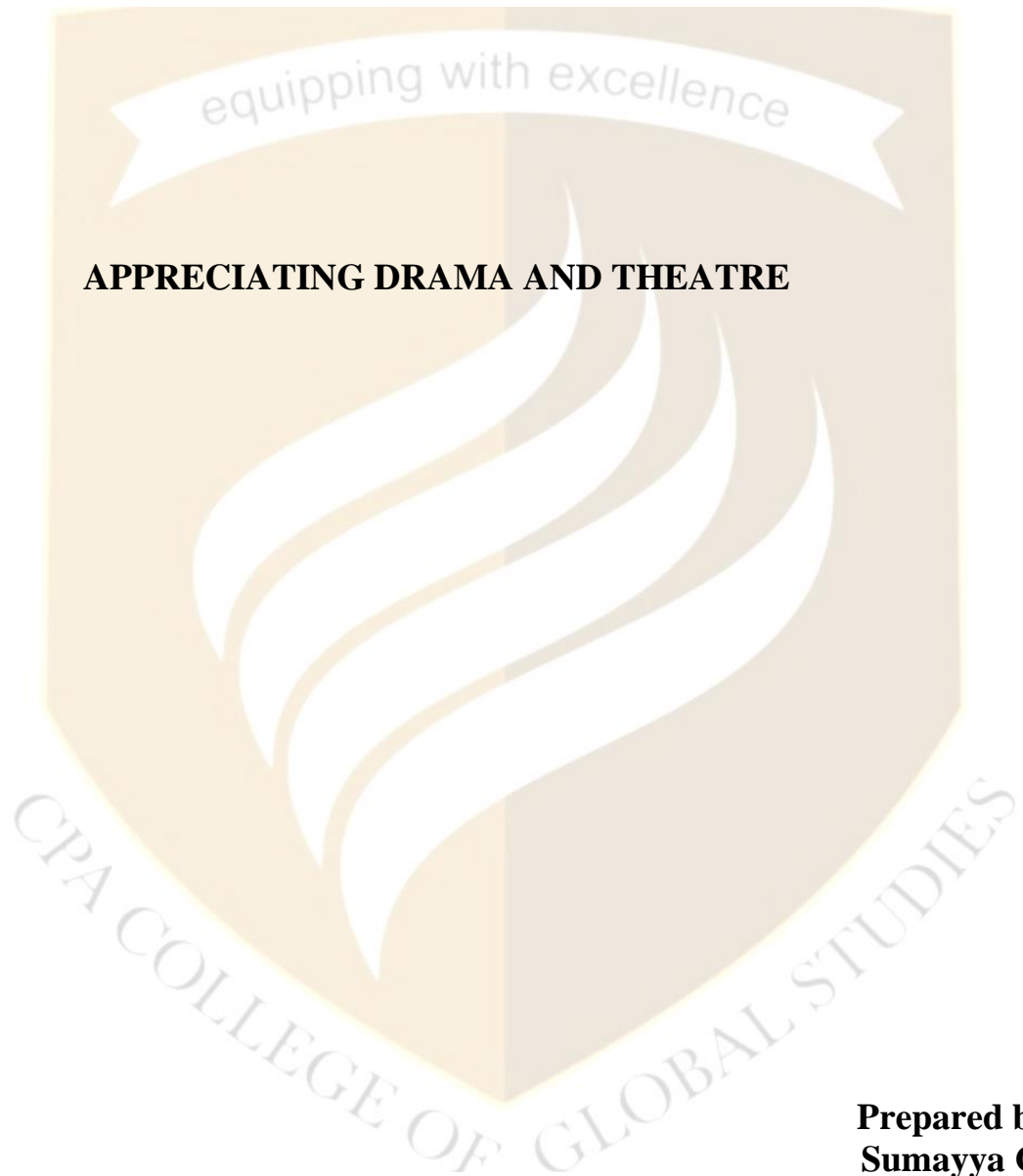


5th SEMESTER

BA ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE



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COURSE DESCRIPTION

- COURSE CODE: ENG5B07
- TITLE OF THE COURSE: APPRECIATING DRAMA AND THEATRE
- SEMESTER IN WHICH THE COURSE IS TO BE TAUGHT: 5
- NO. OF CREDITS: 4
- NO. OF CONTACT HOURS: 90 (5 hrs per week)

OBJECTIVES OF THE COURSE:

- To introduce the students to the basic elements of drama, including the historical progress of drama in different continents.
- To foster an ability in the students for appreciating drama as an art form.
- To familiarize the students with the different genres and masters of drama.
- To facilitate the learners to critically go beyond the theatrical performances to the texts and approach them critically from various standpoints.

COURSE SUMMARY:

- Module 1: 16 hrs
- Module 2: 30 hrs
- Module 3: 20 hrs
- Module 4: 12 hrs
- Evaluation 12 hrs
- **Total 90 hrs**

COURSE DETAILS:

Module 1: Drama - Some Key Concepts

- Basic Elements of Drama: Tragedy, Comedy, Tragicomedy; The Constituent Parts of Drama – Plot, Character,
- Thought, Song, Spectacle, Diction, Three Unities, Tragic Hero, Chorus, Simple plot and Complex plot; The
- basic structure of tragedy
- History of Drama: Greek Theatre and Drama, Miracle Plays and Morality Plays, University Wits,
- Shakespearean Theatre, Restoration Drama, Sentimental Drama, Anti-sentimental Drama, Comedy of
- Manners, Drama of the Romantic Period, Decadence, Problem Play, Realism, Ibsen and Bernard Shaw. Avantgarde:
- Expressionism & Epic Theatre, Angry Young Man, The Theatre of the Absurd, Comedy of Menace, The
- Theatre of Cruelty, Feminist theatre, Street theatre, Ritualistic Theatre, The Poor theatre, Radio Drama.

Module 2: Classical Drama

- William Shakespeare: *Othello*

Module 3: World Plays

- 1. Anton Chekov: *The Bear/ The Boor*

- 2. Edward Albee: *Zoo Story*
- 3. Kobo Abe: *The Man who turned into a Stick* – trans. Donald Keene

Module 4: Drama Adaptation

- 1. Roman Polanski: *Macbeth* (1971)
- 2. Syamaprasad: *Akale* (2004)

Module 1: Basic Elements of Drama

Tragedy

- Tragedy is the specific type of dramatic representation of serious action which typically ends with disastrous conclusion for the central character (hero/protagonist)
- Greeks used the word for the first time in first century BC to refer to the particular kind of play enacted as part of festivals. It was often sponsored by the local governments and the ambience of the play was more that of a religious ceremony than an entertainment. Most of the plays drew their themes from legends, myths and history. Many of the plays were adaptations from Homer, the Greek epic poet.
- Tragedy is an imitation of an action that is serious, complete and of a certain magnitude; in language embellished with each kind of artistic embellishment, the several kinds being found in separate parts of the play, in the form of action, not of narration, through pity and fear effecting the proper purgation of these emotions (Prof Butcher's translation).
- **Catharsis:** The concept of 'catharsis' is a major contribution of Aristotle to literature. It literally means purgation or purification. The concept puts forth the idea that the tragic representations of suffering, misfortune or defeat do not produce negative emotions of sorrow or gloom in the audience, they instead leave the audience relieved or even exalted through the process of purification of these emotions in the minds of the spectators.
- Therefore catharsis can be considered as the pleasure of pity and fear'. The concept of catharsis can be related to the concept of *rasa* in Indian Aesthetics. *Rasa* too is the sublimated feeling aroused in the spectators when they watch elemental feelings dramatically represented on stage.
- **Tragic hero:** Aristotelian concept of a tragic hero requires a protagonist who is a person with loftier characteristics that makes him better than the ordinary people. Yet he should not be completely good or perfect. He will have a tragic flaw or error in judgment that will eventually result in his downfall. The misfortune of the tragic hero arouses pity in the audience since he is not an evil man and his misfortune is greater

than he deserves. They feel fear as they recognise similar possibilities of error in their thoughts and actions.

- Revenge Tragedies were popular tragic dramas during the Elizabethan period. They were modelled on Senecan Tragedies which revelled on murder, revenge, ghosts, and bloodshed. The Spanish Tragedy (1586) by Thomas Kyd belongs to this group, Christopher Marlow's The Jeap of Malta (1569) too belongs to this mode. The greatest tragedies like The Duchess of Malfi and Hamlet can be considered as innovations on Senecan Tragedies or Revenge Tragedies
- The Elizabethan age of late sixteenth and early seventeenth century are considered as the golden period of English Tragedies. Shakespeare, Chapman, Webster, Philip Beaumont and Fletcher wrote their famous works during the period.
- But the Elizabethan tragedies deviated considerably from the Aristotelian concept of tragedy. They introduced humorous characters in tragic plots and do not conform to the concepts of dramatic unities of time and place of action.
- Norwegian playwright Henrik Ibsen is a major figure who wrote during the latter half of the nineteenth century. Many of his plays like A Doll's House, Ghosts and An Enemy of the People deals with social and political issues and belong to the group of Problem Plays.
- Arthur Miller, the American playwright is yet another prominent figure. All My Sons (1947) and Death of a Salesman (1949) are two of his major plays.
- American Eugene O'Neill is yet another prominent figure in the modern period. Mourning Becomes Electra, one of his most popular plays, is an adaptation of Aeschylus' Oresteia. Murder in the Cathedral (1935) by T S Eliot is a noteworthy contribution in the pre-war period. It adopts the Greek convention and is written in verse and incorporates elements from medieval miracle and morality plays.

Comedy

- The word 'comedy' is derived from the Greek verb that means "to revel". Comedies were traditionally staged in ancient Greece in the festivals of god Dionysius, the god of fertility. These festivals are connected to the fertility cults.
- Aristotle in Poetics observes that comedy has its origin from the phallic songs. He further observes that while tragedy imitated men who are better than the average, comedy imitated men who are worse
- Comedy in drama is the kind of play which is primarily intended to amuse us. The characters and the difficult situations they are in are created in such a way to engage our pleasurable attention.
- The basic concept of comedy right from Aristotle to the contemporary times is centered on human being as social beings, not as private individuals.
- Therefore the major function of comedy has always been to highlight the oddities and eccentricities of people or communities and to correct them. . Comedies can be broadly divided into the following types:

1. Comedy of Manners: It originated from the New Comedy of the Greek Menander (342-291 BC) and was developed by Roman dramatists Plautus and Terence subsequently in ancient Rome. The play typically has stock characters such as a clever servant, wealthy rival etc. The Shakespearean play *Much Ado About Nothing* is a fine example of English comedy of manners. The Restoration Comedy (1660-1700) that dealt with the relations and intrigues of people living in sophisticated upper-class society was a polished form of the comedy of manners. It was influenced by French writer Moliere (1622-1673).

2. Comedy of Humours

- It was the type of comedy fashioned by Ben Jonson and perfected in his play *Everyman Out of His Humour* (1600). The Elizabethan playwright designed comedies based on the ancient physiological theory of the four humours. The humours were believed to be the four basic fluids - blood, phlegm, choler and melancholy. These fluids were considered to be responsible for determining the physical conditions as well as the character of a person. An imbalance in any particular temperament was believed to be the basis of four kinds of disposition. They were- sanguine, phlegmatic, choleric and melancholic. In the comedy of humours each of the major characters belonged to a particular humour that gave him a characteristic distortion or eccentricity of disposition. William Wycherley, Sir George Etherege, William Congreve and other dramatists of the Restoration period produced many popular dramas of this particular variety.

3. Romantic Comedy

- This particular type of comedy often involves a love affair of a charming and engaging heroine. They may encounter many difficulties. But they often overcome these difficulties to end in a happy union or marriage. Romantic comedy bloomed during the Elizabethan period and they were modelled on prose romances. Shakespeare's popular comedy *As You Like It* (1599) is modelled on *Rosalynde*, a prose romance by Thomas Lodge. The Romantic comedies in general portray an idyllic setting, like a wood or a faraway island where the worries and troubles of the ordinary world do not impede the ideal love affair of the romantic pairs. The Forest of Arden in *As You Like It* and the woods in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* are such idyllic places where the action moves from the world of conflict and trouble into a scenic world of beauty and tranquillity.

4. Satiric Comedy

- These comic productions ridiculed political or philosophic doctrines. It often attacked deviations from standard social order. Greek Aristophanes (450-385 BC) is said to be the father of Satiric Comedy. Ben Johnson, the Elizabethan playwright wrote satiric comedy to expose the evils in society. *Volpone* and *The Alchemist* are fine examples from Jonson of this type of plays.

5. Farce

- It is the kind of comedy designed for simple hearty laughter, often called belly laughs. Exaggerated and caricatured characters often figured up in such plays. Farce was a regular component in medieval morality plays. Farcical elements account for much of the comedy in some of the Shakespearean plays like Merry Wives of Windsor and Taming of the Shrew.

High and Low Comedy

- High Comedy can be defined as the intellectual laughter often arising from the intelligent spectators who remain detached from the action. George Meredith in his classical essay "The Idea of Comedy (1877) considers the comedy of manners as the typical form of high comedy. Low Comedy relies on slapstick humour, boisterous or clownish physical activity or jokes for comic effect.

Tragicomedy

- Tragicomedies are dramatic forms that transgressed the conventional concepts of the classical Greek drama. They mixed up the standard norms of characters, subject matter and typical plot forms of Tragedy and Comedy. One can find characters of high degree and low degree in those plays
- The term is coined by the Roman dramatist Plautus in the second century BC. Amphitryon, a play by Plautus shows a reversal of roles traditionally attributed to them.
- Tragicomedies represented a serious action that would bring a tragic turn out to the protagonist. Yet it would often be averted by a sudden reversal of circumstance and would conclude happily. The Faithful Shepherdess (1608), a play by John Fletcher is a typical example of the genre. The Merchant of Venice can thus be considered as a tragicomedy even though traditionally it is regarded as a Shakespearean Comedy. Cymbeline, The Winter's Tale and The Tempest- the last plays of Shakespeare, belong to the tragicomic group.
- With the advent of realism in the later 19th century, tragicomedies underwent yet another revision. It mingled the tragic and comic elements. The Ibsen plays like Ghosts (1881) and The Wild Duck (1884) belonged to this genre.
- In the modern period tragicomedies became synonymous with absurd drama as they focussed on laughter as the sole solace for men confronted with the emptiness and meaninglessness of existence. Endgame (1958) by Samuel Beckett and The Dumb Waiter (1960) by Harold Pinter are fine examples of this genre.

The Constituent Parts of Drama

1. Plot

- Aristotle used the term mythos to refer to plot. He regarded Plot as the most important component of a tragedy. Plot can be defined as the main events of a play devised and arranged by the playwright as an interrelated sequence of events and actions.
- Plot and Characters are interdependent critical concepts. Plot is different from the story. Story is mere summary of the play that shows the bare outline of what happens in a play
- The following concepts constitute a plot: a. Protagonist- The central/chief character in a plot. They were traditionally known as Hero/ Heroine. The plot is generally woven around their actions and fate.

b. Antagonist- The protagonist is often pitted against the antagonist. The antagonist is often called a Villain if he is distinctly evil and cruel. Sometimes the antagonist can be either the fate or the circumstances that plot creates against the protagonist.

c. Foil- is a Character who shows a sharp contrast in temperament to the protagonist. A foil is introduced to stress and highlight the distinctive temperament of the protagonist. Laertes, the man of action is a foil to the doubting Hamlet in Shakespeare's play.

d. Suspense- The play retains the consistent interest of the viewer through the element of Suspense. The lack of certainty on the part of the spectator about what is going to happen next in the play is called suspense. Suspense is often enhanced by the sympathy of the spectator with the protagonist of the play. He would be eagerly watching the play to see what would eventually happen to his favourite character(s). The success of a play depends upon how effectively the playwright is capable of maintaining suspense in a spectator.

e. Intrigue- it is a scheme devised to fool other characters in a play. The success of an intrigue depends on the ignorance or gullibility of the person(s) against whom it is devised. Iago successfully intrigues against Othello in the Shakespearean tragedy making use of the gullibility of the protagonist

f. The Beginning, Middle and End in a plot- Aristotle conceived these three elements as essential to a unified plot. The beginning introduces the main action in a way that anticipates further action. The middle presumes what has gone before and recovers something to follow The end follows what has gone before but requires nothing more.

g. Exposition -Exposition period in the plot is the time for building up necessary background and information for the central conflict in a play. It often comes soon after the opening scene in a tragedy. The appearance of the ghost in Hamlet exposes

the hidden secrets to the Prince of Denmark that results in the tragic actions that follow.

h. Action sequence in a play -The Rising action begins after the opening scene and Exposition. It develops the conflict that leads to the Climax. The Climax is a turning point that is followed by the crisis resulting in the change of fortune of the protagonist. Catastrophe is often applied to tragedy only. A common term for both comedy and tragedy are Resolution or Denouement. It is a situation where the conflict is settled, the mystery is solved or misunderstanding is cleared away.

2. Character

- Characters are persons represented in a dramatic work.. A character is assessed by the viewer through the dialogue and action. A character can be stable or changing in a play. Prospero in The Tempest, for example, undergoes major changes through the course of action.
- Aristotle considers character as the second most important element in a tragedy just after Plot. According to Poetics, a character should have four main qualities. Primarily a character should be good. Second aim is propriety. Thirdly, a character should be true to life. The fourth point is consistency. The person of a given character should speak and act in a given way.

3. Thought

- The psychology behind the character's action.
- Aristotle has expressed his views regarding Thought more clearly in Rhetoric than in Poetics. Thought of a character is revealed either through his actions or through dialogue; it would be difficult to treat thought as a separate entity in a drama. Yet the concept of thought can be estimated as the mental transactions of the characters that are manifested in the forms of actions and speech in a drama.

4. Diction

- Aristotle considers Diction as an essential component of tragedies. He has given a detailed concept of diction in Poetics. According to Poetics, diction includes the following: phoneme, syllable, connective, noun, verb, conjunction, inflection and utterance. He further divides phonemes into vowels, continuants and mutes. The most important quality of diction is clarity, according to Aristotle. He feels there must be a balance between clarity and exotic words in the diction. Thus he feels the diction should be clear but different from the ordinary speech.
- Diction in drama in the contemporary context can be defined as the particular language employed by the playwright to script the dialogue in a play. It gives emphasis to the choice of vocabulary, style and the tone of language employed in a play.

5. Song

- Song has been one of the fundamental elements of ancient drama. The very concept of drama is closely associated with singing. In ancient Greece, dramas were enacted in connection with the festivals. The core element of the festivals was revelry- drunken men dressed in goatskin sang in choruses to imitate the capering of goats. It was also done to honour Dionysius, the god of fertility and wine making.

6. Spectacle

- Spectacle refers to the visual elements of a drama. It could also refer to the special or surprising scenes introduced in the ancient drama to amuse the spectators. The visual elements in a play consist of costumes, stage properties and special visual effects. The costume, makeup and other stage properties should suit the character and the scene. Aristotle calls spectacle 'least artistic' element of a tragedy and 'least connected to the work of the playwright'.

Three Unities

- A more elaborate convention of three unities was formulated by the French classicists based on the fundamental concept in Poetics. The Three Unities require a play to have a single action represented as occurring in a single place and within the course of a day. These principles were - unity of action, unity of place and unity of time.
- The concept of three unities was held in high esteem all through the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries in France and Italy.
- The unity of action: a play should have one main action that it follows, with no or few subplots. The unity of place: a play should cover a single physical space and should not attempt to compress geography, nor should the stage represent more than one place. The unity of time: the action in a play should take place over no more than 24 hours

Tragic Hero

- The Tragic Hero is the protagonist or chief character in a Tragedy. Aristotle stipulates certain specific attributes to a tragic hero. He should be a lofty character so that he should not be identified as a common man by the spectators. Yet he flawless either. He is characterised by his Tragic Flaw, the error in judgement or **hamartia**. commonest form of hamartia is hubris or pride that often leads to the downfall of the hero as we see in King Lear. It is this tragic flow of excessive pride or overmuch self confidence that prompts the protagonist to neglect a divine warning or violate a moral law.
- The downfall or misery of the hero evokes our pity as he is not a bad or evil personality and his tragedy is disproportionate to his flaw. The tragedy evokes fear in us as such flawed judgments or error in character is often part of every one of us.

Aristotle speaks of the tragic plot as something that evokes tragic pity and fear in the auditor through complication to a catastrophe. It involves **anagnorisis**, a discovery of facts hitherto unknown to the hero. It results in **peripeteia**, or a reversal of fortune from happiness to sorrow or downfall.

Simple and Complex Plot

- Aristotle classifies the plots broadly into two- Simple and Complex plots. A Simple plot is one in which there is only a single and continuous action. Simple plots do not have Peripeteia and Anagnorisis- the Reversal of fortune and the Recognition.
- A complex plot is one in which either the Reversal or the Recognition or both take place. Reversal of situation is where the actions in the drama take a completely opposite direction contrary to our expectations or speculations. Thus in Oedipus, the messenger comes to cheer Oedipus and free him from his alarms about his mother, but by revealing who he is, he produces the opposite effect.

Chorus

- Chorus was part of rituals in ancient Greece. It was a group of people, who wore masks and chanted verses while dancing at religious festivals. Chorus became a part of the classical Greek tragedies. They served mainly as commentators on actions in the dramas. They often expressed traditional, moral, religious and social attitudes.
- Frederic Nietzsche makes some remarkable speculations regarding the Chorus in his book The Birth of Tragedy (1872). He says that there were only the choruses on stage at the beginning days of Greek tragedies.
- Chorus was later introduced to the Roman plays by writers like Seneca. Gorboduc, the British play written in the sixteenth century has a chorus. It was probably imitated from the Senecan tradition by Norton and Sackville, the playwrights.

History of Drama

Greek Theatre and Drama

- The term drama comes from a Greek word meaning 'actors'. The term theatre is derived from the Greek word Theatron or 'seeing place'. Drama could be defined as printed text of the play while theatre is the performance text.
- The origin of drama happened in Greece - the city state of Athens. Individual poets read out their written works. Soon people packed to listen to them and this sets the ball rolling, longer scripts followed and roles were handpicked. These became full-fledged shows with writers, directors and a cast of actors.

- Actually, drama is originated in Greece to propitiate Dionysus, the God of wine. The blessings of Dionysus were invoked for a rich harvest. The music played in his honour was known as Tragos or goat song. The actors and singers wore goat skins. The group of singers was known as chorus. The stage was called orchestra; the people listening to the music were called the audience. The audience sat in the auditorium to watch and listen to the show.
- Until 530 BC, these festivals did not have actors. It was Thespis who introduced the first actor in 530 BC. He is regarded as one of the founding fathers of drama or the "Father of Tragedy". Aeschylus, Sophocles and Euripides formed the three pillars of Greek theatre.
- The ancient Greek theatre characterized three genres tragedy, comedy and satire. All the early plays were tragedies. The term Greek tragedy thus became a cultural label still in vogue. As said earlier Aeschylus, Sophocles and Euripides formed the trilogy of tragedy. Their dramatic genius went a long way to enrich the Greek theatre and to give a cult status to classical Greek tragedy.
- Oedipus by Sophocles is a typical example for classical Greek tragedy. It is based on the tragic story of king Oedipus.

Medieval Drama is divided into four portions:

- 1) Mystery Plays
- 2) Miracle Plays
- 3) Morality Plays
- 4) Interlude

Miracle Play

- -The plays which are related to the lives of the saints are called Miracle plays .
- -These plays are written in verse forms . The author remained still unknown.
- -These plays were popular in England from the 12th to the 16th century. Even earlier than this ,Miracle plays were performed in France
- Miracle play, also called Saint's Play, is one of three principal kinds of vernacular drama of the European Middle Ages (along with the mystery play and miracle play). A miracle play presents a real or fictitious description of the life, miracles, or martyrdom of a saint. By the 13th century they had become vernacularized and packed with un ecclesiastical elements. They had been separated from church services and were performed at public festivals. Almost all surviving miracle plays concern either the Virgin Mary or St. Nicholas, the 4th-century bishop of Myra in Asia Minor.

Mystery Play

- The mystery plays, usually representing biblical subjects, developed from plays presented in Latin by churchmen on church premises and depicted such subjects as the Creation, Adam and Eve, the murder of Abel, and the Last Judgment.
- **Morality plays**, also called morality, are allegorical drama popular in Europe especially during the 15th and 16th centuries, in which the characters personify moral qualities (such as charity or vice) or abstractions (as death or youth) and in which moral lessons are taught.
- Together with the mystery play and the miracle play, the morality play is one of the three main types of vernacular drama produced during the Middle Ages.
- -which involves a direct conflict between right and wrong or good and evil and from which a moral lesson may be drawn.
- -Most morality plays have a protagonist who represents either humanity as a whole (Everyman) or an entire social class (as in Magnificence). -Antagonists and supporting characters are not individuals, per se, but rather personifications of abstract virtues or vices, especially the seven deadly sins.

The University Wits

- The drama before Shakespeare, found its full flowering with the dramatists called the 'University Wits'. These dramatists were well-educated scholars. They wrote in the closing years of the 16th century. This name of University Wits was given them because they were nearly all educated at Oxford or Cambridge University. Wit was the synonym for scholar.
- The University wits were the scholars who were fostered under the atmosphere of either Oxford or Cambridge. They were the most noticeable of pioneer English dramatists who wrote during the last 15 years of the sixteenth century. Quality and diversity in themes marked their plays.
- The university wits included Christopher Marlowe, Robert Greene, and Thomas Nash (all Cambridge graduates). Also in the list were Thomas Lodge and George Peele of Oxford and Thomas Kyd who was not a university graduate. Together, they could well be considered the fore-runners of Shakespeare.
- All the University Wits have several features in common. All of them were actively associated with the theatre. They were usually actors as well as dramatists. They understood the requirements of the stage and felt the pulse of the audience. They often worked in collaboration with each other. With these dramatists English drama reached the highest point of glory. In many ways they developed English drama.
- The most important playwright of the group who had been a major influence on Shakespeare was, undoubtedly, Marlowe. Doctor Faustus, The Jew of Malta and Edward II are great examples of perfected dramatic art of Marlowe. Marlowe's major achievement was in the usage of blank verse which later was perfected and popularised by Shakespeare.

- Shakespeare did not belong to the university wits' group. His place was among the rival group of actor playwrights. Drama, for him, was not a peg on which to hang splendid speeches. Rather, he considered it an organic whole where characters and plot developed each other. Among Shakespeare's contemporaries, the names of Ben Jonson, Chapman, Marston and Dekker need special mention. Ben Jonson's masterpiece, Every Man in His Humour was a play noted for its characters and their treatment.

Theatre in the Age of Shakespeare

- The playhouse with which tradition connects Shakespeare was called 'The Theatre'. It was built by an actor-manager James Burbage in 1597. In 1598, it was pulled down and rebuilt as the Globe. Most of Shakespeare's works were performed here.
- During Shakespeare's time, plays were written for the masses. Queen Elizabeth, unlike her predecessors, loved theatre and the process of acting. She was a great patron of art and naturally, her patronage paved the way for the popularity of the theatre.
- The popular theatres emerged outside the city walls. Shakespeare's audience was not a disciplined lot. They booed, cheered, walked around, ate and drank during the staging of plays.
- The Elizabethan stage formed part of a circular yard, open to the sky surrounded by 3 tiers of galleries. Painted scenery was totally absent. A few screens gave actors their opportunities of exit and entrance. At the back of the stage was erected a permanent wooden balcony about nine feet above the ground. The balcony scene of Romeo and Juliet was enacted here.
- Actors wore rich costumes and little attention was paid to chronological or national accuracy. The cost of admission was small even for the reserved seats. Usually, the play started in broad daylight in the afternoon and continued for 2 hours or so.
- Female characters were taken by boys or young men. Women did not appear on stage till after Restoration. Directness and vivacity were the twin attributes of Shakespearean theatre.

Restoration and Eighteenth Century Drama

- The term “restoration” in restoration drama refers to the return of the monarchy to England after something more than a decade of Puritan rule.
- The period of Restoration owes its name from the Restoration of the Stuart dynasty to the English throne in 1660. Major changes in the cultural, art and literary fields were brought about by this political act.
- The puritan rulers had made life difficult for writers and actors. Performances were given in secrecy. Indulging in art and literature was considered a sin by the puritan rulers. In stark contrast to this, the restoration of Charles II gave a boost to the theatre.

in England. The closed playhouses were given a fresh lease of life. Technology was to be used both structurally and visually on the stage.

- With the advent of Restoration, women made their appearance on stage. A distinctive type of comedy called comedy of manners was developed by John Dryden. It was also called Restoration comedy. Excellent examples are William Congreve's 'The Way of the World' and William Wycherley's 'The Country Wife'. On the other hand, a form of drama also called heroic tragedy was developed by the restoration dramatists. Dryden's All for Love is typical of this genre.

Sentimental Comedy

- Sentimental comedy, also termed the drama of sensibility is a dramatic genre of the 18th century. These plays reflected or represented middle class life where the protagonists overcome moral trials and come out triumphantly. Though labelled as comedy, these plays aimed at producing tears and not laughter.
- The virtues of private life are exhibited in sentimental comedy. In the place of humour, there is abundance of sentiment and feeling. Needless to say, the audience wore a gloomy look as they watched these plays.
- In short, the comic or satiric of the Restoration Drama was substituted by an abundant show of moral sentiments. Richard Steele's The Conscious Lovers (1722) and Richard Cumberland's The West Indian (1771) present monumental heroes and heroines of the middle class suffering tribulations which aim at evoking pleasurable tears from the audience. These play coexisted with conventional comedies like Goldsmith's She Stoops to Conquer (1773) and Sheridan's The Rivals (1775) until the Sentimental genre waned in the 19th century.

Anti-Sentimental Comedy

- It is a reaction against sentimental comedy. The pioneer of Anti-Sentimental comedy is Oliver Goldsmith. Goldsmith, in his 'Comparison between Sentimental and Laughing Comedy', criticised the Sentimental comedy for creating situations which evoke tears in the place of laughter.
- Oliver Goldsmith writes that the true function of a comedy was to give a humorous exhibition of the follies and vices of men and women and to rectify them by exciting laughter. Goldsmith opposed sentimental comedy because in place of laughter and humour, it provided tears and distressing situations, pathetic lovers, serious heroines and honest servants.
- He argued that sentimental comedy was more like tragedy than a comedy. If comedy was to trespass upon tragedy where humour will have right to express itself. On two occasions and with unequal success, Goldsmith tried to revive sincere laughter on stage.

Comedy of manners

- Comedy of manners is a form of dramatic comedy that depicts and often satirizes the manners and affectations of contemporary society. It is mainly a satirical comedy of the Restoration period (1660–1700) that questions and comments upon the manners and social norms of a greatly sophisticated, artificial society.
- the characters of the comedy of manners belong to the real life of the 18th century—to the artificial, snobbish, vulgar English society. They are realistic, although they belong to a much restricted social span.
- The comedy of manners of the restoration, again, deals with intellect and has little emotion or impulsiveness. Instead of the emotional love of youth of the romantic comedy, the Restoration comedy is packed with highly enjoyable repartees of wit and the frank display of social depravity.
- the root of the Restoration comedy of manners might be traced in Dryden, the famous makers of this comedy were to come much later. They included William Congreve, George Etherege, William Wycherley, John Vanbrugh, and George Farquhar.
- Some of the most famous examples of comedy of manners are William Congreve's *The Way of the World*, William Wycherley's *The Country Wife*, R.B. Sheridan's *The Rivals*, *The School for Scandal*, etc.

Drama of the Romantic Period

- The Romantic period in English literature begins with the Age of Sensibility (1705 or alternately in 1789, the year of French revolution or in 1798, the year in which Wordsworth and Coleridge published *Lyrical ballads*. It is a term applied to the lyrical movements in European countries and America.
- The major writer-poets of this period, besides Wordsworth and Coleridge were Robert Burns, William Blake, Byron, Shelley and Keats.
- The major lyric poets of this age tried their hand at writing plays. By 1780s, the Sentimental plays were gradually transforming themselves into the most important dramatic form of the early 19th century which was termed melodrama.
- The tragedies written by these poets met with little success. Coleridge's *Osorio* (1797) was produced as *Remorse* at Drury Lane in 1813, Byron's *Marino Faliero* in 1821, Wordsworth's *The Borderers* (1797), *Otho the Great* by John Keats (1819) and P. B Shelley's *The Cenci* (1819) were not staged. *The Cenci* has a sustained narrative tension which gives it a class of its own.
- The general Romantic tendency is to accord greater importance to character than to action. Consequently, closet dramas are produced which are meant to be read rather than staged.

Decadence

- The term Decadence describes a period of art or literature which, compared to the excellence of a former age, is in decline. The Alexandrine period (300-30BC) and the

period after the death of Augustus (AD14) have been described as periods of decadence.

- In modern times, the term is used to refer to the Symbolist movement in French autonomy of art was emphasized in the art for art's sake slogan.
- The word 'decadence' literally ' means falling away or decline. It became an aesthetic term all throughout Europe by the end of the century. The poet Arthur Symons in his essay, 'The Decadent Movement in Literature' described decadence as a new, beautiful and interesting disease. In France, Baudelaire was considered the high priest of decadence. According to its practitioners, art is totally opposed to nature.
- In England, the ideas of decadence are manifested in the writings of Swinburne, beginning in the 1860s and by writers like Oscar Wilde, Arthur Symons, and Ernest Dowson. In the search for 'unnatural' sensations, a number of English decadent writers experimented with drugs.
- Wilde's novel, The Picture of Donan Gray is a typical example of decadent literature. Although unrecognised, women also have contributed to the decadent style. The most important of these voices was Michael Field, the pseudonym of two women writers Katherine Bradley and Edith Cooper who jointly wrote under the same name

Problem Play

- The problem play is a type of drama popularized by the Norwegian playwright Henrik Ibsen. In a problem play, the situation faced by the protagonist is portrayed as a typical situation that is representative of a contemporary social problem. For example, the play Doll's House" explores the position of a woman in society through the character of Nora.
- problem play, type of drama that developed in the 19th century to deal with controversial social issues in a realistic manner, to expose social ills, and to stimulate thought and discussion on the part of the audience.
- The genre had its beginnings in the works of the well-known French writers like Alexander Dumas. In England, Bernard Shaw brought the problem play to its intellectual peak. In a specialized application, the term problem play was also used in connection with some of Shakespeare's plays like Measure for Measure which explores the dark aspects of human nature.

Realism

- Realism in drama, as observed in the 19th century was a less extreme form of naturalism. Henrik Ibsen is a key figure among the realist playwrights. Ibsen rejected the concept of the well- made play and exaggerated theatricalism. Ibsen's influence was noticeable on Shaw and Strindberg Theatrical realism aims at bringing texts and performances closer to life.

- Realism and naturalism are differentiated on the basis of the degree of choice the characters have. While naturalism believes in the strength of natural forces over internal decisions, realism is built on the freedom and power of the individual with respect to their life choices.

Henrik Ibsen

- Henrik Johan Ibsen, popularly known as Ibsen is a major Norwegian playwright. He is often referred to as "the father of realism" and is the second most influential playwright of all times, after Shakespeare.
- He completely rewrote the rules of drama. While Europe was at the cusp of a transformation political, social and literary, Ibsen played an important role in bringing about revolutionary changes in drama. He challenged the age old romantic traditions and introduced unconventional themes. The moral values portrayed in his plays became an eye opener for the contemporary society.
- The major works of Ibsen are A Doll's House, Ghosts, The Wild Duck, The Master Builder Hedda Gabler. In Doll's House, Nora leaves her home, banging the door at the face of the worn out values of society. She leaves behind her husband Torvald and three children and sets out to educate herself on an array of issues. Nora gained an iconic status and the play was hailed by many as a major statement in gender politics.

George Bernard Shaw

- Popularly known as Bernard Shaw, he was born in Dublin in 1856 and moved to London where he established himself as a writer, orator and a socialist thinker. He became a member of the Fabian society and continued to be an active propagator of Fabian socialism. He used his plays as tools to discuss his ideas and politics.
- As a playwright, his first commercial success was "Arms and the Man". In this play, he portrayed the hollowness and hypocrisy of war politics. According to Shaw, heroism in war is not a practical man's priority. Ibsen was a major influence in Shaw's writings. The first decade of twentieth century witnessed the rise of Shaw as a major playwright.
- Shaw's early plays were appropriately titled as Plays pleasant and Unpleasant (1898). One of his early plays, Mrs. Warren's Profession, criticised the hypocrisy of society, Shaw's utter disregard of conventions is obvious in this play.
- His sparkling wit and a keen dialectic interest turn the stage into a forum of ideas where one can witness the active clash between the outdated and modern. His characters are ordinary people and the writer views them from an extraordinary perspective. Pygmalion is an example. Shaw's masterpiece, St. Joan (1923), is a revisiting of the valiant French maiden's story. Shaw recreates the story in his play extending it from the middle ages to the present.
- Pygmalion (1912) is witty with its interesting characters a phonetics teacher and an ordinary flower girl. It is one of Shaw's most successful plays on stage with its brilliant treatment of middle class morality and class distinctions. Shaw was awarded

the Nobel Prize for literature in 1925. His complete works appeared in thirty-six volumes between 1930 and 1950. His prefaces to his plays, some of them longer than the plays themselves, are literary masterpieces.

Avantgarde (Experimental theatre)

- An important term used in the history of art and literature, the term has a military origin which means "advance guard. When used in connection with literature, the term denotes exploration, and innovation- a sort of path finding- something advanced and ahead of its time. Avant garde theatre is experimental theatre where playwrights experimented with revolutionary and non-traditional forms of theatre. Experimental theatre aims at changing the equation between the play on stage and its audience. An interactive relationship with the audience is created in such theatrical genres like theatre of the absurd, expressionistic theatre, etc.

Expressionism

- The term Expressionism refers to a movement in Germany in the early twentieth century, in which a number of painters attempted at avoiding the expression of external reality. They projected themselves and their personal vision of the world in their art. Expressionism dominated the theatre for a period in the 1920s. Expressionistic theatre was a reaction against realism and aimed to depict the inner psychological realities. The origins of this are to be found in August Strindberg. The major elements of expressionistic theatre are marked in Strindberg's *The Dream Play*.
- Expressionism reached its peak during the second decade of the twentieth century. Its precursors in art were Vincent van Gogh and Paul Gauguin. The expressionistic mode of painting was epitomized in Edvard Munch's lithograph, "The Cry" (1894) which depicted a tense figure with distorted face uttering a cry of horror set in a bleak background. In literature, the precursors of Expressionism besides Strindberg were the French poet Baudelaire, the Russian novelist Fyodor Dostoyevsky and the German philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche. The central feature of Expressionism is a revolt against the artistic and literary tradition of realism, both in subject and style.
- Drama was a prominent form of expressionist writing: Georg Kaiser and Ernst Toller are the better known German playwrights who wrote in the expressionist mode. These dramatists represented anonymous human types instead of individualised characters: Plot was replaced by episodic rendering of intensely emotional states. Dialogues took the form of exclamatory words and incoherent sentences. Characters also wore masks. This mode of German drama influenced the American theatre. A typical example is *Emperor Jones* by Eugene O'Neill.

Epic Theatre

- Epic theatre is a theatrical movement which arose in the early twentieth century and was in vogue till the middle of the century. It was meant to be a new political theatre,

a response to the political climate of the time Bertolt Brecht (1898-1956) was one of its chief practitioners.

- The epic theatre was at break with the established dramatic conventions and style. It aimed at appealing to the reasoning faculty of the spectator rather than to his feelings. According to Brecht, a play must act like an alarm clock and not like a sleeping pill. It must not put the reasoning faculty of the spectator to sleep. It must address the head and not the heart.
- The epic theatre forces its audience to see the world as it is. Brecht loathed the theatre of realism, his plays were didactic. They aimed at instructing the audience. The non realistic techniques used by Brecht came to be known as the *verfremdungseffekt*, the 'alienation effect'. Element of suspense, an integral part of the traditional theatre, was no longer there.
- Though not propagandist, much epic drama depicted political ideals. Historicization is also employed to draw connections from a historical event to a similar current event (Mother Courage and her Children).
- Life of Galileo is another important play. Defamiliarization or making strange is also employed in epic theatre. What is familiar and known is made fresh, new and strange. The techniques and devices by which a work of art is constructed are laid bare. Thus, the reader's or the spectator's attention is drawn to the artifice of the text.

Theatre of the Angry Young Man

- The term Angry young Man was first used as the title of Leslie Paul's autobiography published in 1951. The term was later used by the Royal Court Theatre's press officer to promote John Osborne's 1956 play Look Back in Anger. The label became a catchphrase in Britain in the middle and late 1950s.
- "Look Back in Anger" became the mouthpiece of a disillusioned and discontented young generation who consistently maintained an anti-establishment stand.
- Angry Young Men, various British novelists and playwrights who emerged in the 1950s and expressed scorn and disaffection with the established sociopolitical order of their country. The Angry Young Men were a new breed of intellectuals who were mostly of working class or of lower middle-class origin. Some had been educated at the postwar red-brick universities at the state's expense, though a few were from Oxford. They shared an outspoken irreverence for the British class system, its traditional network of pedigreed families, and the elitist Oxford and Cambridge universities. The reforms of the post-war welfare state which failed to satisfy their aspirations resulted in frustration and a raw anger frequently expressed in their writings.
- John Osborne and Kingsley Amis are the important dramatists of the Angry Young Man movement. Amis's Lucky Jim is another typical play of this genre. Jimmy Porter the protagonist of "Look Back Anger" described as an anti-hero. The play was staged in 1956 and created tremendous stir.
- The portrayal of domestic realism everyday language instigated its critics to describe it as kitchen-sink drama. The protagonist, Jimmy, dissatisfied with job and finds it

impossible to fit into society and its established norms. This is reflected frequent quarrels with his wife. It is with excessive and disdainful humour that he reacts socially. Much of the play centres round his attacks on the society. The frustration, revolt and anger brewing in him define his personality. Though he criticises the class throughout the play, he is unable to move beyond the stereotyped working class. Thus, he belongs neither here nor there. Off from his own class, Jimmy Porter reassures in the old-fashioned pattern relationship which seeks to dominate women. The 1950s is portrayed as a contradiction of Jimmy's criticism of the social ills and his bullying towards his wife. In order to escape from the situation, he turns to drink and commits adultery.

- The kitchen-sink drama also became popular in the 1950s. It denoted plays with working class backgrounds. Works of Osborne and Arnold Wesker were two of Wesker's plays. One of Wesker's plays was titled *The Kitchen*.

Theatre of Absurd

- The term, Theatre of the Absurd was originally coined by Martin Esslin, who wrote *The Theatre of the Absurd* in 1961. Martin Esslin in his work stated that the human condition is essentially and ineradicably absurd and this condition can be adequately represented only in works of literature that are themselves absurd.
- The movement emerged in France after the horrors of the Second World War as a rebellion against the beliefs and values associated with the traditional culture and literature.
- After the 1940s, there arose a tendency prominently expressed in the existential writings of the French existentialist Jean-Paul Sartre and Albert Camus that man is an isolated being cast into an alien universe. The universe possesses no inherent truth or value and man moves from nothingness to nothingness, living an anguished and absurd existence.
- In *The Myth of Sisyphus* (1942), Albert Camus observes "In a universe that is suddenly deprived of illusions and of light, man feels a stranger. His is an irremediable exile. This divorce between man and his life, the actor and his setting, truly constitutes the feeling of Absurdity"
- Eugene Ionesco, the famous French writer of absurd drama describes this condition as a lost condition when man's actions become senseless, absurd and meaningless. *Chairs* (1952) is his well-known play. Samuel Beckett (1906-1989) is another eminent writer of this mode. His masterpiece, *Waiting for Godot*, (1955), titled as a tragicomedy in two acts, portrays the absurdity of life and helplessness of the individual in dramatic forms sans a realistic setting, logical reasoning and a coherent plot. The main feeling of the audience is that of bafflement as they face a world on stage which is devoid of any sort of logic with respect to events or human behaviour. Life becomes nothing but absurd in this context of disjointedness and meaninglessness. In *Waiting for Godot*, two tramps Vladimir and Estragon meet at a place where there is just one tree. They are waiting for Godot who never comes. The two tramps spend their time by playing word games.

- The whole ambience of the play is totally bleak. It is both comic and terrifying at the same time. Like all great writers, Beckett seems to see beyond time, to anticipate what is to be. Estragon says: "Nothing happens, nobody comes nobody goes, it's awful!" The play is absurd in a double sense- it's grotesquely comic and irrational. Also, it is a parody of the conventions of traditional drama Harold Pinter's Birthday Party, Edward Albee's Zoo Story are other examples of absurd drama.

Comedy of Menace

- Comedy of Menace is a term first used by David Campton as a subtitle to his four short plays The Lunatic View (1957) .It is a kind of play where the laughter of the audience is often followed by a feeling of some lurking danger.
- The characters of these plays (one or more of them) feel that they are threatened by some frightening, unknown power or force or personality. There is an underlying sense of violence throughout the play. The impending disaster or the threatening menace is portrayed in a comic manner.
- Even in the midst of laughter on the stage, the audience smell danger but the whole thing remains uncertain Consequently, a feeling of insecurity is produced throughout the play. These feelings of fear and insecurity become a source of grim comedy.
- Harold Pinter's The Birthday Party (1958) is a typical comedy of menace. The play mingles. comedy with the perception of danger that surrounds the whole play Laughter is aroused but it is not innocent laughter or pure comedy, P'inter's The Dumb Waiter (1960) is another example.
- In The Birthday Party, the setting is a sea-side boarding house. A Birthday party is arranged here. Two strangers come unexpectedly to this scene and the birthday party turns into a nightmare. The pinteresque features like ambiguous identification, confusion of time and place and dark symbolism are obvious in the play What Pinter prevevits is a world when people seem to be locked inside themselves along a non communicative line.

Theatre of Cruelty

- Theatre of cruelty is based on the theories of the French dramatist Antonin Artaud (1896-1945) His work "The Theatre and its Double" prescribes theories for Theatre of Cruelty. According to him, theatre must disturb or shock the spectator. His heart and soul must be pierced.
- The theatre must be a portrayal of the repressed feelings of the individual, which have been stored in his unconscious mind. The spectator, thus, must be able to view himself as he really is.
- Theatre of cruelty is seen as a break from the traditional western theatre. Artaud believed that civilisation had made humans into sick creatures due to their repressed impulses. Civilisation, as it is does not permit the individual to bring out his basic instincts and feelings. This instinctual energy. when brought out, makes him feel liberated.

- Gesture and scenery are more important than words and the director of the play is kind of a maker of magic Spectacle, lighting and stage effects are exploited to the maximum.
- Jean Genet. Jerzy Grotowski, Peter Brook etc. are some major playwrights influenced by Artaud's Theatre of Cruelty.

Feminist Theatre

- The wider political theatre of the 1970s gave rise to feminist theatre. Following the political and social activism of the times, women's theatres came up in the 70s and 80s.
- Michelene Wandor, Martha Boesing, Caryl Churchill and the Women's theatre group in London are the early leaders. Caryl Churchill's best known plays are Top Girls (1982) and Serious Money (1987), a satire on the Thatcher years from history.
- Women will always play the role expected of them to perfection but they are denied opportunities and are seen as inferior to men. But a desire to move on despite the challenges is very strongly depicted in these plays. Thus, these plays articulated not only a sense of the past but also a sense of how the existing social order could be reconstructed in favour of women.
- The women's movements all round the world have resulted in the growth of feminist theatre which, consequently, has turned into a global genre. One of the earliest feminist theatres in England is the Sphinx Theatre. The oldest theatre group in the United States is Spiderwoman Theatre (1976) and in Canada it is the Nightwood Theatre (1979). In India, the Feminist Theatre took the form of Street Theatre which became popular in the 70s and 80s.
- Feminist theatre, by its very nature, defies definition because it is about breaking boundaries and experimentation.
- Feminist theatre, since its outset, has faced internal and external challenges. The goals and methods of third wave feminism were different from that of the second wave. This too posed a challenge for the existing feminist theatre. The goals of feminist theatre continue to be extreme, including exploration of social injustices and inequalities.
- Today, gender privilege and bias continue to be both the subject and the challenge for the Feminist theatre. The theory of Feminist theatre identified ways to disrupt male gaze and to avoid objectifying women.
- The female characters became subjects rather than objects. The female point of view was made visible to the audience when women characters acted and refused to be acted upon.
- The content of the Feminist theatre focuses on the following -Examining sex and gender roles, often reversing or mocking them, telling the hitherto ignored stories of influential historical figures, telling the unjust stories of women who are oppressed and critiquing those systems of power which oppress women. The form of Feminist theatre. from plot structures to casting and rehearsal process challenges the accepted norms of the male dominated theatre.

Street Theatre

- Street theatre is a theatrical performance in outdoor public spaces without a specific paying audience. Street corners, college and university campuses, shopping centres and many such public spaces are the venues of street theatre.
- Usually, a comparatively large number of people assemble to watch these plays. The actors range from buskers (Street musicians) to organised theatre companies which wish to experiment with performance, form or propagation.
- Street theatre is used as a vehicle for providing information on important issues like health and other social issues and also for conveying messages to the public. Political propaganda is one of the main agendas of street theatre. Simple costumes dance, mime, music loud voices are all features of street theatre.
- During the twentieth century, political and community based street performance companies expanded the nature and scope of Street Theatre. Social and political activists began to choose Street theatre as their favourite and most effective medium of propagating these ideas.
- Because it directly engages the public, its influence is immediate and wide-reaching. One popular form of Street theatre developed in the 21st century is Flash Mob. A Flash Mob is where a group of people assemble all of a sudden in a street or a public place and perform a synchronised or unusual or seemingly pointless act in a short time.
- The Flash Mob is widely used as a means of propaganda by political and social activists. Song and dance comprise the main elements of Flash Mob.
- In India, one of the most prominent names associated with Street Theatre is Safdar Hashmi, the founder of Jana Natya Manch. During the staging of a street play, he was brutally attacked and murdered by some hooligans His work was continued by his family and followers.

Ritual Theatre

- Ritual theatre is the enactment of a myth or an archetypal story. It aims at resolving an issue, dealing with a difficult life experience, or as a means of healing. It also seeks to restore depleted energies.
- A ritual theatre is open to all anybody can participate. It does not require special skills as actors. Wholehearted willingness to participate is what is needed. Through the enactment of archetypal stories, the participants are involuntarily enabled to express the feelings stored in their collective unconscious. This facilitates the healing of psyche and soul which is akin to the ritual healing ceremonies of ancient times.
- All human societies have rituals. the rites of worship, all religious rites, ceremonies like inauguration, coronation, marriage, funeral all come under rituals. Even saying hello and handshake are rituals. All these rituals are part of a culture Ritual becomes a source of theatre.
- Music, dance, spectacle, costumes, speech are all part of a ritual theatre. Aristotle, in his Poetics, states that theatre has its roots in the pagan rituals of Greece. Any myth

could be its subject- for example, the fight between a God and monster or the wanderings of a prince in the underworld were themes of ritual theatre Tribal societies have their myths and rituals and their enactment.

Poor Theatre

- The Polish director, Jerzy Grotowski, in his renowned work, “Towards a Poor Theatre”(1968) formulated the ideas of Poor Theatre. It was he who coined the term poor theatre. It is a performance style with minimum stage properties or props to attain the maximum effect.
- The absence of lavish costumes and elaborate sets mark the poor theatre. Grotowsky believed that theatre cannot compete with either films or television in terms of technology. Hence, he stood for poor theatre. The skill, especially physical skill of the actor is most important in Poor Theatre. Grotowski, in his theoretical formulations of his theatre was influenced by Brecht, and Stanislavsky. He used non- traditional spaces like buildings and rooms for staging his plays. The audience was placed on many sides of action or even amidst the action. Actor-training was recommended. The period between 1959 and 1970 was the phase of Poor Theatre.
- Grotowski's Theatre was an intense confrontation with the audience. The audience was limited to fewer than 60. The actors go through the most rigorous physical training and a rigid discipline is maintained. The focus was the unadorned actor. Grotowski's productions included adaptations of the 17th century Spanish playwright Pedre Calderon's ‘The Constant and the early 20th century Polish writer Stanislaw Wyspianski's ‘Acropolis’

Radio Drama

- Radio drama is a dramatised, acoustic performance broadcast on radio or published on audio media like tapes. There is absolutely no visual component. Radio drama is purely dialogue, music and sound effects. The listeners imagine the characters, situations and the ambience of the play by listening to the dialogues.
- Radio Drama, developed in the early 1920s, achieved wide spread popularity. It was an important source of popular entertainment in the 1940s. In October 1938, Orson Welles and his Mercury Theatre produced the play War of the Worlds and it became the most famous radio play of all times. But, with the advent of television, the radio drama lost its popularity.

Module 2 : Classical Drama

Othello – William Shakespeare

- Othello, in full Othello, the Moor of Venice, tragedy in five acts by William Shakespeare, written in 1603–04 and published in 1622
- The Tragedy of Othello, Moor of Venice, 1st performance around 1604
- Often known as “Tragedy of Character”
- Coleridge said: Iago had 'motiveless malignity' (Iago had no motive, only hatred).

Characters:

1. Othello: African General in Venetian Army.
2. Desdemona: Othello's wife and Brabantio's Daughter.
3. Iago: Othello's trusted but jealous junior officer/ensign.
4. Emilia: Iago's wife and Desdemona's Maidservant.
5. Cassio: Othello's loyal Captain/Lieutenant.
6. Bianca: Cassio's lover.
7. Brabantio: Venetian Senator & Desdemona's father
8. Roderigo: A wealthy Venetian, Iago's friend. He is in love with Desdemona.
9. Montano: The former Governor.
10. Gratiano: Brabantio's brother.
11. Lodovico: Brabantio's Kinsman.
12. Duke of Venice.

Act 1

- Roderigo is upset because of Othello and Desdemona's secret marriage as he is in love with Desdemona. Iago hates Othello because Othello had promoted a much younger man, Cassio. Iago plans to exploit Othello. He provokes Roderigo to tell Brabantio about Desdemona's elopement.
- Brabantio confronts Othello and takes the case to the Duke, where he accuses Othello of seducing Desdemona by witchcraft. Othello explains to the Duke that Desdemona got enamoured to him because of the compelling stories he told her about his life before Venice.
- The Senate is satisfied when Desdemona confirms that she loves Othello.
- Before leaving, Brabantio says that Desdemona will betray Othello one day.

- The Duke orders Othello to leave Venice for the purpose of commanding the Venetian Army against the invading Turks on the island of Cyprus.

Act 2

- When Othello reaches Cyprus, he learns that the Turkish Army got destroyed in the storm. Othello orders a celebration and leaves to spend time with Desdemona.
- Iago gets Cassio drunk.
- Cassio gets disorderly and wounds Montano.
- Othello enters the party and blames Cassio for the disturbance. Othello strips Cassio of his rank.
- Iago persuades Cassio to ask Desdemona to convince Othello to reinstate him. Iago organizes the meeting between Cassio and Desdemona at Othello's house.
- Othello watches Cassio leave in haste. Desdemona pleads Othello to forgive Cassio and give him his rank back.
- Iago persuades Othello to be suspicious of Cassio and Desdemona.
- When Desdemona accidentally drops her handkerchief, Emilia finds it and gives it to Iago, unaware of what he plans to do with it.
- Othello gets manipulated and asks Iago for some proof about Desdemona's unfaithfulness. Iago says that Desdemona has given her handkerchief to Cassio.
- Iago plants Desdemona's handkerchief in Cassio's lodging. Iago creates many fake and manipulative scenes to convince Othello that Cassio and Desdemona are having an affair.
- Enraged and hurt, Othello resolves to kill his wife and tells Iago to kill Cassio. Iago convinces Roderigo to kill Cassio.

Act 5

- Roderigo attacks Cassio on the street. Iago comes from behind and cuts Cassio's leg.
- Desdemona claims to be innocent and begs Othello to let her live a little longer but Othello smothers her with a pillow. Emilia calls for help. Montano and Gratiano arrive with Iago.
- When Othello mentions the handkerchief as proof of Desdemona's unfaithfulness, Emilia realizes what Iago has done. She exposes Iago. Iago stabs Emilia.
- Othello, realizing Desdemona's innocence, wounds Iago and then commits suicide due to extreme guilt and pain.
- Lodovico appoints Cassio as Othello's successor and tells Cassio to punish Iago.

Othello as a Revenge Play

- *Othello* is an example of the style of Elizabethan revenge tragedy popular in Shakespeare's day after Thomas Kyd wrote '*The Spanish Tragedy*,' in 1587. In such plays, usually one or more characters are exacting revenge.

- Revenge tragedy was very popular during the Elizabethan and Jacobean period. An early example is Thomas Kyd's *The Spanish Tragedy*; probably the most famous example is Shakespeare's *Hamlet*
- Othello is the story of a noble military general who has enjoyed many success in the battlefield. His tragic flaw (hamartia) that brings his downfall are Jealousy, Poor Judgment and Thoughtless Action. Due to his outsider status, Othello has self-doubts, insecurities and a low self-esteem. This is the reason why Iago could manipulate him.
- The play is about Iago's Revenge against both Othello and Cassio. Iago's manipulation and lies motivate Othello and Roderigo to pursue vengeance. Iago is a malcontent and a skilled manipulator. Iago's thirst for Revenge is the main cause for Destruction in the play.
- Only after killing Desdemona, Othello realizes he trusted the wrong person all this while. The claustrophobic ending of the Play in the bedroom where Othello kills himself after smothering his innocent wife makes Othello a Great Tragedy.

Character Analysis Othello

- Othello is a combination of greatness and weakness, in his own words "an honourable murderer" (V.2, 295). He is a general in the Venetian defence forces, and, although a foreigner from Africa, he has won this post by excellence in the field of war. He has courage, intelligence, the skill of command, and the respect of his troops. When the colony of Cyprus is threatened by the enemy, the Duke and Senate turn to "valiant" Othello to lead the defence.
- Othello is an outsider who is intelligent and confident in military matters but socially insecure. He leads an intense life, swinging between triumph and dread. He is different from those around him, due to his origins and his life history, but he shares their religion, values, and patriotism to Venice.
- More importantly, he is visibly different due to the colour of his skin, so he lives constantly among, but separated from, other people. Whenever they look at his black face, however brilliant a general he is, he knows the others are thinking "Yes, but he is not really one of us." Shakespeare presents this fact in the dialogue and also in the staging of the play: Othello's is a black face among a sea of white faces, and he is constantly referred to as "The Moor," a representative African.
- Othello tells his life story to Desdemona, and she sees him through his words. On the field of battle Othello is skilled and triumphant; in the drawing room he is reluctant until Desdemona takes the lead and encourages him to tell his life story. It is Desdemona, as well as Othello, who turns the secret marriage into a social success with her skillfully worded defense.
- Othello feels that his marriage is at the pinnacle of his life
- Desdemona is the angel who has rescued Othello with her love.
- Iago finds it easy to drive Othello to jealousy and think that Desdemona loves another man because he already feels that her love for him is too good to be true. Iago has only to push Othello to the belief that he has been betrayed, and Othello does the rest, judging, condemning, and executing Desdemona.
- Fate is cruel to Othello, like the cruel fate of ancient Greek tragedies. Like the Greek heroes, Othello can confront this fate only with the best of his humanity. In his final speeches, Othello brings again a flash of his former greatness: his military glory, his

loyalty to Venice, the intensity of his love, and his terrible realization that, by killing Desdemona, he has destroyed the best in himself. No man has full control over his life, but a man can judge himself and perform the execution and die with his love.

Character Analysis Desdemona

- Desdemona is a lady of spirit and intelligence. Desdemona is the most direct and honest speaker in the play. Her speeches are not as lengthy as those of the men, but with Desdemona, every word counts.
- For Desdemona, Othello is the hero of many exciting and dangerous adventures, who also has the appeal of the orphan child who needs love. Add to this the fact that he is now an honoured and powerful man in her country, and what young noble woman would not find him attractive? As the Duke says, "I think this tale would win my daughter too" (I.3, 171).
- In Cyprus, in charge of her own household, Desdemona continues to fulfil her duties, receiving petitioners as the commander's wife and being hostess at official receptions.
- Her marriage has brought her position and happiness, so much so that she finds it unbearable to think that her husband has turned against her. This numbness lasts until she sees that he actually intends to kill her; then she puts up a brave and spirited defense, insisting on her innocence. In despair at losing his love, she still defends him from the consequences of his actions, but he is past seeing what is clear to her and to Shakespeare's audience: that she has committed herself wholly to loving him; without his love, she cannot live.

Module 3: World Plays

The Bear – Anton Chekhov

Characters

- Elena Ivanovna Popova, a landowning little widow, with dimples on her cheeks, her husband has died
- Grigory Stepanovitch Smirnov, a middle-aged landowner
- Luka, Popova's aged footman

Context and Setting

- This short play takes place on a country estate in 19th century Russia. The main characters are part of the privileged land-owning class. Gender roles are traditional and that is part of the reason a battle of the sexes ensues.

About the Play

- Anton Chekhov is the most eminent Russian playwright who is universally regarded as the greatest Russian storyteller and dramatist of modern times. "The Boor" is one

of his highly cherished comic works. The play is about a desperate young widow named Elena Ivanovna Popova.

- Her husband had been unfaithful to her and she knew it, but as a kind of poetic revenge she has vowed to live in seclusion for the rest of her life. We learn the true motive of her vow through a brief soliloquy. This one-act play is written with the purpose of exposing the hypocrisy, pretension, falsity and artificiality of the feudal class of his country.
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Summary

- Mrs. Popov was a widow grieving a lot because of her husband death. She had been imprisoning herself for about seven months after her husband death and receiving no one. Then suddenly a man, Mr. Smirnov, came asking for money that her husband had loaned and he needed the money very much. But Mrs. Popov couldn't pay at that day; she could pay the following two days. That made them, Mrs. Popov and Mr. Smirnov, had a confrontation and then insulted each other. Then they changed the conversation about their own problem in their insulting, about a faithful of a man or a woman. They started to be angry then she took guns, pistols, they had a duel. But they didn't fight, because he told her that he like her. That was hard to believe. And the story ended in contrasting point Mr. Smirnov fell in love with Mrs. Popov.

Analysis

- In *The Bear*, a widow, who mourns for her husband seven months after his death, is approached by one of his creditors, a man in dire financial circumstances who desperately requires the money that the widow's husband owed him. The exchange between the widow and the creditor quickly progresses from polite to explosive, and the creditor, who expresses his negative opinion of women in general, is transformed by the spirit with which the widow argues with him. Yet the two agree to duel, and the widow's willingness to meet this challenge compels the creditor to profess his love for her.
- The play ends with the pair embracing. Despite Chekhov's disparaging remarks about *The Bear*, it is known from his letters that he took the composition of such plays as seriously as he viewed the writing of his fiction and lengthier dramas.
- This play is a farce. It is a humorous play that typically involves ridiculous situations, stereotypes, exaggerated behaviour and physical comedy. The duel, for example, illustrates all four of these elements. It is ridiculous and exaggerated the two will fight to the death here, Mrs. Popov asks Smirnov to show her how to use the pistol, which reveals women to be stereotypically non-violent and the duel itself involves physical comedy.

Themes

- *The Bear's* comedy derives from the characters' lack of self-knowledge. The widow Popova fancies herself inconsolably bereaved, while Smirnov considers himself a misogynist. They are both ludicrous pretending to be more than they actually are. The

central theme in *The Bear* is the prevailing nature of happiness and its victory over grief. Other themes include joy and new beginnings.

- We have a theme battle of the sexes. The conflict between Smirnov and Mrs. Popov reveals stereotypes about both men and women. Smirnov claims women are stupid and Mrs. Popov claims men are unfaithful.
- The farce in this play lies in the way that extremes of emotion so quickly shift to other, opposite extremes, and so-called rational human beings are shown to be subject to their tempestuous emotions, which have much more control over their lives than reason. While both Smirnov and Mrs. Popov detest one another in the beginning of the play, opposites attract in this case and they fall in love. This is the theme of this masterful play.
- Although the play is full of silliness and slapstick, there is a serious theme here. Chekhov is reminding us that life is for living. When Elena finally lets Smirnov in, she comes to life. She admits that the husband she is being so faithful to was not even faithful to her. He left her nothing, not even the money, because the money was hers!

Title of the play

- The title of the play is *The Bear* (Boor). There are many meanings of bear in English. On surface bear means tolerance, bear means naked but here is very outspoken person, bear means uneducated, nonsense, out of head, bear means a man who has no manners talk to before a woman and at a wild animal. In everyday language, we call 'bear' to a person who is rude, bad mannered and bad tempered. This title suggests the attitude of Smirnov who is just like a bear. In everyday language, we call 'bear' to a person who is rude, bad mannered and bad tempered. This title which name is *The Bear* is totally justified the meaning of the play here. It suggests the attitude of Smirnov who is just like a bear in his attitude.
- The title is ironic. The heroine of the play rebukes the hero and calls him, "a coarse bear, a bourbon! a monster. But at the end she accepts his love and is driven into his arms forgetting all her claims of love for her late husband and her proposed dislike for SMIRNOV... the bear. Bear is thought to be a greedy, impertinent and totally uncontrollable animal. So the bear may symbolically point towards the hero of the play. SMIRNOV is ill mannered and violent but at the same time he is a very passionate man. He is haughty and boorish. His attitude with POPOVA is very harsh and impolite that reveals his bear like nature. So the title is meant to represent Mr. SMIRNOV and his true nature.

The Zoo Story – Edward Albee

About the Author

- Edward Albee was born on March 12, 1928, in Virginia, United States and died on September 16, New York, United States.
- American producer, dramatist and theatrical
- He was educated at Choate School and at Trinity College in Hartford, Connecticut.

- He was awarded by Tony Award for Best Play, Pulitzer Prize for Drama and more.
- Among Albee's early one-act plays, *The Zoo Story* (1959), *The Sandbox* (1959), and *The American Dream* (1961) were the most successful and established him as an intelligent critic of American values.
- *The Zoo Story* is his first play. It was written in 1958 and completed in just three weeks. It is his masterpiece which begins with a conversation between two strangers, Peter and Jerry and it ends with a death of Jerry.
- This is an absurd play and it is a satire on American life style.

Characterization

Peter

- He is well-educated and insightful. He is in his early forties. He has a wife, two daughters, two cats, two parakeets, and a nice apartment. He is studious, calm and patient.
- His intention on this afternoon was to read quietly in Central Park.

Jerry

- A man in his late thirties, rough looking careless person. He is criticized by society so he is lonely and unhappy with life. He is eager to share his opinions about life, love, and isolation with Peter. He also seems jealous of Peter who has a 'full' life. He is an absurd man who is fed up with life and wants to die.

Summary of the Play

- The entire play is set on a park bench in Central Park.
- One Sunday afternoon, Peter, an upper-middle class family man in his mid-forties, is reading a book on a bench. Jerry, a messily dressed in his late thirties approaches.
- He says to Peter that he is coming from the Central Park Zoo. Despite Peter's unwillingness to chat, Jerry starts up a conversation. Jerry's rough personality quickly begins to annoy Peter and he starts smoking.
- Jerry points out that Peter will likely get cancer from smoking and says that he is feeble because he has cats instead of dogs.
- Jerry continues to ask Peter about his life, his job, and his interests. When Peter asks about Jerry, he tells him about his miserable apartment in a flophouse on the Upper West Side.
- He describes his unpleasant neighbours and two empty picture frames. When Peter asks him about the picture frames, Jerry explains that he is completely alone in life. His parents died when he was young. He had a romantic relationship with another boy when he was a teenager.
- Jerry promises to tell Peter about his trip to the zoo, but he talks about his landlady, a drunken woman who constantly tries to attract him towards her.
- The landlady had a dog. Jerry tried to befriend it but the dog responded only by attacking him. So, he decided to murder the dog by feeding it a poisoned hamburger. Although this sickened the dog, it eventually recovered and began to ignore him.
- Peter finds his story extremely upsetting and wonders why Jerry told it to him. Jerry explains that he tries to befriend animals as an entrance to befriend other people.

- Peter tries to leave the place, but Jerry prickles him to keep him from leaving. He then tries to force Peter to move from the bench and punches him when he refuses. Although Peter initially realizes that Jerry's behaviour is absurd, he gradually becomes more possessive of the bench.
- Jerry pulls a knife and insists him to fight. This shocks Peter, who refuses to fight. As a gesture of peace, Jerry gives the knife to Peter, who holds the knife out to protect himself. Suddenly, Jerry charges Peter and stabs himself on the knife.
- Although he is initially hysterical, Jerry soon calms down and accepts his death. He even thanks Peter and wipes Peter's fingerprints off the knife handle so that Peter will not be accused of his murder. Peter takes his book and ran away from that place before passers-by notice that Jerry is dying.

Themes of the play

- The play explores the themes of isolation, loneliness, miscommunication and social disparity
- The impact of modernization in a society that makes people suffer from alienation in life in a materialistic world.
- Absurdity versus reality, and wealth versus poverty.
- From this play, Albee wants to depict the panic situation of Americans during 20th century through the character of Jerry.

The Man who Turned into a Stick Death) – Kobo Abe

- Kobo Abe was born on March 7, 1924, in Tokyo, Japan. Abe learned the magic of storytelling as a teenager in Manchuria. Abe narrated the stories of Edgar Allan Poe, first for himself, then for the entire class. Abe established his own theatre company, the Kobo Abe Studio, in 1973. It was here, in 1976, that Abe staged the more well-known version of his play, The Man Who Turned into a Stick.
- The Man Who Turned Into a Stick by Kobo Abe is a play that, despite its eccentric features, nameless characters, and almost non-existent plot, has the power to not only grab its audience but also to touch on issues that deserve attention even forty years after it was published.
- In his book Modern Japanese Fiction and Its Traditions: An Introduction, J. Thomas Rimer writes, "Abe has always been a trendy novelist." His early work, especially in the theatre, demonstrates the stress influence of Marxism, which was so significant in Japanese cultural history. Rimer also compares Abe's work to that of Franz Kafka, claiming that it is "most conspicuously 'avant-garde,'" and that his "literary techniques stress wit and satire." Rimer, writing in the Dictionary of Literary Biography, credits.
- The Man Who Turned into a Stick contains elements of existentialism and Theatre of the Absurd. Kobo Abe asserts emphatically and consistently that no one can avoid the human condition. The play forces various generations to become conscious of how they live their lives, like a stick prodding the audience to question its beliefs and values.

- *The Man Who Turned into a Stick* is a short one-act play published in 1957 by Japanese writer and inventor Kōbō Abe. It is the last play in a trilogy, The first play of the set, *The Suitcase*, was subtitled *Birth*; the second play, *The Cliff of Time*, was subtitled *Process*; and the third, *The Man Who Turned into a Stick* was given the subtitle *Death*.

Summary

- *The Man Who Turned into a Stick* is set entirely on a busy street beside a department store, sometime in midsummer. At the beginning, two characters, Hippie Boy and Hippie Girl, loiter outside the store, sniffing glue. Their bumbling is interrupted when a stick falls from the sky.
- The stick is played by an actor, who also represents the man who was turned into the stick. The cast is then joined by Man from Hell and Woman from Hell. Hippie Boy marvels at how he almost was struck by the falling stick. Man from Hell and Woman from Hell attribute his luck to fate.
- Hippie Boy takes the stick and starts to drum a beat. Hippie Girl then notices a young boy on the roof and assumes that he threw the stick at them. Stick speaks to the child, revealing himself as his father.
- Man from Hell and Woman from Hell interrogate Hippie Boy and Hippie Girl about the origin and nature of the stick, doubting that they found it so innocently. The hippies ask the people from Hell whether they are police officers. They reply that they are not, and then ask them to hand over the stick. Hippie Boy, suspecting that the man and woman are lying, accuses them of throwing the stick and orchestrating a cover-up.
- The man and woman reassert that the stick is a person who transformed before falling from the roof; they ask the kids to understand them. Hippie Boy and Hippie Girl reply that they understand little because their age difference from the man and woman divides their perceptions of reality. Hippie Girl notes that she and Hippie Boy are, therefore, “alienated.”
- The man who transformed into a stick laments that it is so. The Man and Woman from Hell and the Hippies debate the meaning of life. Man from Hell asks what Hippie Boy thinks he will do with the stick; Hippie Boy replies that the very question does not interest him because it is a relic of the past. Man from Hell uses this logic against Hippie Boy, arguing that if it is so, he has no reason to withhold the stick. Hippie Boy does not concede, frustrating the Man from Hell. He proclaims that to want something, with the knowledge that it is insubstantial or meaningless, is “bad for your health.” The Hippies refuse money for the stick and go on several digressions.
- Then Woman from Hell announces that the boy from the roof is coming; he has alerted the store employees about his father’s plight to no avail. The stick speaks again, asking why fate made him turn into a stick.
- Hippie Boy drops the stick in fright, remarking that it looks uncannily similar to him. He agrees to give the Man from Hell the stick for five dollars. Before he walks offstage, he adds that he only sold it because he didn’t want to sell it, setting up a “contradiction of circumstances.” Hippie Girl adds, supportively, that such is the “generation gap.”
- Having obtained the stick, the Man and Woman from Hell deliberate about how they will conduct their investigation of the man it once was. They contact Hell to debrief.

Woman from Hell expresses sympathy for the stick and is scolded by the man. They digress into another discussion on the nature of the stick. The man calls the stick the “root and source of all tools,” making it faithful and capable. The woman remarks that she has never before seen a man in the form of a stick; the man responds that it is because they are so ubiquitous that they are routinely skipped over by those of their profession.

- Man from Hell tells Woman from Hell to throw away the stick, but she hesitates, wondering aloud whether it retains feelings. She suggests they give the stick to the boy so he can grieve appropriately. The man replies that the boy and father are content as it is, otherwise, the father would never have transformed.
- The two people from Hell walk off the stage to find another person who has turned into a stick. Stick then delivers a monologue, calling into doubt their proclamations that he was content. Man from Hell breaks the fourth wall, noting that the whole audience is full of sticks. Woman from Hell tries to comfort Stick that he is not alone in his condition.
- Nevertheless, the play ends with the stick’s predicament unresolved and the man and woman departing to mechanically repeat their roles.
- Alienation is a theme that runs through most of Abe's work. In *The Man Who Turned into a Stick*, alienation is represented as Hippie Girl and Hippie Boy, the younger generation. Their alienation is specifically expressed by Hippie Girl when she declares that there is a generation gap between her and Hippie Boy and the man and woman from hell. Hippie Girl also delivers the line: "We're alienated."

