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INSTITUTE OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

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SCHOOL OF SCIENCE & HUMANITIES

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH

SYLLABUS – DRAMA-II – SHS1206

SHS1206	DRAMA - II	L	T	P	CREDITS
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COURSE OBJECTIVE: To make students to realize how life and drama are closely linked.

UNIT – 1 (20th Existentialists Dramas) 10 Hrs

Detailed : Jean-Paul Sartre : *The Respectful Prostitute*

Non-Detailed : Albert Camus : *Caligula*

UNIT – 2 (Early 20th Century Drama) 10 Hrs

Detailed : Galsworthy : *Justice* (1910)

Non-Detailed: J.M. Barrie : *The Admirable Crichton* (1916)

UNIT – 3 (20th Century Drama) 10 Hrs

Detailed : T.S. Eliot : *Murder in the Cathedral* (1935)

Non – Detailed: Arthur Miller : *Death of a Salesman* (1949)

UNIT – 4 (20th Century - Absurd Drama) 10 Hrs

Detailed : Harold Pinter : *The Caretaker* (1960)

Non- Detailed : John Osborne : *Look Back in Anger* (1956)

UNIT - 5 (21st Century Feminist Drama) 10 Hrs

Detailed : Martin McDonagh : *The Beauty Queen of Leenane* (1996)

Non – Detailed : Caryl Churchill : *Top Girls* (1982)

References:

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UNIT I – DRAMA-II – SHS1206

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DRAMA- II: SHS1206

Course Materials

UNIT – 1 (20th Existentialists Dramas)

Detailed : Jean-Paul Sartre : *The Respectful Prostitute*

Non-Detailed : Albert Camus : *Caligula*

DETAILED

THE RESPECTFUL PROSTITUTE- JEAN-PAUL SARTRE

Characters:

Lizzie - A white woman. She is a prostitute. While she does not wish to testify against the Negro in court, she is manipulated by the Senator into signing an accusation. She wears a snake charm bracelet.

The Negro - A black man who is described as "tall" and "strapping" with white hair. He is married and has children. He is on the run because he has been accused of raping Lizzie.

Fred Clarke - A wealthy white man. The Senator's son. He asks Lizzie to testify against the Negro and accuse him of raping her, so that his cousin, Thomas, will not go to jail for shooting the black man who was with the Negro

The Senator - Fred Clarke's father. He manipulates Lizzie into signing the accusation.

Thomas - Fred Clarke's cousin. He killed the black man who was with the Negro.

John and James - Two policemen, that also try to pressure Lizzie into signing the accusation.

Characters: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Respectful_Prostitute

Plot Summary

Setting

Lizzie moves to the south of the United States. She is on a train when four white men harass her. Two black men defend her, and a fight ensues. In the fight, Thomas kills the black man that was with The Negro. He is arrested. He is a nephew of the rich Senator Clarke. The Negro escapes, and the other white men spread the rumour that he had raped Lizzie, so that Thomas shooting the other black man would become acceptable.

The first act

Scene I

The Negro knocks at Lizzie's door. He says that the Whites are chasing him. He asks her to testify for him that he did not harm her in front of the judge, because the Whites want to charge him in court. She refuses to go to the police, but agrees that if they force her to testify, she will tell the truth, but when he tries to hide in her house, she sends him away.

Scene II

Fred, Lizzie's client from last night, comes out of the bathroom. He is the senator's son. During the scene, he directs the conversation towards the incident on the train. He tries in many different ways to get Lizzie to go to the police and testify against The Negro, but Lizzie says no to everything and refuses to falsely testify that the black man raped her, when in reality, she was being harassed by white men on the train and the black men defended her. At the end of the scene you hear a voice of a police officer. The police officer enters Lizzie's house with his colleague.

Scene III

Scene III features John and James, the two policemen who were previously only heard speaking from offstage. They know Fred, and like him, and are also racists. They also try to convince Lizzie to testify against The Negro. When the three men present Lizzie with a document that would prove the rape allegations with Lizzie's signature, she says no again.

Scene IV

In scene IV, the senator himself goes to Lizzie's house. He is a good speaker, and he knows how to talk to voters. He gains Lizzie's trust during the scene, and at the end he gives her a choice. Either The Negro, who "hangs around, robs and sings" or Thomas, "an officer, Harvard student and good American". While she is still reluctant, the senator takes Lizzie's hand and forces her to sign. Lizzie immediately realizes her mistake and tries to call the senator back. However, the senator has already disappeared and does not listen to Lizzie.

The second act

The second act takes place 12 hours later, also at Lizzie's house. During this time The Negro has jumped through one of her windows and is hiding behind a curtain.

Scene I

On the same evening, the senator visits Lizzie. He gives her a \$100 reward for her testimony. As for The Negro, he is wanted by a white lynchmob, who are searching for him in every house.

Scene II

The Negro comes out of hiding and asks Lizzie, who is shocked to see him, to help hide him. Lizzie gives him a revolver, but he states that he doesn't want to use it on the mob, so the revolver is relatively useless to him. There are then noises from the street, as the mob is coming closer. The Negro hides in the bathroom when there is a knock at the door.

Scene III

Scene III is very short. Lizzie explains to the men knocking on the door that she has not hidden The Negro, because she was raped by him. The men believe it and leave.

Scene IV

In scene IV, The Negro comes out of hiding again. They talk briefly about the differences between black and white people, during which Lizzie also sees similarities between her and The Negro. Then there is another knock on the door and The Negro hides for the third time.

Scene V

Lizzie opens the door and Fred comes in. During the conversation, Fred hears a noise from the bathroom. Lizzie tries to convince him that it is her next client, but Fred doesn't believe her and goes to check. He finds The Negro, who immediately runs away from him and out into the street. Lizzie runs after him and shouts that he is innocent, but two shots are fired. She is very angry and about to kill Fred, however, Fred, just like his father, is a very good speaker and manages to convince her not to.

Short Summary

The action takes place in a small town in one of the southern states of America. Lizzie McKay, a young girl, arrives from New York by train, where she witnesses the murder of one of two blacks by a white man, who, as the killer later explained, allegedly wanted to rape Lizzie. The next morning, the surviving gray-haired black man appears at Lizzie's door and begs her to testify to the police that the black man is innocent, otherwise he will be lynched by the residents of the city who are already hunting him. Lizzie promises to fulfill his request, but refuses to hide it and slams the door in front of him.

At this time, Fred, her nightly guest, a wealthy and well-groomed young man, comes out of the bathroom. Lizzie confesses to him that she avoids receiving random guests. Her dream is to make three or four regular old friends who would visit her once a week. Although Fred is young, he looks personable, so she offers him her permanent services. Fred tries not to show her that she made a strong impression on him, so he starts to be insolent and pays only ten dollars. Lizzie is indignant, but Fred orders her to shut up and adds that otherwise she will be behind bars. He may well give her this pleasure, since his father is Senator Clark. Lizzie gradually calms down, and Fred starts a conversation with her about yesterday's incident on the train, described in the newspapers. He wonders if the negro was really going to rape her. Lizzie replies that nothing like this happened. The negroes talked very calmly among themselves. None of them even looked at her. Then four whites entered. Two of them began to pester her. They won the rugby match and were drunk. They began to say that the compartment smelled of blacks, and tried to throw the blacks out of the window. The negroes defended themselves as best they could. In the

end, one of the whites got his eye knocked out, then he pulled out a revolver and shot the negro. Another Negro managed to jump out the window when the train approached the platform.

Fred is sure that the Negro will not have long to walk free, since they know him in the city and will soon be captured. He wonders what Lizzie will say in court when she is summoned to testify. Lizzie declares that she will tell what she saw. Fred tries to talk her into not doing it. In his opinion, she should not bring a person of her race to justice, especially since Thomas (the name of the killer) is Fred's cousin. Fred forces her to choose whom she would prefer to betray: some negro or Thomas, "a decent person" and "a natural born leader." He even tries to bribe the girl with five hundred dollars, but Lizzie does not want to take his money and bursts into tears, realizing that Fred had only been thinking about how to spend her all night. The doorbell rings, and shouts of "Police" are heard. Lizzie opens the door and two cops, John and James, enter the room. They demand Lizzie's documents and ask her if she brought Fred to her place. She replies that it was she who did it, but added that she was making love unselfishly. To this Fred replies that the money lying on the table is his and he has evidence. The police force Lizzie to choose: either she herself go to prison for prostitution, or to document that Thomas is not guilty, because the judge, if confirmed, is ready to release Thomas from prison. Lizzie flatly refuses to whitewash Thomas, even despite Fred's threats to imprison her or place her in a brothel. Fred is indignant at the fact that the fate of the "best man in town" depends on the "ordinary girl". He and his buddies are at a loss. Senator Clark appears in the doorway. He asks young people to leave the girl alone and declares that they have no right to terrorize her and force her to act against her conscience. In response to Fred's protesting gesture, the senator asks the police to leave, and he himself, making sure that the girl is not lying and that the negro really did not threaten her honor, begins to lament poor Mary. When Lizzie asked who Mary was, the senator replied that this was his sister, the mother of unfortunate Thomas, who would die of grief. Having said this, the senator pretends to leave. Lizzie is clearly upset. She's sorry for the old lady. Senator Clarke asks the girl not to think about his sister anymore, about how she could smile at Lizzie through her tears and say that she will never forget the name of the girl who returned her son to her. Lizzie asks the senator about his sister, learns that it was at her request that the senator came to Lizzie and that now Thomas's mother, this "lonely creature thrown overboard by fate," is waiting for her decision. The girl does not know what to do. Then the

senator approaches the matter from a different angle. He invites her to pretend that the American nation itself is addressing her. She asks Lizzie to make a choice between her two sons: a black man who was born by chance, God knows where and from whom. The nation fed him, and what did he give her? Nothing. He messes around, steals and sings songs. And another, Thomas, the complete opposite of him, who, although he did very badly, is one hundred percent American, a descendant of the oldest family in the country, a graduate of Harvard University, an officer, the owner of a factory where two thousand workers work and who will become unemployed if their owner will die, that is, a person absolutely necessary for the nation. With his speech, the senator confuses Lizzie and, having assured, moreover, that Thomas's mother will love her like her own daughter, makes the girl sign a document justifying Thomas.

After Fred and Senator leave, Lizzie already regrets giving up. Twelve hours later, a noise is heard from the street, a negro's face appears in the window; grabbing the frame, he jumps into an empty room. When the doorbell rings, he hides behind a curtain. Lizzie walks out of the bathroom and opens the door. On the threshold is a senator, who wants to thank the girl on behalf of his sister sobbing with happiness in the arms of his son and give her an envelope with a hundred-dollar bill. Not finding the letter in the envelope, Lizzie crumples it and throws it on the floor. Would she have liked it if Thomas's mother had gone by herself? worked hard to choose something for her to her liking. It is much more important to her attention and consciousness of what a person is seen in her. The Senator promises to thank Lizzie in due time and return soon. After he leaves, the girl bursts into sobs. The screams in the street are getting closer. The Negro comes out from behind the curtain, stops near Lizzie. She lifts her head and screams. The negro begs to hide him. If they catch him, they will douse him with gasoline and burn him. Lizzie feels sorry for the Negro, and she agrees to hide him until morning. The pursuers post sentries at both ends of the street and scour house after house. A phone call rings in her apartment, and then three people enter with guns. Lizzie declares that she is the very girl who was raped by the Negro, so she has nothing to look for him. All three leave. Fred appears after them, he locks the door behind him and hugs Lizzie. He reports that the pursuers nevertheless caught the negro, although not the one, and lynched him. After the lynching, Fred was drawn to Lizzie, which he confesses to her.

A rustle is heard in the bathroom. When Fred asks who is in the bathroom, Lizzie replies that this is her new client. Fred declares that from now on she will not have clients, she - only him. A black man comes out of the bathroom. Fred pulls out his revolver. The negro runs away. Fred runs after him, shoots, but misses and returns. Lizzie, not knowing that Fred missed, takes the revolver, which Fred, upon returning, threw on the table, and threatens to kill him. However, she does not dare to shoot and voluntarily gives him the weapon. Fred promises to settle her in a beautiful house with a park, from where she, however, will not be allowed to leave, because he is very jealous, give a lot of money, servants and visit her three times a week at night.

NON- DETAILED:

CALIGULA - ALBERT CAMUS

Caligula by Albert Camus (1938)

‘This purity of heart you talk of – every man acquires it, in his own way. Mine has been to follow the essential to the end... Still, that needn’t prevent me from putting you to death.’

Camus began writing a play about *Caligula* in 1938, completing a three-act version by 1941, and a final, four-act version was published in 1944. The play was part of what the author called the ‘Cycle of the Absurd’, along with the short novel *The Stranger* (1942) and the long essay, *The Myth of Sisyphus* (1942).

Overview:

The play depicts Caligula, Roman Emperor, torn by the death of Drusilla, his sister and lover. In Camus' version of events, Caligula eventually deliberately manipulates his own assassination. (Historically, Caligula's assassination took place on January 24, AD 41.)

Caligula, a seemingly kind prince, realises upon the death of Drusilla (his sister and his mistress) that "men die and they are not happy." Obsessed by the quest for the Absolute and poisoned by contempt and horror, he tries to exercise through murder and systematic perversion of all values, a freedom, which he discovers in the end is not truly freedom. He rejects friendship and love, simple human solidarity, good and evil. He takes the word of those around him, he forces them

to logic, he levels all around him by force of his refusal and by the rage of destruction which drives his passion for life.

But if his truth is to rebel against fate, his faculty is to oppose, and deny other men. One cannot destroy, without destroying oneself. This is why Caligula depopulates the world around him and, true to his logic, makes arrangements to arm those who will eventually kill him. Caligula is the story of a superior suicide. It is the story of the most human and the most tragic of errors. Unfaithful to man, loyal to himself, Caligula consents to die for having understood that no one can save himself all alone and that one cannot be free in opposition to other men.

ALBERT CAMUS and his play:

Albert Camus, the French existentialist wrote his political allegory, the play about the Roman emperor Caligula in 1944 after spending the war in France fighting with the French Resistance. Camus returned to the play and reworked it throughout his lifetime. Albert Camus was of Algerian origin and much of his political perspective would have been linked to the way Algeria was treated by the French. The Algerian crisis ended in 1963 three years after Camus' death in a car accident. Camus was one playwright in a movement of the 1950s and 1960s known as the Theatre of the Absurd. Absurdist playwrights included Samuel Beckett and Eugene Ionesco; their dramatic writing reflects the incomprehensibility and futility of the human existence. The play is ostensibly about a Roman emperor, Gaius "Caligula" Caesar (Emperor AD37 -41) but Camus uses the play to develop his philosophical ideas about the conflict between absolute power and individual freedom. Gaius was the youngest of nine children and the only boy to survive his grandfather, the emperor Tiberius. His father Germanicus, his mother Agrippina and all his brothers were either killed or starved to death by Tiberius and his lieutenant Sejanus. Gaius was given the nickname "Caligula" which means Little Boots by the soldiers because as a child he wore a child size version of army boots. Caligula is devastated by the death of his sister Drusilla with whom he probably had an incestuous relationship, deserts the Roman assembly for three days and three nights. On his return he is determined to understand the meaning of life. He is to push his power to the limits. His reign will become synonymous with terror, murder, torture, cruelty and sexual excess. "I've finally understood what absolute power is for. It gives the impossible a chance to exist. Freedom has no boundaries any more." Camus completed Caligula when he was 25. The play begins with the death of Drusilla, and the turning point of Caligula's life. The work itself is about cruelty and the arbitrary exercise of power.

Written in 1938 and first performed in 1945, no-one was left with any doubt of the influences and inferences of the play. Consider the time of writing. The world had witnessed dictators from both ends of the political spectrum espousing and putting into practice fantastic ideological plans. Mussolini bragged about a building a "New Rome"; Hitler guaranteed an "Aryan" empire; Stalin assured the necessity of his purges in the bringing about of a communist utopia. After the death of his sister/lover, Caligula realises a fact: "men die and they are not happy". He is experiencing the absurdity of human existence. Caligula wants to make the impossible, possible. He has realised the meaningless of the world and wants to make everyone else aware of it. The plan is to make everything in life obviously meaningless. He arbitrarily kills and makes ludicrous decrees such as a new order of merit based on the number of times a man visits the emperor's brothel (which he has staffed with the wives and mistresses of the Patricians). Caligula's acts are not one's of random madness, each of his bizarre pronouncements has a curious logic to them. When it is pointed out that he is a terror to the Roman people, he [feigns] surprise, reiterating the fact that what he's doing is a gift to the people - letting them understand the meaningless of life. Afterall, he adds, in the time he's been emperor, he hasn't gone to war, saving thousands of lives. But of course, Caligula is no hero, he represents the governments of Camus' time and the suffering their arbitrary rule creates. A criticism of the play is that although Caligula represents the authoritarian powers of the day [Fascism, Nazism, Communism] these powers did not express the meaningless of life. Camus does not want us to resign ourselves, as Caligula does, to the absurd but neither did the proponents of Nazism et al. If we are to be cautious against the spread of totalitarianism, then we can be so without needing to be aware of the absurd nature of the world. However, as an elaboration of the absurd, the play succeeds and works in addition with Camus' Myth and Sisyphus in helping us understand a difficult philosophical idea.

Theatre of ideas

Theatre in France has always been more philosophical and intense than in England. The tragedies of Jean Racine (1639-1699) have a purity and a terror with no match in English literature.

Like much modern French theatre, *Caligula* is a play of ideas, or maybe of one idea, in which the characters mostly exist as types or foils for the psychological and philosophical debate.

The character of Caligula

Gaius Julius Caesar Germanicus was the third emperor of the Roman Empire. 'Caligula' means 'little boots' and was a nickname given him by Roman soldiers when he was on campaign as a boy.

Caligula succeeded his adoptive grandfather, the emperor Tiberius, in 37 AD. For the first eight months of his reign he ruled wisely. But after his sister, Drusilla, died in 38, the 24-year-old Caligula abruptly changed character, becoming, in the words of the Roman historian, Suetonius, 'a monster'. He instituted a reign of terror, having leading patricians murdered, their sons killed and their daughters forced to work in public brothels.

So much for the historical record. In Camus's hands Caligula becomes a demented philosopher-emperor who takes most of the leading philosophical themes of Camus's time and pushes them to extremes. He seeks: a philosophy that's logical from start to finish, but in seeking it, time after time reveals the absurdity at the core of human hopes and ambitions.

Take the theme of freedom – Caligula realises that, by having complete power over every human in the Roman Empire, he has in effect become 'the only free man in the world'.

Or the idea of 'power' – for Caligula the only point of having power is to abuse it i.e. to have the power to use power senselessly and in the face of all rational limits or protest.

Or take Camus's central preoccupation of the 1930s, the Absurd. By carrying his wishes to their logical conclusion, Caligula demonstrates at some points the absurdity of human wishes; at others, the absurdity of having wishes which the real world cannot deliver. Right at the start of the play he says he wants the moon, he wants to possess the moon, why can't he have the moon? — establishing the absurdity of his romantic longings, the impossibility of his desires.

So the play isn't much concerned with character, let alone incidental touches of humanity or humour. Everyone talks as if they've just swallowed a philosophy textbook, and almost everything Caligula says seems designed to be quoted in a textbook about existentialism.

I wish men to live by the light of truth. And I've the power to make them do so.

All that's needed is to be logical right through, at all costs.

This world has no importance. Once a man recognises that, he wins his freedom... You see in me the one free man in the whole Roman Empire.

A man can't live without some reason for living.

One is always free at someone else's expense.

I've merely realised that there's only one way to get even with the gods. All that's needed is to be as cruel as they.

There's no understanding Fate; therefore I choose to play the part of Fate.

Logic, Caligula; follow where logic leads. Power to the uttermost; willfulness without end.

What I want it to live, and to be happy. Neither, to my mind, is possible if one pushes the absurd to its logical conclusions.

Other artists create to compensate for their lack of power. I don't need to make a work of art; I *live* it.

The only variation from the sweeping generalizations about life and the universe, fate and freedom, is when Caligula's soliloquies rise to a pitch of hysteria reminiscent of Racine's tragedies:

I want to drown the sky in the sea, to infuse ugliness with beauty, to wring a laugh from pain.

Ah, if only in this loneliness, this ghoul-haunted wilderness of mine, I could know, but for a moment, real solitude, real silence...

Not many laughs here (although Caligula's cynical brutality occasionally amuses *him*). Instead the play sustains an exhausting tone of continuous hysteria, reflecting the subject matter.

Structure of the play

The play doesn't so much have a plot as consists of a sequence of scenes each one designed to give examples of Caligula's insanity i.e. his realization that he can do *anything he wishes*. Thus we have scenes where he humiliates the patricians (the ruling class of Rome) who live in a constant state of terror; he forces them to invite him to dinner, forces them to let him sleep with their wives. If he feels like it he has their sense murdered, and, when he's bored, he has them poisoned or executed on a whim.

For Caligula, with absurdist logic, points out that, since all men must die, it is only a question of when not if and therefore it doesn't much matter whether it's now, or tomorrow, or in ten years' time.

This is an example of him pushing human logic right to its limits and exposing its absurd consequences. But it is also – when you step away from the play and ponder his speeches and actions along these lines – very immature. Sure, all men must die. But that makes life all the more precious, all the more worth saving, all the more worth living well. To point out that all men must die and then burst into tears about it or howl against the injustice of fate are both essentially immature, almost childish, responses.

The message of Shakespeare's tragedies – that it's the readiness, the ripeness, the preparedness to die, without hysteria or melodrama, which counts – is the philosophy of a much more worldly-wise and mature man.

Camus, born in 1913, was only 25 when the first draft was completed, much the same age as Caligula, who achieved all the mayhem which made him notorious for all time, before he was finally assassinated by his own bodyguard at the age of 28.

The play's climax

Having tortured, executed, debauched and manipulated as many men and women as he can, Caligula discovers that the Total Freedom he sought is empty, brings him no joy or release.

And so, when he discovers there is a plot to kill him, he carries his Absurdist logic – his repeated theme that life is meaningless – to its logical conclusion and chooses to ignore it.

Right at the very end of the play he murders Caesonia, the only woman who ever loved him, strangling her despite her pleas of love, and then allows himself to be stabbed to death by the conspirators.

Assessment

The play works examines, dramatises and takes to the limit the absurdist logic inherent in the figure of ‘the tyrant’ – the human who has complete power of life and death over everyone else in his society.

Assessing the play amounts to assessing whether the dramatisation, the showing-forth of Caligula’s madness in the series of short scenes which Camus has assembled, is adequate to the theme.

Well, there’s no doubting that many of the scenes are powerful – there is no shortage of cynical cruelty and occasional black humour but – despite much intense melodrama – the play is actually not very *dramatic*.

There are no reversals or surprises, Caligula just sets out on a quest to become a monster – and succeeds. He starts off spouting high romantic ambitions to conquer the moon and outface fate and achieve his freedom, and the play never departs from this high, airless, often hysterical tone.

Which makes it all the more surprising to learn that *Caligula* was a great success when first staged in 1945 with the 20 year-old actor Gérard Philipe making his name in the title role. The success or failure of plays is much more complex than poems or novels. It is dependent on innumerable contingent factors like the staging, costumes, lighting, music, on the ability of the actors, and, above all, on whether the production captures the often intangible spirit of the times.

Theatrical history is littered with plays which were smash-hit sell-outs in one season or year and which, only a few years later, seemed dated, badly made, creakily plotted or over-written, their one-time success now inexplicable.

Philipe was a talented new face, that probably helped, theatre has its own fashions and rising stars. But it also seems reasonable to guess that the play’s absurdity matched the post-war

mood, as people tried to rebuild lives (and cities and countries) devastated by years of war, and as the broader culture caught up with the mood of black nihilism unleashed by the terrible revelation of the Nazi death camps, and almost immediately afterwards the revelation that humanity had created new, atomic weapons which could potentially wipe us off the face of the earth. Not to mention, of course, the lingering memory of the last days of the Nazi regime and the mad rantings of the megalomaniac at the heart of it.

All these factors maybe explain why what appears to us, now, 70 years later, such an extended exercise in shrill adolescent hysteria, *at the time* perfectly caught the mood of a culture and a continent in ruins.

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DRAMA- II: SHS1206

Course Materials

UNIT – 2 (Early 20th Century Drama)

Detailed : Galsworthy : *Justice* (1910)

Non-Detailed: J.M. Barrie : *The Admirable Crichton* (1916)

DETAILED

JUSTICE (1910) - GALSWORTHY

Plot:

The play opens in the offices of James How & Sons, solicitors. A young woman appears at the door, with children in tow, asking to see the junior clerk, William Falder, on a personal matter. She is Ruth Honeywill, Falder's married sweetheart with whom he is planning to elope to save her from brutality and possible death at the hands of her drunken husband. After Robert Cokeson, the senior clerk, discovers that a cheque he had issued for nine pounds has been altered to read ninety, Falder confesses to the forgery, pleading a moment of madness. Realising that he must be in some sort of predicament in connection with the young woman, Cokeson shows considerable sympathy, as does the firm's junior partner, Walter How. But the senior partner James How does not, and turns Falder over to the police.

The opening of the second act takes place in court, at Falder's trial. He is defended by a young advocate, Hector Frome, who - while not attempting to deny that his client did indeed alter the cheque - pleads temporary aberration and argues that Falder was attempting to deal with a situation in which the woman he loved could obtain no protection from the law: either she had to stay with her husband, in terror of her life, or she could seek a separation (mere brutality not being a legal ground for divorce) in which case she would end up in the workhouse or on the streets selling her body in order to support her children. He pleads with the jury not to ruin the

young man's life by condemning him to prison. Falder is convicted and is sentenced to three years' penal servitude.

Cokeson visits Falder's prison asking if Ruth might be allowed to see the prisoner, but receives no sympathy. Ruth tells Cokeson that she has left her husband and that she is destitute and unable to support herself or her children.

Falder adapts to incarceration poorly, and at the end of his sentence leaves prison a broken man. Ruth and he appear at the solicitors' offices, and Ruth pleads with the partners to give Falder a chance and to take him back. The partners express their willingness reluctantly, but on condition that he give up Ruth entirely. At this point Falder, horrified, realises that she has managed to survive in his absence only by selling herself.

A policeman arrives to arrest Falder for failing to report to the authorities as a ticket-of-leave man. Overcome by the inexorability of his fate, Falder throws himself out of an upstairs window, falling to his death. The play ends with the words of the senior clerk who has tried so hard to help him, "No one'll touch him now! Never again! He's safe with gentle Jesus!"

Characters

- James How, solicitor
- Walter How, solicitor
- Robert Cokeson, their managing clerk
- William Falder, their junior clerk
- Sweedle, their office-boy
- Wister, a detective
- Cowley, a cashier
- Mr Justice Floyd, a judge
- Harold Cleaver, an old advocate
- Hector Frome, a young advocate
- Captain Danson, VC, a prison governor
- The Rev Hugh Miller, a prison chaplain
- Edward Clement, a prison doctor
- Wooder, a chief warder

- Moaney, convict
- Clifton, convict
- O'Cleary, convict
- Ruth Honeywill, a woman

Introduction

Galsworthy's Justice published in 1910 is a problem play. A.C. Ward says, "**Justice** is a commentary upon the prison administration of that period." No doubt, much of the strength of the popular appeal of the drama lies in the awfully realistic picture that it presents of the prison administration, no doubt, Galsworthy himself very keenly felt the need of reformation in jail administration. But taking the drama as a whole, it cannot be said that its central problem is the administration of the prison. As it is, the central problem of the drama is the one concerned with the administration of the criminal law in England and, for the matter of that in all modern civilized societies. The problem is – even if the law is justly administered, does it do full real justice to the criminal?

This is the central topic of the play-the failure of true justice in the name of doing justice according to law. This central theme of the failure of true justice is brought out by some inevitable concomitants of the administration of the law as it is.

Justice Plot Summary

Act 1

On a July morning Cokeson, the old managing clerk of the solicitors' firm named James and Walter How, is adding up and checking the entries in a bank pass-book. He is interrupted by a young girl named Ruth who wants to see Falder, a junior clerk of the office. Falder is not in the office just then. She insists on seeing Falder on a matter of life and death. Cokeson sends the bank pass-book to James, the senior partner. He then hears from Ruth that she is no relative to Falder but a friend: her children are with her. Reluctantly, and rather suspiciously, the old moral-minded clerk allows her to see Falder as soon as Falder returns, he leaves them together for a moment. She informs Falder that her husband tried to cut her throat the previous night and she has left home with the children. Falder asks her to be ready to start that very night with him to run away from England and gives her seven pounds. Old Cokeson comes in just when they are kissing to part, Ruth goes away and Cokeson warns Falder.

Then Walter, the junior partner, comes in and talks about business with Cokeson, James, father of Walter and senior partner, comes in with the bank pass book. He asks Walter if the latter drew £ 90 from the bank. Being informed that Walter drew only 9 and not 90, the shrewd lawyer James smells a rat. Suspicion falls on young Falder. It is found out that the counterfoil too has already been altered along with the cheque itself. The bank cashier is called in and he identifies Falder the person who took the sum of 90 from him by a cheque. Cokeson and Walter plead with James for dealing with Falder a bit leniently and not to hand him over to the police. But James thinks it a serious crime, especially in a lawyers' firm, sends for detective Wister and asks him to arrest Falder.

Act 2

Falder is put up for trial in the next October. The prosecution lawyer Cleaver states the case from the evidence of James, Walter, Cowley, the cashier and Wister, the detective. The defense lawyer Frome, a young humanitarian novice in the line, sets up an elaborate defense of Falder mainly on the ground that he did the forgery in a moment; of temporary insanity, so very emotionally stirred he was at the moment. In the eye of law, he cannot be held responsible for his action. Frome builds up his defence from the evidence of Cokeson, Ruth, and Falder, trying to prove how Falder's passionate eagerness to save Ruth from the hands of her brutal husband momentarily put him into great temptation to secure the money in order to fly with her and her children to South America.

The immorality involved in the design is admitted but the situation, Frome pleads, deserves consideration. The prosecution lawyer cross-examines the witnesses and easily makes short work of the plea of insanity. The judge takes a serious view of the immoral relation between Ruth and Falder. Then Frome and Cleaver address the Judge and jury, each according to his own view of the case, and the Judge sums up the case to the jury. The jury returns a verdict of guilty. Falder is sentenced to three years' rigorous imprisonment.

Act 3

Scene 1

It is Christmas Eve and Falder is serving his one month's term of solitary imprisonment. Cokeson pays a visit to the Governor of the prison with a view to enquiring after Falder's well-

being and, if possible, to arranging a visit. But the rule does not allow anyone to see a prisoner in separate confinement. He speaks to the Governor and the prison Chaplain about the evil of such heartless confinement. The Governor is sympathetic but helpless: the Chaplain is sarcastic and inconsiderate. Cokeson tells the story of Falder's love for Ruth and asks if the woman can see him. Nothing comes out of his request.

Scene 2

The Governor of the prison inspects the prisoners in their separate cells. Moaney, an old jailbird, has made a saw and tried to cut through the rod of the window. He is given two days' cell and bread and water. Clifton, another prisoner, complains of the noise that is made by his next-door man by banging the door: then the Irishman O'Cleary, who banged the door, complains that he wants some noise by way of conversation. Last of all, Falder is seen in his cell; the governor treats him sympathetically and asks the jail doctor to examine him. Falder is reported by the doctor to be physically all right; he cannot be recommended to be taken out and removed to the Workshops.

Scene 3

Falder's misery in the separate cell is depicted at some length by presenting him as broken, crushed, nervous, and now listening against the door, now started by the slightest noise, now walking the floor like one insane.

Act 4

Falder is released after two years, he having won a remission of about a year. He has met Ruth by Hyde Park and told her of his misery. Ruth comes to see Cokeson in his office and requests him to take in Falder once more; she gives her own history and tells him that she had to live as the mistress of her employee; but seeing Falder she is determined not to go back to her employer, but seeing Falder she is determined not to go back to her employer any more. Ruth goes out. Falder, who was waiting below, now comes up and tells Cokeson all his woes in prison and his woes after his release. He got a job in an office but had to give it up when other clerks came to know of his past. He forged some references to secure another job; but being afraid of detection he has left that place too. Cokeson is somewhat moved and promises to do what he can to take him in.

Now James and Walter come into the office and see Falder talking to Cokeson. Cokeson and Walter plead for Falder, and Falder too describes his misery and his underserved sufferings from the hands of society as an ex-convict, Ruth is called in and James asks her to give up Falder. Walter proposes to seek divorce for her. But James puts it to her that he is not morally chaste. Falder too realises the fact. He is very much mortified. Just at that moment, detective Wister comes in and arrests Falder on a charge of forging references. Falder is made desperate. He goes out with Wister and jumps down from the stairs and thus kills himself by the fall.

Conclusion

Galsworthy through this title, **Justice** points out the social injustice in the name of justice. To save his lady love Ruth, the protagonist Falder committed his first crime, an act of forgery. After two years of imprisonment he was denied by the society and killed himself. On the other hand judicial system fails to put an end to Ruth's suffering.

NON- DETAILED:

THE ADMIRABLE CRICHTON (1916)- J.M.BARRIE

Characters

Character Name	Gender	Part Size	Vocal Part(S)
Crichton	Male	Lead	Spoken
Lady Mary Lasenby	Female	Lead	Spoken
Tweeny	Female	Supporting	Spoken
Lady Agatha Lasenby	Female	Supporting	Spoken
Lady Catherine Lasenby	Female	Supporting	Spoken
Reverend John Treherne	Male	Supporting	Spoken
Lord Loam	Male	Supporting	Spoken
The Hon. Ernest Woolley	Male	Supporting	Spoken
Lord Brocklehurst	Male	Supporting	Non-singer
Fisher	Female	Featured	Spoken
Lady Brocklehurst	Female	Featured	Spoken

Tompsett

Male

Featured

Spoken

Servants

Either Gender

Ensemble

Silent

Summary:

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

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

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

In **Act II**, the yacht has been destroyed in a storm somewhere in the Pacific, and the party is stranded on a deserted island. The pompous Loam tries to assume leadership of the group; after all, he has the highest rank. But his practical skills are few. Crichton, on the other hand, is resourceful and practical. His survival skills mean that he soon assumes command of the party.

At first, the other aristocrats resent Crichton. Since he does not believe in social equality, he is happy to wield his newfound authority. The Hon. Ernest Woolley, Loam's nephew, clashes

with the butler over his obsession with crafting witty epigrams. When Crichton becomes the leader, he dips Ernest's head into a bucket of water for every epigram he makes in an effort to cure him of what Crichton considers a bad habit. Loam tries to assume leadership of a new group, but they soon realize they can't get by without Crichton's common sense. They return and signal their acceptance of his leadership by eating the food he has gathered and cooked.

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

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

Their social statuses have been inverted: the others now wait upon Crichton as if he were the lord and them his servants. Lady Mary is in love with Crichton, recognizing his abilities make him superior to anyone else in the group, no matter the setting. Although she is engaged to Lord Brocklehurst back in England, the Islanders have no hope of rescue, and she agrees to marry Crichton.

Just as Mary and Crichton are about to be married, they hear the sound of a ship's gun. For a moment, Crichton is tempted to do nothing, avoiding rescue. But he gives in and launches a signal so the ship can find them, resuming his status as a butler as soon as the rescuers find them.

Act IV, called "The Other Island," sees the party back in England, where everyone has reverted to their previous lives and statuses. Ernest has written a book about his experiences on the island, but presents himself and Loam as the leaders and barely mentions Crichton. Crichton is still the butler for the family, but they are made uneasy by his presence because

they all remember the truth. Mary is about to marry Lord Brocklehurst as planned. His mother, Lady Brocklehurst, asks Mary many questions about her life on the island, suspicious that she might have been unfaithful to Lord Brocklehurst while she was away. The Loams avoid telling her the truth, but when Lady Brocklehurst suggests Crichton might become Mary's butler after she is married, she reacts with horror and deems the suggestion impossible.

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

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

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SCHOOL OF SCIENCE & HUMANITIES

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH

UNIT III – DRAMA-II – SHS1206

**SATHYABAMA INSTITUTE OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY
(DEEMED TO BE UNIVERSITY)**

DRAMA- II: SHS1206

Course Materials

UNIT – 3 (20th Century Drama)

Detailed : T.S. Eliot : *Murder in the Cathedral* (1935)

Non – Detailed: Arthur Miller : *Death of a Salesman* (1949)

DETAILED

MURDER IN THE CATHEDRAL – T.S ELIOT

Characters:

Thomas

Thomas Becket is the Archbishop of Canterbury and former Chancellor of England. Historically, he stood up against Henry II's demands that the Church subsume its authority to Henry's secular power, and ultimately died for the cause. In the play, he is represented as an overly proud and sanctimonious man who nevertheless transcends his weakness to accept martyrdom as God's will.

Chorus

The chorus of *Murder in the Cathedral* comprises the women of Canterbury. Poor, common, and plain, these women have lived a difficult but manageable life since Thomas was sent into exile seven years before the play begins. Though they are Catholic and respect the archbishop, they are also worried that his return will bring them a new level of spiritual burden. The play examines the way they come to accept their spiritual responsibilities through the example of Thomas's martyrdom.

Herald

A messenger who brings word that Thomas Becket has returned to England and will soon arrive in Canterbury. He has a premonition that Thomas's return presages violence.

First Priest

A nameless priest of Canterbury, characterized by his excessive mournfulness and worry. He continually sees the situation of Becket's return as one that can bring trouble for his people and their country.

Second Priest

A nameless priest of Canterbury, characterized by his pragmatism. He examines Becket's return based on its political ramifications and notes how Becket's clash with Henry reflects issues of land ownership and power, rather than spiritual dominion.

Third Priest

A nameless priest of Canterbury, characterized by his patience. Whereas the other priests worry about how Becket's return will change their lives, the Third Priest suggests that, as no human can understand the way the universe works, so should they remain patient and allow God to work his will upon the world.

First Tempter

The first man to tempt Thomas identifies himself as Old Tom. He is a friend from Becket's early, carefree days, and he tempts Thomas with the possibility of relinquishing his responsibilities in favor of a more libertine lifestyle.

Second Tempter

The second man to tempt Thomas identifies himself as a political ally from Thomas's days as Chancellor. He tempts Thomas to resume his role as Chancellor, arguing that Thomas could do more good for the poor through secular power than he ever could as a priest.

Third Tempter

Thomas does not know the third tempter, who identifies himself as a simple baron. He tempts Thomas with the possibility of ruling the country via a coalition that would split control between the nominal ruler and the barons.

Fourth Tempter

The Fourth Tempter is unexpected. Using subtle arguments, he tempts Thomas with the possibility of courting martyrdom for the sake of his reputation and glory. His temptation is powerful because it touches on something Thomas has wished in his private moments. By denying this temptation, Thomas prepares himself to accept martyrdom for the right reason.

First Knight

Though none of the four knights is particularly individualized before Becket's murder, the First Knight gives his name as Reginald Fitz Urse afterward when he addresses the audience. He claims he is not a man of eloquence, and so mostly serves as a narrator during the knights' speeches.

Second Knight

Though none of the four knights is particularly individualized before Becket's murder, the Second Knight is introduced as William de Traci afterward. He presents an emotional

argument, asking for pity on the grounds that, though the knights committed the murder, they were "disinterested" and merely did what was necessary for the English people as ordered by their king.

Third Knight

Though none of the four knights is particularly individualized before Becket's murder, the Third Knight is introduced as Hugh de Morville afterward. He presents a long, detailed argument that Becket was guilty of great offenses against the English people, and hence was it legal to murder him.

Fourth Knight

Though none of the four knights is particularly individualized before Becket's murder, the Fourth Knight is introduced as Richard Brito afterward. He presents the most subtle argument, claiming that Becket essentially committed suicide by facilitating his murder, and hence the knights are innocent of the crime.

Henry

King Henry II, though not a speaking character in the play, is a large influence on the action. Historically, he was an impetuous king who wanted to subsume the various factions of English power under the crown; the most contentious of these was the church, led in England by Thomas Becket. The knights arrive in his name, and he is cited frequently by those in the play who try to understand Becket's past and character.

Pope

Though not a speaking character in the play, Pope Alexander figures prominently. Historically, he was protecting Thomas Becket at the time of this play's action, allowing the archbishop to announce excommunications upon the English church. His protection is one of the many barriers between Thomas and Henry, and it gives Thomas a defense against the knights.

Summary:

The play begins in the Archbishop's Hall of Canterbury Cathedral; the date is December 29, 1170. The members of the Chorus—made up of common women of Canterbury—are the first to speak. They say that it's been seven years since Thomas Becket, the Archbishop of Canterbury, has left them, and that—despite his kindness as a spiritual leader—it would be best that he not return, though they do not explain why. The Chorus says that they have suffered since he's left, but that they are nonetheless content if they are left alone, "to their

own devices,” and unbothered by the wealthier members of society (barons, merchants, the king) who can lord their power over the Chorus in a coercive fashion.

Ultimately, the Chorus conveys a sense of powerlessness as they say that they expect some “malady” to fall upon them. They can only wait in anticipation, since destiny is controlled by God, and—as the poor folk of Canterbury—they have no power to change their lives through the world of politics and commerce. They truly are left to themselves—to their own inventiveness and, ultimately, their faith.

After the Chorus’s opening monologue, three priests enter the scene and discuss a feud which occurred between Archbishop Becket and the king some time ago, before Becket’s departure. The second priest wonders what the Archbishop does now that he’s abroad in France, with the English and the French king being caught up in a political battle of “ceaseless intrigue.” The third priest comments that he sees nothing “conclusive”—nothing effective, dignified, or merited—in “temporal” (everyday and earthly) political (versus religious) government. He adds that the only law which the keepers of temporal power uphold is that of seizing and maintaining a greedy, lustful power.

After the priests’ brief discussion, a herald enters the scene, and announces that Becket, the Archbishop, is in England. The first priest asks if the feud between Becket and the king has been resolved or not—whether Becket comes in war or in peace. The herald replies by saying that Becket’s return, even though it may seem cheerful and potentially peaceful at first, is really just the beginning of more turmoil.

The priests respond to the herald’s message. The first priest says he fears for the Archbishop and the Church, adding that he always thought Becket was out of place in the world of political power (Becket was formerly both Archbishop and Chancellor). The second priest develops this, saying that, with the spiritual leadership of Becket back in Canterbury, they can feel confident that they will be guided through whatever political problems the king, barons, and landholders may throw at them, and concludes that they therefore have cause to rejoice. The third priest, more philosophically, says that they must “let the wheel turn” for good or bad—they must let the passage of time and the unfolding of fate operate however it will, and with whatever consequences it brings for their lives, since the nature of good and evil cannot be totally comprehended.

After the priests’ discussion about Becket’s return to Canterbury, the Chorus weighs in. They say they want the Archbishop to go back to France, thinking his presence in Canterbury will spell only doom. “Living and partly living” for seven years, the Chorus describes their time

living apart from the Archbishop as troubling, but at least tolerable. But Becket's return imposes a "great fear" upon them (the possibility of his death—of losing their spiritual leader). They therefore plea that Becket go back to France. The second priest, hearing the Chorus's reluctance about Becket's return, condescends to them, calling them "foolish, immodest and babbling women." He tells them to put aside whatever unmerited, personal fears they have, and give Becket a "hearty welcome."

Becket enters the scene, and tells the second priest that the Chorus is not being foolish, but that they "speak better than they know, and beyond your [the second priest's] understanding." He then gives a philosophical description of the relationship between acting and suffering, saying that both are interdependent, "fixed / in an eternal action," and constitute a fundamental pattern to existence. Becket then likens this pattern to a wheel that turns and yet is still at the same time.

The second priest apologizes for the poor welcome Becket received, as Becket walked in on the Chorus saying they didn't want him to return. The second priest regrets that he and the other priests were unable to prepare an adequate welcome for Becket, since he arrived with such short notice, but the Archbishop says he is more than grateful for whatever accommodations the priest will provide, adding that these are small concerns compared to the greater distresses facing Canterbury.

Becket informs the priests that he evaded being killed on the way to Canterbury, because "rebellious bishops" who would have sent spies after him failed to intercept letters he'd sent—letters describing where he'd be going once he left France. In response, the first priest asks Becket if anyone might be following him, and his answer is unusual: Becket describes his enemies like a "hungry hawk" preying on him, but does not make any conclusive statement about whether he feels safe or not. Instead, he says the "end will be simple, sudden," and "God-given," though whether he intends this "end" to be the death of his enemies or himself is unclear.

The first tempter, a former friend of both Becket and the king, enters the scene. He says he hopes that, despite the seriousness of Becket's current situation, Becket will nonetheless excuse him for the cheeriness and comparably trivial nature of the topic he wants to discuss. The tempter tries to get Becket to remember when he and the king were good friends, and says that friendship shouldn't let itself be undone by the passage of time. He also thinks that Becket should drop his problems with the king, claiming that mending their relationship will have a trickle-down effect on solving the problems of the Church.

When Becket concedes that the first tempter is discussing a past worth remembering, the tempter says he's also talking about the "new season"—about the joys of the incoming spring. But Becket replies that neither he nor anyone else knows about the future, and further, that whatever has happened in the past cannot happen again.

The first tempter gives up trying to convince Becket, saying he'll leave the Archbishop to the pleasures of his "higher vices," mocking Becket's religion. Still, he leaves Becket on relatively friendly terms, saying that if Becket will think of him during prayer, he'll think of Becket "at kissing-time below the stairs."

The second tempter enters the scene, and reminds Becket of how they met many years ago. He says that Becket made a mistake when he resigned from the office of Chancellor, to which Henry II appointed him along with the role of Archbishop. This tempter says that the power of the Chancellor is much greater, and more real, than that of the Archbishop. While the power of the Chancellorship is in the present, he says, the holiness of the Archbishop is "hereafter." Becket responds by calling the Chancellorship a "punier power" compared to his own as Archbishop, and says that those who have faith in political, worldly orders not controlled by God only "breed fatal disease." The second tempter leaves, calling Becket a sinner.

The third tempter appears, and introduces himself to Becket as a "country-keeping lord" and a "rough straightforward Englishman," and not a trifler or politician. He says that country lords like himself are the people who truly know England and its needs. He then starts his proposal to Becket by claiming that, once real friendship ends, it can never be recovered, so there's no hope for Becket to reconcile with the king. But other "friends," the tempter says, can be found in Becket's situation: the country lords like himself—the English barons. He then proposes that Becket help him in a plot to overthrow King Henry II—that Becket procure the Pope's blessing for a coalition of the country-lord middle class, formed with the aim of ending the king's "tyrannous jurisdiction."

Becket rejects the third tempter's proposal, saying that he'd never betray a king. The tempter leaves, and tells Becket that he hopes the king will one day show more regard for Becket's loyalty.

The fourth tempter enters the scene, and commends the strength of Becket's will in rejecting the other tempters' proposals. He says that kingly rule, and all other political power beneath the king, pales in comparison to spiritual power, and affirms the magnitude of Becket's power as Archbishop, saying that "the course of temporal power" leads only to destruction, instability, and falsity. He further points out the futility and impermanence of kingly rule,

since kings just keep dying and replacing one another, implementing new reigns that will never last. The saint and the martyr, however, rule from the grave, the tempter says—and he asks Becket to think about such glory after death.

Ultimately, the fourth tempter tells Becket to follow the path of martyrdom—to make himself “the lowest / On earth, to be high in heaven.” But Becket is repulsed. He acknowledges that the fourth tempter tempts Becket with his actual, personal desires, while the others have only been concerned with the temporal, worldly order of things—things he actively shuns.

Ashamed that this fourth tempter has revealed his innermost desires, Becket wonders if it is even possible to escape damnation on account of pride (such as his desire for glory and renown because of martyrdom). In response, the tempter repeats the same speech about the relationship between acting and suffering (using the image of the wheel) which Becket gave to the priests before.

After the fourth tempter finishes his proposal, all four tempters, in unison, proclaim that human life “is a cheat and a disappointment,” and that everything, for humankind, is either “unreal or disappointing.” They say that humans only pass from unrealities to further unrealities, “intent / On self-destruction,” and that humankind is the enemy of itself and of its own society.

After the tempters give their opinion about the nature of humankind, the priests all plead, in unison, for Becket to not enter a fight he can’t win—to not “fight the intractable tide” or “sail the irresistible wind.” They want Becket to hold off on immediately implementing his own religious agenda in Canterbury, and wait for the political conflict bred by his presence to cool down.

The Chorus addresses their Lord, Becket, and says that they are not ignorant or idealistic; they say they know what to expect and what not to, and that they are intimately familiar with political coercion and personal/physical hardships. Yet God always gave them some hope, they say, whereas now a new fear haunts them—a fear which they cannot avoid. They say that God is leaving them, and beg Becket to save them by saving himself, for if their Archbishop is destroyed, then they will be destroyed themselves.

The first part of the play ends with a monologue by Becket. He’s now certain of his fated path, and proclaims that he will never again feel temptation in so overwhelming a manner as the fourth tempter’s proposal. The fourth tempter encouraged Becket “to do the right deed for the wrong reason”—to sacrifice himself through martyrdom not for a sheer love of, and faith in, God, but rather a selfish desire for spiritual glory and power.

Becket goes on to recount how, in his youth, he sought pleasure in all the wrong, superfluously secular ways, through such means as philosophy, music, and chess. He also reveals that he never wanted to become a servant of God, and says that God's servants risk committing greater sin and experiencing more sorrow than someone who serves a king.

Becket concludes by acknowledging that most people will view his commitment to God and martyrdom as fanatical, but he nevertheless commits himself to his divine cause, and asks an Angel of God to protect him from getting caught in the human divide between suffering and action.

Analysis:

The Chorus would rather keep to themselves and remain in the state of relative dissatisfaction and suffering they currently face, just because it's tolerable. They'd rather that Becket stay away from Canterbury, it seems, because his presence in Canterbury would somehow bring about more suffering and pain for them, to an extreme degree which they couldn't bear to face. The Chorus wants to be left alone to their own ways of dealing with the somewhat hopeless world around them, because so far they've been able get by.

The Chorus occupies the lowest position of power in Canterbury society, both spiritually and politically. Spiritually, they are subjects of the Archbishop and look to him for religious guidance. Politically, they are peasants at the hands of those with earthly wealth and power.

A clear sense of the divide between worldly/temporal power and spiritual power in the play first appears here. That the third priest sees no purpose in temporal power instantly lets us know that the priests are aligned with Becket's spiritual cause, and against the political agendas of the king, insofar as they impinge on the Archbishop's religious authority. The only motivation behind temporal power, for the priests, is greed.

The herald's message gives some substance to the Chorus's desire to remain separated from Becket. And now that the priests have explained the feud between Becket and the Archbishop, we ourselves can come to sense the thickness of the tension between the two authorities.

The strength of the priests' faith in the Archbishop becomes amplified here—despite the potential backlash that Becket's religious agendas in Canterbury may face from the main forces of political power (the king, barons, and landholders), the priests are confident that Becket and God will guide them and the Church effectively through whatever hardships they may face. Further, the third priest's opinion about the relationship between good and bad, and the passage of time, suggests that he and the other priests feel that, whatever results from the potential conflict between Becket and the king, it will unfold according to God's plan.

Here, the Chorus's initial desire to remain in their currently disappointing yet tolerable state of existence acquires more meaning. Becket's return to Canterbury could spell their ruin, and it seems what they truly fear is his death at the hands of the King. The loss of their spiritual leader and guide would bring their currently tolerable level of suffering to something more overwhelming and extreme. The Chorus is therefore opposed to the priests' view. Further, the priest's condescension towards the Chorus reveals their general disregard for their opinion.

The image of the wheel—a metaphor for the passage of time, and the way human action can and cannot change the external world—appears here for the first time. Becket's insistence that the Chorus is speaking from a place of genuine feeling, and are not the fools the priests make them out to be, underscores that the Chorus, just like everyone else, is caught up in the unfolding of fate, over which they have little control.

While the priests care about superficial matters regarding Becket's arrival at Canterbury—such as his accommodations and the way his followers (the Chorus) vocalize their reaction to his return—Becket seems unconcerned. He cares only about the spiritual needs of Canterbury as a whole, and not his material comfort or the fact that the Chorus holds a contrary opinion about his return.

The calmness of Becket's reply to the first priest's question reveals his lack of concern about the way the future unfolds. He doesn't say how he thinks the "end" should occur—whether he outlasts his enemies or they outlast him—rather, he says that the "end" will be wholly given, or determined, by God; he therefore seems to feel that, however the future unfolds, it will have spiritual merit, because it will be the realization of God's will.

The first tempter is just concerned with restoring the happiness and enjoyment of life in Canterbury's past—he's not invested in any higher spiritual goals. He thinks that restoring happiness—through the mending of Becket's relationship with the king—is the sole solution to the problems facing Canterbury. The first tempter seems unwilling to think that happiness should be sacrificed for spiritual progress or any kind of higher ideal.

Becket refuses to give in to the first tempter's hopes of restoring the pleasures of the past. Rather, he holds the philosophy that nothing can ever be repeated—and so it would be futile to try and restore his past relationship with the king.

By calling them "higher vices," the first tempter equates Becket's religious endeavors to merely alternative ways of seeking pleasure. He tries to bring Becket's sense of spiritual superiority to down to the level of simply desiring happiness.

The second tempter totally dismisses spiritual power as a valid form of authority that has any effects on the world, claiming that the office of the Chancellorship (a form of worldly or

temporal power) holds a more effective power than the Archbishop. This tempter therefore represents an extreme way of thinking about the relation between worldly and spiritual powers. He thinks the spiritual should be totally shunned, whereas the fourth tempter argues for the opposite.

The third tempter argues for a total overthrow of the king—of the prevailing seat of worldly power in England. Yet this tempter's proposal is by no means motivated by spiritual goals—he simply wants to replace one worldly power with another one (a government ruled by the class of country lords). In this way, his proposal contrasts with the fourth tempter's, who argues that Becket should shun the worldly for spiritual reasons. Compared to the second tempter, the third tempter has less lust for authoritarian power, and less disdain for the Church; however, he still sees spirituality as coming second to worldly affairs.

Becket's claim that he'd never double-cross a king reveals his conviction that, despite the political/religious conflicts he's had with Henry II, he doesn't feel he's ever forfeited his loyalty to the crown.

The fourth tempter embodies everything against which the second tempter stands, asserting that true power is spiritual, not temporal, in nature. Temporal power, lacking roots in the spiritual dimension, leads only to worldly chaos, and is not eternal. But spiritual power, precisely because it rules from beyond the grave—in the “hereafter,” a trait which the second tempter said made spiritual power useless—is why it's so powerful: it outlasts the temporal, it outlasts life itself.

The fourth tempter reveals that Becket is maybe not so personally disinterested in his martyrdom as he may think he is or wants to be. Becket actually is quite invested in his martyrdom in a way that is somewhat selfish at this point in the play; he merely wants the spiritual glory martyrdom affords.

Becket encounters a paradox once his personal desire for martyrdom gets revealed: is it even possible at all to escape being prideful, or desiring things for personal gain? After all, isn't some amount of desire required to do anything, even sacrificing oneself?

Based on Becket's insistence in following his own spiritual path away from their worldly temptations (even the fourth tempter invoked worldly desire), the four tempters all conclude that the whole of humankind seeks destruction (like Becket's martyrdom) and that the things and ideals it values are always illusory (like Becket's spiritual fanaticism).

The priests want Becket to stay alive, and worry that, by entering into conflict with the king, his life will be threatened. They are therefore opposed to Becket's spiritual path, which might require that he sacrifice his life for God.

The utter powerlessness which characterizes the spiritual and political position of the Chorus keeps magnifying. It becomes more and more apparent that Becket truly isn't safe in Canterbury, and that he's unwilling to tone down his religious fanaticism. Whereas the Chorus always had a sense of hope in the past, living their disappointing but tolerable existence, now they have none in the face of an overwhelming fear (Becket's death).

Becket exudes a new confidence in his fated path after having endured the psychological brunt of the fourth tempter's proposal—realizing that to only seek martyrdom for spiritual glory is to totally miss the point, which is the sacrifice of oneself for the will of God, to become an instrument of God's will.

Here, Becket reveals how he's evolved spiritually—how he wasn't always so fervently devout, and invested himself in intellectual pursuits rather than trying to foster a pure faith in God; he also alludes to the fact that, because of the pride potentially involved in being a servant of God, there's greater risk of damnation.

Becket continues to exude confidence and a purity of faith, refusing to cater to those who would say his spirituality is overzealous. To stick purely in touch with his fate, he must avoid getting caught in the dualistic, worldly view of suffering and action.

NON - DETAILED

DEATH OF A SALESMAN – ARTHUR MILLER

Characters:

Willy Loman

An insecure, self-deluded traveling salesman. Willy believes wholeheartedly in the American Dream of easy success and wealth, but he never achieves it. Nor do his sons fulfill his hope that they will succeed where he has failed. When Willy's illusions begin to fail under the pressing realities of his life, his mental health begins to unravel. The overwhelming tensions caused by this disparity, as well as those caused by the societal imperatives that drive Willy, form the essential conflict of *Death of a Salesman*.

Biff Loman

Willy's thirty-four-year-old elder son. Biff led a charmed life in high school as a football star with scholarship prospects, good male friends, and fawning female admirers. He failed math, however, and did not have enough credits to graduate. Since then, his kleptomania has gotten him fired from every job that he has held. Biff represents Willy's vulnerable, poetic, tragic

side. He cannot ignore his instincts, which tell him to abandon Willy's paralyzing dreams and move out West to work with his hands. He ultimately fails to reconcile his life with Willy's expectations of him.

Linda Loman

Willy's loyal, loving wife. Linda suffers through Willy's grandiose dreams and self-delusions. Occasionally, she seems to be taken in by Willy's self-deluded hopes for future glory and success, but at other times, she seems far more realistic and less fragile than her husband. She has nurtured the family through all of Willy's misguided attempts at success, and her emotional strength and perseverance support Willy until his collapse.

Happy Loman

Willy's thirty-two-year-old younger son. Happy has lived in Biff's shadow all of his life, but he compensates by nurturing his relentless sex drive and professional ambition. Happy represents Willy's sense of self-importance, ambition, and blind servitude to societal expectations. Although he works as an assistant to an assistant buyer in a department store, Happy presents himself as supremely important. Additionally, he practices bad business ethics and sleeps with the girlfriends of his superiors.

Charley

Willy's next-door neighbor. Charley owns a successful business and his son, Bernard, is a wealthy, important lawyer. Willy is jealous of Charley's success. Charley gives Willy money to pay his bills, and Willy reveals at one point, choking back tears, that Charley is his only friend.

Bernard

Bernard is Charley's son and an important, successful lawyer. Although Willy used to mock Bernard for studying hard, Bernard always loved Willy's sons dearly and regarded Biff as a hero. Bernard's success is difficult for Willy to accept because his own sons' lives do not measure up.

Ben

Willy's wealthy older brother. Ben has recently died and appears only in Willy's "daydreams." Willy regards Ben as a symbol of the success that he so desperately craves for himself and his sons.

The Woman

Willy's mistress when Happy and Biff were in high school. The Woman's attention and admiration boost Willy's fragile ego. When Biff catches Willy in his hotel room with The Woman, he loses faith in his father, and his dream of passing math and going to college dies.

Howard Wagner

Willy's boss. Howard inherited the company from his father, whom Willy regarded as "a masterful man" and "a prince." Though much younger than Willy, Howard treats Willy with condescension and eventually fires him, despite Willy's wounded assertions that he named Howard at his birth.

Stanley

A waiter at Frank's Chop House. Stanley and Happy seem to be friends, or at least acquaintances, and they banter about and ogle Miss Forsythe together before Biff and Willy arrive at the restaurant.

Miss Forsythe and Letta

Two young women whom Happy and Biff meet at Frank's Chop House. It seems likely that Miss Forsythe and Letta are prostitutes, judging from Happy's repeated comments about their moral character and the fact that they are "on call."

Jenny

Charley's secretary.

Summary:

As a flute melody plays, Willy Loman returns to his home in Brooklyn one night, exhausted from a failed sales trip. His wife, Linda, tries to persuade him to ask his boss, Howard Wagner, to let him work in New York so that he won't have to travel. Willy says that he will

talk to Howard the next day. Willy complains that Biff, his older son who has come back home to visit, has yet to make something of himself. Linda scolds Willy for being so critical, and Willy goes to the kitchen for a snack.

As Willy talks to himself in the kitchen, Biff and his younger brother, Happy, who is also visiting, reminisce about their adolescence and discuss their father's babbling, which often includes criticism of Biff's failure to live up to Willy's expectations. As Biff and Happy, dissatisfied with their lives, fantasize about buying a ranch out West, Willy becomes immersed in a daydream. He praises his sons, now younger, who are washing his car. The young Biff, a high school football star, and the young Happy appear. They interact affectionately with their father, who has just returned from a business trip. Willy confides in Biff and Happy that he is going to open his own business one day, bigger than that owned by his neighbor, Charley. Charley's son, Bernard, enters looking for Biff, who must study for math class in order to avoid failing. Willy points out to his sons that although Bernard is smart, he is not "well liked," which will hurt him in the long run.

A younger Linda enters, and the boys leave to do some chores. Willy boasts of a phenomenally successful sales trip, but Linda coaxes him into revealing that his trip was actually only meagerly successful. Willy complains that he soon won't be able to make all of the payments on their appliances and car. He complains that people don't like him and that he's not good at his job. As Linda consoles him, he hears the laughter of his mistress. He approaches The Woman, who is still laughing, and engages in another reminiscent daydream. Willy and The Woman flirt, and she thanks him for giving her stockings.

The Woman disappears, and Willy fades back into his prior daydream, in the kitchen. Linda, now mending stockings, reassures him. He scolds her mending and orders her to throw the stockings out. Bernard bursts in, again looking for Biff. Linda reminds Willy that Biff has to return a football that he stole, and she adds that Biff is too rough with the neighborhood girls. Willy hears The Woman laugh and explodes at Bernard and Linda. Both leave, and though the daydream ends, Willy continues to mutter to himself. The older Happy comes downstairs and tries to quiet Willy. Agitated, Willy shouts his regret about not going to Alaska with his brother, Ben, who eventually found a diamond mine in Africa and became rich. Charley, having heard the commotion, enters. Happy goes off to bed, and Willy and Charley begin to play cards. Charley offers Willy a job, but Willy, insulted, refuses it. As they argue, Willy imagines that Ben enters. Willy accidentally calls Charley Ben. Ben inspects Willy's house and tells him that he has to catch a train soon to look at properties in Alaska. As Willy talks

to Ben about the prospect of going to Alaska, Charley, seeing no one there, gets confused and questions Willy. Willy yells at Charley, who leaves. The younger Linda enters and Ben meets her. Willy asks Ben impatiently about his life. Ben recounts his travels and talks about their father. As Ben is about to leave, Willy daydreams further, and Charley and Bernard rush in to tell him that Biff and Happy are stealing lumber. Although Ben eventually leaves, Willy continues to talk to him.

Back in the present, the older Linda enters to find Willy outside. Biff and Happy come downstairs and discuss Willy's condition with their mother. Linda scolds Biff for judging Willy harshly. Biff tells her that he knows Willy is a fake, but he refuses to elaborate. Linda mentions that Willy has tried to commit suicide. Happy grows angry and rebukes Biff for his failure in the business world. Willy enters and yells at Biff. Happy intervenes and eventually proposes that he and Biff go into the sporting goods business together. Willy immediately brightens and gives Biff a host of tips about asking for a loan from one of Biff's old employers, Bill Oliver. After more arguing and reconciliation, everyone finally goes to bed.

Act II opens with Willy enjoying the breakfast that Linda has made for him. Willy ponders the bright-seeming future before getting angry again about his expensive appliances. Linda informs Willy that Biff and Happy are taking him out to dinner that night. Excited, Willy announces that he is going to make Howard Wagner give him a New York job. The phone rings, and Linda chats with Biff, reminding him to be nice to his father at the restaurant that night.

As the lights fade on Linda, they come up on Howard playing with a wire recorder in his office. Willy tries to broach the subject of working in New York, but Howard interrupts him and makes him listen to his kids and wife on the wire recorder. When Willy finally gets a word in, Howard rejects his plea. Willy launches into a lengthy recalling of how a legendary salesman named Dave Singleman inspired him to go into sales. Howard leaves and Willy gets angry. Howard soon re-enters and tells Willy to take some time off. Howard leaves and Ben enters, inviting Willy to join him in Alaska. The younger Linda enters and reminds Willy of his sons and job. The young Biff enters, and Willy praises Biff's prospects and the fact that he is well liked.

Ben leaves and Bernard rushes in, eagerly awaiting Biff's big football game. Willy speaks optimistically to Biff about the game. Charley enters and teases Willy about the game. As Willy chases Charley off, the lights rise on a different part of the stage. Willy continues yelling from offstage, and Jenny, Charley's secretary, asks a grown-up Bernard to quiet him down. Willy enters and prattles on about a "very big deal" that Biff is working on. Daunted by Bernard's success (he mentions to Willy that he is going to Washington to fight a case), Willy asks Bernard why Biff turned out to be such a failure. Bernard asks Willy what happened in Boston that made Biff decide not to go to summer school. Willy defensively tells Bernard not to blame him.

Charley enters and sees Bernard off. When Willy asks for more money than Charley usually loans him, Charley again offers Willy a job. Willy again refuses and eventually tells Charley that he was fired. Charley scolds Willy for always needing to be liked and angrily gives him the money. Calling Charley his only friend, Willy exits on the verge of tears.

At Frank's Chop House, Happy helps Stanley, a waiter, prepare a table. They ogle and chat up a girl, Miss Forsythe, who enters the restaurant. Biff enters, and Happy introduces him to Miss Forsythe, continuing to flirt with her. Miss Forsythe, a call girl, leaves to telephone another call girl (at Happy's request), and Biff spills out that he waited six hours for Bill Oliver and Oliver didn't even recognize him. Upset at his father's unrelenting misconception that he, Biff, was a salesman for Oliver, Biff plans to relieve Willy of his illusions. Willy enters, and Biff tries gently, at first, to tell him what happened at Oliver's office. Willy blurts out that he was fired. Stunned, Biff again tries to let Willy down easily. Happy cuts in with remarks suggesting Biff's success, and Willy eagerly awaits the good news.

Biff finally explodes at Willy for being unwilling to listen. The young Bernard runs in shouting for Linda, and Biff, Happy, and Willy start to argue. As Biff explains what happened, their conversation recedes into the background. The young Bernard tells Linda that Biff failed math. The restaurant conversation comes back into focus and Willy criticizes Biff for failing math. Willy then hears the voice of the hotel operator in Boston and shouts that he is not in his room. Biff scrambles to quiet Willy and claims that Oliver is talking to his partner about giving Biff the money. Willy's renewed interest and probing questions irk Biff more, and he screams at Willy. Willy hears The Woman laugh and he shouts back at Biff, hitting him and staggering. Miss Forsythe enters with another call girl, Letta. Biff helps Willy

to the washroom and, finding Happy flirting with the girls, argues with him about Willy. Biff storms out, and Happy follows with the girls.

Willy and The Woman enter, dressing themselves and flirting. The door knocks and Willy hurries The Woman into the bathroom. Willy answers the door; the young Biff enters and tells Willy that he failed math. Willy tries to usher him out of the room, but Biff imitates his math teacher's lisp, which elicits laughter from Willy and The Woman. Willy tries to cover up his indiscretion, but Biff refuses to believe his stories and storms out, dejected, calling Willy a "phony little fake." Back in the restaurant, Stanley helps Willy up. Willy asks him where he can find a seed store. Stanley gives him directions to one, and Willy hurries off.

The light comes up on the Loman kitchen, where Happy enters looking for Willy. He moves into the living room and sees Linda. Biff comes inside and Linda scolds the boys and slaps away the flowers in Happy's hand. She yells at them for abandoning Willy. Happy attempts to appease her, but Biff goes in search of Willy. He finds Willy planting seeds in the garden with a flashlight. Willy is consulting Ben about a \$20,000 proposition. Biff approaches him to say goodbye and tries to bring him inside. Willy moves into the house, followed by Biff, and becomes angry again about Biff's failure. Happy tries to calm Biff, but Biff and Willy erupt in fury at each other. Biff starts to sob, which touches Willy. Everyone goes to bed except Willy, who renews his conversation with Ben, elated at how great Biff will be with \$20,000 of insurance money. Linda soon calls out for Willy but gets no response. Biff and Happy listen as well. They hear Willy's car speed away.

In the requiem, Linda and Happy stand in shock after Willy's poorly attended funeral. Biff states that Willy had the wrong dreams. Charley defends Willy as a victim of his profession. Ready to leave, Biff invites Happy to go back out West with him. Happy declares that he will stick it out in New York to validate Willy's death. Linda asks Willy for forgiveness for being unable to cry. She begins to sob, repeating "We're free. . . ." All exit, and the flute melody is heard as the curtain falls.

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SCHOOL OF SCIENCE & HUMANITIES

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH

UNIT IV – DRAMA-II – SHS1206

**SATHYABAMA INSTITUTE OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY
(DEEMED TO BE UNIVERSITY)**

DRAMA- II: SHS1206

Course Materials

UNIT – 4 (20th Century - Absurd Drama)

Detailed : Harold Pinter : *The Caretaker* (1960)

Non- Detailed : John Osborne : *Look Back in Anger* (1956)

DETAILED

THE CARETAKER – HAROLD PINTER

Characters:

Davies

Davies is a man full of excuses and deceit. His sole purpose is to take care of himself as he pits two brothers against each other so he may have a place to stay. He finds excuses to not go to Sidcup to sort out his paperwork. He is prejudiced and constantly worries about the family that lives next door. He complains incessantly and is unappreciative. For example, he always turns away the shoes that are offered him and never says thank you. He reveals his true colors when he tries to set one brother against the other for his own selfish gain.

Aston

Aston brings Davies into his home after he has rescued him from an altercation in a tavern. Aston is slow-witted as evidenced by his broken speech. However, he is kind and generous which is evident when he offers Davies a bed, shoes, and supplies. He is gentle in demeanor and patient when Davies complains about his shoes, the draft, and the weather. Aston is eager to have someone listen to him and does not hesitate to share the story of his hallucinations, hospitalization, and shock treatments.

Mick

Mick is in his late 20s and is the owner of the home though he lives elsewhere. Mick is unpredictable. At times he is quite caring, but at other times he is somewhat aggressive. He is

suspicious of Davies from the beginning and interrogates him extensively. While sometimes frustrated with his brother's lack of work ethic, he is protective of him and loyal to him.

Summary:

Act 1

All of the scenes take place in Mick's home where Aston lives. The room has a window on the back wall that is half covered by a sack. There is a cupboard above an iron bed along the left wall. Paint buckets, boxes, vases, a stepladder, a lawn mower, a shopping trolley, and other miscellaneous items clutter the room. Another bed with a mound of clutter lies next to a gas stove. Above the stove is a shelf with a Buddha statue on top. A vacuum cleaner is tucked underneath the bed. A bucket hangs from the ceiling to collect drips from the leaking roof.

Mick is alone in a room in his home in west London in the early 1950s. Mick is a tradesman who allows his slow-witted brother Aston to live in his home. When he hears muffled voices outside, he turns off the light and exits through the door.

Two men named Aston and Davies enter the home. Davies is an older homeless man that Aston has rescued from an altercation at a local tavern and offered temporary stay at his home. Davies and Aston discuss what led up to the incident at the tavern. Davies shares his frustration in finding a seat while he inserts negative comments about other nationalities and races. He says that a coworker had asked him to take a bucket of rubbish out back which infuriated him. He threatened the coworker and created commotion when Aston intervened.

Davies and Aston converse before making the room more suitable for sleeping. Davies peppers Aston with questions about the black family that lives next door. His focus then turns to his shoes. Davies asks Aston if he has a spare set of shoes because his shoes are worn, but he is unhappy with both pairs that Aston offers him. Davies is curious about the Buddha statue on the shelf, and Aston says that he picked it up in a shop because he liked how it looked. The men then prepare the room so that it will serve as an adequate sleeping space.

Aston and Davies continue to reveal more about themselves. Aston offers Davies some money which he eagerly accepts. Aston shares how he did not drink the beer at a pub recently because it was not served in a thin glass. Davies does not respond and launches into his need to get to the town of Sidcup to retrieve papers that prove who he is. Sidcup is a town southeast of London. He tells Aston that years ago he changed his name to Bernard Jenkins.

He has an unemployment card in that name but fears that he will be arrested if he uses that card. Davies's real name is Mac Davies.

Davies notices a bucket hanging from the ceiling. Aston explains that there is a roof leak, and the bucket is there to catch the drips. Davies heads to bed while Aston works on mending a plug. Davies is concerned about the stove that is near his bed but lies down anyway.

The next morning Aston walks to the foot of Davies's bed and coughs to wake him. Davies startles and awakens. Aston shares that Davies was groaning and jabbering during the night which Davies denies. The men discuss the stove near Davies's bed, and Aston assures Davies that it is not connected. Davies announces that he may go to a café in Wembley for a job prospect and expects that he will get the job because he is English.

Aston leaves and Davies looks around the room. He sees a stack of papers which almost fall to the floor after he touches them. Suddenly, the door opens and Mick walks into the house. Davies does not notice at first and is startled when Mick seizes his arm and forces it back. Mick puts his hand to his lips and then to Davies's lips before letting him go. Mick then moves to a chair where he sits expressionless and watches Davies.

Act 2

Davies stands facing Mick who is seated in a chair. Mick stares at Davies without saying a word for a few moments. Then Mick asks Davies who he is. Davies tells Mick that his name is Jenkins. Mick wants to know how Davies slept and which bed he used. Mick tells Davies that he is choosy. Mick's barrage of questions rattle Davies, and he is angry that Mick will not share anything about himself. Davies shares that he was born and bred in the British Isles.

Suddenly Mick grabs Davies's trousers off the bed, and the two men fight over the garment. They lunge and grab the legs from each other. Davies is furious. He explains to Mick that he was brought home by the homeowner who saved him from a fight at the café where he works. Mick calls him a liar and tells him that he is the owner. He gives Davies the option to either be dropped at the police station or rent a spot in the home.

Aston returns and says that he has brought Davies's bag that was left at the café. Mick claims that he has seen it before and grabs it. A tug-of-war ensues over the bag. Eventually Mick gives it to Davies and leaves.

Aston and Davies are alone in the home and talk about their plans. Aston adds that he plans to build a shed. Davies then realizes that the bag is not his. Aston confirms that he picked up the bag elsewhere and purchased some clothes for Davies which Davies dislikes. Davies asks Aston if he is the caretaker of the home which Aston denies. Aston then offers Davies the job of caretaker. He considers this offer but shows concern. Davies confesses that he uses an assumed name and adds that the authorities might want the assorted unemployment cards he possesses.

The next scene opens with Davies entering the home after dark. He finds that the light does not work, so he lights a match. The match stays lit only momentarily, and the box of matches falls. He cannot find the box and assumes someone moved. Davies says he has a knife. He then stumbles, falls, and cries out. Suddenly the vacuum cleaner begins to hum, and Davies jumps away. The vacuum cleaner goes off and the light goes on to reveal Mick standing on the bed. He holds the plug and tells Davies that he was doing some spring cleaning.

Mick decides that he and Davies started off poorly and tells him that he wants to know more about his brother's friend. Davies denies being Aston's friend. Mick shares his worries about his brother and comments, "No, he just doesn't like work, that's his trouble." Mick is angered by some of Davies's remarks about Aston. Mick changes the subject and offers Davies the job of caretaker. At first Davies is hesitant, but he accepts the position. Davies tells Mick that he can provide references once he gets to Sidcup. He plans to go the next day once the weather breaks.

The next morning Aston wakes Davies so he can head to Sidcup, but Davies decides that he will not go because of the weather. Aston plans to walk to Goldhawk Road to look at a saw bench. He suggests that Davies go to the nearby café for some tea while he is gone.

Aston is reminded of how often he used to go to the café years ago. This remembrance leads into a long monologue about a time that he "went away." Aston tells Davies that he used to work in a factory where he was younger than most of his coworkers. He says that he used to talk to his coworkers quite a bit. Unfortunately, he told them about the hallucinations he was experiencing. Some of the coworkers shared their concerns with one another. Eventually Aston was taken against his will to a hospital where the doctor recommended a procedure be carried out on his brain. Aston's mother gave permission for the procedure. At the hospital Aston watched others succumb to the treatment. He did not want the electric shock therapy

and tried to fight the men off. One of the men grabbed Aston around the throat and administered the shock treatment while Aston was still standing. Aston could not walk very well after the treatment, and his speech was slowed. He had headaches. He thought he would die. Aston adds that he no longer talks much to people and typically avoids places like the café. He is still angry. He thinks about finding the man who did that to him sometimes. He says that he may do so but not until after he has built his shed.

Act 3

Mick lies on the floor and Davies paces around the room in the home. Davies shares a list of complaints about Aston. He feels that Aston is not listening to his worries about the gas stove and the blacks using the lavatory. Davies suggests that he and Mick together could improve the home. Mick appears excited about the idea and begins to list ideas for improvement. Davies then asks who would live in the home. Mick answers, "My brother and me." Davies asks him about himself, but Mick does not respond.

Davies returns to his complaints about Aston. He tells Mick that Aston has no feelings and that he is different. Davies shares that Aston wakes him up every night and tells him that he is making noises. Mick agrees that that is terrible. Finally, Davies tells Mick that he often awakes to find Aston standing over his bed smiling at him. Davies claims that "He puts on his coat, he turns himself round, he looks down at my bed, there's a smile on his face!" Mick does not respond.

Mick rises to leave as Aston enters the room carrying a paper bag with some shoes for Davies. Immediately, Davies tells him that the shoes do not fit and the only way they are usable is with shoelaces. Aston finds brown shoelaces for the black shoes, but Davies is not satisfied. Davies shares his need to get to Sidcup but states that he cannot go there because of the weather and his lack of good shoes.

That night Davies groans in his sleep. Aston lights a cigarette, walks over to Davies, and shakes him. Davies is not happy and begins to criticize Aston. He taunts Aston with going back to the hospital and says, "They can put them pincers on your head again, man!" When Aston approaches him, Davies takes out his knife and threatens Aston to not come any closer. Aston asks Davies to find another place to live and tells him that he is not suitable. The men argue over who should stay and who should leave. Davies declares that Aston should leave because Mick has hired Davies as a caretaker. Aston offers Davies money to get to Sidcup

and then tells Davies that he stinks. Davies moves toward Aston and thrusts the knife toward his throat. Davies puts the knife back into his pocket and eventually leaves.

It is early evening. Davies has returned to the home and sits with Mick. They talk about Aston and where he will live if Davies becomes the caretaker. Mick adds, "Well, you say you're a good interior decorator, you'd better be one." Davies shares that he is not an experienced interior decorator. Mick becomes angry and calls Davies an imposter. Infuriated, Mick circles around Davies and yells, "You're violent, you're erratic, you're completely unpredictable." He calls him a barbarian and tells him that he stinks. He says that he has not seen any of the references that Davies supposedly has in Sidcup. Mick takes a sixpence out of his pocket, throws it at Davies's feet, and tells him that this is his pay for caretaking. Mick picks up the Buddha and throws it at the gas stove which causes the statue to break.

The door opens and Aston enters. Mick and Aston exchange faint smiles. Mick leaves. Aston sees the broken Buddha, grabs a screwdriver, and begins to poke at the plug he picks up. Davies tells Aston that he had left but came back for his pipe. He begins to beg Aston to let him stay. Aston tells him, "You make too much noise." A long silence ensues, and Davies heads slowly to the door.

The Caretaker Plot Diagram



Introduction:

1. Aston offers Davies a place to stay temporarily.

Rising Action:

2. Davies tells Aston about the incident at the tavern.
3. Davies tells Aston he goes by a fake name.
4. Davies notices a bucket and a Buddha statue.
5. Aston offers Davies keys to the home.
6. Mick questions Davies after finding him at his home.
7. Aston asks Davies to be caretaker of his home.
8. Mick asks Davies to be caretaker and decorator.

Climax:

9. Aston tells Davies about his hospitalization.

Falling Action:

10. Davies taunts Aston after he wakes him.
11. Aston and Mick ask Davies to leave.

Resolution:

12. Davies begs to stay but must leave.

NON - DETAILED LOOK BACK IN ANGER – JOHN OSBORNE

Characters:

Jimmy Porter

Jimmy Porter is the play's main character. He is the "Angry Young Man" who expresses his frustration for the lack of feelings in his placid domestic life. Jimmy can be understood as both a hero for his unfiltered expressions of emotion and frustration in a culture that propagated unemotional resignation. He can also be considered a villain for the ways in which his anger proves to be destructive to those in his life.

Cliff Lewis

Cliff is a friend to both Jimmy and Alison. Cliff lives with them in their attic apartment. He is a working class Welsh man and Jimmy makes sure to often point out that he is "common" and uneducated. Cliff believes this is the reason that Jimmy keeps him as a friend. He is quite

fond of Alison and they have a strange physically affectionate relationship throughout the play.

Alison Porter

Alison Porter is Jimmy's wife. She comes from Britain's upper class, but married into Jimmy's working class lifestyle. The audience learns in the first act that she is pregnant with Jimmy's child. Jimmy's destructive anger causes her great strain and she eventually leaves him. Her child miscarries and she comes back to Jimmy to show him that she has undergone great suffering.

Helena Charles

Helena Charles is Alison's best friend. She lives with them in their apartment while visiting for work. Helena is from an upper class family. She is responsible for getting Alison to leave Jimmy. She and Jimmy then begin an affair. Her sense of morality leads her to leave. She can be considered the play's moral compass.

Colonel Redfern

Colonel Redfern is Alison's father. He represents Britain's great Edwardian past. He was a military leader in India for many years before returning with his family to England. He is critical of Jimmy and Alison's relationship, but accepts that he is to blame for many of their problems because of his meddling in their affairs.

Summary:

Act 1

Look Back in Anger takes place over three acts and approximately four months. The setting is Jimmy and Alison Porter's small attic apartment. The play opens with Jimmy and his friend Cliff Lewis sitting in leather armchairs reading papers and magazines on a Sunday night. Alison is in the room too, doing some ironing. Jimmy is the driving force of the play. He is a young man frustrated with his life, and he takes his frustrations and anger out on everyone around him. At times charming and sensitive, he is often aggressive and demanding, full of opinions about the world and his wife and friends. Cliff sometimes acts as a buffer between Jimmy and Alison, though with limited effect. Alison comes from a privileged background, and Jimmy is educated but works selling sweets from a street stall. Alison's life with Jimmy is not what she hoped for when she turned away from her family to marry him.

As Jimmy and Cliff read their papers, Jimmy opines on a myriad of topics—the actions of a local bishop, how Cliff doesn't fold the papers correctly, dying British culture, how slothful and empty his wife can be. He laments they are all too passive and says they need to do something in the world rather than just sitting around. Jimmy rants about how horrible Alison's mother is, how tied to the past her father is, and what a vacuous political aspirant her brother is. He antagonizes Alison with the word *pusillanimous* (which means timid or cowardly), which he's recently learned, claiming it is the perfect word to describe her. Cliff and Jimmy begin playfully wrestling around the apartment, and Jimmy pushes Cliff into the ironing board. The iron burns Alison's arm. She yells at Jimmy to leave the apartment.

While Cliff attends to Alison's injury, she tells him she's pregnant—but she hasn't told Jimmy yet. Cliff urges her to tell Jimmy, but she is afraid of how he'll react. When Jimmy returns, Cliff leaves to get them more cigarettes. Jimmy apologizes for hurting her arm but admits he did it on purpose. He says he still can't stop wanting her after four years of marriage. They playfully pretend to be like the stuffed teddy bear (Jimmy) and squirrel (Alison) they keep on their dresser. It is a childish game they share as a refuge from the cruelties of the world outside. Cliff returns and tells Alison she has a phone call from her friend Helena Charles. Jimmy roots through Alison's purse while she is taking the call, telling Cliff marriage has made him "predatory and suspicious." Alison returns and tells them Helena will be staying in the building while she's in town for a traveling show she is in. Jimmy does not like Helena, and he argues with Alison. He says Alison is far too naive and innocent, and he wishes something would happen to her to wake her from her privileged "beauty sleep." Jimmy even suggests she could have a child and it could die. Maybe then she would feel something, like suffering or anguish. He exits, leaving Alison and Cliff stunned.

Act 2, Scene 1

Two weeks later Alison and Helena are preparing Sunday afternoon tea. Jimmy is playing trumpet in a room down the hall. Alison tries to explain to Helena about how difficult their marriage has become. She is cut off from her family and doesn't really have any friends but Cliff and Helena, who is always traveling. Helena has seen enough of the way Jimmy treats Alison, and she urges her friend to leave him for the sake of the baby. Helena doesn't understand why Alison married someone like Jimmy. Alison tells her about how they met and fell in love. Her parents were vehemently opposed to the marriage, but Jimmy acted like a "knight in shining armor" to win and keep her. Nevertheless Helena says Alison has to fight Jimmy and leave.

Cliff and Jimmy arrive for tea, and Jimmy immediately starts deriding Alison in front of her friend. Helena is angered and offended by the things Jimmy says about Alison and Alison's mother, and she challenges him, threatening to slap his face. Jimmy threatens to hit her back. When Alison says she is going to church with Helena this evening, Jimmy mocks both of them and religion. He accuses Helena of trying to win her over. Jimmy asks Helena if she has ever watched someone die. She replies she hasn't. He then tells them about watching his soldier father die slowly when he was only 10. He relates how confusing it was and how angry and helpless he felt. Helena exits to prepare for church. Jimmy accuses Alison of being an unfaithful Judas, but Alison says all she wants is "a little peace."

Helena returns and tells Jimmy he has a phone call. When he leaves, she also tells Alison she has wired her father to come pick her up the following day. Alison agrees she will leave. When Jimmy returns, he is upset. The mother of a good friend has had a stroke and is dying. He has to leave for London immediately. He expects Alison to go with him, but she silently walks to the door and leaves with Helena for church.

Act 2, Scene 2

The following day, Alison's father, Colonel Redfern, is watching his daughter pack up her things to leave. They discuss Jimmy, and the colonel confesses he always thought Jimmy was clever in his own way. Alison tells her father about how he expects allegiance from the people around him. The colonel admits he feels they went too far in trying to stop the marriage between Jimmy and Alison. He says he was horrified by some of the things his wife did, like hiring detectives to investigate Jimmy. He suggests he and Alison might have been most to blame for how bad things got because they are both fence sitters who prefer to avoid conflicts. Alison doesn't agree. Her father acknowledges he doesn't understand modern England. It is so different than when he left it as a young man to serve in India. He's baffled by young people like his daughter and Jimmy.

Helena arrives to help Alison pack her things. The colonel thanks her for letting them know about what has been happening between Alison and Jimmy. Cliff arrives to say goodbye to Alison. She gives him an envelope to give to Jimmy when he returns. Alison and her father leave. Cliff doesn't want to be around when Jimmy arrives, so he gives the envelope to Helena and departs. Jimmy comes into the apartment agitated. He tells Helena his father-in-law nearly ran him over with his car and Cliff practically ignored him as he entered the

building. Helena gives him the envelope. He reads it aloud and begins deriding the sentimentality of it. He says Alison didn't even have the courage to say she hates him and hopes he rots. The letter was phonier than he could have imagined.

Helena tells Jimmy that Alison is pregnant and she had to get away from him. Jimmy is taken aback at the news, but then quickly dismisses it, saying he doesn't care. He has spent the past day sitting beside his friend's mother as she died, and Alison wouldn't go with him. He doesn't care about a "cruel, stupid girl" having a baby. Helena slaps him viciously. He covers his face. Helena pulls his hand away and kisses him passionately as they lie down on the bed together.

Act 3, Scene 1

It's several months later. Another Sunday night: Jimmy and Cliff are reading their papers and Helena is behind them ironing. The two men bicker about what they read, as they usually do, with Jimmy declaring his opinions on the news of the past week. He jokes about an evil orgy in a nearby town where there is a sacrifice and people drink blood. Jimmy and Helena joke about performing their own sacrifice—perhaps using Cliff. It's the usual Sunday activity, only now Jimmy is a little less hostile. He does chide Helena about her faith and going to church, as he finds religion to be outdated and doesn't understand her interest in it. He makes fun of the church by comparing faith to the bodybuilder ads in the magazines he reads that promise weaklings a muscular body. Helena asks him to stop; he changes the subject. He and Cliff fall into a familiar skit about a man looking for "nobody." Then they break into song about a man who marries a woman from a higher class (which could be referencing Alison and Helena).

When Helena leaves to wash Cliff's dirty shirt, Cliff tells Jimmy he's going to move somewhere else for a change of pace. Jimmy says he'll miss his friend but understands why he wants to make his own way. Jimmy confesses he knows Helena can't give him what he needs or wants. He wonders why men let women bleed them to death. He suggests their generation has no good causes to fight for like their parents' generation did—in a sense they can only be butchered by women. Cliff leaves, and Jimmy tells Helena he thinks they are worthy opponents. Helena says she loves him. Jimmy suggests they leave town and make a new start somewhere else together. Helena agrees. As they are leaving to go celebrate, the door opens and Alison enters. She looks frazzled and very sickly.

Act 3, Scene 2

Helena and Alison have tea and discuss what has happened between them and Jimmy. Jimmy's trumpet playing can be heard from down the hall. Alison tells her she lost the baby. She has tried to come to the apartment a number of times but could never make the trip all the way. She wanted to come back to convince herself what happened here really did happen. Helena apologizes for moving in with Jimmy; Alison says she has no reason to apologize. But Helena says she still believes in right and wrong, and what she did was wrong, even evil. She feels Alison's miscarriage was a judgment against all of them.

Helena says she has figured out what's wrong with Jimmy: he was born into the wrong time. They muse he should've been born during the French Revolution (1787–99)—when the French citizens overthrew the monarchy and established a republic—or the Victorian era of the mid-1800s—the time period in England characterized by polite manners and social conformity. This is why he's so futile, says Helena, and why "he'll never amount to anything." Helena is going to leave Jimmy—not to step aside for Alison, but because Helena feels what she has done is morally wrong. She hopes Alison doesn't return to Jimmy. Alison says maybe they're both wrong for him. He'd prefer a cross between a mother and a prostitute. Helena can no longer stand the trumpet playing, and she yells down the hall for Jimmy to stop.

Jimmy enters. He notices Alison looks "ghastly." He says he knows what happened—it was his child too—but it wasn't his first loss. Helena tells him she is leaving immediately. She explains it's her decision and Alison had nothing to do with it. Helena says she can't be happy doing something so wrong. As she leaves, Jimmy tells Helena everyone wants "to escape from the pain of being alive" and love can be a very messy thing. If she can't bear the idea of getting messy, she should be a saint instead. Helena leaves.

Jimmy tells Alison that he believes the strongest creatures are the loneliest. He reminds Alison of the first night they met and how relaxed she seemed to him, and how much strength he thought she had. But he learned while they were married she didn't really have strength—she'd never had an ounce of distress in her life. He says he may be a "lost cause," but he thought her love could help him. Alison says she wants to be a lost cause—she doesn't want to be a saint. When she lost the baby, she wanted to die. She had never felt anything so painful in her life. She realized it was the kind of suffering Jimmy wanted her to have to become stronger and more human. She collapses at his feet and he picks her up, holding her.

Jimmy says they can be together in their pretend bear cave and look out for each other. They can protect each other from all the world's traps lying in wait.

Plot Diagram – Look Back in Anger



Introduction:

1. Jimmy and Alison Porter are in an antagonistic relationship

Rising Action:

2. Cliff Lewis seems better suited for Alison Porter.
3. While Jimmy is out, Alison tells Cliff she is pregnant.
4. Cliff urges her to tell Jimmy, but Alison is afraid.
5. Helena Charles comes to stay in the same building.
6. Jimmy and Helena argue, causing romantic sparks.
7. Helena convinces Alison to move to her parents' house.
8. Helena tells Jimmy Alison is pregnant, but he doesn't care.

Climax:

9. As Jimmy's new girlfriend, Helena takes Alison's place.

Falling Action:

10. Alison returns, revealing she has had a miscarriage.

11. Helena tells Jimmy she is leaving him.

Resolution:

12. Jimmy and Alison realize they need each other for solace.

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SCHOOL OF SCIENCE & HUMANITIES

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH

UNIT V – DRAMA-II – SHS1206

**SATHYABAMA INSTITUTE OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY
(DEEMED TO BE UNIVERSITY)**

DRAMA- II: SHS1206

Course Materials

UNIT - 5 (21st Century Feminist Drama)

Detailed : Martin McDonagh : *The Beauty Queen of Leenane* (1996)

Non – Detailed : Caryl Churchill : *Top Girls* (1982)

DETAILED

THE BEAUTY QUEEN OF LEENANE – MARTIN McDONAGH

The Beauty Queen of Leenane is a 1996 dramatic play by Irish playwright Martin McDonagh which was premiered by the Druid Theatre Company in Galway, Ireland. It also enjoyed successful runs at London's West End, Broadway and Off-Broadway.

It was nominated for a Laurence Olivier Award as Best Play for the London production, and the 1998 Broadway production was nominated for six Tony Awards, winning four, for Best Leading Actress in a Play, Best Featured Actor in a Play, Best Featured Actress in a Play and Best Direction of a Play.

Summary:

Maureen Folan, a 40-year-old spinster, lives in the Irish village of Leenane, Connemara, in the early 1990s with her 70-year-old mother Mag, for whom she acts as caretaker. While Maureen is out, the Folan home is visited by Ray Dooley, a young man, who invites both women to a farewell party for his visiting American uncle. When it seems Mag is incapable of remembering this message, Ray writes it down for Maureen. As soon as he leaves, Mag destroys the note in the furnace. Upon Maureen's return, she admonishes her mother for depending on her as if she were an invalid; despite her bad back and burnt hand, Maureen thinks Mag is capable of doing more for herself. Maureen has already learnt of the party from Ray, whom she passed on her way in, so she punishes Mag for her dishonesty by forcing her to drink lumpy Complan.

Maureen, a virgin who has only ever kissed two men, buys a new dress and attends the party. She brings Ray's older brother, Pato, home with her. Pato is a construction worker who lives

primarily in London, though he is unhappy both there and in Leenane. He reveals that, although he has barely spoken to Maureen in 20 years of acquaintance, he has secretly thought of her as "the beauty queen of Leenane" for a long time. She brings him to her bedroom. In the morning, Mag empties her bedpan into the kitchen sink, a daily habit that disgusts Maureen. Pato emerges from the bedroom and prepares breakfast for a shocked Mag, revealing that Maureen insisted he not sneak out. Maureen then emerges, dressed only in her underwear, and flaunts her intimacy with Pato in front of Mag. Incensed, Mag accuses Maureen of having deliberately burnt her hand by pouring hot oil over it, and then reveals that it is actually she who is legally responsible for Maureen after having signed her out of an English "loony bin." After Mag goes to find the papers that prove this, Maureen tells Pato that Mag burnt herself trying to cook unsupervised, but she admits that she truly did suffer a nervous breakdown while working as a cleaner in England, 15 years earlier, when she was unable to endure the teasing of her English coworkers. She claims Mag sometimes tries to tell lies about the past, thinking Maureen is unable to discern them from reality. Pato is sympathetic, telling her that his opinion of her is unchanged. However, when he urges her to dress herself for warmth, she becomes insecure about her appearance and throws a tantrum. Mag returns with the documents, but Pato ignores her, departing after telling an upset Maureen that he will write to her.

Some time later, Pato writes from London, telling Maureen that he is going to work for his American uncle in Boston, and he wants Maureen to come with him as soon as she can. The letter also reveals that he was unable to perform sexually when they were together, but he tells her that it was only because he had drunk too much. He also tells her that there will be a going away party for him. He sends the letter to Ray, with explicit instructions to put it directly into Maureen's hands. However, when Ray comes to the house, Maureen is out and Mag persuades him to leave the letter with her, playing on his resentment of Maureen for failing to return his swingball that fell in the Folan yard when he was a child and for snubbing him recently in the street. After Ray leaves, Mag reads and burns the letter.

On the night of Pato's farewell party, Maureen is aware of Pato's plans but assumes he is uninterested in pursuing a relationship. However, she tells Mag that it was she who ended things with him. When she continues to talk about the sexual encounter, Mag teases her and accidentally lets slip that she is aware of Pato's impotence. Seizing on it, Maureen tortures Mag with hot oil until she confesses the letter's existence and contents. Leaving Mag writhing on the floor, Maureen quickly puts on her dress and rushes out to the party.

She returns home after midnight, telling an unmoving Mag that she caught Pato at the train station before he left, and they recommitted themselves to one another. At the end of the scene, Mag slumps to the floor, dead. Maureen has bashed her head in with the poker.

A month later, Mag's funeral is held following an inquest that exonerated Maureen. Ray visits, bringing word from Pato. However, it soon becomes clear that Maureen imagined her reunion with Pato; he actually left by taxi without ever seeing Maureen. And now he has become engaged to a woman with whom he danced at the party. Maureen asks Ray to send Pato a message, "The beauty queen of Leenane says 'Goodbye.'" Ray leaves after discovering and seizing his lost swingball. Left alone in the house, Maureen puts on Mag's sweater, sits in her rocking chair, and adopts her mannerisms.

NON - DETAILED

TOP GIRLS – CARYL CHURCHILL

Characters:

Pope Joan

Pope Joan is one of Marlene's dinner party guests in act 1, scene 1, and the fourth to arrive. Pope Joan is somewhat aloof, making relevant, intellectual declarations throughout the conversation. When the topic turns to religion, she cannot help but point out heresies—herself included—though she does not attempt to convert the others to her religion. Joan reveals some of her life. She began dressing as a boy at age twelve so she could continue to study; she lived the rest of her life as a man, though she had male lovers. Joan was eventually elected pope. She became pregnant by her chamberlain lover and delivered her baby during a papal procession. For this, Joan was stoned to death. At the end of the scene, Joan recites a passage in Latin.^[9] Like all the dinner guests, Joan's life and attitude reflect something about Marlene; in particular how she had to give up her female body in order to "succeed" in her time.

Dull Gret

The subject of the painting *Dulle Griet* by Pieter Breughel, in which a woman wearing an apron and armed with tools of male aggression – armor, helmet, and sword – leads a mob of peasant women into Hell, fighting the devils and filling her basket with gold cups. In the play she eats crudely and steals bottles and plates when no one is looking, putting these in her

large apron. Throughout most of the dinner scene, Dull Gret has little to say, making crude remarks such as "bastard" and "big cock". Her rare speech is coarse, reductive and amusing while her relative silence adds an element of suspense up to the point where she recounts the tale of her invasion.

Lady Nijo

Lady Nijo is a thirteenth-century Japanese concubine who enters the play near the beginning of act one and proceeds to tell her tale. As the most materialistic of the women, she is influenced more by the period of time before she became a wandering nun than by the time she spent as a holy woman. It may be suggested that it is her social conditioning that Churchill is condemning, not her character, as she is brought up in such a way that she cannot even recognize her own prostitution. She is instructed by her father to sleep with the emperor of Japan and reflects on it positively; she feels honored to have been chosen to do so when discussing it with Marlene in Act 1. In relation to Marlene, this may suggest that Marlene, like Lady Nijo, has not questioned the role given to her by society and merely played the part despite the consequences; as she does whatever it takes to be successful in an individualistic business environment.

Patient Griselda

Patient Griselda is one of Marlene's dinner guests in act one. She is the last to arrive, so Marlene and the other characters in the scene order without her. Historically, Griselda first came into prominence when Chaucer adapted her (from earlier texts by Boccaccio) for a story in *The Canterbury Tales* called "The Clerk's Tale." In Chaucer's tale, and also in *Top Girls*, Griselda is chosen to be the wife of the Marquis, even though she is only a poor peasant girl. The one condition that he gives her is that she must promise to always obey him.

After they have been married for several years, Griselda gives birth to a baby girl. When the baby turns six weeks old the Marquis tells Griselda that she has to give it up, so she does. Four years later Griselda gives birth to a son. She has to also give this child up after two years because it angers the other members of the court. Twelve years after she gave up her last child, the Marquis tells her to go home, which she does. The Marquis then comes to Griselda's father's house and instructs her to start preparing his palace for his wedding. Upon her arrival, she sees a young girl and boy and it is revealed that these are her children. All of this suffering was a trial to test her obedience to the Marquis.

When she recounts her tale at dinner with the other women it appears in an accurate but slightly shortened form. Griselda says that she understands her husband's need for complete obedience, but it would have been nicer if he had not done what he did. She spends much of her time defending her husband's actions against Lady Nijo's accusations concerning his character.

Isabella Bird

Isabella Bird is the first dinner guest to arrive at Marlene's celebration. In real life, as discussed in the first act, Bird was a world traveler. The play does not mention that she wrote several books, including *An English Woman In America*, *A Lady's Life in the Rocky Mountains*, and *Among the Tibetans*. Her adventures took her around the world. At dinner, Bird tells everyone that she was first instructed to travel by a doctor who thought it would improve her poor health. Following this advice, she took her first trip, a sea voyage to America at age 23. For a long time, she lived with her mother and her younger sister, Henrietta Bird, whom she talks about with great affection during the dinner party. She also mentions Jim Nugent, a one-eyed mountain man who was her guide in the Rocky Mountains.^[12] In life, Nugent was in love with Bird but she ignored his advances. She once wrote in a letter to her sister "He is a man any woman might love, but no sane woman would marry." Nugent would later be found murdered.

Of the dinner guests, Bird seems to have the most in common with Marlene. Bird, like Marlene, did not marry young because of her career, but later married John Bishop, who died two days before their fifth anniversary. She refers to him as "my dear husband the doctor" but, despite her love for her husband, is still disappointed with marriage itself ("I did wish marriage had seemed more of a step"). Bird gets the last words in act 1 and continues to discuss her final travels to Morocco.

Summary

Act One

Five women from different times in history join Marlene to celebrate her new position as managing director of an employment agency. Marlene is the first to arrive and orders a bottle of wine. The women arrive one at a time and join the conversation. Isabella shares details about her life in Edinburgh and her travels. Nijo describes her life as a courtesan to the emperor. Joan explains how she disguised herself as a man and ruled as pope for several

years. Griselda shares her fairy tale marriage to a prince who cruelly tested her loyalty over many years. Dull Gret adds crude comments from time to time. Eventually she shares how she led an army of women through a village to fight the devils. The women toast Marlene on her promotion. The women eventually show signs of intoxication. Nijo begins to cry over the children she has lost. Pope Joan moves over to console her. Joan begins to recite a verse in Italian and becomes ill soon after. Griselda asks for water for Joan. Isabella continues talking and is oblivious to Joan's sickness.

The next day Marlene interviews a woman named Jeanine at the "Top Girls" Employment Agency. Jeanine is interested in making a change because she would like to make more money. She is saving to get married. Marlene offers up job prospects and suggests to Jeanine that she not mention that she is engaged. Jeanine agrees to being recommended for a job at a lampshade company and a knitwear manufacturer. Marlene reminds her to be confident in her interview.

Two girls Angie and Kit are squashed together in a shelter in Joyce's backyard. Joyce is Angie's guardian, and the two of them have a difficult relationship. Angie is 16 and Kit is 12. Joan is not able to see Angie in the yard and is shouting for her. Angie ignores her mother and adds that she hates her. The girls talk about supernatural things. Angie then tells Kit that she is going to kill her mother.

Joyce comes outside to offer the girls chocolate biscuits, but the girls stop talking in order to not be discovered. The girls trade profanities and insults as they talk. Then Angie entrusts Kit with a secret. Angie believes that her aunt Marlene is her real mother. She plans to visit her aunt in London when she gets a chance.

Joyce finally finds the girls hiding in the backyard, and she orders Angie to clean her room. Kit stays behind and talks with Joyce about school. Angie no longer attends school because she didn't like it. Joyce believes that Angie's future depends on being able to find a husband, but Joyce has her doubts that a man may want Angie. Angie returns wearing a nice dress that is a bit too small. Joyce immediately scolds her for wearing it. When Joyce is out of earshot Angie tells Kit that she plans to wear this dress to murder her mother with a brick.

Act 2

Employees Nell and Win arrive at "Top Girls" Employment Agency on Monday morning. The women discuss their weekends and then talk about their coworker Howard who is upset

after losing the management position to Marlene. Marlene enters a bit late and Win makes note of it. Marlene shares her work agenda for the day. Win mentions that she is pleased that Marlene beat out Howard for the job. Nell agrees. The women begin their day.

Win interviews a woman named Louise who is 46 years old and has been working for the same company for years. Louise has been passed over for a number of promotions and is ready for a change. She was the only woman at the company with the exception of a younger woman who was her assistant for a while. She prefers to work with men. Win tells her that she understands her and asks Louise if she drinks. Win commends Louise when she says that she does not.

Angie unexpectedly shows up at the office and surprises Marlene who is not pleased to see her. Marlene wants to know why Angie is there and when she will be heading back. Angie confirms that her mother Joyce knows she is there. Then Angie shares that the best day of her whole life was when Marlene came to her home to visit the previous year.

Howard's wife Mrs. Kidd interrupts the reunion to talk to Marlene. Mrs. Kidd shares that Howard is ill and hasn't slept in three nights. She wants Marlene to step down because Howard has a family to support. She adds that it will be her that bears the brunt of the fallout from this situation. Marlene is unsympathetic to Mrs. Kidd's pleas. Mrs. Kidd angrily leaves but not before telling Marlene that she will end up miserable and lonely. Meanwhile Nell interviews a 29 year-old woman named Shona who is seeking a management position. Nell discovers that Shona is lying to her about her experience and is really only 19.

Win finds Angie at her desk and the two talk about working at the employment agency. Angie shows interest in working there someday inspiring Win to share her own background. Win tells her all about her education, work experience, and marriage in such detail that Angie falls asleep. Nell enters to inform Win that Howard has had a heart attack but is still alive. Marlene enters to find her sleeping niece and shares her concerns about Angie's future success.

The scene flashes back to one year ago. Joyce, Angie, and Marlene gathered together in Joyce's kitchen. Angie opened the presents Marlene brought for her. One of the presents was a floral dress that Angie liked. Joyce was surprised to see her sister and Marlene told her that Angie invited her. Marlene expected that Joyce knew this. Angie entered the room wearing the dress. Angie confessed to arranging the reunion of sisters because she thought that they would have enjoyed seeing each other after many years.

The women then began to share a bottle of whiskey. They talk about Mr. Connolly who killed his wife. Joyce says that her husband moved out three years ago when Marlene was in America. Joyce sends Angie off to get ready for bed. The women begin to argue about past decisions. Joyce accuses Marlene of abandoning her daughter and mother. Marlene counters by criticizing Joyce's choice to stay there and not pursue a career. An intoxicated Marlene says that good things are ahead for the eighties. Both women shoot insults at each other as they continue to argue.

The topic eventually changes to Angie. Marlene suggests that Angie will be alright, but Joyce disagrees. Joyce says that things really haven't changed that much for all of them. Joyce heads to bed and Angie emerges from her bedroom. Angie sees Marlene and asks, "Mum?" Marlene asks her if she had a bad dream and Angie says, "Terrifying."

Plot Diagram – Top Girls



Introduction:

1. Marlene surprises Joyce with a visit to her home.

Rising Action:

2. Joyce asks Marlene how she could leave her child Angie.
3. Angie calls Marlene "Mum."
4. Marlene celebrates promotion with women from history.
5. Angie tells Kit that she thinks Marlene is her mom.
6. Marlene, Win, and Nell interview women for jobs.

Climax:

7. Angie surprises Marlene with a visit to her office.

Falling Action:

8. Mrs. Kidd confronts Marlene.

Resolution:

9. Marlene says that Angie will not be successful.

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