all of his lands.

Face returns and sends Subtle to the door to meet Drugger, who has brought the Spanish suit. Subtle has to tell him to bring a parson to the house. When he returns, Face takes parts of the suit and exits.

While Face is out, Subtle tells Dol that he intends to take all the goods but not to meet Face in Ratcliff as agreed. He will, like the play, unexpectedly "turn his course" and go somewhere else. Subtle outlines to Dol his dream of what he will do when they "have all," and the two are kissing when Face returns to send Subtle to collect the parson from Drugger. Face leaves to bestow him, and Subtle crowingly observes that Face thinks he has the upper hand.

When Face returns again, the three itemize the things they have conned from the gulls onstage and off, and they pack them into bags and trunks. Face announces to Subtle and Dol that his master knows all and will keep all the proceeds—an assertion the play never verifies. Subtle and Dol are shocked into silence. A knock on the door prompts them to escape, cursing Face, "over the back wall" without any of the proceeds.

Officers are at the door, and Lovewit enters, newly married to the widow, stripping off his Spanish suit and discarding it before opening the door. Mammon, Surly, Kastrill, Tribulation, and Ananias pour into the house, searching for Captain Face, the Doctor, and "Madame Suppository." Lovewit invites them to search, and they do, but they find nothing. Lovewit says there are just empty walls, slightly smoked, "a few cracked pots and glasses," and a bit of graffiti on the walls. Lovewit has met just one person, the widow, whom he has married.

Mammon is hugely relieved to find his own goods and wants to take them back from the cellar so that “I may have home yet.”Lovewit tells him that if he brings “order of law” to prove they are his, then he can take them. Mammon says he’d “rather lose ‘em”and leaves, resolving to “mount a turnip cart and preach / The end o’the world.”Surly, having lost the widow, refuses to cheat himself “with that same foolish vice of honesty!”Tribulation and Ananias are beaten away by Lovewit, and, in a final cruel touch, so is Drugger.

There is a slightly positive turn in the final moments. Kastrill is deeply impressed by the violent, drinking Lovewit. He seems quite satisfied with his new brother-in-law. The two of them go off together with the widow to smoke and drink. Face, left alone on stage to deliver the epilogue comments that for his part “a little fell in this last scene.”Face refers to the “pelf” (reward) which he has got, and he promises to use it to “feast you often”(meaning us, the audience)—as well as to bring more people to the theater.

Ben Jonson’s The Alchemist as a Comedy of Humours:

The Alchemist is a play by Jonson that deals with another aspect of comedy of humours. Jonson has exploited with the humours that indirectly exposes the characters motives as well as the corruption of the society during those times. Jonsonian humours reflects the realism of the age and projects the moral issues that was prevalent during those times.

As a comedy of humours, Jonson shows the humour of blood that makes the character Dapper sanguine or optimistic in extracting lots of wealth. Dapper’s imbalance humour of blood gives rise to such optimism in his head that he goes to the alchemist Subtle to win him money at horse races, card parties and dice parties. Subtle disrupts his humour more with the positivity sanguine feeling that the spirit will aid him in winning all the gambling that will reduce the other participants to bankruptcy and further adds that he is a nephew of the Queen of Fairies realizing at the end that his money and goods are all stolen from him by Face and Dol. One can assess the superficiality of the society which is indirectly established through the humour of dapper who is avarice, greedy and materialistic. The same type of humour is also seen in the character of Drugger who seems to be optimistic after meeting Subtle who claims to boost his business proposed by Subtle’s methods to him.

However, the same humour of blood or optimistic fluid runs in the character of Ananias. Jonson seems to bring forth the corruption of the Church Anabaptists and the rise of power the Church wants to attain during the time of Reformation. Ananias after the consultation with

brethren Tribulation at Amsterdam decides to give money to Subtle to provide them with the philosopher's stone and they became optimistic visualizing that they will be able to attain power and buy the entire country and fight against their enemies and enlarge over their influences and their beliefs to large areas. They even accept to buy "orphan goods"which was given by Mammon declaring its capability to convert into gold. The indirect establishment is the corruption and the avarice greedy nature of the members of the church and the materialistic attitude of the people of those age.

As a comedy of humours, the humour that dominates the play is the blood or optimistic nature of acquiring wealth and money by the characters. The characters seem to be sanguine to live a luxurious life and the imbalance in the humour makes their body and mind unhealthy making them materialistic, greedy and avarice. Sir Epicure Mammon is also a character who is optimistic about the philosopher's stone and even tells Surly that he will become rich and also make Surly rich. He also states that the one who has the stone will also have love, honour and respect in the world. Due to the imbalance of the humour in his bodily fluid, his' another aspect of characterization is brought forth in the play where he has a lustful desire for Dol. He wants to have Dol and immediately makes her as his bed partner and even urges Face to provide Dol for him for sexual pleasure. He even literally compliments her for her beauty and charm.

Lastly, Jonson is able to establish the nature of greed in each characters in the play. The idea of greed, avarice and materialism are merely a disposition of person's character when the four humours becomes imbalances. The humour that becomes imbalances in their body was the blood making them feel optimistic and sanguine about the wealth and capital that they can extract from others or achieve with supernatural belief system. It is also ironic because Lovewit and Surly seems not to engage with greed. The development of greed is in their disposition as these two characters were phlegmatic or calm but Surly was happy that he was going to get married to Dame Pliant who is rich and Lovewit who instead of taking action Jeremy or Face joins with him and the dowry given by Dame Pliant to Lovewit was irresistible for him establishing his greedy nature.

UNIT II

The Good-Natured Man- Oliver Goldsmith

Oliver Goldsmith, Life and Works:

The son of an Anglo-Irish clergyman, Goldsmith was born in 1729 in Pallas, County Longford, Ireland, and grew up in Lissoy. He showed a flair for storytelling from a young age but was not a natural student. He studied at Trinity College, Dublin, where he was almost expelled for his involvement in the Black Dog riot (where a group of students released a fellow student from arrest, captured a bailiff and stormed Newgate Prison, which was known as the Black Dog). After scraping a degree, he tried the Church for a while – but this did not work out either. He led something of an itinerant life as a young man, studying medicine in Edinburgh (without graduating) and vagabonding across Europe. He arrived in London, short of funds, in 1756.

In London he turned to journalism, though he also worked as an apothecary's assistant and a school usher. He often contributed to Ralph Griffiths's Monthly Review. He soon emerged as a nimble essayist with an engaging style and a sense of humour that was always tempered by affection. A number of his essays were collected as The Citizen of the World in 1762.

Eventually his work led him into Samuel Johnson's circle. The men became friends, and Goldsmith is one of the most prominent figures in Boswell's Life of Johnson. Goldsmith was one of the nine original members of The Club, a literary dining society founded in 1746, along with Johnson and the artist Joshua Reynolds. He was socially awkward and people often commented on his 'foolishness', but he was embraced by this set of sophisticated men. 1764 was the year he cemented his reputation as a poet with The Traveller, the first work to which he put his name.

Throughout his life Goldsmith was spectacularly bad with money. He gambled, was generous beyond his means, often frittered away what he earned and as a result was frequently in debt and had to resort to hack work. During a period of financial distress, Johnson helped him to sell his novel The Vicar of Wakefield, a humorous portrait of village life underscored with gentle wit. He next turned his attention to theatre with The Good-Natured Man (1768), though it was his play She Stoops to Conquer (1773), a 'laughing comedy' in which a woman poses as a maid in order to get a man to fall for her, that was his biggest success. Like much of Goldsmith's work, it was written, in part, to pay off the debts that dogged him.

Goldsmith died after a brief illness in 1774, at the age of just 43, and is buried in London's Temple Church. Johnson would remember him as a man 'who left scarcely any kind of writing untouched and who touched nothing that he did not adorn'.

Outline of the Play:

The Good-Natured Man, which debuted while Hugh Kelly's latest sentimental play, False Delicacy (pr. 1768), was dominating theatrical London, teased contemporary taste in two ways. First, Goldsmith created scenes that are ironic, farcical, or witty enough to generate laughter. Second, he delineated—that is, in traditional terms, offered up to ridicule—the folly of a culture hero of the age, the "good-natured man."The good-natured man is the sentimental hero, the one who thinks with his heart rather than his head and who leaps to help solve life's smallest distresses. This generous instinct, Goldsmith's good-natured man discovers, has its limitations: One so inclined to sympathize with others may be in danger of losing himself. The twin purposes of the play—literary and moral—actually work together because the laughter that the play generates makes the lesson easier for the audience to accept.

The Good-Natured Man traces Sir William Honeywood's attempt to test and reform his nephew and heir, whose easy generosity (that is, good nature) has led him into extravagance and foolishness. Sir William's plan is to involve young Honeywood in enough fictitious distresses that he will be jailed for debt. Young Honeywood, then, the uncle reasons, would learn a valuable lesson by seeing which of his friends come to his assistance and which of them have only been taking advantage of his generosity. Sir William willingly admits that his nephew's universal benevolence is "a fault near allied to excellency," but as far as Sir William is concerned, it is still a fault to be corrected.

Sir William's plot is intended to demonstrate the need for the sentimental, good-natured man to be shown his follies, and most of the play's other characters reinforce the same idea. Sir William himself is a not very subtle mouthpiece for the dramatist, expostulating precisely and exactly on the hero's mistakes. Honeywood's friend Croaker is the exact opposite of Honeywood; as a man who sees everything gloomily and selfishly, he lets the audience see the defects of the other extreme. Another friend, Lofty, is a character who counterfeits benevolence (pretending to use influence at court on his friends' behalf) in order to puff himself up in the eyes of the world. Lofty is a conscious pretender, while Honeywood is sincere, but the latter comes to see that "in attempting to please all," he "fed his vanity" as much as Lofty did.

Once Honeywood has been arrested for debt, Sir William is pleased to learn, Miss Richland, a woman of independent fortune and a close friend, has secured his release. Honeywood, however, does not need his uncle's conniving to find himself in difficulties. His benevolence, good nature, and sensibility generate other problems, one of the most knotty being his relationship with Miss Richland. Honeywood loves her deeply, but he is content to be only a friend. "Never let me harbour," he proclaims sentimentally, "a thought of making her unhappy by a connection with one so unworthy her merits as I am."In addition to being modest about his worth to her, Honeywood fears that he could never please her guardians, Mr. and Mrs. Croaker. Rather than tackle such obstacles directly, as would the witty hero of a Restoration comedy, Honeywood is content to sigh and wring his hands in distress.

Circumstances, however, refuse to let Honeywood remain uninvolved. Honeywood must watch while Croaker tries to marry his son, Leontine, to Miss Richland, despite the fact that Leontine is really in love with Olivia, an orphan whom he has brought to England from France in place of the long-absent sister he was sent to fetch. Honeywood must not only watch Croaker's matchmaking, but he must also intercede for Lofty's wooing of Miss Richland. Lofty, pretending to sentimental friendship, calls on Honeywood to court the young heiress for him. Honeywood is on an emotional rack, stretched between the desire to please a friend and the agony of speaking love in another person's name: "What shall I do! Love, friendship, a hopeless passion, a deserving friend!... to see her in the possession of another!... Insupportable! But then to betray a generous, trusting friend!—Worse, worse."

Honeywood's dilemmas are solved in the last two acts by accident and by Sir William's intercession. He lends money to Leontine and Olivia that they may elope, but when Croaker intercepts what he thinks is a blackmail letter, Honeywood accidentally sends him after the "blackmailer" to the very inn where the lovers are hiding. Catching his son and "daughter," Croaker praises Honeywood for his help and Leontine damns him for his apparent betrayal. Meanwhile, in speaking to Miss Richland on Lofty's behalf, Honeywood coaxes an admission of love from her. Not realizing that the one she confesses to loving is himself, Honeywood decides that "nothing remains henceforward for me but solitude and repentance."

As the characters gather at the inn for the last act, Sir William sets all to rights on his nephew's behalf. First, he persuades Croaker to accept Olivia as Leontine's bride: She is, Sir William testifies, the daughter of an old acquaintance, of good family, and an orphan with a

fortune. Next, Sir William exposes the pretensions of Lofty so that Honeywood sees he is no friend. Now that his sentimental dilemma between love and friendship is understood to be no dilemma after all, a pleased but surprised Honeywood receives Miss Richland's hand in marriage. The events have been a lesson for the good-natured man, who closes the play with the promise that "it shall be my study to reserve pity for real distress, my friendship for true merit, and my love for her, who first taught me what it is to be happy."

Goldsmith generates "laughing comedy" in the play by several devices: a farcial scene in which a bailiff and his deputy dress as gentlemen, humorous characters such as Croaker and Lofty whose foibles are played on repeatedly, and dialogue at cross-purposes. Dialogue at cross-purposes is one of Goldsmith's favorite comedic devices, one of several dialogue strategies that had made the Restoration comedy of manners so rich in wit. When characters speak at cross-purposes, they manage to hold what appears to be a logical conversation although each is talking about a different subject. The result is confusion among the characters onstage and delight for the audience, which appreciates the ironic interplay of one attitude with another.

The best of these scenes in The Good-Natured Man are Leontine's marriage proposal to Miss Richland in act 1, Honeywood's plea on Lofty's behalf in act 4, and Honeywood's interview with the Croakers in act 4. In the first instance, Leontine twists himself into verbal knots as he tries simultaneously to convince his father that he is making an ardent proposal and to make it lukewarm enough to ensure that Miss Richland will reject it. In the second, Honeywood pleads so eloquently for another that Miss Richland is convinced he speaks for himself. In the third, Honeywood counsels Croaker on how to forgive the eloping lovers—counsel that the old man mistakes for advice on how to treat a blackmailer.

***The Good-Natured Man* as an ideal sentimental comedy:**

The Good-Natured Man attacks sentimentalism, more precisely, excessive sentimentalism. The play itself is a true comedy, not a weeping but a laughing comedy. The underlying philosophy in this play is the same as that of the sentimental drama. It is human perfectibility, or the belief that human nature is essentially good and could be perfect, if it is not yet perfect. Many scholars point out that sentimentalism is based on this principle, and that this constitutes one of the important aspects of a sentimental drama. For example : "The drama of sensibility, which includes sentimental comedy and domestic tragedy, was from its birth a protest against the orthodox view of life, and against those literary conventions which had served that

view. It implied that human nature, when not, as in some cases, already perfect, was perfectible by an appeal to the emotions. “Sentimentalism rests on the belief that human nature is fundamentally good.”Sentimental writings usually reflected the optimistic philosophy Known as benevolism, the belief that people are basically good and that those who are not good have been corrupted by society, especially the fashionable society of the town. *The Good Natured Man* attacks sentimentalism embodied in the character of Honeywood. Excessive sentimentalism is bad. Excessive generosity, excessive unselfishness, and excessive “sensibility” will never result in happiness. Although Goldsmith’s attack seems to be thorough, it has several loopholes as we have seen. We cannot thoroughly accuse Honeywood, because we are told that his nature is not so contemptible. Honeywood should be criticized because of his extravagance, but his vice is rooted in his virtue. He just erroneously uses it, something which he could correct. He sometimes shows real virtue. When we examine the circumstances, his conduct is not so contemptible, and can escape a thorough accusation. He is clearly perfectible, and his human nature is essentially good. Although Goldsmith complains that characters in a sentimental comedy are good, most of his characters are, like Honeywood, good, too. Certainly, however, they do not “want humour.” Rather, they are full of humour and the play is full of deceptions and errors, which make us constantly laugh. Lofty, Croaker, and Honeywood are said to be among the most brilliant of the humorous characters in Georgian comedy. Deceptions and errors are, for example, climaxed in Leontine’s proposal to Miss Richland and in the incendiary letter story. *The Good Natured Man* is thus characterized as “a comedy of deceptions and errors. On this effect level, the play is different from “the Weeping Sentimental Comedy”which “aims at touching our Passions.” The elements of sympathy considered are different. They limit the strong irony of accusing Honeywood the sentimentalist to a certain degree, but never destroy the ruling comic tone. Hence we can call *The Good Natured Man* an “ideal sentimental comedy”- - a laughing play based on sentimental philosophy.

UNIT III

All for Love – John Dryden

John Dryden, Life and Works:

A great playwright, exceptional poet, fine translator, solid critic, and an excellent satirist, John Dryden wore many hats during his living. He was a legendary figure of the seventeenth century who ranks amongst the greatest English poets such as John Donne and John Milton and the greatest playwrights such as William Shakespeare and Ben Johnson. As far as prose, literary criticism and translation are concerned, he had no peers who matched his capability and competence. Dryden is credited with writing the greatest heroic play of the century, "The Conquest of Granada", the greatest tragicomedy, "Marriage A-la-Mode", the greatest tragedy of the Restoration, "*All for Love*", the greatest comi-tragedy, "Don Sebastian" and one of the greatest comedies, "Amphitryon". His writing style was unique, mostly employing the daily patterns and rhythms used in everyday speech. His works so much so dominated the Restoration Period that the phase is proudly remembered in the literary circle as the "Age of Dryden".

John Dryden was an English poet, critic, and playwright active in the second half of the 17th century. Over the span of nearly 40 years, he dabbled in a wide range of genres to great success and acclaim. As a poet, Dryden is best known as a satirist and was England's first poet laureate in 1668. In addition to satires, Dryden wrote elegies, prologues, epilogues, odes, and panegyrics. His most famous poem is Absalom and Achitophel (1681). Dryden was so influential in Restoration England that the period was known to many as the Age of Dryden.

Born at a vicarage in Northampshire in 1631, Dryden was the son of parliamentary supporters, but exhibited royalist sympathies early. His poem "Upon the Death of Lord Hastings" supports a royalist agenda. Three years after graduating from Trinity College, Cambridge, he moved to London and wrote his "Heroic Stanzas" in 1659. After writing the poem "Annus Mirabilis" in 1667, Dryden was named poet laureate of England.

Dryden wrote plays throughout the 1670s, and was at the forefront of Restoration comedy. His best-known plays were Marriage à la Mode in 1673 and *All for Love* in 1678. However, his plays were never as successful as his poetry, and he eventually turned back to satires. In the satires that he wrote, Dryden often took aim at the Whigs, which earned him

attention from Charles II. In the 1680s, Dryden converted to Catholicism and set to work criticizing the Anglican church, which ultimately lost him the position of Poet Laureate.

At the end of his career, Dryden returned to theatrical writing and also took up translation. He died in 1700 from gout.

Dedication:

All for Love begins with John Dryden's dedication of the play to an aristocratic patron, Thomas Osborne. He praises Osborne for his loyalty to the crown during the English Civil War. This praise leads Dryden to a larger consideration of the merits of the English constitutional monarchy, which he calls the best form of government in the world. Dryden thinks that all attempts at "reform" are dangerous, since any rebellion strikes at "the root of power, which is obedience."

Preface:

Dryden then writes a preface about the play itself. The story of Antony and Cleopatra has been "oft told," most famously by William Shakespeare, but Dryden has made some changes. For instance, he has invented new characters and scripted a fictional meeting between Cleopatra and Octavia, Antony's Roman wife. He explains that Antony and Cleopatra are appealing protagonists because they are neither wholly good nor evil.

Historical Context of *All for Love*:

The English Civil War dominated political, religious, and cultural life in England in the middle of the seventeenth century. During the late 1630s and early 1640s, King Charles I experienced increasing tensions with his Parliament. In 1642, a republican Puritan faction in Parliament took power and banned theater on the grounds that it was immoral. In 1649, after years of fighting between republican and royalist forces, King Charles I was executed. Following eighteen years of republican rule, his son King Charles II returned to the throne in 1660. That same year, the theaters reopened. Thus, the "Restoration" of Charles II was also a restoration of English drama. Dryden became a fierce royalist after the Restoration, and for the rest of his life he remained wary of the dangers of rebellion, civil war, and threats to hierarchical authority—a political stance reflected in *All for Love*.

Outline of the play:

After his humiliating defeat at Actium, Mark Antony retires to Alexandria, Egypt, where he remains in seclusion for some time in the temple of Isis. He avoids meeting his mistress, Cleopatra, the queen of Egypt, whose cowardice largely caused the defeat. Meanwhile the Romans, under Octavius, Maecenas, and Agrippa, have invaded Egypt, where, having laid siege to Alexandria, they calmly await Antony's next move. Serapion, a patriot and a priest of Isis, becomes alarmed at a sudden rising of the Nile and by prodigious disturbances among the royal tombs; these events seem to presage disaster for Egypt.

Ventidius, Antony's trusted and highly successful general in the Middle East, comes at this time to Alexandria to aid his commander. Alexas, Cleopatra's loyal, scheming eunuch, and Serapion try to encourage citizens and troops with a splendid birthday festival in Antony's honor. Ventidius, in Roman fashion, scorns the celebration. He tells Antony's Roman soldiers not to rejoice, but to prepare to defend Antony in his peril. Antony, clearly a ruined man, at last comes out of his seclusion. While he curses his fate and laments the day that he was born, Ventidius, in concealment, overhears the pitiful words of his emperor. Revealing his presence, he attempts to console Antony. Both men weep; Antony marvels that Ventidius can remain faithful to a leader who brought a large part of the Roman Empire to ruin through his love for Cleopatra.

Ventidius offers to Antony his twelve legions, which are stationed in Lower Syria, but his stipulation that these legions will not fight for Cleopatra plunges doting Antony into renewed gloom. When Ventidius mentions the name of Cleopatra lightly, Antony takes offense and curses the general as a traitor. After this insult Antony, his mind filled with misgivings, guilt, and indecision, hastens to assure Ventidius of his love for him. He promises to leave Cleopatra to join the legions in Syria.

The word that Antony is preparing to desert her leaves Cleopatra in a mood of anger and despair. Meanwhile Charmion, her maid, goes to Antony and begs the Roman to say farewell to her mistress. Antony refuses, saying that he does not trust himself in Cleopatra's presence. Not daunted by this refusal, Alexas later intercepts Antony as he marches out of Alexandria. The eunuch flatters the Romans and presents them with rich jewels from Cleopatra. As Antony is with difficulty clasping a bracelet around his arm, Cleopatra makes her prepared appearance. Antony bitterly accuses her of falseness and of being the cause of his downfall. The two argue. In desperation, Cleopatra tells Antony that as her friend he must go to Syria, but that as her lover

he must stay in Alexandria to share her fate. Antony wavers in his determination to leave when Cleopatra tells him that she spurned Octavius's offer of all Egypt and Syria if she would join his forces, and he elects to stay when she represents herself as a weak woman left to the mercy of the cruel invaders. Antony declares, in surrendering again to Cleopatra's charms, that Octavius could have the world as long as he had Cleopatra's love. Ventidius is overcome with shame and pity at Antony's submission.

Cleopatra is triumphant in her renewed power over Antony, and Antony seems to have recovered some of his former magnificence when he is successful in minor engagements against the troops of Octavius. While Octavius, biding his time, holds his main forces in check, Ventidius, still hopeful of saving Antony, suggests that a compromise might be arranged with Maecenas or with Agrippa.

Dolabella, the friend whom Antony banishes because he fears that Cleopatra might grow to love the young Roman, comes from Octavius's camp to remind Antony that he has obligations toward his wife and two daughters. Then Octavia and her two young daughters are brought before Antony, Octavia, in spite of Antony's desertion, still hopes for reconciliation with her husband. When Antony accuses her of bargaining with her brother Octavius, Octavia, undismayed, admits that Octavius is prepared to withdraw from Egypt at the news that a reconciliation has been effected between his sister and Antony. Octavia's calm dignity affects Antony greatly, and when his two small daughters embrace him, he declares himself ready to submit to the will of Octavia. Cleopatra, entering upon this family reunion, exchanges insults with the momentarily triumphant Octavia.

Still afraid to face Cleopatra for the last time, Antony prevails upon Dolabella to speak his farewell to Cleopatra. Dolabella, aspiring to Cleopatra's favors, accepts the mission with pleasure. Alexas, knowing of Dolabella's weakness and ever solicitous of the welfare of Egypt, advises Cleopatra to excite Antony's jealousy by pretending to be interested in Dolabella. After Ventidius and Octavia secretly overhear the conversation between Dolabella and Cleopatra, Ventidius, now unwittingly a tool of Alexas, reports to Antony, Cleopatra's apparent interest in the young Dolabella. Octavia confirms his report, and Alexas suggests to the raging Antony that Cleopatra is capable of perfidy. Antony's passionate reaction to this information convinces Octavia that her mission is a failure and she returns to the Roman camp. Antony, meanwhile,

accuses Cleopatra and Dolabella of treachery. Ignoring their earnest denials, he banishes them from his presence.

Cleopatra, cursing the eunuch’s ill advice, attempts unsuccessfully to take her own life with a dagger. Antony ascends a tower in Alexandria harbor to watch an impending naval engagement between the Egyptian and Roman fleets. To his horror he sees the two fleets join and the entire force advance to attack the city. Antony realizes now that his end is near; furthermore, his heart is broken by the belief that Cleopatra is responsible for the treachery of the Egyptian fleet. When Alexas brings false word that Cleopatra retired to her tomb and took her life, Antony, no longer desiring to live, falls on his own sword. The faithful Ventidius kills himself. Cleopatra comes to the dying Antony and convinces him, before he dies, that she remained steadfast in her love for him. Then, to cheat Octavius of a final triumph, she dresses in her royal robes and permits herself to be bitten by a poisonous asp. Her maids, Iras and Charmion, kill themselves in the same manner. Serapion enters to find Cleopatra joined with her Antony in death.

Detailed Summary:

Antony, who along with Octavius Caesar (the brother of his wife Octavia) has defeated Brutus and Cassius (who murdered Julius Caesar), is now on bad terms with Caesar as he loves Cleopatra (the ruler of Egypt) and for her sake he has abandoned his wife (sister of Octavius) and daughters. Caesar (the ruler of Roman Empire) now wants to take revenge from Antony. For years Antony is living in Egypt with his beloved Cleopatra and is quite happy with his life. However when the play opens, we find that he is quite sorrowful and depressed.

Act Wise Summary:

Act-1:

The Play opens with the discussion of some citizens of Egypt. Serapion tells his fellows about the queer supernatural incidents that he witnessed last night. Alexas, the eunuch, who is in the service of Cleopatra comes to them and scolds Serapion for telling his cooked dreams to others and warns him from doing so. Ventidius, a Roman knight comes. Alexas recognise him and tells the citizens that though he hates Ventidius, yet it cannot be denied that he is of the bravest Romans.

As Alexas sees Ventidius approaching to him, he announces that Egypt will celebrate Antony's birthday with great pump and show. Ventidius is displeased with Alexas announcement as Antony's life is in danger and Egyptians are celebrating his suffering. Ventidius goes to Alexas and abuses Cleopatra as 'she has quite unmanned him (Antony)". He says that Antony was a brave soldier but Cleopatra has made him useless with her false love.

Ventidius then asks about Antony and is told that he is quite depressed and does not meet anybody. He also comes to know that Antony has not eaten anything for days. Ventidius, being a close friend of Antony, goes to him. Antony first repels him but when Ventidius weeps, he feels pity and both are reconciled.

Ventidius praises his chivalry and asks him to accompany him to River Nile where 10,000 brave soldiers are waiting for him so that he may command them to fight against Caesar. Antony first denies his proposal but at last agrees to quit Egypt. Ventidius talks bad about Cleopatra saying that she has ruined his life. Antony doesn"t like words against Cleopatra and asks him to prevent such statements. However he agrees to leave her for the sake of honour.

Act-2:

Alexas has informed Cleopatra about the discussion of Antony and Ventidius. Cleopatra becomes sorrowful. Charamion enters and tells about the current situation. Cleopatra asks him about the behaviour of Antony. Charamion assures her that Antony is as sorrowful as she is. Alexas tell Cleopatra a plan by which Antony will probably change his mind. Meanwhile Antony and Ventidius ridicule and laugh at the cowardice of Octavius Ceasar. Alexas enter and tell Antony that Cleopatra has prayed for him and also given some gifts as a token of her love.

Saying this he distributes bracelets to the soldiers. Ventidius calling them "poisoned gifts" rejects them and says, "I"m not ashamed of honest poverty; nor all the diamonds of the east can bribe Ventidius from his faith." Antony, in spite of Ventidius's disapproval, accepts the gift but is unable to wear it. Cleopatra enters. Antony starts blaming her as because of her, his first wife died and he left Octavia (his 2nd wife; the sister of Octavius Caesar) and because of it Caesar has waged war against him.

He also reminds her of the last battle in which she left him alone in the battlefield and she ran away. He also tells her that she was the mistress of Julius Caesar and still he accepted her. Cleopatra, to defend herself first tells him that though she had given her body to Julius Caesar,

she gave her soul to Antony and also shows a page to him on which a message is written which Antony recognizes as the writing of Octavius Caesar.

Antony reads the message and comes to know that Caesar had offered Cleopatra her full safety if she would have handed over Antony to him. Antony melts. Alexas exclaims, "He melts, we conquer." Antony and Cleopatra are reconciled. Ventidius, being annoyed and helpless, goes away saying, "O women! Women! All the gods have not such power of doing good to man, as you of doing harm."

Act-3:

Antony and Cleopatra are enjoying the pleasures of love. Both praise each other. Antony says, "In thy embrace, I would be beheld by heaven and earth at once." Ventidius enters. Antony wants to leave unnoticed but Ventidius catches hold of him. Antony requests him not to repeat the past statements again and tells Ventidius that he has killed 5000 Romans (of Octavius Caesar).

Ventidius says that Octavius is not short of army and danger stills prevails over them. Antony tells him that he had a close friend (Dolabella) in the army of Caesar. But now they (Antony and Dolabella) are not on good terms as someday in the past, Dolabella fell in love with Cleopatra and Antony made him to leave Egypt. Ventidius then brings Dolabella. Both Dolebella and Antony explain how much they missed each other. Now Ventidius and Dolabella criticize Antony for being a servant of Cleopatra and remind him of Octavia. They tell him that he should reconcile with Octavia and thus the danger of Caesar will wither away. Ventidius brings Octavia and her daughters with him.

Antony remains cold to them. Dolabella and Ventidius scold him for his behaviour and force him to accept his wife and daughters. Antony at last accepts them and once again agrees to quit Egypt. Meanwhile Cleopatra is informed about the reconciliation of Antony and Octavia and becomes sorrowful. Alexas once again ensures her that Antony will change his decision. Octavia enters and both the ladies indulge in a heated discussion over Antony. Octavia goes away and Cleopatra fears that she will lose Antony.

Act-4

Antony persuades Dolabella to bid his goodbye to Cleopatra as he lacks courage to do so. Dolabella refuses but when Antony insists, he agrees at last. Dolabella while going to Cleopatra

thinks of deceiving his friend by proposing Cleopatra. Meanwhile Alexas persuades Cleopatra to show Antony that she loves Dolabella and out of jealousy, Antony will return back to her. Dolabella enters and tells falsely to Cleopatra that Antony has talked bad of her. She faints.

Dolabella repents over his lie and tells Cleopatra the truth and Cleopatra also tells him the real motive of showing sympathy to him (to make Antony jealous). Ventidius and Octavia hearing some part of their discussion assume that they (Cleopatra and Dolabella) have fell in love with each other and meeting Antony inform him about it. Antony does not believe them. Ventidius in order to prove his statement brings Alexas, who gives his consent to Ventidius and Octavia. Antony is quite enraged. A little later, Dolabella and Cleopatra enter, who are unaware of the situation. Antony blames both of them for being deceitful. They protest but Antony dominates. Both go away sorrowfully.

Act-5

Cleopatra blames Alexas for brining her to such a situation and orders her to resolve the matter by himself. On the advice of Serapion, she goes to her castle to remain safe. Alexas makes a plan to save his life. He goes to Antony and tells him that Cleopatra has committed suicide. Antony recognizes the innocence of Cleopatra and considers the world and the kingdom to be useless for him without her. He asks Ventidius to kill him. But Ventidius instead kills himself. Antony hits himself with his sword and is badly wounded but not yet dead. Meanwhile Cleopatra becomes aware of the words spoken by Alexas to Antony and rushes to Antony. Both reconcile. Antony dies in her lap. A little later Cleopatra dies in the arms of Antony by making a snake to bite her. Egypt is conquered by Caesar.

Character list:

Mark Antony:

Mark Antony, a Roman triumvirate who, in his role of leader, is caught between concern for his people and his love for a woman. Antony shows various human traits as he tries to recapture his position of leadership against invading forces, as he accepts the friendship of his faithful officers, as he considers reconciliation with his wife and family, as he is duped by clever antagonistic individuals, and as he is shown incapable of adapting to these various relationships because of his devotion to Cleopatra, his mistress. Not strong enough or discerning enough to determine her motives, Antony dies a failure.

Cleopatra:

Cleopatra is the queen of Egypt and mistress of Antony. Steadfast in her love, as she convinces him before his death, she is deluded by some of her servants and shows the vulnerability of the great at the hands of the crafty. Cleopatra is victorious over her peers, in that she averts Antony's return to his family. She takes her life to avoid the celebration of victory over Antony's troops, a defeat that prompts Antony's suicide. Cleopatra glories in imminent death as the poison of the asp she has applied to her arm flows through her body.

Alexas:

Alexas is Cleopatra's eunuch, opposed to his queen's and Antony's love. Scheming Alexas uses flattery, chicanery, and lies to influence people. Knowing that Antony's troops are about to be attacked, he encourages the troops to celebrate in honor of Antony's birthday. Learning that Antony has been persuaded by his own officers to defend his position, Alexas connives to have Antony intercepted by Cleopatra as he leaves the city. Alexas also conspires to arouse Antony's jealousy and to cast doubt on Cleopatra's fidelity, and he lies when he tells Antony that Cleopatra has taken her life. Alexas is brought to justice for his perfidy.

Ventidius:

Ventidius is Antony's general and faithful follower. Seeing through Alexas" devices, he is able to circumvent some of the disaster intended for his leader. Doubting Cleopatra's motives, Ventidius tries to divert Antony's attention from her. Although he is discerning, Ventidius becomes the tool of Alexas in one of his tricks. Feeling that he has unwittingly betrayed his leader, he tries to make amends too late. Ventidius takes his own life when he sees Antony dying.

Dolabella:

Dolabella is Antony's friend, who, although faithful, is banished because Antony fears that Cleopatra may fall in love with the handsome young Roman. Dolabella, dedicated to the Roman cause, attempts a reconciliation between Antony and his family. His affinity to Rome and Antony are reflected also in his willingness to see Cleopatra and to say farewell to her for Antony, who, realizing his lack of will, does not see his mistress before he attempts to renew his fight against the invaders. Dolabella's effort to serve is in vain: Antony believes, despite their denials, that Cleopatra and his young follower are in love.

Octavia:

She is Antony's wife and sister to Octavius, another of the triumvirate. Although she is a woman of charm and determination, Octavia is no match for Cleopatra in the fight for Antony's love. Octavia's announcement that Octavius will withdraw his army if Octavia and Antony are reunited and the sight of his two daughters cause Antony to give serious consideration to reconciliation, but his contemplation is relatively short-lived. Octavia accepts the failure of her mission and returns to the Roman camp.

Charmion and Iras:

They are Cleopatra's maids. Loyal to their queen, they are frequent emissaries to Antony in behalf of Cleopatra. Unwilling to face life without her, Charmion and Iras follow the queen's example and allow themselves to be bitten by the asp that already has poisoned her.

Serapion:

Serapion is a priest of Isis. Although involved in the action of the play, he is principally a spokesman for the author. He opens the play with an announcement of the ill omens and what they portend for Egypt; he also speaks last in pronouncing the valediction over Antony and Cleopatra.

Agrippina and Antonia:

They are Antony and Octavia's daughters. Their appearance before their father and their delight in seeing him move him momentarily to consider returning to his family.

***All for Love* as a heroic play:**

All for Love is a heroic play written by Dryden. It is an adaptation of Shakespeare's Antony and Cleopatra. Dryden's aim was to interpret the highly elevated romantic vision of the greatest of the Elizabethan dramatist in a simplified and restrained manner. Heroic plays were not the result of classical influence. They preserve in their composition the freedom of the National Theatre. They owed much to France, but more in content than in form. They reproduced the extraordinary adventures typical of the eleventh century French novels. Here are super-human feats, Sentiments refined to absurdity, magnificent and sometimes execrable passion. The heroes are models: they are unequalled in valour and are incomparable lovers. The plays are

generally full of magnificent speeches. The influence of the French heroic romances and tragedies explains why most of the themes turn on the conflict between love and honour.

In the preface to All for Love, Dryden says that he has imitated Shakespeare's style But All for Love is regarded as a heroic play. The theme of the drama turns on the Conflict between love and honour - between love for Cleopatra and Antony's sence of duty towards his wife Octavia. Antony is described in the images that suggest his superhuman qualities. Antony throws himself down on the ground as a terrific gesture of torment. The structure of the play like that of the heroics are curbed and the verbal hyperbole is under check. Dryden adopts blank verse and seeks to imitate the elevated style of Shakespeare. In the play, Dryden wanted to adapt Shakespeare's Antony and Cleopatra to neo-classical rules. It has a perfect and complete structure. The play turns on the theme of love and duty. Antony is torn between his love for Cleopatra and duty to his wife Octavia. Octavia is as important a character as Cleopatra. It does not represent the all absorbing passion that is portrayed in Shakespeare's Antony and Cleopatra. The sympathy of the audience is divided between Cleopatra and Octavia.

In spite of the flawlessness of technique and structure, the play fails to inspire that feeling of awe and pity which we feel in reading Shakespeare's Antony and Cleopatra. In fact, the play lacks that emotional fire and ardour which Shakespeare's play does possess.

UNIT IV

Murder in the Cathedral- T.S. Eliot

T.S. Eliot, Life and Works:

T.S. Eliot, in full Thomas Stearns Eliot, (born September 26, 1888, St. Louis, Missouri, U.S.—died January 4, 1965, London, England), American-English poet, playwright, literary critic, and editor, a leader of the Modernist movement in poetry in such works as The Waste Land (1922) and Four Quartets (1943). Eliot exercised a strong influence on Anglo-American culture from the 1920s until late in the century. His experiments in diction, style, and versification revitalized English poetry, and in a series of critical essays he shattered old orthodoxies and erected new ones. The publication of Four Quartets led to his recognition as the greatest living English poet and man of letters, and in 1948 he was awarded both the Order of Merit and the Nobel Prize for Literature.

Eliot's plays, which begin with Sweeney Agonistes (published 1926; first performed in 1934) and end with The Elder Statesman (first performed 1958; published 1959), are, with the exception of Murder in the Cathedral (published and performed 1935), inferior to the lyric and meditative poetry. Eliot's belief that even secular drama attracts people who unconsciously seek a religion led him to put drama above all other forms of poetry. All his plays are in a blank verse of his own invention, in which the metrical effect is not apprehended apart from the sense; thus he brought "poetic drama" back to the popular stage. The Family Reunion (1939) and Murder in the Cathedral are Christian tragedies—the former a tragedy of revenge, the latter of the sin of pride. Murder in the Cathedral is a modern miracle play on the martyrdom of Thomas Becket. The most striking feature of this, his most successful play, is the use of a chorus in the traditional Greek manner to make apprehensible to common humanity the meaning of the heroic action. The Family Reunion (1939) was less popular. It contains scenes of great poignancy and some of the finest dramatic verse since the Elizabethans, but the public found this translation of the story of Orestes into a modern domestic drama baffling and was uneasy at the mixture of psychological realism, mythical apparitions at a drawing-room window, and a comic chorus of uncles and aunts.

After World War II, Eliot returned to writing plays with The Cocktail Party in 1949, The Confidential Clerk in 1953, and The Elder Statesman in 1958. These plays are comedies in

which the plots are derived from Greek drama. In them Eliot accepted current theatrical conventions at their most conventional, subduing his style to a conversational level and eschewing the lyrical passages that gave beauty to his earlier plays. Only The Cocktail Party, which is based upon the Alcestis of Euripides, achieved a popular success. In spite of their obvious theatrical defects and a failure to engage the sympathies of the audience for the characters, these plays succeed in handling moral and religious issues of some complexity while entertaining the audience with farcical plots and some shrewd social satire.

Eliot's career as editor was ancillary to his main interests, but his quarterly review, The Criterion (1922–39), was the most distinguished international critical journal of the period. He was a "director," or working editor, of the publishing firm of Faber & Faber Ltd. from the early 1920s until his death and as such was a generous and discriminating patron of young poets.

Eliot rigorously kept his private life in the background. In 1915 he married Vivien Haigh-Wood. After 1933 she was mentally ill, and they lived apart; she died in 1947. In January 1957 he married Valerie Fletcher, with whom he lived happily until his death and who became his literary executor. She was responsible for releasing a range of editions of Eliot's work and letters, and she also approved Andrew Lloyd Webber's adaptation of Eliot's light verse from Old Possum's Book of Practical Cats (1939) into the musical Cats (1981).

From the 1920s onward, Eliot's influence as a poet and as a critic—in both Great Britain and the United States—was immense, not least among those establishing the study of English literature as an autonomous academic discipline.

Outline of the Play:

Part 1:

The chorus expresses their fear, misery, and unease. Archbishop of Canterbury Thomas Becket has been in exile seven years, and they feel a sense of doom in the air. Three priests further discuss the situation, wondering if Becket has made peace with the king. A messenger arrives and tells them Becket has returned to England and will be back shortly, and Becket follows shortly after the messenger. While the priests prepare, the chorus urges Becket to flee to France where he will be safe. Becket arrives and tells the priests to be kind to the chorus, who know better than they understand.

The first tempter arrives and says Becket could have a comfortable, sensuous life again as the king's friend, but Becket rejects him, saying he is offering this temptation 20 years too late.

The second tempter tells Becket if he would submit to the king he could have earthly political power that would allow him to do much more good in the world than his ecclesiastical offices. Becket rejects this claim, saying the exercise of earthly power without spiritual authority is a delay of evil, at best, and, at worst, a creeping sickness.

The third tempter tries to convince Becket to side with the bishops against the king and increase the power and glory of Rome by overthrowing the monarch. Becket is offended by the offer.

The fourth tempter is a surprise to Becket, who had expected only three. The fourth tempter seems to have a supernatural ability to perceive Becket's inner thoughts and fears, as well as events in the future. He offers Becket his desire: the glory and power of sainthood, and he addresses Becket's fear that even that will not last. Becket is shaken by the revelation that he was seeking the right action for reasons of selfishness and pride.

Interlude:

Resigned to accept God's plan and will, Becket preaches a farewell sermon to his congregation in which he addresses the duality of salvation and suffering and says no martyr is made a saint except by God's design. Unlike most of the rest of the play, this section is delivered in prose.

Part 2:

The chorus reiterates their fear and foreboding as four knights enter and demand to speak to Becket, claiming they have come by order of the king. When the priests try to offer them hospitality, they react with threats. Becket arrives and the knights accuse him of betraying the king and demand he recant his excommunications. When he does not, they declare their intent to murder him.

The priests attempt to drag Becket to safety, but he pauses to reassure the chorus as well as to declare that he is ready to accept whatever comes as is right for a servant of God and a genuine believer in Christ's sacrifice. He opens the door for the knights, and they close in on him. As he is being murdered, the chorus takes over, wailing that a curtain of blood has defiled the world.

In a second prose section the knights address the audience directly and make excuses for their actions, saying in turn that they abhor the necessary violence of their act but that no one can

say they got anything out of it. They maintain they were disinterested parties, loyal to the king and acting in the interest of a strong state, which they know the audience agrees with. In the end, remarks the fourth knight, they were provoked, and Becket's death is rightly viewed as a suicide. They order the audience to disperse and make no trouble.

The priests eulogize Becket but acknowledge that Canterbury has received a saint. The chorus prays, apologizing to God that they are more afraid of temporal and earthly injustice than they are of God's power and love. They acknowledge their part in the state of the world because of it. They ask for God to forgive them and Becket to bless them.

Elaborate Summary of the Play:

Murder in the Cathedral is Eliot's first full-length play. He was asked to write a play for the Canterbury Festival and this was the play that he wrote. It was only natural that he should write on a theme suitable for the occasion and he chose the martyrdom of Thomas Becket, the Archbishop of Canterbury as the subject of this play. But, as the critic D. E. Jones aptly notes, "In his first play Eliot turned immediately to what was to be the central theme of almost all his plays – the role of the spiritually elect in society, the fructification of communal life by the example of the saint and the saintly. And he began with the full-scale study of martyrdom". Eliot wanted to avoid the Shakespearean model for his play which he regarded as the reason of the failure of the 19th century verse dramatists. So he approached the medieval religious drama and the ancient Greek drama to select features of his play. He decided to adopt the versification of the Morality play, Everyman and the chorus of the Greek drama.

The murder of Thomas Becket at the hands of four knights was a historical fact and Eliot has adhered strictly to the historical facts in his play. He focuses on the last days of Becket and the earlier details are filled in during the course of the action through the conversation between the tempters and the Archbishop and later on between him and the knights. So structurally the crisis and the denouement of the play merge with each other. This has left no scope for the dramatist to develop the various stages leading to the final action. This, however, has its advantage also. The swiftness of the action creates a shocking impact on the spectator. Except Thomas Becket no other character in the play has been individualized. This leaves the focus entirely on Becket. The last speech of the knights is addressed to the 20th century audience. In this way Eliot links the past with the present and establishes the contemporary relevance of the play.

The play presents before us the events of the last part of the year 1170. It begins with the chorus consisting of the poor women of Canterbury. These women have gathered outside the Cathedral of Canterbury. They have a foreboding of some impending danger. But they cannot guess its nature or source. Even the cathedral does not seem to provide them any safety. They, however, realize that some unknown force has compelled them to come there and they are going to witness some momentous event. The plentiful October has turned into sombre November and the land has become brown with mud. The coming New Year does not seem to bring any promise of a bright future. Destiny seems to be waiting round the corner. It is the time when Christ was born and it is also the time of the martyrdom of saints. The women recollect that seven years have passed since Thomas Becket, the archbishop of Canterbury left them. He was always kind to his people. But it would not be well if he returns. His return would mean an upheaval in their placid lives.

Whether the king rules or the barons rule they have been largely left to themselves. And they are happy if they are left alone. They have been carrying on with their sufferings and their joys. They have continued with the affairs of their lives, tilling the land, plying their trades and keeping their household in order. They have suffered various oppressions but they have been content with their obscure lives. Now they fear the disturbance of the coming events. Winter seems to bring death from the sea. Nor shall spring bring any happiness. Disastrous summer would burn up the beds of their streams and the poor would be facing a decaying October. But they can do nothing but waitWe wait, we wait, And the saints and martyrs wait, for those who shall be martyrs and saints.

Destiny waits in the hand of God, shaping the still unshapen. Three priests come there and they also talk about the seven years that have passed since the Archbishop left them. They do not know what the Archbishop and the Pope are doing with the English and French kings who are involved in ceaseless intrigues. The third priest says that the temporal powers are involved in endless violence, treachery and corruption. They are governed by one law only – cease power and keep it. The first priest cries in agony that if these things do not cease the poor will forget "their friend, their Father in God."While the priests are expressing their grief, a messenger comes to announce that the Archbishop is in England and will be reaching Canterbury shortly. So they have very little time to prepare for his welcome.

The first priest asks him if there has been any reconciliation between the king and the archbishop. He is sceptical about the reconciliation of two proud men. The second priest asks whether the arrival of the archbishop means war or peace. The third priest comments that there can be no peace between the hammer and the anvil. The first priest asks if the Archbishop is coming with full assurance from the King or only secure in the power of Rome, the spiritual rule and the love of the people. The messenger is sure about the love of the people who have thronged the streets through which the archbishop is passing. He also knows that the Pope and the king of France are fully backing the archbishop, but he cannot say anything about the attitude of the English king. When the Archbishop had parted from the King he is reported to have said that he will not see him again in this life.

Opinions about his meaning vary but in any case it does not augur well. When the messenger goes away the priests begin to reflect upon the situation. They are quite uneasy about it. Referring to the time when Thomas Becket was the Chancellor, the first priest says that even then he was alone, hating and being hated by the feudal lords. The king then loved him, but now pride of both these men stands between them ruling out any reconciliation between the two. The chorus again chants its foreboding of some impending evil. They do not wish the Archbishop to come there: O Thomas, return, Archbishop return, return to France. Return quickly.

Quietly. Leave us to perish in quiet. You come with applause, you come with rejoicing, but you come bringing death into Canterbury. They do not wish anything to happen. For seven years they have lived quietly, living and partly living. Now the arrival of the Archbishop would mean that they would not be able to continue with their old life. The second priest scolds them for speaking in that manner. At this juncture the Archbishop enters there and asks the priest not to scold them. They know and do not know that action is suffering and suffering action. The priests welcome the archbishop and say that he will find his rooms as he had left them. The Archbishop says that he will try to leave them as he will find them. The second priest asks him if his enemies still pursued him. The Archbishop says that at the moment they were waiting and watching. He too can do nothing except wait for the turn of the events.

Then four Tempters come before the archbishop one after the other. Each of them tries to lure him with an offer and an assurance. The first Tempter reminds him of the happy times when he was a friend of the king. It was a life of pleasure and sensuous gratification. He urges the archbishop to give up his ascetic life and return to the good time of mirth and pleasures. The

archbishop tells him that he “comes twenty years too late”. Then comes the second Tempter who reminds him of his powers when he was the Chancellor. He says, “Power is present. Holiness hereafter.”Moreover, as a chancellor he has an opportunity to serve the poor and the needy. When the archbishop asks him what he shall have to do, the tempter tells him to submit to the authority of the king. The archbishop asks him to go way and let him continue with his duties as a churchman.

The third Tempter now appears before the archbishop. He represents the feudal lords and asks the archbishop to join hands with the feudal lords. The archbishop reminds him that it was he who had helped the king in curbing the powers of the barons. So the third tempter also goes away from there. The arrival of the fourth Tempter surprises the archbishop. He had expected the three tempters but not the fourth one. The fourth tempter presents before him the vision of a glorious martyrdom. Kings come and go but the martyrs rule people from their tombs. So he asks the archbishop to go on his way and achieve spiritual glory. The archbishop finds him echoing his own thoughts and the realization dawn upon him that the vision of spiritual glory is no less sinful than the vision of temporal power. He now knows that The last temptation is the greatest treason: To do the right deed for the wrong reason. Thomas Becket thus succeeds in overcoming the temptations that come his way and is now ready to submit to the will of God.

Between Part I and Part II of the play there is an Interlude which comprises the sermon that the Archbishop gives in the morning of the Christmas in the “year 1170. He tells them to ponder over the meaning of the masses of Christmas Day: “For whenever Mass is said, we re-enact the Passion and Death of Our Lord; and on the Christmas Day we do this in celebration of His Birth. So that at the same moment we rejoice in his coming for the salvation of men, and offer again to God His Body and Blood in sacrifice, oblation and satisfaction for the sins of the whole world”. He then explains the Christian meaning of peace which stands for the spiritual peace. Finally, he reminds the congregation that while they celebrate Christ’s birth and death on Christmas, the next day they celebrate the martyrdom of St. Stephen, the first martyr of Christianity. He concludes that martyrdom is never an accident, nor is it a man’s will to become a martyr. It is always a Divine design.

The Part II of the play presents the murder of the Archbishop in his cathedral on 29 December, 1170. It begins with the chorus which creates the atmosphere of that fateful day. The priests enter with the flags of the martyrs Stephen and John and the flag of the Holy Innocents.

And then enter four Knights. The knights demand to be taken straight to the archbishop as they have some urgent business with him. When the archbishop comes before them, they charge him with rebellion against the king and the law of the land. It was the king who appointed him the archbishop and so it was his duty to carry out the wishes of the king. The archbishop denies the charges and says that he does not defy the king's command except in the matters where he has to perform his duties as the archbishop. This enrages the knights and they ask him to appear before the king or face the consequences. When they find the archbishop unmoved they prepare to kill him. The priests hurriedly take the archbishop away from there to the inside of the church and lock the doors. The archbishop asks them to unlock the doors as he would not want the door of the church barred for anyone. The knights enter the hall and kill the archbishop. The play ends with the address of the knights to the audience where they defend their action. They assert that what they did was not motivated by any personal motive but was done in the larger interest of the country. They even go the extent of saying that Thomas Becket deliberately courted his death. So it was a case of suicide and not murder.

Theme of Martyrdom:

T. S. Eliot's Murder in the Cathedral deals with the theme of martyrdom. Oxford Dictionary & Thesaurus defines martyr as a "person who undergoes death or suffering for great cause". In this play Eliot focuses on the martyrdom of Thomas Becket. While going through the historical background of the story you must have noted the personal relationship of Becket with the king when the former was the Chancellor and also his estrangement from the latter when he became the Archbishop. So the story has a very strong personal element. Again, the whole situation evolved because of a political struggle for supremacy between the king and the church.

So the story has a political theme as well. But Eliot in his play focuses neither on the friend-turned-foe theme nor on the theme of political conflict. His sole concern here is to present the theme of martyrdom dramatically. Murder in the Cathedral is not the dramatization of the death of Becket. It is a deep searching study of the significance of martyrdom. Thus though the conflict between Church and state is a recurrent theme in the play, it never assumes major significance. Moreover, the clash of character and personal antagonism is deliberately avoided. The king does not appear in the play and the Archbishop also does not refer to him in personal terms. The characters of the knights are also not individualized. They are not presented as individual characters but as a group. They also assert after they have murdered the archbishop

that they did not act out of any personal motive. Dramatist has excluded all other angles from the play and focused solely on the martyrdom of Becket.

When Thomas Becket returns to England, he is already aware what awaits him there. He has come prepared to lay down his life for the Church. But in the deep recesses of his heart lies the desire for glory that such martyrdom would bring for him. He has not yet become free from this grossness of his desire. So when the fourth Tempter echoes his own inner most thoughts, he is startled. The Tempter says to him: What can compare with glory of Saints Dwelling forever in presence of God? What earthly glory of king or emperor, What earthly pride that is not poverty Compared with richness of heavenly grandeur? Seek the way of martyrdom, make yourself the lowest On earth, to be high in heaven.

Becket asks him who he is, tempting him with his own desires? He realizes the grossness of his apparently selfless and pious desire, and overcomes it: Now is my way clear, now is the meaning plain: Temptation shall not come in this kind again. The last temptation is the greatest treason: To do the right deed for the wrong reason. Becket now is ready to merge his will in the Will of God. This is the true spirit of martyrdom. In his sermon to his congregation on the Christmas morning- a few days before he would be martyred – he explains the meaning of martyrdom: "A Christian martyrdom is never an accident, for Saints are not made by accident. Still less is a Christian martyrdom the effect of a man's will to become a Saint, as a man by willing and contriving may become a ruler of men.

A martyrdom is always the design of God, for His love of men, to warn them and to lead them, to bring them back to His ways. It is never the design of man; for the true martyr is he who has become the instrument of God, who has lost his will in the will of God, and who no longer desires anything for himself, not even the glory of martyrdom." Thomas Becket is not merely preaching about martyrdom. He is now ready to act upon it. So when his murderers come he is ready for them in the true spirit of a martyr. Murder in the Cathedral is a play which penetrates to the heart of the mystery of human suffering and the anguish of surrender.

As such, it speaks of the human condition and may be regarded as a drama of salvation, for is it not said in the second epistle of Paul to Timothy 2:12, 'If we suffer, we shall also reign with Him.'? Christian life is often called an Imitation of Christ. The Saviour's sacrifice is renewed in the martyrdom of Thomas which may be seen as a re-enactment of Christ's death in miniature. A martyrdom is not efficacious unless it is accepted by the great mass of men as 'the

design of God, for His love of men, to warn them and lead them back to His ways…The primary and by far the most complex role of the Chorus is to demonstrate their journey towards salvation…"

Interlude:

The short Christmas sermon delivered by Thomas Becket in T. S. Eliot's Murder in the Cathedral is central to the drama in many senses. By considering the sermon as a focal point for analysis of the play, we might ultimately hope to illustrate some of Eliot's theories concerning the rhythmic possibilities of language, the incorporation of historical materials into drama, the relationship of drama to liturgy, and the proper standards for sermon style. As the Interlude between Parts I and II of the play, the sermon is not only a hiatus in the central action of Murder in the Cathedral but also a balancing point between many contrasted elements.

Eliot's didactic purpose is achieved primarily through the audience's consideration of these contrasts, which point to a definition of the play's major theme. As familiar a form as a prose sermon may be, we are not accustomed to hearing prose from the mouth of Eliot's Becket, a character who speaks in verse on all other occasions. Thus the prose stands out from the texture of its verse framework and calls attention to the sermon as something like a play within a play, that powerful device of the Elizabethan and Jacobean theatre which Eliot had studied so carefully. We must watch a play within a play with a double consciousness, to catch the heightened inner drama for ourselves and simultaneously, to see how it will affect characters who perceive it differently because of their places in the action.

Within the context created by the portrayal of these two highly complex "days," the Christmas sermon occurs in a realm where "stage" time is the same, in duration, as the actual time which it represents— that is, the time (somewhat shortened, to be sure) that it would actually take to give a sermon. However, the meaning and impact of the sermon depend on a sense of transcendent, "Christian" time, in which the historical progression of events is subordinated to the cyclical repetition of the ceremonies of the church year. In this time scheme, Christmas 1170 is the same as the first Christmas, as Christmas 1935, or as any Christmas, in the sense that the birth of Christ is re-enacted in each celebration of it. Only in the Christmas Mass are the birth and death of Christ celebrated simultaneously, and Eliot's Becket appropriately seizes upon this central paradox to under gird his foreshadowing of his murder and canonization.

Importance of the Chorus:

The Chorus is an important constituent of classical drama that T. S. Eliot has made use of. The Chorus in the original Greek drama was made up of a group of people who interpreted the action to the audience, while taking part in the action. It commented on the action, explained the significance of character and action and informed the audience about the events that took place either before the action of the play or off the stage.

Eliot remarked that "...the Chorus has always fundamentally the same use. It mediates between the action and the audience, it intensifies the action by protecting its emotional consequence, so that we, as the audience, see it doubly, by seeing its effect on other people".

The Chorus in the play Murder in The Cathedral comprises the women of Canterbury, They introduce themselves in the 'beginning as the "poor women of Canterbury". Later, they talk of themselves as "the scrubbers and sweepers of Canterbury". They are "the small folk drawn into the pattern of fate, the small folk who live among small things". In other words, they are ordinary people living ordinary lives, filled with routine events.

The Chorus here is thus different from that in Aeschylus's plays. It is much more individualized. It represents, in effect, the great mass of individuals which Christ came to save "We acknowledge ourselves as a type of the common man....". The Chorus embodies the experiences of these common people.

The Chorus is like the Christian choir. As R. Williams says: "It is the articulate voice of the body of worshippers." It works as the Christian liturgy and as a means of religious instruction. "It instructs us on the meaning of martyrdom and is an extension of the liturgy in that it invites us to celebrate the act of martyrdom, as a sign of God's Grace relevant to all sorts and conditions of man."

The Chorus also foretells the future events, acquainting the audience with the coming events. The women of the Chorus have strong premonitions of impending evil:

"Some presage of an act
Which our eyes are compelled to witness,
...we are forced to bear witness."

Role in the Development of Action:-

The Chorus develops the action of the play. It initiates concludes, comments on and analyses the action of the play. “It develops the plot. keeps its continuity, and knits various actions into one composite fiber.”

Some of the greatest poetry of the play are in the lines given to the Chorus and as Helen Gardner says, the real drama of the play is to be found in the Chorus.

The women of the Chorus grow and evolve in the course of the play. They move from the terror of the supernatural expressed at the opening, to the ecstatic realization of the “glory displayed in all the creatures of the earth” in the last scene.

Helen Gardner says that the fluctuations of the Chorus are the true measure of Thomas Becket spiritual conquest. Each time the women appear, there is a change in their emotions. They began by tearing the events arising out of Becket’s return from France. They fear the impending disturbance of the quiet seasons, the unknown, the uncontrollable events erupting into their routine, orderly and settled way of life. They feel that life’s security is threatened without realizing that it is a false sense of safety and permanence. They prefer to be left alone. They do not want to be witnesses to anything; they are afraid to be involved. They recognize that the events of the near future are part of God’s design, yet they think of it as a malady:” Some malady is coming upon us.”

Their fear itself is testimony to their understanding, that to witness is to be involved. The Chorus’s fears intensify as Thomas faces the united attack of the tempters. The chorus feels an oppressive sense of evil at war with good in Thomas. The fear develops into a sudden panic that the Lords of Hell’ will triumph, as Thomas is assailed for a moment by an unqualified skepticism regarding the value of all earthly endeavor.

The women here acknowledge that their spiritual well-being depends upon Thomas. Still, at this stage, they are not aware of the true meaning of safety. They feel the danger but mistake where safety lies. They have yet to learn that safety does not he in escaping suffering, evil and death. The safety that Thomas and they find in the end, is of a different kind.

The Chorus that opens Part II expresses an acquiescence with the need for Becket’s sacrifice and yet they are ashamed of their part in the design - the consent implied by their standing by and doing nothing to stop the murder: “Nothing if possible but the shamed swoon /Of those consenting to the last humiliation.”

They have now consented to “eternal patience” and admit that they are also to some extent responsible for the imminent death of Thomas. They are aware that they have a share in the sin of the murderers. They have a vision of disorder and, as representatives of humanity, feel involved or responsible for this disorder. This will be their fate unless there is atonement. They turn to the comfort of Christ’s sacrifice, which is about to be renewed in Becket’s martyrdom. As the murder is committed, the unknown becomes known and the women of the Chorus have been removed to a great distance from the petty safety that their routine lives held for them.

By the end of the play, they have gained a fuller understanding of the significance of Thomas’s martyrdom. They experience the moment of “painful joy” that Thomas prophesied and admit that his sacrifice was made on their behalf. The Chorus has at least learned the meaning of suffering. They have realized, that they and the mankind that they represent, have to accept their share of the “eternal burden, the perpetual glory”: the burden of sin, the glory of redemption. Thus they have moved from apathy and evasion to a lively faith and humble acceptance. With the change in their attitude, there is, symbolically, a corresponding change in nature. The disorder gives way to order once again. They are gradually integrated with eternal design.” The Chorus provides a background and counterpoint to the action. It helps in the buildup of tension and a strong emotional atmosphere as it develops from its initial resistance and hostility to the final reconciliation to the martyrdom of Thomas Becket.

The Admirable Crichton- James Matthew Barrie

James Matthew Barrie, Life and Works:

Sir James Matthew Barrie was a late nineteenth century a Scottish writer. He prolifically wrote in the genre of novel and drama. His key work is considered to be the stage-play *Peter Pan*.

Born on 9 May 1860, in Kirriemuir, Angus, J. M. Barrie belonged to a conservative Calvinist family. He was a son of modestly successful weaver. He received his early education from The Glasgow Academy and Dumfries Academy. In fact, he was a voracious reader of the works of James Fenimore Cooper, R. M. Ballantyne and Penny Dreadfuls. Despite his earnest wish to become a writer, his family emotionally blackmailed him to pursue a worthwhile profession, for instance, ministry. However, he struck a bargain that he would receive higher

education from a university with a major in literature. While studying at University of Edinburgh, he served as a drama reviewer for *Edinburgh Evening Courant*. In 1882, he earned his Masters of Arts degree.

Barrie worked at a number of newspapers as a journalist. He adapted his mother's stories about the town Kirriemuir in his own series of stories which were published in *St. James's Gazette*. The stories include, *Auld Licht Idylls* (1888) and *A Window in Thrums* (1890) that laid the groundwork for his first novel. After attaining success for Auld Lichts series, he self published his first novel *Better Dead* (1888). It failed to sell out, though his following works earned him success. His popular fiction works include, *Sentimental Tommy* (1896), *A Window in Thrums* (1889) and *Tommy and Grizel* (1900).

In the following years, Barrie directed his attention toward playwriting. He began writing for stage in 1890's and his early works include a biography of Richard Savage that he co-wrote with H.B. Marriott Watson. Later, he produced a successful play *Walker London* (1892). It was a comedy that mocks and ridicules the institution of marriage. The irony is, two years after writing the play he got married himself to an actress, Mary Ansell. However, things did not pan out as he expected and they got divorced.

In 1980's he happened to meet Llewelyn Davies brothers in London's Kensington Gardens. The Davies brother served as a model for his legendary creation of Peter Pan. The character made its debut appearance in the book *The Little White Bird* (1902). Later he adapted the story into a play titled *Peter Pan* which garnered huge success after its first performance. The idea of a flying boy, stuck in his youth, in a magical Neverland world, fascinated the audience. Barrie penned several plays based on Peter Pan and adapted the play *Peter and Wendy* into a novel format.

Subsequent to receiving rave reviews for Peter Pan, he focused on plays for adult audience. Gradually, his plays resonated with dark themes and complex emotions. In 1910, he wrote *The Twelve-Pound Look* which explored the dynamics of an unhappy marriage. It was followed by another serious play *Half an Hour* (1913) about a woman's unfaithfulness to her husband. One of his chief plays, *Mary Rose* (1920), illustrates the story of a boy visited by his mother's ghost. He wrote his final play in 1936, entitled *The Boy David*, about the Biblical story of the young David and King Saul.

Sir James Matthew Barrie suffered from pneumonia in his last days which resulted in his death on June 19, 1937. He was buried at Kirriemuir in the same cemetery along with his parents and siblings.

Outline of the Play:

The Earl of Loam fancies himself a radical, modern thinker, a true futurist and intellectual, and to prove that class is nonexistent and all men are equal, throws a tea for his household staff once a month, and forces his three indolent, fashionable daughters, and any guests they might have at the time, to serve as hosts. This social transgression annoys his entire household, especially Crichton, the butler, a man who holds strong opinions about the dignity of the British ruling class, the sanctity of the established order, and the tendency of Nature to have the elite few rule over the many. To prove his point, Lord Loam takes a group composed of himself, his daughters -- Mary, Catherine, and Agatha -- his nephew (and suitor to Agatha) Ernest, and Treherne the clergyman (suitor to Catherine) on a sea voyage with only two servants -- Crichton and Tweeny, the humble "between maid" -- to take care of them, a form of "roughing it" in the wild Atlantic waters. When the party is shipwrecked on a deserted island, where a living can be hewn from the wilderness only by those with the skill to do so, the admirable Crichton proves to be the most intelligent, resourceful, and able man to command the party. After a brief resistance on everyone's part, survival compels them to follow his lead, and after two years' time, Crichton builds a utopian island home, an ingenious little civilization where he rules, kindly but firmly, believing that on an island, Nature requires him to step into the elite role of master, and the formerly aristocratic others, now his worshipful servants, live a life composed of healthy exercise and willing labor. Crichton's happiness is nearly complete when Lord Loam's eldest daughter, Mary, happily accepts his proposal of marriage. But when the party is rescued, the new social order crumbles as Lord Loam reasserts himself, Mary returns to her stuffy fiance, and Crichton steps back into his former role. Will Mary's mother-in-law to-be discover the scandalous events of the past two years? Will Crichton's sense of self-sacrifice stand up to extreme insult? Will Ernest, who has written a thrilling memoir of the island, starring himself, ruin everything by letting slip the truth? Hilarity and hypocrisy run rampant, and upstairs/downstairs meets indoors/outdoors in J. M. Barrie's fantastical adventure comedy The Admirable Crichton, which explores divisions of social class, the strict hierarchical orders in

place at the time -- and indeed, in many times -- and the effects of Nature on all sorts of behaviors.

Act wise Summary:

The Admirable Crichton (1902), a play by J. M. Barrie, is a satirical comedy dealing with class and social structure, about a butler who rises to become the leader of his aristocratic employers after they are all stranded on a deserted island. Barrie, best known for Peter Pan, was a Scottish novelist and playwright. He was made a baronet and a member of the Order of Merit for his contributions to literature. Barrie died of pneumonia in 1937.

Act I begins at Loam Hall, where Lord Loam, his family, and his butler, Crichton, live. Lord Loam is progressive, believing that class division is artificial and harmful. Although he enjoys all the privileges of the aristocracy, he believes all members of society are equal, and hosts his servants once a month for tea, crossing class lines to treat them as his peers. Crichton, on the other hand, believes staunchly in class differences. He sees social strata as the natural outcome of civilization. The monthly teas are awkward for everyone involved, except Lord Loam.

Lord Loam decides to take the family on a yachting cruise, telling his daughters they can only take one maid along for the three of them. Lady Mary, his eldest daughter, assumes her maid, Fisher, will come along, but Fisher, not wishing to depart on a several-month cruise, resigns. Loam's valet also resigns, leaving the family with neither of their planned servants to accompany them. Crichton agrees to come along to serve as Loam's valet for the duration of the cruise and convinces another maid, Tweeny, to join as well.

In Act II, the yacht has been destroyed in a storm somewhere in the Pacific, and the party is stranded on a deserted island.

The pompous Loam tries to assume leadership of the group; after all, he has the highest rank. But his practical skills are few. Crichton, on the other hand, is resourceful and practical. His survival skills mean that he soon assumes command of the party.

At first, the other aristocrats resent Crichton. Since he does not believe in social equality, he is happy to wield his newfound authority. The Hon. Ernest Woolley, Loam's nephew, clashes with the butler over his obsession with crafting witty epigrams. When Crichton becomes the leader, he dips Ernest's head into a bucket of water for every epigram he makes in an effort to

cure him of what Crichton considers a bad habit. Loam tries to assume leadership of a new group, but they soon realize they can't get by without Crichton's common sense. They return and signal their acceptance of his leadership by eating the food he has gathered and cooked.

Act III occurs several years later. Still stranded, the group has established its own small civilization on the island. The other castaways now refer to Loam as "Daddy" instead of his name or title, and he busies himself with simple odd jobs around the camp. Crichton has the nickname "Guv," and has made a number of improvements to island living, implementing a system of agriculture and building houses for them to live in.

Ernest has emerged as a more practical man and a diligent worker. Mary has proven her abilities as a hunter, adept at killing prey for food. Her younger sisters, Agatha and Catherine, have learned independence. They no longer rely on their maids to cater to their every whim. The maid, Tweeny, proves a competent worker on the island as well.

Their social statuses have been inverted: the others now wait upon Crichton as if he were the lord and them his servants. Lady Mary is in love with Crichton, recognizing his abilities make him superior to anyone else in the group, no matter the setting. Although she is engaged to Lord Brocklehurst back in England, the Islanders have no hope of rescue, and she agrees to marry Crichton. Just as Mary and Crichton are about to be married, they hear the sound of a ship's gun. For a moment, Crichton is tempted to do nothing, avoiding rescue. But he gives in and launches a signal so the ship can find them, resuming his status as a butler as soon as the rescuers find them.

Act IV, called "The Other Island," sees the party back in England, where everyone has reverted to their previous lives and statuses. Ernest has written a book about his experiences on the island, but presents himself and Loam as the leaders and barely mentions Crichton. Crichton is still the butler for the family, but they are made uneasy by his presence because they all remember the truth. Mary is about to marry Lord Brocklehurst as planned. His mother, Lady Brocklehurst, asks Mary many questions about her life on the island, suspicious that she might have been unfaithful to Lord Brocklehurst while she was away. The Loams avoid telling her the truth, but when Lady Brocklehurst suggests Crichton might become Mary's butler after she is married, she reacts with horror and deems the suggestion impossible.

Crichton saves Mary from embarrassment, saying it is "impossible" because he is resigning. He and Mary exchange goodbyes; she suggests that perhaps something is wrong with English society. Crichton disagrees, saying that he will not hear criticism against England. She asks him if he has lost his courage; he says he has not.

The play deals with class issues in a way that would have been shocking to Barrie's audience. Barrie claimed to have considered an ending in which Mary and Crichton do get married back in England, but decided, "The stalls wouldn't stand it." The Admirable Crichton has been adapted for film, TV, and radio multiple times, including a popular 1957 British adaptation starring Kenneth More and Diane Cilento.

Critical Essay:

One of the best of Sir James Barrie's comedies, The Admirable Crichton contains a more definite theme than Barrie generally put into his plays. His satirical portrait of an English aristocrat with liberal ideas is among the most skillfully executed of this character type. Lord Loam, like many liberals, is a kind of social Jekyll and Hyde, accepting the doctrine of the rights of humanity in theory but holding tightly to his privileges in practice.

The immediate inspiration for The Admirable Crichton, as for its successor Peter Pan (pr. 1904), was Barrie's relationship with the four sons of Arthur Llewellyn Davies, whom Barrie "adopted" as almost his own. Peter Pan was based in the stories Barrie made up for the boys, and The Admirable Crichton was based in the make-believe games he played with them, in which fantasies of being cast away on a deserted island played a major part. The games were fueled by his memories of Daniel Defoe's Robinson Crusoe (1719) and of such boys' books derived from Defoe's work as Johann Rudolf Wyss's Der schweizerische Robinson (1812-1827; The Swiss Family Robinson, 1814, 1818, 1820) and R. M. Ballantyne's Coral Island (1858). In all these tales the resourcefulness of the heroes invariably allows them to establish a comfortable lifestyle, thereby demonstrating the superior nature of British civilization. The skeptical Barrie probably used the make-believe games to teach the four boys that lighting fires and building huts are not quite as easy as such stories make out—a lesson that Lord Loam learns the hard way.

The title of the play is as ironic as its contents. The reputation—what kind of reputation is a matter of interpretation—of the original Admirable Crichton, a sixteenth century Scots adventurer who died in a brawl at the age of twenty-two, is immortalized in Thomas Urquhart's Ekskubalauron (1652), for example. The play's contrasting of the English aristocracy and its

servant class is rooted in Barrie's awareness of the difference in outlook between the wealthy but airy-fairy English and the poor but hardheaded Scots. As a Scotsman from a poor background, Barrie was acutely aware of the delusions of the well-off Londoners among whom he had come to live, and the temptation to subject their affectations to the hypothetical test of castaway life proved irresistible. The silliness that moves along the plot is not as casually satirical as it seems; a depth of bitter feeling in it becomes increasingly apparent as the play progresses.

The blue-blooded Lord Loam poses as a believer in the equality of men, although he sets aside only one day a month for the elevation of his servants' status. Crichton, on the other hand, makes an obsession out of knowing his place and insisting that one's rank reflects one's worth. How ironic this insistence is depends on how the part is played—Barrie's notes to the cast are relentlessly sarcastic—but Crichton's keen awareness that worth depends on context indicates that he harbors carefully concealed resentments.

While it is society that determines his worth, Crichton is a dutiful servant, but when the castaways are cut off from society, his true self emerges. When Lady Mary asks him who made up the rule that those who do not work do not eat, he explains that he "seems to see it growing all over the island." Unlike the rules governing London society, it is no arbitrary invention: It is the way things are. This ability to see things as they are and to apply his common sense to them—which fits Crichton for the leader's role on the island—is exactly the same ability that fits him to be a butler in Mayfair. On the island this ability receives the approval of nature. His common sense sends him straight back to his former station when the party returns to Mayfair, but he is determined that it will be a temporary measure. Having lived for a while as his true self, he can no longer be content with a lie.

A last inversion in the plot is Lady Brocklehurst's interrogation of Crichton, who contrives to answer all her questions truthfully while giving a completely false picture of what actually transpired on the island. The result of this deception is that Lady Mary's promise to marry Crichton does not compromise her engagement to the young Lord Brocklehurst. Afterward, Lady Mary asks Crichton whether he despises her for allowing it to remain uncompromised. This question makes a very subtle point. Instead of having Crichton reply to Lady Mary's question, Barrie inserts a gratuitous (and inaccurate) note that "the man who could never tell a lie makes no answer." Shortly thereafter, Lady Mary asks Crichton to tell her that he did not lose his courage; the man who can and did tell several lies calls down the curtain with an

assertion that he did not. The author carefully leaves it to the audience members to make up their mind what he means by that remark. He clearly cannot mean that he intends to resume his interrupted courtship of Lady Mary—he just exerted himself to ensure that she can marry Lord Brocklehurst—but perhaps he means that he considers that his obligations to the family are now finally and fully discharged.

Crichton, as an honorable and admirable man, cannot refuse to fire the beacons that enabled his companions to be restored to their place in society, but now that he sees Lady Mary's marriage prospects safely restored, everything is back in its "proper" place—except for him. Whatever his proper place may be, he must leave in order to find it. The audience is likely to wish Crichton good luck—but one does have to bear in mind the fate of the man after whom Crichton is named.

Characters:

William (Bill) Crichton, the butler to the earl of Loam. Stuffy, honest, and efficient, Crichton has one complaint about his master: He is not contemptuous enough of his inferiors. While in England, Crichton believes that the established social order is absolutely correct. Stranded on an island, however, he believes in the natural selection of leaders. When everyone realizes how efficient he is, Crichton takes command; he is stern, fair, and almost regal in his deportment.

The earl of Loam:

The earl of Loam, a peer of the realm and Crichton's liberal master. In theory, the earl believes in the equality of all members of society. Once a month, he has his servants in for tea. When he has an opportunity to practice his theories in fact, he becomes an ardent believer in the supremacy of the aristocracy. When the yachting party of which he is host is cast away on a Pacific island, he proves completely ineffectual. For a time, he is his pompous self, until he realizes his utter incapability of leading the stranded party. After Crichton assumes command, the other castaways call him "Daddy," and he seems quite happy doing odd jobs around the camp.

The Hon. Ernest Woolley:

The Hon. Ernest Woolley, a nephew of the earl of Loam and a maker of brilliant epigrams. Ernest is a cheerful, egotistical young man about town with enough shrewdness to

avoid work entirely. In London, he idles away his time making witty remarks. Soon after being stranded on the island, however, his talent for wit gets him into trouble with Crichton, now the leader of the party. With every epigram that Ernest makes, Crichton dips his head into a bucket of cold water, thus curing Ernest of a useless habit. Proving himself to be very adaptable, he becomes a diligent worker. After returning to England, however, he reverts to type, and between epigrams he manages to write a book about his island experience, making himself the hero of the adventure. In the book, the contributions of the rest of the party, including Crichton, are dealt with summarily.

Lady Mary:

Lady Mary, the oldest daughter of the earl of Loam. A part of a useless aristocracy, she is haughty, proud, and languorous. After the shipwreck, she shows herself to be adaptable and courageous. Unlike her former self in England, she becomes a useful member of the island society. The hunter of the group, she has the opportunity to wait on the "Gov." (Crichton). If a rescue ship had not arrived, she would have been chosen to become Crichton's wife.

Catherine:

Catherine, younger daughters of the earl of Loam. After being on the island for a time, they also learn to do things for themselves, and no longer do they depend on maids to answer their every whim. At first, the lack of domestic help is trying to them.

Lord Brocklehurst:

Lord Brocklehurst, the man Mary has chosen to be her husband. He is a complete nonentity, a mother's boy, humorless, pompous, correct, cold, and useless.

Treherne:

Treherne, a pleasant and athletic young clergyman. He is the first to realize that Crichton is the natural leader of the group on the island.

Tweeny:

Tweeny, in England the "between" maid. When the earl of Loam decrees that the three sisters can have only one maid among them, she goes with them, mainly to be near Crichton. On the island, she proves to be a useful helper.

Lady Brocklehurst:

Lady Brocklehurst, Lord Brocklehurst's formidable, domineering mother. After the return of the seafarers, she tries to learn what really happened on the island.

Master Servant Relationship:

The characters in The Admirable Crichton fall into two categories: masters and servants. The characters belong to different categories on the Pacific island than they do in London.

Crichton, the main character, is a man in his early thirties. A dignified, respectful butler as the play opens, he is satisfied with his status and performs his duties with distinction. He does not think of himself as the social equal to Lord Loam any more than he would think of the kitchen servants as his equals. In his mind, they have their jobs and he has his. He detests the "democratic gatherings" insisted upon by his master, Lord Loam, because they perpetuate what he considers the falsehood that human beings are, or can be, equal. He participates only because his master orders him to.

When the travelers find themselves on the deserted island, however, it is Crichton who is best able to provide for the group's survival. He can start a fire, build a shelter, hunt, fish, and cookin short, he can deal with this new environment. Crichton, then, becomes the master, and the London lords and ladies become the servants, attending to their duties under the guidance of Crichton. Lady Mary, who had been the most haughty of the nobles and the last to give up rule to Crichton, falls in love with the former butler and decides to marry him. But more than two years after the shipwreck, a ship appears, and Crichton, having invented an electrically controlled device to set signal fires all around the island, signals the ship to their rescue.

To be an indoor servant at all is to Crichton a badge of honour; to be a butler at thirty is the realizationn of his proudest ambitions.

Lord Loam, the radical earl who insists upon equality between noble and servant classes in London, is of no value as a leader on the deserted island; he is simply out of his element. He is washed overboard during the shipwreck because of his ineptitude, and on the island he discards a hairpin he finds because in London he had no use for such things. But, as Crichton points out, a hairpin could have been very useful in such a primitive place.

Tweeny, a young, untrained household maid, makes the sea voyage only because she is the only servant who would agree to tend all three of Lord Loam's daughters. Tweeny's name comes from her social status: she is neither the upstairs maid nor the kitchen maid, but kind of a

helper in between. Her youth, beauty, and willing spirit have caught Crichton's eye before the beginning of the play; but on the island, Crichton gravitates towards Lady Mary, and Tweeny has marriage proposed to her by the Honorable Ernest Woolley. In London Tweeny is illiterate, shy, and speechless around her betters; but on the island, her skills and her pragmatism make her superior to most of the nobles. She orders them about the kitchen, and when Ernest proposes marriage she turns him down.

Ernest, nephew to Lord Loam, is a self-centered young man, who, while entertaining enough in a London drawing room, is a time-wasting bore in the more primitive society of the island. Crichton has to soak Ernest's head in buckets of water to teach him not to spew forth endless epigrams. He does leam, however, to become a productive member of the island family under the strict guidance of Crichton.

Lady Mary, the only one of the three sisters whose character Barrie develops, is more like Crichton than any of the others. She is perceptive, strong-willed, and somewhat haughty. It is she, for example, who remarks that the servants, Crichton especially, do not like the "democratic gatherings." On the island, Lady Mary becomes the best hunter of the group. Although betrothed to Lord Brocklehurst, she wins Crichton's heart and accepts his marriage proposal.

The other characters, the Reverend John Treherne and Lady Mary's two sisters, Catherine and Agatha, are not well developed. Early in the play they serve as foils for Lady Mary, and on the island they are part of the group that follows The Admirable Crichton. The Reverend Treherne, whose talents are defined by cricket matches, is addle-brained throughout the play. At one point even Ernest thinks that Treherne must have used his head as a cricket bat.

The play's theme is expressed several times throughout the action. At the beginning of the play, when Catherine questions Crichton about her father's democratic pretensions, the butler tries to explain that absolute equality is unnatural. He is a butler, not a nobleman; he cannot act like a nobleman, nor does he want to any more than he would like to act like a lower-class servant.

On the island, when Crichton becomes aware that away from civilization the nobles are useless as leaders, he begins to overrule some of their futile, dangerous orders. Lady Mary chides him for his assertiveness. He responds, "My Lady, I disbelieved in equality at home because it was against nature, and for that same reason I as utterly disbelieve in it on an island." No one at first understands the ambiguity of his assertion; but later when he says, "There must always, my

lady, be one to command and others to obey," Lady Mary realizes what he is saying and insists that the butler be loyal to Lord Loam. When Crichton refuses, the nobles dismiss him and stalk off to another part of the island. But since Crichton, the only one who knows how to build a fire, is cooking a pot of stew, the former rulers all return to sit at the feet of their new master, the one among them who can provide food. Nature has decided for them.

Following their rescue, all return to their old social positions. Lord Loam is once again the master, Ernest theself-centeredd playboy, and Crichton the butler. Lady Mary remains betrothed to Lord Brocklehurst, and no one speaks of the reversal of roles that happened on the island. When Crichton announces his resignation, everyone is "immensely relieved." He cannot be the equal of Lady Mary in London society. And since Lady Mary chooses not to leave London, Crichton resigns. He is disappointed in her, but he bears his disappointment with the dignity born of his understanding of the way of the world.

What makes Crichton "admirable" is his devotion to the principles of nature. Except for the relatively minor character Tweeny, only Crichton is selfless enough to disregard himself for the greater good of principle. On the island Lady Mary finds him admirable enough to be delighted with the prospect of marrying him; but back in London she is unable to forsake her social station. Throughout the play the one who must act selflessly to defend the right principle is The Admirable Crichton.

UNIT V

Saint Joan - George Bernard Shaw

George Bernard Shaw, Life and Works:

George Bernard Shaw (1856-1950) was born in Dublin, the son of a civil servant. His education was irregular, due to his dislike of any organized training. After working in an estate agent's office for a while he moved to London as a young man (1876), where he established himself as a leading music and theatre critic in the eighties and nineties and became a prominent member of the Fabian Society, for which he composed many pamphlets. He began his literary career as a novelist; as a fervent advocate of the new theatre of Ibsen (The Quintessence of Ibsenism, 1891) he decided to write plays in order to illustrate his criticism of the English stage. His earliest dramas were called appropriately Plays Pleasant and Unpleasant (1898). Among these, Widower's Houses and Mrs. Warren's Profession savagely attack social hypocrisy, while in plays such as Arms and the Man and The Man of Destiny the criticism is less fierce. Shaw's radical rationalism, his utter disregard of conventions, his keen dialectic interest and verbal wit often turn the stage into a forum of ideas, and nowhere more openly than in the famous discourses on the Life Force, «Don Juan in Hell», the third act of the dramatization of woman's love chase of man, Man and Superman (1903).

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

Other important plays by Shaw are Caesar and Cleopatra (1901), a historical play filled with allusions to modern times, and Androcles and the Lion (1912), in which he exercised a kind of retrospective history and from modern movements drew deductions for the Christian era. In Major Barbara (1905), one of Shaw's most successful «discussion» plays, the audience's attention is held by the power of the witty argumentation that man can achieve aesthetic salvation only through political activity, not as an individual. The Doctor's Dilemma (1906), facetiously classified as a tragedy by Shaw, is really a comedy the humour of which is directed at the medical profession. Candida (1898), with social attitudes toward sex relations as objects of his satire, and Pygmalion (1912), a witty study of phonetics as well as a clever treatment of

middle-class morality and class distinction, proved some of Shaw's greatest successes on the stage. It is a combination of the dramatic, the comic, and the social corrective that gives Shaw's comedies their special flavour.

Shaw's complete works appeared in thirty-six volumes between 1930 and 1950, the year of his death.

Outline of the Play:

"Saint Joan" begins in 1429, in the French castle called Vaucouleurs. It's a cold and sunny morning, but Robert de Baudricourt, a nobleman, isn't enjoying it. He's angry because he runs a farm and the hens won't lay any eggs. Meanwhile, a girl called Joan arrives. She wants to be a soldier. Robert thinks this is hilarious because girls aren't built for war.

Joan tells Robert to show her respect because God speaks to her. She says that she must see the Dauphin of France crowned King. She plans on crowning him herself. Now, Robert fears for her sanity and he tells her to disappear. The problem is that Joan already convinced Robert's friend Poulengey to support her.

Poulengey swears that he's not just helping her because he fancies her. Dismayed, Robert agrees to help. He tells Joan that the Dauphin lies trapped somewhere and she'll never find him. Joan tells Robert to stop worrying because God is on their side. When she leaves, Robert's servant checks on the henhouse. There are eggs everywhere.

The scene changes to March 1429. The Dauphin is a mess. He eats and drinks too much, and he's indebted to many noblemen. He doesn't want to fight any wars. However, Joan arrives and tells him there's no choice. If he doesn't claim his crown, he'll end up homeless and humiliated. With God on his side, the Dauphin can't fail. Everyone at court falls for Joan and her fervor, including the Dauphin.

Joan plans on helping Dunois, the heir to Orleans, win back the city from the English. When the French reclaim Orleans, the Dauphin may receive his coronation. Dunois worries about Joan. He believes that she's succeeded so far through sheer luck. God isn't with her. One day, her luck must run out. Joan thinks that Dunois is hopeless, and she'll take Orleans herself if he won't help her.

Joan and Dunois seize Orleans. The clergy worries what this means for the Roman Catholic Church. If the people believe that God speaks through a woman, then the whole papal

order loses its power. What's more, she promotes the idea that kings answer to God alone. The Church has no authority over monarchs.

Naturally, the Church can't have any of this. The Church rules Europe. Nationalism is strongly discouraged, because no one should have authority over the Church. Unfortunately for the Church, Joan appeals to French nationalists. The senior clergy conspire together and plan on executing her as a witch.

Meanwhile, Joan sees the Dauphin crowned at Reims Cathedral. He is now officially King Charles VII of France. Although King Charles worships Joan, problems arise when he decides to negotiate a peace treaty with English-occupied Paris. Joan wants to win Paris back, but the king has no appetite for further bloodshed.

Joan insists on attacking Paris. The king warns her against it. The Archbishop sees an opportunity in the chaos. He gives the king papal support and he berates Joan for pride. Pride is a deadly sin, and she'll destroy France if she doesn't stop fighting. Joan still claims that God speaks through her and wants her to seize Paris. Desperately out of options, the king agrees to her imprisonment.

Now, it's May of 1431. The Church must decide whether to execute Joan or leave her imprisoned forever. Joan thinks they're all heretics because, if they speak against her, they speak against God. The Church consents to her torture. Broken and miserable, Joan tells everyone that she made the whole thing up. God doesn't speak to her.

Satisfied, the Church doesn't execute Joan. She asks when they'll let her go, but they plan on keeping her locked up indefinitely. Joan sees now that her ploy didn't work. She renounces her entire confession and asks the Church to execute her. The Church burns her at the stake. It's only after her death that noblemen and priests have second thoughts, and they wonder if God spoke through her after all.

Elaborate Summary:

In 1429 A.D., a young country girl known simply as Joan of Arc, or sometimes simply as The Maid, is given an interview by Robert de Baudricourt since she will not leave until she speaks with him. She tells him that she needs horses and armor to go to the Dauphin of France and to raise the siege of Orleans, a city held captive by the English forces. She knows that a siege would be possible because the voices of Saints Margaret and Catherine have told her what to do. Upon being convinced by The Maid's simplicity, Captain de Baudricourt grants her request.

Upon arriving at the Dauphin's castle, The Maid encounters all sorts of difficulties, especially with the Dauphin, who wants nothing to do with wars and fighting. When France's military fortunes and predicament are reviewed, Joan's demands that something be done to improve France's condition fall on deaf ears, but when she is alone with the Dauphin, she is able to instill enough courage in him so that he finally consents to let her lead the army, knowing full well that she can't make France's condition worse.

Joan then goes to the Loire River near Orleans, where she encounters Dunois, the commander of the French forces; he explains the necessity of waiting until the wind changes, but Joan is determined to lead her forces against the English stronghold without waiting; suddenly, the wind does change favorably, and Dunois pledges his allegiance to The Maid.

Sometime later, in the English camp, Warwick, the leader of the English forces, and his chaplain, de Stogumber, are maintaining that The Maid must be a witch because there is no other way of accounting for the heavy English losses and defeats except by sorcery.

The Bishop of Beauvais, Peter Cauchon, enters and discusses the fate of Joan of Arc. Cauchon's principal intellectual concern is that Joan is setting up her own private conscience in place of the authority of the Church. Warwick, who is not influenced by the concerns of the Church, is, instead, concerned that Joan is telling the common people and the serfs to pledge their allegiance directly to the king, whereas the entire feudal system is based upon the lower classes pledging their allegiance to their immediate lords and masters. Joan's simple pleas can possibly destroy the entire feudal system. Cauchon also adds that Joan is trying to get the common people to pledge further allegiance to their native countries (France and England) instead of to the Universal Catholic Church, an act which would further lessen the power of the Church. Thus, for different reasons, both agree that The Maid must be put to death.

After more victories, Joan has finally been able to fulfill her promise to drive the English back and have the Dauphin crowned king in the Cathedral at Rheims. After the ceremony, Joan is anxious to move on and capture Paris and drive the English from the city. The Dauphin, however, is content now with what he has recaptured, Commander Dunois is hesitant to start another campaign after all of the recent successes, and the Archbishop is beginning to find Joan to be too proud and defiant. Joan then realizes that she must stand alone in the same way that "saints have always stood alone," and in spite of the warning that if she falls into the enemy's hands, neither the military, nor the state, nor the Church will lift a hand to rescue her.

Some nine months later, Joan is standing trial for heresy. She has been imprisoned and in chains for these nine months and has been questioned many times about the validity of her "voices." After many complicated theological questions, her accusers force Joan to admit that her voices were not heavenly sent voices but, instead, came from Satan. After her recantation of the voices, her judges then sentence her to perpetual imprisonment and isolation, living off only bread and water. Joan rejects this horrid punishment and tears up her recantation. She is immediately carried to the stake and burnt as a witch; afterward, the Executioner enters and announces that Joan's heart would not burn.

Some twenty-five years later, in an Epilogue, Joan reappears before the king (the former Dauphin) and her chief accusers, who have now been condemned by a subsequent court, which has pronounced Joan innocent of all charges and her judges guilty of all sorts of crimes.

The time then moves to 1920, when Joan is declared to be a saint by the Church. As such, she now has the power to return as a living woman, and she asks everyone present if she should return. This is a horrifying prospect for them all, and they all confess that they wish her to remain dead. Joan then asks of God, "O Lord, how long before the world will be ready to accept its saints?"

Saint Joan" is a play by George Bernard Shaw. It tells the fictionalized story of Joan of Arc, the famed French military figure. First performed in 1923, it followed Joan's canonization by the Roman Catholic Church in 1920. Critics see "Saint Joan" as a celebration of Joan's life and the person she really was, albeit there is a tragic element. Shaw was a renowned Irish playwright and political activist. He received the 1925 Nobel Peace Prize for Literature, and he's remembered as a leading 20th-century dramatist. Aside from his literary accomplishments, Shaw is remembered for his contentious and unpopular political views.

There are only six scenes and an epilogue in "Saint Joan." The play doesn't follow a typical three-act structure. Shaw begins by explaining that, although Joan practised Catholicism, she was truly a Protestant martyr, an early feminist, and a champion of nationalism. The main reason the Church despised Joan, Shaw suggests, is because she challenged patriarchal society and the idea that God spoke through men.

Critical Essay:

Shaw found in *Saint Joan* a fit medium to dramatize his major religious ideas. He had intended to write a play about Christ, but he was not permitted to portray divinity on the English

stage. Yet no play by Shaw succeeds more unobtrusively in carrying his ideas about the Life Force. As captivating a play as *Major Barbara* is, Undershaft has straw men with whom to do battle, and, though such was not the case in *Man and Superman,* Shaw needed for his purposes the lengthy dream sequence that has made the play so difficult to stage. *Candida* might be a more perfectly structured play, but it does not carry so much of Shaw's mature philosophy. Among Shaw's major dramas, then, *Saint Joan* is perhaps the finest blend of matter and form.

Saint Joan is divided into six scenes and an epilogue. In the first scene, Joan appeals to Robert de Baudricourt for horse and armor to aid in the siege of Orleans and to see to the coronation of the Dauphin. Although he at first scoffs at this request, made through his servant, when faced with Joan, he is persuaded by the strength of her person, as everyone else is. In scene 2, the courtiers try to dupe her and pretend that Gilles de Rais is the Dauphin. Not taken in, she carries the Dauphin, too, by her force of persuasion and convinces this weakling that he, too, has a divine mission that he must be strong enough to accept. In scene 3, Joan joins Dunois, the leader of the French forces, and under their combined leadership, France enjoys a series of victories. In scene 4, the Earl of Warwick and the Bishop of Beauvais plan Joan's eventual execution. The Englishman wants her dead for obvious military reasons; the Frenchman, because she is a dangerous heretic. In scene 5, she is told to give up fighting, that there is no need for more victories. She is told to let the English have Paris. Her sense of destiny, however, convinces her that the English must be driven from French soil.

In scene 6, Joan has been arrested. She is given by the Inquisition what Shaw considers a fairer trial than is available to defendants today. She finally recants what the clergymen consider her heresy, but when told that she must remain forever in prison as punishment for her spiritual offenses, she tears up her recantation and goes to the stake under Warwick's authority. The epilogue gets the play back into the comic frame and allows Joan and the rest of the cast of characters to appear twenty-five years later before Charles, now King, and discuss the Church's recent reversal in favor of Joan. There is even a time-shift of several centuries, to the year 1920, so that Joan's canonization can be mentioned. Yet the epilogue ultimately suggests that, were she to return to France in the twentieth century, Joan would again be put to death by the very people who now praise her.

The greatness of *Saint Joan* lies in its scrupulous dramatization of a universal problem. The problem of how one reconciles the dictates of the individual conscience with the demands of

authority is one without easy solutions, whether the individual stands against ecclesiastical, civil, military, or familial authority. The sympathy Shaw extends to Joan in declaring her one of the first "Protestant" saints he extends also to the Inquisitors, who, he asserts, tried Joan more fairly than they themselves were later tried when the judgment on Joan was reversed.

Shaw's fairness is evident in scene 4, for example, when Peter Cauchon makes clear to the Earl of Warwick that, even though both men want Joan captured, they differ in every other respect. Cauchon, Bishop of Beauvais, does not believe that Joan is a witch and will not allow Warwick to get rid of her on this trumped-up charge. Joan is a heretic, much more dangerous than a witch, but he would prefer to save her soul. She is a pious and honest girl who, through pride, is caught up in the Devil's mighty purpose: to wrack the Church with discord and dissension—the same purpose for which the Devil used John Huss and John Wycliffe. If a reformer will not finally effect reform within the pale of Church authority, every crackpot who sees visions will be followed by the naïve populace, and the Church will be wrecked beyond repair.

These arguments are completely familiar to the present age, in which soldiers are told they must obey commanding officers who order the extinction of noncombatants. Can one obey such orders? Yet there surely must be obedience to authority, despite doubts about its wisdom, or there will be anarchy. Humankind has come no closer to finding a solution to the tensions between individual conscience and authority than it had in Joan's day, and it is that insoluble problem that forces audiences to move beyond easy condemnation of the Inquisition and equally easy sanctification of Joan.

Critics have often objected to Shaw's epilogue on the ground that Joan's tragedy is trivialized by it, yet the epilogue is necessary for Shaw's theme: that from the same elements, the same tragedy would come again. The trial at which Joan's judges were judged and she was exonerated was a much more unscrupulous affair than was Joan's trial. Ladvenu, who had been the most sympathetic of those who tried Joan, tells King Charles that the old trial was faultless in every respect except in its unjust verdict, while the new trial is filled with perjury and corruption yet results in a just verdict. Charles, who is concerned only about his having been crowned by a woman who was considered a witch and a heretic, and who is relieved now by having his reign validated, asserts that no matter what the verdict, were Joan brought back to life, her present admirers would burn her within six months.

In his preface, Shaw argues that there was no inconsistency in the Church's reversal on Joan. Although the Roman Catholic Church does not defer to private judgment, it recognizes that the highest wisdom may come to an individual through private revelation and that, on sufficient evidence, the Church will eventually declare such an individual a saint. Thus, many saints have been at odds with the Church before their canonization. In fact, Shaw contends, had Francis of Assisi lived longer, he might have gone to the stake, while Galileo might yet be declared a saint. Thus, the epilogue helps dramatize the complexity inherent in Joan's struggle with the Church.

In none of the plays discussed—perhaps nowhere else in his canon, with the possible exception of *Caesar and Cleopatra*—does Shaw present an example of a character in the grip of the Life Force so convincingly as he does in the character of Joan. Bluntschli is an amusing soldier-adventurer; Marchbanks, a callow poet; Tanner, a failed revolutionary; and Undershaft, a munitions maker who has built a socialist community. Joan is both a Christian and a Shavian saint. She is caught up in a sense of purpose to a degree none of Shaw's other characters is. *Saint Joan,* then, is the culmination of Shaw's art. Although other plays might embrace more of his standard literary and philosophical obsessions, none takes his most central obsessions, those relating to the Life Force and creative evolution, and fleshes them out with such dramatic integrity.

Look Back in Anger - John Osborne

John Osborne, Life and Works:

John Osborne, in full **John James Osborne**, (born December 12, 1929, London, England—died December 24, 1994, Shropshire), British playwright and film producer whose *Look Back in Anger* (performed 1956) ushered in a new movement in British drama and made him known as the first of the Angry Young Men.

The son of a commercial artist and a barmaid, Osborne used insurance money from his father's death in 1941 for a boarding- school education at Belmont College, Devon. He hated it and left after striking the headmaster. He went home to his mother in London and briefly tried trade journalism until a job tutoring a touring company of juvenile actors introduced him to the theatre. He was soon acting himself, later becoming an actor-manager for various repertory companies in provincial towns and also trying his hand at playwriting. His first play, *The Devil*

Inside Him, was written in 1950 with his friend and mentor Stella Linden, an actress and one of Osborne's first passions.

Osborne made his first appearance as a London actor in 1956, the same year that *Look Back in Anger* was produced by the English Stage Company. Although the form of the play was not revolutionary, its content was unexpected. On stage for the first time were the 20- to 30-year-olds of Great Britain who had not participated in World War II and found its aftermath shabby and lacking in promise. The hero, Jimmy Porter, although the son of a worker, has, through the state educational system, reached an uncomfortably marginal position on the border of the middle class from which he can see the traditional possessors of privilege holding the better jobs and threatening his upward climb. Jimmy Porter continues to work in a street-market and vents his rage on his middle-class wife and her middle-class friend. No solution is proposed for Porter's frustrations, but Osborne makes the audience feel them acutely.

Osborne's next play, *The Entertainer* (1957), projects a vision of a contemporary Britain diminished from its days of self-confidence. Its hero is a failing comedian, and Osborne uses the decline of the music-hall tradition as a metaphor for the decline of a nation's vitality. In 1958 Osborne and director Tony Richardson founded Woodfall Film Productions, which produced motion pictures of *Look Back in Anger* (1959), *The Entertainer* (1959), and, from a filmscript by Osborne that won an Academy Award, *Tom Jones* (1963), based on the novel by Henry Fielding.

Luther (1961), an epic play about the Reformation leader, again showed Osborne's ability to create an actably rebellious central figure. His two *Plays for England* (1962) include *The Blood of the Bambergs,* a satire on royalty, and *Under Plain Cover,* a study of an incestuous couple playing games of dominance and submission.

The tirade of Jimmy Porter is resumed in a different key by a frustrated solicitor in Osborne's *Inadmissible Evidence* (1964). *A Patriot for Me* (1965) portrays a homosexual Austrian officer in the period before World War I, based on the story of Alfred Redl, and shows Osborne's interests in the decline of empire and the perils of the nonconformist. *West of Suez* (1971) revealed a measure of sympathy for a type of British colonizer whose day has waned and antipathy for his ideological opponents, who are made to appear confused and neurotic. Osborne's last play, *Déjàvu* (1992), a sequel to *Look Back in Anger,* revisits Jimmy Porter after a 35-year interval.

As revealed in the first installment of Osborne's autobiography, *A Better Class of Person* (1981), much of the fire in *Look Back in Anger* was drawn from Osborne's own early experience. In it he attacks the mediocrity of lower-middle-class English life personified by his mother, whom he hated, and discusses his volatile temperament. The second part of his autobiography appeared in 1991 under the title *Almost a Gentleman*. Osborne was married five times.

Having come to the stage initially as an actor, Osborne achieved note for his skill in providing actable roles. He is also significant for restoring the tirade—or passionately scathing speech—to a high place among dramatic elements. Most significantly, however, he reoriented British drama from well-made plays depicting upper-class life to vigorously realistic drama of contemporary life.

Outline of the Play:

John Osborne's Look Back in Anger didn't change the face of British theatre overnight, but it did pave the way for that change. The play 'energised a generation', according to The Guardian's theatre critic Michael Billington, but only after an extract had been broadcast on the BBC.

Written when he was 26, Osborne's play was an attack on the restrictiveness and division of 1950s England; a yell of frustration and discontent. The play explores the relationship between intelligent but disaffected Jimmy Porter – the original 'angry young man' – and his wife, Alison. Class is a major factor in the Porters' marriage. Jimmy is from a working-class background, while Alison is from an upper-middle-class military family.

The play takes place in the Porters' cramped one-room flat in the Midlands. Jimmy and their lodger Cliff discuss politics while Alison does the ironing, Jimmy's temper becoming more and more volatile, his ire shifting towards Alison and her family. The ironing board ends up being overturned, and Alison's arm is burned.

Alison's friend Helena, an actress, comes to stay. Jimmy can't stand her and this further inflames his temper. It also transpires that Alison is pregnant. Helena believes that Alison needs rescuing from a relationship that she sees as little more than an act of rebellion against her family. After she sends a telegram to Alison's parents, Alison's colonel father comes to take her

home. In this scene Alison encapsulates the social and generational divide, telling him: ‘You’re hurt because everything is changed. Jimmy is hurt because everything is the same’.

After finding Alison’s goodbye note, Jimmy continues to rage at Helena, only for Act 2 to end with them kissing and falling onto the bed together. In Act 3, Helena and Jimmy are living together, and there is a replay of the ironing board scene to illustrate the nature of their relationship. But when Helena discovers that Alison has lost the baby she regrets what she has done and decides to leave, too. The play ends with a scene of reconciliation between Jimmy and Alison.

The verbal repartee of the music hall was a big influence on Osborne, and it can be heard in much of the dialogue and seen in the interactions between characters. According to Michael Billington, Look Back in Anger, much like Samuel Beckett’s Waiting for Godot, is a play ‘all about waiting and the agony of hope endlessly deferred’.

Act wise Summary:

ACT I: The play opens with a description of the setting and the scene. Act I takes place on an evening in April. The setting is the Porter’s attic apartment. It is a small room with simple, sparse furniture. It is cluttered with items such as “books, neckties, and odds and ends, including a large, tattered toy teddy bear and soft, woolly squirrel.” There is a large window in the attic, but the only light comes from a skylight, so the room is somewhat dim. As the curtain rises, the audience sees Jimmy Porter and Cliff Lewis seated in two shabby armchairs. They are reading newspapers which cover the top half of their bodies so that the audience can only see their legs. Jimmy is smoking a cigar and wearing a tweed jacket and flannel pants.

The opening of the play gives detailed descriptions of the disposition of each character. Jimmy, who is about 25 years old, is described as “a disconcerting mixture of sincerity and cheerful malice, of tenderness and freebooting cruelty; restless, importunate, full of pride, a combination which alienates the sensitive and insensitive alike.” Cliff, who is about the same age as Jimmy, is almost the opposite of Jimmy. He is relaxed, “almost to lethargy,” and easy going. Cliff demands other people’s love, while Jimmy mostly repels it.

Also in the attic is Alison Porter, Jimmy’s wife. She is a tall, slim, dark girl whose personality is not immediately apparent to the audience. She “is tuned in a different key, a key of well-bred malaise that is often drowned in the robust orchestration of the other two.” She is ironing a pile of laundry.

Jimmy throws his paper down in disgust. He complains that all the book reviews sound the same and that the papers provide no intellectual stimulation. He asks Cliff antagonistically if the papers make him feel ignorant. He calls Cliff "a peasant." The audience comes to understand that Cliff has not received the same education that Jimmy has received. Jimmy then turns his antagonism towards Alison who is only half listening to his rantings. Cliff tries to deflect some of Jimmy's anger away from her, but Jimmy keeps on with his ranting. Jimmy obviously feels that Alison is not as brilliant as she and others think she is. Jimmy then becomes upset that nobody is listening to him when he speaks and he steals the newspaper from Cliff.

Jimmy tells the other two that he is hungry and Cliff mocks him for always wanting food. Cliff tells him that he will end up being fat one day, but Jimmy tells him that won't happen because "We just burn everything up." He demands that Cliff make him some tea, and Cliff complains because he's already had a potful that day. Cliff then complains that Jimmy had creased his paper and Jimmy tells him that "I'm the only one who knows how to treat a paper, or anything else, in this house."

Cliff is kind to Alison. He tells her to leave the laundry and come sit down and she comes over where Cliff, in a flirting manner, bites her fingers and tells her she's beautiful. Jimmy is not bothered by this. He only looks at her and says, "That's what they all tell me." They begin to discuss the articles in the paper by the Bishop of Bromley who urges all Christians to support the manufacture of the H-bomb and denies the existence of class distinctions. Jimmy discusses some of the other odd articles in the paper. A woman had several ribs broken and her head kicked when a crowd rushed to the stage at a meeting of an American evangelist. He mocks an article on love advice for young women. When Alison suggests that they go to the movies, Jimmy declares that he will not have his evening ruined. He then goes on a rant about a journalist who wrote a poor piece in the paper. Jimmy proclaims that nobody reads the paper because "Nobody can be bothered. No one can raise themselves out of their delicious sloth."

Cliff's trousers are wrinkled and Alison offers to iron them. Cliff wants a pipe, but cannot stand the smell of it and so starts to smoke a cigarette even though Jimmy warns him they will upset his ulcers. Jimmy begins to reflect on the state of the English nation. He remembers an old saying about England: "...we get our cooking from Paris (that's a laugh), our politics from Moscow, and our morals from Port Said." He knows that he shouldn't be very patriotic, but he says sarcastically that he can't help but idealize Alison's father's time spent in the British army

in India. He decides that "it's pretty dreary living in the American Age -- unless you're an American of course."

Cliff and Jimmy discuss whether Alison's friend Webster might come over to visit. Jimmy hopes not, but Alison notes that he is the only person that understands him. Jimmy says that Webster exhilarates him in the same way that one of his old girlfriends, Madeline, did. Jimmy talks about Alison's brother, Nigel. Nigel was a soldier in the British army and is moving up in the world. Jimmy thinks he'll be in Parliament one day, though he also believes that Nigel "seek(s) sanctuary in his own stupidity." Jimmy continues to disparage Alison and her family. He calls them "sycophantic, phlegmatic and pusillanimous." Jimmy then tries to explain what the word "pusillanimous" means. He tells her it means "Wanting of firmness of mind, of small courage, having a little mind, mean spirited, cowardly, timid of mind." He tells her that this word describes her perfectly. Alison's face contorts in anger, but the feeling passes and she returns to ironing.

The concert that Jimmy wants to listen to comes on the radio and Alison finishes ironing Cliff's pants. Alison keeps ironing and Jimmy complains that he can't hear the music because of the noise. He angrily turns off the radio and Alison chides him for acting like a child. He begins to yell about how loud women are and describes her clumsiness by telling her she is like "a dirty old Arab, sticking his fingers into some mess of lamb fat and gristle." Church bells start ringing outside and this noise upsets Jimmy even more. Cliff, trying to improve the mood, pretends to dance with Jimmy to the bells and grips him in a vice while Jimmy protests.

Cliff and Jimmy wrestle and Jimmy pushes Cliff into Alison and her ironing board. They fall to the floor together and Alison burns her arm on the iron. Jimmy tries to apologize, but Alison yells for him to leave the room. He goes into his room and begins to play his trumpet. Cliff sits down with her and gets some soap to wash the wound. Alison confides to him that "I don't think I can take much more...I don't think I want anything more to do with love."

Cliff tells Alison that she is too young to give up, but she responds that these days she cannot remember what it was like to be really young and carefree. She knows Jimmy feels the same way. As Cliff continues to bandage her arm, she tells him that she is pregnant and that she has not told Jimmy. He asks her if it is "too late to avert the situation," and she tells him she doesn't know. He urges her to tell Jimmy because Jimmy does love her, even though he is cruel. She believes that Jimmy will suspect that she is attempting to trap him in a life with her. She tells

Cliff that Jimmy has "his own private morality" and that he had been angry when he had slept with her on their wedding night and found out she was a virgin, as if "an untouched woman would defile him."

Cliff tells her that he understands Jimmy in some way. They both come from working class people and Jimmy likes him for that. In Jimmy's words, it is because Cliff is "common as dirt...." Jimmy reenters the room and sees Cliff and Alison touching and close together on the couch, but he doesn't say anything and sits down to read the paper. He makes fun of the two of them and how physically affectionate they are with each other. Jimmy tells Cliff that he's just a "randy little mouse" and Cliff begins to run and dance around the flat like a mouse. He grabs Jimmy's foot and they begin to tussle. When they finish playing, Alison gives Cliff a half a crown for cigarettes and he exits to go to the store.

Jimmy enters again in an apologetic mood. He tells Alison that he is sorry that he pushed her down. He tells her that "There's hardly a moment when I'm not -- watching and wanting you." He acknowledges that sometimes he takes her for granted and Alison warms to his affection. Jimmy suggests that they have sex, but Alison shyly reminds him that Cliff will return soon. Jimmy reflects that Cliff is probably the only friend he has, though he remembers all his former friends from school. He and Alison tease each other, him calling her a squirrel and she calling him a bear. She makes squirrel noises as they hug each other.

Cliff enters and tells them he couldn't even leave the house because Mrs. Drury, their landlord, wouldn't let him get away. Cliff tells Alison that she has a call from Helena Charles. Alison leaves to take the call. Jimmy tells Cliff that this is one of Alison's old friends and he calls her a "bitch." He explains that she is one of his "natural enemies." Jimmy reflects that he has "had enough of this 'expense of spirit' lark, as far as women are concerned." He thinks that they have a "cause" and that plenty of women have a "revolutionary fire" to them. Most people don't like him because he's got a "strawberry mark" to him as a "right-wing deviationist." He goes through Alison's purse and finds a letter from her mother. He is angry because Alison and her mother write letters but never mention his name because it's a "dirty word" to them.

Alison reenters and tells Jimmy that Helena is coming to stay with them while she is in town. Jimmy is angry. He starts to verbally assault his wife, telling her that if only she "could have a child, and it would die...Let it grow, let a recognisable human face emerge from that little mass of India rubber and wrinkles" than she would understand the ways of the world. He tells

her that she devours his passion as a python devours an animal. Alison stands over the stove and trembles as Cliff watches the scene.

Act II opens two weeks later. Alison is boiling water for tea on a Sunday afternoon. The newspapers are again spread out across the floor of the attic apartment. Alison is only wearing a slip and as she begins to dress, Helena enters. Helena is described as the same age and build as Alison, but with a "sense of matriarchal authority" that "makes most men who meet her anxious, not only to please but impress...." Jimmy is vehemently opposed to her in every way. Though she always retains her dignity in the face of Jimmy's assaults, "the strain of this is beginning to tell on her a little."

Helena places a bowl of salad on the table. Alison expresses her gratitude for her help in the last couple of weeks. She tells her it's been nice to have another woman around to help around the house. When Helena is there, "Everything seems to be very different...." Jimmy is in Cliff's room playing his trumpet very loudly. Alison worries that Mrs. Drury is going to kick them out of the apartment. Helena notes that even his trumpet playing sounds angry. She believes that Jimmy's anger is "horrifying...and oddly exciting."

Helena changes the conversation to Cliff. She asks Alison if they are in love and Alison denies it, though she does admit that their affection towards each other is a "relaxed, cheerful sort of thing, like being warm in bed." Helena asks if Jimmy notices their affection, and Alison tells her that the situation isn't easy to explain. Jimmy demands allegiance from those around him; allegiance both to himself and to the things he believes in as well as the things from his past. He even expects Alison to be loyal to his past girlfriends. Alison admits that, though she's tried, she just can't feel the way that Jimmy feels towards some people and some things.

She tells Helena the story of their first few months of marriage. Without any money or jobs, they went to live with Hugh Tanner, a friend of Jimmy's. Alison and Hugh could tell immediately that they didn't like each other. Hugh was even more angry and insulting than Jimmy and Alison realized that for the first time in her life she was cut off from all the people in her life. Her mother and father had made her sign over all her money and assets when she married Jimmy because they believed him to be "utterly ruthless." Her brother, Nigel, had been running for Parliament at the time and so didn't have the time for anyone but his constituents.

Alison tells her about the months they lived with Hugh. They would go and crash the parties of the wealthy families they had known in London. They would invite themselves in and

help themselves to all the food and drink and cigars of the party. Out of all the parties they crashed, only one family kicked them out when Hugh tried to seduce a young girl. These old money families were too polite to turn them away and, besides, Alison believes they felt sorry for them. She recounts to Helena the first time that she and Jimmy met at a party. It had been soon after her mother and father returned from India. Because they were distant, she immediately gravitated towards this young man. "Everything about him seemed to burn, his face, the edges of his hair glistened and seemed to spring off his head, and his eyes were so blue and full of the sun." She believes that because her family distrusted Jimmy he did everything he could to take her from them and marry her. After a few months, Hugh decided that he wanted to move overseas in order to work on his novel. He believed "England was finished for us, anyway." Jimmy did not want to go and told Hugh that he should not leave his poor, frail mother, but Hugh decided to leave anyway. A bitter fight broke out between the two of them.

Helena changes the conversation and tells Alison that she must either tell Jimmy that he is going to be a father or else leave him. Alison points towards the stuffed squirrel and teddy bear in the corner of the room and tells Helena that those animals represent the two of them. She tells her about the game they play in which she pretends to be a squirrel and he pretends to be a bear. "It was the one way of escaping from everything...We could become little furry creatures with little furry brains. Full of dumb, uncomplicated affection for each other." Helena warns that she must fight Jimmy or else he will kill her. Cliff enters.

Cliff yells to Jimmy to come in and get his tea. Cliff asks Helena and Alison where they are going, and they tell him they are going to church. They invite him, but he stammers and tells them that he hasn't yet read the papers. Jimmy enters and begins bantering with Cliff. He asks him why he would want to read the papers since he has no intellect or curiosity and is nothing but "Welsh trash." Cliff, with good nature, agrees. Jimmy then turns his venom towards Alison's friends and family, those "old favourites, your friends and mine: sycophantic, phlegmatic, and, of course, top of the bill -- pusillanimous."

Jimmy tells the group that he has made up a song entitled "You can quit hanging round my counter Mildred 'cos you'll find my position is closed." He begins to sing the verse. It's a song about how he is tired of women and would rather drink and be alone than have to deal with their problems. He turns to Helena and tells her that he also wrote a poem, one that she will like

because "It's soaked in the theology of Dante, with a good slosh of Eliot as well." It is entitled "The Cess Pool," and Jimmy says he is "a stone dropped in it...."

Helena confronts him and asks him why he must be such an unpleasant person to be around all the time. Jimmy becomes delighted that she has taken his bait and continues to goad her on. He sees Alison dressing in the mirror in the corner of the room and asks her where she is going. She tells him she is going to church and Jimmy is genuinely surprised. He asks her if she has lost her mind. "When I think of what I did, what I endured to get you out -- ..." Alison bursts into anger at this, sarcastically telling Jimmy that she remembers how he rescued her from her family so that she would never have to suffer with them again.

Jimmy then goes on a rant on Alison's mother. He tells how "There is no limit to what the middle-aged mummy will do in the holy crusade against ruffians like me." He is trying to prod Alison into anger. He recounts how Alison's mother was suspicious of his long hair and how she hired detectives to watch him. Cliff tries to calm the situation, but Jimmy tells him that fighting is all he's good at now. Jimmy accuses Alison of having been influenced by Helena, that "genuflecting sin jobber...." Helena tries to tell Jimmy to back off his anger, but this only makes him more eager to fight. He tells Alison that her mother should die and that when the worms eat her they'll get a bad case of indigestion for their troubles. He looks at Helena and asks her what is wrong and she tells him that she fells "Sick with contempt and loathing." Jimmy tells them that one day, when he is done running his sweet-stall, he will write a book about everyone in the room, a recollection of their time together "in fire, and blood. My blood."

Helena asks why Jimmy is being so obstinate. She asks him if he thinks the world has treated him badly and Alison interjects, telling her to not take away his suffering because "he'd be lost without it." Jimmy tries to figure out why Helena is still staying with them since her play finished eight days earlier. He believes that she is up to no good and trying to influence Alison in some way. He tells Helena that the last time she was in a church was on their wedding day. They had had to sneak away to a church where the vicar didn't know Alison's father so they could be secretly married. Her parents, however, found them anyway and were the only people in the church when the two were married. Jimmy tells Alison that Helena is nothing but a cow and, furthermore, a "sacred cow as well." Cliff tries to tell Jimmy that he's gone too far, but Jimmy doesn't listen.

Jimmy then gives a monologue on Helena's life. He says that she is "an expert in the New Economics -- the Economics of the Supernature." Her type has thrown out "Reason and Progress" and look towards the past, the Dark Ages, to find a way around the dark problems of the twentieth century. Her spirituality, he ways, cuts her off "from all the conveniences we've fought to get for centuries." She is full of "ecstatic wind...." Helena calmly tells him that she will slap his face and, sensing a challenge, Jimmy rises and starts to slowly move his face towards her. He asks her if she's ever watched someone die. She starts to move away, but he makes her face him. He tells her that if she hits him and tries "to cash in on what she thinks is my defenseless chivalry by lashing out with her frail little fists, I lash back at her." He asks her again if she has ever seen someone die. She answers "no." Jimmy then proceeds to tell her about how he watched his father die for a year when he was ten years old. His father had come home from the war in Spain where "certain god-fearing gentlemen...had made such a mess of him, he didn't have long to live." Jimmy recounts how his family had abandoned the old man and only Jimmy had been there to listen to his father's ramblings; "the despair and the bitterness, the sweet, sickly smell of a dying man." He tells Helena that "I knew more about -- love...betrayal...and death, when I was ten years old than you will probably ever know all your life." Helena rises, tells Alison that it's time to go, and exits.

Jimmy addresses Alison in a whisper. He wants to know why his suffering means nothing to her. He calls her a "Judas" and a "phlegm" and, finally fed up, Alison throws a glass across the room where it shatters. She tells him that all she wants is peace and goes to the bed to put on her shoes while Jimmy continues to rant. Jimmy responds that "My heart is so full, I feel ill -- and she wants peace!" Jimmy asks which of them is really the angry and disturbed one. He turns to Cliff and tells him that he wishes that he would try loving her so he could know the difficultly of it. He tells Alison that he wants to be there when she comes groveling back to him. Helena enters with two prayer books and tells Jimmy that there is a phone call for him. Jimmy exits.

Helena turns on Cliff now and asks him why he does nothing when Jimmy is so angry. He tells her that, though things are always bad, they have been worse since she arrived. He tells her that most of the time things are like "a very narrow strip of plain hell. But where I come from we're used to brawling and excitement." He tells her that he loves both Alison and Jimmy very much and that he pities everyone involved.

Helena tells Alison that she has sent a wire to Alison's father to come and get her. She asks if Alison will agree to leave Jimmy and return home and Alison says that she will. Alison seems numb and distant and Helena knows that she must take charge of the situation. Jimmy enters solemnly. He tells Cliff that Hugh's mom has had a stroke and is dying and that he must leave to go see her. Cliff leaves to make arrangements for Jimmy's trip. Jimmy becomes nostalgic and remembers how Hugh's mother had gushed over how beautiful Alison was after they had been married. Jimmy tells Alison that he needs her to come with him. Church bells ring and Alison stands in the middle of the room, undecided on whether to leave with Helena or stay with Jimmy. She walks over to the table and picks up her prayer book and leaves. Jimmy, stunned, leans on the chest of drawers and picks up the teddy bear. He throws it across the room and then falls on the bed, burying himself in the covers.

The second scene of Act Two opens on the following evening. Alison is at her dressing table, packing a suitcase. Her father, Colonel Redfern, sits in a chair on the other side of the room. The Colonel is a handsome man in his late sixties. He is slightly withdrawn. He was a dedicated and strict soldier for forty years but now he has an air of kindness and gentleness to him. He feels disturbed and bewildered by everything that is happening to his daughter.

The Colonel asks where Jimmy has gone and Alison tells him that he's gone to visit Mrs. Tanner in London. She explains how Mrs. Tanner set Jimmy up with the sweet stall and how he has remained fond of her through the years. The Colonel asks why Jimmy, an educated young man, decided to work a sweet stall and Alison tells him that he tried many things, "journalism, advertising, even vacuum cleaners for a few weeks. He seems to have been as happy doing this as anything else."

Alison and her father begin to discuss her life with Jimmy. She tells him of how Jimmy hates all of them and how he believes it is "high treason" for Alison to be in touch with her family. The Colonel admits to Alison that he believes her mother went too far in castigating Jimmy. He tells her about how her mother hated Jimmy and believed that he was a criminal. He admits that "All those inquiries, the private detectives -- the accusations. I hated every moment of it." Alison says that she believes her mother was only trying to protect her and the Colonel says that he wishes they had never interfered with their daughter's life.

The Colonel proffers the idea that perhaps he and Alison are to blame for everything that has happened. Alison is shocked at this, but the Colonel explains to her that she is like him. He

tells her that she likes “to sit on the fence because it’s comfortable and more peaceful.” She reminds him that he had threatened her, but that she was the one that married him anyway.

Alison tells the Colonel what Jimmy said about him and her mother. She tells the Colonel that Jimmy called her mother an “over privileged old bitch” and called the Colonel a plant left over “from the Edwardian Wilderness that can’t understand why the sun isn’t shining any more.” The Colonel asks her why he married her if he felt like this. Alison answers that this is “the famous American question -- you know, the sixty-four dollar one!” She says that he perhaps married her for revenge. Perhaps, she thinks, Jimmy thought that “he should have been another Shelley, and can’t understand now why I’m not another Mary, and you’re not William Godwin.” She says that when she met Jimmy he threw down a gauntlet for her; a challenge that she felt compelled to rise up and meet. The Colonel only answers that he doesn’t understand why young people cannot simply marry for love.

The Colonel concedes to Alison that, perhaps, Jimmy is right in calling him an old Edwardian. He tells her the story of how he left England in 1914 to command the Maharajah’s army in India. He loved India and did not return to Britain until 1947. He discovered that, by then, the England he had left was no longer there. He remembers how happy he was in India and remembers the “last day the sun shone was when that dirty little train steamed out of that crowded, suffocating Indian station...I knew in my heart it was all over then.” Alison hears the story and cannot help but compare the two men in her life: “You’re hurt because everything is changed. Jimmy is hurt because everything is the same. And neither of you can face it.”

Alison picks up the squirrel from the dresser and begins to put it in her suitcase, then she stops and puts it back. For a moment, “she seems to be standing on the edge of choice.” She makes a choice and goes to her father, leans against him and weeps. The Colonel tells her she’s taking a big step in deciding to leave with him. Alison finishes packing her bag. Helena enters and Alison and the Colonel prepare to leave. The Colonel asks if Helena is coming with them, and she tells him that she is not and that she has a job interview the next day in Birmingham and will stay one more night. Cliff enters and Alison introduces the two men. The Colonel takes Alison’s bag and exits.

Cliff asks Alison if she wants to stay and tell Jimmy about her departure. She hands Cliff a letter, an action that Cliff calls “conventional,” and she leaves. Cliff and Helena are alone in the apartment. Cliff tells Helena that the apartment is going to be “really cock-eyed” now. Helena

wonders if Jimmy will look up one of his old girlfriends, Madeline, but Cliff doesn't think so. Cliff loses his sense of good humor for the first time and he snaps at Helena. Helena tells him that "I've never seen so many souls stripped to the waist" because of Jimmy. Cliff decides to meet Jimmy at the train station and he says that he might have a few drinks or even pick up a prostitute and bring her back to the apartment. He throws Alison's letter at Helena and tells her to give it to Jimmy.

Helena goes to the dresser and picks up the bear. She falls on the bed clutching it. Suddenly, Jimmy bursts in the room "almost giddy with anger...." He yells at her that the Colonel almost ran him down with his car and that Cliff walked away from him on the street without speaking. Helena throws the letter at him and he opens it. He reads the first few lines. Alison expresses that she desperately needs peace and that she needs time. She ends the letter by writing that "I shall always have a deep, loving need of you...."

Jimmy is incensed. He calls her a phony. He wants to know why Helena is still here at the apartment. She tells him that Alison is pregnant with his child. He is taken aback by this news but then he gets in Helena's face and tells her he doesn't care. He dares Helena to slap his face and recounts how for the past eleven hours he watched Hugh's mother die. He tells her that when he goes to the funeral, he will be alone because "that bitch won't even send her a bunch of flowers...." He believes that Alison did not take Hugh's mother seriously and so he doesn't care if she is going to have a baby. He tells Helena to leave and she slaps his face. He is surprised at first, but then he lets the painful emotions of the situation come over him. He lets out a "muffled cry of despair" and then Helena grabs him and they passionately kiss.

The scene opens several months later. Jimmy and Cliff sit in their armchairs with the Sunday papers. Helena, whose things now occupy the apartment, is ironing in a corner. Jimmy is smoking a pipe. Cliff tells him to put it out. Helena notes that she likes the pipe and this pleases Jimmy. Jimmy begins to tell them of an outrageous tabloid story in one of the papers: a cult in the Midlands is partaking in "grotesque and evil practices." The cult is drinking the blood of a white cockerel and making "midnight invocations to the Coptic Goddess of fertility." Jimmy wonders if perhaps this is what Mrs. Drury, their landlord, does in her spare time. Jimmy wonders if someone is performing evil magic upon him and then, humorously, suggests that Alison's mother is performing voodoo rituals to cause him pain. Helena tells Jimmy that he should perform the rituals on her, and Jimmy suggests that Cliff could be the voodoo doll.

Jimmy notes in a “brooding excursion” how sacrifice is really not a big deal because most people only sacrifice the things they didn’t want to begin with. He ponders that “we shouldn’t be admiring them. We should feel rather sorry for them.” Returning to the playful banter, Jimmy suggests they make a loving cup from Cliff’s blood, which wouldn’t be very good since his blood is so common. He suggests making the cup from Helena’s blood instead, a “pale Cambridge blue....”

Jimmy turns his attention back to the paper, telling Cliff to finish his because he doesn’t understand what the writers are talking about anyway. He relates a story he read about a Yale professor coming to England to prove that Shakespeare changed his sex while writing The Tempest. Helena laughs at this and Jimmy asks her if anything is wrong. She only says that she is not used to being around him and that she can’t tell whether he is serious or not. He asks her if she is going to church and she tells him she is not, unless he wants to go. Jimmy gets a cold look in his eyes and begins to question her on whether she feels sinful for living with him. He then quickly turns back to badgering Cliff. Jimmy then asks Helena if he saw her talking to the Reverend the other day. She says she did talk to him and Jimmy asks if “ this spiritual beefcake would make a man of me?” He says, “I was a liberal skinny weakling...but now everyone looks at my superb physique in envy. I can perform any kind of press there is without betraying the least sign of passion or kindliness.” Helena asks if they can have just one day without talking about politics or religion and Cliff echoes the sentiment.

Jimmy changes the subject by saying he thought of a new title for a song for a traveling act: “My mother’s in the madhouse -- that’s why I’m in love with you.” He had previously thought of a name for his act with Helena -- Jock and Day -- but thinks that the name might be too intellectual. He suggests “T.S. Eliot and Pam” instead. Jimmy then starts in on a routine that all of them obviously know well. Cliff and Jimmy begin a comedy sketch about “nobody” in which Cliff is looking for “nobody” and Jimmy keeps telling him that he hasn’t seen “nobody.” Helena chimes in as a character and when Jimmy asks her who she is, she says “nobody” -- the punch line to the skit. Jimmy and Cliff start to do a “Flanagan and Allen” routine and sing a song: “So don’t be afraid to sleep with your sweetheart, / Just because she’s better than you....”

Jimmy then stops and tells Cliff that he kicked his ankle and that the routine is no good. Cliff pushes him hard and he falls. Jimmy jumps up and they start to wrestle until Cliff pushes him off. Cliff complains that his only clean shirt is dirty now and Helena offers to wash it for

him. Cliff hesitates but then takes the shirt off and lets Helena launder it for him. When she exits, Jimmy notes that Cliff doesn't like Helena very much. Cliff answers that, at one time, Jimmy didn't like her either.

Cliff then tells Jimmy that he is thinking of leaving. He says he is tired of the sweet stall and that he would not be such a burden on Helena if he left. Jimmy takes this news casually and tells him that maybe he can find one of Helena's "posh girl friends with lots of money, and no brains" to take care of him. Jimmy tells him that he's been a good friend but that he is prepared for him to leave. He tells him that he's looking for something from Helena that she could never give and that he's worth "a half a dozen Helenas to me or to anyone." Jimmy wonders "why, why, why do we let these women bleed us to death?" He thinks, "people of our generation aren't able to die for good causes any longer. We had all that done for us, in the thirties and the forties, when we were still kids." He thinks that if they should all die in a nuclear explosion it will "just be for the Brave New-nothing-very-much-thank-you."

Helena enters and gives Cliff his shirt. Jimmy tells him to dry it quickly so they can all go out for drinks. Jimmy tells Helena to cheer up and that he wished her "heart stirred a little" when she looked at him. She tells him that it does and that she knows Cliff is leaving. Jimmy tells her that he's been a good friend, that "he's had to learn how to take it, and he knows how to hand it out." Helena goes over and sits on the arm of his chair, running her hand through his hair. He tells her that she had always put out her hand for him and that she has made a good enemy. "But then, when people put down their weapons, it doesn't mean they've necessarily stopped fighting." Helena tells him that she loves him.

Helena and Jimmy share a tender moment, embracing. He tells her that they should leave and start their act, "T.S. Eliot and Pam," and that he'll "close that damned sweet-stall and...start everything from scratch." Helena tells him that this is wonderful. She goes to change out of her shirt and Jimmy goes to hurry up Cliff when there is a knock at the door. Jimmy opens it and finds Alison, standing in a raincoat and looking ill. Jimmy tells Helena that she has a visitor and walks out of the room, leaving the two women together.

When the curtain rises on the second scene, it is only moments later and Jimmy is in Cliff's room playing his trumpet. Helena is pouring Alison a cup of tea. She picks up Jimmy's pipe and places the ashes in a tray. Alison comments on how one has to get used to Jimmy's smoking. Helena gives her the tea to help her feel better. Alison tells her that she feels mad for

coming, that even as she was buying her train ticket she couldn't believe that she was making the trip to this place. She tells Helena that she came "to convince myself that everything I remembered about this place had really happened to me once." In despair, Alison cries out that Helena must want her a thousand miles away.

Helena tells her that this is not the case and that she has more right to be here than she does. Alison tells her not to bring out the rule book that "even I gave up believing in the divine rights of marriage long ago...They've got something different now -- constitutional monarchy. You are where you are by consent. And if you start trying any strong arm stuff, you're out. And I'm out." Alison tells Helena that she knows she's done something wrong by coming to their apartment and doesn't want there to be a breach between her and Jimmy. Helena tells her that she believes her and that it is Alison that should chastise her for her behavior. Alison protests that "you talk as though he were something you'd swindled me out of..." and Helena responds, "you talk as if he were a book or something you pass around to anyone who happens to want it for five minutes." Helena admits that she knows what she is doing is wrong, but that at least she believes in right and wrong.

Alison asks her if the reason she called for her father those months ago was because she was in love with Jimmy. Helena tells her it is true. Alison says it was difficult to believe at first but that then she understood. Helena says that she has discovered what is wrong with Jimmy -- "he was born out of his time." Alison agrees. Helena continues that Jimmy belongs "in the middle of the French Revolution" and that "he'll never do anything, and he'll never amount to anything." Alison adds that he is "an Eminent Victorian." Helena then tells her that things are over between her and Jimmy. She still believes in good and evil and she knows she cannot continue to live in this way with him. "It's quite a modern, scientific belief now, so they tell me," she says. "And, by everything I have ever believed in, or wanted, what I have been doing is wrong and evil."

Alison begs her to stay because Jimmy will have no one. Helena tells her she can do what she wants, but that she'd be a fool to return to Jimmy and that he'll find someone to take care of him like "one of the Renaissance popes." She tells Alison that seeing that she lost her baby is "like a judgment on us." Alison again begs her not to leave and Helena begins to yell at Jimmy to stop playing the trumpet so loudly. She demands that Jimmy join them.

When Jimmy enters he sees Alison. There is a cold concern in his voice as he asks if she needs something from being ill. Helena begins to mention that she's lost the baby, but Jimmy stops her and tells her he knows what has happened. Jimmy begins to gain authority in the room when Helena stops him and begins to tell him that she's leaving. She tells him that she sees that what they are doing is wrong and that, though she loves him, she can't take part "in all this suffering."

Jimmy speaks in a "low, resigned voice." He tells them they are both trying to escape the pain of being alive and that one cannot fall into love "without dirtying up your hands." He tells her that if she can't mess up her "nice, clean soul" than she should give up the idea of life "and become a saint." As Helena leaves, Jimmy leans against the window and cries, "Oh, those bells!" Alison begins to leave but Jimmy stops her. He tells her she denied him something when she didn't send any flowers to the funeral. It's an "injustice...The wrong people going hungry, the wrong people being love, the wrong people dying!"

He wonders if he is wrong to believe that there is "a kind of burning virility of mind and spirit that looks for something as powerful as itself," like a bear that looks for its own herd. He asks her if she remembers the night they met. He tells her he admired her relaxed spirit and that he knew she was what he wanted. He realized, however, that one has to tear "your guts out" in order to relax and that she'd never worked in her life for anything. Alison moves to the table and cries silently.

Alison cries out that none of it matters. She wants to be "a lost cause" and "corrupt and futile." She tells him when she lost the child she wished he could have seen her, "so stupid, and ugly and ridiculous. This is what he's been longing for me to feel...I'm in the fire and all I want is to die!" She tells him she is "in the mud at last!" Realizing her pain, he stops her and kneels with her. He tries to comfort her and then, with a "mocking, tender irony" begins to tell her that they'll be together as a bear and a squirrel. He tells her he's "a bit of a soppy, scruffy sort of a bear" but that he'll protect her from the cruel traps even though she's "none too bright." She laughs a bit and then softly adds, "Oh, poor, poor, bears!" They embrace as the curtain closes.

Critical Essay:

John Osborne's "Look Back in Anger" explores and exposes the world of the 1950s, drowned in the visible darkness of post-war disillusionment. The despair and frustration, the anger and anxiety is articulated through the character of Jimmy Porter, the central character in

the play. However, it is through the parallel presentation of his wife Alison that the play gains a multidimensional expanse. Alison represents a remarkable presence in elaborating the implications of the play's central theme: protest, though not in its most active form. She is described by the playwright as "the most elusive personality". She is an attractive woman with a tall and slim stature and a long and delicate face. "There is a surprising reservation about her eyes, which are so large and deep they should make equivocation impossible". She is an attractive woman with a tall and slim stature and a long and delicate face. "There is a surprising reservation about her eyes, which are so large and deep they should make equivocation impossible".

With her aristocratic background, Alison represents the society in her own way. She is the embodiment of values of upper-middle class which her husband despises. As a result, she becomes the natural target of Jimmy's verbal abuse. He abuses her continuously to extract some meaningful reaction from her. However, having discovered that her only defence is her imperturbability, Jimmy gets irritated by her passive resistance: "She is a great one of getting used to things". Alison's ironing board becomes her weapon of endurance. As she smooths out the wrinkled clothes, she possibly gets to smooth out her own inner creases. Her domestic chores become her pivot of survival. She might be accused of sitting on the wall, of not taking stand, of not being actively engaged in Jimmy's intellectual uproars, but she has a different kind of strength: the strength of passive resistance.

Alison is basically a well-bred person who refuses to stoop to Jimmy's level to retaliate on his provocation. She fondly embraces the responsibility and tradition of her upbringing. She keeps faith in an orthodox morality. However, she married Jimmy against her parents' wishes. Perhaps her love was triggered by pity and compassion. Perhaps she saw him as a knight in shining armour because of some misdirected juvenile fantasy. The way she speaks to Helena about Jimmy is full of these implications: "Everything about him seem to burn…full of sun. He looked so young and frail." Jimmy, the extrovert, airing his views loudly and blatantly, "riding roughshod" on everyone's sentiments, appeared to Alison as a stark contrast to her own introvert calm. During the play, she finds it impossible in the beginning to inform him of her pregnancy. It appears clearly that over the years, they have drifted apart. Or, perhaps, they never were close at all. On a human level, they hardly have the ability to reach out and communicate to each other. While on one hand Jimmy abuses her for her middle-class adherence to values, her pre-marital

virginity, he openly calls her a python, engulfing his passionate advances with stoical coolness and apathy. She could never accept Jimmy's permissive sexual code and attitude to sexuality. "It is not easy to explain," she says to Helena, "it's what he would call a question of allegiance and he expects you to be pretty literal about them."

On a sub-human level, the level of animals, with little awareness and expectation, Alison comes to terms with Jimmy. When they fail to reach a human union, their world of bears and squirrels helps them survive. This makes one wonder if Jimmy too, quite like Alison, is juvenile with a solid faith in the world of fantasy because reality can never give him any relief. However, the world of bears and squirrels lacks retention and permanence. It can only offer momentary respite. However, despite her apathy, Alison knows Jimmy deep down. She knows that Jimmy has suffered intensely but is also shaped by his suffering. If the suffering is taken away, he She rightly believes that Jimmy married her from a sense of retaliation; by making her suffer, she imagines that Jimmy is reacting against and punishing the society that she represents. Her friendship with Cliff helps her unburden herself.

Alison is not as passive as she is claimed to be by her husband. "I keep looking back as far as can remember and I can't think what it was to feel young." Alison may be seen as withdrawing behind a façade of indifference, but her apparent apathy need not be perceived only as indication of tolerance and acceptance. Unlike most women of her set, she is neither domineering nor ambitious; she has voluntarily chosen a life of poverty, gladly sacrificing the comfort of her home. She has cast her lot with one who manages a meagre existence. However, this life would have been bearable if Jimmy were a reasonable man. She leaves him in search of peace. She returns distraught after four months, collapsing at Jimmy's feet and Jimmy takes her up, probably for the first time, with loving tenderness. After the death of her baby, Alison comes to realize the spectra of loneliness that Jimmy has always been in and only then can they find each other's embrace an escape out of the prison of agony. This is when they truly communicate, not needing the illusive world of beasts, but as humans, reaching out to each other, no more in anger, but in love.