

DIRECTORATE OF DISTANCE EDUCATION

UNIVERSITY OF NORTH BENGAL

MASTER OF ARTS-ENGLISH

SEMESTER –I

SHAKESPEARE STUDIES

CORE-102

BLOCK-2

UNIVERSITY OF NORTH BENGAL

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FOREWORD

The Self Learning Material (SLM) is written with the aim of providing simple and organized study content to all the learners. The SLMs are prepared on the framework of being mutually cohesive, internally consistent and structured as per the university's syllabi. It is a humble attempt to give glimpses of the various approaches and dimensions to the topic of study and to kindle the learner's interest to the subject

We have tried to put together information from various sources into this book that has been written in an engaging style with interesting and relevant examples. It introduces you to the insights of subject concepts and theories and presents them in a way that is easy to understand and comprehend.

We always believe in continuous improvement and would periodically update the content in the very interest of the learners. It may be added that despite enormous efforts and coordination, there is every possibility for some omission or inadequacy in few areas or topics, which would definitely be rectified in future.

We hope you enjoy learning from this book and the experience truly enrich your learning and help you to advance in your career and future endeavours.



SHAKESPEARE STUDIES

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BLOCK-2 SHAKESPEARE STUDIES

Introduction to Block 2

This paper helps to understand the various plays as a part of the literary work of Shakespeare. This module comprises of seven units which comprises of the three famous plays of Shakespeare which are Antony and Cleopatra , The Tempest and Measure for measure.

Unit-8 Comprises of Introduction of the play Antony and Cleopatra along with its summary and also defines the characters of the play to understand the play.

Unit-9 Core over gives the interpretation and analysis of the Antony and Cleopatra along with its critical analysis. It provides the deep analysis of the play.

Unit-10 Helps to understand and provide the summary of the play The tempest. It gives the insight of the few of the acts of the play.

Unit -11 Helps to understand the critical analysis of the play The Tempest. It helps to understand the theme and motif of the play by giving its interpretation.

Unit-12 Find out that how characters of the play The tempest mould out. It gives the synopsis of the play along with the act wise analyse.

Unit-13 Gives reviews of the few of the acts of Measure for Measure. It helps to find deep root of the play.

Unit-14 Discuss analysis and interpretation of the play Measure for Measure. It also provides the summary of few of the acts.

UNIT 8 SHAKESPEARE’S ANTONY AND CLEOPATRA: AN OVERVIEW

STRUCTURE

- 8.0 Objectives
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- 8.3 List Of Play’s Characters
- 8.4 Synopsis
- 8.5 Before Reading The Play
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- 8.7 Let’s Sum up
- 8.8 Keywords
- 8.9 Questions For Review
- 8.10 Suggested Readings And References
- 8.11 Answers to Check Your Progress

8.0 OBJECTIVES

This unit provides the critical analysis of the Shakespeare’s play Antony And Cleopatra: It provides the interpretation along with various activities that can be performed during and after the play .Following objectives can be achieved with the help of this unit:

- List Of Play’s Characters
- Synopsis
- Activities Before Reading The Play
- Activities While Reading The Play

8.1 INTRODUCTION

William Shakespeare's *Antony and Cleopatra* is a play filled with political intrigue, power struggles, war and its consequences, and the plight of two desperately impassioned lovers. Although the play's action is slightly more complicated than Shakespeare's other tragedies, *Antony and Cleopatra* provides an excellent means for students to study the multiple

levels of subject matter contained in historical dramas. Teachers of English, history, political science, social studies, geography, mythology, and drama may all benefit from the themes explored in this play. The play, therefore, provides many opportunities for cross-curricular study.

The very mention of the two title characters, Antony and Cleopatra, conjures images of love and the desperate measures taken in pursuit of love. Some have subtitled this play "The Greatest Love Story Ever Told." Others argue that the play does not depict love, but rather presents a desperate infatuation that destroys a great Roman leader and a noble Egyptian queen. With either interpretation, the play offers a compelling love story that will intrigue students of any age or skill level. Additional themes of divided power, battles with formidable forces, and manipulative enemies and subordinates provide suspense and action. The juxtaposition of love and war is neatly wrapped in Shakespeare's poetic language, thereby providing a literary work that is compelling and eloquent.

The play at first appears quite complex with inconsistent character behavior, such as Cleopatra's many mood swings. A sprawling location for the play's action also complicates events as they occur on three different continents and on the seas that divide these lands. Once character behavior is analyzed and questions are posed concerning motives, many of the

play's hidden truths become known and reveal a familiar plot of love and war. Likewise, when the play's action is visually recreated by acting out scenes, exploring staging, or being a member of an audience enjoying the play or a film version of the play, many text references to geographical location, character motivation, and circumstance gain new meaning.

After all, plays are written to be performed and observed, not just read.

The following teacher's guide provides materials to aid teachers in planning multi-layered exercises in text exploration.

The guide provides historical context and a plot synopsis. Following this literary overview, teachers will find activities suggested for student investigation of the play's content before, during, and after reading. A list of discussion questions for each act is also provided to assist teachers in developing class dialogues concerning the play's action and thematic content.

8.2 SHAKESPEARE'S ANTONY AND CLEOPATRA: AN OVERVIEW

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Before one delves into Shakespeare's play *Antony and Cleopatra*, it is important to look at the world of the main characters and the events that precede the play's action.

Approximately two thousand years ago, Cleopatra, "Queen of the Nile," ruled over Egypt. Her capital city, Alexandria, was considered the greatest cultural and commercial center in the eastern Mediterranean. At the same time, Mark Antony, Octavius Caesar, and Lepidus were in joint control of the Roman Empire. This triumvirate was the result of Mark Antony's defeat of Brutus and Cassius, who had assassinated Julius Caesar in 44 b.c. After his victory over the assassins, Mark Antony joined with Octavius Caesar and Lepidus, men who had remained loyal to Julius Caesar, and formed a joint rulership of the entire Roman Empire. They divided the Empire into three provinces: Octavius Caesar controlled Rome's European provinces; Lepidus oversaw North Africa; and Mark Antony ruled Rome's Asian territories.

As the play begins, it is 41 B.C. and the Roman Empire is expanding its hold on surrounding lands and would soon dominate the whole of their known world. But the Empire is experiencing civil unrest in Italy and faces a considerable threat from Parthia in its eastern provinces, Mark Antony's territory. From the east, Parthia's Sextus Pompeius is attempting to take control of the Mediterranean Sea, and the triumvirate faces a formidable force. While Octavius Caesar and Lepidus struggle to keep control in Italy, Mark Antony readies for war with the Parthians.

Although recognized as a brave soldier and eloquent speaker, Mark Antony also has quite the reputation as a ladies man and a great appreciator of a good game and a witty joke. Knowing of Queen Cleopatra's reputation as a provocative woman who uses her feminine charms, wit, and guile to compensate for being a woman in a traditionally male role, he commences what might be considered social intrigue. While Mark Antony readies his troops for battle, he commands Queen Cleopatra to appear before him when he arrives in Cilicia, a country in Asia Minor close to the occupied areas of Parthia. He plans to provoke Cleopatra by accusing her of aiding Cassius and Brutus in their earlier war against him, but Cleopatra has other plans for Antony.

Determined to win over Antony as she had Julius Caesar, Cleopatra sets sail on the river Cydnus to meet Antony. Her barge is decorated with gleaming gold and propelled by servants rowing silver oars to the sounds of enchanting music. She drapes herself in gold robes and is fanned by young boys dressed as cupids. Her ladies-in-waiting, dressed as beautiful mermaids, steer the helm and tend the tackle. As she arrives, large crowds flock to the dock, drawn by the music and the exotic perfumes that fill the air. The people rumor that Venus has come to play with the god Bacchus, and it is here that the tale of Antony and Cleopatra begins. Antony is dazzled by Cleopatra's beauty, wit, and mystique, and, although the Parthians are now assembled in Mesopotamia ready to invade Syria, he leaves his wife and his post to depart for Alexandria with the insistent and enchanting Queen Cleopatra.

8.3 LIST OF THEPLY'S CHARACTERS

EGYPT

Cleopatra—Queen of Egypt

Charmian and Iras—her personal attendants

Alexas—her minister

Seleucus—her treasurer

Mardian—a eunuch

Diomedes—a servant

Clown—a simple country man

ROME

Mark Antony, Octavius Caesar, Lepidus—the Triumvirate

Octavia—sister to Octavius Caesar and second wife of Antony

Sextus Pompeius (Pompey)—leader of the faction opposed to the Triumvirate

MARK ANTONY'S FOLLOWERS AND OFFICERS

Domitius Enobarbus Decretas

Ventidius A Soothsayer

Eros Philo

Demetrius Canidius

Silius Scarus

OCTAVIUS CAESAR'S FOLLOWERS AND OFFICERS

Maecenas Dolabella

Thidias Taurus

Proculeius Gallus

Agrippa

SEXTUS POMPEIUS'S FOLLOWERS AND OFFICERS

Menas and Menecrates—pirates

Varrius

Messengers, Servants, Officers, Soldiers, Sentries, Guards, Watchmen

8.4 SYNOPSIS

At the play's opening, Antony, who had abandoned his wife Fulvia and his post in time of war, is indulging in Alexandria's lavish lifestyle and is fully infatuated by Cleopatra. Then Antony learns from a messenger that his wife and his brother Lucius were the cause of the unrest in Italy and had engaged in battle with Octavius Caesar. A new messenger brings the unfortunate news that Antony's wife, Fulvia, died in Greece after having fled Italy (I,i). Antony mourns Fulvia's death and resolves to leave Cleopatra and return to Rome in order to counter Pompey's threat in Asia. Cleopatra throws a passionate tantrum when she hears of Antony's announced departure. She rants and raves to Antony about love and devotion and accuses him of not loving her fully. But as quickly as the tides turn, Cleopatra begs his forgiveness for her outbursts and wishes

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him victory. Antony departs for Rome, but Cleopatra knows he will return to her (I,iii).

In Rome, Octavius Caesar condemns Antony for being self-indulgent, living a debauched life in Alexandria and neglecting his duties to Rome, but Lepidus is softer in his judgement of Antony. A messenger announces that Sextus Pompeius has gained allegiance from many Romans, and that his allies, the pirates of Menecrates and Menas, threaten the borders of Italy. Octavius

and Lepidus hope Antony will return to his position and unite the triumvirate in a combined war against the Parthians (I,iv).

Cleopatra daydreams of Antony and wonders how he is faring in Rome when Alexas, her minister, brings her a pearl from

Antony with Antony's promise to extend her empire. She boasts of how she enchanted both Julius Caesar and Gnaeus Pompey in the past, and to seal her deal with Antony, she sets out to return her love to Antony in a letter (I,v).

In Sicily, Pompey waits for a sign from the gods that he should make his final move for power over the triumvirate. He counts on Cleopatra distracting Antony from the war and keeping him in Egypt (II,i).

Antony returns to Rome and is met by a furious Octavius Caesar who accuses Antony of inciting the war in Italy. Antony denies the accusations, blaming Fulvia's wild nature, but the men are clearly at odds and the unity of the triumvirate is threatened. Agrippa, Octavius's officer, proposes a remedy to mend the rift between Antony and Octavius. As proof of Antony's devotion to Octavius and Rome, Agrippa proposes that Antony, now a widower, marry Octavius's newly widowed sister, Octavia. To prove his devotion and seal their alliance, Antony agrees, and Octavius consents to an immediate wedding, before the attack on Pompey (II,iii).

A messenger comes to tell Cleopatra that Antony is to marry Octavia. Enraged, Cleopatra beats the messenger and sends him off to get details of Octavia's age and beauty (II, v). He later returns and, having learned from his previous encounter with Cleopatra, describes Octavia in the most unflattering way so as to please Cleopatra and escape further beatings.

Satisfied, Cleopatra commends the servant on his graphic descriptions (III,iii). Meanwhile in Italy, after some negotiations, Pompey agrees to peace and invites his past enemies on board his ship for a banquet. Many side discussions ensue concerning the battles, the questionable future of Antony and Octavia, and persistent doubts about a united triumvirate. Lepidus drinks too much and the servants mock him while Menas, a pirate unhappy with the treaty, pulls Pompey aside and offers to cut the throats of Antony, Lepidus, and Caesar. Pompey refuses to conspire with Menas, but Pompey admits that he would have commended him had Menas done the deed without his knowledge (II, vii). Disappointed in Pompey's missed opportunity for power, Menas later decides to desert Pompey (II,vii).

At the announced defeat of the Parthians, Antony, Octavia, and Caesar have a heartfelt farewell as Antony and Octavia depart for Athens (III,ii). No sooner does the couple arrive in Athens than they learn of new trouble, stirred this time by Octavius Caesar. Caesar has broken the treaty and declared war on Pompey. For Octavia's sake, Antony agrees not to act against Caesar in anger and instead offers to act as mediator. Octavia leaves for Rome to be with her brother, Caesar

(III,iv). Later, Antony's personal assistant, Eros, reports to Enobarbus that Caesar has betrayed Lepidus by first using him in his attack on Pompey and then arresting him for breaking the treaty (III,v). Antony is enraged when he learns of this deceit and demands that Lepidus be deposed and his revenue divided between Caesar and Antony.

Meanwhile, Octavia returns to Rome. Offended that his sister had not been accompanied by a military escort of suitable pomp, Caesar vows revenge for the disgraceful treatment of his sister and for Antony's proclamation giving Rome's eastern provinces to Cleopatra and her children (III,vi).

Octavius Caesar and Antony engage in battle, and Cleopatra insists on being present, much to the disapproval of Antony's commanders. Antony decides to fight Caesar at sea, which Cleopatra supports, but others advise against such a strategy.

But Antony insists, and all blame Cleopatra's bad influence for Antony's poor decision (III,vii). Antony and Cleopatra go to battle at sea, but the

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Egyptian fleet soon turns and flees, and Antony's ships follow Cleopatra's in retreat. Antony loses the battle in disgrace.

Antony delivers a passionate speech, lamenting his poor strategy and advising his followers to flee as well. He offers his treasure to them as compensation. Cleopatra begs Antony's forgiveness for her cowardliness. Softened by her heartfelt plea, Antony forgives her (III,xi). Through the messages of his ambassador, Antony requests that Caesar allow him to live in Egypt with Cleopatra. If not, Antony asks that Caesar grant him leave to carry on a private life in Athens. Cleopatra also surrenders to Caesar and asks that the crown of the Ptolemies (Egypt) be reserved for her heirs. Caesar refuses Antony's requests but agrees to Cleopatra's, provided that she exile Antony in disgrace or kill him (III,xii). Back at Cleopatra's palace, Antony learns of Caesar's answer and, against all odds, demands a hand-to-hand combat with Caesar. Having finally lost his faith in Antony's power of reason, Enobarbus decides to leave Antony's service. Caesar sends his officer Thidias to win Cleopatra. But when Thidias is caught kissing Cleopatra's hand, Antony has him whipped.

Humiliated, Thidias scurries back to Caesar. Antony accuses Cleopatra of being a faithless strumpet, but she swears her loyalty and he, once more, forgives her. Antony declares a last night of revelry before the final battle, where he has promised to fight Caesar to the death (III,xiii).

Antony prepares for battle and bids a tearful farewell to his loyal servants (IV,ii). While in battle camp he learns that the loyal Enobarbus has deserted him at last. He forgives Enobarbus and sends his belongings after him along with a number of additional gifts (IV, v). Enobarbus, learning of Antony's forgiveness and generosity, is wracked with guilt over his desertion.

He refuses to fight in Caesar's army against Antony and vows to die in a ditch, considering it an appropriately foul end to such a foul deed (IV,vi). As the watchmen carry him away, the dying Enobarbus begs for Antony's forgiveness (IV,ix). Pursued by Antony's fierce forces, Caesar's troops retreat (IV,viii). Antony returns to Alexandria and a proud Cleopatra (IV,viii).

Then Antony learns that Caesar's navy is preparing for a counterattack at sea, and he orders his fleet into battle (IV,x). Antony leaves Alexandria to observe the battle, and then returns, enraged. He has been betrayed! The Egyptian fleet has surrendered and has appeared to support Caesar's fleet. Irreconcilable, he accuses Cleopatra of betrayal and vows to kill her (IV,xii). Fearing for her life, Cleopatra locks herself high in her monument. She sends Mardian, a eunuch, to tell Antony that she has killed herself and the last word on her lips had been "Antony" (IV,xiii). Mardian dutifully reports on Cleopatra's "suicide." Overcome by the loss, Antony pledges to join Cleopatra in death. He orders Eros to make one final act as his servant and kill him. Reluctantly, Eros draws his sword, but asks Antony to turn away as he does this hateful deed. At the last moment, Eros kills himself instead. Antony praises Eros's valiant act and takes it as a lesson for himself. Antony impales himself on his own sword but fails to strike a fatal wound. Guards swarm into the room and halt his further attempts at suicide. Diomedes, Cleopatra's servant, arrives to announce that Cleopatra is not dead after all. Mortally wounded, Antony asks to be taken to Cleopatra's side so that he may die in his lover's arms (IV,xiv). Antony is carried to Cleopatra's monument and pleads for one last kiss. Fearing capture by Octavius, Cleopatra refuses to leave the monument. Instead, she bids her ladies to lift Antony up to her. He dies in her arms. Overcome by the loss of her lover, Cleopatra vows to take her own life (IV,xv). At his camp, Caesar learns of Antony's suicide. He mourns Antony's death, claiming that such a death should shatter the very world. An Egyptian servant arrives asking Caesar what will become of Cleopatra. Caesar assures the servant that he will treat Cleopatra gently and with dignity. Fearing Cleopatra's Irrational behavior, Caesar sends his officer Proculeius to ensure that Cleopatra is brought back to Rome alive, for her arrival there would provide evidence of Caesar's great victory (V,i).

Proculeius arrives at Cleopatra's monument and informs her that Caesar has assured both her safety and her son's continued rule of Egypt. But she fears the servant is untrustworthy and attempts to kill herself with a dagger. Proculeius commands his guards to stop her, but she vows that she will find another way to kill herself rather than become Caesar's captive.

Notes

Dolabella, Caesar's officer, reveals that Caesar instead intends to take her and her children to Rome. Fearful that she would have to endure many indignities if she complied, Cleopatra resolves to commit suicide in the "high Roman fashion."

Cleopatra prepares for death. She invites into her chambers a trusted countryman who arrives with a basket of figs in which he has concealed several poisonous asps. As Cleopatra bids farewell to her ladies, Iras and Charmian, Iras suddenly falls dead at her feet. Worried that her attendant will meet Antony in death before she does, Cleopatra quickly clutches an asp to her breast. She applies another to her arm and soon dies from their bites. As one of Caesar's guards enters, Charmian announces that the escort was too slow to stop an act so fitting of a noble queen. Charmian applies the last asp

to herself and dies. Caesar, upon learning of Cleopatra's valiant death, pays tribute to her courage and noble end. He orders her burial next to Antony in honorable graves accompanied with great ceremony (V,ii).

Antony & Cleopatra written around 1606 is one of Shakespeare's great historical love stories. Antony is captivated by Cleopatra, Queen of Egypt. Gossip and scandal leads to plots of murder and battles.

Mark Antony, Octavius Caesar and Lepidus, having defeated Julius Caesar's assassins at Philippi, now rule the Roman Empire as a triumvirate.

While in Alexandria however, the ageing Antony has become captivated by Cleopatra, Queen of Egypt (and mother to Julius Caesar's illegitimate son, Caesarion). The gossip and scandal this is creating both amongst Romans in Alexandria and at home in Rome gives rise to dissention between Octavius and Antony, whose behaviour is felt to be debauched and 'un-Roman'.

At the same time as the power of the triumvirate is being challenged by a dissatisfied senator, Pompey, Antony hears news from Rome that his wife, Fulvia, is dead. These two issues together force Antony to return to Rome and take up his responsibilities as a triumvir again.

Once back in Rome, Antony seems less controlled by his fascination for Cleopatra and, in an attempt to strengthen the triumvirate and cement his political alliance with Octavius following a quarrel, he agrees to marry Octavius's sister, Octavia. This news drives Cleopatra into a jealous rage.

BROKEN ALLIANCES

On the brink of another bloody civil war against Pompey's forces, Antony and Octavius manage to negotiate a peace and they, along with Lepidus, feast with Pompey in celebration.

Antony and Octavia then leave for Athens, where Antony has been summoned to quell a rebellion by the Scythians. No sooner have they arrived there than Antony learns that Octavius has ignored the agreed peace treaty, has taken arms against Pompey once more, is plotting against Lepidus, the third member of the triumvirate, and has also spoken critically of Mark Antony. Enraged, Antony sends Octavia back to Rome to act as a go-between but also prepares for war against Octavius.

WAR

Octavius learns that Antony has returned to Alexandria and, with Cleopatra, has appeared enthroned in the market place, crowning themselves and their children as kings and queens. Octavius declares war on Egypt and, despite warnings not to fight at sea, Antony agrees that the two navies will meet for a sea battle at Actium.

The Egyptians, under Antony's command, lose when he deserts the battle to follow Cleopatra's fleeing ships. Antony is ashamed and in despair at his own unsoldierly behaviour. But when he hears that Octavius is planning a secret peace with Cleopatra at the expense of Antony's own life, he has Caesar's messenger whipped and rouses himself for a second battle in which he is victorious.

Before the third and decisive battle, many of Antony's soldiers desert him fearing bad omens, including his most loyal friend Enobarbus. A disappointed Antony sends after Enobarbus all the treasures he had left behind on his desertion, and Enobarbus is so stricken with shame that he dies.

Having won the initial battle by land, Antony prepares to face Octavius's forces again at sea.

THE ENDING

If you don't want to know how it ends, stop reading now! The Egyptian navy deserts, leading the defeated Antony to believe that Cleopatra has betrayed him to Octavius. She is so angry that she retreats

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to her monument and sends false word to Antony that she has committed suicide.

Appalled, and echoing the suicide of the conspirator Brutus at Philippi, Antony begs a faithful servant to hold his sword while he falls upon it. Unwilling to do so, the servant, Eros, kills himself. Antony then attempts suicide but fails, leaving himself badly wounded.

A messenger arrives from Cleopatra, telling Antony of her deception. Antony instructs his guards to take him to Cleopatra's monument where he is raised up to the top of the monument to die in her arms.

Having persuaded Octavius that she will surrender, but fearful of capture and the shame of being exhibited as a defeated enemy through the streets of Rome, Cleopatra holds a poisonous snake to her breast and dies, along with her faithful maids.

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS I :

Q1. Give brief about list of characters.

Answer.....
.....
.....
.....

Q2. Write a short note on end of the war.

Answer.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

8.5 BEFORE READING THE PLAY

Before reading the play, students should explore the time period and historical significance of the play's action. They should become familiar with the famous tales of Julius Caesar, Marcus Antony, and Queen Cleopatra, which were well known to Elizabethans. Students should

become acquainted with the topographical world in 44 b.c. and the effects of divided power on war and land acquisitions. Finally, students should delve into the language of Shakespeare's play, with its implied meanings and poetic language. An understanding of the effects of iambic pentameter and purposeful switches to prose to imply character, class, subtext, and action is essential for higher levels of literary appreciation and understanding.

Following is a list of exercises and assignments that will support this manner of text and content exploration. Any of the exercises may be expanded or adapted as time and facilities allow.

I. THE STRATEGY GAME

This map game is designed to help students explore the concepts of divided power, leadership strategies, and the stakes of war. The game is specific to the play's action by including a triumvirate, homeland protection, love and betrayal, and five possible individuals seeking control.

SETTING UP THE GAME

Supplies needed:

1. One large map of the Roman Empire and its surrounding territories in approximately 41 b.c. for each group of students.

(To be used as a game board. Alternately, if more familiar geography is preferred, use a map of the United States with Canada, and Mexico as the surrounding territories and the U.S. governed by a triumvirate.)

2. Five large game pieces to represent five leaders and 60 smaller game pieces to represent five armies of 12 pieces each.

(Either chess or checkers pieces, coins or toy soldiers are recommended as game pieces.)

3. Strategy Cards made by writing individual strategies on index cards (suggestions for strategy statements below).

4. Small pieces of scrap paper and pens or pencils to write Declarations.

- Divide the class into groups of five. If numbers do not work out evenly, assign a sixth person to the group to act as

the mediator who requests Declarations and hands out Strategy Cards.

- Designate each group member to one of the following (A,B,C,D or E): Triumvirate of Rome (A,B,C), Ruler of Egypt (D),

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Ruler of Parthia (E).

- Give each student a large game piece to represent his ruler. Each ruler receives an army, represented by 12 game pieces.

PLAYING THE GAME

A simplified list of steps:

1. Divide Power and Territories amongst five Rulers.
2. Round One: (a) Strategy Cards dealt, (b) invitation for Requests for Allies made and Requests for Allies notes exchanged, (c) Declarations made by all five Rulers, (d) game pieces moved to war or retreat locations, (e) losses and gains of armies exchanged, (f) armies stay where they are and go on to next round.
3. Round Two: same as above.
4. Round Three: same as above, but in step (e) game pieces are counted, (f) all Strategy cards and notes of Requests for Allies are exposed. Leaders with the most game pieces are announced as winners.

To start the game, the Triumvirate divides the Roman Empire into three territories of sub-rule. The Ruler of the African continent is (A), the Ruler of the Asian continent is (B), and the Ruler of the European continent is (C).

The game consists of three rounds. To play each round:

- Deal out one Strategy Card to each ruler. (Use the Strategy Card to influence your Declaration and strategy during the round.)
- Privately read your Strategy Card and decide how this will influence your Declaration. Leaders do not conspire before they announce their Declarations, but if one ruler wishes to request the aid of another ruler in war before the Declarations are made, a “Request for Allies” is offered.
- Request Allies by passing small notes to certain rulers. The contents of the notes are not to be known until all three rounds are complete. Once declarations are made there is no turning back. The rulers must make Declarations that are based on the Strategy Cards, for the card’s strategies will all be exposed after all three rounds have been played. (This assures that students, as in life and in the play’s action, are not always sure whom to trust and exactly how their actions are motivated.)
- Make your declaration of war on a specific ruler or territory, or plea for peace or abstinence, by making a Declaration

Statement one at a time. (Examples of Declaration Statements given below.)

- After all five Declarations are made, move the game pieces representing armies and rulers to declared locations of wars, or in retreat to your own land. (Armies placed in war will either win or lose soldiers. Those that stay at home and are not attacked, lose nothing, but gain nothing.)
- If you combine forces with another ruler and outnumber another army placed on the same territory, the outnumbered army gives up one half of his/her soldiers to the larger army and these soldiers are divided equally amongst the winning rulers. If you do not combine forces and armies are equal, the round is a draw.

The leader with the most game pieces after three rounds wins and holds whatever land his/her army has conquered over other armies.

SUGGESTIONS FOR STRATEGY CARDS:

- “You are in love with Ruler D and will proclaim whatever Ruler D proclaims.”
- “You don’t trust Ruler A’s ability to make rational decisions and will not side with Ruler A in war.”
- “You have great loyalty towards Ruler C and will back Ruler C in any war, unless you suspect that Ruler C has betrayed you.”
- “You believe that the Triumvirate is disorganized and ask Ruler D to side with you in overtaking all of the Triumvirate territory.”
- “You do not want to go to war and risk losing your beautiful country, so you refrain from attacking anyone, even if it means betraying another Ruler and fleeing battle.”
- “You suspect that Ruler E has broken the treaty with you, and you declare war.”
- “You are angry with Ruler A and are determined to fight, no matter what the consequences.”
- “You don’t trust anyone, and so will side with no one.”
- “You will promise anything so that no one will be angry with you, but you will turn tail and run in war, rather than face defeat or vulnerability.”

Notes

- “You believe you are invincible and will fight with anyone for more control over land.”

SUGGESTIONS FOR DECLARATIONS:

Declarations are to be made as announcements of battle, retreat, wishes for peace, and for forming an ally with another

Ruler. Examples:

- “I will ally with D, and go to war if he/she proclaims war on anyone.”
- “I stand my ground and go to war with anyone who attacks my borders.”
- “I will not partake in any of these wars and hope that all of you will refrain from battle.”

II. THE ANCIENT WORLD

Acquaint students with the geography of Antony’s and Cleopatra’s world by posting a map of the world depicting the division of land and ancient names of these lands as listed in the play.

- Show students the territories governed by the five rulers in the play.
- Use the map as a visual guide to the play’s action so that students can see territories lost and gained.
- Use color-coded push-pins, flags, or post-it notes to represent where rulers are during each scene. Also keep track of each ruler’s armies.
- Have students point to where each scene takes place so they can follow the action.

Students can also create map images of the play’s action using a computer and a simple graphics program, like Power Point. They can highlight territories gained and lost during the play’s action and present these images to the class showing how the play’s world changes with each battle.

III. STORYTELLING

Shakespeare, one of the greatest storytellers of the English language, adapted most of his plays from popular, well-known tales. As any good storyteller does, he took artistic license with these tales and made his own adaptations of the original. So, too, could the students.

- Before reading the play, tell students the beginning of the story of *Antony and Cleopatra* and then have them finish the story, predicting how it will end.
- Students can write their own stories or small groups can create group stories with each member adding to it.
- Then they can simply tell their version to the class or explore an original method of presenting the story. As Shakespeare used the stage and drama, students could also use drama or comic strips, radio plays, spoof skits, readers' theater, soap opera, poetry, rap, ballad, mime, dance, video, email exchanges, news announcement, etc. This can be a lengthy and creative exercise where students invest in the possibilities and methods of storytelling.
- Once all stories are presented, students can discuss and perhaps vote on the most likely ending to match Shakespeare's version.

IV. WHAT MAKES A TRAGEDY?

Introduce students to Aristotle's *Poetics*. Outline the contents of an effective tragedy interpreted from Aristotle's *Poetics*, including:

1. **Tragedy**—a serious play typically dealing with the problems of a central character, or protagonist, leading to an unhappy or disastrous ending brought on by fate and a tragic flaw in the main character
2. **Hubris**—wanton insolence or arrogance resulting from excessive pride or from passion
3. **Foreshadowing**—to indicate or suggest beforehand
4. **Climax**—the highest point of interest or tension in a drama, and the turning point of the play's action
5. **Catharsis**—the purifying of the emotions or relieving of emotional tensions
6. **Denouement**—the outcome, solution, unraveling or clarification of a plot in a drama

Discuss Aristotle's six constituent elements of a Tragedy, ranked in order of priority:

1. Plot—the arrangement of dramatic incidents
2. Characters—the people represented in the play

3. Thought or Theme—the ideas explored
4. Language—the dialogue and poetry
5. Music—the choral odes (*specific to Greek plays*)
6. Spectacle—scenery and other visual elements

Relate these elements to other contemporary real-life tragedies like politicians or leaders who are scandalized publicly for having extra-marital affairs, committing crimes or for covering a lie. Students can also read Greek and Roman myths, other tragic plays by Shakespeare, and/or watch popular tragic movies, like *Braveheart*. As students read *Antony and*

Cleopatra they should identify places where these elements are exposed through the play's action and discuss the characters' flaws and the cause of each character's downfall or success.

V. UNDERSTANDING REAL VS. DRAMATIC ACTION

Have students read books or watch documentaries that depict life in Rome, Egypt, and the ancient world. They can explore transportation, styles of dress, methods of war as well as uniforms and arms. This provides students with clear visual images of the characters and their lifestyles. Likewise, they will begin to understand how long it took to move armies

from place to place. Students can then understand how, within the play's two-hour dramatic action, many years elapse. During the time of the play's five acts, Antony and Cleopatra have born a number of children together, and many battles have been won or lost.

Have students speculate how much time has passed during the play's action and look to the text to support these speculations. For example, in Act III, scene vi, Caesar complains of Antony's public display of his bastard children and his declarations

to give more of the Triumvirate's land to Cleopatra:

CAESAR: I'th' marketplace, on a tribunal silvered,

Cleopatra and himself in chairs of gold

Were publicly enthroned; at the feet sat

Caesarion, whom they call my father's son,

And all the unlawful issue that their lust

Since then hath made between them, Unto her

He gave the establishment of Egypt, made her
 Of lower Syria, Cyprus, Lydia
 Absolute queen

VI. KEEPING TRACK OF THE CHARACTERS AND THEIR LOYALTIES

Have students divide a piece of paper into four columns and place the rulers, Caesar, Antony, Cleopatra, and Pompey, at the top of each column. Underneath, list his/her loyal followers. Students can place this chart next to the script as they read the play and keep track of the loyalties of the minor characters. As minor characters betray their leaders, retreat or die, students can either cross out or move them to other columns, keeping track of power shifts.

VII. KNOWING THE STORY AS THE ELIZABETHANS DID

Most Elizabethans were familiar with the tale of Antony and Cleopatra before Shakespeare produced his drama about them. Shakespeare's source was most likely Plutarch and it is included as supplemental reading in the Signet Classic text. Students can read Plutarch's story before they read the play and later discuss how Shakespeare adapted Plutarch's famous tale to the stage. Assign portions of Plutarch's tale to small groups to read and relate to the class either by oral reading or storytelling.

8.6 WHILE READING THE PLAY

I. FORMING INDIVIDUAL INTERPRETATIONS OF SCENES

Many scenes offer an opportunity for individual interpretations. For example: where Cleopatra's integrity and honesty are questionable, where an officer's or servant's loyalty sways, or where humor and sarcasm are used to expose subtext. Can students form their own opinions of these interpretations? If so, how do they interpret them?

- Divide the characters' parts amongst the students, reading the play orally. Discuss interpretations of scenes and character motivations.

Notes

- Divide the class into small groups, assigning a scene to each group. Have them rehearse, practicing voice, inflection, and emotion. They can prepare an introduction to the scene, set the stage, and then read the scene aloud with their practiced interpretations while the rest of the class attempts to summarize the scene in writing. The class can then discuss perceived interpretations gained through these presentations.
- Staging methods can also be explored by individuals or small groups. For example, in Act IV, scene xv, Cleopatra is in her monument with her ladies. She asks them to help lift the dying Antony up to her so that she will not have to leave the safety of her monument. Assign this same scene to a few different individuals or groups and compare interpretations and solutions to its staging challenge.

II. EXPLORING THE SOUNDS OF THE PLAY

Shakespeare's plays were performed outdoors with minimal props. Elizabethan theater practitioners had to be quite creative using inexpensive devices to create magic and action on stage. This activity reinforces the live action and stage sounds of drama, as well as introduces students to simplified staging devices as a means of bringing a play to life.

Assign small groups to specific scenes from the play. Provide each group with a cassette recorder. Have students practice reading the scenes aloud, playing specific characters and providing sound effects. Students enjoy bringing objects to class that make supportive sound effects, including crowd and battle noises, footsteps upon character's entrances, swords being drawn, snakes attacking, etc. Have students record the scenes as a mini radio play. Groups then play their scenes in sequence.

III. INTERPRETING CONTENT THROUGH DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Pose discussion questions before reading each scene or act that require students to delve into the content as they read it.

- After reading the scene, hold class discussions concerning their varied answers to the questions.
- Assign journal entries that explore the answers to these questions.
- Split the class into small groups and have them discuss the answers to questions posed and report on their findings.
- Split the class into small groups and assign each group a different scene to explore. Give each group one or two discovery questions to guide their exploratory work on the scene. Then have each group read the scene aloud and discuss their interpretations.

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS II :

Q1. Give short activity before the play

Answer.....
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.....

1. Study a short activity during the play.

Answer.....
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8.7 LET’S SUM UP

They are arguably the most famous lovers in history. Marcus Antonius of Rome stood at the pinnacle of power, fighting to be the most powerful man in the known world; and Cleopatra VII Philopator was the queen of one ancient civilization, Egypt, and heir to the unmatched cultural achievements of another, Greece.

Their love affair, their war together, their defeat and, finally, their suicides have been told and retold for centuries. But most of those

retellings have been far from accurate, according to author and historian Adrian Goldsworthy.

Goldsworthy, author of *Antony and Cleopatra*, describes the couple's true story and why so much of what we know about them is wrong.

8.8 KEYWORDS

- **Aside** : a remark or passage by a character in a play that is intended to be heard by the audience but unheard by the other characters in the play
- **Soliloquy**: the act of speaking one's thoughts aloud when by oneself or regardless of any hearers
- **dramatis personae** : the main characters in a dramatic work
- **tragic irony** : when the audience is aware that a character's words or actions will bring about a tragic or fatal result, while the character himself is unaware
- **dramatic irony** : irony that is inherent in speeches or a situation of a drama and is understood by the audience but not grasped by the characters in the play

8.9 QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW

1. Do you think that the primary focus of the play's thematic burden lies on interpreting *Hamlet* as a revenge play?
2. Comment on the nature and significance of the ethics of revenge in *Hamlet*. How do various characters in the play respond to the issue of revenge?
3. How does the preponderance of the metaphors of theatre, acting, stage etc. In *Hamlet* condition our response to the play? Interpretations
4. Does your own reading of the play suggest to you that one could profitably read and enjoy the play without paying attention to the issue of "theme" and meaning. "?"

8.10 SUGGESTED READINGS AND REFERENCES

- Antony and Cleopatra – Digital text by the Folger Shakespeare Library
- Antony and Cleopatra at Project Gutenberg
- No Fear Shakespeare: Antony and Cleopatra – The play with a glossary by SparkNotes

- Barroll, J. Leeds (1965). "The Chronology of Shakespeare's Jacobean Plays and the Dating of Antony and Cleopatra". In Smith, Gordon R. (ed.). *Essays on Shakespeare*. University Park, Pennsylvania: Penn State University Press. pp. 115–162. ISBN 978-0-271-73062-2.
- ^ Shakespeare, William (1998). "The Jacobean Antony and Cleopatra". In Madelaine, Richard (ed.). *Antony and Cleopatra*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. pp. 14–17. ISBN 978-0-521-44306-7.
- ^ Jump up to:^a ^b Neill, Michael, ed. *Antony and Cleopatra*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994
- ^ Bevington, David, ed. (1990). *Antony and Cleopatra*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 12–14 ISBN 0-521-84833-4.
- ^ "Antony & Cleopatra – McCarter Theatre Center".

8.11 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS 1 :

Answer 1 : Check Section 8.3

Answer 2 : Check Section 8.4

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS 2 :

Answer 1 : Check Section 8.5

Answer 2 : Check Section 8.6

UNIT 9 SHAKESPEARE’S ANTONY AND CLEOPATRA: ANALYSIS AND CRITICISM

STRUCTURE

- 9.0 Objectives
- 9.1 Introduction
- 9.2 Acts : Shakespeare’s Antony And Cleopatra: Summary
- 9.3 Analysis And Criticism
- 9.4 Critical History: Changing Views Of Cleopatra
- 9.5 Themes And Motifs
- 9.6 Let’s Sum up
- 9.7 Keywords
- 9.8 Questions For Review
- 9.9 Suggested Readings And References
- 9.10 Answers To Check Your Progress

9.0 OBJECTIVES

This unit provides the critical analysis and criticism of the Shakespeare’s play Antony And Cleopatra: It provides the critical history along with the themes and motif of the play .Following objectives can be achieved with the help of this unit:

- Summary of the acts
- Analysis And Criticism
- Critical History
- Themes And Motifs

9.1 INTRODUCTION

Antony and Cleopatra (First Folio title: **The Tragedie of Anthonie, and Cleopatra**) is a tragedy by William Shakespeare. The play was first performed, by the King's Men, at either the Blackfriars Theatre or

the Globe Theatre in around 1607;^{[1][2]} its first appearance in print was in the Folio of 1623.

The plot is based on Thomas North's 1579 English translation of Plutarch's Lives (in Ancient Greek) and follows the relationship between Cleopatra and Mark Antony from the time of the Sicilian revolt to Cleopatra's suicide during the Final War of the Roman Republic. The major antagonist is Octavius Caesar, one of Antony's fellow triumvirs of the Second Triumvirate and the first emperor of the Roman Empire. The tragedy is mainly set in the Roman Republic and Ptolemaic Egypt and is characterized by swift shifts in geographical location and linguistic register as it alternates between sensual, imaginative Alexandria and a more pragmatic, austere Rome.

Many consider Shakespeare's Cleopatra, whom Enobarbus describes as having "infinite variety", as one of the most complex and fully developed female characters in the playwright's body of work.^{p.45} She is frequently vain and histrionic enough to provoke an audience almost to scorn; at the same time, Shakespeare invests her and Antony with tragic grandeur. These contradictory features have led to famously divided critical responses. It is difficult to classify Antony and Cleopatra as belonging to a single genre. It can be described as a history play (though it does not completely adhere to historical accounts), as a tragedy (though not completely in Aristotelian terms), as a comedy, as a romance, and according to some critics, such as McCarter, a problem play. All that can be said with certainty is that it is a Roman play, and perhaps even a sequel to another of Shakespeare's tragedies, Julius Caesar....

Mark Antony—one of the triumvirs of the Roman Republic, along with Octavius and Lepidus—has neglected his soldierly duties after being beguiled by Egypt's Queen, Cleopatra. He ignores Rome's domestic problems, including the fact that his third wife Fulvia rebelled against Octavius and then died.

Octavius calls Antony back to Rome from Alexandria to help him fight against Sextus Pompey, Menecrates, and Menas, three notorious pirates of the Mediterranean. At Alexandria, Cleopatra begs Antony not to go, and though he repeatedly affirms his deep passionate love for her, he eventually leaves.

Notes

The triumvirs meet in Rome, where Antony and Octavius put to rest, for now, their disagreements. Octavius' general, Agrippa, suggests that Antony should marry Octavius's sister, Octavia, in order to cement the friendly bond between the two men. Antony accepts. Antony's lieutenant Enobarbus, though, knows that Octavia can never satisfy him after Cleopatra. In a famous passage, he describes Cleopatra's charms: "Age cannot wither her, nor custom stale / Her infinite variety: other women cloy / The appetites they feed, but she makes hungry / Where most she satisfies."

A soothsayer warns Antony that he is sure to lose if he ever tries to fight Octavius.

In Egypt, Cleopatra learns of Antony's marriage to Octavia and takes furious revenge upon the messenger who brings her the news. She grows content only when her courtiers assure her that Octavia is homely: short, low-browed, round-faced and with bad hair.

Before battle, the triumvirs parley with Sextus Pompey, and offer him a truce. He can retain Sicily and Sardinia, but he must help them "rid the sea of pirates" and send them tributes. After some hesitation, Sextus agrees. They engage in a drunken celebration on Sextus' galley, though the austere Octavius leaves early and sober from the party. Menas suggests to Sextus that he kill the three triumvirs and make himself ruler of the Roman Republic, but he refuses, finding it dishonourable. After Antony departs Rome for Athens, Octavius and Lepidus break their truce with Sextus and war against him. This is unapproved by Antony, and he is furious.

Antony returns to Hellenistic Alexandria and crowns Cleopatra and himself as rulers of Egypt and the eastern third of the Roman Republic (which was Antony's share as one of the triumvirs). He accuses Octavius of not giving him his fair share of Sextus' lands, and is angry that Lepidus, whom Octavius has imprisoned, is out of the triumvirate. Octavius agrees to the former demand, but otherwise is very displeased with what Antony has done.

9.2 ACTS : SHAKESPEARE'S ANTONY AND CLEOPATRA: SUMMARY

Act I

After the death of Julius Caesar, the Roman Empire is ruled by three men: Mark Antony, Octavius Caesar, and Lepidus.

Mark Antony commands the eastern Mediterranean and lives in Egypt. He has also become infatuated with Cleopatra, Queen of Egypt. After the death of his wife, Fulvia, and the rebellion of Pompey against his fellow ruler Octavius, Antony is forced to leave for Rome. He travels with his friend Enobarbus.

Antony and Cleopatra, RSC, 2006

Act II

In Rome, Antony and Octavius Caesar argue over the former's escapades in Egypt. They eventually decide that their friendship must be cemented by a political marriage between Antony and Octavia, Caesar's sister. Enobarbus refuses to believe that Antony will desert Cleopatra and tells his Roman friends about the Egyptian court. The rulers, including Lepidus, make peace with the rebellious Pompey, who entertains them on his ship in the harbour. During the feast, Pompey refuses to allow his men to murder the triumvirate (Lepidus).

In time we hate that which we often fear

— *ANTONY AND CLEOPATRA, ACT 1 SCENE 3*

Act III

Cleopatra receives the news of Antony's marriage. After a fit of rage and jealousy, she realises that Octavia offers no real romantic challenge. When Antony and Octavia reach Athens, they learn that Caesar has revoked his peace treaty and attacked Pompey. He also betrayed the triumvirate agreement by imprisoning Lepidus. Antony sends Octavia back to Rome to try to renew peace.

Antony himself goes on to Egypt to raise an army with Cleopatra. Caesar, disgusted by Antony's abandonment of Octavia, declares war on Antony and Cleopatra. Despite Enobarbus's advice, Antony decides to fight at sea at Actium. In the battle, Cleopatra's ships flee from the Roman fleet, and Antony is defeated.

Act IV

Humiliated by his love for Cleopatra, Antony eventually chooses to fight Caesar on land. His army begins to lose faith in their leader after many portents of Antony's supposedly inevitable defeat. Enobarbus deserts Antony and defects to Caesar's army, leaving Antony saddened, not angry. Enobarbus is overcome with guilt for his betrayal of Antony and dies alone in his grief.

Mrs. Yates as Cleopatra, 1777

At the battle, Cleopatra's men flee, abandoning Antony. Fearing Antony's anger, Cleopatra takes refuge in her monument. When Antony fears that Cleopatra has betrayed him to Caesar, she sends false word that she is dead, hoping to win over his affections once more. Antony is devastated by the news and resolves to die himself. He falls onto his sword and is mortally wounded. At this point, Cleopatra's messenger goes to inform him that the queen is still alive and finds him dying alone. Antony is then taken up into the monument by Cleopatra and her waiting women, and he dies in Cleopatra's arms.

Age cannot wither her, nor custom stale her infinite variety

— *ANTONY AND CLEOPATRA, ACT 2 SCENE 2*

Act V

Cleopatra cannot bear the thought of being a prisoner of the Romans. When Caesar believes that she is now his prisoner, she has a countryman bring her poisonous snakes in a basket. Her waiting women dress her in state robes before she lays an asp on her breast and dies, along with her women. Caesar, upon discovering the bodies, orders that Antony and Cleopatra be buried together. Now unhindered in his quest for Egypt, and conveniently lacking in political foes, Caesar returns to Rome and becomes Emperor.

9.3 ANALYSIS AND CRITICISM

Many critics have noted the strong influence of Virgil's first-century Roman epic poem, the *Aeneid*, on Shakespeare's *Antony and Cleopatra*. Such influence should be expected, given the prevalence of allusions to Virgil in the Renaissance culture in which Shakespeare was educated. Moreover, as is well-known, the historical Antony and Cleopatra were the prototypes and antitypes for Virgil's Dido and Aeneas: Dido, ruler of

the north African city of Carthage, tempts Aeneas, the legendary exemplar of Roman *pietas*, to forego his task of founding Rome after the fall of Troy. The fictional Aeneas dutifully resists Dido's temptation and abandons her to forge on to Italy, placing political destiny before romantic love, in stark contrast to Antony, who puts passionate love of his own Egyptian queen, Cleopatra, before duty to Rome. Given the well-established traditional connections between the fictional Dido and Aeneas and the historical Antony and Cleopatra, it is no surprise that Shakespeare includes numerous allusions to Virgil's epic in his historical tragedy. As Janet Adelman observes, "almost all the central elements in *Antony and Cleopatra* are to be found in the *Aeneid*: the opposing values of Rome and a foreign passion; the political necessity of a passionless Roman marriage; the concept of an afterlife in which the passionate lovers meet." However, as Heather James argues, Shakespeare's allusions to Virgil's Dido and Aeneas are far from slavish imitations. James emphasizes the various ways in which Shakespeare's play subverts the ideology of the Virgilian tradition; one such instance of this subversion is Cleopatra's dream of Antony in Act 5 ("I dreamt there was an Emperor Antony" [5.2.75]). James argues that in her extended description of this dream, Cleopatra "reconstructs the heroic masculinity of an Antony whose identity has been fragmented and scattered by Roman opinion." This politically charged dream vision is just one example of the way that Shakespeare's story destabilises and potentially critiques the Roman ideology inherited from Virgil's epic and embodied in the mythic Roman ancestor Aeneas.

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS I:

Q1. Give a short note on analysis of the play.

Answer.....

Q2. Give short summary of the play.

Answer.....

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.....
.....

9.4 CRITICAL HISTORY: CHANGING VIEWS OF CLEOPATRA

A Roman Second Style painting in the House of Marcus Fabius Rufus at Pompeii, Italy, depicting Cleopatra as Venus Genetrix and her son Caesarion as a cupid, mid-1st century BC Cleopatra, being the complex figure that she is, has faced a variety of interpretations of character throughout history. Perhaps the most famous dichotomy is that of the manipulative seductress versus the skilled leader. Examining the critical history of the character of Cleopatra reveals that intellectuals of the 19th century and the early 20th century viewed her as merely an object of sexuality that could be understood and diminished rather than an imposing force with great poise and capacity for leadership.

This phenomenon is illustrated by the famous poet T.S. Eliot's take on Cleopatra. He saw her as "no wielder of power," but rather that her "devouring sexuality...diminishes her power". His language and writings use images of darkness, desire, beauty, sensuality, and carnality to portray not a strong, powerful woman, but a temptress. Throughout his writing on Antony and Cleopatra, Eliot refers to Cleopatra as material rather than person. He frequently calls her "thing". T.S. Eliot conveys the view of early critical history on the character of Cleopatra.

Other scholars also discuss early critics' views of Cleopatra in relation to a serpent signifying "original sin".The symbol of the serpent "functions, at the symbolic level, as a means of her submission, the phallic appropriation of the queen's body (and the land it embodies) by Octavius and the empire".The serpent, because it represents temptation, sin, and feminine weakness, is used by 19th and early 20th century critics to undermine Cleopatra's political authority and to emphasise the image of Cleopatra as manipulative seductress.

The postmodern view of Cleopatra is complex. Doris Adler suggests that, in a postmodern philosophical sense, we cannot begin to grasp the character of Cleopatra because, "In a sense it is a distortion to consider

Cleopatra at any moment apart from the entire cultural milieu that creates and consumes Antony and Cleopatra on stage. However the isolation and microscopic examination of a single aspect apart from its host environment is an effort to improve the understanding of the broader context. In similar fashion, the isolation and examination of the stage image of Cleopatra becomes an attempt to improve the understanding of the theatrical power of her infinite variety and the cultural treatment of that power." So, as a microcosm, Cleopatra can be understood within a postmodern context, as long as one understands that the purpose for the examination of this microcosm is to further one's own interpretation of the work as a whole. Author L.T. Fitz believes that it is not possible to derive a clear, postmodern view of Cleopatra due to the sexism that all critics bring with them when they review her intricate character. He states specifically, "Almost all critical approaches to this play have been coloured by the sexist assumptions the critics have brought with them to their reading." One seemingly anti-sexist viewpoint comes from Donald C. Freeman's articulations of the meaning and significance of the deaths of both Antony and Cleopatra at the end of the play. Freeman states, "We understand Antony as a grand failure because the container of his Romanness "dislimns": it can no longer outline and define him even to himself. Conversely, we understand Cleopatra at her death as the transcendent queen of "immortal longings" because the container of her mortality can no longer restrain her: unlike Antony, she never melts, but sublimates from her very earthly flesh to ethereal fire and air."¹

These constant shifts in the perception of Cleopatra are well-represented in a review of Estelle Parsons' adaptation of Shakespeare's *Antony and Cleopatra* at the Interart Theatre in New York City. Arthur Holmberg surmises, "What had at first seemed like a desperate attempt to be chic in a trendy New York manner was, in fact, an ingenious way to characterise the differences between Antony's Rome and Cleopatra's Egypt. Most productions rely on rather predictable contrasts in costuming to imply the rigid discipline of the former and the languid self-indulgence of the latter. By exploiting ethnic differences in speech, gesture, and movement, Parsons rendered the clash between two opposing cultures not only contemporary but also poignant. In this setting, the white Egyptians represented a graceful and ancient aristocracy—well groomed, elegantly

poised, and doomed. The Romans, upstarts from the West, lacked finesse and polish. But by sheer brute strength they would hold dominion over principalities and kingdoms." This assessment of the changing way in which Cleopatra is represented in modern adaptations of Shakespeare's play is yet another example of how the modern and postmodern view of Cleopatra is constantly evolving.

Cleopatra is a difficult character to pin down because there are multiple aspects of her personality that we occasionally get a glimpse of. However, the most dominant parts of her character seem to oscillate between a powerful ruler, a seductress, and a heroine of sorts. Power is one of Cleopatra's most dominant character traits and she uses it as a means of control. This thirst for control manifested itself through Cleopatra's initial seduction of Antony in which she was dressed as Aphrodite, the goddess of love, and made quite a calculated entrance in order to capture his attention. This sexualised act extends itself into Cleopatra's role as a seductress because it was her courage and unapologetic manner that leaves people remembering her as a "grasping, licentious harlot". However, despite her "insatiable sexual passion" she was still using these relationships as part of a grander political scheme, once again revealing how dominant Cleopatra's desire was for power.¹ Due to Cleopatra's close relationship with power, she seems to take on the role of a heroine because there is something in her passion and intelligence that intrigues others. She was an autonomous and confident ruler, sending a powerful message about the independence and strength of women. Cleopatra had quite a wide influence, and still continues to inspire, making her a heroine to many.

9.5 THEMES AND MOTIFS

Ambiguity and opposition

Relativity and ambiguity are prominent ideas in the play, and the audience is challenged to come to conclusions about the ambivalent nature of many of the characters. The relationship between Antony and Cleopatra can easily be read as one of love or lust; their passion can be construed as being wholly destructive but also showing elements of

transcendence. Cleopatra might be said to kill herself out of love for Antony, or because she has lost political power. Octavius can be seen as either a noble and good ruler, only wanting what is right for Rome, or as a cruel and ruthless politician.

A major theme running through the play is opposition. Throughout the play, oppositions between Rome and Egypt, love and lust, and masculinity and femininity are emphasised, subverted, and commented on. One of Shakespeare's most famous speeches, drawn almost verbatim from North's translation of Plutarch's *Lives*, Enobarbus' description of Cleopatra on her barge, is full of opposites resolved into a single meaning, corresponding with these wider oppositions that characterise the rest of the play:

The barge she sat in, like a burnish'd throne, **Burn'd on the water...**
 ...she did lie In her pavilion—cloth-of-gold of tissue— O'er-picturing
 that Venus where we see The **fancy outwork nature**: on each side her
 Stood pretty dimpled boys, like smiling Cupids, With divers-colour'd
 fans, **whose wind did seem To glow the delicate cheeks which they
 did cool, And what they undid did.** (Act 2, Scene 2)

Cleopatra herself sees Antony as both the Gorgon and Mars (Act 2 Scene 5, lines 118–119).

Theme of ambivalence

The play is accurately structured with paradox and ambivalence in order to convey the antitheses that make Shakespeare's work remarkable. Ambivalence in this play is the contrasting response of one's own character. It may be perceived as opposition between word and deed but not to be confused with "duality." For example, after Antony abandons his army during the sea battle to follow Cleopatra, he expresses his remorse and pain in his famous speech:

All is lost; This foul Egyptian hath betrayed me: My fleet hath yielded to the foe; and yonder They cast their caps up and carouse together Like friends long lost. Triple-turn'd whore! 'tis thou Hast sold me to this novice; and my heart Makes only wars on thee. Bid them all fly; For when I am revenged upon my charm, I have done all. Bid them all fly; begone. [Exit SCARUS] O sun, thy uprise shall I see no more: Fortune and Antony part here; even here Do we shake hands. All come to this?

Notes

The hearts That spaniel'd me at heels, to whom I gave Their wishes, do discandy, melt their sweets On blossoming Caesar; and this pine is bark'd, That overtopp'd them all. Betray'd I am: O this false soul of Egypt! this grave charm,— Whose eye beck'd forth my wars, and call'd them home; Whose bosom was my crownet, my chief end,— Like a right gipsy, hath, at fast and loose, Beguiled me to the very heart of loss. What, Eros, Eros! [Enter CLEOPATRA] Ah, thou spell! Avaunt! (IV.12.2913–2938)

However, he then strangely says to Cleopatra: "All that is won and lost. Give me a kiss. Even this repays me" (3.12.69–70). Antony's speech conveys pain and anger, but he acts in opposition to his emotions and words, all for the love of Cleopatra. Literary critic Joyce Carol Oates explains: "Antony's agony is curiously muted for someone who has achieved and lost so much." This irony gap between word and deed of the characters results in a theme of ambivalence. Moreover, due to the flow of constant changing emotions throughout the play: "the characters do not know each other, nor can we know them, any more clearly than we know ourselves". However, it is believed by critics that opposition is what makes good fiction. Another example of ambivalence in *Antony and Cleopatra* is in the opening act of the play when Cleopatra asks Antony: "Tell me how much you love." Prominent professor at The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Tzachi Zamir, points out: "The persistence of doubt is in perpetual tension with the opposing need for certainty" and he refers to the persistence of doubt that derives from the contradiction of word and deed in the characters.

Betrayal

Betrayal is a recurring theme throughout the play. At one time or another, almost every character betrays their country, ethics, or a companion. However, certain characters waver between betrayal and loyalty. This struggle is most apparent among the actions of Cleopatra, Enobarbus, and most importantly Antony. Antony mends ties with his Roman roots and alliance with Caesar by entering into a marriage with Octavia, however he returns to Cleopatra. Historian Diana E. E. Kleiner points out "Anthony's perceived betrayal of Rome was greeted with public calls for war with Egypt". Although he vows to remain loyal in his

marriage, his impulses and unfaithfulness with his Roman roots is what ultimately leads to war. It is twice Cleopatra abandons Antony during battle and whether out of fear or political motives, she deceived Antony. When Thidias, Caesar's messenger, tells Cleopatra Caesar will show her mercy if she will relinquish Antony, she is quick to respond:

"Most kind messenger, Say to great Caesar this in deputation: I kiss his conqu'ring hand. Tell him I am prompt To lay my crown at 's feet, and there to kneel." (III.13.75–79)

Shakespeare critic Sara Deats says Cleopatras betrayal fell "on the successful fencing with Octavius that leaves her to be "noble to [herself]". However, she quickly reconciles with Antony, reaffirming her loyalty towards him and never truly submitting to Caesar. Enobarbus, Antony's most devoted friend, betrays Antony when he deserts him in favour for Caesar. He exclaims, "I fight against thee! / No: I will go seek some ditch wherein to die" (IV. 6. 38–39). Although he abandoned Antony, critic Kent Cartwright claims Enobarbus' death "uncovers his greater love" for him considering it was caused by the guilt of what he had done to his friend thus adding to the confusion of the characters' loyalty and betrayal that previous critics have also discovered Even though loyalty is central to secure alliances, Shakespeare is making a point with the theme of betrayal by exposing how people in power cannot be trusted, no matter how honest their word may seem. The characters' loyalty and validity of promises are constantly called into question. The perpetual swaying between alliances strengthens the ambiguity and uncertainty amid the characters loyalty and disloyalty.

Power dynamics

As a play concerning the relationship between two empires, the presence of a power dynamic is apparent and becomes a recurring theme. Antony and Cleopatra battle over this dynamic as heads of state, yet the theme of power also resonates in their romantic relationship. The Roman ideal of power lies in a political nature taking a base in economical control. As an imperialist power, Rome takes its power in the ability to change the world. As a Roman man, Antony is expected to fulfill certain qualities pertaining to his Roman masculine power, especially in the war arena and in his duty as a soldier:

Notes

Those his goodly eyes, That o'er the files and musters of the war Have
glowed like plated mars, now bend, now turn The office and devotion of
their view Upon a tawny front. His captain's heart, Which in the scuffles
of greatness hath burst The buckles on his breast, reneges all tempers,
And is becomes the bellows and the fan To cool a gipsy's lust.

Cleopatra's character is slightly unpin-able, as her character identity
retains a certain aspect of mystery. She embodies the mystical, exotic,
and dangerous nature of Egypt as the "serpent of old Nile".^[35] Critic Lisa
Starks says that "Cleopatra [comes] to signify the double-image of the
"temptress/goddess". She is continually described in an unearthly nature
which extends to her description as the goddess Venus.

...For her own person, It beggared all description. She did lie In her
pavilion—cloth of gold, of tissue— O'er-picturing that Venus where we
see The fancy outwork nature.

This mysteriousness attached with the supernatural not only captures the
audience and Antony, but also, draws all other characters' focus. As a
center of conversation when not present in the scene, Cleopatra is
continually a central point, therefore demanding the control of the stage.
As an object of sexual desire, she is attached to the Roman need to
conquer. Her mix of sexual prowess with the political power is a threat to
Roman politics. She retains her heavy involvement in the military aspect
of her rule, especially when she asserts herself as "the president of [her]
kingdom will/ Appear there for a man." Where the dominating power lies
is up for interpretation, yet there are several mentions of the power
exchange in their relationship in the text. Antony remarks on Cleopatra's
power over him multiple times throughout the play, the most obvious
being attached to sexual innuendo: "You did know / How much you were
my conqueror, and that / My sword, made weak by my affection, would /
Obey it on all cause."¹

Use of language in power dynamics

Manipulation and the quest for power are very prominent themes not
only in the play but specifically in the relationship between Antony and
Cleopatra. Both utilise language to undermine the power of the other and
to heighten their own sense of power.

Cleopatra uses language to undermine Antony's assumed authority over her. Cleopatra's "'Roman' language of command works to undermine Antony's authority." By using a Romanesque rhetoric, Cleopatra commands Antony and others in Antony's own style. In their first exchange in Act I, scene 1, Cleopatra says to Antony, "I'll set a bourn how far to be beloved." In this case Cleopatra speaks in an authoritative and affirming sense to her lover, which to Shakespeare's audience would be uncharacteristic for a female lover.

Antony's language suggests his struggle for power against Cleopatra's dominion. Antony's "obsessive language concerned with structure, organization, and maintenance for the self and empire in repeated references to 'measure,' 'property,' and 'rule' express unconscious anxieties about boundary integrity and violation." (Hooks 38) Furthermore, Antony struggles with his infatuation with Cleopatra and this paired with Cleopatra's desire for power over him causes his eventual downfall. He states in Act I, scene 2, "These strong Egyptian fetters I must break,/Or lose myself in dotage." Antony feels restrained by "Egyptian fetters" indicating that he recognises Cleopatra's control over him. He also mentions losing himself in dotage—"himself" referring to Antony as Roman ruler and authority over people including Cleopatra.

Cleopatra also succeeds in causing Antony to speak in a more theatrical sense and therefore undermine his own true authority. In Act I, scene 1, Antony not only speaks again of his empire but constructs a theatrical image: "Let Rome and Tiber melt, and the wide arch/Of the ranged empire fall... The nobleness of life/Is to do thus; when such a mutual pair/And such a twain can do't—in which I bind/On pain of punishment the world to weet/We stand up peerless." Cleopatra immediately says, "Excellent falsehood!" in an aside, indicating to the audience that she intends for Antony to adopt this rhetoric.

Yachnin's article focuses on Cleopatra's usurping of Antony's authority through her own and his language, while Hooks' article gives weight to Antony's attempts to assert his authority through rhetoric. Both articles indicate the lovers' awareness of each other's quests for power. Despite

awareness and the political power struggle existent in the play, Antony and Cleopatra both fail to achieve their goals by the play's conclusion.

Performing gender and crossdressing

The performance of gender

Antony and Cleopatra is essentially a male-dominated play in which the character of Cleopatra takes significance as one of few female figures and definitely the only strong female character. As Oriana Palusci says in her article "When Boys or Women Tell Their Dreams: Cleopatra and the Boy Actor", "Cleopatra constantly occupies the centre, if not of the stage, certainly of the discourse, often charged with sexual innuendos and disparaging tirades, of the male Roman world". We see the significance of this figure by the constant mention of her, even when she is not on stage.

What is said about Cleopatra is not always what one would normally say about a ruler; the image that is created makes the audience expect "to see on stage not a noble Sovereign, but a dark, dangerous, evil, sensual and lewd creature who has harnessed the 'captain's heart". This dangerously beautiful woman is difficult for Shakespeare to create because all characters, male or female, were played by men. Phyllis Rackin points out that one of the most descriptive scenes of Cleopatra is spoken by Enobarbus: "in his famous set speech, Enobarbus evokes Cleopatra's arrival on the Cynus". It is an elaborate description that could never possibly be portrayed by a young boy actor. It is in this way that "before the boy [playing Cleopatra] can evoke Cleopatra's greatness, he must remind us that he cannot truly represent it". The images of Cleopatra must be described rather than seen on stage. Rackin points out that "it is a commonplace of the older criticism that Shakespeare had to rely upon his poetry and his audience's imagination to evoke Cleopatra's greatness because he knew the boy actor could not depict it convincingly".

The constant comments of the Romans about Cleopatra often undermine her, representing the Roman thought on the foreign and particularly of Egyptians. From the perspective of the reason-driven Romans, Shakespeare's "Egyptian queen repeatedly violates the rules of decorum". It is because of this distaste that Cleopatra "embodies political power, a power which is continuously underscored, denied, nullified by

the Roman counterpart". To many of Antony's crew, his actions appeared extravagant and over the top: "Antony's devotion is inordinate and therefore irrational". It is no wonder, then, that she is such a subordinated queen.

And yet she is also shown as having real power in the play. When threatened to be made a fool and fully overpowered by Octavius, she takes her own life: "She is not to be silenced by the new master, she is the one who will silence herself: 'My resolution and my hands I'll trust/ None about Caesar' (IV. 15.51–52)". From this, connections can be made between power and the performance of the female role as portrayed by Cleopatra.

Interpretations of crossdressing within the play

Scholars have speculated that Shakespeare's original intention was to have Antony appear in Cleopatra's clothes and vice versa in the beginning of the play. This possible interpretation seems to perpetuate the connections being made between gender and power. Gordon P. Jones elaborates on the importance of this detail:

Such a saturnalian exchange of costumes in the opening scene would have opened up a number of important perspectives for the play's original audience. It would immediately have established the sportiveness of the lovers. It would have provided a specific theatrical context for Cleopatra's later reminiscence about another occasion on which she "put my tires and mantles on him, whilst / I wore his sword Philippan" (II.v.22–23). It would have prepared the ground for Cleopatra's subsequent insistence on appearing "for a man" (III.vii.18) to bear a charge in the war; in doing so, it would also have prepared the audience for Antony's demeaning acquiescence in her usurpation of the male role.

The evidence that such a costume change was intended includes Enobarbus' false identification of Cleopatra as Antony:

DOMITIUS ENOBARBUS: Hush! here comes Antony. CHARMIAN:
Not he; the queen.

Enobarbus could have made this error because he was used to seeing Antony in the queen's garments. It can also be speculated that Philo was referring to Antony cross-dressing in Act 1, scene 1:

PHILO: Sir, sometimes, when he is not Antony, He comes too short of that great property Which still should go with Antony.

In the context of cross-dressing, "not Antony" could mean "when Antony is dressed as Cleopatra."

If Shakespeare had indeed intended for Antony to crossdress, it would have drawn even more similarities between Antony and Hercules, a comparison that many scholars have noted many times before.^{[68][69][70]} Hercules (who is said to be an ancestor of Antony) was forced to wear Queen Omphale's clothing while he was her indentured servant. The Omphale myth is an exploration of gender roles in Greek society. Shakespeare might have paid homage to this myth as a way of exploring gender roles in his own.

However, it has been noted that, while women dressing as men (i.e., a boy actor acting a female character who dresses as a man) are common in Shakespeare, the reverse (i.e., a male adult actor dressing as a woman) is all but non-existent, leaving aside Antony's debated case.

Critics' interpretations of boys portraying female characters

Antony and Cleopatra also contains self-references to the crossdressing as it would have been performed historically on the London stage. For instance, in Act Five, Scene Two, Cleopatra exclaims, "Antony/ Shall be brought drunken forth, and I shall see/ Some squeaking Cleopatra boy my greatness/ I'th' posture of a whore" (ll. 214–217). Many scholars interpret these lines as a metatheatrical reference to Shakespeare's own production, and by doing so comments on his own stage. Shakespeare critics such as Tracey Sedinger interpret this as Shakespeare's critique of the London stage, which, by the perpetuation of boy actors playing the part of the woman, serves to establish the superiority of the male spectator's sexuality. The male-male relationship, some critics have offered, between the male audience and the boy actor performing the female sexuality of the play would have been less threatening than had the part been played by a woman. It is in this manner that the London stage cultivated in its audience a chaste and obedient female subject,

while positioning male sexuality as dominant. Shakespeare critics argue that the metatheatrical references in *Antony and Cleopatra* seem to critique this trend and the presentation of Cleopatra as a sexually empowered individual supports their argument that Shakespeare seems to be questioning the oppression of female sexuality in London society. The crossdresser, then, is not a visible object but rather a structure "enacting the failure of a dominant epistemology in which knowledge is equated with visibility". What is being argued here is that the cross-dressing on the London stage challenges the dominant epistemology of Elizabethan society that associated sight with knowledge. The boy actors portraying female sexuality on the London stage contradicted such a simple ontology.

Critics such as Rackin interpret Shakespeare's metatheatrical references to the crossdressing on stage with less concern for societal elements and more of a focus on the dramatic ramifications. Rackin argues in her article on "Shakespeare's Boy Cleopatra" that Shakespeare manipulates the crossdressing to highlight a motif of the play—recklessness—which is discussed in the article as the recurring elements of acting without properly considering the consequences. Rackin cites the same quote, "Antony/ Shall be brought drunken forth, and I shall see/ Some squeaking Cleopatra boy my greatness/ I'th' posture of a whore" to make the argument that here the audience is reminded of the very same treatment Cleopatra is receiving on Shakespeare's stage (since she is being portrayed by a boy actor) (V.ii.214–217). Shakespeare, utilizing the metatheatrical reference to his own stage, perpetuates his motif of recklessness by purposefully shattering "the audience's acceptance of the dramatic illusion".

Other critics argue that the crossdressing as it occurs in the play is less of a mere convention, and more of an embodiment of dominant power structures. Critics such as Charles Forker argue that the boy actors were a result of what "we may call androgyny". His article argues that "women were barred from the stage for their own sexual protection" and because "patriarchally acculturated audiences presumably found it intolerable to see English women—those who would represent mothers, wives, and daughters—in sexually compromising situations". Essentially, the crossdressing occurs as a result of the patriarchally structured society.

Empire

Sexuality and empire

The textual motif of empire within *Antony and Cleopatra* has strong gendered and erotic undercurrents. Antony, the Roman soldier characterised by a certain effeminacy, is the main article of conquest, falling first to Cleopatra and then to Caesar (Octavius). Cleopatra's triumph over her lover is attested to by Caesar himself, who gibes that Antony "is not more manlike/ Than Cleopatra; nor the queen of Ptolemy/ More womanly than he" (1.4.5–7). That Cleopatra takes on the role of male aggressor in her relationship with Antony should not be surprising; after all, "a culture attempting to dominate another culture will [often] endow itself with masculine qualities and the culture it seeks to dominate with feminine ones"—appropriately, the queen's romantic assault is frequently imparted in a political, even militaristic fashion. Antony's subsequent loss of manhood seemingly "signifies his lost Romanness, and Act 3, Scene 10, is a virtual litany of his lost and feminised self, his "wounder chance". Throughout the play, Antony is gradually bereaved of that Roman quality so coveted in his nostalgic interludes—by the centremost scenes, his sword (a plainly phallic image), he tells Cleopatra, has been "made weak by his affection" (3.11.67). In Act 4, Scene 14, "an un-Romaned Antony" laments, "O, thy vile lady!/ She has robb'd me of my sword," (22–23)—critic Arthur L. Little Jr. writes that here "he seems to echo closely the victim of raptus, of bride theft, who has lost the sword she wishes to turn against herself. By the time Antony tries to use his sword to kill himself, it amounts to little more than a stage prop". Antony is reduced to a political object, "the pawn in a power game between Caesar and Cleopatra".

Having failed to perform Roman masculinity and virtue, Antony's only means with which he might "write himself into Rome's imperial narrative and position himself at the birth of empire" is to cast himself in the feminine archetype of the sacrificial virgin; "once [he] understands his failed *virtus*, his failure to be Aeneas, he then tries to emulate Dido". *Antony and Cleopatra* can be read as a rewrite of Virgil's epic, with the sexual roles reversed and sometimes inverted. James J Greene writes on the subject: "If one of the seminally powerful myths in the cultural memory of our past is Aeneas' rejection of his African queen

in order to go on and found the Roman Empire, than it is surely significant that Shakespeare's [*sic*]... depicts precisely and quite deliberately the opposite course of action from that celebrated by Virgil. For Antony... turned his back for the sake of his African queen on that same Roman state established by Aeneas". Antony even attempts to commit suicide for his love, falling short in the end. He is incapable of "occupying the... politically empowering place" of the female sacrificial victim. The abundant imagery concerning his person—"of penetration, wounds, blood, marriage, orgasm, and shame"—informs the view of some critics that the Roman "figures Antony's body as queer, that is, as an open male body... [he] not only 'bends' in devotion' but... bends over". In reciprocal contrast, "in both Caesar and Cleopatra we see very active wills and energetic pursuit of goals". While Caesar's empirical objective can be considered strictly political, however, Cleopatra's is explicitly erotic; she conquers carnally—indeed, "she made great Caesar lay his sword to bed;/ He plough'd her, and she cropp'd" (2.2.232–233). Her mastery is unparalleled when it comes to the seduction of certain powerful individuals, but popular criticism supports the notion that "as far as Cleopatra is concerned, the main thrust of the play's action might be described as a machine especially devised to bend her to the Roman will... and no doubt Roman order is sovereign at the end of the play. But instead of driving her down to ignominy, the Roman power forces her upward to nobility". Caesar says of her final deed, "Bravest at the last,/ She levelled at our purposes, and, being royal,/ Took her own way" (5.2.325–327).

Arthur L. Little, in agitative fashion, suggests that the desire to overcome the queen has a corporeal connotation: "If a black—read foreign—man raping a white woman encapsulates an iconographic truth... of the dominant society's sexual, racial, national, and imperial fears, a white man raping a black woman becomes the evidentiary playing out of its self-assured and cool stranglehold over these representative foreign bodies". Furthermore, he writes, "Rome shapes its Egyptian imperial struggle most visually around the contours of Cleopatra's sexualised and racialised black body—most explicitly her "tawny front", her "gipsy lust", and her licentious climactic genealogy, "with Phoebus' amorous pinches black". In a similar vein, essayist David Quint contends that

"with Cleopatra the opposition between East and West is characterised in terms of gender: the otherness of the Easterner becomes the otherness of the opposite sex". Quint argues that Cleopatra (not Antony) fulfils Virgil's Dido archetype; "woman is subordinated as is generally the case in *The Aeneid*, excluded from power and the process of Empire-building: this exclusion is evident in the poem's fiction where Creusa disappears and Dido is abandoned... woman's place or displacement is therefore in the East, and epic features a series of oriental heroines whose seductions are potentially more perilous than Eastern arms", i.e., Cleopatra.

Politics of empire

Antony and Cleopatra deals ambiguously with the politics of imperialism and colonization. Critics have long been invested in untangling the web of political implications that characterise the play. Interpretations of the work often rely on an understanding of Egypt and Rome as they respectively signify Elizabethan ideals of East and West, contributing to a long-standing conversation about the play's representation of the relationship between imperializing western countries and colonised eastern cultures. Despite Octavius Caesar's concluding victory and the absorption of Egypt into Rome, *Antony and Cleopatra* resists clear-cut alignment with Western values. Indeed, Cleopatra's suicide has been interpreted as suggesting an indomitable quality in Egypt, and reaffirming Eastern culture as a timeless contender to the West. However, particularly in earlier criticism, the narrative trajectory of Rome's triumph and Cleopatra's perceived weakness as a ruler have allowed readings that privilege Shakespeare's representation of a Roman worldview. Octavius Caesar is seen as Shakespeare's portrayal of an ideal governor, though perhaps an unfavourable friend or lover, and Rome is emblematic of reason and political excellence. According to this reading, Egypt is viewed as destructive and vulgar; the critic Paul Lawrence Rose writes: "Shakespeare clearly envisages Egypt as a political hell for the subject, where natural rights count for nothing." Through the lens of such a reading, the ascendancy of Rome over Egypt does not speak to the practice of empire-building as much as it suggests the inevitable advantage of reason over sensuality.

More contemporary scholarship on the play, however, has typically recognised the allure of Egypt for *Antony and Cleopatra's* audiences. Egypt's magnetism and seeming cultural primacy over Rome have been explained by efforts to contextualise the political implications of the play within its period of production. The various protagonists' ruling styles have been identified with rulers contemporary to Shakespeare. For example, there appears to be continuity between the character of Cleopatra and the historical figure of Queen Elizabeth I, and the unfavourable light cast on Caesar has been explained as deriving from the claims of various 16th-century historians.

The more recent influence of New Historicism and post-colonial studies have yielded readings of Shakespeare that typify the play as subversive, or challenging the status quo of Western imperialism. The critic Abigail Scherer's claim that "Shakespeare's Egypt is a holiday world" recalls the criticisms of Egypt put forth by earlier scholarship and disputes them. Scherer and critics who recognise the wide appeal of Egypt have connected the spectacle and glory of Cleopatra's greatness with the spectacle and glory of the theatre itself. Plays, as breeding grounds of idleness, were subject to attack by all levels of authority in the 1600s; the play's celebration of pleasure and idleness in a subjugated Egypt makes it plausible to draw parallels between Egypt and the heavily censored theatre culture in England. In the context of England's political atmosphere, Shakespeare's representation of Egypt, as the greater source of poetry and imagination, resists support for 16th century colonial practices. Importantly, King James' sanction of the founding of Jamestown occurred within months of *Antony and Cleopatra's* debut on stage. England during the Renaissance found itself in an analogous position to the early Roman Republic. Shakespeare's audience may have made the connection between England's westward expansion and *Antony and Cleopatra's* convoluted picture of Roman imperialism. In support of the reading of Shakespeare's play as subversive, it has also been argued that 16th century audiences would have interpreted *Antony and Cleopatra's* depiction of different models of government as exposing inherent weaknesses in an absolutist, imperial, and by extension monarchical, political state.¹

Empire and intertextuality

One of the ways to read the imperialist themes of the play is through a historical, political context with an eye for intertextuality. Many scholars suggest that Shakespeare possessed an extensive knowledge of the story of Antony and Cleopatra through the historian Plutarch, and used Plutarch's account as a blueprint for his own play. A closer look at this intertextual link reveals that Shakespeare used, for instance, Plutarch's assertion that Antony claimed a genealogy that led back to Hercules, and constructed a parallel to Cleopatra by often associating her with Dionysus in his play. The implication of this historical mutability is that Shakespeare is transposing non-Romans upon his Roman characters, and thus his play assumes a political agenda rather than merely committing itself to a historical recreation. Shakespeare deviates from a strictly obedient observation of Plutarch, though, by complicating a simple dominant/dominated dichotomy with formal choices. For instance, the quick exchange of dialogue might suggest a more dynamic political conflict. Furthermore, certain characteristics of the characters, like Antony whose "legs bestrid the ocean" (5.2.82) point to constant change and mutability. Plutarch, on the other hand, was given to "tendencies to stereotype, to polarise, and to exaggerate that are inherent in the propaganda surrounding his subjects."

Furthermore, because of the unlikelihood that Shakespeare would have had direct access to the Greek text of Plutarch's *Parallel Lives* and probably read it through a French translation from a Latin translation, his play constructs Romans with an anachronistic Christian sensibility that might have been influenced by St. Augustine's *Confessions* among others. As Miles writes, the ancient world would not have been aware of interiority and the contingency of salvation upon conscience until Augustine. For the Christian world, salvation relied on and belonged to the individual, while the Roman world viewed salvation as political. So, Shakespeare's characters in *Antony and Cleopatra*, particularly Cleopatra in her belief that her own suicide is an exercise of agency, exhibit a Christian understanding of salvation.

Another example of deviance from the source material is how Shakespeare characterises the rule of Antony and Cleopatra. While

Plutarch singles out the "order of exclusive society" that the lovers surrounded themselves with—a society with a specifically defined and clear understanding of the hierarchies of power as determined by birth and status—Shakespeare's play seems more preoccupied with the power dynamics of pleasure as a main theme throughout the play. Once pleasure has become a dynamic of power, then it permeates society and politics. Pleasure serves as a differentiating factor between Cleopatra and Antony, between Egypt and Rome, and can be read as the fatal flaw of the heroes if *Antony and Cleopatra* is a tragedy. For Shakespeare's *Antony and Cleopatra*, the exclusivity and superiority supplied by pleasure created the disconnect between the ruler and the subjects. Critics suggest that Shakespeare did similar work with these sources in *Othello*, *Julius Caesar*, and *Coriolanus*.

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS II :

Q1. Give a brief of critical history of the play.

Answer.....

Q2. Write a note of theme and motif of the play

Answer.....

9.6 LET'S SUM UP

For all their fame, Antony and Cleopatra receive little attention in formal study of the first century b.c.. Engaged in a power struggle, they were beaten and so had little real impact on later events. Academic history has long since developed a deep aversion to focusing on individuals, no matter how charismatic their personalities, instead searching for 'more profound' underlying trends and explanations of events. As a student I took courses on the Fall of the Roman Republic and the creation of the Principate, and later on as a lecturer I would devise and teach similar

courses myself. Teaching and studying time is always limited, and as a result it was natural to focus on Caesar and his dictatorship, before skipping ahead to look at Octavian/Augustus and the creation of the imperial system. The years from 44–31 b.c, when Antony's power was at its greatest, rarely receive anything like such detailed treatment. Ptolemaic Egypt is usually a more specialised field, but, even when it is included in a course, the reign of its last queen -- poorly documented and anyway in the last days of long decline -- is seldom treated in any detail. The fame of Cleopatra may attract students to the subject, but courses are, quite reasonably and largely unconsciously, structured to stress more 'serious' topics, and shy away from personalities.

Antony and Cleopatra did not change the world in any profound way, unlike Caesar and to an even greater extent Augustus. One ancient writer claimed that Caesar's campaigns caused the death of one million people and the enslavement of as many more. Whatever the provocation, he led his army to seize Rome by force, winning supreme power through civil war, and supplanted the Republic's democratically elected leaders. Against this, Caesar was famous for his clemency. Throughout his career he championed social reform and aid to the poor in Rome, as well as trying to protect the rights of people in the provinces. Although he made himself dictator, his rule was generally benevolent, and his measures sensible, dealing with long-neglected problems. The path to power of his adopted son, Augustus, was considerably more vicious, replacing clemency with revenge. Augustus' power was won in civil war and maintained by force, and yet he also ruled well. The Senate's political freedom was virtually extinguished and popular elections rendered unimportant. At the same time he gave Rome a peace it had not known in almost a century of political violence and created a system of government that benefited a far wider section of society than the old Republic.

Antony and Cleopatra proved themselves just as capable of savagery and ruthlessness, but the losers in a civil war do not get the chance to shape the future directly. Apart from that, there is no real trace of any long-held beliefs or causes on Antony's part, no indication that he struggled for prominence for anything other than his own glory and profit. Some like

to see Cleopatra as deeply committed to the prosperity and welfare of her subjects, but this is largely wishful thinking. There is no actual evidence to suggest that her concerns went any further than ensuring a steady flow of taxation into her own hands, to cement her hold on power. For only a small part of her reign was she secure on the throne, at the head of a kingdom utterly dependent on

Roman goodwill, and it would probably be unreasonable to expect her to have done more than this.

9.7 KEYWORDS

- **delayed emergence** :introducing the main character later in the play
- **stoicism** :the endurance of pain or suffering without a display of feeling/showing emotion
- **exeunt** :stage direction to inform characters of when to exit offstage
- **apotheosis** :the elevation of a person to the rank of a god
- **triumvirate** :a coalition of three men (Caesar, Pompey, Antony)

9.8 QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW

1. Antony and Cleopatra are perhaps the most famous lovers in the western world. How would you describe their relationship in act 1?
2. What sort of person is Pompey? What do we learn about him in act 2? How does he compare to Antony and Caesar? What do we learn about the Romans from the party on Pompey's ship in 2.7?
3. Why does Octavia return to Rome, and how does Caesar react to his sister's return? What effect does this seem to have on his responses to Antony? Does Caesar in act 3 appear as a better person than Antony or a worse?
4. By the end of the play, are Antony and Cleopatra tragic figures? Is this play a tragedy?

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9.10 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS 1 :

Answer 1 : Check Section 9.3

Answer 2 : Check Section 9.2

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS 2 :

Answer 1 : Check Section 9.4

Answer 2 : Check Section 9.5

UNIT 10 THE TEMPEST-PLOTS AND ACTS- PART -1

STRUCTURE

- 10.0 Objectives
- 10.1 Introduction
- 10.2 Plot Summary
- 10.3 What does ending mean?
- 10.4 Summary: Act I, Scene I
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- 10.6 Summary Act II, Scene I
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- 10.11 Summary Act V, Scene I & Epilogue
- 10.12 Let's Sum up
- 10.13 Keywords
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- 10.15 Suggested Readings And References
- 10.16 Answers to Check Your Progress

10.0 OBJECTIVES

The objective of the unit to understand the brief about the The Tempest.

This unit helps to understand the various acts of the play. It gives the deep analysis of the play and gives the summary of the play.

This unit helps to achieve following objectives:

- Provide summary of the play
- Give the understanding of the Tempest
- Give the analysis of each act
- Dictate the review of each act

10.1 INTRODUCTION

A storm strikes a ship carrying Alonso, Ferdinand, Sebastian, Antonio, Gonzalo, Stephano, and Trinculo, who are on their way to Italy after coming from the wedding of Alonso's daughter, Claribel, to the prince of Tunis in Africa. The royal party and the other mariners, with the exception of the unflappable Boatswain, begin to fear for their lives. Lightning cracks, and the mariners cry that the ship has been hit. Everyone prepares to sink.

10.2 PLOT SUMMARY

The scene begins much more quietly. Miranda and Prospero stand on the shore of their island, looking out to sea at the recent shipwreck. Miranda asks her father to do anything he can to help the poor souls in the ship. Prospero assures her that everything is all right and then informs her that it is time she learned more about herself and her past. He reveals to her that he orchestrated the shipwreck and tells her the lengthy story of her past, a story he has often started to tell her before but never finished. The story goes that Prospero was the Duke of Milan until his brother Antonio, conspiring with Alonso, the King of Naples, usurped his position. Kidnapped and left to die on a raft at sea, Prospero and his daughter survive because Gonzalo leaves them supplies and Prospero's books, which are the source of his magic and power. Prospero and his daughter arrived on the island where they remain now and have been for twelve years. Only now, Prospero says, has Fortune at last sent his enemies his way, and he has raised the tempest in order to make things right with them once and for all.

After telling this story, Prospero charms Miranda to sleep and then calls forth his familiar spirit Ariel, his chief magical agent. Prospero and Ariel's discussion reveals that Ariel brought the tempest upon the ship and set fire to the mast. He then made sure that everyone got safely to the island, though they are now separated from each other into small groups.

Ariel, who is a captive servant to Prospero, reminds his master that he has promised Ariel freedom a year early if he performs tasks such as these without complaint. Prospero chastises Ariel for protesting and reminds him of the horrible fate from which he was rescued. Before Prospero came to the island, a witch named Sycorax imprisoned Ariel in a tree. Sycorax died, leaving Ariel trapped until Prospero arrived and freed him. After Ariel assures Prospero that he knows his place, Prospero orders Ariel to take the shape of a sea nymph and make himself invisible to all but Prospero.

Miranda awakens from her sleep, and she and Prospero go to visit Caliban, Prospero's servant and the son of the dead Sycorax. Caliban curses Prospero, and Prospero and Miranda berate him for being ungrateful for what they have given and taught him. Prospero sends Caliban to fetch firewood. Ariel, invisible, enters playing music and leading in the awed Ferdinand. Miranda and Ferdinand are immediately smitten with each other. He is the only man Miranda has ever seen, besides Caliban and her father. Prospero is happy to see that his plan for his daughter's future marriage is working, but decides that he must upset things temporarily in order to prevent their relationship from developing too quickly. He accuses Ferdinand of merely pretending to be the Prince of Naples and threatens him with imprisonment. When Ferdinand draws his sword, Prospero charms him and leads him off to prison, ignoring Miranda's cries for mercy. He then sends Ariel on another mysterious mission.

On another part of the island, Alonso, Sebastian, Antonio, Gonzalo, and other miscellaneous lords give thanks for their safety but worry about the fate of Ferdinand. Alonso says that he wishes he never had married his daughter to the prince of Tunis because if he had not made this journey, his son would still be alive. Gonzalo tries to maintain high spirits by discussing the beauty of the island, but his remarks are undercut by the sarcastic sourness of Antonio and Sebastian. Ariel appears, invisible, and plays music that puts all but Sebastian and Antonio to sleep. These two then begin to discuss the possible advantages of killing their sleeping companions. Antonio persuades Sebastian that the latter will become

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ruler of Naples if they kill Alonso. Claribel, who would be the next heir if Ferdinand were indeed dead, is too far away to be able to claim her right. Sebastian is convinced, and the two are about to stab the sleeping men when Ariel causes Gonzalo to wake with a shout. Everyone wakes up, and Antonio and Sebastian concoct a ridiculous story about having drawn their swords to protect the king from lions. Ariel goes back to Prospero while Alonso and his party continue to search for Ferdinand.

Caliban, meanwhile, is hauling wood for Prospero when he sees Trinculo and thinks he is a spirit sent by Prospero to torment him. He lies down and hides under his cloak. A storm is brewing, and Trinculo, curious about but undeterred by Caliban's strange appearance and smell, crawls under the cloak with him. Stephano, drunk and singing, comes along and stumbles upon the bizarre spectacle of Caliban and Trinculo huddled under the cloak. Caliban, hearing the singing, cries out that he will work faster so long as the "spirits" leave him alone. Stephano decides that this monster requires liquor and attempts to get Caliban to drink. Trinculo recognizes his friend Stephano and calls out to him. Soon the three are sitting up together and drinking. Caliban quickly becomes an enthusiastic drinker, and begins to sing.

Prospero puts Ferdinand to work hauling wood. Ferdinand finds his labor pleasant because it is for Miranda's sake. Miranda, thinking that her father is asleep, tells Ferdinand to take a break. The two flirt with one another. Miranda proposes marriage, and Ferdinand accepts. Prospero has been on stage most of the time, unseen, and he is pleased with this development.

Stephano, Trinculo, and Caliban are now drunk and raucous and are made all the more so by Ariel, who comes to them invisibly and provokes them to fight with one another by impersonating their voices and taunting them. Caliban grows more and more fervent in his boasts that he knows how to kill Prospero. He even tells Stephano that he can bring him to where Prospero is sleeping. He proposes that they kill Prospero, take his daughter, and set Stephano up as king of the island. Stephano thinks this a good plan, and the three prepare to set off to find

Prospero. They are distracted, however, by the sound of music that Ariel plays on his flute and tabor-drum, and they decide to follow this music before executing their plot.

Alonso, Gonzalo, Sebastian, and Antonio grow weary from traveling and pause to rest. Antonio and Sebastian secretly plot to take advantage of Alonso and Gonzalo's exhaustion, deciding to kill them in the evening. Prospero, probably on the balcony of the stage and invisible to the men, causes a banquet to be set out by strangely shaped spirits. As the men prepare to eat, Ariel appears like a harpy and causes the banquet to vanish. He then accuses the men of supplanting Prospero and says that it was for this sin that Alonso's son, Ferdinand, has been taken. He vanishes, leaving Alonso feeling vexed and guilty.

Prospero now softens toward Ferdinand and welcomes him into his family as the soon-to-be-husband of Miranda. He sternly reminds Ferdinand, however, that Miranda's "virgin-knot" (IV.i.15) is not to be broken until the wedding has been officially solemnized. Prospero then asks Ariel to call forth some spirits to perform a masque for Ferdinand and Miranda. The spirits assume the shapes of Ceres, Juno, and Iris and perform a short masque celebrating the rites of marriage and the bounty of the earth. A dance of reapers and nymphs follows but is interrupted when Prospero suddenly remembers that he still must stop the plot against his life.

He sends the spirits away and asks Ariel about Trinculo, Stephano, and Caliban. Ariel tells his master of the three men's drunken plans. He also tells how he led the men with his music through prickly grass and briars and finally into a filthy pond near Prospero's cell. Ariel and Prospero then set a trap by hanging beautiful clothing in Prospero's cell. Stephano, Trinculo, and Caliban enter looking for Prospero and, finding the beautiful clothing, decide to steal it. They are immediately set upon by a pack of spirits in the shape of dogs and hounds, driven on by Prospero and Ariel.

Prospero uses Ariel to bring Alonso and the others before him. He then sends Ariel to bring the Boatswain and the mariners from where they

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sleep on the wrecked ship. Prospero confronts Alonso, Antonio, and Sebastian with their treachery, but tells them that he forgives them. Alonso tells him of having lost Ferdinand in the tempest and Prospero says that he recently lost his own daughter. Clarifying his meaning, he draws aside a curtain to reveal Ferdinand and Miranda playing chess. Alonso and his companions are amazed by the miracle of Ferdinand's survival, and Miranda is stunned by the sight of people unlike any she has seen before. Ferdinand tells his father about his marriage.

Ariel returns with the Boatswain and mariners. The Boatswain tells a story of having been awakened from a sleep that had apparently lasted since the tempest. At Prospero's bidding, Ariel releases Caliban, Trinculo and Stephano, who then enter wearing their stolen clothing. Prospero and Alonso command them to return it and to clean up Prospero's cell. Prospero invites Alonso and the others to stay for the night so that he can tell them the tale of his life in the past twelve years. After this, the group plans to return to Italy. Prospero, restored to his dukedom, will retire to Milan. Prospero gives Ariel one final task—to make sure the seas are calm for the return voyage—before setting him free. Finally, Prospero delivers an epilogue to the audience, asking them to forgive him for his wrongdoing and set him free by applauding.

1) Why was Prospero banished?

Years before the action of *The Tempest* begins, two men conspired to assassinate Prospero, who was then the Duke of Milan. These two men were Prospero's brother, Antonio, and the King of Naples, Alonso. The purpose of these men's conspiracy was to remove Prospero from power and install Antonio in his place. Antonio succeeded in taking over the dukedom but the assassination plot failed because Gonzalo alerted Prospero to the plot and helped him escape from Milan on a rotting boat. As Prospero explains to Miranda in Act I, scene ii, they arrived on the island "By providence divine." Although Prospero is clearly the victim of a foul plot against his life, he was not entirely blameless in the events that occurred. By his own admission, Prospero's increasing obsession with the study of magic had begun to take more and more of his time. This obsession forced him to neglect his duties as duke and eventually

hand the government over to Antonio. Though Prospero's delinquency does not justify Antonio's betrayal, it certainly enabled it.

2) Who is Ariel and why does he work for Prospero?

Ariel is a spirit who uses magic to help Prospero carry out his plans. Given Ariel's evident power, it may seem odd that he would be willing to serve Prospero at all. So why does he do the magician's bidding? The main reason is that Ariel owes what freedom he has to Prospero. Prior to Prospero's arrival on the island, Ariel served Caliban's mother, Sycorax. As Prospero reminds him in Act I, scene ii, Ariel fell out of favor with Sycorax, and she imprisoned him in a "cloven pine." Ariel remained stuck in the tree for twelve years, during which time Sycorax died, abandoning Ariel to an eternity of pain. When Prospero arrived on the island, he found Ariel in torment: "Thy groans," he explains, "Did make wolves howl and penetrate the breasts / Of ever angry bears" (I.ii.). Prospero freed Ariel from this prison, and he struck a deal in which Ariel would serve him faithfully for one year, after which he would be released from all service and return to freedom.

3) Why does Caliban hate Prospero and Miranda?

Caliban sees Prospero and Miranda as imperialists who took control of an island that he felt belonged to him. In a way, Caliban ironically mirrors Prospero, who was also violently unseated from power. However, whereas Prospero ended up free but in exile, Caliban ended up enslaved in his own home. Caliban resents the sudden and radical shift in his social position, going from the free ruler of the island to the servant of a tyrannical master. In addition to despising Prospero for enslaving him and divesting him of all power, Caliban also resents Miranda for the education she has given him. Miranda describes her efforts as selfless and guided by pity. However, Miranda's educational program also intends to civilize Caliban, a "savage" who "wouldst gabble like / A thing most brutish" (I.ii.). Caliban sees Miranda's apparently selfless act as an extension of her father's imperialism. He also insists that the only good thing about being forced to learn her language is that he can now

fully express his hatred: “You taught me language, and my profit on ’t / Is I know how to curse” (I.ii.).

4) How does Prospero manipulate Alonso and his company?

Throughout the play Prospero commands his servant Ariel to present Alonso and his company with visions of splendor and horror. These visions have a dual purpose. On the one hand, they are meant to keep the men disoriented. At one point Ariel even puts the men to sleep in order to disorient them further. As long as Alonso and his company remain bewildered, Prospero can control their movements and lead them through space as he pleases. On the other hand, the visions of splendor and horror are meant to break the men down emotionally and psychologically. This emotional breakdown is a crucial aspect of Prospero’s plan. Alonso must feel broken and defeated, so that when Prospero reveals that his son Ferdinand survived, the revelation will enable an authentic emotional resolution to their longstanding conflict. In other words, Prospero uses magic both to get revenge and to secure his own salvation.

5) Why does Prospero give up magic?

Near the beginning of Act V, Prospero stands alone onstage and delivers a speech where he lists his many accomplishments in magic. At the end of this speech, he tells himself that he will abandon “this rough magic” once he’s managed to resolve his conflict with Alonso and Antonio: “I’ll break my staff, / Bury it certain fathoms in the earth, / And, deeper than did ever plummet sound, / I’ll drown my book” (V.i.). In *The Tempest*, Prospero uses magic as a means to an end. Although his accomplishments in the magic arts have been great, magic itself remains “rough,” meaning either “crude” or “violent.” In short, magic is capable of great harm. And as Prospero describes in the first act, his obsessive study of magic is what cost him his dukedom in the first place. Prospero therefore uses magic to right a wrong and restore himself to power. However, once he accomplishes his goal, he resolves to abandon magic and rid himself of its corrupting influence for good.

10.3 WHAT DOES THE ENDING MEAN?

The Tempest ends with a general sense of resolution and hope. After four acts in which Prospero uses magic to split up, disorient, and psychologically torture his enemies, in the final act he lures everyone to the same spot on the island and forgives Alonso and Antonio for their betrayal twelve years prior. The main event that heals the wounds of the past is the union between Miranda and Ferdinand. Alonso, who thought his son had died in the shipwreck, feels completely renewed when he sees that Ferdinand has, in fact, survived. Ferdinand's engagement to Miranda establishes a bond of kinship between Alonso and Prospero, further bridging that rift that separates them. Miranda and Ferdinand's union suggests the possibility for a new future, devoid of the kind of conflict that has driven the play. Miranda articulates this possibility for a new future when she expresses a sense of wonder at the "brave new world" (Vi.i) that has opened up for her. With the major conflict between Prospero and Alonso resolved, Prospero breaks his staff and gives up magic in preparation for his return to Milan.

Despite the resolution of the main conflict, the end of Shakespeare's play also plants the seeds for possible future conflict. Miranda and Ferdinand's engagement may help bring an end to the conflict of the previous generation, but a disagreement that arises during their game of chess in the final act suggests that new conflicts may hover on the horizon. First of all, the very fact that they are playing chess may bode ill. Chess is a game about regicide, meaning the assassination of a king. Given that the central conflict of *The Tempest* arose from the attempted assassination of Prospero while he was Duke of Milan, it seems striking that Miranda and Ferdinand would play a game that repeats the narrative of assassination—even if only metaphorically. Even more foreboding is Miranda's accusation that Ferdinand has cheated: "Sweet lord, you play me false" (V.i.). Cheating in a game is not as serious as political betrayal. Nevertheless, it remains disconcerting that the sense of a new beginning that arises at the end of the play should be tinged with dishonesty. Will the next generation repeat the sins of the past?

10.4 SUMMARY: ACT I, SCENE I

Summary

A violent storm rages around a small ship at sea. The master of the ship calls for his boatswain to rouse the mariners to action and prevent the ship from being run aground by the tempest. Chaos ensues. Some mariners enter, followed by a group of nobles comprised of Alonso, King of Naples, Sebastian, his brother, Antonio, Gonzalo, and others. We do not learn these men's names in this scene, nor do we learn (as we finally do in Act II, scene i) that they have just come from Tunis, in Africa, where Alonso's daughter, Claribel, has been married to the prince. As the Boatswain and his crew take in the topsail and the topmast, Alonso and his party are merely underfoot, and the Boatswain tells them to get below-decks. Gonzalo reminds the Boatswain that one of the passengers is of some importance, but the Boatswain is unmoved. He will do what he has to in order to save the ship, regardless of who is aboard.

The lords go belowdecks, and then, adding to the chaos of the scene, three of them—Sebastian, Antonio, and Gonzalo—enter again only four lines later. Sebastian and Antonio curse the Boatswain in his labors, masking their fear with profanity. Some mariners enter wet and crying, and only at this point does the audience learn the identity of the passengers on-board. Gonzalo orders the mariners to pray for the king and the prince. There is a strange noise—perhaps the sound of thunder, splitting wood, or roaring water—and the cry of mariners. Antonio, Sebastian, and Gonzalo, preparing to sink to a watery grave, go in search of the king.

Analysis

Even for a Shakespeare play, *The Tempest* is remarkable for its extraordinary breadth of imaginative vision. The play is steeped in magic and illusion. As a result, the play contains a tremendous amount of spectacle, yet things are often not as they seem. This opening scene certainly contains spectacle, in the form of the howling storm (the “tempest” of the play's title) tossing the little ship about and threatening

to kill the characters before the play has even begun. In terms of stagecraft, it was a significant gamble for Shakespeare to open his play with this spectacular natural event, given that, in the early seventeenth century when the play was written, special effects were largely left to the audience's imagination.

Shakespeare's stage would have been almost entirely bare, without many physical signs that the actors were supposed to be on a ship, much less a ship in the midst of a lashing storm. As a result, the audience sees Shakespeare calling on all the resources of his theater to establish a certain level of realism. For example, the play begins with a "noise of thunder and lightning" (stage direction). The first word, "Boatswain!" immediately indicates that the scene is the deck of a ship. In addition, characters rush frantically in and out, often with no purpose—as when Sebastian, Antonio, and Gonzalo exit at line 29 and re-enter at 33, indicating the general level of chaos and confusion. Cries from off-stage create the illusion of a space below-decks.

But in addition to this spectacle, the play also uses its first scene to hint at some of the illusions and deceptions it will contain. Most plays of this era, by Shakespeare and others, use the introductory scene to present the main characters and hint at the general narrative to come—so *Othello* begins with Iago's jealousy, and *King Lear* begins with Lear's decision to abdicate his throne. But *The Tempest* begins toward the end of the actual story, late in Prospero's exile. Its opening scene is devoted to what appears to be an unexplained natural phenomenon, in which characters who are never named rush about frantically in service of no apparent plot. In fact, the confusion of the opening is itself misleading, for as we will learn later, the storm is not a natural phenomenon at all, but a deliberate magical conjuring by Prospero, designed to bring the ship to the island. The tempest is, in fact, central to the plot.

But there is more going on in this scene than initially meets the eye. The apparently chaotic exchanges of the characters introduce the important motif of master-servant relationships. The characters on the boat are divided into nobles, such as Antonio and Gonzalo, and servants or professionals, such as the Boatswain. The mortal danger of the storm

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upsets the usual balance between these two groups, and the Boatswain, attempting to save the ship, comes into direct conflict with the hapless nobles, who, despite their helplessness, are extremely irritated at being rudely spoken to by a commoner. The characters in the scene are never named outright; they are only referred to in terms that indicate their social stations: “Boatswain,” “Master,” “King,” and “Prince.” As the scene progresses, the characters speak less about the storm than about the class conflict underlying their attempts to survive it—a conflict between masters and servants that, as the story progresses, becomes perhaps the major motif of the play.

Gonzalo, for instance, jokes that the ship is safe because the uppity Boatswain was surely born to be hanged, not drowned in a storm: “I have great comfort from this fellow: methinks he hath no drowning mark upon him; his complexion is perfect gallows” (I.i.25–27). For his part, the Boatswain observes that social hierarchies are flimsy and unimportant in the face of nature’s wrath. “What cares these roarers,” he asks, referring to the booming thunder, “for the name of king?” (I.i.15–16). The irony here, of course, is that, unbeknownst to the occupants of the ship, and to the audience, the storm is not natural at all, but is in fact a product of another kind power: Prospero’s magic.

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS I :

Q1. Give 5 important questions of the play.

Answer.....
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Q2. Write analysis of Act 1 Scene 1.

Answer.....
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10.5 SUMMARY ACT I, SCENE II (CONTINUED)

Summary

After Miranda is fully awake, Prospero suggests that they converse with their servant Caliban, the son of Sycorax. Caliban appears at Prospero's call and begins cursing. Prospero promises to punish him by giving him cramps at night, and Caliban responds by chiding Prospero for imprisoning him on the island that once belonged to him alone. He reminds Prospero that he showed him around when he first arrived. Prospero accuses Caliban of being ungrateful for all that he has taught and given him. He calls him a "lying slave" and reminds him of the effort he made to educate him (I.ii.347). Caliban's hereditary nature, he continues, makes him unfit to live among civilized people and earns him his isolation on the island. Caliban, though, cleverly notes that he knows how to curse only because Prospero and Miranda taught him to speak. Prospero then sends him away, telling him to fetch more firewood and threatening him with more cramps and aches if he refuses. Caliban obeys him.

Ariel, playing music and singing, enters and leads in Ferdinand. Prospero tells Miranda to look upon Ferdinand, and Miranda, who has seen no humans in her life other than Prospero and Caliban, immediately falls in love. Ferdinand is similarly smitten and reveals his identity as the prince of Naples. Prospero is pleased that they are so taken with each other but decides that the two must not fall in love too quickly, and so he accuses Ferdinand of merely pretending to be the prince of Naples. When he tells Ferdinand he is going to imprison him, Ferdinand draws his sword, but Prospero charms him so that he cannot move. Miranda attempts to persuade her father to have mercy, but he silences her harshly. This man, he tells her, is a mere Caliban compared to other men. He explains that she simply doesn't know any better because she has never seen any others. Prospero leads the charmed and helpless Ferdinand to his imprisonment. Secretly, he thanks the invisible Ariel for his help, sends him on another mysterious errand, and promises to free him soon.

10.6 SUMMARY ACT II, SCENE I

Summary

While Ferdinand is falling in love with Miranda, Alonso, Sebastian, Antonio, Gonzalo, and other shipwrecked lords search for him on another part of the island. Alonso is quite despondent and unreceptive to the good-natured Gonzalo's attempts to cheer him up. Gonzalo meets resistance from Antonio and Sebastian as well. These two childishly mock Gonzalo's suggestion that the island is a good place to be and that they are all lucky to have survived. Alonso finally brings the repartee to a halt when he bursts out at Gonzalo and openly expresses regret at having married away his daughter in Tunis. Francisco, a minor lord, pipes up at this point that he saw Ferdinand swimming valiantly after the wreck, but this does not comfort Alonso. Sebastian and Antonio continue to provide little help. Sebastian tells his brother that he is indeed to blame for Ferdinand's death—if he had not married his daughter to an African (rather than a European), none of this would have happened.

Gonzalo tells the lords that they are only making the situation worse and attempts to change the subject, discussing what he might do if he were the lord of the island. Antonio and Sebastian mock his utopian vision. Ariel then enters, playing "solemn music" (II.i.182, stage direction), and gradually all but Sebastian and Antonio fall asleep. Seeing the vulnerability of his sleeping companions, Antonio tries to persuade Sebastian to kill his brother. He rationalizes this scheme by explaining that Claribel, who is now Queen of Tunis, is too far from Naples to inherit the kingdom should her father die, and as a result, Sebastian would be the heir to the throne. Sebastian begins to warm to the idea, especially after Antonio tells him that usurping Prospero's dukedom was the best move he ever made. Sebastian wonders aloud whether he will be afflicted by conscience, but Antonio dismisses this out of hand. Sebastian is at last convinced, and the two men draw their swords. Sebastian, however, seems to have second thoughts at the last moment and stops. While he and Antonio confer, Ariel enters with music, singing in Gonzalo's ear that a conspiracy is under way and that he should "Awake,

awake!” (II.i.301). Gonzalo wakes and shouts “Preserve the King!” His exclamation wakes everyone else (II.i.303). Sebastian quickly concocts a story about hearing a loud noise that caused him and Antonio to draw their swords. Gonzalo is obviously suspicious but does not challenge the lords. The group continues its search for Ferdinand.

Analysis

As in the storm scene in Act I, scene i, Shakespeare emphasizes and undercuts the capacity of the bare stage to create a convincing illusion throughout Act II, scene i. As the shipwrecked mariners look around the island, they describe it in poetry of great imagistic richness, giving the audience an imaginary picture of the setting of the play. Even so, they disagree about what they see, and even argue over what the island actually looks like. Adrian finds it to be of “subtle, tender, and delicate temperance,” where “the air breathes upon us . . . most sweetly” (II.i.42–47). Gonzalo says that the grass is “lush and lusty” and “green” (II.i.53–54). Antonio and Sebastian, however, cynical to the last, refuse to let these descriptions rest in the audience’s mind. They say that the air smells “as ’twere perfumed by a fen” (II.i.49), meaning a swamp, and that the ground “indeed is tawny” (II.i.55), or brown. The remarks of Antonio and Sebastian could be easily discounted as mere grumpiness, were it not for the fact that Gonzalo and Adrian do seem at times to be stretching the truth. (Adrian, for example, begins his remarks about the island’s beauty by saying, “Though this island seem to be desert . . . Uninhabitable, and almost inaccessible” [II.i.35–38].) Thus the bareness of the stage allows the beauty and other qualities of the island to be largely a matter of perspective. The island may be a paradise, but only if one chooses to see it that way.

Shakespeare uses this ambiguous setting for several different purposes. First, the setting heightens the sense of wonder and mystery that surrounds the magical island. It also gives each audience member a great deal of freedom to imagine the island as he or she so chooses. Most importantly, however, it enables the island to work as a reflection of character—we know a great deal about different characters simply from how they choose to see the island. Hence the dark, sensitive Caliban can

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find it both a place of terror—as when he enters, frightened and overworked in Act II, scene ii—and of great beauty—as in his “the isle is full of noises” speech (III.ii.130–138). Therefore, both Gonzalo (at II.i.147–164) and Trinculo (throughout Act III, scene ii), colonially minded, are so easily able to imagine it as the site of their own utopian societies.

Gonzalo’s fantasy about the plantation he would like to build on the island is a remarkable poetic evocation of a utopian society, in which no one would work, all people would be equal and live off the land, and all women would be “innocent and pure.” This vision indicates something of Gonzalo’s own innocence and purity. Shakespeare treats the old man’s idea of the island as a kind of lovely dream, in which the frustrations and obstructions of life (magistrates, wealth, power) would be removed and all could live naturally and authentically. Though Gonzalo’s idea is not presented as a practical possibility (hence the mockery he receives from Sebastian and Antonio), Gonzalo’s dream contrasts to his credit with the power-obsessed ideas of most of the other characters, including Prospero. Gonzalo would do away with the very master-servant motif that lies at the heart of *The Tempest*.

The mockery dished out by Antonio and Sebastian reveals, by contrast, something of the noblemen’s cynicism and lack of feeling. Where Gonzalo is simply grateful and optimistic about having survived the shipwreck, Antonio and Sebastian seem mainly to be annoyed by it, though not so annoyed that they stop their incessant jesting with each other. Gonzalo says that they are simply loudmouthed jokers, who “would lift the moon out of her sphere, if she would continue in it five weeks without changing” (II.i.179–181). By conspiring against the king, however, they reveal themselves as more sinister and greedier than Gonzalo recognizes, using their verbal wit to cover up their darker and more wicked impulses. However, their greediness for power is both foolish and clumsy. As they attempt to cover their treachery with the story of the “bellowing / Like bulls, or rather lions” (II.i.307–308), it seems hard to believe that Antonio ever could have risen successfully against his brother. The absurdly aggressive behavior of Antonio and Sebastian makes Prospero’s exercise of power in the previous and

following scenes seem necessary. It also puts Alonso in a sympathetic position. He is a potential victim of the duo's treachery, a fact that helps the audience believe his conversion when he reconciles with Prospero at the end.

10.7 SUMMARY ACT II, SCENE II

Summary

Caliban enters with a load of wood, and thunder sounds in the background. Caliban curses and describes the torments that Prospero's spirits subject him to: they pinch, bite, and prick him, especially when he curses. As he is thinking of these spirits, Caliban sees Trinculo and imagines him to be one of the spirits. Hoping to avoid pinching, he lies down and covers himself with his cloak. Trinculo hears the thunder and looks about for some cover from the storm. The only thing he sees is the cloak-covered Caliban on the ground. He is not so much repulsed by Caliban as curious. He cannot decide whether Caliban is a "man or a fish" (II.ii.24). He thinks of a time when he traveled to England and witnessed freak-shows there. Caliban, he thinks, would bring him a lot of money in England. Thunder sounds again and Trinculo decides that the best shelter in sight is beneath Caliban's cloak, and so he joins the man-monster there.

Stephano enters singing and drinking. He hears Caliban cry out to Trinculo, "Do not torment me! O!" (II.ii.54). Hearing this and seeing the four legs sticking out from the cloak, Stephano thinks the two men are a four-legged monster with a fever. He decides to relieve this fever with a drink. Caliban continues to resist Trinculo, whom he still thinks is a spirit tormenting him. Trinculo recognizes Stephano's voice and says so. Stephano, of course, assumes for a moment that the monster has two heads, and he promises to pour liquor in both mouths. Trinculo now calls out to Stephano, and Stephano pulls his friend out from under the cloak. While the two men discuss how they arrived safely on shore, Caliban enjoys the liquor and begs to worship Stephano. The men take full advantage of Caliban's drunkenness, mocking him as a "most ridiculous

monster” (II.ii.157) as he promises to lead them around and show them the isle.

Analysis

Trinculo and Stephano are the last new characters to be introduced in the play. They act as comic foils to the main action, and will in later acts become specific parodies of Antonio and Sebastian. At this point, their role is to present comically some of the more serious issues in the play concerning Prospero and Caliban. In Act I, scene ii, Prospero calls Caliban a “slave” (II.ii.311, 322, 347), “thou earth” (II.ii.317), “Filth” (II.ii.349), and “Hag-seed” (II.ii.368). Stephano and Trinculo’s epithet of choice in Act II, scene ii and thereafter is “monster.” But while these two make quite clear that Caliban is seen as less than human by the Europeans on the island, they also treat him more humanely than Prospero does. Stephano and Trinculo, a butler and a jester respectively, remain at the low end of the social scale in the play, and have little difficulty finding friendship with the strange islander they meet. “Misery acquaints a man with strange bedfellows,” says Trinculo (II.ii.36–37), and then hastens to crawl beneath Caliban’s garment in order to get out of the rain. The similarity, socially and perhaps physically as well, between Trinculo and Caliban is further emphasized when Stephano, drunk, initially mistakes the two for a single monster: “This is some monster of the isle with four legs” (II.ii.62).

More important than the emphasis on the way in which Caliban seems to others more monster than man, is the way in which this scene dramatizes the initial encounter between an almost completely isolated, “primitive” culture and a foreign, “civilized” one. The reader discovers during Caliban and Prospero’s confrontation in Act I, scene ii that Prospero initially “made much of” Caliban (II.ii.336); that he gave Caliban “Water with berries in’t” (II.ii.337); that Caliban showed him around the island; and that Prospero later imprisoned Caliban, after he had taken all he could take from him. The reader can see these events in Act II, scene ii, with Trinculo and Stephano in the place of Prospero. Stephano calls Caliban a “brave monster,” as they set off singing around the island. In addition, Stephano and Trinculo give Caliban wine, which Caliban finds

to be a “celestial liquor” (II.ii.109). Moreover, Caliban initially mistakes Stephano and Trinculo for Prospero’s spirits, but alcohol convinces him that Stephano is a “brave god” and decides unconditionally to “kneel to him” (II.ii.109–110). This scene shows the foreign, civilized culture as decadent and manipulative: Stephano immediately plans to “inherit” the island (II.ii.167), using Caliban to show him all its virtues. Stephano and Trinculo are a grotesque, parodic version of Prospero upon his arrival twelve years ago. Godlike in the eyes of the native, they slash and burn their way to power.

By this point, Caliban has begun to resemble a parody of himself. Whereas he would “gabble like / A thing most brutish” (I.ii.359–360) upon Prospero’s arrival, because he did not know language, he now is willfully inarticulate in his drunkenness. Immediately putting aside his fear that these men are spirits sent to do him harm, Caliban puts his trust in them for all the wrong reasons. What makes Caliban’s behavior in this scene so tragic is that we might expect him, especially after his eloquent curses of Prospero in Act I, scene ii, to know better.

10.8 SUMMARY ACT III, SCENE I

Summary

I am your wife, if you will marry me. If not, I'll die your maid. To be your fellow You may deny me, but I'll be your servant Whether you will or no.

Back at Prospero’s cell, Ferdinand takes over Caliban’s duties and carries wood for Prospero. Unlike Caliban, however, Ferdinand has no desire to curse. Instead, he enjoys his labors because they serve the woman he loves, Miranda. As Ferdinand works and thinks of Miranda, she enters, and after her, unseen by either lover, Prospero enters. Miranda tells Ferdinand to take a break from his work, or to let her work for him, thinking that her father is away. Ferdinand refuses to let her work for him but does rest from his work and asks Miranda her name. She tells him, and he is pleased: “Miranda” comes from the same Latin word that gives English the word “admiration.” Ferdinand’s speech plays on the etymology: “Admired Miranda! / Indeed the top of admiration, worth / What’s dearest to the world!” (III.i.37–39).

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Ferdinand goes on to flatter his beloved. Miranda is, of course, modest, pointing out that she has no idea of any woman's face but her own. She goes on to praise Ferdinand's face, but then stops herself, remembering her father's instructions that she should not speak to Ferdinand. Ferdinand assures Miranda that he is a prince and probably a king now, though he prays his father is not dead. Miranda seems unconcerned with Ferdinand's title, and asks only if he loves her. Ferdinand replies enthusiastically that he does, and his response emboldens Miranda to propose marriage. Ferdinand accepts and the two part. Prospero comes forth, subdued in his happiness, for he has known that this would happen. He then hastens to his book of magic in order to prepare for remaining business.

Analysis

There be some sports are painful, and their labour Delight in them sets off. Some kinds of baseness Are nobly undergone, and most poor matters Point to rich ends. This my mean task Would be as heavy to me as odious, but The mistress which I serve quickens what's dead And makes my labours pleasures.

This scene revolves around different images of servitude. Ferdinand is literally in service to Prospero, but in order to make his labor more pleasant he sees Miranda as his taskmaster. When he talks to Miranda, Ferdinand brings up a different kind of servitude—the love he has felt for a number of other beautiful women. Ferdinand sees this love, in comparison to his love for Miranda, as an enforced servitude: “Full many a lady / I have eyed with the best regard, and many a time / Th’ harmony of their tongues hath into bondage / Brought my too diligent ear” (III.i.39–42). When Miranda stops the conversation momentarily, remembering her father's command against talking to Ferdinand, the prince hastens to assure her that he is worthy of her love. He is royalty, he says, and in normal life “would no more endure / This wooden slavery [carrying logs] than to suffer / The flesh-fly blow my mouth” (III.i.61–63). But this slavery is made tolerable by a different kind of slavery: “The very instant that I saw you did / My heart fly to your service; there resides, / To make me slave to it” (III.i.64–66). The words “slavery” and

“slave” underscore the parallel as well as the difference between Ferdinand and Caliban. Prospero repeatedly calls Caliban a slave, and we see Caliban as a slave both to Prospero and to his own anger. Ferdinand, on the other hand, is a willing slave to his love, happy in a servitude that makes him rejoice rather than curse.

At the end of the scene, Miranda takes up the theme of servitude. Proposing marriage to Ferdinand, she says that “I am your wife, if you will marry me; / If not, I’ll die your maid. . . . / You may deny me; but I’ll be your servant / Whether you will or no” (III.i.83–86). This is the only scene of actual interaction we see between Ferdinand and Miranda. Miranda is, as we know, and as she says, very innocent: “I do not know / One of my sex, no woman’s face remember / Save from my glass mine own; nor have I seen / More that I may call men than you, good friend, / And my dear father” (III.i.48–52). The play has to make an effort to overcome the implausibility of this courtship—to make Miranda look like something more than Prospero’s puppet and a fool for the first man she sees. Shakespeare accomplishes this by showing Ferdinand in one kind of servitude—in which he must literally and physically humble himself—as he talks earnestly about another kind of servitude, in which he gives himself wholly to Miranda. The fact that Miranda speaks of a similar servitude of her own accord, that she remembers her father’s “precepts” and then disregards them, and that Prospero remains in the background without interfering helps the audience to trust this meeting between the lovers more than their first meeting in Act I, scene ii.

Of course, Prospero’s presence in the first place may suggest that he is somehow in control of what Miranda does or says. At the end he steps forward to assure the audience that he knew what would happen: “So glad of this as they I cannot be, / Who are surprised with all” (III.i.93–94). But Prospero’s five other lines (III.i.31–32 and III.i.74–76) do not suggest that he controls what Miranda says. Rather, he watches in the manner of a father—both proud of his daughter’s choice and slightly sad to see her grow up.

10.9 SUMMARY ACT III, SCENE II

Summary

Caliban, Trinculo, and Stephano continue to drink and wander about the island. Stephano now refers to Caliban as “servant monster” and repeatedly orders him to drink. Caliban seems happy to obey. The men begin to quarrel, mostly in jest, in their drunkenness. Stephano has now assumed the title of Lord of the Island and he promises to hang Trinculo if Trinculo should mock his servant monster. Ariel, invisible, enters just as Caliban is telling the men that he is “subject to a tyrant, a sorcerer, that by his cunning hath cheated me of the island” (III.ii.40–41). Ariel begins to stir up trouble, calling out, “Thou liest” (III.ii.42). Caliban cannot see Ariel and thinks that Trinculo said this. He threatens Trinculo, and Stephano tells Trinculo not to interrupt Caliban anymore. Trinculo protests that he said nothing. Drunkenly, they continue talking, and Caliban tells them of his desire to get revenge against Prospero. Ariel continues to interrupt now and then with the words, “Thou liest.” Ariel’s ventriloquizing ultimately results in Stephano hitting Trinculo.

While Ariel looks on, Caliban plots against Prospero. The key, Caliban tells his friends, is to take Prospero’s magic books. Once they have done this, they can kill Prospero and take his daughter. Stephano will become king of the island and Miranda will be his queen. Trinculo tells Stephano that he thinks this plan is a good idea, and Stephano apologizes for the previous quarreling. Caliban assures them that Prospero will be asleep within the half hour.

Ariel plays a tune on his flute and tabor-drum. Stephano and Trinculo wonder at this noise, but Caliban tells them it is nothing to fear. Stephano relishes the thought of possessing this island kingdom “where I shall have my music for nothing” (III.ii.139–140). Then the men decide to follow the music and afterward to kill Prospero.

Analysis

As we have seen, one of the ways in which *The Tempest* builds its rich aura of magical and mysterious implication is through the use of doubles: scenes, characters, and speeches that mirror each other by either

resemblance or contrast. This scene is an example of doubling: almost everything in it echoes Act II, scene i. In this scene, Caliban, Trinculo, and Stephano wander aimlessly about the island, and Stephano muses about the kind of island it would be if he ruled it—"I will kill this man [Prospero]. His daughter and I will be King and Queen . . . and Trinculo and thyself [Caliban] shall be viceroys" (III.ii.101–103)—just as Gonzalo had done while wandering with Antonio and Sebastian in Act II, scene i. At the end of Act III, scene ii, Ariel enters, invisible, and causes strife among the group, first with his voice and then with music, leading the men astray in order to thwart Antonio and Sebastian's plot against Alonso. The power-hungry servants Stephano and Trinculo thus become rough parodies of the power-hungry courtiers Antonio and Sebastian. All four men are now essentially equated with Caliban, who is, as Alonso and Antonio once were, simply another usurper.

But Caliban also has a moment in this scene to become more than a mere usurper: his striking and apparently heartfelt speech about the sounds of the island. Reassuring the others not to worry about Ariel's piping, Caliban says:

The isle is full of noises, Sounds and sweet airs, that give delight and hurt not. Sometimes a thousand twangling instruments Will hum about mine ears, and sometime voices, That, if I then had waked after long sleep, Will make me sleep again: and then, in dreaming, The clouds methought would open and show riches Ready to drop upon me, that, when I waked, I cried to dream again. (III.ii.130–138)

In this speech, we are reminded of Caliban's very close connection to the island—a connection we have seen previously only in his speeches about showing Prospero or Stephano which streams to drink from and which berries to pick (I.ii.333–347 and II.ii.152–164). After all, Caliban is not only a symbolic "native" in the colonial allegory of the play. He is also an actual native of the island, having been born there after his mother Sycorax fled there. This ennobling monologue—ennobling because there is no servility in it, only a profound understanding of the magic of the island—provides Caliban with a moment of freedom from Prospero and even from his drunkenness. In his anger and sadness, Caliban seems for a

moment to have risen above his wretched role as Stephano's fool. Throughout much of the play, Shakespeare seems to side with powerful figures such as Prospero against weaker figures such as Caliban, allowing us to think, with Prospero and Miranda, that Caliban is merely a monster. But in this scene, he takes the extraordinary step of briefly giving the monster a voice. Because of this short speech, Caliban becomes a more understandable character, and even, for the moment at least, a sympathetic one.

10.10 SUMMARY ACT V, SCENE I & EPILOGUE

Summary

Ariel tells Prospero that the day has reached its "sixth hour" (6 p.m.), when Ariel is allowed to stop working. Prospero acknowledges Ariel's request and asks how the king and his followers are faring. Ariel tells him that they are currently imprisoned, as Prospero ordered, in a grove. Alonso, Antonio, and Sebastian are mad with fear; and Gonzalo, Ariel says, cries constantly. Prospero tells Ariel to go release the men, and now alone on stage, delivers his famous soliloquy in which he gives up magic. He says he will perform his last task and then break his staff and drown his magic book.

Ariel now enters with Alonso and his companions, who have been charmed and obediently stand in a circle. Prospero speaks to them in their charmed state, praising Gonzalo for his loyalty and chiding the others for their treachery. He then sends Ariel to his cell to fetch the clothes he once wore as Duke of Milan. Ariel goes and returns immediately to help his master to put on the garments. Prospero promises to grant freedom to his loyal helper-spirit and sends him to fetch the Boatswain and mariners from the wrecked ship. Ariel goes.

Prospero releases Alonso and his companions from their spell and speaks with them. He forgives Antonio but demands that Antonio return his dukedom. Antonio does not respond and does not, in fact, say a word for the remainder of the play except to note that Caliban is "no doubt

marketable” (V.i.269). Alonso now tells Prospero of the missing Ferdinand. Prospero tells Alonso that he, too, has lost a child in this last tempest—his daughter. Alonso continues to be wracked with grief. Prospero then draws aside a curtain, revealing behind it Ferdinand and Miranda, who are playing a game of chess. Alonso is ecstatic at the discovery. Meanwhile, the sight of more humans impresses Miranda. Alonso embraces his son and daughter-in-law to be and begs Miranda’s forgiveness for the treacheries of twelve years ago. Prospero silences Alonso’s apologies, insisting that the reconciliation is complete.

After arriving with the Boatswain and mariners, Ariel is sent to fetch Caliban, Trinculo, and Stephano, which he speedily does. The three drunken thieves are sent to Prospero’s cell to return the clothing they stole and to clean it in preparation for the evening’s reveling. Prospero then invites Alonso and his company to stay the night. He will tell them the tale of his last twelve years, and in the morning, they can all set out for Naples, where Miranda and Ferdinand will be married. After the wedding, Prospero will return to Milan, where he plans to contemplate the end of his life. The last charge Prospero gives to Ariel before setting him free is to make sure the trip home is made on “calm seas” with “auspicious gales” (V.i.318).

The other characters exit, and Prospero delivers the epilogue. He describes the loss of his magical powers (“Now my charms are all o’erthrown”) and says that, as he imprisoned Ariel and Caliban, the audience has now imprisoned him on the stage. He says that the audience can only release him by applauding, and asks them to remember that his only desire was to please them. He says that, as his listeners would like to have their own crimes forgiven, they should forgive him, and set him free by clapping.

Analysis

In this scene, all of the play’s characters are brought on stage together for the first time. Prospero repeatedly says that he is relinquishing his magic, but its presence pervades the scene. He enters in his magic robes. He brings Alonso and the others into a charmed circle (V.i.57, stage direction) and holds them there for about fifty lines. Once he releases them from the spell, he makes the magician-like spectacle of unveiling

Miranda and Ferdinand behind a curtain, playing chess (V.i.173, stage direction). His last words of the play proper are a command to Ariel to ensure for him a safe voyage home. Only in the epilogue, when he is alone on-stage, does Prospero announce definitively that his charms are “all o’erthrown” (V.i.1).

10.11 SUMMARY ACT V, SCENE I & EPILOGUE

When Prospero passes judgment on his enemies in the final scene, we are no longer put off by his power, both because his love for Miranda has humanized him to a great extent, and also because we now can see that, over the course of the play, his judgments generally have been justified. Gonzalo is an “honourable man” (V.i.62); Alonso did, and knows he did, treat Prospero “[m]ost cruelly” (V.i.71); and Antonio is an “[u]nnatural” brother (V.i.79). Caliban, Stephano, and Trinculo, led in sheepishly in their stolen apparel at line 258, are so foolish as to deserve punishment, and Prospero’s command that they “trim” his cell “handsomely” (V.i.297) in preparation for the evening’s revels seems mild. Accusing his enemies neither more nor less than they deserve, and forgiving them instantly once he has been restored to his dukedom, Prospero has at last come to seem judicious rather than arbitrary in his use of power. Of course, it helps that Prospero’s most egregious sins have been mitigated by the outcome of events. He will no longer hold Ariel and Caliban as slaves because he is giving up his magic and returning to Naples. Moreover, he will no longer dominate Miranda because she is marrying Ferdinand.

Prospero has made the audience see the other characters clearly and accurately. What is remarkable is the fact that the most sympathetic character in the play, Miranda, still cannot. Miranda’s last lines are her most famous: “O wonder!” she exclaims upon seeing the company Prospero has assembled. “How many goodly creatures are there here! / How beauteous mankind is! O brave new world / That has such people in’t!” (V.i.184–187). From Miranda’s innocent perspective, such a remark seems genuine and even true. But from the audience’s perspective, it must seem somewhat ridiculous. After all, Antonio and

Sebastian are still surly and impudent; Alonso has repented only after believing his son to be dead; and Trinculo and Stephano are drunken, petty thieves. However, Miranda speaks from the perspective of someone who has not seen any human being except her father since she was three years old. She is merely delighted by the spectacle of all these people.

In a sense, her innocence may be shared to some extent by the playwright, who takes delight in creating and presenting a vast array of humanity, from kings to traitors, from innocent virgins to inebriated would-be murderers. As a result, though Miranda's words are to some extent undercut by irony, it is not too much of a stretch to think that Shakespeare really does mean this benediction on a world "[t]hat has such people in't!" After all, Prospero is another stand-in for the playwright, and he forgives all the wrongdoers at the end of the play. There is an element in the conclusion of *The Tempest* that celebrates the multiplicity and variety of human life, which, while it may result in complication and ambiguity, also creates humor, surprise, and love.

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS II :

Q1. Give analysis of Act 2 Scene 2.

Answer.....

.....

Q2. Write a short epilogue of the play.

Answer.....

.....

10.12 LET'S SUM UP

If *The Tempest* is read, as it often is, as a celebration of creativity and art, the aging Shakespeare's swan song to the theater, then this closing benediction may have a much broader application than just to this play,

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referring to the breadth of humanity that inspired the breadth of Shakespeare's characters. Similarly, Prospero's final request for applause in the monologue functions as a request for forgiveness, not merely for the wrongs he has committed in this play. It also requests forgiveness for the beneficent tyranny of creativity itself, in which an author, like a Prospero, moves people at his will, controls the minds of others, creates situations to suit his aims, and arranges outcomes entirely in the service of his own idea of goodness or justice or beauty. In this way, the ambiguity surrounding Prospero's power in *The Tempest* may be inherent to art itself. Like Prospero, authors work according to their own conceptions of a desirable or justifiable outcome. But as in *The Tempest*, a happy ending can restore harmony, and a well-developed play can create an authentic justice, even if it originates entirely in the mind of the author.

The plot of *The Tempest* is organized around the idea of persuasion, as Prospero gradually moves his sense of justice from his own mind into the outside world, gradually applying it to everyone around him until the audience believes it, too. This aggressive persuasiveness makes Prospero difficult to admire at times. Still, in another sense, persuasion characterizes the entire play, which seeks to enthrall audiences with its words and magic as surely as Prospero sought to enthrall Ariel. And because the audience decides whether it believes in the play—whether to applaud, as Prospero asks them to do—the real power lies not with the playwright, but with the viewer, not with the imagination that creates the story, but with the imagination that receives it. In this way, Shakespeare transforms the troubling ambiguity of the play into a surprising cause for celebration. The power wielded by Prospero, which seemed unsettling at first, is actually the source of all of our pleasure in the drama. In fact, it is the reason we came to the theater in the first place.

10.13 KEYWORDS

- **amain** at or with great speed; here, Miranda's peacocks fly quickly.
- **bark** any boat, but especially a small sailing ship.

- **bass my trespass** Here, meaning that the condemnation (my trespass) was uttered in a deep bass voice. The thunder proclaimed his sin, according to Alonso, like a noise from the heavens.
- **Bermoothes** refer to the Bermudas, a common word to describe tempests and enchantments.
- **betid** happened or befell; here, it means that nothing has happened to the boat's inhabitants.

10.14 QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW

1. Did the storm described in the first scene suggest the title of the play?
2. Is Shakespeare's description of this storm technically accurate? 3. Why does Shakespeare begin this play with the description of a storm?
4. What further dramatic function does the storm now have? 5. What does Prospero's mantle symbolize?

10.15 SUGGESTED READINGS AND REFERENCES

- The Tempest at the British Library
- The Tempest at Project Gutenberg
- The entire First Folio owned by Brandeis University at Internet Shakespeare Editions
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10.16 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS 1 :

Answer 1 : Check Section 10.2

Answer 2 : Check Section 10.4

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS 2 :

Answer 1 : Check Section 10.7

Answer 2 : Check Section 10.10

UNIT 11. THE TEMPEST-PART – CRITICISM AND HISTORY- PART –II

STRUCTURE

11.0 Objectives

11.1 Introduction

11.2 Synopsis

11.3 Date and Sources

11.3.1 Date

11.3.2 Contemporary Course

11.4 Themes and Motifs

11.4.1 The Theatre

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11.5 Criticism and Interpretation

11.5.1 Genre

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11.5.3 Post Colonial

11.6 Performance History

11.6.1 Shakespeare Day

11.6.2 Restoration and 18th Century

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11.6.3 20th century and beyond

11.7 Literature and Art

11.8 Let's Sum up

11.9 Keywords

11.10 Questions For Review

11.11 Suggested Readings And References

11.12 Answers to Check your Progress

11.0 OBJECTIVES

The objective of the unit to understand the Criticism and Interpretation of The Tempest.

This unit helps to understand the various acts of the play. It gives the deep synopsis of the play along with themes and motifs.

- Synopsis of the play
- Date and Sources
- Themes and Motifs
- Criticism and Interpretation
- Performance History

11.1 INTRODUCTION

The Tempest is a play by William Shakespeare, probably written in 1610–1611, and thought to be one of the last plays that Shakespeare wrote alone. After the first scene, which takes place on a ship at sea during a tempest, the rest of the story is set on a remote island, where the sorcerer Prospero, a complex and contradictory character, lives with his daughter Miranda, and his two servants—Caliban, a savage monster figure, and Ariel, an airy spirit. The play contains music and songs that evoke the spirit of enchantment on the island. It explores many themes including magic, betrayal, revenge, and family. In act four, a wedding masque serves as a play-within-the play, and contributes spectacle, allegory, and elevated language.

Though *The Tempest* is listed in the First Folio as the first of Shakespeare's comedies, it deals with both tragic and comic themes, and modern criticism has created a category of romance for this and others of Shakespeare's late plays. *The Tempest* has been put to varied interpretations—from those that see it as a fable of art and creation, with Prospero representing Shakespeare, and Prospero's renunciation of magic signaling Shakespeare's farewell to the stage, to interpretations that consider it an allegory of Europeans colonizing foreign lands.

11.2 SYNOPSIS

A ship is caught in a powerful storm, there is terror and confusion on board, and the vessel is shipwrecked. But the storm is a magical creation carried out by the spirit Ariel, and caused by the magic of Prospero, who was the Duke of Milan, before his dukedom was usurped and taken from him by his brother Antonio (aided by Alonso, the King of Naples). That was twelve years ago, when he and his young daughter, Miranda, were set adrift on the sea, and eventually stranded on an island. Among those on board the shipwreck are Antonio and Alonso. Also on the ship are Alonso's brother (Sebastian), son (Ferdinand), and "trusted counsellor", Gonzalo. Prospero plots to reverse what was done to him twelve years ago, and regain his office. Using magic he separates the shipwreck survivors into groups on the island:

- Ferdinand, who is found by Prospero and Miranda. It is part of Prospero's plan to encourage a romantic relationship between Ferdinand and Miranda; and they do fall in love.
- Trinculo, the king's jester, and Stephano, the king's drunken butler; who are found by Caliban, a monstrous figure who had been living on the island before Prospero arrived, and who Prospero, adopted, raised and enslaved. These three will raise an unsuccessful coup against Prospero, acting as the play's 'comic relief' by doing so.
- Alonso, Sebastian, Antonio, Gonzalo, and two attendant lords (Adrian and Francisco). Antonio and Sebastian conspire to kill Alonso and Gonzalo so Sebastian can become King; at Prospero's command Ariel thwarts this conspiracy. Later in the play, Ariel, in

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the guise of a Harpy, confronts the three nobles (Antonio, Alonso and Sebastian), causing them to flee in guilt for their crimes against Prospero and each other.

- The ship's captain and boatswain, along with the other sailors, are asleep until the final act.

Prospero betroths Miranda to marry Ferdinand, and instructs Ariel to bring some other spirits and produce a masque. The masque will feature classical goddesses, Juno, Ceres, and Iris, and will bless and celebrate the betrothal. The masque will also instruct the young couple on marriage, and on the value of chastity until then.

The masque is suddenly interrupted when Prospero realizes he had forgotten the plot against his life. He orders Ariel to deal with this. Caliban, Trinculo, and Stephano are chased off into the swamps by goblins in the shape of hounds. Prospero vows that once he achieves his goals, he will set Ariel free, and abandon his magic, saying:

I'll break my staff,
Bury it certain fathoms in the earth,
And deeper than did ever plummet sound
I'll drown my book.

Ariel brings on Alonso, Antonio and Sebastian. Prospero forgives all three, and raises the threat to Antonio and Sebastian that he could blackmail them, though he won't. Prospero's former title, Duke of Milan, is restored. Ariel fetches the sailors from the ship; then Caliban, Trinculo, and Stephano. Caliban, seemingly filled with regret, promises to be good. Stephano and Trinculo are ridiculed and sent away in shame by Prospero. Before the reunited group (all the noble characters plus Miranda and Prospero) leaves the island, Ariel is told to provide good weather to guide the king's ship back to the royal fleet and then to Naples, where Ferdinand and Miranda will be married. After this, Ariel is set free. In the epilogue, Prospero requests that the audience set him free—with their applause.

11.3 DATE AND SOURCES

11.3.1 Date

It is not known for certain exactly when *The Tempest* was written, but evidence supports the idea that it was probably composed sometime between late 1610 to mid-1611. It is considered one of the last plays that Shakespeare wrote alone. Evidence supports composition perhaps occurring before, after, or at the same time as *The Winter's Tale*. Edward Blount entered *The Tempest* into the Stationers' Register on 8 November 1623. It was one of 16 Shakespearean plays that Blount registered on that date.

11.3.2 Contemporary Sources

There is no obvious single origin for the plot of *The Tempest*; it appears to have been created with several sources contributing. Since source scholarship began in the eighteenth century, researchers have suggested passages from "Nafragium" ("The Shipwreck"), one of the colloquies in Erasmus's *Colloquia Familiaria* (1518), and Richard Eden's 1555 translation of Peter Martyr's *De orbo novo* (1530).

William Strachey's *A True Reportory of the Wracke and Redemption of Sir Thomas Gates, Knight*, an eyewitness report of the real-life shipwreck of the *Sea Venture* in 1609 on the island of Bermuda while sailing toward Virginia, is considered a primary source for the opening scene, as well as a few other references in the play to conspiracies and retributions. Although not published until 1625, Strachey's report, one of several describing the incident, is dated 15 July 1610, and it is thought that Shakespeare must have seen it in manuscript sometime during that year. E.K. Chambers identified the *True Reportory* as Shakespeare's "main authority" for *The Tempest*. Regarding the influence of Strachey in the play, Kenneth Muir says that although "[t]here is little doubt that Shakespeare had read ... William Strachey's *True Reportory*" and other accounts, "[t]he extent of the verbal echoes of [the Bermuda] pamphlets has, I think, been exaggerated. There is hardly a shipwreck in history or

fiction which does not mention splitting, in which the ship is not lightened of its cargo, in which the passengers do not give themselves up for lost, in which north winds are not sharp, and in which no one gets to shore by clinging to wreckage", and goes on to say that "Strachey's account of the shipwreck is blended with memories of Saint Paul's—in which too not a hair perished—and with Erasmus' colloquy."

Another *Sea Venture* survivor, Sylvester Jourdain, published his account, *A Discovery of The Bermudas* dated 13 October 1610; Edmond Malone argues for the 1610–11 date on the account by Jourdain and the Virginia Council of London's *A True Declaration of the Estate of the Colonie in Virginia* dated 8 November 1610.

Michel de Montaigne's essay "Of the Caniballes" is considered a source for Gonzalo's utopian speculations in Act II, scene 1, and possibly for other lines that refer to differences between cultures.

A poem entitled *Pimlyco; or, Runne Red-Cap* was published as a pamphlet in 1609. It was written in praise of a tavern in Hoxton. The poem includes extensive quotations of an earlier (1568) poem, *The Tunning of Elynor Rymming*, by John Skelton. The pamphlet contains a pastoral story of a voyage to an island. There is no evidence that Shakespeare read this pamphlet, was aware of it, or had used it. However, the poem may be useful as a source to researchers regarding how such themes and stories were being interpreted and told in London near to the time *The Tempest* was written.

11.4 THEMES AND MOTIFS

11.4.1 The Theatre

“ Our revels now are ended. These our actors, As I foretold you, were all spirits and Are melted into air, into thin air; And like the baseless fabric of this vision, The cloud-capped towers, the gorgeous palaces, The solemn temples, the great ”

globe itself, Yea, all which it inherit, shall
 dissolve, And, like this insubstantial pageant
 faded, Leave not a rack behind. We are such
 stuff As dreams are made on, and our little life Is
 rounded with a sleep.

—*William Shakespeare, Act 4, Scene 1.*

The Tempest is explicitly concerned with its own nature as a play, frequently drawing links between Prospero's art and theatrical illusion; the shipwreck was a spectacle that Ariel performed, while Antonio and Sebastian are cast in a troupe to act. Prospero may even refer to the Globe Theatre when he describes the whole world as an illusion: "the great globe ... shall dissolve ... like this insubstantial pageant". Ariel frequently disguises himself as figures from Classical mythology, for example a nymph, a harpy, and Ceres, acting as the latter in a masque and anti-masque that Prospero creates.

Thomas Campbell in 1838 was the first to consider that Prospero was meant to partially represent Shakespeare, but then abandoned that idea when he came to believe that *The Tempest* was an early play.

11.4.2 Magic

Prospero is a magician, whose magic is a beneficial "white magic". Prospero learned his magic by studying in his books about nature, and he uses magic to achieve what he considers positive outcomes. Shakespeare uses Caliban to indicate the opposite—evil black magic. Caliban's mother, Sycorax, who does not appear, represents the horrors that were stirring at this time in England and elsewhere regarding witchcraft and black magic. Magic was taken seriously and studied by serious philosophers, notably the German Henricus Cornelius Agrippa, who in 1533 published in three volumes his *De Occulta Philosophia*, which summarized work done by Italian scholars on the topic of magic. Agrippa's work influenced John Dee (1527–1608), an Englishman, who, like Prospero, had a large collection of books on the occult, as well as on

science and philosophy. It was a dangerous time to philosophize about magic—Giordano Bruno for example was burned at the stake in Italy in 1600—just a few years before *The Tempest* was written.

11.4.3 Ariel

Prospero uses magic grounded in science and reality—the kind that was studied by Agrippa and Dee. Prospero studied and gradually was able to develop the kind of power represented by Ariel, which extended his abilities. Sycorax's magic was not capable of something like Ariel: "Ariel is a spirit too delicate to act her earthy and abhorred commands." Prospero's rational goodness enables him to control Ariel, where Sycorax can only trap him in a tree. Sycorax's magic is described as destructive and terrible, where Prospero's is said to be wondrous and beautiful. Prospero seeks to set things right in his world through his magic, and once that is done, he renounces it, setting Ariel free.

What Prospero is trying to do with magic is essential to *The Tempest*; it is the unity of action. It is referred to it as Prospero's project in act two when Ariel stops an attempted assassination:

My master through his art forsees the danger

That you, his friend, are in, and sends me forth—
For else his project dies—to keep them living!

At the start of act five Prospero says:

Now does my project gather to a head

Prospero seems to know precisely what he wants. Beginning with the tempest at the top of the play, his project is laid out in a series of steps. "Bountiful fortune"^l has given him a chance to affect his destiny, and that of his county and family.

His plan is to do all he can to reverse what was done twelve years ago when he was usurped: First he will use a tempest to cause certain persons to fear his great powers, then when all survived unscathed, he will separate those who lived through the tempest into different groups. These separations will let him deal with each group differently. Then Prospero's plan is to lead Ferdinand to Miranda, having prepared them both for their meeting. What is beyond his magical powers is to cause them to fall in

love. But they do. The next stages for the couple will be a testing. To help things along he magically makes the others fall into a sleep. The masque which is to educate and prepare the couple is next. But then his plans begin to go off the tracks when the masque is interrupted. Next Prospero confronts those who usurped him, he demands his dukedom and a “brave new world” by the merging of Milan and Naples through the marriage of Ferdinand and Miranda.¹

Prospero's magic hasn't worked on Sebastian and Antonio, who are not penitent. Prospero then deals with Antonio, not with magic, but with something more mundane—blackmail. This failure of magic is significant, and critics disagree regarding what it means: Jan Kott considers it a disillusionment for both Prospero and for the author. E. M. W. Tillyard plays it down as a minor disappointment. Some critics consider Sebastian and Antonio clownish and not a real threat. Stephen Orgel blames Prospero for causing the problem by forgetting about Sebastian and Antonio, which may introduce a theme of Prospero's encroaching dotage. David Hirst suggests that the failure of Prospero's magic may have a deeper explanation: He suggests that Prospero's magic has had no effect at all on certain things (like Caliban), that Prospero is idealistic and not realistic, and that his magic makes Prospero like a god, but it also makes him other than human, which explains why Prospero seems impatient and ill-suited to deal with his daughter, for example, when issues call on his humanity, not his magic. It explains his dissatisfaction with the “real world”, which is what cost him his dukedom, for example, in the first place. In the end Prospero is learning the value of being human.

11.5 CRITICISM AND INTERPRETATION

11.5.1 Genre

The story draws heavily on the tradition of the romance, a fictitious narrative set far away from ordinary life. Romances were typically based around themes such as the supernatural, wandering, exploration and discovery. They were often set in coastal regions, and typically featured

exotic, fantastical locations and themes of transgression and redemption, loss and retrieval, exile and reunion. As a result, while *The Tempest* was originally listed as a comedy in the First Folio of Shakespeare's plays, subsequent editors have chosen to give it the more specific label of Shakespearean romance. Like the other romances, the play was influenced by the then-new genre of tragicomedy, introduced by John Fletcher in the first decade of the 17th century and developed in the Beaumont and Fletcher collaborations, as well as by the explosion of development of the courtly masque form by such as Ben Jonson and Inigo Jones at the same time.

11.5.2 Dramatic structure

Like *The Comedy of Errors*, *The Tempest* roughly adheres to the unities of time, place, and action. Shakespeare's other plays rarely respected the three unities, taking place in separate locations miles apart and over several days or even years. The play's events unfold in real time before the audience, Prospero even declaring in the last act that everything has happened in, more or less, three hours. All action is unified into one basic plot: Prospero's struggle to regain his dukedom; it is also confined to one place, a fictional island, which many scholars agree is meant to be located in the Mediterranean Sea. Another reading suggests that it takes place in the New World, as some parts read like records of English and Spanish conquest in the Americas. Still others argue that the Island can represent any land that has been colonised.

In the denouement of the play, Prospero enters into a parabasis (a direct address to the audience). In his book *Back and Forth* the poet and literary critic Siddhartha Bose argues that Prospero's epilogue creates a "permanent parabasis" which is "the condition of [Schlegelian] Romantic Irony". Prospero, and by extension Shakespeare, turns his absolution over to the audience. The liberation and atonement Prospero 'gives' to Ariel and Caliban is also handed over to the audience. However, just as Prospero derives his power by "creating the language with which the other characters are able to speak about their experiences", so too the mechanics and customs of theatre limit the audience's understanding of itself and its relationship to the play and to reality. Four centuries after original productions of the play audiences are still clapping at the end

of *The Tempest*, rewarding Prospero for recreating the European hegemony. One need not change the text of *The Tempest* for feminist and anti-colonial reproductions. All that is needed is a different kind of audience, one that is aware of itself and its agency.

11.5.3 Postcolonial

In Shakespeare's day, much of the world was still being colonized by European merchants and settlers, and stories were coming back from the Americas, with myths about the Cannibals of the Caribbean, faraway Edens, and distant tropical Utopias. With the character Caliban (whose name is almost an anagram of Cannibal and also resembles "Cariban", the term then used for natives in the West Indies), Shakespeare may be offering an in-depth discussion into the morality of colonialism. Different views of this are found in the play, with examples including Gonzalo's Utopia, Prospero's enslavement of Caliban, and Caliban's subsequent resentment. Caliban is also shown as one of the most natural characters in the play, being very much in touch with the natural world (and modern audiences have come to view him as far nobler than his two Old World friends, Stephano and Trinculo, although the original intent of the author may have been different). There is evidence that Shakespeare drew on Montaigne's essay *Of Cannibals*—which discusses the values of societies insulated from European influences—while writing *The Tempest*.

Beginning in about 1950, with the publication of *Psychology of Colonization* by Octave Mannoni, *The Tempest* was viewed more and more through the lens of postcolonial theory. This new way of looking at the text explored the effect of the coloniser (Prospero) on the colonised (Ariel and Caliban). Although Ariel is often overlooked in these debates in favour of the more intriguing Caliban, he is nonetheless an essential component of them. The French writer Aimé Césaire, in his play *Une Tempête* sets *The Tempest* in Haiti, portraying Ariel as a mulatto who, unlike the more rebellious Caliban, feels that negotiation and partnership is the way to freedom from the colonisers. Fernandez Retamar sets his version of the play in Cuba, and portrays Ariel as a wealthy Cuban (in comparison to the lower-class Caliban) who also must choose between rebellion or negotiation. Although scholars have suggested that his

dialogue with Caliban in Act two, Scene one, contains hints of a future alliance between the two when Prospero leaves, Ariel is generally viewed by scholars as the good servant, in comparison with the conniving Caliban—a view which Shakespeare's audience may well have shared. It has also been argued that Ariel, and not Caliban or Prospero, is the rightful owner of the island. Ariel is used by some postcolonial writers as a symbol of their efforts to overcome the effects of colonisation on their culture. For example, Michelle Cliff, a Jamaican author, has said that she tries to combine Caliban and Ariel within herself to create a way of writing that represents her culture better. Such use of Ariel in postcolonial thought is far from uncommon; the spirit is even the namesake of a scholarly journal covering post-colonial criticism.

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS I:

Q1. Give short criticism of the play .

Answer.....
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Q2. Write note on themes of the play.

Answer.....
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11.6 PERFORMANCE HISTORY

11.6.1 Shakespeare's Day

A record exists of a performance of *The Tempest* on 1 November 1611 by the King's Men before James I and the English royal court at Whitehall Palace on Hallowmas night. The play was one of the six Shakespearean plays (and eight others for a total of 14) acted at court during the winter of 1612–13 as part of the festivities surrounding the

marriage of Princess Elizabeth with Frederick V, the Elector of the Palatinate of the Rhine. There is no further public performance recorded prior to the Restoration; but in his 1669 preface to the Dryden/Davenant version, John Dryden states that *The Tempest* had been performed at the Blackfriars Theatre. Careful consideration of stage directions within the play supports this, strongly suggesting that the play was written with Blackfriars Theatre rather than the Globe Theatre in mind.

11.6.2 Restoration And 18th Century

Adaptations of the play, not Shakespeare's original, dominated the performance history of *The Tempest* from the English Restoration until the mid-19th century. All theatres were closed down by the puritan government during the English Interregnum. Upon the restoration of the monarchy in 1660, two patent companies—the *King's Company* and the *Duke's Company*—were established, and the existing theatrical repertoire divided between them. Sir William Davenant's *Duke's Company* had the rights to perform *The Tempest*. In 1667 Davenant and John Dryden made heavy cuts and adapted it as *The Tempest, or The Enchanted Island*. They tried to appeal to upper-class audiences by emphasising royalist political and social ideals: monarchy is the natural form of government; patriarchal authority decisive in education and marriage; and patrilineality preeminent in inheritance and ownership of property. They also added characters and plotlines: Miranda has a sister, named Dorinda; Caliban also has a sister, named Sycorax. As a parallel to Shakespeare's Miranda/Ferdinand plot, Prospero has a foster-son, Hippolito, who has never set eyes on a woman. Hippolito was a popular breeches role, a man played by a woman, popular with Restoration theatre management for the opportunity to reveal actresses' legs. Scholar Michael Dobson has described *The Tempest, or The Enchanted Island* by Dryden and Davenant as "the most frequently revived play of the entire Restoration" and as establishing the importance of enhanced and additional roles for women.

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In 1674, Thomas Shadwell re-adapted Dryden and Davenant as an opera of the same name, usually meaning a play with sections that were to be sung or danced. Restoration playgoers appear to have regarded the Dryden/Davenant/Shadwell version as Shakespeare's: Samuel Pepys, for example, described it as "an old play of Shakespeares" in his diary. The opera was extremely popular, and "full of so good variety, that I cannot be more pleased almost in a comedy" according to Pepys. Prospero in this version is very different from Shakespeare's: Eckhard Auberlen describes him as "reduced to the status of a Polonius-like overbusy father, intent on protecting the chastity of his two sexually naive daughters while planning advantageous dynastic marriages for them." The operatic *Enchanted Island* was successful enough to provoke a parody, *The Mock Tempest, or The Enchanted Castle*, written by Thomas Duffett for the King's Company in 1675. It opened with what appeared to be a tempest, but turns out to be a riot in a brothel.

In the early 18th century, the Dryden/Davenant/Shadwell version dominated the stage. Ariel was—with two exceptions—played by a woman, and invariably by a graceful dancer and superb singer. Caliban was a comedian's role, played by actors "known for their awkward figures". In 1756, David Garrick staged another operatic version, a "three-act extravaganza" with music by John Christopher Smith.

The Tempest was one of the staples of the repertoire of Romantic Era theatres. John Philip Kemble produced an acting version which was closer to Shakespeare's original, but nevertheless retained Dorinda and Hippolito. Kemble was much-mocked for his insistence on archaic pronunciation of Shakespeare's texts, including "aitches" for "aches". It was said that spectators "packed the pit, just to enjoy hissing Kemble's delivery of 'I'll rack thee with old cramps, / Fill all they bones with aches'." The actor-managers of the Romantic Era established the fashion for opulence in sets and costumes which would dominate Shakespeare performances until the late 19th century: Kemble's Dorinda and Miranda, for example, were played "in white ornamented with spotted furs".

In 1757, a year after the debut of his operatic version, David Garrick produced a heavily cut performance of Shakespeare's script at Drury Lane, and it was revived, profitably, throughout the century.

11.6.3 19th Century

It was not until William Charles Macready's influential production in 1838 that Shakespeare's text established its primacy over the adapted and operatic versions which had been popular for most of the previous two centuries. The performance was particularly admired for George Bennett's performance as Caliban; it was described by Patrick MacDonnell—in his *An Essay on the Play of The Tempest* published in 1840—as "maintaining in his mind, a strong resistance to that tyranny, which held him in the thralldom of slavery".

The Victorian era marked the height of the movement which would later be described as "pictorial": based on lavish sets and visual spectacle, heavily cut texts making room for lengthy scene-changes, and elaborate stage effects. In Charles Kean's 1857 production of *The Tempest*, Ariel was several times seen to descend in a ball of fire. The hundred and forty stagehands supposedly employed on this production were described by the *Literary Gazette* as "unseen ... but alas never unheard". Hans Christian Andersen also saw this production and described Ariel as "isolated by the electric ray", referring to the effect of a carbon arc lamp directed at the actress playing the role. The next generation of producers, which included William Poel and Harley Granville-Barker, returned to a leaner and more text-based style.

In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, Caliban, not Prospero, was perceived as the star act of *The Tempest*, and was the role which the actor-managers chose for themselves. Frank Benson researched the role by viewing monkeys and baboons at the zoo; on stage, he hung upside-down from a tree and gibbered.

11.6.4 20th Century And Beyond

Continuing the late-19th-century tradition, in 1904 Herbert Beerbohm Tree wore fur and seaweed to play Caliban, with waist-length hair and apelike bearing, suggestive of a primitive part-animal part-human stage of evolution. This "missing link" portrayal of Caliban became the norm in productions until Roger Livesey, in 1934, was the first actor to play the role with black makeup. In 1945 Canada Lee played the role at the Theatre Guild in New York, establishing a tradition of black actors

Notes

taking the role, including Earle Hyman in 1960 and James Earl Jones in 1962.

In 1916, Percy MacKaye presented a community masque, *Caliban by the Yellow Sands*, at the Lewisohn Stadium in New York. Amidst a huge cast of dancers and masquers, the pageant centres on the rebellious nature of Caliban but ends with his plea for more knowledge ("I yearn to build, to be thine Artist / And 'stablish this thine Earth among the stars- / Beautiful!") followed by Shakespeare, as a character, reciting Prospero's "Our revels now are ended" speech.

John Gielgud played Prospero numerous times, and is, according to Douglas Brode, "universally heralded as ... [the 20th] century's greatest stage Prospero". His first appearance in the role was in 1930: he wore a turban, later confessing that he intended to look like Dante. He played the role in three more stage productions, lastly at the Royal National Theatre in 1974. Derek Jacobi's Prospero for The Old Vic in 2003 was praised for his portrayal of isolation and pain in ageing.

Peter Brook directed an experimental production at the Round House in 1968, in which the text was "almost wholly abandoned" in favour of mime. According to Margaret Croydon's review, Sycorax was "portrayed by an enormous woman able to expand her face and body to still larger proportions—a fantastic emblem of the grotesque ... [who] suddenly ... gives a horrendous yell, and Caliban, with black sweater over his head, emerges from between her legs: Evil is born."

In spite of the existing tradition of a black actor playing Caliban opposite a white Prospero, colonial interpretations of the play did not find their way onto the stage until the 1970s. Performances in England directed by Jonathan Miller and by Clifford Williams explicitly portrayed Prospero as coloniser. Miller's production was described, by David Hirst, as depicting "the tragic and inevitable disintegration of a more primitive culture as the result of European invasion and colonisation". Miller developed this approach in his 1988 production at the Old Vic in London, starring Max von Sydow as Prospero. This used a mixed cast made up of white actors as the humans and black actors playing the spirits and creatures of the island. According to Michael Billington, "von

Sydow's Prospero became a white overlord manipulating a mutinous black Caliban and a collaborative Ariel keenly mimicking the gestures of the island's invaders. The colonial metaphor was pushed through to its logical conclusion so that finally Ariel gathered up the pieces of Prospero's abandoned staff and, watched by awe-struck tribesmen, fitted them back together to hold his wand of office aloft before an immobilised Caliban. *The Tempest* suddenly acquired a new political dimension unforeseen by Shakespeare."

Psychoanalytic interpretations have proved more difficult to depict on stage. Gerald Freedman's production at the American Shakespeare Theatre in 1979 and Ron Daniels' Royal Shakespeare Company production in 1982 both attempted to depict Ariel and Caliban as opposing aspects of Prospero's psyche. However neither was regarded as wholly successful: *Shakespeare Quarterly*, reviewing Freedman's production, commented, "Mr. Freedman did nothing on stage to make such a notion clear to any audience that had not heard of it before."

In 1988, John Wood played Prospero for the RSC, emphasising the character's human complexity, in a performance a reviewer described as "a demented stage manager on a theatrical island suspended between smouldering rage at his usurpation and unbridled glee at his alternative ethereal power".

Japanese theatre styles have been applied to *The Tempest*. In 1988 and again in 1992 Yukio Ninagawa brought his version of *The Tempest* to the UK. It was staged as a rehearsal of a Noh drama, with a traditional Noh theatre at the back of the stage, but also using elements which were at odds with Noh conventions. In 1992, Minoru Fujita presented a Bunraku (Japanese puppet) version in Osaka and at the Tokyo Globe.

Sam Mendes directed a 1993 RSC production in which Simon Russell Beale's Ariel was openly resentful of the control exercised by Alec McCowen's Prospero. Controversially, in the early performances of the run, Ariel spat at Prospero, once granted his freedom. An entirely different effect was achieved by George C. Wolfe in the outdoor New York Shakespeare Festival production of 1995, where the casting of Aunjanue Ellis as Ariel opposite Patrick Stewart's Prospero charged the production with erotic tensions. Productions in the late 20th-century

have gradually increased the focus placed on sexual tensions between the characters, including Prospero/Miranda, Prospero/Ariel, Miranda/Caliban, Miranda/Ferdinand and Caliban/Trinculo.

The Tempest was performed at the Globe Theatre in 2000 with Vanessa Redgrave as Prospero, playing the role as neither male nor female, but with "authority, humanity and humour ... a watchful parent to both Miranda and Ariel." While the audience respected Prospero, Jasper Britton's Caliban "was their man" (in Peter Thomson's words), in spite of the fact that he spat fish at the groundlings, and singled some of them out for humiliating encounters.^[119] By the end of 2005, *BBC Radio* had aired 21 productions of *The Tempest*, more than any other play by Shakespeare.

In 2016 *The Tempest* was produced by the Royal Shakespeare Company. Directed by Gregory Doran, and featuring Simon Russell Beale, the RSC's version used performance capture to project Ariel in real time on stage. The performance was in collaboration with The Imaginarium and Intel, and featured "some gorgeous [and] some interesting" use of light, special effects, and set design.

11.7 LITERATURE AND ART

Percy Bysshe Shelley was one of the earliest poets to be influenced by *The Tempest*. His "With a Guitar, To Jane" identifies Ariel with the poet and his songs with poetry. The poem uses simple diction to convey Ariel's closeness to nature and "imitates the straightforward beauty of Shakespeare's original songs". Following the publication of Darwin's ideas on evolution, writers began to question mankind's place in the world and its relationship with God. One writer who explored these ideas was Robert Browning, whose poem "Caliban upon Setebos" (1864) sets Shakespeare's character pondering theological and philosophical questions. The French philosopher Ernest Renan wrote a closet drama, *Caliban: Suite de La Tempête* (*Caliban: Sequel to The Tempest*), in 1878. This features a female Ariel who follows Prospero back to Milan, and a Caliban who leads a coup against Prospero, after the

success of which he actively imitates his former master's virtues. W. H. Auden's "long poem" *The Sea and the Mirror* takes the form of a reflection by each of the supporting characters of *The Tempest* on their experiences. The poem takes a Freudian viewpoint, seeing Caliban (whose lengthy contribution is a prose poem) as Prospero's libido.

In 1968 Franco-Caribbean writer Aimé Césaire published *Une Tempête*, a radical adaptation of the play based on its colonial and postcolonial interpretations, in which Caliban is a black rebel and Ariel is mixed-race. The figure of Caliban influenced numerous works of African literature in the 1970s, including pieces by Taban Lo Liyong in Uganda, Lemuel Johnson in Sierra Leone, Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o in Kenya, and David Wallace of Zambia's *Do You Love Me, Master?*. A similar phenomenon occurred in late 20th-century Canada, where several writers produced works inspired by Miranda, including *The Diviners* by Margaret Laurence, *Prospero's Daughter* by Constance Beresford-Howe and *The Measure of Miranda* by Sarah Murphy. Other writers have feminised Ariel (as in Marina Warner's novel *Indigo*) or Caliban (as in Suniti Namjoshi's sequence of poems *Snapshots of Caliban*).

From the mid-18th century, Shakespeare's plays, including *The Tempest*, began to appear as the subject of paintings. In around 1735, William Hogarth produced his painting *A Scene from The Tempest*: "a baroque, sentimental fantasy costumed in the style of Van Dyck and Rembrandt". The painting is based upon Shakespeare's text, containing no representation of the stage, nor of the (Davenant-Dryden centred) stage tradition of the time. Henry Fuseli, in a painting commissioned for the Boydell Shakespeare Gallery (1789) modelled his Prospero on Leonardo da Vinci. These two 18th-century depictions of the play indicate that Prospero was regarded as its moral centre: viewers of Hogarth's and Fuseli's paintings would have accepted Prospero's wisdom and authority. John Everett Millais's *Ferdinand Lured by Ariel* (1851) is among the Pre-Raphaelite paintings based on the play. In the late 19th century, artists tended to depict Caliban as a Darwinian "missing-link", with fish-like or ape-like features, as evidenced in Joseph Noel Paton's *Caliban*, and discussed in Daniel Wilson's book *Caliban: The Missing Link* (1873).

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Charles Knight produced the *Pictorial Edition of the Works of Shakespeare* in eight volumes (1838–43). The work attempted to translate the contents of the plays into pictorial form. This extended not just to the action, but also to images and metaphors: Gonzalo's line about "mountaineers dewlapped like bulls" is illustrated with a picture of a Swiss peasant with a goitre. In 1908, Edmund Dulac produced an edition of *Shakespeare's Comedy of The Tempest* with a scholarly plot summary and commentary by Arthur Quiller-Couch, lavishly bound and illustrated with 40 watercolour illustrations. The illustrations highlight the fairy-tale quality of the play, avoiding its dark side. Of the 40, only 12 are direct depictions of the action of the play: the others are based on action before the play begins, or on images such as "full fathom five thy father lies" or "sounds and sweet airs that give delight and hurt not".

Fantasy writer Neil Gaiman based a story on the play in one issue of his comics series *The Sandman*. The comic stands as a sequel to the earlier *Midsummer Night's Dream* issue. This issue follows Shakespeare over a period of several months as he writes the play, which is named as his last solo project, as the final part of his bargain with the Dream King to write two plays celebrating dreams. The story draws many parallels between the characters and events in the play and Shakespeare's life and family relationships at the time. It is hinted that he based Miranda on his daughter Judith Shakespeare and Caliban on her suitor Thomas Quiney.

As part of Random House's Hogarth Shakespeare series of contemporary reimaginings of Shakespeare plays by contemporary writers, Margaret Atwood's 2016 novel *Hag-Seed* is based on *The Tempest*.

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS II :

Q1. Give a brief on account of restoration and 18th century with respect to play

Answer.....
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Q2. Write a short note on literature and art included in the play.

Answer.....

11.8 LET'S SUM UP

The Tempest is a difficult play to categorize. Although it ends in a wedding and thus might be defined as a comedy, there are many serious undertones that diminish the comedic tone. Instead, most modern anthologies of Shakespeare's works list this play as a romance. This separate division of romances includes what are generally labeled as "the problem plays." Along with *The Tempest*, the romances include *Pericles*, *Cymbeline*, *The Winter's Tale*, and *The Two Noble Kinsmen*, plays of Shakespeare's later years. These plays were written between 1604 and 1614, just prior to his retirement, when Shakespeare was composing plays that combined romance with some of the darker aspects of life. The romances are plays with the potential for tragedy but in which these tragic elements are resolved.

With *The Tempest*, Shakespeare turns to fantasy and magic as a way to explore romantic love, sibling hatred, and the love of a father for his child. In addition, *The Tempest* examines many of the topics that Shakespeare had focused on in his earlier plays, topics such as the attempts to overthrow a king (*Macbeth*, *Richard II*, and *Julius Caesar*), nature versus nurture (*The Winter's Tale* and *King Lear*), and innocence (*Twelfth Night*).

Although *The Tempest* provides the first masque within a play, the idea of a play within a play had occurred in earlier works, such as *Hamlet* and *Much Ado About Nothing*. In many ways *The Tempest* serves as a culmination of Shakespeare's earlier work, since in this play, he brings many of these earlier ideas together in one work.

11.9 KEYWORDS

- **chaps** jaws. Stefano is telling Caliban to open his jaws and drink more.
- **coragio** take courage (Italian).
- **dowle** small feather.
- **dropsy** a disease characterized by the accumulation of fluid in the connective tissues, resulting in swelling.
- **drowning mark** refers to a mole, located on the boatswain's face, the appearance of which was thought to portend a person's manner of death. In this case, the boatswain's mole appears to be the type that predicts a death by hanging.
- **extirpate** to pull up by the roots. The reference here is to Prospero and Miranda's being forced from their home and country.

11.10 QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW

1. What does Prospero say regarding his love of study and of books? 2. What is the dramatic purpose of the quarrel between Prospero and Ariel? 3. Who is Sycorax? 4. What has Shakespeare accomplished in Act I of *The Tempest*? 5. Who is Claribel? What dramatic purpose is attained by the references to Claribel?

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11.12 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS 1 :

Answer 1 : Check Section 11.5

Answer 2 : Check Section 11.4

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS 2 :

Answer 1 : Check Section 11.6.2

Answer 2 : Check Section 11.7

UNIT 12 SHAKESPEARE : THE TEMPEST--ANALYSIS- PART -III

STRUCTURE

- 12.0 Objectives
- 12.1 Introduction
- 12.2 Plot Analysis
- 12.3 Characters by Relationships
- 12.4 Synopsis
- 12.5 Analysis
- 12.6 Shakespeare Language
- 12.7 Historical and Cultural Context
- 12.8 Structure of The Tempest
- 12.9 Let's Sum up
- 12.10 Keywords
- 12.11 Questions For Review
- 12.12 Suggested Readings And References
- 12.13 Answers To Check your Progress

12.0 OBJECTIVES

The objective of the unit to understand the Language of Shakespeare in The Tempest.

This unit helps to understand the various acts of the play. It gives the deep synopsis and analysis of the play along with structure and its characters.

- Plot Analysis

- Characters by Relationships
- Synopsis
- Analysis
- Shakespeare Language
- Structure of The Tempest

12.1 INTRODUCTION

THE TEMPEST

The Tempest is generally regarded as Shakespeare's last play, first performed in 1611 for King James I and again for the marriage festivities of Elizabeth, the King's daughter, to Frederick, the Elector Palatine. Scholars attribute the immediate source of the play to the 1609 shipwreck of an English ship in Bermuda and travelers' reports about the island and the ordeal of the mariners. The period in which it was written, the seventeenth century age of exploration, the circumstances of its performance at court, and the context of the playwright's writing career suggest immediately some of its rich themes and ambiguities.

The play can be read as Shakespeare's commentary on European exploration of new lands. Prospero lands on an island with a native inhabitant, Caliban, a being he considers savage and uncivilized. He teaches this "native" his language and customs, but this nurturing does not affect the creature's nature, at least from Prospero's point of view. But Prospero does not drive Caliban away, rather he enslaves him, forcing him to do work he considers beneath himself and his noble daughter. As modern readers, sensitive to the legacy of colonialism, we need to ask if Shakespeare sees this as the right order; what are his views of imperialism and colonialism? What are our twentieth century reactions to the depiction of the relationship between the master and slave, shown in this play?

The theme of Utopianism is linked to the explorations of new lands. Europeans were intrigued with the possibilities presented for new beginnings in these "new" lands. Was it possible to create an ideal state when given a chance to begin anew? Could humans hope to recreate a "golden age," in places not yet subject to the ills of

Notes

European social order? Could there be different forms of government? Would humans change if given a second chance in an earthly Paradise?

The play emphasizes dramatic effects. Because it was performed at court, there is a lot of stage business: music, dance, masque-like shows. The role of the artist is explored through Prospero's use of his magic, and parallels can be drawn to Shakespeare's own sense of his artistry.

Finally, knowing that this is Shakespeare's last play, it is intriguing to explore autobiographical connections. Does he see himself in Prospero? Does he feel somehow isolated, in need of reconciliation? How is this play a culmination of other themes he has explored?

These questions assume an audience of students who have previously encountered Shakespeare. So, this play will be most appropriate for high school seniors or college students. *The Tempest* is an excellent play for study, though, because it shows Shakespeare's final treatment of themes that have run through the other plays, e.g. good and evil, justice and mercy. In addition, this play provides a primary source perspective on 17th-century attitudes about imperialism. Students of world history might especially be interested by this view. Also, the low humor and pageantry in the play heightens its appeal to a wider audience. Students might especially have fun with the scenes involving Caliban and the members of the crew.

In this guide we will suggest activities and discussion questions which encourage students to explore these various ideas. Since the play may be challenging to high school students, teachers will need to carefully provide students with background knowledge in order to insure that their reading and enjoyment of the play is as rich as possible. As in previous

12.2 PLOT ANALYSIS

Prospero's desire to return home to Italy and reclaim his position as the rightful Duke of Milan drives the plot of *The Tempest*. However, we don't know about Prospero's history until the second scene of the play. Instead, the play begins by hurtling the audience straight into the action. The first scene opens on a ship in the midst of a storm. By opening with the chaos of the tempest, Shakespeare has drawn on the literary technique of "in medias res," which involves starting a narrative "in the

midst of things” and hence without preamble. In doing so, Shakespeare places the audience in the same position as the shipwrecked crew, confused and disoriented on a strange island. The audience doesn’t meet Prospero until the second scene, when we learn that he conjured the storm. Knowing that his enemies were aboard a passing ship, Prospero used his training in sorcery to fashion a tempest and cause the ship to wreck on the island. The storm therefore constitutes the inciting incident of the play, setting events into action.

In the second scene we also learn about the circumstances that landed Prospero on the island and made him cause the storm. Prospero was the Duke of Milan until his brother, Antonio, conspired with Alonso, the King of Naples, to assassinate Prospero and seize control of Milan. Prospero managed to escape alive with help from his loyal councilor Gonzalo. These events occurred twelve years prior to the events of the play itself. This means that by the time the play begins, Prospero has already spent a long time seething with rage on the island, where he lives alone with his daughter Miranda and his slave Caliban. Prospero recounts this backstory to Miranda in Act I, Scene 2. In order to realize his desire to return to Italy and reclaim his position, Prospero needs to resolve the conflict with his brother Antonio. These themes of separation and reunion will define the action of the play, as characters are torn apart from each other before being happily reunited at the end.

The wreck that Prospero has orchestrated separates the ship’s crew into three groups: Ferdinand gets stranded by himself and soon encounters Prospero and Miranda; Alonso, Sebastian, Antonio, and Gonzalo wind up on another part of the island; and Trinculo and Stephano wash up together on yet another shore. By separating these groups, Prospero forces them live through an experience not unlike his own. Just as Prospero has been cut off from his home and loved ones, the shipwrecked crew wanders around cut off from one another, believing that their missing companions have perished in the squall. The separation causes a great deal of sorrow and confusion, and Prospero uses his command of the island’s spirits—and Ariel in particular—to confuse and disorient his enemies further. However, as the play continues, Prospero’s designs grow clearer. After making his enemies suffer, he eventually

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employs Ariel to guide each group toward his camp, where reunion and reconciliation can at last take place.

Prospero's manipulations enable the play's climax, in which he confronts his enemies. When Alonso and his company arrive at his camp, Prospero confronts Alonso and Antonio over their past betrayal when they tried to assassinate him. Prospero also continues with his emotional manipulation, claiming that he has lost his daughter in the tempest. Alonso, who is mourning his son Ferdinand, who he still believes died in the tempest, feels deeply for Prospero's loss, and in the process forges an emotional bond with the man he wronged so many years ago. After Alonso restores Prospero's dukedom, Prospero performs his greatest trick of all, pulling back the curtain to reveal Ferdinand, alive. Alonso is overcome with happiness, and the play that began in the midst of chaos ends with an atmosphere of serenity and joy. By forcing his enemies through an experience of separation and reunion, Prospero has resolved the play's central conflict and ensured his own return home, thereby bringing everything in the play full circle.

12.3 CHARACTERS BY RELATIONSHIP

Prospero, the true Duke of Milan but now living on a deserted island

Miranda, his daughter

Antonio, brother of Prospero and usurper of the role of Duke of Milan

Ariel, "an airy spirit" who does Prospero's bidding

Caliban, a savage creature controlled by Prospero

Alonso, King of Naples

Sebastian, his brother

Ferdinand, son of the King of Naples

Gonzalo, former advisor to Prospero, now principally serves Alonso

12.4 SYNOPSIS

ACT I, SCENE I

The play begins on the deck of a ship at sea in the middle of a violent tempest. Amid loud sounds of thunder and flashes of lightning, the sailors fight to bring down the sails in order to control the ship. The passengers, Alonso, Sebastian, Antonio, and Ferdinand, come on deck to see what is happening, but the sailors complain that they interfere with their work and make more noise than the storm. Soon all appears lost as the ship breaks apart. The passengers and crew believe they are about to drown.

ACT I, SCENE II

The scene changes to the island where Miranda and Prospero have viewed the plight of the storm-tossed ship through Prospero's magic powers. Removing his magical robe, Prospero tells Miranda the history of her birth and her true place and value. He describes how he and Miranda, then not quite three years old, were forced to board a rotting ship and put to sea to suffer certain death. The conspiracy to take over Prospero's power and station was the work of his brother who plotted with the King of Naples, Prospero's enemy. Now "by accident most strange," all these men have been brought close to the island where Prospero and Miranda have been shipwrecked for the last twelve years. Through magic and the spirit Ariel who is required to do his bidding, Prospero created the storm and chaos among the sailors and passengers so that they would be separated and believe the others drowned. However, Prospero has protected them all from harm and hidden the ship under a charm.

When Ariel appears reluctant to continue to serve Prospero, he reminds the spirit of its imprisonment by the witch Sycorax and Caliban, her child, until Prospero worked his magic. (Ariel's gender is unspecified.) Besides, Prospero promises complete freedom in just two days time if Ariel carries out his designs.

Prospero awakens Miranda and they visit Caliban, "the slave," who carries wood, makes fire, and serves their basic needs. Caliban curses Prospero, his master, for usurping his rightful rule of the island, and Prospero vows to punish Caliban for these insults and his continued insolent behavior. Prospero recalls how when he attempted to befriend Caliban and teach him language and manners, Caliban tried to "violate the honor" of Miranda.

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Meanwhile Ariel's song and music has lured Ferdinand near to Prospero and Miranda. Miranda is immediately impressed by Ferdinand's good looks, and he is equally smitten by her beauty, calling her a "goddess." Prospero lets the audience know through the vehicle of asides that this attraction is exactly what he had planned and hoped for, and he only acts disapproving in order to make their bond even stronger. Miranda pleads with her father to spare Ferdinand while Prospero demands his subservience.

ACT II, SCENE I

Meanwhile Alonso, Sebastian, Antonio, and Gonzalo have washed up on another part of the island. Gonzalo counsils Alonso to see the optimistic side of their predicament. Even though Ferdinand is missing, they should rejoice that they are alive. This is, of course, the last thing that Alonso wants to hear. Meanwhile Sebastian and Antonio ridicule Gonzalo, making

fun of his speeches. Cruelly, Sebastian even accuses Alonso of being responsible for Ferdinand's death. They wouldn't have been on this journey if Alonso had allowed his daughter to marry a European prince rather than the King of Tunis. Gonzalo counsels moderation; no one is to blame. He also calls on the company to observe the beauty of the island. Then he begins to describe the type of government he would institute on this island. It would be a utopia of equality with no marks of wealth or social status. All would have leisure and their needs would be met "without sweat or endeavor."

Ariel, who is invisible, passes among the men playing music, and all of the company, except Antonio and Sebastian, suddenly fall into a deep sleep. Antonio uses this moment to describe to Sebastian the opportunity he now has to seize the crown from his brother.

With Alonso's son and daughter out of the way, Sebastian can easily claim the crown; all he has to do is kill Alonso.

Antonio points to his own behavior as a model. He overthrew his brother and now enjoys success. He vows to kill Gonzalo to prevent his interference with their plot while Sebastian kills his brother. Sebastian decides to follow Antonio's "precedent," promising Antonio as his reward that he will no longer have to pay tribute to Naples.

Just as they draw their swords, Ariel awakens Gonzalo, singing in his ear that treachery is at hand. Sebastian and Antonio are able to avoid suspicion by saying that they too had heard a loud noise and were protecting the king. The company now decides to continue their search for Ferdinand.

ACT II, SCENE II

On another part of the island, a parallel scene occurs between Trinculo, a jester, Stephano, a butler, and Caliban. At first Caliban hides from Trinculo, fearing he will torment him. For his part Trinculo cannot tell if Caliban is fish or man, but decides to take shelter in Caliban's garments because he fears a storm is coming. Stephano, who has found the ship's liquor,

doesn't know what to make of the "beast" he discovers with four legs, two voices, and a severe case of the shakes. Finally, Trinculo and Stephano discover each other, and Caliban is so impressed with Stephano's "celestial liquor" that he declares he will be his subject. Caliban promises to show Stephano all the fine points of the island and to give him food and drink; he vows he will no longer serve Prospero.

ACT III, SCENE I

Ferdinand carries and stacks wood for Prospero, but declares that it is not odious work since he serves a sweet mistress.

Miranda laments Ferdinand's heavy burden and offers to take his place. Prospero, observing this scene from a hiding spot, is happy because it confirms that the two young people are deeply in love. Miranda and Ferdinand declare their affections and decide to marry.

ACT III, SCENE II

Caliban, who is quite drunk, continues to pledge his allegiance to Stephano. The invisible Ariel creates mischief among Caliban, Stephano, and Trinculo by making it appear that they are contradicting and interrupting each other. Stephano beats Trinculo for defying Caliban, finally forcing him to stand at a distance while he plots with Caliban to overthrow Prospero, marry Miranda, and rule the island. Their

conspiracy is interrupted by Ariel's sweet music when Stephano and Trinculo follow the music in hopes of catching up with the musician.

ACT III, SCENE III

Alonso and his company, exhausted from their search for Ferdinand, decide they must accept the fact that he is drowned. Sebastian quietly vows to Antonio to take advantage of the next opportunity and carry out their coup. Suddenly music is heard and spirits enter with a banquet table and invite all to eat. The men are amazed and wonder if anyone will believe their stories of these strange events when they return home. Just as they prepare to eat, Ariel arrives in thunder and lightning, looking like a bird of prey, and makes the table disappear. The spirit announces "you are three men of sin" who overthrew Prospero; the shipwreck is fair punishment. The three men are deeply affected with guilt and anger and run off in different directions. Gonzalo thinks they may harm themselves in their desperation and calls on the rest of the group to follow them and restrain them if necessary.

ACT IV, SCENE I

Prospero agrees to the betrothal of Miranda and Ferdinand. He explains that the tasks he set were merely trials of Ferdinand's love, and he has proven to be true. However, Prospero cautions Ferdinand not to give way to his passions before the marriage ceremony.

Ariel is sent to gather the whole company while Prospero entertains the young couple with a magic show. Ceres and Juno are called to the earth by Iris to witness a contract of true love. They sing of the blessings to be bestowed on their marriage.

Just as nymphs and reapers begin to perform a graceful dance, Prospero rises up in alarm and interrupts the show. He has just remembered the conspiracy of Caliban and his confederates.

Meanwhile Ariel's music has led the trio through a maze of briars and mud. Stephano and Trinculo are disgusted and angry with Caliban who still urges them to kill Prospero. But when they get to Prospero's home, the men are distracted when they see luxurious clothing hanging on a line. They start to fight over the garments and force Caliban to carry what they

steal. Suddenly spirits in the shape of dogs attack them.

ACT V, SCENE I

Prospero realizes that his project is almost completed. All his enemies are gathered together in one place. Ariel describes the sorrow and emotions of the company, adding that anything human would certainly feel compassion for them. Taking this cue, Prospero decides to show mercy. His reason and not his passion takes control. He realizes that “the rarer action is in virtue than in vengeance,” and since they are sorry for their crimes, he has accomplished his purpose. Ariel is sent to release them. Prospero uses his magic one last time to create music to sooth the senses and spirits of the conspirators. Ariel fetches Prospero clothes showing his true status as Duke of Milan. When the company revives, Prospero greets them and accuses them of their crimes. Alonso begs forgiveness and asks about Prospero’s life on the island. Everything would now

be in order except that Alonso regrets deeply the death of his son. Prospero says he too has suffered a similar loss; he has lost a daughter. Then he bids the company to look into his home. There they see Miranda and Ferdinand playing chess, and all are happily united.

Ariel leads in the sailors who announce that the ship is safe and sound. Caliban and his conspirators are led forward, entangled in their stolen clothes and still reeling from drink. Caliban has a change of heart, realizing that Prospero is a true master, not the drunken Stephano. He vows to serve Prospero henceforth. The company retires to hear the story of Prospero’s life after which he promises them safe journey home.

12.5 ANALYSIS

The Tempest opens in the midst of a storm, as a ship containing the king of Naples and his party struggles to stay afloat. On land, Prospero and his daughter, Miranda, watch the storm envelop the ship. Prospero has created the storm with magic, and he explains that his enemies are on board the ship.

Notes

The story Prospero relates is that he is the rightful Duke of Milan and that his younger brother, Antonio, betrayed him, seizing his title and property. Twelve years earlier, Prospero and Miranda were put out to sea in little more than a raft. Miraculously, they both survived and arrived safely on this island, where Prospero learned to control the magic that he now uses to manipulate everyone on the island. Upon his arrival, Prospero rescued a sprite, Ariel, who had been imprisoned by the witch Sycorax. Ariel wishes to be free and his freedom has been promised within two days. The last inhabitant of the island is the child of Sycorax and the devil: Caliban, whom Prospero has enslaved. Caliban is a natural man, uncivilized and wishing only to have his island returned to him so that he can live alone in peace.

Soon the royal party from the ship is cast ashore and separated into three groups. The king's son, Ferdinand, is brought to Prospero, where he sees Miranda, and the two fall instantly in love. Meanwhile, Alonso, the king of Naples, and the rest of his party have come ashore on another part of the island. Alonso fears that Ferdinand is dead and grieves for the loss of his son. Antonio, Prospero's younger brother, has also been washed ashore with the king's younger brother, Sebastian. Antonio easily convinces Sebastian that Sebastian should murder his brother and seize the throne for himself. This plot to murder Alonso is similar to Antonio's plot against his own brother, Prospero, 12 years earlier.

Another part of the royal party — the court jester and the butler — has also come ashore. Trinculo and Stefano each stumble upon Caliban, and each immediately sees a way to make money by exhibiting Caliban as a monster recovered from this uninhabited island. Stefano has come ashore in a wine cask, and soon Caliban, Trinculo, and Stefano are drunk. While drinking, Caliban hatches a plot to murder Prospero and enrolls his two new acquaintances as accomplices. Ariel is listening, however, and reports the plot to Prospero.

Meanwhile, Prospero has kept Ferdinand busy and has forbidden Miranda to speak to him, but the two still find time to meet and declare their love, which is actually what Prospero has planned. Next, Prospero

stages a masque to celebrate the young couple's betrothal, with goddesses and nymphs entertaining the couple with singing and dancing.

While Ferdinand and Miranda have been celebrating their love, Alonso and the rest of the royal party have been searching for the king's son. Exhausted from the search and with the king despairing of ever seeing his son alive, Prospero has ghosts and an imaginary banquet brought before the king's party. A god-like voice accuses Antonio, Alonso, and Sebastian of their sins, and the banquet vanishes. The men are all frightened, and Alonso, Antonio, and Sebastian run away.

Prospero punishes Caliban, Trinculo, and Stefano with a run through a briar patch and swim in a scummy pond. Having accomplished what he set out to do, Prospero has the king's party brought in. Prospero is clothed as the rightful Duke of Milan, and when the spell has been removed, Alonso rejects all claims to Prospero's dukedom and apologizes for his mistakes. Within moments, Prospero reunites the king with his son, Ferdinand. Alonso is especially pleased to learn of Miranda's existence and that Ferdinand will marry her.

Prospero then turns to his brother, Antonio, who offers no regrets or apology for his perfidy. Nevertheless, Prospero promises not to punish Antonio as a traitor. When Caliban is brought in, Caliban tells Prospero that he has learned his lesson. His two co-conspirators, Trinculo and Stefano, will be punished by the king. Soon, the entire party retires to Prospero's cell to celebrate and await their departure home. Only Prospero is left on stage.

In a final speech, Prospero tells the audience that only with their applause will he be able to leave the island with the rest of the party. Prospero leaves the stage to the audience's applause.

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS I :

Q1. Define Plot summary.

Answer.....

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.....
Q2. Write any three characters by relationship.

Answer.....
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12.6 SHAKESPEARE'S LANGUAGE

Shakespeare's Elizabethan language can sometimes intimidate his audience. Shakespeare wrote most of *The Tempest* in verse, using iambic pentameter. *Iambic pentameter* is a literary term that defines the play's meter and the stresses placed on each syllable. In iambic pentameter, each complete line contains ten syllables, with each pair of syllables containing both an accented syllable and an unaccented syllable. Many Renaissance poets used iambic pentameter because the alternating stresses create a rhythm that contributes to the beauty of the play's language.

Shakespeare also included prose passages in his plays, with prose lines being spoken by characters of lower social rank. Shakespeare uses this device to reveal the complexity of Caliban. In *The Tempest*, Caliban speaks prose when he is conspiring with Stefano and Trinculo, but when Caliban speaks of the beauty of the island, he speaks in verse.

Shakespeare's Elizabethan language can be difficult to understand at first. Use of a Shakespearean glossary and the *Oxford English Dictionary* are two sources that can help in understanding the language, but the biggest assist comes with practice. Reading and listening to Shakespeare's words becomes easier with practice. Reading aloud also helps in becoming familiar with early modern English. With time, the unfamiliar language and the rhetorical devices that Shakespeare employed in writing his texts cease to be strange, and the language assumes the beauty that is hidden within it.

12.7 HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL CONTEXT

By the beginning of the seventeenth century, the threat of the Black Death (the plague) was diminishing, but it still continued to be a seasonal problem in London, which was overcrowded and suffered from poor sanitation and too much poverty.

A hundred years earlier, Henry VII had formed alliances with neighboring countries and trade was flourishing in London. But the coming of trade changed the face of England. Instead of a country composed largely of an agrarian culture, England, and especially London, became an important center of trade. There was more wealth, and the newly rich could now afford to escape the congestion of the city. There was a need for large country estates, and so more and more farm land was enclosed.

Displaced rural families fled to the larger cities, where crowding, unemployment, and disease increased with the increase in population. As city life flourished, there was a resulting nostalgia for the loss of country life. In response to this sentimentality, England's poets began to compose poetry recalling the tranquility of rustic life.

Early in the seventeenth century, the masque that comprises much of the fourth act of *The Tempest* was becoming a regular form of court entertainment. Masques were elaborate spectacles, designed to appeal to the audience's senses and glorify the monarch. Furthermore, their sheer richness suggested the magnificence of the king's court; thus they served a political purpose as well as entertained.

It is important to remember that the masque fulfilled another important function, the desire to recapture the past. As is the case with most masques, Prospero's masque is focused on pastoral motifs, with reapers and nymphs celebrating the fecundity of the land.

The masques, with their pastoral themes, also responded to this yearning for a time now ended. The country life, with its abundance of harvests and peaceful existence, is an idealized world that ignores the realities of

an agrarian life, with its many hardships. The harshness of winter and the loss of crops and animals are forgotten in the longing for the past.

Elaborate scenery, music, and costumes were essential elements of earlier masques, but during the Jacobean period, the masque became more ornate and much more expensive to stage. Eventually the cost became so great — and the tax burden on the poor so significant — that the masques became an important contributing cause for the English Revolution, and ultimately, the execution of Charles I.

12.8 STRUCTURE OF THE TEMPEST

There is really very little plot in *The Tempest*. There is the love story, and then there is the story of two younger brothers who covet their older brothers' titles and possessions. And finally, there is the story of Caliban's plot to murder Prospero. But none of these plots are given much attention or substance; instead, the play is about the complexities of human nature and about reminding the audience that the division between happiness and tragedy is always fragile and must be carefully maintained.

Although *The Tempest* ends with the promise of a wedding, it could just as easily have ended with tragedy. In this play, there are two murder plots and a betrayal to resolve. In a tragedy, these might have ended with the stage awash in blood, as in *Hamlet*, but in *The Tempest*, Prospero's careful manipulation of all the characters and their plans also controls the direction of the action. Prospero's avoidance of tragedy reveals his character's decency and contradicts some critics' arguments that he is an amoral demigod exploiting the natural inhabitants of this island.

The Tempest is unique in its adherence to the three unities. In his *Poetics*, Aristotle argued that *unity of action* was essential for dramatic structure. This meant that a dramatic work should have a clear beginning, middle, and end. The *unity of time* is derived from Aristotle's argument that all the action should occur within one revolution of the sun — one day. The *unity of place* developed later and is a Renaissance idea, which held that the location of the play should be limited to one place. These unities

added verisimilitude to the work and made it easier for the audience to believe the events unfolding on stage.

Shakespeare rarely used the three unities, but he uses them in this play, something he has only done in one other play, *The Comedy of Errors*. All the events occur on the island and within one brief three-hour period. Shakespeare needed the three unities, especially that of time, to counter the incredulity of the magic and to add coherence to the plot.

The Tempest, although it is one of Shakespeare's shortest plays, still maintains the integrity of the five-act structure. In fact, most Elizabethan theatre adheres to the five-act structure, which corresponds to divisions in the action. The first act is the Exposition, in which the playwright sets forth the problem and introduces the main characters. In *The Tempest*, the first act establishes the nature of Antonio's betrayal of Prospero, and it explains how Prospero and Miranda came to live on the island.

The Tempest opens in the midst of a storm, as a ship containing the king of Naples and his party struggles to stay afloat. On land, Prospero and his daughter, Miranda, watch the storm envelop the ship. Prospero has created the storm with magic, and he explains that his enemies are on board the ship.

The story Prospero relates is that he is the rightful Duke of Milan and that his younger brother, Antonio, betrayed him, seizing his title and property. Twelve years earlier, Prospero and Miranda were put out to sea in little more than a raft. Miraculously, they both survived and arrived safely on this island, where Prospero learned to control the magic that he now uses to manipulate everyone on the island. Upon his arrival, Prospero rescued a sprite, Ariel, who had been imprisoned by the witch Sycorax. Ariel wishes to be free and his freedom has been promised within two days. The last inhabitant of the island is the child of Sycorax and the devil: Caliban, whom Prospero has enslaved. Caliban is a natural man, uncivilized and wishing only to have his island returned to him so that he can live alone in peace.

Notes

Soon the royal party from the ship is cast ashore and separated into three groups. The king's son, Ferdinand, is brought to Prospero, where he sees Miranda, and the two fall instantly in love. Meanwhile, Alonso, the king of Naples, and the rest of his party have come ashore on another part of the island. Alonso fears that Ferdinand is dead and grieves for the loss of his son. Antonio, Prospero's younger brother, has also been washed ashore with the king's younger brother, Sebastian. Antonio easily convinces Sebastian that Sebastian should murder his brother and seize the throne for himself. This plot to murder Alonso is similar to Antonio's plot against his own brother, Prospero, 12 years earlier.

Another part of the royal party — the court jester and the butler — has also come ashore. Trinculo and Stefano each stumble upon Caliban, and each immediately sees a way to make money by exhibiting Caliban as a monster recovered from this uninhabited island. Stefano has come ashore in a wine cask, and soon Caliban, Trinculo, and Stefano are drunk. While drinking, Caliban hatches a plot to murder Prospero and enrolls his two new acquaintances as accomplices. Ariel is listening, however, and reports the plot to Prospero.

Meanwhile, Prospero has kept Ferdinand busy and has forbidden Miranda to speak to him, but the two still find time to meet and declare their love, which is actually what Prospero has planned. Next, Prospero stages a masque to celebrate the young couple's betrothal, with goddesses and nymphs entertaining the couple with singing and dancing.

While Ferdinand and Miranda have been celebrating their love, Alonso and the rest of the royal party have been searching for the king's son. Exhausted from the search and with the king despairing of ever seeing his son alive, Prospero has ghosts and an imaginary banquet brought before the king's party. A god-like voice accuses Antonio, Alonso, and Sebastian of their sins, and the banquet vanishes. The men are all frightened, and Alonso, Antonio, and Sebastian run away.

Prospero punishes Caliban, Trinculo, and Stefano with a run through a briar patch and swim in a scummy pond. Having accomplished what he set out to do, Prospero has the king's party brought in. Prospero is

clothed as the rightful Duke of Milan, and when the spell has been removed, Alonso rejects all claims to Prospero's dukedom and apologizes for his mistakes. Within moments, Prospero reunites the king with his son, Ferdinand. Alonso is especially pleased to learn of Miranda's existence and that Ferdinand will marry her.

Prospero then turns to his brother, Antonio, who offers no regrets or apology for his perfidy. Nevertheless, Prospero promises not to punish Antonio as a traitor. When Caliban is brought in, Caliban tells Prospero that he has learned his lesson. His two co-conspirators, Trinculo and Stefano, will be punished by the king. Soon, the entire party retires to Prospero's cell to celebrate and await their departure home. Only Prospero is left on stage.

In a final speech, Prospero tells the audience that only with their applause will he be able to leave the island with the rest of the party. Prospero leaves the stage to the audience's applause.

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS II :

Q1. Provide the cultural and structural context of the play.

Answer.....
.....
.....
.....

Q2. Write the structure of the play *The Tempest*.

Answer.....
.....
.....
.....

12.9 LET’S SUM UP

The Tempest is a difficult play to categorize. Although it ends in a wedding and thus might be defined as a comedy, there are many serious undertones that diminish the comedic tone. Instead, most modern

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anthologies of Shakespeare's works list this play as a romance. This separate division of romances includes what are generally labeled as "the problem plays." Along with *The Tempest*, the romances include *Pericles*, *Cymbeline*, *The Winter's Tale*, and *The Two Noble Kinsmen*, plays of Shakespeare's later years. These plays were written between 1604 and 1614, just prior to his retirement, when Shakespeare was composing plays that combined romance with some of the darker aspects of life. The romances are plays with the potential for tragedy but in which these tragic elements are resolved.

With *The Tempest*, Shakespeare turns to fantasy and magic as a way to explore romantic love, sibling hatred, and the love of a father for his child. In addition, *The Tempest* examines many of the topics that Shakespeare had focused on in his earlier plays, topics such as the attempts to overthrow a king (*Macbeth*, *Richard II*, and *Julius Caesar*), nature versus nurture (*The Winter's Tale* and *King Lear*), and innocence (*Twelfth Night*).

Although *The Tempest* provides the first masque within a play, the idea of a play within a play had occurred in earlier works, such as *Hamlet* and *Much Ado About Nothing*. In many ways *The Tempest* serves as a culmination of Shakespeare's earlier work, since in this play, he brings many of these earlier ideas together in one work.

12.10 KEYWORDS

- **twain** two. Ferdinand refers to himself and his father as but two of the victims of the storm.
- **unbacked** not broken to the saddle: said of a horse.
- **vanity** reference to an illusion or trick that Prospero has created.
- **Wallets** here, meaning wattle, the fleshy, wrinkled, often brightly colored piece of skin that hangs from throat of a turkey.
- **wezand** windpipe.
- **wooden slavery** being compelled to carry wood.

12.11 QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW

1. Why was Caliban so much shrewder than Stephano and Trinculo?
 2. Why does Shakespeare introduce here the game of chess? 3. Of what is Prospero the personification? 4. What is the nature and function of Ariel? Why is he invisible to every one in the play except Prospero?
 5. In *The Tempest* and *A Midsummer Night's Dream* Shakespeare portrays man in connection with the supernatural. What is the principal difference between the plays so far as they relate to this subject? 6. What does Prospero say about the conspiracy against his life? What effect does the recollection of the conspiracy have upon Prospero

12.12 SUGGESTED READINGS AND REFERENCES

- *The Tempest* at the British Library
- *The Tempest* at Project Gutenberg
- The entire First Folio owned by Brandeis University at *Internet Shakespeare Editions*
- *The Tempest* Navigator, including annotated text, line numbers, scene summaries, and text search
- Printed introductory lecture on *The Tempest* by Ian Johnston of Malaspina-University College
- Lesson plans for *The Tempest* at Web English Teacher
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12.13 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS 1 :

Answer 1 : Check Section 12.2

Answer 2 : Check Section 12.3

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS 2 :

Answer 1 : Check Section 12.7

Answer 2 : Check Section 12.8

UNIT 13 SHAKESPEARE : MEASURE FOR MEASURE-ACTS AND ANALYSIS -PART -1

STRUCTURE

13.0 Objectives

13.1 Introduction

13.2 Acts and Reviews Measure For Measure

13.3 Acts and Reviews(Contd.) Measure For Measure

13.4 Let's Sum up

13.5 Keywords

13.6 Questions For Review

13.7 Suggested Readings And References

13.8 Answers To Check your Progress

13.0 OBJECTIVES

The objective of the unit to understand the Measure For Measure by Shakespeare.

This unit helps to understand the various acts of the play. It gives the deep analysis of the play and gives the summary of the play.

This unit helps to achieve following objectives:

- Provide summary of the play
- Give the understanding of play Measure for Measure
- Give the analysis of each act
- Dictate the review of each act

13.1 INTRODUCTION

For though I speak it to you, I think the King is but a man, as I am: the violet smells to him as it doth to me; the element shows to him as it doth to me; all his senses have but human conditions. His ceremonies laid by, in his nakedness he appears but a man.

King Henry V Act IV Scene 1

From **Much Ado About Nothing** and **Henry V** to **The Tempest**, Shakespeare is concerned to present his audiences with the Renaissance view of man; in **Measure for Measure**, writes G. Wilson Knight, his central theme is “man’s moral nature”. Specifically, Shakespeare’s concern is with what man looks like when ‘his ceremonies’ are all ‘laid by’; then, ‘man, proud man,’ looks not like an angel, but ‘like an angry ape’ (II.2). The purpose of this Bookmark is to give a scene-by-scene commentary of

Measure for Measure which explains how Shakespeare arrives in this play at his vision of a creature who – for all his airs and graces, manners and laws – is ultimately a natural thing, flawed, naked and unaccommodated. Given a common humanity, what – the play asks – entitles one man to judge any other?

13.2 ACTS AND REVIEWS MEASURE FOR MEASURE

ACT I Scene 1

In **Measure for Measure**, Shakespeare appears to stage an experiment. In this play, he is concerned to test out a hypothesis: he wants to know what will happen if a human judge is left to dispense divine justice. Shakespeare, of course, is merely contriving to experiment: in truth, he knows full well before he starts what will happen if Angelo is asked to play God. More precisely, he is seeking to demonstrate what inevitably happens if man is put in this impossible and ironic position. Surprisingly, Shakespeare’s main aim in this opening scene is not exposition: rather, he is concerned to set up his dramatic experiment without further ado. The situation for the experiment, for the play, is that Vincentio, the Duke of Vienna, is supposedly about to travel to Poland; to deputise for him in

his absence, he appoints Lord Angelo. It is important to know that Duke Vincentio is an Elizabethan Prince: that is, he is an ideal figure of authority in

whom all the good offices of government are meant to repose. In being a repository for these good qualities, he is not so much akin to Nicolo Machiavelli's model in *The Prince* (1513) as like Thomas Elyot's model in *The Governor* (1531). The purpose of the experiment is to see which of these two models Lord Angelo, once in charge, will more closely resemble.

Shakespeare's immediate aim is to outline for us the political structure of Vienna that will operate throughout the action. It becomes plain that a new hierarchy is being created at the top of which Lord Angelo will sit: "What figure of us think you he will bear?" The Duke's question to Escalus (whom he has appointed Angelo's Second-in-Command) is a leading question in that it takes us to the heart of the play: what kind of prince will he make? What kind of man is he? The Duke appears anxious to know what figure Angelo will cut when 'all the organs' of princely power are invested in him. Given that the Duke – a figure who plainly foreshadows Prospero – is conducting an experiment, there runs throughout the play an eerie suggestion that he may have a foreknowledge of Angelo's actions. The Duke's first words to Angelo seek to establish him as a model of probity, of upright character: specifically, there is 'a kind of character' in his young life which augurs well for his future. His personal history to date is evidence in itself that he is a paragon of puritan virtue.

Our initial perception of Angelo is of an impeccable character, an immaculate administrator whose morality is beyond reproach. Given Angelo's exemplary case-history, the Duke has no hesitation in placing both his full confidence and his absolute power in his protégé. The balanced terms in which authority is conferred upon Angelo –

Mortality and mercy in Vienna Live in thy tongue and heart are immediately important in helping us to understand the play: they are directly relevant to its central concern with weighing and measuring. It becomes apparent that the function of the good governor, of the true prince, is to exercise a Solomon-like judgement: his role is to make wise

decisions about who dies [= 'mortality'] and who lives [= 'mercy'].

Angelo's aim,

then, is to maintain a balanced judgement of human affairs. So that his audience does not miss this crucial point, Shakespeare redefines the terms of this contract. Here, he supplies us with two verbs –

Your scope is as mine own

So to enforce or qualify the laws

As to your soul seems good

– that tally purposefully with 'mortality' and 'mercy': in deciding whether to 'enforce' or 'qualify' the laws, Angelo will show whether he is a 'good' governor or not.

It was G. Wilson Knight in *The Wheel of Fire* (1930) who originally pointed out that *Measure for Measure* owes a central debt to St Matthew's Gospel (Chapter 7 Verse 2) and St Luke's Gospel (Chapter 6 Verse 38):

Give, and it shall be given unto you ... for with what measure ye mete,
with the same shall man mete to you again.

In his title, Shakespeare has announced that his interest in this play will be in the fair meting out of justice. In the terms of this debate, Angelo is something of a weights-and-measures man; but significantly, the commodity in which he will deal is nothing less than human life. How he weighs and measures mortality and mercy will determine what sort of man he is.

ACT I Scene 2

In Shakespeare's plays, there tends to be a mathematical correspondence between the scenes in which high-life characters speak verse and other scenes in which low-life characters speak prose. This deliberate contrast is not merely for comic relief, for variety's sake; it is not without serious dramatic designs upon us. Here, as in **King Henry IV Part 1**, Shakespeare rotates his scenes in order to establish his dramatic point of view: in other words, he fashions

the scenes which take place in the Viennese slums so that they supply an objective correlative by which we can morally assess [= measure] the goings-on in the Viennese court.

Scene 2 takes place in Vienna's Soho, a setting not without striking similarities to London's Southwark: "I had as lief be a list of an English kersey, as be piled, as thou art piled, for a French velvet." The First Gentleman's language ('English kersey' and 'French velvet') explains that we have entered the cosmopolitan area of the city in which sexual morality is extremely lax; in particular, his pun on 'piled' (both 'pile' and 'syphilitic scab') sets the tone for this seedy world.

Lucio is a social butterfly: as this description suggests, he is remarkable for his social mobility.

He anticipates Beau Brummel: that is, he is equally at ease in the company of high-life and low-life characters. He is 'a fantastic', a spiv: that is, one noted for his sharp suits and his sharp practices. He is renowned for his sartorial elegance; at the same time, his language – "but whilst I live, forget to drink after thee" – exhibits an acute awareness of the inelegant circles in which he moves.

Mistress Overdone is a madame: that is, she is a Viennese brothel-keeper. Lucio's sobriquet for her – 'Madame Mitigation' – refers presumably to her indefatigable capacity to 'mitigate' the effects of sexual desire in the local gentry; at the same time, such an epithet reveals that Shakespeare's low-life characters are to provide us with a witty view of human sexuality beside which Angelo's high seriousness appears out of proportion: that is, it lacks measure.

If **Measure for Measure** has a motto, then it is "moderation in all things".

The purpose of these scenes – in which low-life characters speak the plain prose of common sense – is to provide us with a perspective in which to study Angelo's 'precise' enforcement of sexual law. The action does not proceed much further before we are given in Dumb Show an emblem of Angelo's precision: a Gaoler and a prisoner (Claudio) pass across the stage. The chorus to this action is then supplied in an exchange between Pompey (Mistress Overdone's barman and pimp) and Mistress Overdone herself. Their conversation –

POMPEY: Yonder man is carried to prison.

MISTRESS OVERDONE: Well! What has he done?

POMPEY: A woman.

MISTRESS OVERDONE: But what's his offence?

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POMPEY: Groping for trouts in a peculiar river

– conveys at once the strict temper of Angelo's rule: upon assuming office, he proclaimed that 'all houses in the suburbs of Vienna must be plucked down' and began to imprison men for the sin of fornication [= sex outside marriage]. In this instance, Claudio has enjoyed premarital relations with his fiancée: as a result, Julietta appears at an advanced stage of pregnancy.

In this context, Pompey's language is instructive: indirectly, the lewd terms in which he answers – Claudio has 'done a woman'/has 'groped for trouts' – show us that Angelo may have good reason for his strictness. It is in face of an epidemic of sexually-transmitted disease that Angelo, a responsible governor, is obliged to act: in other words, these exchanges between Lucio and the First Gentleman/between Pompey and Mistress Overdone are designed to show that the political body to which Angelo has been made physician is horribly infected.

At the end of this scene, the dialogue between Claudio and Lucio does much to advance the plot. Claudio thwarts Lucio's suggestion that he appeal to Duke Vincentio with the news that he is 'not to be found'. This being so, Claudio sends Lucio in the direction of his sister Isabella who is about to enter a nunnery; his plan is that she should appeal to 'the strict deputy' on his behalf. Claudio's reasons for believing that his sister will succeed with Angelo are significant:

I have great hope in that, for in her youth

There is a prone and speechless dialect,

Such as move men; beside, she hath prosperous art

When she will play with reason and discourse,

And well can she persuade.

Claudio testifies that Isabella has a charismatic way with words: 'hath prosperous art'. Such a testimonial raises interesting questions about Shakespeare's method of composition: before composing this speech for Claudio, had he crafted the arguments that Isabella will use in Act II? if not, how could he be confident that her arguments on Claudio's behalf would be lucid and

persuasive? It would be negligent to pass over that phrase 'speechless dialect' – an oxymoron in that the adjective ('speechless') expressly contradicts the term 'dialect' in order to establish that this young woman

has a kind of stage-presence, enhancing whatever she then happens to say.

ACT I Scene 3

Measure for Measure is a problem play: that is, there is a problem in deciding whether it is a comedy or a tragedy. As a matter of technical fact, it is a comedy: that is, a play in which the action – in spite of numerous confusions and threats to the hero and the heroine – issues in the achievement of happiness. What is more, it is a play in which we are reassured – almost from the outset – that there will be a happy ending: into this play, as into all the other plays of this genre, Shakespeare implants a device to reassure us that ‘all shall be well’ (Puck). Bertrand Evans contends that, even though Shakespeare’s Vienna may be more wicked, dark, dangerous and unhealthy than many of his tragic worlds, “our view of it is profoundly affected by our certainty that all is well and will end well.” More wicked, dark and dangerous than Lear’s Britain and Macbeth’s Scotland apparently ...

It is at the start of this third scene that Shakespeare provides us with this comic reassurance. In Duke Vincentio’s second speech, we gain an advantage [= achieve a superior awareness] over all the other characters in the play. After his justification of his temporary abdication, the Duke announces that his purpose is to conduct an experiment into the nature of man: as Wilson Knight sees it, “a scientific experiment to see if extreme ascetic righteousness can stand the test of power.” His disclosure that, for this purpose, he is to masquerade as ‘a true friar’ establishes the mood of a comedy; it supplies us with the reassurance that the evil in the dramatic world of Vienna is under supervision. Bernard Evans explains:

This disclosure ... establishes a climate for comedy by assuring us that a supreme power of good yet watches over this world; that evil has a line drawn around it and will be contained; that though villainy may threaten, it can do no permanent harm.

In this wicked world, both ‘omniscience and omnipotence’ (Evans) are on the side not of Lord Angelo, but of the angels. As a result, we can regard the subsequent action with the comfort that this superior knowledge affords us. We are able to view the remainder of the action

through the window of this reassuring scene. In studying Measure for Measure, we must never forget that Shakespeare's encompassing interest is in man. In Hamlet, Hamlet (IV.4) himself asks this leading question – What is a man

If his chief good and market of his time

Be but to sleep and feed? A beast, no more ...

It is this distinct possibility that comes to perplex King Lear. In that contemporary play, Lear (III.4) considers Edgar in a state of extreme destitution and momentarily asks: "Is man no more than this?" At the start of Measure for Measure, Shakespeare presents us with a man who seems to resist this basic definition: Lord Angelo is precise; Stands at a guard with Envy; scarce confesses That his blood flows; or that his appetite

Is more to bread than stone. Lord Angelo is no Caliban-figure in whom basic human appetites have gained the upper hand; on the contrary, he is a creature in whom bestial instincts seem to have been successfully repressed. Lord Angelo is 'precise': that is, he is fastidious/punctilious in moral matters and seems to present a perfect example of the contemplative man. He is a self-disciplinarian:

however, in his rigid denials 'that his blood flows' and that he enjoys food, we are meant to perceive a critical imbalance in his human soul. To be 'a man', he must admit to and cope with the fact that a passionate blood courses through his veins. It is towards this very admission that the play proceeds. Indeed, the Duke's couplet makes a direct prophecy:

Hence shall we see

If power change purpose, what our seemers be.

He suspects that Angelo is a 'seemer'; what they will 'see' is that he is not an incorruptible wielder of 'power', not the paragon he seems to be. Angelo's conduct will anticipate Lord Acton's remark that "power corrupts and absolute power tends to corrupt absolutely" (1887).

Lord Angelo, 'a man of stricture and firm abstinence', holds 'absolute power' in Vienna; thankfully, he does not have absolute knowledge of the city, for he merely supposes that Duke Vincentio has left it. Dramatic irony – the central mechanism of this plot – comes into operation: we know, whereas the other characters do not, that the Duke is to spend the entire action of the play in Vienna, invigilating Angelo's use of power.

For the consumption of the audience, Duke Vincentio embarks upon a historical justification of the political situation that he has brought about. He explains – nominally to Friar Thomas – that, for either ‘fourteen’ or ‘nineteen’ years,* he has been a lax governor of Vienna; he compares himself to a lenient father who has spared the rod and spoiled the child. As a result, Vienna is fast degenerating into a state of lawlessness: So our decrees,

Dead to infliction, to themselves are dead.

In this city, ‘all decorum’ has been lost because the Duke has not strained the quality of mercy. Ironically, he has been guilty of a criminal failure to enforce the laws that are on his own statute book. He has grown complacent in discriminating between the law-abiding and law-offending citizens in his state. *The text is inconsistent on this figure.

Duke Vincentio confesses to having given his people too much ‘scope’: that is, to having created by his negligence a permissive society. Since he (‘my fault’) accepts full blame for the existence of this society, he feels that it would be morally unfair of him (‘my tyranny’) to begin now to dismantle it. He therefore appoints someone else to do his dirty work for him, feeling – rather conveniently – that this further dereliction of duty will make moral sense; in short, he passes an uncomfortable buck to Angelo.

Significantly, it is in the ‘ambush’ of Duke Vincentio’s name that all the Viennese miscreants will be brought to book. This ambush-image signifies that these offenders will walk – exactly as Claudio did – into an unsuspected trap: that is, find themselves guilty of a crime which they did not know they had committed. It is challenging to consider that the structure of Measure for Measure itself resembles an ambush: that is, its characters are taking part in

an experiment without knowing that it is going on. Not unlike Prospero, Vincentio is observing and controlling the actions of others without their knowing it.

The purpose of Duke Vincentio’s speech is to supply us with an objective assessment of Angelo’s character. It reinforces our initial impression that Angelo is of an ascetic disposition: that is, he is dedicated to living a life of self-denial, to pursuing a frugal/spartan

existence. We shall, of course, see whether he is in reality what he seems to be ...

ACT I Scene 4

In this scene, Lucio carries out Claudio's instruction: he finds Isabella – who is about to enter the Order of Saint Clare – and informs her that her brother Claudio has been arrested on a charge of fornication and that he faces the death penalty. The purpose of this scene is to give us Isabella's initial reaction to this harsh development and thereby offer us a first insight into her character. Like Angelo, Isabella is of an ascetic disposition: indeed, she is about to withdraw from the world into a Franciscan convent noted for its austerity. Her first words – 'wishing a more strict restraint' – show that she is fit to vie with Angelo for the angelic

laurels; her wish for a more rigid discipline is a wish to appear holier than the next nun. In short, Isabella too is a puritan. It is this sanctimonious impression that Lucio's speech reinforces:

I hold you as a thing enskied and sainted
By your renouncement, an immortal spirit,
And to be talked with in sincerity,
As with a saint.

Dressed in a pristine habit, Isabella flatters to deceive us that such 'precise' and 'severe' cleanliness is next to godliness. Lucio's eulogy prepares us for Isabella's pious and selfrighteous conduct in Act III: there, in her major argument with Claudio, her professed enthusiasm for self-sacrifice, her instinct for martyrdom, is expressed with an indecent haste.

In the event, Isabella does not behave 'as a thing enskied and sainted' ought to do. As a result, her saintliness – here, Lucio talks to her as to 'a saint' – becomes a matter of debate. Lucio performs a choric function. He it is who acts as second referee to Angelo's character. Here, he reinforces our impression of Lord Angelo, a man whose blood

Is very snow-broth; one who never feels
The wanton stings and motions of the sense;
But doth rebate and blunt his natural edge
With profits of the mind, study and fast.

His portrait is of a frigid individual in whom the passionate part of the soul is defective. Angelo, whose ‘blood is very snow-broth’, exhibits a wilful determination to ‘blunt his natural edge’: that is, he is a perverse personality, one of those men who actually keeps his New Year Resolutions! Lucio’s additional remark – that Angelo ‘follows close to the rigour of the statute’ in order to make Claudio an example – illustrates that he is a stickler for detail and that he is prepared ruthlessly to encourage the others.

Significantly, Lucio instructs Isabella to call upon Angelo and ‘assay the power’ that she possesses; this instruction pre-supposes that Isabella has a power [= a kind of verbal charisma] of which she is well aware. Consequently, Lucio outlines a strategy for her: “when maidens sue men weep like gods.” The strategy is based upon his belief that Angelo will grant her petition if she cries on his shoulder. Isabella, then, will rely upon her persuasive tongue and her maiden comeliness. The problem, however, is that Isabella’s comeliness is not without sex appeal ...

ACT II Scene 1

Angelo’s comparison of the law to ‘a scarecrow’ is a measure of his wisdom. He is a sufficiently fine governor, a sufficiently adept moral philosopher, to realise that the law must have a deterrent effect: that, if it is not actively enforced, then it will defeat the purpose for which it was designed and make a mockery of itself.

Escalus is a man of even wider ethical vision. It is left to him to point out that the law exists both to deter and to exact retribution – and, moreover, to observe that Angelo’s enforcement of deterrent law is inflamed with a retributive zeal. In a voice of moderation, Escalus argues that it is unjust and extreme to punish Claudio in a capital manner for a crime that any human might commit. He argues that, if it were not for the Grace of God, then any man might have gone Claudio’s way: that even the most straight-laced of individuals, ‘had time cohered with place, or place with wishing’, might have fallen into this particular temptation. With a proleptic irony that resounds throughout the play, Escalus then ventures

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to suggest that even Angelo might sometime in his life have 'erred in this point' on which he censures Claudio. Angelo's retort –

'Tis one thing to be tempted, Escalus,
Another thing to fall – is sanctimonious to the point at which it becomes supercilious. In this passage, Angelo sermonises. Ironically, he chooses texts that have the reverse thrust of the Christian Gospels: rather than suggest that no man should cast the first stone, he makes allowances for man's Original Sin and recognises that, if justice is to be done at all, then it will be necessary to put up with a thief or two in our juries. Although Angelo is a purist, he is also a zealot: that is, pragmatic in his zealous pursuit of the written law. He has no qualms about working within an imperfect legal system if that system will bring about the kind of justice that he wants to see. Here, he exhibits his awareness of St Luke's Gospel. He will not allow that there are extenuating circumstances in Claudio's case simply because this Gospel – Judge not, and ye shall not be judged. Condemn not, and ye shall not be condemned. Forgive, and ye shall be forgiven – pleads for such allowances. A. D. Nuttall argues that this un-Christian refusal to pardon Claudio is intellectually respectable and morally defensible: that, although a fallen man may not have a metaphysical right to judge and dispense justice, he cannot at the practical level afford to do otherwise; if he wishes to prevent a state of lawlessness, then he must be brave enough to act as if he is more morally fit than the next man. Angelo recognises that it is absolutely necessary to judge, even at the risk of being judged in one's own turn. Uncomfortably, his high moral stance – When I that censure him do so offend,
Let mine own judgement pattern out my death,
And nothing come in partial – is based on the pride that comes before a fall. This, in particular, is the statement that informs and justifies Wilson Knight's two descriptions of Angelo: 1) "a man of ascetic purity who has a hitherto invulnerable faith in the rightness and justice of his own ideals"; 2) "a man of spotless reputation and self-conscious integrity who will have no fears as to the justice of enforcing precise obedience." As a consequence,

Angelo exhibits hubris: no sooner does he make this vain boast than the audience realises that his nemesis duly awaits him.

Nigel Alexander remarks that Angelo's administration of the law is "so inhumane as to be inhuman". It is nevertheless important to recognise that Angelo's speeches, though they are the utterance of an evil man, express a good understanding of human nature. Escalus, a choric figure, a liberal interpreter, explains that Angelo has merely erred on the side of excess. Escalus' couplet –

Well, heaven forgive him and forgive us all.

Some rise by sin and some by virtue fall comes ruefully to terms with Angelo's way of doing things; he seems to reflect that it takes all sorts to make a world. But Escalus, rather more than Angelo, understands that the condition of being human necessitates the forgiveness for which St Luke calls: it is human to

err and equally human, if not divine, to forgive. If justice is to be done, then there must be room for a measure of forgiveness/mercy.

Enter Elbow, Froth, Pompey and Officers .

The scene that follows provides a commentary on Angelo's administration of the law. Echoing Dogberry, Elbow inadvertently points to the situation on which 'some rise by sin and some by virtue fall.' Although he puns upon his own name, Elbow's speech makes an unfunny point: "I do lean upon justice, sir, and do bring in here before your good honour two notorious benefactors." His inadvertent oxymoron ('notorious benefactors') and his malapropistic use of 'benefactors' highlight the situation that obtains in Angelo's Vienna:

namely, that it is a state in which those who do good – like Claudio – can become 'notorious' wrong-doers. It is especially ironic that Angelo himself endeavours to clear up this confusion: "Benefactors? Well, what benefactors are they? Are they not malefactors?" The irony is that Angelo sees himself as dealing only and merely with a linguistic confusion. In fact, the more serious confusion is a moral one: namely, that Angelo himself cannot tell benefactors from malefactors.

The effect of the prose dialogue that follows is to try Angelo's patience and his fitness for office. Ultimately, its sheer length and its wilful lack of consecutiveness weary him to the point where he gives up governing, delegates his authority and goes home. The issue at stake is that Pompey

Notes

(Mistress Overdone's pimp) has procured Constable Elbow's wife – while she was pregnant – for sexual services at their inn. Pompey's tactic is not to answer the

charge of procuring for prostitution (of which he is guilty) but to filibuster: that is, to talk and talk until the issue at stake is swamped in a welter of words and the charge against him dropped.

Although Escalus calls Pompey 'a tedious fool', he is only half right: although Pompey may be tedious and verbose, there is nothing foolish about him. Consequently, Angelo tires of hearing about the events of All-hallow'd Eve at The Bunch of Grapes and shows himself to be emptier of moral rectitude than we might have imagined:

This will last out a night in Russia

When nights are longest there. I'll take my leave,

And leave you to the hearing of the cause.

He refuses to listen any longer to this shaggy dog story and actually abdicates his responsibility to Escalus. In this respect, he ironically resembles Duke Vincentio who, having failed to take the measures necessary to control the sex industry in Vienna, has also given up his effort as a bad job. Angelo's exit illuminates this very perception: even he, the strictest of disciplinarians, cannot be bothered to discipline Pompey. His dramatic exit therefore constitutes a moment of moral laxness that prepares us for his fall into temptation.

It is important not to overlook the issues of this prose dialogue, for they are full of poetic significance. Frequently, the diction that Shakespeare introduces into these exchanges illuminates the main themes of the play. Earlier, Elbow was afraid that, if his wife had been discovered under the roof of a brothel, then she 'might have been accused in fornication, adultery, and all uncleanness there'. But who is to accuse her? Who is to accuse any woman of adultery? Let him who is without any sexual feeling, who has never lusted after a married woman, cast the first stone of accusation. Let Angelo cast it ..? Equally, this apparently idle exchange between Elbow and Pompey has skilful designs upon us:

ELBOW: The time is yet to come that she was ever respected with man, woman or child.

POMPEY: Sir, she was respected with him before he married with her.

Shakespeare makes free with Elbow's malapropistic use of 'respected'. Knowingly, Pompey makes of this misunderstood verb an impudent euphemism for the sexual act: accordingly,

Elbow paid his marital respects to his wife 'before he married with her'. In Pompey's euphemistic terms, Elbow paid her the compliment of sleeping with her; inadvertent though it is, such a way of speaking raises the possibility that it may be respectable for human beings to perform this act under any circumstances. It is upon this possibility that Escalus' question touches: "Which is the wiser here, Justice or Iniquity?" This question frames for us the matters of jurisprudence which lie at the heart of the play: what is just? what is iniquitous? Foremost among the objective correlatives by which Shakespeare invites us to measure

Angelo's interpretation of Viennese law is this debate between Escalus and Pompey. It is conducted in a racy prose, remarkable for the unerring consecutiveness of its logic. Escalus confronts Pompey with the charge that, although he may pass for a barman, a 'tapster', he is actually a procurer of prostitutes for the bar's clients; he is a 'tapster' in the precise sense that he pulls both pints and punters. Pompey's answer – "Truly, sir, I am a poor fellow that would live" – seeks to equate the two livings [= legal barman and illegal pimp] on the basic humanitarian ground that both – regardless of their moral standings – enable him to 'live' [= earn a living rather than die]. It becomes apparent that this prose dialogue is making more than an academic contribution to the debate upon the nature of Viennese law. This swift exchange –

ESCALUS: Is it a lawful trade?

POMPEY: If the law would allow it, sir lies at the heart of all law-making. It is axiomatic with Pompey that there are no legal axioms: that is, that man makes up his laws as he goes along and reserves the right to amend them as he wishes. Law is nothing more than a human invention; all law, not merely Viennese law, is therefore circumstantial. Pompey then applies this wisdom to the particular circumstances that apply in Angelo's Vienna. He points out that, in order to extirpate the 'trade' of prostitution, it will be necessary to 'geld and splay all the youth of the city'. Here, Pompey does no more than follow Angelo's logic to its inevitable conclusion; in doing so, he reduces Angelo's legislation to absurdity. He demonstrates that Angelo and Escalus are engaged in

nothing less than a vain attempt to repress one of the irrepressible impulses of human nature: unless they introduce a law to castrate ('geld') and sterilise ('spay') every man

('knave') and every woman ('drab'), then this greater law will continue to operate – "they will to 't then". For this fundamental reason, the upshot of Angelo's legislation will be the 'heading and hanging' of all Vienna's men-folk. Pompey's logic is far-sighted: he reasons that, if this bad law remains on the statute books for ten years, then the authorities will ironically – be only too pleased when it is broken, so desperate will they then be to increase the heads of the population. The Justice is there to remind us that the action of the play has reached its eleventh hour. Appropriately, Escalus' thoughts turn to Claudio and remind us that his execution is imminent.

Moreover, this brief exchange –

JUSTICE: Lord Angelo is severe.

ESCALUS: It is but needful.

Mercy is not itself, that oft looks so;

Pardon is still the nurse of second woe reminds us of the 'precise' and 'severe' nature of Lord Angelo's character. Escalus' attempt to see things from Lord Angelo's uncompromising point of view – "Pardon is still the cause of second woe" – even suggests that this grave approach may be adequate. Certainly, Escalus' remark confirms that Angelo is a man of reason: in doing so, it prepares us for the following scene in which this man of pure reason is shown to be inadequate.

13.3 ACTS AND REVIEWS(CONTINUED) MEASURE FOR MEASURE

ACT II Scene 2

There follows one of the most important scenes in the play. It is in this scene that Angelo and Isabella come face to face.

The Provost sets the tone of this head-to-head encounter when he repeats the humanitarian argument that, since 'all sects, all ages smack of this vice', no man should die for it. Since Claudio – to his way of thinking – is only as guilty as if he had committed this crime in his sleep, the

Provost ventures to suggest to Angelo that Claudio's execution 'might be too rash'.

Angelo, however, does not suffer from doubt; not rash, but rational to a fault, he is certain that he will not live to regret his 'judgement'. He does not expect to repent at leisure or to suffer remorse.

Shakespeare invests Angelo with psychological realism. Shortly before Isabella's entrance, he gives Angelo a reason for his self-satisfaction: although Juliet is a fornicatress in his moral terms, he makes provision for her: "Let her have needful but not lavish means." He shows that he can give a benevolent order; in short, he shows a measure of compassion. Shakespeare, then, begins to open up his debate on the nature of man. In Renaissance terms, the balanced man must have a measure of each human quality in his soul. In this scene, Shakespeare – in G. Wilson Knight's words – endeavours to show that Angelo is "the symbol of a fake intellectualised ethic divorced from the deeper springs of the human instinct". What Wilson Knight means is that Angelo, whose "spotless reputation" intimidates those around him with its dazzling whiteness, is "reason abstracted from emotion"; he is the

contemplative courtier who refuses to admit that passion (as opposed to compassion) has a place in the human scheme of things. For her part, Isabella – "There is a vice that most I do abhor ..." – opens her suit in terms which suggest that she is a kindred spirit. She too takes the hard-line view that fornication is a capital offence: that it can be pardoned only under

extenuating circumstances. Consequently, Isabella's plea rests upon a legal nicety; her coordinate clauses ('but that I must'/'but that I am') express – by means of a syntactical parallelism – her view that reason must be weighed against emotion. It is the very balance of these clauses, the second carefully qualifying the first, which shows that – against Isabella's natural instinct – there must be measure for measure. She shows that extenuating circumstances should be taken into consideration. It is imperative that Isabella's part in this dialogue be heard in the context of Claudio's reference to her rhetorical skills: her 'speechless dialect' and 'prosperous art' (Act I Scene 2).

Originally, Isabella argues that Angelo should condemn the sin rather than the sinner. In this case, her art does not prosper; he dismisses this

sophisticated argument, this vain attempt to split a hair, with an indignant ease: acquainted with the Doctrine of Original Sin, Isabella ought to know that the function of God's Deputy on Earth can only be to punish those who commit sins. Isabella's response ("O just but severe law") expresses her respect for this Old

Testament judgement. In this scene, Lucio's function is to suggest – in a series of adroit asides – that Isabella's art will not prosper if she continues to play Angelo at his own game; her powers of persuasion will prove inadequate if she continues to share his belief in the 'severe' rule of law. Consequently, Lucio's remark – 'you are too cold', significantly repeated fifteen lines later – insists that she change her tactics. The effect of this insistence is to encourage Isabella to speak instead in that 'prone and speechless dialect' that 'moves' men.

As a result, Isabella's terms of address –

Not the King's crown, nor the deputed sword,
The marshal's truncheon, nor the judge's robe,
Become them with one half so good a grace

As mercy does become more emotive. With a refreshing candour, she tells Angelo off; she lectures him upon the kingly graces, reminding him that 'mercy' is foremost among them: to coin a phrase, that the quality of mercy is not strained. She is adamant that his apparel (his judge's robe) does not necessarily proclaim a judicious man. Isabella makes a charismatic and dramatic appeal to Angelo's better judgement. Here, her terms of address –

If he had been as you, and you as he,
You would have slipped like him, but he like you

Would not have been so stern become terms of endearment. Isabella applies the Golden Rule: that, if the roles had been reversed, then Claudio would not have done unto Angelo what Angelo is intent on doing unto him. Unfortunately for Isabella, this argument is equally unsuccessful in cutting the ice that preserves Angelo's stern approach; he has already told us (in II.1) that he is prepared to follow his own 'pattern' of judgement.

Directors of this scene are required to make a fine judgement as to the moment when Isabella's warmth (previously, she was 'too cold') begins to melt the iceberg of Angelo's personality. As a result, they may elect to

ignore the metaphorical thrust of Lucio's next aside "Ay, touch him: There's the vein" – and urge a literal action upon their actress. What is certain is that they must in this scene show a development in Isabella's attitude, a growth away from her initial coldness towards a sensuality which actually warms Angelo's blood.

Isabella's next move is to pit New Testament orthodoxy against Old Testament dogma. She begs to point out that God sent Christ upon Earth so that 'all the souls' which 'were forfeit once' need no longer be so. She goes so far as to suggest that God ('he which is the top of judgement') showed mercy to man and, by sacrificing his own Son, made man anew. It is for this reason, to follow this Christian example, that Angelo – so Isabella argues – should show Christian mercy. Angelo's reactions carry the accents of Old Testament prose:

It is the law, not I, condemns your brother.

The law hath not been dead, though it hath slept.

In these sententious pronouncements, Angelo seems to lack the courage of his own convictions and to hide behind the skirts of the law. Angelo, not a humanitarian, but a humanist, makes out the case for the rule of law on the solid ground that one man's freedom is another man's tyranny. Both as law-maker and as law-enforcer, he appreciates the shortcomings of Christianity as a political creed; showing mercy all the time is no way to run a society. To Isabella's accusation that he is without pity, he has a ready answer:

I show it most of all when I show justice;

For then I pity those I do not know.

The good governor cannot espouse pious principles; he must adopt practical policies. In executing Claudio for such a common infringement, he sees himself as encouraging others and thereby acting in the defence of others' civil liberties. It is with this policy that he orders Isabella to 'be satisfied'. For this ethic to be memorably articulated, we must wait until 1759 when Voltaire writes **Candide**: "Dans ce pays-ci, il est bon de tuer de temps en temps un amiral pour encourager les autres" –

Chapter XXIII.

It is possible to explain this scene in terms of a chess match. Every move made by Isabella (in white) is promptly matched by Angelo's counter-move. Her Christian appeal for magnanimity –

O, 'tis excellent

To have a giant's strength, but it is tyrannous

To use it like a giant falls on his deaf ears because it ignores practical politics. She expresses a fine and lofty sentiment ("That's well said") but overlooks the realities of post-Vincentian Vienna with which Angelo has to deal. Consequently, it becomes necessary for Isabella to turn up the volume of

her pleas in order to sway him. She amplifies her next speech by means of an emotive imagery: Merciful Heaven,

Thou rather with thy sharp and sulphurous bolt

Splits the unwedgeable and gnarled oak, Than the soft myrtle.

One feature of this impassioned speech is that it ceases to make rational sense of the legal situation and tries instead to make poetic sense of it.

It is at this point that Isabella's art begins to prosper; it is here that she makes her first impact upon Angelo's ego and shows how 'well she can persuade'. Isabella then proceeds to give us a picture of unaccommodated man: "man, proud man, dressed in a little brief authority ...". It is her thesis that Angelo, as he stands before her, is an epitome of man himself: that is, an unnecessarily proud creature, made in God's image, who dresses himself up in the panoply of 'authority' in order to supply himself with an inflated sense of his own importance. In this speech, Isabella's aim is to remind this man that, because he is merely a reflection ('glassy essence') of God's perfection, he himself has no divine right to put on these airs and graces. In fact, Angelo ('most ignorant of what he's most assured') appears 'like an angry ape': that is, his antics appear to the angels – who rank above him in the cosmic order – as if they are the circus 'tricks' of a beast. According to Isabella, these tricks are enough to make

'the angels weep': in other words, the angels find Angelic man so ridiculous that, if they could laugh, they would do so till they cried. The point of this diatribe against man is to put him in his cosmic place. More particularly, it is to illuminate for us an individual man who is 'most ignorant' of his true place: in other words, Angelo, in spite of his robes of authority, remains an inadequately clad ignoramus if he does not know what little right he has to feel so 'assured'. Significantly, it is at this point that Angelo's self-assurance begins to weaken:

Why do you put these sayings upon me? For the best part of thirty lines, he has remained in rapt silence. We are meant to understand that it has been in this golden silence that his development towards self knowledge has begun. The effect of Isabella's answer Go to your bosom, Knock there and ask your heart what it doth know That's like my brother's fault is to insist that Angelo examine his understanding of his own manhood. He is to knock on the door of his own bosom and ask whether or not it contains a measure of beastliness: that is, a natural guiltiness. It is this conviction – that man, by his very nature, is guilty of sexual feeling – that strikes a chord in Angelo's breast and stirs his genitals. The reason (as his aside makes clear) is not only that he can suddenly see sense: "She speaks, and 'tis such sense that my sense breeds with it." It is also that Isabella (who, in her 'speechless dialect', speaks logical sense) has herself made a sexual impression on him; she has awakened in him those feelings of sexual desire that he has been striving to repress. Consequently, Isabella's use of the verb 'bribe' is suggestive to Angelo of a corrupt practice which he – in his position of authority – finds seductive.

Parting between Angelo and Isabella therefore becomes a sweet sorrow, rich in the dramatic ironies which result when characters speak (as here) at cross-purposes. For his part, Angelo is acutely conscious that, in defiance of the Lord's Prayer, he is being led in 'to temptation'. His soliloquy – in which he attempts to apportion blame for human misconduct – constitutes a profound analysis of male sexuality:

What dost thou, or what art thou, Angelo?

Dost thou desire her foully for those things That make her good?

He experiences the need to recognize man for the 'poor, bare, forked animal' that he ultimately is. In the course of this rigorous self-examination, Angelo attempts to come to terms with the appetitive/passionate part of his tri-partite soul: although he accuses himself of behaving 'foully', he has merely become inflamed with the natural 'desire' to 'love' a beautiful woman, 'this virtuous maid'. The value of this speech is that it makes explicit Angelo's culpability: in other words, it exonerates Isabella and attributes his fall to his susceptibility to her innocence. It becomes possible to argue that, in

responding to her saintliness, being ‘subdued’ by it, he is responding to the qualities that he most admires.

Angelo need not be merely enthralled by a basic desire to deflower a virgin; the point is that there is nothing perverse or unwholesome (as Angelo himself automatically supposes) about such sexual attraction. This soliloquy dramatises the debate in Angelo’s head: not merely about what kind of man he is, but also – more significantly – about what kind of creature man is. Shakespeare’s blank verse monitors the movement of Angelo’s mind as it moves to and fro; its rhythm is functional in following the manoeuvres of a mind engaged in the act of agonized thinking. By means of enjambments and of rhetorical questions, eleven of each, Shakespeare charts Angelo’s stream of consciousness; by these technical means, he demonstrates how Angelo vacillates between self-righteousness and self-disgust.

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS I:

Q1. Give short summary of Act 1 Scene 4

Answer.....
.....
.....
.....

Q2. Write analysis of Act 2 Scene 2

Answer.....
.....
.....
.....

ACT II Scene 3

Such are the dynamics of this plot, such is the tragi-comic nature of this play, that Shakespeare must act quickly to provide us with a reassurance that the tragedy will not materialise. The purpose of this scene, then, is to supply Duke Vincentio (disguised as a friar) with an update on Claudio’s situation and to supply us with a comic reassurance. Duke Vincentio is our reassurance that, no matter what may eventuate, we remain in the world of comedy.

Drama is conflict. In **Measure for Measure**, Shakespeare's aim is to explore the conflict between two attitudes to life: between Angelo's right-wing asceticism and Vincentio's left-wing liberalism. To this exploration, this short scene between Vincentio and Julietta makes an effective contribution. It sheds further light upon Vincentio's tolerant character:

DUKE: Love you the man that wronged you?

JULIETTA: Yes, as I love the woman that wronged him.

In this exchange, the two parties are in the process of addressing the very question that Angelo's soliloquy raised: "the tempter or the tempted who sins most?" Correct grammar: '... who sins more'.

Shakespeare is a dramatic engineer: this is, he engineers the dialogue – in which the verb 'wronged', the adjective 'offenceful' and the nouns 'sin' and 'shame' are all used with a knowing irony – in order to show that, unlike Angelo, Vincentio would have acquitted Claudio for being tempted and Julietta for 'tempting' him. In other words, Vincentio's irony illustrates that his attitude to governing/ruling/law-enforcing has not undergone a transformation; his gentle imperative 'there rest' is equivalent to a pardon granted on the soft ground that Julietta has owned up and promised never to do it again. Here is a question which the play asks: who governs better, the executioner or the pardoner?

ACT II Scene 4

This scene begins with a long soliloquy in which Angelo registers an incredulous selfrealisation.

By speaking 'sense', Isabella has brought him to his physical senses; in his words, she speaks 'such sense' that his sense 'breeds with it': in other words, she has awoken him to the fact that he is an appetitive man and that she is a woman for whom he has an appetite/whom his senses can enjoy.

In his thirty lines, Angelo – whose blood was previously 'snow broth' – is obliged to confess that it now flows: "Blood, thou art blood." He is compelled by his sexual arousal ('the strong and swelling evil of my conception') to recognise that his previous persona – that of a 'precise'

and 'severe' puritan – was a form of false 'seeming' and that, in order to be a whole man, he must now come to terms with his aroused sexuality. Significantly, Angelo's self-searching soliloquy – "Blood, thou art blood" – is interrupted by a servant who informs him in loaded language that Isabella 'desires access' to him. When his soliloquy resumes, Angelo asks himself another desperate question: "Why does my blood thus muster to my heart?" He is deeply perplexed, puzzled: he wants to know why he can no longer keep control of his own body. With horror, he is forced to recognise that his 'desire'

for Isabella is 'dispossessing' him 'of necessary fitness'. Angelo's phrase 'necessary fitness' reveals that he has been embarrassed by an erection, a 'strong and swelling evil'; in his puritan scale of values, such a reaction to the imminent arrival of Isabella does not become a self-disciplined man. His bitterly ironic line – "Let's write 'good Angel' on the devil's horn" – expresses his self-disgust at his realisation that his body (in particular, his 'devil's horn', his penis) is letting him down. Nothing illustrates his physiological shame more vividly than his

metonyms for his penis; it is a 'swelling evil' and a 'devil's horn' because it betrays him and leads him into irresistible temptation.

It is on this cue that Isabella (a nun whom he must now perceive as a woman) arrives upon her second mission of mercy. The substance of Angelo's soliloquy provides an ironic context for Isabella's first remark: "I am come to know your pleasure". Although she intends that this sentence be heard as a courteous cliché, we know on the contrary that Angelo hears it as if it has an ulterior meaning: namely, that it is his pleasure (in its most basic form) which she will

come to know in the course of this interview. Throughout this scene, Angelo is acutely aware that he is being tempted by the devil in his flesh. His fierce interjection – "Fie, these filthy vices" – attempts to quell the insurrection in his blood; psychologically, it is entirely right that a lapsed puritan should find his sexual nature so repugnant.

For the next one hundred lines, Angelo engages in a form of circumlocution which raises the dramatic tension. He suffers acutely from a divided personality; he struggles to reconcile his public persona (his gravity, his 'necessary fitness' for office) with his private, previously suppressed inclinations. The opening exchange between Angelo and

Isabella dramatises the conflict which the remainder of this scene will explore:

ANGELO: How now, fair maid?

ISABELLA: I am come to know your pleasure.

This conflict is between Angelo's perception of Isabella as a 'fair maid' (in whom Beauty and Chastity repose) and his intense feeling that he would like her to give him 'pleasure' (and thereby complete her own soul). Deliberately, Shakespeare puts into Isabella's mouth an ironic and provocative term: 'pleasure' [ie. passion]; innocently, inadvertently, Isabella sets the tone for their exchanges. There is a dramatic irony at Isabella's expense. Given Angelo's earlier soliloquy, we know (whereas Isabella does not) that he has conceived a powerful passion for 'this virtuous maid'.

Although Angelo ("Yet he may live a while") may sound as if he is toying with her emotions, he is actually preparing the context in which Isabella may give her consent to sex with him.

To begin with, Isabella has no notion of his ulterior motive; to begin with, it sounds to her as if Angelo, a scholarly governor, is concerned to 'pose' a purely hypothetical question, asking her out of academic interest what such a governor should do in such a case. It sounds to her as if he is talking only in general terms, asking her to consider what in theory, but not in practice, should be done:

Which had you rather, that the most just law

Now took your brother's life, or to redeem him

Give up your body to such sweet uncleanness

As she [Julietta] that he hath stained?

One reason why Angelo's argument sounds purely legalistic involves the construction of Line 54 (here italicised) from which the second-person pronoun 'you' is omitted, rendering that clause ungrammatical. It is instructive to note that Shakespeare's omission of the syllable has nothing to do with the exigencies of the iambic pentameter, for the line is already eleven syllables long; indeed, to talk in particular terms and thereby to personalise his argument,

Angelo had only to accommodate 'you' ("You gave your body up to such sweet ...") and find a monosyllabic noun for 'uncleanness' (itself already a coinage). That Angelo speaks in this hygienic way simply

underlines his squeamish reluctance to come straight out with his indecent proposal, a reluctance subtly explained by that oxymoron ‘sweet uncleanness’ which

betrays his puritanical attitude to sexual intercourse. The subsequent exchange

ISABELLA: I had rather give my body than my soul.

ANGELO: I talk not of your soul illustrates the extent to which the two protagonists remain at cross-purposes and articulates the position of fornication in Renaissance theology: that is, a mortal sin for which a fornicatress would be consigned to eternal damnation. Isabella’s use of the first-person pronoun (‘**I** had rather ...’) is not a response to a personalised proposition, but a generalised

reflection: if she were facing execution, then she would ‘rather’ go to it with a clean conscience than fornicate [= have sex outside holy matrimony] and be forever damned. For a moment, Angelo’s callous disregard for a woman’s soul stuns her (“How say you?”) but does nothing to awaken her realisation that he is a ‘corrupt Deputy’. Still speaking around the point, Angelo recovers his composure and puts a second theological question to her:

Might there not be a charity in sin

To save this brother’s life?

It is another poser: is it not possible to find a way out of the original dilemma by adopting an alternative attitude to the mortal ‘sin’? What if the ‘sin’ were an act of charity, one of the three Christian Graces? Would not this act of charity then compensate for the ‘sin’, triumph over it? Thinking that Angelo is looking for a way to square a pardon for Claudio with ‘the most just law’, Isabella (“Please you to do ‘t’”) agrees that such a pardon would not be a sin, but an act of charity.

Realising that Isabella remains obtuse to his meaning, Angelo (“Please you to do ‘t’”) recycles her reply, delightedly turning her moral argument against her; in his riposte, the impersonal pronoun ‘it’ refers not to a charitable pardon, but – by the same ethic – to a charitable act of extra-marital intercourse. When Isabella thinks that he is admonishing her merely for begging a pardon, Angelo (“Your sense pursues not mine”) loses patience again and talks tougher: “Your brother is to die.” Still, Isabella’s sense pursues not his. Still, Angelo resorts to circumlocution,

asking her to suppose that there were ‘no other way’ to save Claudio’s life but that she, his sister, finding herself ‘desired’ by ‘such a person’ who could pardon him, should consent to sex with ‘this supposed’ person. Here is the third formulation of the same dilemma:

but that either

You must lay down the treasures of your body

To this supposed or else to let him suffer,

What would you do?

Despite the pointed use of pronouns, the dramatic irony at Isabella’s expense persists. Both the glamorous metaphor for vaginal access (‘lay down the treasures’) and the conditional tense (“What would you do?”) continue to suggest to this innocent novice that Angelo is engaging her in theoretical debate. She knows the answer to this question and retorts with rhetorical indignation that, if she were under sentence of death, then she would strip myself to death as to a bed That long I have been sick for ere I’d yield

My body up to shame ...

Better it were a brother died at once

Than that a sister, by redeeming him,

Should die for ever.

Isabella’s passionate answer to Angelo is that there is a fate worse than death: namely, eternal damnation for having committed the mortal sin of fornication. She advances their argument still in the ironic belief that it is merely academic and that she is being asked

hypothetical questions:

Ignomy in ransom and free pardon

Are of two houses: lawful mercy

Is nothing kin to foul redemption.

Still not experiencing the heat of the moment, Isabella is cool enough to make the critical distinction – between ‘ignomy in ransom and free pardon’/between ‘lawful mercy’ and ‘foul redemption’ – to which Angelo’s actions will ultimately give point. She recognises that there is no comparison between Christian clemency [= ‘free pardon’/‘lawful mercy’ and shady deals [‘ignomy in ransom’/‘foul redemption’].

For the purpose of **Measure for Measure**, Shakespeare asks us to imagine that Angelo is Jove/Jehovah [= God in the Old Testament] who

Notes

is intent on pursuing malefactors and exacting retribution for their wrong-doings: that is, an unforgiving God. Against Angelo, Shakespeare pits Isabella whose dramatic purpose is to show that Angelo's relentless/pitiless pursuit of justice is out of date in a post-Christian world where justice is no longer absolute

because Christ's mercy is an available alternative. Now that the human factor has been introduced into the sum of his own existence, Angelo is painfully aware that 'we are all frail'. It is with the zeal of the convert that he makes the mistake of supposing that Isabella can be crudely included in this equation: "Nay, women are frail too." Consequently, he makes so 'bold' as to suggest that she should stop pretending to be a nun and be herself:

Be that you are,

That is, a woman; if you be more, you're none.

If you be one – as you are well expressed

By all external warrants – show it now,

By putting on the destined livery.

Angelo responds to her as a woman: that is, to all her 'external warrants', her face and her figure. Quite naturally, he then desires to see her in the secular clothing ('livery') for which such a body is 'destined'; he wants to see her in an Elizabethan dress, its neckline cut fashionably low. Converted, Angelo automatically assumes that Isabella has come to him from a world in which copulation thrives and that she has been merely pretending (as he has

been) to find sex so distasteful. It is only very slowly that it begins to dawn on Isabella both that she is being offered a live deal and what the deal is. At first, she overlooks Angelo's directness ("Plainly conceive, I love you") and pretends to preserve protocol. Even though her ironic observation –

My brother did love Juliet, And you tell me that he shall die for 't goes to the heart of Angelo's dilemma, this irony remains within the bounds of etiquette and is not yet aimed at his sheer villainy. It can only be when the Angelo-actor performs an amorous action to emphasise his 'purpose' that an epiphany occurs and Isabella finally sees to her horror that his 'purpose' (here, she picks up his very word) is 'pernicious':

Seeming, seeming!

I will proclaim thee, Angelo, look for 't!
 Sign me a present pardon for my brother,
 Or with an outstretched throat I'll tell the world
 What man thou art.

Like all Shakespearean villains, Angelo is guilty of 'seeming'; that is, his appearance is deceptive. Like Iago, he is a dissembler: that is, he is an evil man going under the guise of a good/honest man. In Angelo's case, he has been ambushed by his own nature and is now in the embarrassing position of keeping up his former front. It is in this predicament that Angelo begins to act like a complete tyrant. He endeavours to use/abuse his position, to exercise the full weight of his brief authority in order to get his own lascivious way; the pounds of flesh that he demands are hers and he will have them. It is here that Angelo wilfully confuses his social rank (Deputy Governor of Vienna) with his cosmic rank (below God and the Angels). Although Isabella has discovered what kind of man he is, she finds herself powerless to use this evidence against him:

Who will believe thee, Isabel?
 My unsoiled name, th' austereness of my life,
 My vouch against you, and my place i' th' state,
 Will so your accusation outweigh
 That you shall stifle in your own report,
 And smell of calumny.

Angelo thinks that his appointed place in the state entitles him to ignore his appointed place in the universe. Indeed, he is acutely aware that his position inures him against suspicion of corruption: in other words, it pre-empts any strike against his person: "Who will believe thee, Isabel?" For this reason, he is effectively free to give his 'sensual race the rein'. At this stage, Angelo is a man in whom the appetitive element ('my sharp appetite') predominates.

Here, Shakespeare's aim – rather than to characterise Angelo – is to show how powerful and ruinous a force man's appetite can be if it is not kept in check/reined in/controlled by compassion. In order to ensure that Isabella yields up her body to his will, Angelo is quite prepared to torture Claudio to death in an admittedly tyrannical manner. Angelo's threat –

“I’ll prove a tyrant to him” – is not empty. Within the moral pattern of this play, it signifies those lengths to which a man will go in order to satisfy his sexual appetite.

In her soliloquy, Isabella accepts that Angelo is in an impregnable position. He has opened up such a wide gap of credibility between her private knowledge of him and the public perception of him that it is pointless to ‘complain’: “Did I tell this/Who would believe me?”

Ruling out completely the possibility that she should ‘stoop to such abhorred pollution’, Isabella self-righteously races off to Claudio to give him the good news that he must die:

Then, Isabel live chaste, and brother, die:

More than our brother is our chastity. Shakespeare’s intention is that we should regard this peremptory decision as self-indulgent.

He intends us to feel – as Isabella herself plays God with her brother’s life – that there is an imbalance in her soul too. In this couplet, her triumphant tones suggest that it is all right with her that she should keep her chastity and her brother lose his head – in which case there is hardly measure for measure.

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS II :

Q1. Give analysis of Act 2

Answer.....
.....
.....
.....

Q2. Write analysis of Act 2 Scene 4

Answer.....
.....
.....

13.4 LET’S SUM UP

The basic plot which Shakespeare employed in *Measure for Measure* was not new to that play. Its ultimate source was a historical incident supposed to have occurred near Milan in 1547. A young wife

prostituted herself to save her condemned husband. The magistrate who had forced the woman to yield to him proceeded to execute her husband. He was eventually made to marry the widow and was then put to death himself for his crime against her.

13.5 KEYWORDS

- Extol :praise, glorify, or honor
- Abhor :find repugnant
- Approbation: official recognition or approval
- Assay :analyze; evaluate
- Audible: heard or perceptible by the ear

13.6 QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW

1. How does Shakespeare present ideas about 'mortality and mercy' in *Measure for Measure*?
2. 'The old fantastical duke of dark corners'. In your opinion, how far does this description reflect Shakespeare's presentation of the Duke in *Measure for Measure*?
3. 'Of government the properties to unfold ... ' What does *Measure for Measure* suggest about the nature of government, and by what means?
4. 'More than our brother is our chastity.' Explore how Shakespeare presents Isabella's attitude to chastity throughout *Measure for Measure*.
5. Explore Shakespeare's presentation and use of 'low-life' characters in *Measure for Measure*.

13.7 SUGGESTED READINGS AND REFERENCES

- ed. J. W. Lever, Shakespeare *Measure for Measure*, Arden Shakespeare 1965
- ed. J. M . Nosworthy, Shakespeare *Measure for Measure*, New Penguin Shakespeare 1969
- G. Wilson Knight, *The Wheel of Fire*, 1930

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- H. B. Charlton, Shakespearian Comedy, 1938
- Northrop Frye, The Argument of Comedy, 1948
- E. M. W. Tillyard, Shakespeare's Problem Plays, 1949
- Bertrand Evans, Shakespeare's Comedies, OUP 1960
- ed. Kenneth Muir, Shakespeare: The Comedies, C20 Views, Prentice-Hall 1965
- Patrick Swinden, An Introduction to Shakespeare's Comedy, 1973

13.8 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS 1 :

Answer 1 : Check Section 13.3 Act 1 Scene 4

Answer 2 : Check Section 13.3 Act 2 Scene 2

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS 2 :

Answer 1 : Check Section 13.3 Act 2

Answer 2 : Check Section 13.3 Act2 scene 4

UNIT 14 SHAKESPEARE : MEASURE FOR MEASURE-ACTS AND ANALYSIS -PART -2

STRUCTURE

14.0 Objectives

14.1 Introduction

14.2 Acts and Reviews: Measure For Measure

14.3 Acts and Reviews(Contd.): Measure For Measure

14.4 Let's Sum up

14.5 Keywords

14.6 Questions For Review

14.7 Suggested Readings And References

14.8 Answers To Check your Progress

14.0 OBJECTIVES

This unit helps to understand the various scenes of the play of the play. It basically dealt with the Act III to Act V. It gives the interpretation of the play and gives the review of the same.

This unit helps to achieve following objectives:

- Provide synopsis of the play
- Give the review of ACT III to ACT V.
- Give the interpretation of the act.
- Analytical study of the play

14.1 INTRODUCTION

The Measure for Measure is known to have been performed by Shakespeare's company at the Court of James I on December 26, 1604. It is generally presumed to have been written in the same year. The earliest printed text appeared in the First Folio, published in 1623. Confusions and imperfections in that text suggest that errors may have been made in transcription, and further, that the play may have undergone revision at some time prior to its first printing.

14.2 ACTS AND REVIEWS: MEASURE FOR MEASURE

ACT III Scene 1

It is for his role – rather than for his character – that Duke Vincentio commands attention in this scene. The common criticism of his great speech to Claudio is that, rather like Jaques' speech in Act II Scene 7 of **As You Like It**, it stands outside the context of the play. It is an aria that does not belong to its opera. Even so, the theme of this aria –

Be absolute for death: either death or life

Shall thereby be the sweeter. Reason thus with life:

If I do lose thee, I do lose a thing

That none but fools would keep is nothing less than the transience of human life. In recommending that Claudio 'be absolute for death', the Duke is making a contribution to Shakespeare's analysis of man. Like Hamlet (Act II Scene 2) and like Lear (Act III Scene 4), he is pointing out the irony of the human condition: that is, that man is a finite creature in an infinite universe.

The Duke's statement, then, is a further product of Renaissance humanism: in arguing that Claudio should evolve an attitude to sustain him in the face of death, he is offering conventional advice. The Duke's speech reduces man's life to the perspective in which man's inevitable death compels us to view it: since man is no more than a 'quintessence of dust', no more than 'a poor, bare, forked animal', there is no logical

reason why he should wish to cling to life. On this ground, the Duke goes so far as to maintain that man's brief life is little more than an illusion:

Thou hast nor youth, nor age
 But as it were an after-dinner's sleep
 Dreaming on both, for all thy blessed youth
 Becomes as aged ...

The Duke's thesis – that man is no sooner young than he is old – argues that human life is effectively not worth living. One man's life (such as Claudio's) is so fleeting in the vast context of time that it may as well not have been lived. Knowing this, why, then, does man fear death? Not – according to the Duke – because he fears its physical impact, but because it 'makes these odds all even': that is, it reduces all human endeavours to the same dusty level.

In preparing Claudio for his death, Duke Vincentio is inhabiting his assumed role as Friar. Although his theological argument is watertight, it is flawed in that it leaves out of account a man's emotional attachment to his own life. Although Claudio initially accepts the rationale of Vincentio's case, he discovers – in the course of his following interview with Isabella – that he is really being offered cold comfort. In the end, Claudio will humbly thank this Friar for nothing.

Here, Vincentio, more role-player than character, is more god than man. Consequently, an audience, hearing his command that Claudio be resolute in the face of death, is aware that his operatic speech, for all its philosophical grandeur, is a charade. We know, whereas Claudio does not, that the Duke (our comic reassurance) will not be prepared to let the condemned man die. It is through this special frame of awareness that we view this scene.

It is through this same window of awareness that we must view the dramatic encounter between Claudio and Isabella. Upon this scene between brother and sister, Vincentio is an eavesdropper; our perpetual awareness that this third party is there, not so much waiting in the wings as effectively on stage, conditions our appreciation of the dialogue. Indeed, it enables us to feel that their heated exchanges, their agonisings over body and soul, are much ado about nothing. Up to this point in the play, Vincentio has lagged behind us in awareness of the situation in Angelo's Vienna. The purpose of this scene is to bring him up to date

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with the moral mismanagement of his city; in this scene, he catches up with us never to fall behind again.

Isabella acquaints her brother with the news that ‘there is a devilish mercy in the judge’. Her use of euphemistic and oxymoronic circumlocutions shows that she is reluctant to broach the subject of Claudio’s pardon, to come to ‘the point’ upon which his life depends.

Understandably, Isabella is afraid that Claudio – although ostensibly resigned to death – may ‘entertain’ a natural desire to live for a few more years. Fearing that Claudio may submit to Angelo’s blackmail, her strategy – before she divulges Angelo’s exact terms – is to adopt a high moral tone in order to ‘shame’ him into accepting them and going quietly to his execution. Isabella’s tactic, the purpose of her “I do fear thee, Claudio” speech, is to mount a pre-emptive strike against the suggestion that her brother’s life is worth more than her chastity: that is, to place her chastity – rather than his life – on the moral high ground. At first – that is, until he learns the exact terms of the deal – Claudio manages to remain ‘absolute for death’. He is prepared to embrace it initially with a grand romantic gesture:

If I must die,

I will encounter darkness as a bride

And hug it in mine arms.

Being passionately human, he is willing to countenance his death for as long as he can conceive of it in terms of life – somehow hugging it as if it were Julietta. Once he learns from Isabella that ‘this outward sainted deputy’ is a devil in disguise, he begins to change his attitude. Initially, Claudio is incredulous that ‘the precise Angelo’ is not what he appears to be; but once he has heard the terms of the bargain, he is tempted actually to answer

Isabella’s rhetorical question:

Dost thou think, Claudio,

If I would yield him my virginity

Thou mightst be freed?

Understandably unnerved by the complacent statements (“yes, thou must die” and “be ready, Claudio, for your death tomorrow”) with which his sister has condemned him to death, Claudio confirms this inhuman sister’s worst suspicions. His vision of the grave –

Ay, but to die and go we know not where,
 To lie in cold obstruction and to rot is both lurid and vivid.
 Shakespeare's vigorous handling of the iambic pentameter adds weight to this graphic depiction of physical life-after death (either in 'fiery floods' or 'in thrilling regions of thick-ribbed ice') and provides us with a dramatic counter-weight to Duke Vincentio's dignified advertisement of death. Claudio's speech exults in a grotesque imagery; in its depiction of a 'horrible' reality, it might be said to look back a century to the iconography of mediaeval art – for example, to Grünewald's **Isenheim Altarpiece** and Bosch's **Garden of Earthly Delights**. With poetic power, it states the necessary opposite case: that even the worst 'worldly life ... is a paradise to what we fear of death'. Claudio rehearses a familiar argument: namely, that Isabella's 'venal sin' would instantly translate itself into a 'virtue' if it were to save his life. Quite reasonably, from Claudio's imperilled point of view, her loss of chastity would transform itself into an act of charity. Isabella's immediate retort relies for its dramatic effectiveness upon its context in the play.

Her outburst –

O faithless coward! O dishonest wretch!

Wilt thou be made a man out of my vice?

Is 't not a kind of incest to take life

From thine own sister's shame?

– is indignant to the point of ferocity. It arouses in us a moral repugnance – that she should dispense so freely with her brother's life and call him such names – which would not have been so keenly felt if Shakespeare had not previously been at such pains to establish his heroine as 'a thing enskied and sainted'. Her virtue turns on her and becomes a vice. This is why Wilson Knight, when he originally characterised Isabella, used two oxymoron: from the start, he was appalled by her 'self-centred saintliness' and her 'ice-cold sanctity'. Here, her outright repudiation of Claudio's plea confirms her fall from a notional grace.

Shakespeare's handling of Isabella's rhetoric is instructive. So far as Isabella herself is concerned, her questions are rhetorical in that they assume that it would be a 'vice' for her to sleep with Angelo and 'a kind of incest' if this intercourse were to save her brother's life; accordingly,

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Isabella opens the emotional bidding at an extremely high price. To Claudio, however, her questions are not rhetorical. On the point of execution, he is naturally inclined to take an alternative view: namely, to ask – together with the audience – whether or not the loss of Isabella's maidenhead would represent an unnatural vice. The argument of the play rather suggests that it would not: that, although it may be wrong to give in to a tyrant's/a

terrorist's blackmail, giving in to a man is not in itself a crime. Isabella's parting shot – “Thy sin's not accidental, but a trade” – betrays an unexpected awareness of the way of the world, together with an expected – but extremely revealing – reaction against the sin of sexuality: that is, Isabella equates Claudio's love-making to his bride with Mistress Overdone's intercourse with her customers at the tradesman's entrance. Both a novice and a virgin, Isabella is proving inflexible to the point of bigotry ...

It is at this critical moment that the process of Isabella's development begins. Vincentio steps forward and utters a convoluted sentence – “the satisfaction I would require is likewise your own benefit” – which signals his interest in her education: although Shakespeare will be concerned primarily with the mechanics of his plot, he is also interested in the growth of Isabella's character/in her progress towards Renaissance womanhood. It is for this reason that Duke Vincentio (“Angelo had never the purpose to corrupt her”) proceeds to tell Claudio a pack of lies: if he abandoned his masquerade now, then he could not complete his own assay of Isabella's temperament and bring her to full womanhood.

There is a schism in Isabella's soul: that is, there are currently divisions in her personality which need bridging. In order fully to understand Isabella's character, it is necessary to understand the Renaissance view of woman. To Shakespeare – as a Renaissance writer – it is important that Isabella appears ultimately to combine within herself the Three Graces that Botticelli depicts in **Primavera** (1478): beauty, chastity and passion. At the end of this scene, her problem [= the disharmony in her soul] is that she cannot reconcile her chastity (costitas) with her desire (voluptas) that her brother Claudio should live. It is in order to solve this equation that Mariana (dea ex machina) is introduced; her love/beauty

(pulchritudo) for Angelo – who has shown her unjust unkindness – will supply the grace that is missing.

Vincentio's mission is to bring about this state of spiritual harmony – which a triangular dance traditionally represents.

ACT III Scene 2

To Shakespeare's debate, Elbow contributes the view that Pompey and other traders who 'sell men and women like beasts' are reducing man to the appetitive element in his soul. Duke Vincentio, who has ceded power to Angelo on account of his own failure to restrict this trade, recognises now how remiss he has been. The very strength of his language – "Fie, sirrah, a bawd, a wicked bawd" – amplifies the extent to which he reproaches himself for being so lenient. He inveighs against Pompey, not merely because he despises his way of making a living, but also because he feels strong remorse at having allowed such an illicit trade ('such a filthy vice') to prosper. Vincentio's tirade has the zealous accents of a convert: as such, it represents a growth in his personal development from one extreme (abject tolerance) to the other (intransigent tyranny). Shakespeare's view is that man – both an Angelo and a Vincentio – should measure one extreme against the other and try to achieve the harmonious median. In this speech, Vincentio is in the process of redressing the balance in his own character/soul; he is castigating Pompey for living off immoral earnings and himself for having permitted him to be so 'stinkingly depending'. Pompey's reply – "Indeed it does stink in some sort, sir. But yet, sir, I would prove ..." – states the necessary opposite case: that this living is 'a life'/that it is nice work if he can get it. Pompey's 'but yet' is critical in directing the argument of the play towards a conclusion in which man (a 'rude beast') is seen to require both stick and carrot in order to mend/redeem himself:

Correction and instruction must both work Ere this rude beast will profit.
Shakespeare's vision is of a bestial man who requires equal measures of correction and instruction to nurture his nature. Vincentio's next couplet is equally philosophical in its scope.

His wish –

That we were all, as some would seem to be,

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From our faults, as faults from seeming, free!

– expresses his former compassion for fallen man: that is, that we were all – as Angelo appears to be – free from our faults and not in need of rehabilitation.

In **Measure for Measure**, Shakespeare is concerned to make allowances for the fact that man is a recidivist.

As if to give point to this observation, Lucio enters and makes fun of Pompey (“Is the world as it was, man?”) in terms that recognize this innate tendency in man towards recidivism. Both Pompey and Mistress Overdone (“Procures she still, ha?”) are characters who cannot help returning to their bad old ways.

In their own ways, both Vincentio and Angelo are ‘seemers’: if the first secret of the play is that Vincentio is disguised as a Friar, then the second secret is that Angelo (a villain, a hypocrite, who uses political power for personal ends) goes under the guise of a virtuous man. This is what Lucio means when he says that Lord Angelo ‘dukes it well’ in Vincentio’s absence.

Deceived though Lucio may be about Angelo’s ducal qualities, he is less deceived about Angelo’s lack of moderation. His two remarks – ‘a little more lenity to lechery would do no harm in him’ + ‘something too crabbed that way, friar’ – contain adjectives indicative of the fact that Angelo’s misgovernment of Vienna is a matter of degree. Lucio’s retort to the Duke’s provocative suggestion that such ‘severity’ is necessary – “It is well allied; but it is impossible to extirp it quite, friar, till eating and drinking be put down” – should remind us of Pompey’s ‘poor opinion’ that, in order to extirpate sexual vice entirely, it will be necessary to castrate/sterilise all Viennese youth. Both low-life characters (Pompey and Lucio) contribute valuably to the debate in the play: they are agreed that copulation is a primal appetite of man which cannot be exterminated. Only those who have not been made after ‘this downright way of creation’, only those who are themselves impotent or sterile – those like Angelo, an ‘ungenitured agent’, whose urine is ‘congealed ice’ – would think to be so absolutely ruthless in administering the law and thereby threaten to ‘unpeople the province’. Lucio’s argument – ‘the rebellion of a cod-piece’ [= an erection] should never be allowed to ‘take away the

life of a man' – enlists both basic good sense and basic good humour to his cause. Lucio's

dramatic value, then, is that he is likely to voice an audience's gut-reaction.

Vincentio's reaction to Lucio's criticism of Angelo's anti-vice campaign sheds an instructive light on his character. His sonorous pronouncement – "It is too general a vice, and severity must cure it" – purports to show that the Duke has learned the error of his charitable ways [= that venereal diseases kill people if you do not ruthlessly stop them] and is eager to correct the impression of excessive compassion which Lucio attributes to him: "he would have paid for the nursing a thousand [bastards]". Lucio's contends that the Duke had the common touch: "He had some feeling for the sport" and had "crochets in him". He reasons that this character-flaw is what 'instructed him to mercy', but this contentious conclusion is refuted promptly by the Duke's denials that he ever thought in quite that way ...

As if he has had an eerie premonition of Russell Brand, G. Wilson Knight argues that "Lucio's running wit ... pays no consistent regard to truth" and adds that his commentary on Viennese affairs is "merely a careless, shallow, truthless wit-philosophy which enjoys its own sexchatter". Certainly, the series of insulting epithets which Lucio applies to Duke Vincentio – 'a very superficial, ignorant, unweighing fellow' – is entertaining for the dramatic irony that it contains; on the other hand, it has a more important purpose which is to show that Vincentio did not competently weigh up all moral considerations, did not – as Governor of Vienna –

ensure measure for measure. Despite the dramatic irony at his expense, Lucio provides us with a yardstick by which we can measure Vincentio's kind of government: by contrast with Lord Angelo, he was clearly not 'crabbed' enough, not ruthless enough in dealing with the Viennese vice-trade and its venereal epidemic. This being so, Vincentio's denials must not be heard as if they are defences of his public record. More specifically, his denials are defensive of his private 'disposition': namely, that he 'was not much detected for women' [= not

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reputed to use prostitutes] and ‘not inclined’ to womanise. By his own estimation, he should – on the contrary – ‘appear’ to have met Plato’s expectation of an ideal man:

Let him be but testimonied in his own bringings-forth, and he shall appear

to the envious a scholar, a statesman and a soldier

Despite his tolerant rule of Vienna, Duke Vincentio has managed to live his own life according to the Platonic Doctrine of the Tri-partite Soul. Accordingly, Escalus’ testimony to the Duke’s character confirms that he cherishes no less worthy an ambition and has always been One that, above all other strifes, contended especially to know himself.

Such testimony reminds us that the central aim of an Elizabethan education was to ‘know thyself’ and implies that Duke Vincentio’s quest for such self-knowledge remains in progress. Escalus’ epithet – ‘a gentleman of all temperance’ – adds that the Duke is an advocate of moderation in all things and as such supplies the model of good character towards which his two protégés, Angelo and Isabella, should also aspire. It is an account of his own failure to master the tripartite life that Vincentio has asked Angelo to deputise for him. Now, more learned, more a master of himself, Vincentio feels that he is finally in a position to judge Angelo, to weigh up his character, to measure his conduct. It is only after this significant development in his own education that Vincentio becomes morally entitled to rebuke his deputy for having strayed from the ‘straightness’ and the narrowness of his path. The couplets out of which Vincentio’s concluding soliloquy is constructed –

He who the sword of heaven will bear

Should be as holy as severe:

Pattern in himself to know,

Grace to stand and virtue, go:

More nor less to others paying

Than by self-offences weighing

– present to our mind’s eye the figure of Justice, holding in one hand a sword (for

punishment) and in the other a pair of scales (for weighing evidence).

The message seems to be that only a complete man (one who is aware of the ‘pattern’ in himself) is fit to dispense Justice: that is, to temper

retribution with mercy. It is in this context that Vincentio asks the central question of the play:

O, what may man within him hide,

Though angel on the outward side!

It is the ‘pattern in himself’, not what appears on ‘the outward side’, which determines what a man is. Although Angelo may appear to be an angel, such a man may well be a beast unless the three parts of his soul have been disciplined and harmonised. The Duke’s remaining purpose is therefore to demonstrate that Ariel (angel/spirit) and Caliban (beast/flesh) can and must coalesce peacefully in a man’s soul. To this end, Vincentio will employ a justified measure of ‘craft’ against Angelo’s measure of ‘vice’.

14.3 ACTS AND REVIEWS(CONTD..) :MEASURE FOR MEASURE

ACT IV Scene 1

In a Shakespearean comedy, the function of any song is to encapsulate its main theme.

Here, the Boy’s song to Mariana –

Take, O take those lips away

That so sweetly were forsworn,

And those eyes, the break of day,

Lights that do mislead the morn:

But my kisses bring again, bring again;

Seals of love, but sealed in vain, sealed in vain is skilfully constructed to show that man’s appearance, an angel on the outward side, is deceptive: that, although he endeavours to resist temptation, he longs at the same time to be led into it (“take those lips away ... but my kisses bring again”). The distinction in the song

between ‘lips’ and ‘kisses’ has only a lawyer’s sophistication; it is not real. In fact,

Shakespeare uses this semantic division to show how deep the conflict is in man’s soul between its Ariel-element and its Caliban-element. Both for Angelo and for Mariana, reconciling these opposites, resolving the

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tension between these elements, is no easy matter. The function of this scene is to prepare us for the bed-trick. First, Shakespeare introduces us to the figure of Mariana, here at the 'moated grange'. The dramatic function of Mariana is that of a *deus ex machina*: rather than a rounded character, endowed with psychological realism, she is a necessary agent for the plot. Second, Shakespeare supplies us – by way of Isabella, who also has conveniently turned up at the moated grange – with the practical circumstances under which Isabella's assignation with Angelo is due to take place. It transpires that Isabella is to meet Angelo in a walled garden and there, 'upon the heavy middle of the night', go with him to perform the coital act.

One measure of Mariana's representative function is that the Duke makes no special effort to prepare her for this traumatic turn of events. Mariana is not a fully developed character designed to engage our sympathies; rather she is a cipher, required to square the circle of the plot. The standard view of Mariana is that she supplies the third grace (Passion) that complements Isabella's Beauty and Chastity; regarded in this way, she becomes more than a piece of convenient machinery and can be integrated comfortably into the symbolic design of the play. In short, we are asked to accept that Isabella and Mariana between them constitute the perfect woman in whom the three parts of the Platonic soul are in harmony.

It is significant that the clandestine assignation takes place in the middle of a 'vaporous night': this being so, it might seem plausible that Angelo could mistake one unknown female (Mariana) for another (Isabella). This detail is a modest gesture in the direction of credibility.

Furthermore, it is significant that Angelo should be Mariana's husband on a 'pre-contract': because they are betrothed, Mariana will not be engaging in fornication and will therefore commit 'no sin': that is, she will not lose the grace that she brings to the triangular dance. Consequently, the trap is set to show that Angelo's 'place' is no guarantee of his 'greatness'.

ACT IV Scene 2

Pompey's function in the play is to represent the common-sense attitude towards human sexuality. At the start of this scene, his retort to the Provost establishes the superiority of his point of view:

If the man be a bachelor, sir, I can; but if he be a married man, he's his wife's

head; and I can never cut off a woman's head.

The wholesomeness of this viewpoint he illuminates by means of his ready wit: here, his triple pun upon 'head' (male foreskin/master/virginity) reminds us that sex is not to be taken too seriously, that at best it is fun. It was Samuel Johnson who maintained that Shakespeare wrote "without moral purpose". He meant not that Shakespeare's drama encouraged immorality, but that it declined to take a didactic stance: in this case, the playwright offers us Pompey's approach to sex and allows us to make up our own minds about it.

Pompey's dramatic value as a representative of Vienna's bawdy underworld/seedy underclass enables Shakespeare to present us with an ironic reflection upon the political outlook of Angelo's Vienna. His confession –

Sir, I have been an unlawful bawd time out of mind, but yet I will be content

to be a lawful hangman draws a deliberate comparison between fornication (which creates life) and execution (which exterminates it); ironically, Angelo's oxymoronic sense of values has brought about a state in which love-making is 'unlawful' and killing is lawful. It is upon this utterly ludicrous contradiction that Abhorson ("A bawd, sir? Fie upon him, he will discredit our mystery")

comments so indignantly. Not for the first time, Shakespeare's aim is to reduce Lord Angelo's dogmatic ethic to absurdity. In Act III Scene 2, Lucio had claimed satirically that Angelo was so severe and strict that he would condemn 'lecherous' sparrows to death for building their nests 'in his house-eaves'. Here, Abhorson's comment is a *reductio ad absurdum* of a legal

system which mysteriously condemns to death men for making love and creating life. The Provost presents Claudio with the warrant for his death. At this eleventh hour, Duke Vincentio (disguised) makes his entrance. At this critical point, Vincentio presumes that the bed-trick has worked and

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that all is going according to plan. Ironically, he rebukes the Provost for saying that Angelo is ‘a bitter deputy’. There is no doubt that this defence of Angelo –

He doth with holy abstinence subdue
That in himself which he spurs on his power
To qualify in others: were he mealed with that
Which he corrects, then were he tyrannous;
But this being so, he’s just

– is deeply disingenuous. He knows that Angelo has long since ceased to subdue ‘with holy abstinence’ the sexual part of himself for which he condemns others; on the contrary, he knows full well that, because Angelo is ‘mealed with that which he corrects’, he has become a ‘tyrannous’ hypocrite: in Wilson Knight’s words, he has “swiftly become an utter scoundrel”.

What Duke Vincentio does not yet know is that Angelo is not about to keep his part of the bargain. Consequently, Vincentio’s presumptuous assertion – “and here comes Claudio’s

pardon” – involves a dramatic irony at his expense; his confidence (expressed by his rhyming couplets) that Angelo will release his prisoner upon payment of the ransom is entirely misplaced. Here, Vincentio’s experimental research into the nature of man discovers an even lower level of evil, an even filthier pond: ”Whatsoever you may hear to the contrary, let Claudio be executed by four of the clock ...” Given this unexpected turn of events, Vincentio – presumably struggling to keep his composure and thinking on his feet – finds himself having to hatch Plan B. For the record, this involved plan is that the reprobate Barnardine should be executed before Claudio so that his head (“O, death’s a great disguiser”) can be presented to Angelo instead. In short, Vincentio is stalling for time. Of course, this rather casual and impromptu re-alignment of the plot is not especially important; intricate though it is, it is merely a convenient way of bringing events to a moral conclusion. In short, the turn of

events (which here are mere details) is entirely subservient to the dramatic purpose: namely, to present us with a bleak vision of man. The circumstantial description at the end of this scene – “Look, th’ unfolding

star calls up the shepherd ... it is almost clear dawn” – is a measure of the speed towards which the play is proceeding to its climax.

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS I :

Q1. Give analysis of Act 3 Scene 2

Answer.....
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Q2. Write analysis of Act 4 Scene 2

Answer.....
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ACT IV Scene 3

Duly installed as Assistant Hangman, Pompey conducts a tour of the prison. The cast of characters which he enumerates for us – thirteen former clients of The Bunch of Grapes who have fallen on hard times, plus ‘forty more, all great doers in our trade’ – is designed to illustrate the scale of Angelo’s operation against the Viennese sex-trade. The episode involving Barnardine is designed to present us with a vision of bestial man.

Although Pompey cracks a number of jokes both at the expense of Barnardine and at the expense of Death itself, the purpose of his remarks (“I hear his straw rustle”) is serious: ‘unaccommodated man’ is no more than such a ‘poor, bare, forked’ creature as Barnardine is. In other words, Barnardine is an emblem of condemned man: that is, man condemned to eat and sleep and die. Because Barnardine refuses to take seriously the prospect of his execution,

because he has not come to terms with death, Vincentio pronounces him ‘unfit to live or die’. Implicit in this pronouncement is a vision of man which echoes Claudio’s vision in Act III Scene 1 and which looks

forward to that Hobbesian creature whose 'nasty, brutish and short' life is to be seen merely as a preparation for his grisly death.

The next turn that the plot takes illustrates how firmly events in Shakespeare's Vienna are rooted in the theatrical world of comedy. This Vienna turns out to be a world in which no one will be allowed to meet his death: if a man must die, then it will be 'a most notorious pirate' by natural causes. It just so happens that Ragozine (who looks not unlike Claudio) has died at the very moment when the plot requires him to. The Duke's explanation – "O, 'tis an accident that heaven provides" – is there to pass off as an accident an incident which has occurred more by design. The Duke, then, has become a mouth-piece through which Shakespeare is prosaically describing the way in which his complex plot will develop. When

the Provost re-enters with Ragozine's head, the Duke's comment ("Convenient is it") refers specifically to the convenient machinery of the plot.

Duke Vincentio's dealings with Isabella have more artistic purpose. In soliloquy, the Duke tells us that he intends to keep Isabella 'ignorant of her good': that is, unaware that Claudio has been rescued. He tells her to the contrary that Angelo has released Claudio from the world [= executed him]. The decision is not a wanton act of mental cruelty, but must instead be seen in the context of Shakespeare's dramatic design. According to this design, it is necessary that Isabella –

Unhappy Claudio! wretched Isabel!

Injurious world! most damned Angelo!

– should be supplied with an opportunity to atone for her peremptory condemnation of the unhappy Claudio. To accomplish this end, she must be given an opportunity to show undeserved clemency/to redeem the most damned Angelo.

The Duke sets up the complicated arrangements by which he will return to Vienna in order to ensure that justice is done: to see that there is 'measure for measure'. The scene ends with a further bout of banter between the Duke and Lucio in which there is further dramatic irony at Lucio's expense. During this bout, Lucio's commentary on the Duke continues to run wild: to Lucio, he remains 'the old fantastical Duke of dark corners' of whom 'pretty tales' can be told ... Of Lucio, J. M.

Nosworthy remarks that “he scarcely speaks one word true throughout the whole play”; accordingly, the dramatic purpose of this episode is to signal that, in Act V

Scene 1, such hubris will meet its nemesis when Duke Vincentio removes his disguise ... In particular, the Duke will dispense poetic justice to Lucio if, at the end of the play, he orders him to marry ‘the rotten medlar’ whom he got with child two years earlier!

Lucio’s parting pronouncement on himself (“I am a kind of burr, I shall stick”) reminds us that he belongs to the irreducible contingent of mankind required to complete a dramatic pattern.

ACT IV Scene 4

The action switches back to Vienna. Angelo, not realising that Duke Vincentio is having to react on the spur of the moment to his unscrupulous actions, expresses his bewilderment at Vincentio’s commands and countermands: “and why meet him at the gates and redeliver our authorities there?” The ironic point at Angelo’s expense is that, ‘if any crave redress of injustice, they should exhibit their petitions in the street ...’ So is the climactic scene of the play set up.

Now, Angelo (from whom we have not heard since the bed-trick was practised upon him) goes into soliloquy in order to express aloud his true thoughts upon the nefarious deeds which he has committed. His confession, his self-analysis, is made more dramatic and poignant by his knowledge that Isabella can legitimately ‘crave redress’ for injustice. The diction of his soliloquy is alive with adjectives, nouns and verbs which betray his fear that he may have impregnated Isabella. His first statement – “this deed unshapes me quite” – indicates his loss of personal identity. At the back of his mind, there lies the ironic thought that, while he may be ‘unpregnant’ [= not alert] to things happening around him, Isabella may literally be pregnant. Clearly, he is beginning to suffer from a guilty conscience; this suffering, writes Wilson Knight, in a brilliant phrase, is “the reward ... of an idealism not harmonized with instinct.” Not only because he has ‘deflowered’ a maid, but also because the ‘eminent body’ that did the deflowering [= his] should have known better, Angelo is becoming acutely aware of his own hypocrisy and villainy.

Notes

On the one hand, Angelo begins to suffer from an acute remorse for what he has done; on the other, he suffers from an acute fear that he will be found out. Consequently, he crossexamines himself in this soliloquy, not about the damage that he has done to a maid, but about the damage that he may have done to himself. First, he reasons that Isabella would 'tongue' him if it were not for the fact that she would be ashamed of having lost her virginity.

Second, he calculates that, even if she overcomes this shame, his position in the state/his 'eminent bulk' will daunt her; he calculates that his position of authority makes him immune to such suspicion/prosecution. Third, Angelo reasons that Claudio – 'who should have lived' had to be executed lest he came back 'in the times to come' to take his 'revenge' upon Angelo for the dishonourable circumstances under which his sister lost her virginity. Angelo, then, is acting in the tradition of the Machiavellian politician: that is, he is thinking first and foremost of his own survival. Although his mind moves to and fro between the alternatives that were open to him, he convinces himself (on Machiavellian grounds) that he was right to proceed with Claudio's execution. In the event, Angelo had opted for Machiavellian selfpreservation; in the end, he finds himself suffering from remorse: "Would yet he had lived." Angelo, then, failed to keep his part of the bargain simply because he considered that it was expedient not to do so; at the end of this soliloquy, he is a more complex character, regretting his duplicity in Claudio's apparent execution. The final image is of a confused human individual ("We would, and we would not") who cannot free himself from the horns of his dilemma.

ACT IV Scene 5

The purpose of this brief scene is to re-introduce Vincentio in his own habit. Furthermore, it presents him refining his plot against Angelo and warning his cohorts (Flavius, Valencius, Rowland, Crassus) that this plot may take surprising turns. The function of this warning is that of a safety-catch: that is, it warns the audience that, although the Duke may appear to make mistakes, he remains in tactical control.

ACT IV Scene 6

This scene fulfils a similar function. Isabella – it is clear – has been primed by the Duke to make only an indirect appeal for justice; moreover, she has been warned not to worry if – as part of the Duke’s plan – he speaks against her (‘on the adverse side’). The purpose of these statements is again to alert the audience that Act V will not take an entirely straightforward course. Duly, Act IV ends with the triumphant return of Duke Vincentio to his city.

ACT V Scene 1

To the sound of trumpets, Duke Vincentio returns to Vienna and – for all Angelo knows begins to resume control of events in his capital in complete ignorance of the turns that they have taken. Since we know that the Duke’s knowledge is superior, we may view this scene through the comfortable window of our superior awareness and hear how disingenuous and ironic his remarks to Angelo are. Bertrand Evans’ analysis of this scene cannot be bettered.

Commenting on the multiple layers of irony, he forewarns us in italics that ‘every flash’ of irony will come of just such an utterance as the Duke would have made without ironical intent if he had truly just returned to Vienna.

For a start, the Duke’s comment that “we hear such goodness of your justice” is loaded with a heavy irony because it pays to Angelo the very compliment which he does not deserve.

To assess the dramatic effectiveness of this scene, it is vital to remember what Isabella, its chief protagonist, does not know. She speaks ‘indirectly’ to Duke Vincentio because Friar Lodowick* told her to do so: in short, she does not know that the Friar was the Duke in disguise. For this reason, she is able to petition her ‘worthy prince’ for justice without the disadvantage of feeling that she plays a part in a staged scene. *Given that the Duke is playing games with every other character in the scene, this pseudonym – derived from the Latin verb *ludere* – is poetically

appropriate for him. The dramatic effect of her unawareness is that she responds to Duke Vincentio’s ironic remark – “Here is Lord Angelo shall

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give you justice” – with righteous indignation. It is important to remember that her response is emotional because she also does not know that Claudio is still alive. Consequently, Isabella –

That Angelo’s a murderer, is ‘t not strange?

– can begin to call Angelo names in the categorical and uncompromised belief that they apply to him. An advantage of Isabella’s half-knowledge is that she can call Angelo both ‘murderer’ and ‘virgin-violator’ (even though neither cap actually fits) with complete integrity and moral rectitude: “for truth is truth”. She is not put at the disadvantage which would occur if she were having merely to pretend that Claudio has been murdered. The Duke spends the entire scene in disingenuous mode. First, for Angelo’s benefit, he assents to the suggestion that Isabella – to say such slanderous things – must be of unsound mind. Subsequently, and equally for Angelo’s benefit, he appears to change his opinion; he remarks that Isabella’s accusation [= that Angelo, for all his ‘dressings’ and ‘titles’, is an ‘archvillain’]

makes a great deal of sense to him: “Her madness hath the oddest frame of sense.”

Mischievously, the Duke entertains the possibility that there is method in her madness ...

It is worth noting that, before allowing Isabella to proceed with her tale, Shakespeare inserts an interlude of inconsequential banter between the Duke and Lucio. The function of such episodes is to remind us that, although the play seems headed for a tragic climax, its characters continue to inhabit a comic world in which all shall end well.

Isabella does not mince her words. The invidious remarks that she makes about Angelo (‘pernicious caitiff deputy’/‘his concupiscent intemperate lust’) entitle Vincentio to spring vehemently – and very ironically – to Angelo’s defence. If Isabella’s condemnations had not been so extreme, then the Duke could not have put Angelo in such an embarrassing and intimidating spot: “first, his integrity stands without blemish ... if he had so offended he would have weighed thy brother by himself, and not have cut him off.” Oh no, he wouldn’t!

Knowing all the while that Angelo is ‘an hypocrite’, the Duke enjoys a pantomime pretence to his Deputy’s face that he could not possibly be such a man/could not possibly be guilty of moral turpitude. Furthermore,

the Duke's comment – "This needs must be a practice" – is ironic because the trick is being played not by Isabella upon the Duke, but by the Duke on Angelo. At the same time, Lucio's continual interjections – "I know him, 'tis a meddling friar; I do not like the man" – constantly remind us that Shakespeare's Vienna is ultimately a comic world. The dramatic irony at Lucio's expense continues to prepare us for his comic nemesis.

It is important to note that Friar Peter (either a misnomer for Friar Thomas or a reincarnation of Friar Thomas from Act I Scene 3) shares the secret of the Duke's disguise. If Act IV Scene

5 and Scene 6 are to be believed, then he is acting as an agent of Vincentio's plot. Here,

Friar Peter/Friar Thomas' function is to supply a convenient reason why Friar Lodowick [= Duke Vincentio] is unable to appear and explain his part in Isabella and Mariana's case against Lord Angelo.

The Duke continues to control proceedings in his own person. His disingenuous question –

"Do you not smile at this, Lord Angelo?" – and his genial imperative – "Be you judge of your own course" – are consciously designed to make Angelo squirm in his uncomfortable seat of power. Such is the poetic justice to be done that Angelo will be compelled to pass his own precise/severe judgement on his corrupt behaviour and in this way come finally and fully to

know himself. We witness the entrance of the veiled Mariana in the enjoyable knowledge that Angelo does not know who she is; we richly enjoy the advantage that we and she hold over the corrupt Deputy. The Duke's cross-examination of Mariana –

DUKE Are you a maid?

MARIANA No, my lord is entirely disingenuous and carried out by the Duke for Lord Angelo's benefit. It is vital to note that the Duke – in his endeavour to bring his protégé to a full knowledge of himself – is in full control of proceedings; in this respect, the Duke displays the manipulative powers that Nicolo Machiavelli would rightly have applauded in a 'royal prince', a good governor.

Notes

Mariana's declaration that Angelo has been the victim of a bed-trick represents the first stage of his encounter with nemesis in this scene. The dramatic moment of anagnorisis when

Mariana unveils –

My husband bids me; now I will unmask.

That is the face, thou cruel Angelo, Which once thou swor'st was worth the looking on is the moment when Angelo realises that his own cruelty has been exposed. In blank verse that reflects her nobility and her poise, Mariana – to Angelo's obvious astonishment – narrates the circumstances under which he knew her 'as a wife'. Angelo's grim response – "I did but smile till now" – announces not that he is about to capitulate and confess, but that he is going to try to bluff his way out of his predicament. His request – that Vincentio give him 'the scope of justice' – is one of the most hypocritical statements that he makes in the play and it illustrates the depth of his moral depravity.

Of course, Angelo – in trying to dig himself out of this deep pit – succeeds only in digging himself further into it. First, it is ironic that he should ask the Duke, who has conceived the practice, to let him 'find this practice out'. Second, it is ironic that the Duke (while appearing to go along with Angelo's self-righteous scheme) should condemn the 'foolish friar' and the 'pernicious woman' and pay tribute to Angelo's non-existent 'worth and credit'.

It falls to Escalus publicly to cross-examine Friar Lodowick. During this cross-examination, Shakespeare has fun in creating dramatic ironies not only at the expense of Lucio, but also at the expense of the assembled throng which is equally ignorant of the Friar's true identity.

Accordingly, he puts into Lucio's mouth a series of pejorative epithets ('rascal', 'goodman Baldpate', 'a flesh-monger, a fool and a coward', 'bald-pated, lying rascal') that builds towards the eagerly anticipated moment when Lucio pulls off the Friar's hood and discovers the Duke in his own person, not in a dark corner, but in broad daylight: He pulls off the Friar's hood and discovers the Duke. Shakespeare prepares this moment of anagnorisis with such care because it is the moment when Lucio comes literally face to face with his nemesis.

Into Escalus' mouth, Shakespeare puts a less pointed series of expressions ('the Duke's in us', 'thou unreverend and unhallowed friar',

‘this worthy man’) which echoes the public’s unawareness of the Duke’s successful experiment. The great advantage of Duke Vincentio’s experiment [= his disguised absence as a friar] is that he has been able to adopt the impartial position of an onlooker upon the Viennese state. It is not, however, clear whether this overview of the city –

Where I have seen corruption boil and bubble
Till it o’errun the stew

– is a description of Vincentio’s city (from which he absented himself so that Angelo’s new broom could sweep clean) or of Angelo’s city (in which the Deputy added his own dimension to the corruption). The Duke’s line – “I protest, I love the Duke as I love myself” – suggests a measure of complacency. Certainly, he feels free to sentence an astonished Lucio to a fate ‘worse than hanging’; certainly, he feels entitled to mete out justice [= marriage to Mistress Kate Keepdown] to a minor miscreant ... Now that the unserious business is over, Duke Vincentio, on his return, must in addition show that he is a reformed ruler by virtue of the justice that he metes out to Lord Angelo. His treatment of Angelo (for whom the Friar’s unhooding was a second moment of anagnorisis) may determine our ultimate opinion not only of the Duke, but also of man himself.

Upon retaking his seat of authority, Duke Vincentio turns to Angelo – who, now, at long last, is aware that the Duke as Friar Lodowick has all along been implicated in the practice against him. The Duke asks him how he pleads in response to the charges of corruption ... Without hesitation, Angelo’s response to the ‘good prince’ is to plead guilty, confess his sins and beg for an immediate death-sentence. By this response, Angelo demonstrates publicly that he has learned what just measure needs to be taken in his case: that is, he judges his own case, thereby re-affirming his original vow (sworn in II.1) that any misdeeds of his should provide the ‘pattern’ for his own death.

At this moment, Duke Vincentio orders that Angelo must marry Mariana immediately. By doing so, the Duke, at one and the same moment, is not only rewarding Mariana with a husband and thereby redeeming her, but also – apparently – passing a merciful judgement upon Angelo’s corrupt conduct ... Next, Duke Vincentio turns his attention to Isabella’s pleas for justice.

Notes

Ultimately, the Duke's treatment of Isabella may determine whether we think that man – in the form of Angelo and Vincentio – is a fallen creature for whom redemption is impossible. It is significant that the language in which he addresses Isabella (“Your friar is now your prince”) is ambiguous: it is both that of a prince to a subject and that of a man to a woman who owes him a favour.

Now, the uneasy suggestion – “Your friar is now your prince” – is that Isabella should find some way to thank Vincentio for pardoning her for her outspokenness ... This suggestion – not without an equivalence to Angelo's emotional/moral blackmail – stands only to be reinforced when Isabella later learns that the Duke has also saved Claudio's life for her. Deliberately, he has continued to withhold from her the news of Claudio's pardon: suddenly, it becomes possible to assign an ulterior motive to his decision to keep up the pretence far longer than is necessary or kind ...

Upon the re-entry of Angelo (‘this new married man’) and Mariana, the Duke, comfortably inhabiting the role of a true prince, tells Isabella that, although she must pardon Angelo for Mariana's sake, so that Mariana is not immediately widowed, he - as a ‘royal duke’, a true prince – cannot afford the luxury of such leniency. He tells the assembled populace that he has learned the error of his lenient/tolerant ways and that he must now exact retribution:

“An Angelo for Claudio, death for death!”

Haste still pays haste, and leisure answers leisure;

Like doth quit like, and Measure still for Measure.

It is accordance with Old Testament law (such as operates in **King Lear**) that the Duke condemns Angelo to ‘the very block’ on which Claudio was supposedly executed. His new dispensation of justice is no more enlightened than an eye for an eye: in other words, it does without Christian mercy. It is for such mercy (after all, the quality of mercy is not strained) that Mariana and Isabella then plead in concert. The Duke makes it clear that he has married Mariana to Angelo simply so that her honour can be satisfied and her financial future secured; so left, she should be able to buy herself ‘a better husband’. Mariana, however, continues to think not only of herself. Mariana, an agent of Christian grace, entreats Isabella to assist her cause on the Christian grounds that

redemption and rehabilitation are possible for all men. Her argument – that ‘the best men are moulded out of faults’/‘so may my husband’ – applies not only to Angelo, but also of course to the Duke who at this very moment is inspired by a reformist zeal. After Mariana (“O Isabel, will you not lend a knee?”) has implored Isabella to plead with her for Angelo’s life, there is a huge moment when the Isabella-actress can hold the audience in silent suspense for as long as she

dares. Because this silence is so long and tense, the Duke (“He dies for Claudio’s death”) reiterates that Angelo’s nemesis awaits him ... It is only when Isabella, learning at last not to be so puritanical and sanctimonious, does kneel and intercede on Angelo’s behalf that the

Duke softens. Isabella’s argument –

My brother had but justice

In that he did the thing for which he died.

For Angelo ...

... Thoughts are no subjects;

Intents, but merely thoughts

– exonerates Angelo on the flimsiest of grounds (that her beauty naturally tempted him) but in so doing illustrates that she herself has learned to temper her selfish passion with a selfless compassion. Her further argument – that an intention to commit a crime is not itself a crime may raise important issues for the student of jurisprudence; its function here, however, is to illustrate that Isabella has developed/matured into a Christian soul upon whom the votarists of Saint Clare would now impose too strict a restraint. Now that Isabella has passed this critical test, Duke Vincentio proceeds to master the ceremonies towards a finale. He proceeds to exercise control over the Viennese state in keeping with New Testament morality. Escalus pronounces a final judgement upon Angelo’s moral turpitude/his ‘lack of tempered judgement’. As a consequence, Angelo expresses the contrite judgement upon himself that he deserves to die and, as a consequence, attains that

degree of self-knowledge [= becomes a better man] which permits his redemption in a Christian world.

The Duke thereupon produces and un-muffles Claudio – who is very much alive. Now that both Angelo and Isabella have in their different

ways redeemed themselves, the plot can proceed towards its comic conclusion. If **Measure for Measure** is 'a problem play', then the problem is that this conclusion seems to have been artificially achieved. The poetic justice which results from Shakespeare's masterly organization of events does not always seem consistent with our own sense of natural justice/of fair play. In the first case, Angelo –

Well, Angelo, your evil quits you well,

Look that you love your wife: her worth worth yours seems to get more than he deserves. For his corrupt behaviour, his reward is not merely a free pardon from execution, but also the love of a good woman. Given this dispensation of

justice, Duke Vincentio's remark – "I find an apt remission in myself" – seems well wide of the mark: such leniency towards such arch-villainy suggests that he is an unreformed liberal who is incapable of ensuring measure for measure. In the second case, Lucio, never worse than a 'lewd fellow', does get exactly what he deserves:

Marrying a punk, my Lord, is pressing to death, whipping and hanging.

His nemesis – which takes the form of an immediate marriage to that 'rotten medlar' Kate Keepdown, the prostitute by whom he has a 15-month-old child – is poetically suited to his misdemeanours. Such an ignoble marriage is perfect reward for a career in which the sins at least by Lord Angelo's standard – have been of the second rank: for example, insolence, insubordination, slander. The Duke's genial verdict upon Lucio's conduct is entirely in keeping with his relaxed instincts; he is not in favour of whipping and hanging anyone, let alone a 'lewd fellow'. In the third case, Vincentio supplies us with an insight into his own way of thinking which perhaps explains why – at the end of the play – he is no stricter than he was

at the beginning. His repeated proposition to Isabella for your lovely sake

Give me your hand and say you will be mine

Whereto if you'll a willing ear incline,

What's mine is yours, and what is yours is mine is distinctly problematic in that, in the final analysis, it is tantamount to Angelo's original attempt to blackmail Isabella. It seems reasonable to the Duke that Isabella, by way of recompense for his saving of her honour and her brother's life, should agree to his offer of marriage.

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS II :

Q1. Give analysis of Act 4 Scene 2

Answer.....

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Q2. Write analysis of Act 5 Scene 1

Answer.....

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14.4 LET'S SUM UP

The moral deal is nothing more dignified than the calling-in of a favour: what is more, it begins to look especially reprehensible when we consider that the good governor (as opposed to the scheming, self-interested prince) should be endeavouring to see innocents receive justice in any case.

As a consequence, the conclusion of the play ties up the loose ends of the plot, but leaves hanging the moral question which **Measure for Measure** set out to answer: namely, what kind of a creature is man? Given Vincentio's unreconstructed state, the answer seems to be that man is no more than an incorrigible recidivist: that is, a fallen creature who cannot be expected to reform himself for good.

14.5 KEYWORDS

- **Beget** :to produce; to father offspring
- **Betrothed**: the person to whom you are engaged
- **Calumny**: an abusive attack on a person's character or good name
- **Celerity**: swiftness, rapidity of motion or action
- **Censure** :harsh criticism or disapproval

14.6 QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW

1. How does Shakespeare present Lucio? What do Lucio's character and attitudes contribute to the play as a whole?
2. How does Shakespeare present ideas about 'restraint' and 'liberty' in Measure for Measure?
3. In Measure for Measure, what is the significance, to the play as a whole, of Escalus?
4. 'I have seen corruption boil ...' What ideas does Shakespeare present about corruption in Measure for Measure, and by what means?
5. What is the significance, in your opinion, of Shakespeare's presentation of Claudio and Juliet in Measure for Measure?

14.7 SUGGESTED READINGS AND REFERENCES

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- Measure for Measure
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14.8 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS 1 :

Answer 1 : Check Section 14.3 Act 3 Scene 2

Answer 2 : Check Section 14.3 Act 4 Scene 2

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS 2 :

Answer 1 : Check Section 14.3 Act 4 Scene 2

Answer 2 : Check Section 14.3 Act 5 Scene 1