

DJE2B - AMERICAN LITERATURE

Unit I - Prose

- a. Edgar Allan Poe - The Philosophy of Composition.
- b. Robert Frost - The Figure a Poem makes.
- c. Allan Tate - The Man of Letters in the Modern World.
- d. V.K.Chari - Indian Thought in Emerson, Thoreau & Whitman.

Unit II - Poetry

- a. Emily Dickinson - Because I could not stop for death.
- b. Poe - The Raven.
- c. Robert Frost - After Apple Picking.
- d. Sylvia Plath - Lady Lazarus.

Unit III - Drama

Tennessee Williams - The Glass Menagerie.

Unit IV - Fiction

Earnest Hemingway - Farewell to Arms.

Unit V - Short story

- a. Poe - The Cask of Amantillado.
- b. Steinbeck - The Crysanthamums.
- c. Hawthorne - Young Goodman Brown.
- d. MarkTwain - Tom Meets Becky.

Reference:

An Anthology of American Literature, Volumes I and II, Eurasia, S.Chand & Co.

The Philosophy of Composition

- **Edgar Allen Poe**

According to Poe the plot of a novel must be set out in detail before the conclusion is reached. The denouement should always be in the mind of the writer. Otherwise, the plot will not be worthwhile. Moreover, the purpose of writing a novel will also be lost.

History is the base for ideas. It gives material for the story. This material deals with description, dialogue and the comment by the author. But originality alone gives effect to the story. Effect includes incident and tone. With regard to the magazine paper, the author can make it interesting with details built up step by step. Only then the composition will gain value and interest. But the author does not release one such due to his vanity.

No poet allows the public to have a peep into his crude thoughts. At the same time it is uncommon to retrace the steps by which he had attained conclusions. Poe feels that he can recall the progressive steps of any of his composition, and show its modus operandi. Writers do not write by accident or intuition. It is done like a mathematical problem. Poe wants to show this with his poem 'The Raven'.

Poe lists the essentials of composing a poem. The first one is the length of the poem. A literary work should not be too long to be read at one sitting. A break in the reading will make one lose the trend. It would interfere and spoil the impression. A long poem is a succession of small ones. While prose works need no unity, poetry aims at a total effect. That is why Poe reduced the length of the poem "Raven" to hundred and eight lines.

Beauty is the main 'desideratum' of a poem. It does not mean a quality but the effect. Poetry elevates the soul intensely and purely. Intellect has no role to play here. Truth and Passion are easily attainable in prose. If they are introduced into a poem, they will produce discords. Next to beauty, 'tone' is important for a poem. Whatever quality beauty might be, it excites the sensitive soul to tears. Melancholy is the most suitable of all poetical tones.

Artistic piquancy is the keynote of a poem. The whole poem revolves on it. It is called 'refrain'. It helps to improve a poem. 'Refrain' depends on the forces of monotone. Repetition produces a strange effect. Poe wants to use the monotone to create new effects by varying the refrain.

After deciding the refrain, the poem should be divided into stanzas. The refrain formed the close of each stanza. To give force, refrain must be 'sonorous'. The long 'o' is the most sonorous vowel. The most producible consonant is 'n'. In keeping with the sad tone of the poem "Raven", Poe uses the word 'Nevermore'. If the word is used by a human being it will

be monotonous. So a bird, raven is selected. It is a non-reasoning creature, capable of speech. First he selected a parrot but he decided on raven as it will be suitable for the intended tone.

The Raven is a bird of ill omen. It repeats the word 'Nevermore' at the end of each stanza. The title "Raven" will tell of sadness. The saddest event in the world is 'death' and particularly the death of the most beautiful woman. So Poe chose that.

Then Poe combined the sad aspect of the woman he loved with the often repeated word of the Raven 'Nevermore'. The Raven answers the questions posed by the lover to it. The intended effect was produced by what Poe calls "variation of application". The Raven repeats the word 'Nevermore' to the afflicted lover 'ominously'. The continuous repetition makes the word 'nevermore' a sort of superstition. It kindles questions and the answers are half superstitious and half desperate.

Poe begins his poem with the climax. He calls the Raven, the prophet of evil. He asks the bird to tell him by the God that governs the lives of both, when he can clasp the sainted maiden – Lennox. The Raven replies – 'Nevermore'. After establishing the climax, Poe varies the importance of theme and settles the rhythm, the metre, the length and the general arrangement of the stanza (Trochaic metre, octometric lines). The musical quality of the verse form is enhanced by the use of internal rhymes and alliteration.

Poe attempts to bring together the lover and the raven by 'locale' or setting. The bird is seen in the broad air. The incident is insulated. So, the space where the raven is placed is circumscribed. Poe keeps the lover in a chamber, richly furnished and beautiful. The lover is reminded of his lover who frequented that place. The Raven enters through the window. The flapping sound of its wings makes the lover open the door. It is dark outside. He feels that it is the spirit of his mistress that has knocked the door. The Raven seeks admission, enters in and sits on the bust of Pallas. To all questions it replies 'Nevermore'. The repetition of the word confirms the lover's sorrow and self-torture.

For such a subject as in "Raven", there must be some complexity. It can be called 'adaptation'. It refers to indefiniteness which makes the poem rich. Poe added the last two stanzas for such suggestiveness. The lover asks the raven to take its beak from his heart and take its form from his door. The raven replies 'Nevermore' lending a moral to the poem. The reader now feels that the Raven is emblematical.

Thus Poe gives his theory for composition and explains it with his poem "Raven".

The Figure a Poem Makes

- **Robert Frost**

Frost begins his essay by distinguishing between the poets of old and modern era. The poets of old were abstractionists. But today poetry is like a toy in the hands of new artists. It is difficult to have poetry of our choice.

Sound makes what a poem is. It is like the gold in the ore. It should be taken out discarding the inessential. Mere rules of poetry such as vowels, consonants, punctuations, syntax, words, sentences and meter are not enough to differentiate one poem from another. What is needed is the subject matter. Frost feels that the ancient poets did not score much in spite their accent on meters. The sprung-rhythmists in fact strain too much. A poem becomes valid only on the basis of its deeper and wider experience.

Wildness (in tune) is the next quality that makes the poem charming. But the problem of the modern poets is to have pure wildness i.e., “to be wild with nothing to be wild about”. Frost calls the modern poets ‘aberrationists’ and compares them to a grasshopper that kicks about on a hot afternoon. It is the theme that brings down the wildness of a poem. Free from the constraints of space, time and relationships, it aids in free movement.

A poem begins with delight and ends in wisdom. It is comparable to love which is full of enthusiasm at the beginning. A poet starts writing with delight. Then there is the impulse. When the first line is written, the poem assumes direction. Lucky events follow ending up in clarifications. The proper ending of the poem is not foreseen by the poet. It is a ‘trick’.

A poem does not create tears in a reader or a writer. Similarly it gives no surprise too. The poet might have written it from the materialistic (ground) or from the ethereal heights (clouds). It is the unexpected that gives a twist to the poem. It seems as if the impressions the poet speaks of have not appeared at all when he wrote the poem. Frost compares it to the ‘straight crookedness’ of a walking stick.

Frost then speaks of the wildness of logic. It is better than inconsequence. However, the logic is backward and it has to be spoken in retrospect. It must be a revelation for both the poet and the reader. For this purpose, the theme must be flexible. Frost criticizes the term ‘freedom’ which the people boast to have. He says none is free till sixteen years as everyone is compelled to attend a school. Political freedom does not mean anything to him. What he treasures most is the freedom of his material i.e., his body and mind which he believes to be in utter chaos.

The scholars and the artists differ in the manner in which they get their knowledge. Scholars get their knowledge consciously. They are logically thorough and have a definite

plan when they acquire knowledge. But the poets have no such projected plan. They get their knowledge not through books but from outside. They do not stick to anything deliberately. Frost recommends the artists to snatch something from previous experience (space and time) and put to practical use. Past must be linked to the present in a new way.

More than once, Frost himself was allured into radicalism. But he refused to become a radical as he wanted to be original. According to Frost, originality and freshness are the true hallmarks of a poem. A poem should run from delight to wisdom. Like a piece of ice on a hot stove it must start as a solid stuff and then melt. At the same time it must carry the poet along with it. Then the freshness will remain forever like a metal that never loses its fragrance. That is the true quality of a poem.

The Man of Letters in the Modern World

- **Allen Tate**

In the modern world the role of the man of letters is to recreate the image of man. He should also propagate standards that would help others to test that image. But the problem for the man of letters is that all languages are debased by the modern techniques of mass control. However he is responsible for improving the vitality of language. He must attempt to rediscover the human conditions in the living arts.

A man of letters must keep up his standards. The aim of the literary arts is not the control of other persons but self-knowledge. Without arts a man cannot live well or live as 'man'. Literary arts are meant to enlighten the ignorant. So the man of letters must differentiate between the knowledge obtained and its social function.

Men in a dehumanized society may communicate but they cannot live in full communion. Thoughts emanate from writers, spread, explode and dominate a whole epoch. Rene Descartes, isolated thought from nature and divided man against himself. What Descartes said was already there and would have happened so even if he had not said so. Descartes mechanized human nature. Secularism has dehumanized society. As a result there is no communion of human spirit. Tate blames the immoral or amoral politician for dehumanized mechanization.

A man of letters must see to it that the modern society is not just a machine. He might have read more but he might not have the cunningness of a politician. While the politician is cynically innocent, the man of letters is disdainfully innocent. He even withdraws from the society. Tate feels that the man of letters must play a more positive role in the society. Modern political philosophy has made modern literature shadowy. It is the duty of the modern man of letters to improve the moral tone of the society. Augustine and Dante saw the

city of God even in the material city. This is not possible for the modern man of letters. The society shocks him with 'existentialist' disorders.

Society substitutes 'means' for the ends. The idolatry of the means has become egregious. However, a more advanced worship is going on in Europe, eastward of Berlin, and in Asia. Russian system of secularism borders on barbarism. What one sees in the West today is a psychic crisis expressing itself as a political crisis. This internal crisis affects the writer and he serves the existential disorders. He has to recreate a society in which everyone must be allowed to participate.

Tate feels that the word 'communion' does not mean being in touch with others. It means 'love' that unites people. An enlightened person who says that he hates his brother is, in fact, in darkness. In a secularized country a writer is not able to have communion with the audience. He is no better than a machine. The society is full of communication but is not backed up with communion. It is a society of means without ends. 'Literature must participate in promoting 'communion'. From lyric to epic every form is a 'recurrent discovery of the human communion' experienced in a definite place and at a definite time.

The contemporary society is full of democratic urge. 'Drive', 'stimulus' and 'response' are the words used by the modern technologists. Tate considers this the language of the slaves. He wants to replace the words with 'discrimination'. In a secular world, though the poet is able to communicate to the point of sharing, the news-commentator does not allow the experience to be shared. Nothing can be shared though everything is transmitted. This atmosphere must be cleansed completely by the man of letters.

Tate assigns three types of roles to the writer – end, choice and discrimination. The particular responsibility of a writer is 'discrimination' through choice. This will bring him to the appointed conclusion. He must not be committed to 'illiberal specializations'. In the modern society, he has to be critical and recreate the literary standards. His choice of the letter and the words is much important. He should keep up purity, integrity and reality of language.

Tate says that the 'letter' the writer uses will give him power. It gives him the power of discrimination. The language the writer uses must have a link with the human community. Only then it will become the language of a freeman. If a writer fails in this, his writings will be mere communications and mechanical analogies.

A man of letters should have a sense of dedication. But it is difficult, because the society is not democratic. He has to give something in return for his freedom. He must have the courage to condemn the abuse of democracy. He must be able to discriminate the usurpations

of democracy that are perpetrated in the name of democracy. He must be allowed to publish his discriminations on the abuse of democracy including the boorish jargon of the State Department, the dollars and the gadgets. Men of letters are like the upstart Gods of ancient Rome spreading distraction and novelty. But his true province is 'culture' itself. He should disseminate 'culture' which is the fulcrum on which even the state revolves. It is the duty of the man of letters to supervise the culture of language. The social man represents communion through love. It is beyond time.

Indian Thought on Emerson, Thoreau and Whitman

- V K Chari

Emerson and Thoreau were influenced by the Vedantic thoughts in the early nineteenth century. Emerson showed great interest in the Vedantic even while he was in Harvard University. He knew the Laws of Manu, Vishnupurana, the Bhagavad Gita and Katha Upanishad. He had referred to these Indian scriptures in his journals and essays. Thoreau was also attracted to Hindu philosophy when he read an essay on Oriental poetry by Sir William Jones at the age of 24. In the January 1843 issue of 'The Dial', Thoreau published selected passages from Laws of Manu. He translated a story from a French version of the Sanskrit 'Harivansa'. It was titled "The Transmigration of Seven Brahmans". In 'The Dial' of January 1844, he published excerpts from Buddhist scriptures under the title "The Preaching of Buddha".

Emerson, Thoreau and the Transcendentalists were interested in the concept of 'selfhood' found in the Hindu scriptures. Hindu scriptures like the Upanishads tell us that the central core of one's self (antaratman) is identifiable with the cosmic whole (Brahman). Concepts similar to this occur in the writings of transcendentalists. But such thoughts are also found in Oriental literature, neo-Platonic doctrines, Christian mysticism and German idealists like Kant and Schelling. There was a spiritual relationship between the Transcendentalists and the Oriental thinkers.

Emerson finds a close link between the thoughts of Plato and those of the Vedantists, the Bhagvad Gita and the Vishnu Purana. He quotes Krishna speaking to a sage. 'The distinctions of which men talk in this world are born out of ignorance. The soul is the be all and end all of one's life. It is exempt from birth. It does not decay. It is omnipresent. It is independent and unconnected. The knowledge that this spirit is one, is in one's own and in all other bodies is the wisdom to be achieved.

In formulating the theory of 'Over Soul' also, Emerson quotes Lord Krishna. The soul of man symbolizes the whole, though human beings talk of separateness. The soul represents the

universal beauty. It is eternal, self-sufficing and perfect. But in the act of seeing and the thing seen, the subject and the object are one.

Some of the poems of Emerson resemble Vedanta literature in form and content. The poem 'Brahma' is a striking example echoing the thoughts of "Katha Upanishad (The soul does not slay. Nor is it slain) and the "Gita" (I am immortality and also death. I am being as well as non-being).

V K Chari is of the opinion that Thoreau was more powerfully attracted by Oriental thoughts than Emerson in his writings. Thoreau found in Hindu scriptures a way of life with which he felt a profound affinity. He felt that he could not read even a sentence in the book of the Hindus within being elevated. He considered the laws of Manu useful in private as well as public life. He found clues to a meaningful life in Bhagavad Gita. He believed those who practiced the 'yoga' gathered sure results in Brahma. In "Walden" he describes a state of mind that resembles the experience of a yogi. It also echoes the image of the transcendental Self portrayed in the "Upanishads".

When Walt Whitman published "Leaves of Grass" he was condemned for his heretic philosophy. But Emerson found incomparable things said incomparably well. Whitman's "Song of Myself" expresses the essence of Vedantic mysticism. It speaks of the objective world which includes the conception of 'Selfhood'. It is a way of finding the world in the Self and as the Self. Like the 'Dynamic Self' of the Upanishads and 'Cosmic form' of the Gita, Whitman's mysticism has its counterpart in Sri Ramakrishna who saw Mother Kali vibrating everywhere and in everyone.

The critic Malcolm Cowley points out the dissimilarity between Whitman and Oriental scripture. Whitman did not believe that everything in the world is maya and the earth is like a purgatory. He praised the world as real and joyful. He did not despise the body but considered it miraculous as the soul. He did not subjugate his senses like yogis and Buddhists, but he thought union with the Oversoul could be achieved through senses.

Thus V K Chari points out the similarity and dissimilarity in thought and experience between three leading American writers and Vedanta literature.

Because I could Not Stop for Death

- **Emily Dickinson**

"Because I Could Not Stop for Death" is considered to be the most interesting, most intriguing and most touching poem by Emily Dickinson that leaves an indelible mark in the reader's mind. It deals with Dickinson's favourite subject, the effect of death upon a human being. Instead of the human fear or religious awe usually associated with death, death is

portrayed as a restful trip, a pleasant journey with a courteous visitor and an unnoticed third traveler, Immortality. Yet one perceives undercurrents of terror and shock especially in the last three stanzas, as the passenger gradually becomes aware of the utter finality of the trip. The tensions inherent in the ambivalent approach to death depend heavily on the domestic imagery and the casual tone.

The poetess visualizes Death as a person whom she knew and trusted. She was so engrossed in house-hold activities that she could not spare time for death's call. It was he who came to her and stopped for her out of kindness. The carriage held them both and Immortality. Her reluctance hid the harsh reality that she had no choice, that her carriage was a hearse and that the lover's outing was a sad journey to the grave. They drove in a leisurely manner and she was completely at ease. As he was so gracious and polite to stop for her, she put her work willingly aside.

As the carriage passed, she noticed the daily routine she was leaving behind. She saw children playing games during a school recess. Soon the sense of time came to an end as they passed days and seasons; ripeness and decline. She realized that the sun passed them. It became dark. The dampness and cold made her conscious of the flimsy nature of her dress and scarf. She had only gossamer as gown and tulle as tippet.

Soon the poetess identified her 'house'. Her bridal chamber was a horrifying combination of an actual mansion and the swelling mound of a graveyard tomb. The roof of the house was hardly visible and the cornice was just a heap of earth in the ground. The description is suggestive of a grave. At the end in a final instant, the poetess reviewed in a flash that the heads of the horses that carried her were from the beginning toward 'eternity'. Death was no more her companion.

Thus the poem ends in irresolution in the sense that it ends in a statement that is not offered seriously. Death is seen in the poem from various angles – as a welcome relief from life's tensions, as a force which heightens one's satisfaction with life, as a lover gently conveying hidden pleasures, as a cynical caller who hides beneath a cordial exterior and as a guide leading to the threshold of immortality.

The Raven

- **Edgar Allan Poe**

"The Raven" is the most famous poem of Edgar Allan Poe. In his essay "The Philosophy of Composition" Poe uses this poem to illustrate his theory of poetic composition. The poem "The Raven" tells of a strange experience of a grief-stricken lover who longs to be united with his dead lady-love.

It was midnight and the lover was reading some old books of forgotten stories. Suddenly he heard a tapping sound. He thought that it must be some traveler. It was a December night and he was attempting to forget his dead lover –Lenore. The knocking filled him with fear and he consoled himself repeating it must be some late visitor trying to enter into his chamber.

The narrator-lover got up and went to the door. Asking excuse for delay he opened the door but found none. He looked through the darkness filled with wonder, fear and doubt. It was absolute silence everywhere and the lover whispered the word “Lenore” and heard it echoed. When he returned to his chamber, again he heard the knocking and then guessed it to be the sound of the wind. When he opened the window, a raven entered in and straightaway sat over the statue of Pallas above his chamber door.

The lover asked the bird to tell the name by which it was called on the kingdom of Pluto. It replied “Nevermore” and the lover was surprised. When he murmured that it would fly away the next day, it said “Nevermore”. The lover was shocked at its apt reply. He thought that it must be the only word the bird had learnt from its sad master.

Then the lover turned his wheeled cushion chair towards the bird and tried to find out the meaning of the bird’s utterance “Nevermore”. Leaning his head back at ease, he felt sad for his Lenore who would never come and press the velvet violet lining of the chair. He thought that the air is perfumed by some unseen angel whose foot-falls he heard. He guessed that God had sent the angel to comfort him but the raven said “Nevermore”.

The lover called the bird ‘Prophet’ and ‘thing of evil’ and asked if there was balm in Gilead for him. The raven replied “Nevermore”. Then he asked whether he would clasp the hand of his beloved Lenore in Eden and got the reply “Nevermore”. Anger overtook him and he shouted at the bird to move from that place. It replied “Nevermore” and its shadow was seen on the floor from which the lover could not lift his soul.

The poem is remarkable both in its form and in the way the poet is able to build the human speaking voice into the poem. Poe’s love of beauty, his deep and plaintive poetry carefully wrought as a crystal jewel and his pure style make the poem an exceptionally admirable one surrounded by mystery.

After Apple-Picking

- **Robert Frost**

“After Apple – Picking” is a remarkable nature lyric of Robert Frost. It describes the experiences of an apple-picker who has been working throughout the day long two-pointed ladder which still looks towards the sky. He can still see the unpicked apples on the trees. But

he is very tired and is not interested to pick apples anymore. He says, "I am done with apple-picking now". The smell of the apples and his tiredness make the apple-picker drowsy and he longs to lie down for a sleep. He cannot think properly. He is confused. He can imagine the dream he will have later in his sleep. He believes that he will see apples appearing and disappearing and hear the rumbling sound of the loads of apple rolling into the cellar bin. He cannot decide whether his sleep will be like long hibernation of animals as woodchuck or it will be human.

"After Apple-Picking" is a sensuous pastoral poem by Frost. The way the apple-picker confuses his memory of collecting ice from the trough with his dream is indicative of his drowsiness. As a poem of reality it has also the attraction of a dream. Cleanth Brooks finds a symbolic significance in the drowsiness the speaker undergoes after the completion of his work by extending it to the cycle of seasons. The sleep may even suggest 'death'. Though the matter of the poem is 'common' the tone which Frost has used makes the poem attractive.

Lady Lazarus

- **Sylvia Plath**

Written at the height of extreme nervous tension and neurotic excitement at the time of her death, the poem "Lady Lazarus" is agonizingly confessional and acutely grim. The poem presents the author in the midst of her final successful attempt at suicide. She herself said of the poem: The speaker is a woman who has the great and terrible gift of being reborn. The only trouble is she has to die first. She is the phoenix, the libertarian spirit, what you will. She is also a good, plain, very resourceful woman".

Lady Lazarus is a mythical story based on the biblical episode of Lazarus. Lazarus was the brother of Mary. When he died Mary and her sister appealed to Jesus to come to the place where Lazarus had been buried in a cave grave. Jesus came and stood before the grave and said "Lazarus come forth" and Lazarus came out after being resurrected under Christ's order. His death cloths were removed he became one of living persons. Plath takes the myth of Lazarus as the basis of her poem and enacts her own death.

At the end of the poem Plath also refers to the Phoenix. She creates a series of apt images to depict the series of transformations that the Lady undergoes. She also draws upon images from the Second World War as Nazi operations which show her psychic disintegration and her humiliating pain to be made a sight in front of the fun seeking insensitive public.

The poem "Lady Lazarus" is an autobiographical poem and its theme is death. Plath attempts to enumerate her sufferings and her death wish by narrating the sad events of her life. The poem gives a clear idea of her belief that death is her deliverer. The opening line "I

have done it again” tells of Plath’s attempt to commit suicide again. She attempts once every ten years. She can manage it very well. Suicide is a kind of walking miracle for her. After undergoing suicide her skin changes white as that of the colour of a Nazi. She feels like the prisoners of Hitler who were burnt alive and their bones used as paper weight. The skins of Nazis were peeled off their bodies and Plath wants to do it. She is only thirty. She will come to life again like the cat that can come to life nine times. She has destroyed each decade.

The large crowd wants to see Plath’s hands and legs. However, she is the same always. When she attempted suicide for the first time, she was ten. When she attempted for the second time she wanted to close her life. But the people picked the worms off her. Dying is an art and Plath wants to do it beautifully. She attempts suicide and feels hell and hence real. It is easy to do but she has put a stop to it. She has recovered from death. It is like a miracle. After coming to life again she feels weak. She has a charge and the doctors are her enemies. She is a possession of death. After death there is nothing except ashes. When it is poked she will rise like a phoenix. Thus the poem is about Plath’s initiation, death and rebirth.

The Glass Menagerie

- **Tennessee Williams**

The first production of “The Glass Menagerie” took place on December 26, 1944 in Chicago. Earlier, Tennessee Williams had written a short story “Portrait of a Girl in Glass”. Also he had composed a film script “Gentleman Caller”. “The Glass Menagerie” derives from these two pieces as well as from his experience of his own family and their life in St. Louis which is the drama’s locale. In this play, the main character is crushed by a mechanical society and seeks relief from pain in memory, fantasy and flight. Williams “combines realism and symbolism to establish a delicate tone skillfully balanced by humour and harshness and reinforced by accurate observation and realistic dialogue that is effortlessly lyrical”.

Tom is in the uniform of a Merchant Seaman and he is the narrator of the play. It is he who describes the social background – the economic depression of the 1930’s that shook USA. He introduces his mother Amanda, his sister Laura and the gentleman caller who is the only realistic character in the play. The fifth character is his father Mr. Wingfield whose portrait hangs on the wall. He never appears in the play as he has abandoned the family long ago. Tom the narrator withdraws and enters the Wingfield apartment. With the meager income of Tom as a clerk in a shoe company the family manages its life in a two-room apartment in a multi-storied building in the lower middle class area of St. Louis, Missouri. It is evening time in the middle of February. In the dining table Amanda gives Tom detailed instructions as to how to eat and this drives him away. Amanda indulges in a reverie of her

youth in Blue Mountain, Mississippi when she had seventeen gentlemen callers – all planters and sons of planters of the South, but she married Mr. Wingfield for his ‘charm’. Laura, her daughter, does not have even one gentleman caller.

Laura is much interested in her glass menagerie and is seen polishing her collection of glass animals. When she hears her mother coming, she turns immediately towards the chart of the typewriter keyboard. Amanda has learnt that Laura has stopped going to the secretarial course at Rubicam’s Business College and is shocked. Laura seems to be a problem as she cannot cope with the outside world and lives totally in a dream world with her phonograph music and glass menagerie. As all her efforts to make Laura self-reliant failed, Amanda thinks of the only alternative – marriage. Laura thinks of herself as a cripple and feels no one will marry her.

Amanda scolds Tom for his coming home late in the night. She is not ready to believe that he goes to movies every day. Tom becomes violent and tells her that he does not love his job which is never his dream. He calls her an ‘ugly witch’ and throws his coat away. The glass animals fall down shattering and both the mother and the daughter are shocked. Amanda declares that she will not talk to Tom unless he apologizes.

The next day too Tom comes late from the movies drunk. Laura lets him in and requests him to apologize to their mother. When Laura goes out for some purchase in the morning Tom apologizes. Amanda breaks into tears telling that her devotion to the children is her weakness. She praises Tom and gets a promise that he will never be a drunkard. When Tom speaks of his love of adventure, Amanda makes it clear that she knows of his attempt to enlist himself in the Merchant Marine. She wants him to bring home some gentleman – caller for Laura. Tom agrees.

When Tom announces the arrival of Jim O’Connor the next day for dinner, Amanda is filled with excitement. She enquires Tom about Jim and she is particular that the boy does not drink. Tom taunts her that she married his drunkard father and she tells of the father’s charm that trapped her. Jim is Irish, earns \$85 a month and goes to radio engineering and public speaking classes at night. Amanda plans to give the house a face-lift and asks Laura to wish from the moon happiness and good fortune.

It is a late spring Friday evening. Tom’s soliloquy tells of Jim as a high school hero, a basket- ball star, debating club captain, president of the senior class and the male lead in the annual light operas. But he has ended up as a clerk in the shoe company. Amanda has made the house ready and Laura is in her best clothes. When she comes to know of Jim, her school hero, she is not ready to receive him. When he comes with Tom, she tries to leave the place.

Jim and Tom talk of public speaking course and movies. Tom has joined the Union of Merchant Seaman using the money given for paying the electric bill. The dinner is ready but Laura feels sick and does not take part in the dinner.

The light goes out as Tom has not paid the bill. Amanda takes Tom to the kitchen and Laura is left alone with Jim. Jim recognizes Laura as the girl whom he called 'Blue Roses' in school and wonders why she is shy. Laura shows Jim's article in the school magazine which she kept safe. Coming to know of her more, Jim tells her of how she should overcome her inferiority complex. He encourages her to dance with him but accidentally breaks the glass unicorn. He also tells her of his engagement to a girl called Betty. Laura is shocked but gives the broken unicorn to him as a souvenir. Amanda, knowing the fact, shouts at Tom and Tom leaves his home to join the Merchant Marine.

The play falls into two parts. The first five scenes cohere into one unit "Preparation for a Gentleman Caller" and the last two scenes into another unit "The Gentleman Caller Calls". The play displays great skill in the management of plot. It is static with no action as such. The scenes come together by the technique – montage ie., a process of juxtaposition and flow. In each scene, as the curtain rises and the lights flash, the characters wake up to life, play their assigned parts and after some time the lights dim out.

The major theme in the play is the conflict between illusion and reality. Each of the characters is caught in a world of illusion which he loves and he is thrown out of it by reality. Amanda tries to find a husband for Laura, and to train Tom to live according to the American Dream. She also wants to return to her golden days. She comes to the world of reality when she learns of Jim's engagement.

Laura lives in a world of illusion created by the phonograph music and the glass menagerie. Having failed to relate herself to others in the school and in the business college, she has withdrawn into a world of her own. Though Jim encourages her to come out, his revelation of the truth about him sends her back to the world of illusion which is of course a broken one – the unicorn is symbolic of this condition.

Tom also lives in a world of illusion formed by movies and magic shows. His job in the shoe factory is so frustrating that movies become the only meaningful activity for him. His desire to be a poet is not realized. When the situation at home turns intolerable and the gentleman caller proves a wrong man, he leaves home to join the Merchant Marine and seek adventure on the high seas and new cities. But even this turns out to be an illusion as he turns back to St. Louis with nostalgia.

The success Jim achieved in the school promised him a bright future. But six years have passed and he has not progressed much. He is just a clerk in the Continental Shoemakers. To compensate this he takes evening courses in public speaking and radio engineering. Thus Jim too is caught between illusion and reality but in a different way. Thus “The Glass Menagerie” is a rich and memorable work of dramatic art.

Tom Wingfield

Tom is the narrator-artist-participant in the play. He sets the mood of nostalgia with his soliloquies and his relationships with his mother and sister. He is a misfit in his job in the warehouse and escapes from his responsibilities. He is sincere and does not hide anything or distort any situation to his own advantage.

Tom loves to be a poet and has “a poet’s weakness for symbols”. Jim calls him ‘Shakespeare’. To escape from a trap, he acts without pity. He believes that “Man is by instinct a lover, a hunter, a fighter” and the work in the shoe company is a trap from which he has to escape. But when and how are not clear. His nightly trips to movies and magic shows are an escape activity from the boredom and tyranny of ordinary existence. Tom wants to have adventures and fulfill his instincts. He is not like Jim who gets satisfaction through hard work. To his mother’s call “Rise and Shine”, his answer is “I’ll rise – but I won’t shine”. He earns 65 dollars a month and his mother makes something casual by collecting subscriptions on commission for fashion magazines. His father considered him a sissy. His mother too does not understand his burning passion for poetry. The only person who appreciates him for writing poetry is his friend Jim. Tom is soon dismissed for writing a poem on the lid of a shoe box.

Tom is highly frustrated. At home also he is not happy with his mother who nags him every day. She criticizes his way of eating, dressing and even the combing of his hair. He does not like to hear her experiences as a Southern belle. He has a sense of duty and feels the need to act in the absence of his father. He loves his elder sister deeply and this attaches him to the family. She accepts him without reservation, shares his secret world, and loves him with all intensity. Whenever he comes late, it is Laura who lets him in and he shares the story of the movies he sees. Though he does not like his mother’s mania for gentleman callers, he brings Jim for the sake of Laura. At last he walks out like his father because he realizes that there is nothing more he can do for Laura. Wherever he goes, she haunts him.

Tom is like Ulysses gone ‘wrong’ and ‘sour’. He escapes from the trap but there is nothing heroic or positive and challenging. He gets some satisfaction in his life by joining the Merchant Marine. To pay the subscription for membership, he does not pay the electric bill.

At last the lights go out and candle lights come in for the pseudo-romance between Jim and Laura. Tom frees himself by opting for voyage round the world. It is like an emergence into a world of reality.

Laura Wingfield

Laura is a delicate, fragile, alienated person. She lives in a world of shadows and recedes deeper into the dark world. She is the key figure around whom all the episodes revolve. The title “The Glass Menagerie” symbolizes her person and personality. She is a slightly crippled girl, a shy introvert and an escapist living in an illusory world of her own. Her one interest is in collecting and polishing the glass figurines of animals of various sorts. Like these toys she is also translucent, sensitive, artistically structured and quite fragile. Even a slight accident may have impact from the outer world and fragment her.

The first tragedy occurs during the quarrel between her mother and her brother Tom. When nagged beyond endurance, Tom hurls his coat across the room. Part of the glass collection tumbles to the ground with a tinkle and a repentant Tom kneels down and gathers the fragment.

Amanda spends 50 dollars to get Laura admitted in the Rubicam Business College. But Laura deceives the mother by spending the day walking in parks and touring the museum. Amanda is furious but Laura surrenders herself before her mother. Also she wants Tom to be kind to the mother. He also accepts to bring a gentleman caller for Laura.

The physical handicap of being short in one leg has developed an inferiority complex in Laura. She never took part in any activity outside the house. She hero-worshipped Jim at school, attended every play he acted but never got his autograph. When he called her ‘Blue Roses’ she was delighted. When she comes to know of Jim’s arrival she refuses to meet him. Jim slowly brings the girl out of her shell and she hands him her favourite glass animal, a unicorn with a horn in its forehead. It is like Laura who stands apart from the other normal girls. She forgets her handicap and accepts to dance. However, they hit the table and the unicorn falls to the ground and gets its horn broken. The abnormality of Laura is also removed. Soon Jim reveals of his engagement to another girl and Laura is again thrown into the stark reality of her alienation. She gifts Jim the broken unicorn as a souvenir. As a gentle light she vanishes again into the darkness.

The Glass Menagerie – A Memory Play

“The Glass Menagerie” is a memory play and the person who recalls his past is Tom, a Merchant Marine. In his voyage of the high seas, the one thing he has not been able to forget is his life back at home in St. Louis, Missouri. What is enacted is the painful memory of Tom.

The advantage of this method is that many psychological conditions arising in the mind of a particular character can be projected vividly and convincingly. At the same time the disadvantage is – the whole series of episodes are presented from one particular point of view and the character – narrator gives opportunity for his prejudices and predictions.

In the play, the son Tom Wingfield is the narrator. He tells the story a few years after he has deserted the family. He is clear in mind and there is no confusion when he recollects the past incidents. He wants to be a poet and his job in the shoe factory does not satisfy him. He gets fired from his job as he is found writing poetry on the lid of the shoe-box. Tom is honest in presenting his quarrel with the mother and expressing his affection for his sister Laura. His mother refuses to talk to him demanding apology when he calls her a witch. Though he does not like, he apologizes as Laura persuades him to do. In anger, he throws his coat away breaking Laura's glass menagerie but goes down on his knees to collect the broken fragments. Similarly he accepts to bring a gentleman caller as the introvert Laura has no other solution to get settled in life.

A memory play aids in presenting the matter in an unusual way free from conventions. Being so delicate, each and every stage direction has its role to play in producing the desired effects. The artist must be careful not to escape from the responsibility of presenting the truth. In fact he is expected to give a deeper view of men and matters. He presents reality with photographic virtuosity. The conversations are what the audience speaks and the landscape is what is seen in the day-to-day life. Then is the imagination that represents matters convincingly. Here, metamorphosis into other forms is needed resulting in a plastic theatre revitalizing the exhausted stage.

A memory play is made effective by certain techniques. The stage is dimly lighted and the audience is left to guess. The light is focused on different characters at different contexts to attract the attention of the audience. In "The Glass Menagerie", most of the time, the shaft of light is on Laura. She is the hub around which all incidents happen. The next technique used by the dramatist is music. Throughout the play, everything happens to music. When Laura meets Jim, her former hero, out of shyness, she goes away to complete playing the Victrola. The background tune entitled 'The glass menagerie' is always played. The rise and fall of the tune is parallel to the rise and fall of tension and emotion in the play. The tune with the visual glass menagerie constitutes an audiovisual ensemble hinting at the sorrow inherent in a thing of beauty. The audience is connected with the characters on the stage through the music that enhances the effect of the memory.

A Farewell to Arms

- **Ernest Hemingway**

Hemingway's "A Farewell to Arms" is a novel about love and war. Though these two are totally different from each other, Hemingway has brilliantly brought them together and fused them as a love story against the backdrop of war or rather the First World War. The two themes – love and war – run in parallel and undergo six corresponding phases. Regarding war, Frederic Henry begins with a casual and indifferent participation and then goes through serious action, a wound, recuperation in the hospital and then a retreat and desertion. In case of his love-affair with Catherine, Henry begins with just flirtation and then goes to a deeper and real love followed by Catherine's pregnancy, their romantic stay in the mountains, coming down to the plains for the delivery and finally the death of Catherine. Henry first bids farewell to the war and then he has to bid farewell to Catherine. Human life is a personal as well as a social struggle and in the end, nature triumphs over the defeated man who is left with nothing.

The protagonist Frederic Henry is an American serving in the Italian army. He is in charge of an ambulance unit. He is an officer with the rank of lieutenant but he is very casual in his attitude to war. It is the summer of 1916 and the scene is the Italian war front. During the winter, incessant rain comes in bringing with it the epidemic Cholera. Seven thousand men are killed and fighting suspended. Henry, the narrator goes on leave and spends his time eating, drinking and going to the brothel. He returns to the front having visited all the big cities. Soon he meets Catherine Barkley, an English nurse through his roommate Rinaldi (Italian). A kind of romance develops between the two – Henry casual and Catherine serious. Catherine has lost her fiancé recently in the war and tries to find comfort in Henry. Helen Ferguson from Scotland is her friend and both Helen and Catherine were working for the British Hospital in Gorizia as nurses. Soon Henry's attitude towards Catherine changes. He begins to feel lonely when he is unable to see Catherine. Catherine wants to be sure of his love for her. Henry feels himself useless in war. At the same time he wants war to be stopped.

Before Henry leaves for the war point Catherine gives him an image of Saint Anthony for protection. Henry puts it around his neck only after his driver's suggestion. In the dug-out, Henry arranges food for the ambulance drivers. Before the food is eaten a shell bursts nearby and Henry is almost buried under the debris. Among the machine gun sounds, firing rifles and screaming, one of his drivers dies. Henry is wounded severely. A surgeon bandages his legs. On the way to the hospital, another soldier dies. His roommate Rinaldi visits him and informs that the military operation is successful and a thousand enemy soldiers are taken

prisoners. In the evening the priest visits Henry with some presents like mosquito net, a bottle of vermouth and a few newspapers. The priest talks of God and Henry says that he does not love God. The priest tells Henry that love implies sacrifice.

At the field hospital, the doctors decide to send Henry to an American hospital in Milan as they have better equipments. Rinaldi and the Major visit Henry. They inform him of the war declared by the USA on Germany. They also tell him that Catherine and the other nurse are transferred to the American hospital. When Henry is taken to the hospital the doctor is on leave. The nurse Miss Gage attends on Henry. She tells him of his legs full of old iron, trench mortar fragments, old screws and bedsprings. Though Henry is forbidden to drink he gets wine through a porter. Catherine comes there and Henry realizes that he has truly fallen in love with her. His stay in the hospital gives opportunities for the development of their love. Dr. Valentini operates his knee the next day and Catherine attends him every night. Henry invites Catherine's friend Miss Ferguson to his wedding. She feels somehow that they may not marry and warns him against making Catherine unhappy or getting her into trouble. Henry's health improves and Catherine helps him walk in crutches. They spend all their time together. They say to each other that they married the first day she had come to the hospital. Henry wants to marry her but she points out that it is not practical. She will be sent away and he cannot come even on leave. She says that he is her religion. The summer is very hot and Italians get many victories. Henry can walk without the crutches and he goes to the nearby places. He makes a lot of friends – Mr. and Mrs. Meyers, two music students, Ettore Moretti and such.

Soon the season changes and the rains start. In the war front, the Italians are unable to take San Gabriele. Riots start and the Italians loose one hundred and fifty thousand men on the Bainsizza plateau and on San Gabriele and forty thousand on the Carso. The offensive in Flanders is not successful. Henry's leg improves. He is given three years convalescent leave. He receives letters from home as well as from his friends. Catherine wants to get her duty changed to the place where he plans to stay. She also informs him of her pregnancy. She has tried everything but to no use. At the same time she does not want him to worry as it is natural and everyone has babies. Though Henry is disturbed in the beginning, they reconcile themselves and talk of their future. It turns cool that night and Henry gets wet in the rain. The next morning he feels nauseated and it is found that he has contracted Jaundice. He suffers for two weeks. Miss Van Campen the superintendent nurse sees the porter leaving with empty alcohol bottle and checks Henry's room. Eleven bottles are found and the angry lady

reports Henry and as a result his leave of convalescence gets cancelled. Henry leaves for the war front bidding farewell to Catherine.

Back in his old room Henry meets his friend Rinaldi. His love for Henry is the same but his attitude has changed. He has been working very hard and feels the war 'killing'. Henry admits to him that he loves Catherine. Though the priest feels that the war will end, Henry says that the Austrians will not give up as they have won many victories in the summer. The next day Henry meets Gino to take charge of the ambulance. He informs of the Austrians still shelling. As rains have started, the soldiers fall sick. The Italians are in the attacking positions but they may go without wine and food if the Austrians continue their fight. Henry thinks that the abstract words like glory, honour and courage were obscene besides the names of villages, roads, rivers etc. At night the attack continues – shelling, rockets, machine gun and rifle fire. The wounded come in. The Austrians break the North side and the Germans start their attack. The next night the retreat starts. The field hospitals are evacuated. The place is nearly empty. Henry is to go to Pordenone with the ambulances. As the retreat proceeds at noon, the cars get stuck on a muddy road. Henry's request for help is ignored. He gets angry and shoots a sergeant.

The men have to cross a river. They see the bridge blown up. Henry and his men try the railway bridge. On the other end of the bridge Henry sees the Germans and hides with his men. When they try to go back, they hear shots. Ayno, his driver, falls down dead. Soon Henry finds that he is shot by Italians who are afraid and confused.

Henry goes to a deserted house with his drivers and finds some food. Bonello secretly leaves to surrender. With Piani, Henry attempts to cross the river Tagliamento. The Italian Battle police are seen cross examining those who are retreating. If they are not satisfied they shoot the soldiers saying they are responsible for letting down the country. Henry secretly runs to the river, dives into the water and escapes holding a timber. Accidentally he sees a train, gets into it and reaches Mestre. Officially deserting the army, he makes his way towards Catherine.

Henry reaches Milan. He is readily helped by the common people. However he does not like to talk about the war front to them. When he goes to the hospital to meet Catherine the porter's wife tells him of her transfer to Stresa. Henry takes the help of Simmons, a student of music to get a civil dress. Then he takes a train to Stresa. There he takes a room in the Grand Hotel. As he chats with the barman, he enquires about Catherine and Ferguson. The barman informs that they are in a little hotel near the station. When he asks about the war front Henry tells openly that he does not want to talk of that and for him there is no war. He

feels that the war is over for him. However he has a feeling of truancy. When he meets Catherine she is taking her supper with Ferguson. Ferguson accuses Henry for the trouble he has given Catherine. Catherine consoles her and then goes with Henry. Both of them have a happy night together. Though Henry does not feel lonely, Catherine feels that Henry may be arrested as he is out of uniform. He may be just shot at. So they plan to go out of the country – to Switzerland. The guilty thoughts of Henry are soon pacified by Catherine.

At night Henry is woken up by the storm. Soon the barman informs that they are going to arrest Henry in the morning. That he is an officer and is out of uniform is known. The barman asks Henry to go to Switzerland with Catherine. He gives his boat and asks Henry to row across the lake to the other side during the night. Henry wakes Catherine and both leave the hotel. Henry rows throughout the night and soon feels tired and exhausted. Catherine helps him and they reach the Swiss portion of the lake – the town Brissago. The Swiss police arrest them and take them for an enquiry. Henry says that they have come for the winter sports. On seeing their passports, the police let them free to go anywhere in Switzerland but they have to report to the police wherever they are.

Henry and Catherine live in a brown wooden house in the mountains. The owners Mr. and Mrs. Guttingen, are good to the couple. Henry and Catherine spend their time peacefully. They read books or magazines and play card games. Mr. Guttingen is a retired head waiter and his wife a maid in the same hotel. Their son is a student studying to be a head waiter. Henry though away from the war front, comes to know that the war has not ended. Whenever he suggests of marriage, Catherine declines it. Catherine asks Henry to grow a beard and cut his hair short. During spring they have to come down as the big hospital is situated only in Lausanne. They stay in a hotel for three weeks. Catherine buys all the baby things she needs. One day, early morning three o'clock Catherine begins to have pains. Henry admits her in the hospital. As pain increases she is given gas as an anesthetic. When time passes the doctor suggests a Cesarean operation. A baby is born but it is a still baby. Catherine suffers haemorrhage and dies.

Thus the novel is a tragedy wherein tragic emotions and feelings dominate. Henry encounters both war and love first without knowing the truth and soon realizing it. The realization of the brutality of war forces him to desert the army and flee from his duty. On the other hand love welcomes him and offers solace. However he is forced to leave love and the woman he loves as she dies in childbirth. The two farewells therefore point to Henry's disillusionment. It is a statement of how man has to realize the futilities of life and how he has to learn to bear with it. One cannot escape life.

Frederic Henry

Frederic Henry is an American who is serving in the Italian army. He is in charge of an ambulance unit. He is an officer with the rank of lieutenant but he is very casual in his attitude to war. He is not a patriot serving a cause with passion and fervor. He is no more than a spectator. Similarly he has never been in love. He has numerous casual affairs and sexual relationships but he has never developed any kind of bond with a woman.

Henry spends his time eating, drinking and going to the brothel. He is interested in carnal pleasures. Wine and women are his chief recreations. This pleasure loving person is rather conscientious and efficient in discharging his duties. When he joins duty immediately he goes and inspects the ambulances under his charge. He finds everything running smoothly and thinks the whole thing is better in his absence. He is thus honest and frank and does not deceive himself or others.

When Henry is sick, Rinaldi tells him that he is really an Italian – All fire and smoke and nothing inside. Similarly the priest says that what Henry says about the happenings at night are not love but only passion and lust. Henry accepts it and tells that he does not love anyone in a sacrificial or serving way. Thus Henry is hollow and has no feeling in him though he makes a show outside. He has isolated himself from the social responsibility and social concern. He avoids personal relations or intimacy either with Catherine or his friends.

When he finds a soldier who cannot keep up with the regiment, he feels pity and offers to take him in his ambulance. When he is posted at the front, he finds a proper dugout for his drivers and arrange for their food. When Rinaldi asks him if he has done anything to get a medal he is not for it. He has not carried any wounded soldier on his back, or given up his turn of medical care to some other. He is free from hypocrisy and never attempts to glorify himself.

In the later part of the novel, we find Henry depressed of war. He never wants to think of war. Words like ‘sacred’, ‘glorious’ and ‘sacrifice’ are empty and have little meaning. Even the names of places are more dignified than the abstract words like ‘honour’ and ‘courage’.

When the army was retreating, Henry’s job is to get the ambulance to Pordenone. When he finds hindrance to that he attempts to overcome at all means. He changes the route and even wounds the sergeants who do not cooperate. The loss of ambulances create a guilty feeling in his heart and he does not want to wear his uniform. The reality of war has changed his casual attitude to bitterness and anger. He runs away from war but he cannot escape from his thoughts.

Henry's relationship with Catherine is first just flirtation. He prefers her rather than giving to the girls in the officers' brothel. But there is a gradual development of intensity of feeling and he falls in love with Catherine. After the retreat, he goes in search of Catherine and joins her. However he faces the worst ordeal – Catherine's prolonged and painful childbirth ending in her death. As a typical Hemingway hero, Henry faces death and defeat but he endures with courage and fortitude.

Catherine Barkley

Catherine Barkley is an English nurse introduced to Frederick Henry, the American in the Italian army, by the Italian surgeon Rinaldi. She is simple, gentle, sincere, emotional and brave. She does not have any negative feeling. For her, love means total surrender of the self to one's lover. Catherine has recently lost her fiancé and is so depressed. She even wants to cut off all her beautiful hair as a sign of her grief.

When Henry is away for two days in the war front, Catherine feels that he has been away for a long time. She tells him again and again that she loves him very much and asks him if he does so. When she senses his casual attitude she comments it to be a 'rotten game' to play pretence in love. Her love is true and her sentiments are sincere. She gives Henry the image of Saint Anthony to wear as a charm to protect him from death.

In the hospital in Milan, Henry begins to love Catherine and for her it is a culmination of love. She is deeply and intensely in love with him. She arranges her duty in such a way that she can spend all their nights together.

When Henry realizes his love for Catherine, he proposes marriage. In spite of her love, she refuses marriage on practical grounds. If she becomes the wife of an officer, the authorities will send her away from the front to a safer place. Henry cannot meet her even on holidays. She says that she is already married to him. He is her religion. She is one with him and no state or church is needed to legalize their relationship.

Catherine wants Henry to reciprocate her love. As she assures him that she shall never leave him and she can find no peace away from him, she also wants him to love her as much. When Henry is about to leave for the front, she informs him that she is pregnant. Though she knows it earlier, she keeps quiet so that Henry is not disturbed. Even now, she tells that she will manage everything. The state of being an unwed mother never affects her. She is more concerned about the effect of her pregnancy on Henry. She does not want him to feel 'trapped'.

When Henry meets Catherine in Stressa, Ferguson scolds him for the awful situation he has put Catherine into. But instead of Henry, it is Catherine who tries to appease Ferguson.

She has complete faith in Henry. She does not see anything bad in his deserting the army. He is not a deserter as the army is the Italian army. She has known the American law that the moment she marries Henry, their child would become a legitimate child. When Henry gets tired of rowing she helps him saying it will be good for the child.

Towards the end, Catherine realizes that she is going to die but she never complains. She calmly and stoically accepts her impending death. Brave Catherine has one fear – fear of rain. She sometimes sees herself dead in the rain and sometimes Henry. She stands as a symbol of home, domesticity, peace and comfort.

The Cask of Amontillado

- **Edgar Allan Poe**

Fifty years ago the narrator Montresor took revenge on his enemy Fortunato and it was a secret he hid for long. The story 'The cask of Amontillado' is his confession of how he executed the action.

Montresor was injured by Fortunato thousand times which he bore quietly. But when he started insulting, he decided to revenge him or rather punish him with impunity. During the carnival, Montresor wearing a mask or black silk approached Fortunato who prided on his talents in wine. He informed Fortunato of his getting a rare wine Amontillado and invited him to test its genuineness. He added if Fortunato was busy, he would take another man, Luchesi. Fortunato considered Luchesi as his competitor and accepted to determine for Montresor whether it was truly Amontillado.

Montresor took Fortunato home and both of them descended into the damp vaults covered with 'nitre'. Montresor had already sent out all his servants. As the drunken Fortunato could not bear the smell of 'nitre' he started coughing. Montresor asked him again and again to return as he was sick. Fortunato refused and accepted wine as the antidote to his cough. The vaults were full of dead bodies of the Montresor family. Fortunato asked for Montresor's family coat of arms and motto. They were "a huge human foot d'or, in a field azure; the foot crushes a serpent rampant whose fangs are embedded in the heel" and 'no one attacks me with impunity' respectively.

As both the men proceeded, Fortunato made a gesture, a secret sign of the Masons. Montresor could not recognize it and Fortunato laughed at him. Montresor showed a trowel to prove that he was a mason. They reached the crypt where human remains lined the wall on three sides. From the fourth, the bones were removed and heaped below. A small recess was seen inside where Montresor informed the Amontillado was stored. Fortunato who was heavily drunk entered in and soon was chained by Montresor to a granite pillar inside.

Montresor asked Fortunato to come back. Fortunato was confused. He could not move. Montresor started building up a wall with building stone and mortar kept under the heap of bones. When he completed the first layer, Fortunato's intoxication started wearing off. As layers rose there was only silence. When the chains sounded, Montresor stopped his work and waited. After the seventh layer was built, screams came from the throat of the chained Fortunato. Montresor hesitated for a moment and then continued his work. He completed the eleventh layer and there was only one stone to be fitted. Then he heard a low laugh of Fortunato as if Montresor was joking. When the last plea "for the love of God" was ignored, Fortunato kept quiet. Montresor called for his enemy twice in vain. When he searched in with a torch it slipped inside. Then he heard the jingling of bells from the cap of Fortunato who was in a fool's costume for the Carnival celebration. Montresor felt sick, completed his work quick and went off. For fifty years no one disturbed the bones he replaced and he wished "May he rest in peace".

The Chrysanthemums

- **John Steinbeck**

"The Chrysanthemums" by Steinbeck is a criticism of the male chauvinistic society which denies space for intelligent women. The plot is laid in Salinas Valley, California. It was winter season and the day was dull as fog covered the valley. Henry, a traditional man who believed in the division of sexes but could not satisfy his wife was talking with two cigarette-smoking men. His wife Elisa dressed in masculine gardening outfit with men's shoes and a man's hat was working with her chrysanthemums. She had kept the stems of her flowers free of pests and was proud of that. Her house was also maintained neat and clean.

Henry came to Elisa in the garden and praised her work. He said that she could even turn her attention to their orchard. She felt happy for a moment but soon she understood that he was joking. She asked about the men who visited him. He said that they were from the Western Meat Company and bought thirty of his steers for a good amount. He felt that they must celebrate that by going to Salinas for dinner and a movie. He teased her asking if she liked to watch fights.

When Elisa was still in the garden tending her chrysanthemums, she saw a wagon driven by a large bearded man. It had a sign advertising the man's service as a tinker who repaired pots and pans. When the wagon came into Elisa's yard, her dog sniffed at the man's dog and the man made an ugly comment. He was big and not very old. He wore a ragged dirty dress and his hands were rough. Their small talk ended in a sort of attraction in the mind of Elisa.

The man asked for some work repeatedly and Elisa had none. Then he talked in a frustrated tone that he did not get any work for long and was hungry.

When the man asked Elisa about her chrysanthemums her attitude changed. In the course of the talk he said that a customer of his wanted to raise chrysanthemums. Elisa was ready to offer that. She removed her hat and gloves and made a pot ready with soil and a few shoots of the plant. She explained how much care was needed especially during budding. She spoke from a kneeling position how she had green fingers and how she felt one with the plants. To make it clear to the man she spoke about the stars at night. She was even about to touch him. The man said that he could understand nothing with a hungry stomach. Elisa found two pans for him to fix.

As the man worked she asked him if he slept in the wagon and wished such a life for women. The man did not accept her view. Paying him fifty cents she said that she could also do the same work he did. She also reminded him to keep the sand around the chrysanthemums damp.

Elisa went inside her house and took bath scrubbing her skin hard. She looked at her naked body in the mirror, pulled in her stomach pushed out her chest and had a look at her back. She wore a new under wear and a dress, did her hair and make-up. When Henry returned she helped him chose his dress and waited for him. Henry came out and felt her looking “different, strong and happy”. He explained her further that she looked as if she would break a calf and eat it.

Along their way to Salinas, Elisa saw something dark lying and could not turn her eyes away. It was a pile of discarded chrysanthemum shoots that she had offered to the tinker. For a moment she felt that he could have thrown it away somewhere off the road. They passed the tinker’s wagon but Elisa turned her face away. She said to Henry that she was looking forward to the dinner. Henry said that she was different again and felt that he must take her out more often. Elisa said that she had read of boxers beating each other till their gloves were soaked with blood and asked whether women go to fight. Henry replied “Some do” and promised her to take for one. She declined the offer and pulled her coat collar over her face to hide her tears.

Elisa is frustrated with life as she could not express herself. She is desperate to transcend the trap of being woman but never gets a real opportunity.

Young Goodman Brown

- **Nathaniel Hawthorne**

Hawthorne was interested in exploring the darker side of human morality. He believed in the human addiction to evil and in the essential sinful nature of the human heart. His short stories are “sermons, each with a test to which its author rigidly adheres”. Their themes are – hidden sin, incapacity to mingle with men, fantasy and colonial history. “Young Goodman Brown” is a memorable portrayal of a Puritan community, but its theme is universal.

Goodman Brown said goodbye to his wife Faith whom he had married three months ago and got ready for a journey. Faith, wearing pink ribbons in her cap, asked him to stay with her for that one day. Goodman Brown asked her to pray and go to bed early to avoid her confusions. He resolved in his mind to leave his evil purpose after that one day and turn towards Heaven.

When he walked through the forest, he met an elderly man who was waiting for him under a tree. His walking stick looked like a great black snake, twisting and wriggling like a living serpent. He offered Goodman Brown his walking stick. Refusing that, Goodman Brown said that he had kept his promise and wanted to return home. His ancestors never undertook such an errand and their family was a good Christian family.

The man said to Goodman that he was an acquaintance with Goodman’s grandfather, father, many members of the Church and even the Governor. Both of them soon saw an old woman who was the moral and spiritual adviser of Goodman – Goody Cloyse. He did not like to face her with his snake staff and soon it was revealed that she herself was a witch.

The man urged Goodman to walk fast but Goodman sat on a stump and refused to move. He wanted to join his wife Faith. The man left him there with a branch that he broke from a maple tree and asked him to take it while moving. Then he saw the minister of the church and the Deacon proceeding to the devil’s ceremony. They also talked about a good lady who would join them and moved fast. Goodman was shocked. Still, he felt, with heaven above and Faith below he could oppose devil firmly.

Goodman heard some voices which were familiar to him in Salem village. One of the voices seemed to be Faith’s requesting some favour. Goodman was filled with grief, rage and terror. Something fluttered down and was caught on the branches of a tree. When he seized it he found it to be a pink ribbon. Filled with despair, he grasped his staff and proceeded with blasphemy to the devil’s ceremony. The trees around were on fire and on that light he saw the faces on many respectable members of the community including the priests. Of course, Faith was not there and once again hope bloomed in him.

Soon a figure appeared calling for the converts. Among the multitude he saw his father calling but his mother waving her hand to go away. The minister and the Deacon pulled him in. Goody Cloyse and Martha Carrier brought in someone covered and robed. Soon Goodman found her to be Faith and both were shocked.

Then a basin was lowered and the evil shape attempted to lay the mark of baptism. Goodman asked Faith to look up to heaven and resist the evil and suddenly he found himself alone in the forest. When he returned home, every person he passed seemed evil to him. When the minister blessed him he did not accept, called the Deacon a wizard, snatched a small girl from Goody Cloyse while she was teaching Bible verses and even refused to greet Faith. Till his death he never trusted anyone and could not love his wife fully. Even after death no hopeful verse was carved on his tombstone. Thus the story ended as a timeless tragedy.

Tom Meets Becky

- **Mark Twain**

Mark Twain (Samuel Langhorne Clemens) “has been praised for his simplicity and informality of phrase, bold and incongruous similes, flavoured colloquialisms, cadence of speech, and brilliant fragments or episodes as well as for his cumulative jocosities, irresistible drollery, life-like delineation of character, convincing narrative, universal appeal and philosophical insight”. The extract “Tom Meets Becky” is from “The Adventures of Tom Sawyer” which is considered a masterpiece recalling Mark Twain’s boyhood days. Critics praise for its unity of tone and realism and truly it breaks new ground in juvenile fiction.

It was Monday morning. Tom Sawyer was miserable because he was unwilling to go to school. The intervening holiday on Sunday made his going into captivity and fetters more odious. He wanted to be sick so that he could stay at home. He found a tooth loose. The thought of his aunt pulling it out made him keep it in reserve. Then he pretended to suffer from a sore toe. His brother Sid slept without noticing his groans. So Tom shook him and continued. Sid could not understand anything. He ran downstairs and informed Aunt Polly that Tom was dying. Aunt Polly ran up with Sid and Mary. When Tom complained of his sore toe, she laughed and asked him to put an end to that nonsense.

Tom stopped his groans and said that his tooth was awfully painful. Aunt Polly inspected his mouth and then asked Mary to bring a silk thread and a chunk of fire. Tom requested her not to pull the tooth and assured to go to school. She understood his plan to skip the school and go fishing. She tied one end of the silk thread to Tom’s tooth and the other to the bed post. When she thrust the fire almost into Tom’s face, the tooth came out.

When Tom went to school, he was the envy of everybody he met because of the new gap in the upper row of his teeth. He became the centre of attraction. The boy who had cut his finger lost his charm. Soon Tom met Huckleberry Finn whose father was a drunkard. All mothers hated him for he was idle, lawless, vulgar and bad. However, all children admired him and delighted in his company. Tom though prohibited, played with him whenever possible. Huckleberry Finn always dressed himself in loose clothes (of others) fluttering with rags. His hat was a big ruin and his coat was up to his knees. A suspender supported his trousers that bagged low. Huckleberry acted on his own free will. He slept on door steps and in empty hogshead. He had to obey none; never had to wash or put clean clothes.

Huck showed a dead cat to Tom. He got that from a slaughter house for a blue ticket and a bladder. That blue ticket was bought from Ben Rogers for a hoop stick. Dead cats would cure warts. Tom said that spunk water would cure warts and Bob Tanner had experienced it. Huck narrated his way of removing warts using bean and then with dead cats. The dead cat should be taken to the graveyard at midnight where a wicked man was buried. When devils come the cat should be thrown and asked to follow the devil and the warts asked to follow the cat. Mother Hopkins told that to Huck. Huck's father found her to be a witch. She looked at a person steadily and said the Lord's Prayer backwards.

Huck would come to the grave of Hoss Williams that night. Tom said that he was buried on Saturday and the charm might not work at midnight. However Tom wanted to join Huck. They planned to give the signal – 'mewing'. Tom saw a 'tick' which Huck had and asking for that. Huck was not ready to sell it. Finally Tom got it in exchange for his tooth and kept it in the percussion – cap box he kept for the pinch bug. Then they parted, both feeling wealthier than before.

Tom reached the school and went to his class. The master was dozing in his armchair. He sensed the arrival of Tom and asked him why he was late. Tom was about to tell a lie. He saw the new girl who was recently admitted to the class and a vacant place next to her. He replied, "I stopped to talk with Huckleberry Finn". The master got angry, removed his jacket, beat him and asked him to sit with the girls. The girl moved away from him. Among nudges, winks and whistles, Tom pretended to study.

Slowly the class became normal. Tom secretly looked at the girl. She made a mouth. He gave her a peach. She pushed it away. He put it again and wrote on his slate "Please take it – I got more". She made no sign. Then Tom drew something on his slate hiding it with his hand. Out of curiosity, she asked him to show it. He showed the picture of a house with smoke from the chimney. She asked him to make a man and he did. She said it was nice and

asked Tom to draw her coming along. As she desired, he promised to teach her to draw. He asked for her name and she replied “Becky Thatcher”. Tom asked her to call him ‘Tom’ and not ‘Thomas Sawyer’. Then he wrote something on his slate and did not show it to the girl. When she forced him, he showed the words “I love you”. She called him ‘bad’ but looked pleased. The master came, pulled his ears and seated him in his place. With happiness in his heart, he could no more concentrate in his lessons and lost the medal he kept for months.