MAENG-507

American Literature-II

MA ENGLISH

4th Semester

Rajiv Gandhi University

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American Literature II

MAENG507
IV SEMESTER

RAJIV GANDHI UNIVERSITY

Arunachal Pradesh,INDIA - 791 112

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About the University

Rajiv Gandhi University (formerly Arunachal University) is a premier institution for higher education in the state of Arunachal Pradesh and has completed twenty-five years of its existence. Late Smt. Indira Gandhi, the then Prime Minister of India, laid the foundation stone of the university on 4th February, 1984 at Rono Hills, where the present campus is located.

Ever since its inception, the university has been trying to achieve excellence and fulfill the objectives as envisaged in the University Act. The university received academic recognition under Section 2(f) from the University Grants Commission on 28th March, 1985 and started functioning from 1st April, 1985. It got financial recognition under section 12-B of the UGC on 25th March, 1994. Since then Rajiv Gandhi University, (then Arunachal University) has carved a niche for itself in the educational scenario of the country following its selection as a University with potential for excellence by a high-level expert committee of the University Grants Commission from among universities in India.

The University was converted into a Central University with effect from 9th April, 2007 as per notification of the Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India.

The University is located atop Rono Hills on a picturesque tableland of 302 acres overlooking the river Dikrong. It is 6.5 km from the National Highway 52-A and 25 km from Itanagar, the State capital. The campus is linked with the National Highway by the Dikrong bridge.

The teaching and research programmes of the University are designed with a view to play a positive role in the socio-economic and cultural development of the State. The University offers Undergraduate, Post- graduate, M.Phil and Ph.D. programmes. The Department of Education also offers the B.Ed. programme.

There are fifteen colleges affiliated to the University. The University has been extending educational facilities to students from the neighbouring states, particularly Assam. The strength of students in different departments of the University and in affiliated colleges has been steadily increasing.

The faculty members have been actively engaged in research activities with financial support from UGC and other funding agencies. Since inception, a number of proposals on research projects have been sanctioned by various funding agencies to the University. Various departments have organized numerous seminars, workshops and conferences. Many faculty members have participated in national and international conferences and seminars held within the country and abroad. Eminent scholars and distinguished personalities have visited the University and delivered lectures on various disciplines.

The academic year 2000-2001 was a year of consolidation for the University. The switch over from the annual to the semester system took off smoothly and the performance of the students registered a marked improvement. Various syllabi designed by Boards of Post-graduate Studies (BPGS) have been implemented. VSAT facility installed by the ERNET India, New Delhi under the UGC-Infonet program, provides Internet access.

In spite of infrastructural constraints, the University has been maintaining its academic excellence. The University has strictly adhered to the academic calendar, conducted the examinations and declared the results on time. The students from the University have found placements not only in State and Central Government Services, but also in various institutions, industries and organizations. Many students have emerged successful in the National Eligibility Test (NET).

Since inception, the University has made significant progress in teaching, research, innovations in curriculum development and developing infrastructure.

About IDE

The formal system of higher education in our country is facing the problems of access, limitation of seats, lack of facilities and infrastructure. Academicians from various disciplines opine that it is learning which is more important and not the channel of education. The education through distance mode is an alternative mode of imparting instruction to overcome the problems of access, infrastructure and socio-economic barriers. This will meet the demand for qualitative higher education of millions of people who cannot get admission in the regular system and wish to pursue their education. It also helps interested employed and unemployed men and women to continue with their higher education. Distance education is a distinct approach to impart education to learners who remained away in the space and/or time from the teachers and teaching institutions on account of economic, social and other considerations. Our main aim is to provide higher education opportunities to those who are unable to join regular academic and vocational education programmes in the affiliated colleges of the University and make higher education reach to the doorsteps in rural and geographically remote areas of Arunachal Pradesh in particular and North-eastern part of India in general. In 2008, the Centre for Distance Education has been renamed as "Institute of Distance Education (IDE)."

Continuing the endeavor to expand the learning opportunities for distant learners, IDE has introduced Post Graduate Courses in 5 subjects (Education, English, Hindi, History and Political Science) from the Academic Session 2013-14.

The Institute of Distance Education is housed in the Physical Sciences Faculty Building (first floor) next to the University Library. The University campus is 6 kms from NERIST point on National Highway 52A. The University buses ply to NERIST point regularly.

Outstanding Features of Institute of Distance Education:

(i) At Par with Regular Mode

Eligibility requirements, curricular content, mode of examination and the award of degrees are on par with the colleges affiliated to the Rajiv Gandhi University and the Department(s) of the University.

(ii) Self-Instructional Study Material (SISM)

The students are provided SISM prepared by the Institute and approved by Distance Education Council (DEC), New Delhi. This will be provided at the time of admission at the IDE or its Study Centres. SISM is provided only in English except Hindi subject.

(iii) Contact and Counselling Programme (CCP)

The course curriculum of every programme involves counselling in the form of personal contact programme of duration of approximately 7-15 days. The CCP shall not be compulsory for BA. However for professional courses and MA the attendance in CCP will be mandatory.

(iv) Field Training and Project

For professional course(s) there shall be provision of field training and project writing in the concerned subject.

(v) Medium of Instruction and Examination

The medium of instruction and examination will be English for all the subjects except for those subjects where the learners will need to write in the respective languages.

(vi) Subject/Counselling Coordinators

For developing study material, the IDE appoints subject coordinators from within and outside the University. In order to run the PCCP effectively Counselling Coordinators are engaged from the Departments of the University, The Counselling-Coordinators do necessary coordination for involving resource persons in contact and counselling programme and assignment evaluation. The learners can also contact them for clarifying their difficulties in then respective subjects.

SYLLABI-BOOK MAPPING TABLE

Syllabi
UNIT I: History of American Literature II A Brief History of American Literature
UNIT II: Eugene O' Neil *Long Day's ourney into the Night*
UNIT III: Tennessee Williams *A Streetcar Named Desire*
UNIT IV: Ernest Hemmingway *A Farewell to Arms*
UNIT V: William Faulkner *The Sound and the Fury*

UNIT 1 AMERICAN LITERATURE: BACKGROUND AND HISTORY

Structure

1.0 INTRODUCTION

American literature is the body of written works produced in English language in the United States and its preceding colonies. Earlier in history, America was a series of British colonies located on the eastern coast of the present-day United States. As a result, its literary tradition begins as linked to the broader tradition of English literature. However, it is now considered to be a separate course and tradition because of its exceptional American characteristics and extensiveness of its production.

Early American literature was mainly focused on the New England colonies. The revolutionary period of the era comprised the political writings by the Founding Fathers of the United States, Samuel Adams and Benjamin Franklin, and Thomas Paine, an English and American political activist, philosopher and political theorist. An eminent American writer of the post-war period was Thomas Jefferson, another American Founding Father, who was noted for his work, United States *Declaration of Independence*. The nation's first novels were published in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century. Several new literary figures emerged following the War of 1812, who expressed a strong aspiration to produce uniquely American literature and culture. Some of these eminent figures included American authors Edgar Allan Poe and Washington Irving.

A religious and philosophical movement was started in 1836 by American essayist, lecturer and poet Ralph Waldo Emerson (1803–1882), which came to be known as

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Transcendentalism. During this period, American author and transcendentalist Henry David Thoreau (1817–1862) wrote the book, *Walden*, also known as *Life in the Woods*, which insists on resistance to the dictates of organized society. The political revolution surrounding abolitionism, a historical movement, encouraged the writings of William Lloyd Garrison and Harriet Beecher Stowe in her renowned *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. A masterpiece produced in this period was American novelist and short story writer Nathaniel Hawthorne's (1804–1864) *The Scarlet Letter*, which is a novel about adultery.

The two most prominent poets of the nineteenth century America was Emily Dickinson (1830–1886) and Walt Whitman (1819–1892). It was in the early-to-mid-twentieth century when American poetry reached its zenith with notable writers including T. S. Eliot, Wallace Stevens, Robert Frost, E. E. Cummings and Ezra Pound.

Disillusionment was expressed in the writings of American authors following World War I. American author and journalist Ernest Hemingway (1899–1961) was known for his works, *The Sun Also Rises* and *A Farewell to Arms*. He received the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1954. Another American writer William Faulkner (1897–1962) is noted for novels like *The Sound and the Fury*. It was only in the 1920s and 1930s when American drama achieved the international position. This was possible with the works of Pulitzer Prize and the Nobel Prize winner Eugene O'Neill. In the middle of the twentieth century, American drama was dominated by the work of playwrights Tennessee Williams and Arthur Miller, as well as by the maturation of the America musical theatre.

From the end of World War II to, approximately, the late 1960s and early 1970s, the publication of some of the most popular works in American history, such as *To Kill a Mockingbird* by Harper Lee, was noteworthy. From the early 1970s to the present day, the most important literary movement has been postmodernism and the maturing of literature by ethnic minority writers.

1.1 UNIT OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- Prepare a critical review of American literature
- Discuss the importance of realism and regionalism
- Explain naturalism and determinism in American writing
- Paraphrase the dime novel
- Identify the tenets of modern literature
- Describe American literature from 1945 to the present day

1.2 REVIEW OF AMERICAN LITERATURE

The journey to the creation of the United States of America was a slow and gradual one. The cultural history of the next several generations is essentially a story of adaptation, as important ideas and material forms were modified under the pressure of America's different conditions. Both English and Colonial languages made extensive use of Latin and the philosophy, history and literature of Greece and Rome. The Ciceronian and Romish rhetoric inclusive of oratorical performances of the kind seen in English poet John Milton's *Prolusions* was also used to a great extent.

1.3 REALISM AND REGIONALISM

The difference between realism and regionalism is difficult to ascertain. One way to look at realism is as the response to growing inclination towards capital, transformation of raw material into consumer products, replacement of old agrarian values by more urban ones and a shift from private experience to public property. However, the problem with this view of realism is that it presents urban city as one of the various regions within the network of growing modernization enriched and enchanted by industrial growth and establishment of railroads and telegraph wires.

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To define realism in another way would be to say that realism was a reaction against romanticism to capture the life of ordinary people and events in the changing America of the second half of the nineteenth century. The realist writers did not wish to escape from the life of the ordinary like the romantics; instead they embraced it. Their intention and aim was to depict the life as it was during the time, devoid of any subjective colour or prejudice. In such writing, characters became more important than plot. Regionalism, on the other hand, was an attempt to capture the essence of various regions of the nation that was so rapidly changing. A fear was prevalent amongst many that soon local traditions and folkways would vanish amongst the growing standardization and urbanization because of industrial revolution. As a response to this awareness, many realistic writers set their plot in the various local regions of America in an attempt to capture the local colour of the region before it was lost forever. In these writings, they portrayed the stark realities of everyday life, growing plight of the poor and the vanishing traditions and values.

However, to understand realism and regionalism, we must not rely on mere definitions of the terms. It is important that we analyse it through the literary examples of the respective movements. In the nineteenth century, various changes in the society and politics were caused by the effects of both the Civil War and the American westward expansion. The artists, active in the nation at that time, did not find romanticism as adequate enough to capture the sentiments and concerns of the time, for example the struggle of the working class and the rise of the middle class, and as a result, they turned to something new, something different to comment on these changing attitudes. This something new was realism and regionalism. The writers of the age tried to capture the national transformation, the effects of which could also be felt in various regions, through their depiction of an unbiased and unprejudiced account of everyday life, especially of new middle class and urban poor. Two prime examples of regionalism would be Mark Twain's *The Adventure of Huckleberry Finn* and Kate Chopin's *The Awakening*, and a brilliant example of the use of realism is Henry James' *Daisy Miller: A Study*. The employment of regionalism and realism bring the characters and setting of the stories to life and allows the readers to completely immerse in them.

Both Kate Chopin and Mark Twain successfully captured the essence of the regions in which they set their stories. Usually, regionalism focuses on unique and specific features of a region and attempts to capture its local colour and essence by accurately portraying its dialect, customs, traditions, topography, history and characters. It focuses on both formal and informal attitudes of people of the region towards each other and also towards their society as a whole. In such novels, the role of the narrator is of specific importance, for he/she is not simply a narrator but also a translator, whose job is to make the reader understand the region and its various aspects. In *The Adventure of Huckleberry Finn,* Twain expertly uses regionalism to bring the readers to the heart of American west in the nineteenth century. He tells his reader at the very beginning of the book: 'In this book, a number of dialects are used, to wit: the Missouri negro dialect, the extremist form of the backwoods South-Western dialects; the ordinary "Pike-Country" dialect; and four modified varieties of this last.' The use of vernacular and not the standard language, grammatical mistakes, incoherent sentences and words that cannot be found in the dictionary are some of the major composition of the language used by Huck Finn, both the narrator and protagonist of the novel. This allows the reader to feel the character in the way as if he were right next to him. It also gives the reader an understanding of the region to which the character belongs. The local stories that are

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told throughout the novels also offer a rich description of the region in which the characters of the novel live.

Another important aspect of Twain's *Huck Finn* is the role played by the Mississippi River in the story. Rather than simply being a natural landscape and setting for the story, it functions as a major character in the novel, especially because of the way in which it affects both Huck and Jim in their journey to their freedom. The river also brings the attention of the readers to other aspects of regionalism. One of the prime focuses of a rationalist work is on the region and not on the plot. There are a number of instances when Huck indulges in a detailed description of the river and landscape around him: 'The river looked miles and miles across. The moon was so bright I could a counted the drift logs that went a slipping along, black and still, hundreds of yards out from shore.' These descriptions do not help the plot in any way, but the description enhances the portrayal of the region and invites the reader to participate in the actual journey undertaken by Huck and Jim. These descriptions can also be seen as digressions from the plot, and such digressions are important in the regionalist works of fiction for they allow a better representation of regional culture.

Another such deviation from the plot takes place when Huck spends considerable time in giving a detailed account of Jim's superstition. Though these descriptions cannot be dismissed completely as digressions, for they do have a part to play in the plot, but they definitely are not the most crucial aspects of the plot. However, such detailed description of superstitions, like 'Miss Watson's nigger, Jim, had a hair-ball as big as your fist, which had been took out of the fourth stomach of an ox, and he used to do magic with it,' allows the reader to have a better understanding of the beliefs and attitudes of the people of the region.

Another important aspect of regionalism is the narrator's function as a translator. In Twain's novel, Huck, the narrator, also functions as a translator for the readers, for he explains events and his experience to the reader. He offers explanatory accounts of the actions of various characters. For example, while explaining the widow's action, he says: 'The widow cried over me, and called me a poor lost lamb, and she called me a lot of other names, too, but she never meant no harm by it.' The regionalist works also tend to have a sense of sympathy for local values as against the national. In this sense, the novel criticizes the widow for trying to change the uniqueness of Huck into something standard.

Another excellent example of regional fiction is Chopin's *The Awakening*. However, Chopin's employment of regionalism in her novel is slightly different from Twain's use of regionalism. Twain intends to glorify and celebrate the region he sets his stories in. However, Chopin's use of regionalism intends to criticize the region in which her story is set. Nevertheless, in spite of the difference in intention, Chopin's depictions of the region adhere to almost same set of guidelines and regional characteristics that Twain uses in his fiction. The setting of Chopin's novel is the Creole society in Louisiana. While Twain's characters were middle and lower class people, Chopin's characters belong to high class. The use of vernacular is plenty in the novel. Through the other use of regionalist techniques, Chopin introduces the reader to the social norms and system of the particular class of the Southern region. Interestingly, the protagonist of the novel, Edna Pontellier, does not belong to the region in which the novel is set, and, therefore, becomes an effective tool in the hands of Chopin to rebel against the social norms and structure of the region. Edna is portrayed as an outsider, but her being an outsider offers

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a very explanatory glimpse into the inside culture and customs of Creole life. The narrator writes that Edna 'was not thoroughly at home in the society of Creoles. They all knew each other, and felt like one large family'. Edna's observes the Creole people: 'A characteristic which distinguished them and which impressed Mrs. Pontellier most forcibly was their entire absence of prudery. Their freedom of expression was at first incomprehensible to her, though she had no difficulty in reconciling it with a lofty chastity which in the Creole woman seems to be inborn and unmistakable.'

The best of use regionalism in Chopin's fiction is when she critically presents the social rules and roles, most specifically in the socially assumed and acknowledged role of a mother-woman. Chopin writes: 'The mother-women seemed to prevail that summer at Grand Isle. They were women who idealized their children, worshipped their husbands, and esteemed it a holy privilege to efface themselves as individuals and grow wings as ministering angels.' This description manifests in the characters of Adle Ratignolle. Adle is a perfect example of who a Creole wife is supposed to be. She is opposite of Edna. She completely conforms to the socially accepted role of a woman as a wife and mother. She worships her husband and is always on her toe to complete her domestic responsibilities. And in doing so, she is accepted as a perfect Creole woman by the society. Chopin brings the Creole society to life through the dialects and interaction of various characters within the community.

Let us now turn to Henry James famous novella, *Daisy Miller: A Study* to study and analyse a realistic work of fiction. A work of regionalism is also a work of realism, for both depicts the objective view of everyday life of the ordinary. The only difference lies in the fact that a regionalist fiction focuses on capturing the locality and colour of a specific region, while a work of realist fiction attempts to captures the life itself. Like the regionalist works, the realist works also digress from the plot, but unlike the former, the later digresses to study the depths of the characters in an attempt to seize the essence of life as it is lived in the real time. Realism grew as a reaction against the romanticism and this reaction remains visible in the work of realist fiction. The writers of this genre do not intend to hide unpleasant through their flight in the imaginative stories; instead they intend to portray the harshness of everyday reality, the problems and the struggle to live. By remaining true to the techniques of realistic fiction, Henry James creates highly believable characters in his novella *Daisy Miller: A Study*. What makes Daisy so real is the flaws she has as a character. In his depiction of Daisy, James never offers a critical or biased description of her character, even though she may seem to be against the accepted social or traditional norms. Her traits are a radical for her time, but she retains those characteristics and remains true to who she is. As opposed to idealized and exaggerated characters of romantic fiction, Daisy is an imperfect and flawed character which makes it difficult for her to be accepted by the society. Winterbourne and his aunt describe her as 'Crude', 'Dreadful', 'ignorant' and 'vulgar'. Many of her actions, like walking with two men in public, are considered as scandalous, but they are true to her character as a flirt. Later when Winterbourne asks her to leave, for he is afraid that she might catch Roman fever, true to her character, she barks back at him: 'I don't care whether I have Roman fever or not!' The consequence of this refusal is her death. The novel does not seek to resolve everything by providing a pleasant ending to the story. The death of the heroic protagonist of the novel furthers the realist aspect of the novel.

Both realism and regionalism emerged in the later part of the nineteenth century after the Civil War as a reaction against the romanticism that has dominated the American literary landscape in the first half of the nineteenth century. The writers of realism and

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succeeding generation.' The writers of the naturalist fiction overturned the idea of individual freedom and heroism that Americans so celebrated. Humans were now nothing more than tiny specs on the vast natural landscape filled with mountains and oceans, governed what by what Norris called 'the vast rhythms of the seasons' and 'the eternal symphony of reproduction'. A similar view is put rather brutally by one of the characters of Jack London's novel *The Sea Wolf* (1904). He claims that life is 'unmoral': 'It is like a yeast, a ferment, a thing that moves and may move for a minute, an hour, a year, or a hundred years, but that in the end will cease to move. The big eat the little that they may continue to move, the strong eat the weak that they may retain their strength. The lucky eat the most and move the longest, that is all.'

Dreiser believed that men's action were nothing more than 'chemical compulsions', and that is why his characters fails to direct their own action and instead are subject to forces beyond their reach. He also held that 'the race was to swift and the battle to the strong,' and depicted the defeat and destruction of his characters at the hands of stronger opponents. Some of his major works are *Sister Carrie* (1900), *Jennie Gerhardt* (1911), *The Financier* (1912), *The Titan* (1914) and—much later—*An American Tragedy* (1925). Unlike the French naturalists, Dreiser was not very conscious towards the use of style and symbolism in his work. However, other American naturalists like Frank Norris and Stephen Crane paid much attention to such matters. In some of his short stories and in short novels, like *Maggie: A Girl of the Streets* (1893) and *The Red Badge of Courage* (1895), Crane appeared to be an impressionist who presented an idea of man overwhelmed by circumstance and environment. Impressed with Norris's 'aptitude for making phrases—sparks that cast a momentary gleam upon whole phases of life—Crane too came up with phrases, scenes and whole narrative that cast gleams in such novels as *McTeague* (1899), *The Octopus* (1901) and *The Pit* (1903). Both Norris and Crane died before they could completely develop their abilities as a writer, but the experiments they did in fiction indeed helped in the further development of twentieth century novels.

Dime novels

Dime novels were a kind of inexpensive melodramatic adventure novels, with often western themes, popular in America from 1860 to 1915, and were published usually with paperback. The first Dime novel appeared in 1860 when Ann S. Stephens published *Beadles Dime Novels* No. 1, 'Malaeska, the India Wife of the White Hunter'. After the success of the first novel, the market soon flooded with numerous dime or half dime novels. The first publisher to issue cheap paper backed novels in series was Irvin Beadle. Though the term 'dime novels' seems to denote the price at which such novels were sold, in fact the term has little to do with the price. It was a term used for any 'sensational detective' 'or 'blood and thunder' novel sold in the form of pamphlet.

Erasmus Beadle gained much success in publishing various dime novels and popular songbooks featuring heroes like Nick Carter and Deadwood Dick. Dime novels published by him monopolized the market of popular literature for almost the second half of the nineteenth century. Mostly these novels used subjects like historical frontier of Ohio, New York and Kentucky, gold mining in the west, stories of sea, tales of revolutionary wars and colonial wars. From 1870s to 1890s, stories of city street boys who made their way up in the society also became a very popular subject of the dime novels.

E. Z. C. Judson was one of the most famous writers of the dime novels, who wrote under the penname Ned Buntline. Critics of the dime novels called them immoral, perhaps because of the violent themes of the novel. However, the novels in general

attempted to reinforce conventional values like American nationalism, patriotism, self-reliance, etc. By the early twentieth century, the dime novels were taken over and replaced by the emergence of pulp magazines.

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Check Your Progress

7. What was literary naturalism associated with in its early years?
8. Identify the phrase with which literary naturalism was associated.
9. Define dime novel.

1.5 EMERGENCE OF MODERNISM (1914-1945)

The dawn of the twentieth century gave a refreshing start to American politics and philosophy. It also brought about a number of experimental movements in arts and literature. Various movements like cubism, fauvism, vorticism, constructivism, Dadaism and futurism competed to influence the artistic and cultural landscape of Europe and America the most. Some of these movements were part of modernism itself. In simple terms, modernism can be defined as a philosophical and artistic movement that gained impetus in the first half of the nineteenth century around the First World War with a transformative effect on every aspect of the western society. Though modernism originated in Europe, American played an important part in the development of modernism in general and literary modernism in particular. Some of the crucial American literary figures active in the development of modernism as a literary movement are Gertrude Stein in Paris, Ezra Pound and T. S. Eliot in England, and Margaret Anderson and Harriet Monroe, editor of poetry magazine, in Chicago.

Modernism developed both as a reaction to the traditional practices of art and literature, and as a way to grapple with the fragmentation and disillusionment created by the war in the early years of the century. The modernist writers derided sentimentality, emotional prose and decorative adjectives. Pound and Eliot demanded a revolutionary change in literary taste. Pound became the most prominent patron of modernism. He promoted and campaigned for writers who met his demands of authenticity and contempt for the accepted notions and tradition. Soon he took Yeats, Joyce, Frost, Marianna Moore Hemingway, sculpture Gaudier Brzeska and composer George Antheil under his wings and the rest is history.

Ezra Pound, who was the champion of the modernist cause, brought out an anthology called *Des Imagist*, in which poems of writers like H. D., William Carlos Williams, F. S. Flint and Amy Lowell were included. Pound famously decreed 'make it new', but both he and Eliot saw innovation as being based in the reconstruction of the past. They looked at several traditions to locate meaning and order to reconstruct it as something new. They were aware of being radically modern, but they also felt alienated from the modern scene. Their attempts for innovation were an effort to save the elite culture of the past against the meaningless of the present. The first great work that can be called an example of American modernism is Eliot's *Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock*, which appeared in 1915. In the poem, a suffocating sense of sexual panic haunts Prufrock, whose awareness of his own moral and emotional emptiness is what redeems his purposeless life.

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The development in industrial and technological advancement of nineteenth century also aided in the rise of modernism. In his book, *The condition of Postmodernity*, David Harvey defines modernism as 'the transient, the fleeting, the contingent; it is the one-half art, the other being the eternal and the immutable'. It is interesting to know that this definition comes from Baudelaire's essay, *The Painter of Modern Life*. Harvey highlights the 'paradoxical unity' of this definition. The modernist movement of America conveyed a rigid and short-livid aspect of both cultural and political turmoil. Most of the writers who became modernist writers had already published their works before the beginning of the war in 1914. In this sense, modernism becomes a pre-war movement. However, a movement like modernism required 'the desperate convulsion of the great struggle, the crashing of regimes it precipitated, to give [it] the radical political dimension it had hitherto lacked'.

In general, modernism grew out of the ideas and philosophy of Enlightenment, but it was the premise on which modernism developed that made it reject its ties with any historical trend or movement or philosophy. Harvey says that 'modernity can have no respect even for its own past…', and that the only way modernism can finds itself to be meaningful is by adopting the meaning materialized within the vortex of change. The basic idea of the Enlightenment philosophers was to work 'freely and creatively for the pursuit of human emancipation and enrichment of daily life'. The modernists during the early phase of the movement adopted this optimistic ideal of the Enlightenment, like the progressive attitude, break from the past, adoption of what seems fleeting and is transitory in nature, and the idea of innovation in change. However, as the war progressed, it scared these optimistic ideals of the early modernists.

As the socialist governments emerged in various nations out of the shadows of war, modernism became very cautious of the 'relation between means and ends'. With its principle of rejecting the history and the past, it developed the idea of 'creative destruction', which simply suggests that the old must be abandoned or destroyed if something innovative or new has to be created. The idea of 'creative destruction', or at least a major part of it, was first reflected in the cubist movement of early twentieth entry. Breaking ties with the past made the modernists adopt modern technology in their writings and arts. They began to see language as a mechanism designed to perform human communication. They embraced and were influenced by many contemporary advances in technology, medicine and psychology, and philosophy. Theories of Sigmund Freud and Ernst Mach greatly influenced early literature of modernist period.

As modernism developed as a movement, art and literature became the part of established elite and modernism began to be institutionalized, a situation from which it initially intended to break away. Modernism slowly transformed into what it derided—an institutionalized movement that instead of embracing the transitory nature of the art and literature started to form rigid rules and principles. It was this transformation that made modernism loose its revolutionary appeal. Within such a context in the 1960s, anti modernistic views began to develop that became the harbinger of postmodernism in America.

Modernism in America addressed a wide range of topics and issues like race, gender roles, sexuality, consciousness, and most importantly the idea of unconscious. In America, modernism reached at its peak between 1920s and 1940s. Some of the most celebrated American modernist writers include Ezra Pound, William Carlos Williams, William Faulkner, Ernest Hemingway, Scott Fitzgerald and Walt Whitman. Though Whitman is considered as a romantic poet, but at times he is also regarded as the pioneer of the modernism in America.

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After the First World War, psychological war wound became quite a common phenomenon, and is well reflected in the literature of the time. Many American and English writers explored the wounds left on the people's psyche by the war. The beginning of 1930s saw a huge economic crisis in America, the influence of which can also be seen in American modernist writings, such as *The Grapes of Wrath* by John Steinbeck. Another issue that the modernist American writings dealt with is the loss of self and need to define oneself. As urbanization and industrialization grew, the workers faded into the background of the city life stuffed with chaotic industries and machineries. The workers of this period felt an immense requirement to define themselves as human and not just another peg in the vast machine structure. Writers active within the framework of American modernism echoed this idea of building of the self, a theme which has been very well illustrated in Fitzgerald's masterpiece *The Great Gatsby*.

Another important theme modernist writers emphasized the most was madness and the ways in which it manifests. Some of the brilliant examples of this theme in American writing are Eugene O'Neill's play *The Emperor Jones*, Faulkner's *That Evening Sun* and Hemingway's *The Battler*. Though all these themes may appear to be pessimistic and depressing, they were the reality of first half of the twentieth century, which was scarred by the devastation of two most destructive wars of human history. Nevertheless, these themes and depressing aspects of modernism caused new hope and aspirations to arise, and soon a search began for a new and fresh beginning not only for the people, but also for the characters in modernist American fiction.

Another important aspect of modernism was the changes it brought in the perceived gender roles, especially the assumed roles of women in society. Many of the modernist literature documents mirrors the change in the assumed gender role in the social context. Fitzgerald's *Gatsby* deals with the themes like gender interaction in a mundane social situation.

Another important aspect of American modernism was the relationship between the two races, black and white. Many American writers and novels dealt with the tension or the gap between what was an assumed situation of the two races in context of each other and the reality in which they lived with prejudices and biases. Most of American modernist writers like Jean Toomer, Zora Neale Hurston, Faulkner, Hemingway and O'Neill explored the race relation in their writings. Many of the modernist fictions continued to show blacks as a stereotypes dangerous, uneducated and uncivilized. However, some stories, like Hemingway's *The Battler* turned these stereotypes upside down by portraying a black African-American character as kind, calculated and polite, and who is noticeable since his first appearance in the story because of his good manners and carefully selected words.

While talking about the American modernism in literature, it is important to mention the contribution of the African-American writers, for they not only contributed to literature but also did much to elevate the self-esteem of the African Americans. Poets like Sterling Brown and Langston Hughes composed poems with folk orientations. They celebrated an optimistic view of the life in spite of the hardship that pervaded African-Americans' life in early twentieth century America. These poems offer a deep insight into the cultural identity and folk tradition of African Americans. Even white writers like Toomer and Faulkner also explored themes of cultural insight and folklore in their respective novels, *Blood-Burning Blood* and *That Evening Sun*.

After the First World War, a group of American thinkers and writers known as the Lost Generation became synonymous with the idea of modernism. After the first

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war ended, many American writers started living abroad in order to pursue their creative goals. Among these were writer and intellectual Gertrude Stein, Ernest Hemingway and F. Scott Fitzgerald, and the famous painter Waldo Pierce. The term Lost Generation reflects the spiritual and existential hangover left by the destructions caused by the four years of cruel and devastating war. In this wake of chaos, the artists of Lost Generation attempted to find some meaning in the world. One way to do this for these artists and writers was to look inside and capture the ways in which consciousness works, which was also a signature characteristic of the modernism as a literary movement. Hemingway tried to achieve this by abandoning the stylistic and ornamental language.

Hemingway's novels are blunt in style and contain simple and straightforward sentence structure with any hidden meanings. However, his bluntness and simple sentence structure are not without irony, for the characters in his novels always have hidden motives and agendas which become the guiding force for their actions. Like the other prominent modernist of the time, the figures associated with the Lost Generation abandoned the idea that it is possible to completely know anything. Reality, for them, became relative and conditional. The only truth was the transient nature of the world. The First World War had already showed them that the world, the outside reality is not governed by any guiding spirit.

The novel as a genre saw a huge transformation because of the self-conscious and reflective impulses of modernism. A new type of narration was introduced to the novel and it soon changed every single aspect of the novel as a genre. The omniscient narrator which was so characteristic of the previous century novels was replaced by the unreliable narrator, stressing the idea that it is impossible to know anything completely and truly. The emergence of unreliable narrator compelled the readers to question even the most basic and fundamental assumptions regarding the way a novel should and must operate. Capturing the workings of mind and consciousness became a new technique at the hands of geniuses like Joyce and Woolf. Joyce's *Ulysses* (1922), one of the most celebrated modernist text, is a supreme example of the narrative technique which became famous as the stream of consciousness, and which attempts to capture the fleeting nature of human mind. Instead of capturing the outside world, the great modernist writers attempted to capture the inner complexity and intricacies of human consciousness. It was also the time of Psychoanalytical theories of Sigmund Freud, in which he questioned the autonomy of human consciousness. The amalgamation of these two intellectual forces forever changed the fundamental understanding of people regarding reality and truth.

Another defining characteristic of modernist literature was experimentation with the genre and form. The prime example of the manifestation of this urge for experimentation is T. S. Eliot's poem *The Waste Land* (1922). Many critics consider this poem as the most suitable example of modernist poetry. The poem is full of references, which even the most well-read readers found frustrating. The poem is not an attempt to escape from the shocking reality of the world; instead it exposes these realities and darkness. The poem engages with the idea of self and inwardness and exposes moral and spiritual barrenness of modern life, and presents reality in the state of flux.

The alienation and cynical perspective that became so characteristic of modernism could persist for long. By the middle of the twentieth century, many voices and idea began to emerge that challenged the basic views of modernism. After the Second World War, the democratic ideals emerged as a winner over fascism of Germany and Italy. For the first time in a long period, there was a sense of hope and optimism. The elitism of

modernism began to fade and commercialized and popular literature began to be appreciated. The audiences who indulged in such literature were not shunned and looked at with contempt. Moreover, the ideas and principles that later came to be known as postmodernism started to emerge. However, this does not mean that the effects of modernism completely disappeared, for modernism as a movement and the intellectuals and writers associated with it changed the basic understanding of truth and reality, and changed it for good.

Check Your Progress

10. What were the different movements that came to define the modern age?
11. In this age, what was the common feeling among American writers?

1.6 LITERATURE FROM 1945 TO THE PRESENT DAY

In this section, we will discuss the emergence and significance of poetry from 1945 to the present day.

1.6.1 Poetry

By the end of the Second World War, T. S. Eliot emerged as a literary dictator. According to Peter Conn, there was no sense of equality in the modernist cannon of 1958. By this time, it had become a hierarchical structure with Eliot enjoying the top most position of extreme power and eminence. The theoretical foundations of modernism as a movement were explored by John Crowe Ransom in *Poetry* and Allen Tate in *Tension in Poetry*. By the end of the first decade of the second half of the twentieth century, the *New Criticism* under the leadership of Eliot had forged a kind of hegemony that dictated the standards for most of the Academic and literary sections of America.

Poets such as John Berryman, Randal Farrell, Robert Lowell, Theodore Roethke, Karl Shapiro and Schwarts emerged as the prominent poets in the middle of the twentieth century. Robert Lowell termed his school of poetry as confessional school of poetry. The third generation of American poets of twentieth century include James Merrill, W. I. Merwin, Adrianna Rich, Peter Viereck and Richard Wilbur. New Criticism used *The Kenyon Review* and the *Sewance Review* as its weapon to enforce and maintain its hegemony. Charles Olson used Projective Verse to make his contribution in the poetry of the age. The emergence of beat generation of poetry began with the publication of Allen Ginsberg's *Howl*. Drugs and other experience of extreme nature became common amongst the poets and artists of this generation who sought to transcend the ordinary experiences into visual consciousness. The beat poets were anti traditional poets who experimented with the combination of mystical with political and psychological aspect of human consciousness. Unlike the beat poets, confessional poetry had a great and influencing impact on the poetry of the time. Women poets welcomed this school of poetry, for it gave them an adequate medium to record their personal experiences with artistic candour.

Another school of poetry that flourished in America was the Black Mountain Poets. The poets associated with this group criticized the western tradition of art as a

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form of mimesis. The poets of New York School, which include John Ashbery, Barbara Guest, Kenneth Koch, Frank O'Hara and James Schuyler were most self-conscious and t programmatic poets of the period. The counter-culture prominent in 1970s and '80s continued with some of these trends of poetry.

1.6.2 Drama

The most 1.7.2 Dramafamous and prominent practitioner of American drama at the beginning of the twentieth century was Eugene O'Neill. Playwrights such as Philip Barry, S. N. Behrman, Rachael Gothers, George Kelly and Robert Sherwood followed O'Neill's brand of theatre. The next prominent playwright to emerge was Tennessee Williams. Some of his famous plays include *The Glass Menagerie* and *The Street Car Named Desire*. These plays when staged revolutionized the American drama. Williams retired after his last play *Clothes for a Summer Hotel*. The third crucial figure to emerge in American theatre in the twentieth century was Arthur Miller. His powerful plays with traditional narrative themes did in the middle of the twentieth century what O'Neill's plays did at the beginning. Miller wrote twenty plays, amongst which *All My Sons*, *Death of a Salesman* and the *Crucible* are considered to be his best. Amongst women playwrights, the most recognized names are Beth Henley, Tina Howe, Marsha Norman and Adele Shank.

In the second half of the twentieth century, a large number of playwrights emerged as great talents, but this period has a less number of memorable plays. As the African Americans entered the American theatre, the subjects and themes of theatre became more versatile and diverse and, therefore, classification of any kind is almost impossible during this period of American theatre. One of the most prominent and powerful African-American playwright to emerge during this period was Amiri Baraka. His play *Dutchman* is considered to be violent and yet a powerful play.

With other post war literary genres, the theatre shared a sense of alienation and internal division, which unfortunately had become a reality of the late twentieth century. *The American Dream*, *The Zoo Story* and *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf* by Edward Albee successfully captured the American domestic and national scene on the stage. A number of women playwrights also emerged in the American theatre partly because of their talent as playwrights and partly because of the amalgamation of art and ideology that has revolutionized the idea of self-definition across the minority groups in the American society. This also resulted in various minority groups such as Blacks, Hispanics, Asians, Indians and homosexuals, reinforcing their demand for equality thorough the engagement of theatre with its audience.

1.6.3 Fiction

In his *A Gathering of Fugitives* (1956), Lionel Trilling comments: 'The novelist, in his ideal character, is the artist who is consumed by the desire to know how things really are; who has entered into an elaborate romance with actuality. He is the artist of the conditioned, of the impingement of things upon spirit and of spirit upon things and the success of his enterprise depends as much upon his awareness of things as upon his awareness of spirit.' In his *An End of Innocence* (1955), Lesli Fielder writes, 'Even now, the writers of many other countries begin to stand to their own past in a relation as uneasy as our and in our novel they find raised nakedly at last the question that underlay the experimentation of the twenties, the social consciousness of the thirties, the search for formal security of the forties. Can the lonely individual, unsustained by tradition in an

atomized society, achieve a poetry adult and complicated enough to be the consciousness of its age? To have posed that question for the world is the achievement of the American novel at the moment.'

These observations can fiction as a basic guide for us to study the American fiction after the end of the Second World War. Jean Paul Sartre, the famous French philosopher of the mid twentieth century, rightly assessed that the 'Empire of signs is prose'. It is true that the First World War caused a crisis of language. Sartre observed that the Second World War revolutionized it. The modernism of the first half of the century had successfully challenged literary tradition of realism and had attempted to capture the chaotic essence of the world after the first war. In France, Sartre along with Albert Camus attempted to take the novel towards the existential reality. In Britain, F. R. Leavis in his *The Great Tradition* (1948) offered the insight that social and moral realism has always been the central lineage of English novels. A similar sentiment was conveyed by Lionel Trilling's influential essay *The Liberal Inauguration* (1955). In the post second world war period, the novel emerged as a quest for reality. It is important to keep in mind that Richard Chase's *The American Novel and Its Tradition* (1957) and Leslie Fiedler's *Love and Death in the American Novel* (1960) claimed the lack of tradition in the American novel.

By the time the third generation of American writers appeared in 1950s, older writers like Hemingway, Faulkner, Dos Passos and Steinbeck had already established an experimental tradition of American fiction. Some of the important writers of this period in American fiction are Vladimir Nabokov (he had migrated to America in 1940), Robert Penn Warren, Bernard Malamud, Saul Bellow, Mary McCarthy, Norman Miller, John Updike, John Barth, J. D. Salinger and Cynthia Ozick. The themes of the work that these writers produced had a sense of disorientation towards the society. Their distance from rigid social structures and their metaphysical concern for this distance made them categorize this brand of fiction as post-modernist.

Arthur M. Schlesinger, in his *Vital Centre* writes: 'Today, finally and tardily, the skeptical insights are in process of restoration to the liberal mind. The psychology of Freud has renewed the intellectuals' belief in the dark, slumbering forces of the will. The Theology of Barth and Niebuhr has given a new power to old and chastening truths of Christianity. More than anything else, the raise of Hitler and Stalin has revealed in terms no one deny the awful reality of human impulses toward aggrandizement and destruction.'

A historical tension is apparent in the American fiction produced between the end of the second war and second decade of the second half of the century. In this tension, one can see opposite claims of resistance and engagement, accommodation and alienation, isolated self and social system, and an attempt to make existential sense of one's life against process of history. The American novels that appeared after 1945 was remarkably different from the novels that preceded the Second World War in the sense that the former completely abandoned the large mythical landscapes and pastoral description, which were still powerfully present in the American fictions of modernism. Bellow in his first novel *Dangling Man* (1944) narrates the story of a man with no aim, who is awaits his induction in the army. His other novels more or less deal with the similar themes.

The American writers who appeared next on American literary scene like John Cheever, John Updike, Mary McCarthy and Alison Lurie attempted to restore the tradition that realism had earlier abandoned. In 1960s, a group of writers emerged who were known as 'The Silent Generation'. The well-known writers of this group include John Barth, Richard Brautigan, Robert Coover and Ishmael Reed.

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Many of the memorable novels of the second half of the twentieth century have been written by the writers belonging to the minority or ethnic group. This period is also notable for a wide range of talented African-American writers like Toni Morrison, Alice Walker, Ralph Ellison, James Baldwin and Richard Wright.

There is no doubt that the contemporary literary scene of America includes writers from various race, ethnic groups and religions. The diversity of it offers a possibility of the expansion of such lists and categorization, but only time will tell which of the writers who are active today will emerge to be the major literary figures in the American literary cannon.

Check Your Progress

12. Name the figures who dominated poetry and drama during the mid-twentieth century?
13. During this period, what was unique about American fiction?
14. What were the American writers of the 1960s known as?

ACTIVITY

Read the poetry of T. S. Eliot and Ezra Pound. You may compare your notes and ideas with your colleagues.

Did You Know

Toni Morrison, the most recent American recipient of the Nobel Prize for Literature, writing in a distinctive lyrical prose style, published her controversial debut novel, *The Bluest Eye*, to widespread critical acclaim in 1970. Coming on the heels of the signing of the Civil Rights Act of 1965, the novel, widely studied in American schools, includes an elaborate description of incestuous rape and explores the conventions of beauty established by a historically racist society, painting a portrait of a self-immolating black family in search of beauty in whiteness.

1.8 SUMMARY

In this unit, you have learnt that:

- The New World was colonized in the 1500s by the English, French and Spanish.
- The age of exploration opened new avenues and Europeans in large number settled in America.
- It cannot be denied that during the first-century of English Settlement, most of the literary achievements were from the Puritans. They were the most literate of the English Colonists and were committed.

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- Generally speaking, the Puritans and the Yankees were the two halves of the New England.
- The Puritans were a contribution of the Old World created by the rugged idealism of the English Reformation; while the Yankees were a product of native conditions created by practical economics. Puritans immigrants were the children of two different centuries.
- The journey to creating American was a slow and gradual one. The cultural history of the next several generations is essentially a story of adaption, as imported ideas and material forms were altered under the pressure of America's different conditions.
- From 1760s onward, literary and cultural aspirations were linked to the revolution of politics.
- Poetry was also pressed into the service of nationalism. Franklin was the first American to abandon the traditional mercantile school before other America thinkers abandoned it. He was the first to accept the school of laissez faire.
- After the American Revolution, America emerged as a new nation from its colonial status.
- Among the literary nationalists in the late eighteenth century, we have the poets and essayists known as Connecticut Wits.
- In the three generation from independence to the civil war, America expanded its geographical boundaries at a breathtaking rate.
- The period from 1775–1828 was known as the Early National Period ending with the triumph of Jacksonian democracy in 1828, which signalled the emergence of a national imaginative literature.
- The period from 1828–1865 is often identified as the Romantic Period in America. This period is sometimes also known as the American Renaissance.
- Through the period of 1865–1914, the bloody Civil War was followed by a burgeoning industrialism and urbanization in the north that profoundly altered the American sense of itself and also American literary modes. The period from 1865–1900 is often known as the Realistic Period.
- America's increasing economic and technological expansion necessitated a continual broadening and intensifying of contacts with the world culture and with movements of thoughts that were initiated and developed elsewhere.
- It is very difficult to separate realism and regionalism.
- According to French aesthetic theory, realism designated as an art based on accurate, unromanticized observation of life and nature.
- Realism as understood from the works of Whitman, Hawthorne, Stowe and Melville adds a democratic openness in subject matter and style that breaks down rigid hierarchies even as it may indulge in imaginative disorder or utopian fantasy in order to probe the limits of a prevailing social and political reality.
- Whatever be our definition of realism, it does have an anthropological dimension in which new regions are opened to fictional or journalistic exploration and analysis.
- American literary naturalism was associated with continental licentiousness and impiety and was regarded as a literature foreign to American values and interests.

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- The first dime novel was written by Ann S. Stephens, named *The Indian Wife of the White Hunter* (1860).
- The spirit of renewal that breathed though American politics and philosophy in the early twentieth century and influenced literature and the other arts as well.
- Cubism, fauvism, vorticism, constructivism and futurism competed with each other.
- Modernism constituted a concentrated attack on received artistic traditions. It had its origin in Europe. However, Americans played decisive roles as well.
- The era between the two world wars, marked also by the trauma of the great economic depression beginning in 1929, was that of the emergence of what is known as Modern Literature.
- T. S. Eliot became one of the most important literary figures in the world from 1945.
- Twentieth Century Drama had Eugene O'Neill as its pioneer.
- The War of 1914 precipitated a crisis of language.
- According to Sartre, the war of 1940 had revolutionized it. Half a century of modernism had challenged the tradition of literary realism and spoken of a crisis of the word.

1.9 KEY TERMS

- **Scourge:** It means to blight.
- **Exodus:** It means mass departure.
- **Rhetoric:** It means style of oratory.
- **Elegy:** It means a poem of serious reflection, especially a lament for the deceased.
- **Heretical:** It means profane.
- **Seditious:** It means subversive.
- **Antinomian:** It is a belief that Christians are released by grace from the obligation of observing the moral law.
- **Muckracking:** It refers to the search and exposure of misconduct in public life.
- **Knickbocker:** It refers to an obsolete term for New Yorkers.
- **Avant-garde:** It refers to new (often experimental) ideas in art and literature (now extended to fashion and lifestyle).

1.10 ANSWERS TO 'CHECK YOUR PROGRESS'

1. During the first-century of English Settlement, most of the literary achievements were from the Puritans.
2. William Bradford was the first historian of the New England.
3. The New World offers images of peace and plenty. America was to be a modern society, a nation of yeomen farmers bonded together by the silken bond of a mild government.

4. Washington Irving was the first Knickerbocker writer in America to earn an international reputation.
5. The French aesthetic theory of realism designated an art based on accurate and unromanticized observation of life and nature.
6. Realism as understood from the works of Whitman, Hawthorne, Stowe and Melville adds a democratic openness in subject matter and style that breaks down rigid hierarchies even as it may indulge in imaginative disorder or utopian fantasy in order to probe the limits of a prevailing social and political reality.
7. American literary naturalism in its early years was associated with continental licentiousness and impiety and was regarded as a literature foreign to American values and interests.
8. Literary naturalism has been narrowly identified with the phrase 'pessimistic determinism'.
9. Dime novels were a kind of inexpensive melodramatic adventure novels, with often western themes, popular in America from 1860 to 1915, and were published usually with paperback.
10. The different movements that came to define the modern age include cubism, fauvism, vorticism, constructivism and futurism.
11. Many prominent American writers of the decade following the end of World War I, disillusioned by their war experiences, were alienated by what they perceived as the crassness of American culture and its puritanical repressions.
12. T. S. Eliot dominated poetry while Eugene O'Neill dominated drama in the twentieth century.
13. The American fiction of this period from the end of the war to 1960s showed a sense of distinctive historical tension, in which the contrary claims of opposition and engagement, alienation and accommodation, an isolated self and a massed social system and a comically absurd individual struggling to make existential sense of an anarchic and terrible process of history. The American novel that developed after 1945 was in many ways different from the work of its immediate predecessors in its breakaway from the large mythic landscapes and pastoralizing tendencies that had much power even in the novel of American modernism.
14. The American writers of the 1960s were known as 'The Silent Generation'.

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1.11 QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

Short-Answer Questions

1. Write a short note on the meaning of the New World.
2. Who were the Knickerbocker writers in America in the early days?
3. Briefly describe the concept of the Dime novel.
4. Name the important literary figures of modernism.
5. Identify the distinct features of a novel in the modern era.

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Long-Answer Questions

1. Write an overview of the colonial experience and the early days of the New English settlement.
2. Give a critical analysis of the meaning and significance of realism in America.
3. Discuss the emergence of modernism in literature.
4. Highlight T. S. Eliot's contribution to Modern literature.
5. Discuss the contributions of O'Neill and Williams to the American stage.

1.12 FURTHER READING

Hacker, L. M., Helene S Zahler ed. *The Shaping of American Tradition*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1947.

Bigswy, C. W. E. *A Critical Introduction to Twentieth Century American Drama* (2 vols.). New York: *Cambridge University Press*, 1982.

Bloom, Harold, ed. *Modern Critical Views: Robert Frost*. New York: Chelsea House Publishers, 1986.

UNIT 4 EUGENE O'NEILL AND TENNESSEE WILLIAMS

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Structure

4.0 INTRODUCTION

Eugene O'Neill and Tennessee Williams were one of the greatest American playwrights of the twentieth century who were well known for their timeless works.

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Eugene O'Neill was an Irish American playwright, the first and only American dramatist to have won the Nobel Prize for Literature and the Pulitzer Award four times, including one for *Long Day's Journey Into Night*, an autobiographical drama. His plays, which were usually poetically titled, were one of their first types to introduce the techniques of realism in the American drama. This tradition was initially associated with Henrik Ibsen (Norwegian playwright), Anton Chekhov (Russian playwright) and August Strindberg (Swedish playwright).

Eugene O'Neil's *Long Day's Journey Into Night* is an agonizingly autobiographical play, which depicts the disturbed relations between a father, mother and two sons. Posthumously produced, the play strips the strained and complex relations of the main characters, layer after layer, in a day's time. As the play progresses, the audience witness a drug-addict mother, a professionally failed father, an alcoholic older son and an ailing younger son. Although no one dies in the play, still, as a tragedy, the undercurrent is that of perpetual loss, morbid relations, failed communication, guilty pasts and disillusioned present.

Tennessee Williams was an American playwright who was born in the Mississippi region. His birth name was Thomas Lanier Williams III. He studied at the University of Iowa and graduated in 1938. His initial writings were one-act plays and were performed by amateurs and students. Later on, these one-act plays were compiled in *27 Wagons Full of Cotton and Other One-Act Plays* (1946) and *Dragon Country: A Book of Plays* (1970).

Tennessee Williams is the critically acclaimed author of the play *A Streetcar Named Desire*. This play won him the Pulitzer Prize and contributed a great deal in shaping the history of American drama.

In this unit, you will get acquainted with the life and works of Eugene O'Neill and Tennessee Williams. You will also study the important themes in the works of these playwrights and understand why their writings appeal to contemporary generations.

4.1 UNIT OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- Describe the important biographical aspects of Eugene O'Neill and Tennessee Williams
- Summarise the plays: *Long Day's Journey Into Night* and *A Streetcar Named Desire*
- Critically examine the characters of the two plays under study
- Discuss the important themes of the two plays under study

4.2 EUGENE O'NEILL: A BRIEF BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Eugene Gladstone O'Neill was the first American dramatist to be conferred with the Nobel Prize in Literature—the pioneer American playwright who made theatre a strong medium of serious thoughts. He had cherished the idea of making it a forum for the tragic sensitivities of life. He could bring the sublimity of ancient Greek tragedies together

with the characters' emotional strength. His theatrical masterpieces won him critical acclaims during his life and after his death. He had become a living literary icon with many awards and nominations to his credit but just like his tragic heroes, O'Neill died a solitary death in a hotel room with his third wife and a few visitors on his side.

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Eugene O'Neill

Long Day's Journey Into Night is one of Eugene O'Neill's later plays. He began writing the play in 1940 and completed in 1942, but he did not get it published then. Rather it was kept as a sealed copy with Random House with the contract that the play will be published/performed only twenty-five years after his death. As O'Neill had written this play to show the world the truth of his family and the environment in which he was raised, and in order to do so, he laid forth his own upbringing in a compassionate nature. He tried to make it an unbiased work, which is why none of his characters show any hint of sympathy or bias. The play was written at a personal level, but eventually, it attains universality just like Shakespeare's plays. The play depicts the personal problems of a family that take a universal colour with the conflicting world of disturbed relations, taking its roots from a bitter distressed past.

O'Neill died in 1953 and the play saw its first performance in 1956 in Sweden, a country which always loved and honoured him the most. In fact, it was O'Neill's third wife, Carlotta Monterey who broke the contract with Random House when they refused to publish it against his last wishes. Instead, she gave the rights of publication to the Yale University Press. Whatever is said or written about Carlotta's act, one thing is for sure that the play cemented O'Neill's reputation as the foremost figure of American theatre.

O'Neill's life had been a tumultuous one. He was the son of a theatre artist father and a mother who had to accompany the father at different places without much interest. O'Neill did not taste success till his play *Beyond the Horizon* was performed in 1920. He lost his father before he became a literary success which disturbed him a lot as, in spite of differences, O'Neill shared a revered relationship with him. Then came his three marriages and somewhat failed relationships with his wives and children of which his eldest son committed suicide at the age of forty, while his younger son became emotionally unstable and his daughter infuriated him by marrying a much older Charlie Chaplin (of almost O' Neill's age). He himself suffered from tuberculosis early in his life. Moreover, his final years were also full of grim frustration.

The early part of his troubled life forms the plot of *Long Day's Journey Into Night*. His troubles and experiences gave him a rich source for this autobiographical work in which the character of Edmund carries the burden of a parallel with the writer himself.

After achieving success in 1920, O'Neill remained a dominant figure of the American theatre throughout his life. While O'Neill remained troubled throughout his

life, he was most captivated by his experiences while growing up (the years before he found fame). The early part of his life is the subject of *Long Day's Journey Into Night*, which will forever remain O'Neill's goodbye to the world—the play that showed America who O'Neill was and where he came from.

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Important Works of Eugene O'Neill

Full-length plays

- *Bread and Butter*, 1914
- *Servitude*, 1914
- *The Personal Equation*, 1915
- *Now I Ask You*, 1916
- *Beyond the Horizon*, 1918; Pulitzer Prize, 1920
- *The Straw*, 1919
- *Chris Christophersen*, 1919
- *Gold*, 1920
- *Anna Christie*, 1920; Pulitzer Prize, 1922
- *The Emperor Jones*, 1920
- *Diff'rent*, 1921
- *The First Man*, 1922
- *The Hairy Ape*, 1922
- *The Fountain*, 1923
- *Marco Millions*, 1923–25
- *All God's Chillun Got Wings*, 1924
- *Welded*, 1924
- *Desire Under the Elms*, 1925
- *Lazarus Laughed*, 1925–26
- *The Great God Brown*, 1926
- *Strange Interlude*, 1928, Pulitzer Prize
- *Dynamo*, 1929
- *Mourning Becomes Electra*, 1931
- *Ah, Wilderness!*, 1933
- *Days Without End*, 1933
- *The Iceman Cometh*, written in 1939, published in 1940, first performed in 1946
- *Hughie*, written in 1941, first performed in 1959
- *Long Day's Journey Into Night*, written in 1941, first performed in1956 - Pulitzer Prize, 1957
- *A Moon for the Misbegotten*, written 1941–1943, first performed in 1947
- *A Touch of the Poet*, completed in 1942, first performed in 1958
- *More Stately Mansions*, second draft found in O'Neill's papers, first performed in 1967
- *The Calms of Capricorn*, published in 1983

One-act plays

The Glencairn Plays, all of which feature characters on the fictional ship *Glencairn*—filmed together as *The Long Voyage Home*:

- *Bound East for Cardiff*, 1914
- *In The Zone*, 1917
- *The Long Voyage Home*, 1917
- *Moon of the Caribbees*, 1918

Other one-act plays include:

- *A Wife for a Life*, 1913
- *The Web*, 1913
- *Thirst*, 1913
- *Recklessness*, 1913
- *Warnings*, 1913
- *Fog*, 1914
- *Abortion*, 1914
- *The Movie Man: A Comedy*, 1914
- *The Sniper*, 1915
- *Before Breakfast*, 1916
- *Ile*, 1917
- *The Rope*, 1918
- *Shell Shock*, 1918
- *The Dreamy Kid*, 1918
- *Where the Cross Is Made*, 1918
- *Exorcism*, 1919

Awards Won BY Eugene O'Neill

The Eugene O'Neill Award is considered to be one of the best acting awards in Sweden for theatre artists. The award is also known as *The Eugene O'Neill Scholarship Award* or *The Eugene O'Neill Acting Award*. It was introduced by Eugene O'Neill in 1956. Before his death in 1953, O'Neill prepared a will wherein he gave his play *Long Day's Journey Into Night* to the Royal Dramatic Theatre, Sweden's national theatre, along with exclusive first performance rights. Later, his third wife Carlotta Monterey O'Neill gave the rights to stage the play to the Royal Dramatic Theatre, along with the performing rights for *A Touch of the Poet* (written in 1942), *Hughie* and *More Stately Mansions*.

The award is given every year on 16 October (O'Neill's birthday) to the 'highly deserving actors of Dramaten'. The prize money currently consists of approximately 4,000 USD.

Source: Wikipedia

4.3 *LONG DAY'S JOURNEY INTO NIGHT*: AN INTRODUCTION

The play begins in a summer morning of 1912 when Mary Tyrone returns home from a sanatorium after her treatment of morphine addiction. It is a family of mainly four—James Tyrone, his wife Mary and his two sons, Edmund and Jamie. So far as the plot of the play is concerned, there is no 'action' per se. In other words, nothing transpires in this room other than exchange of dialogue over drinking.

As the play unravels, it becomes evident that Mary is still addicted to morphine and Edmund's coughing is actually due to tuberculosis. These are two medical revelations that constitute the plot of the play. Meanwhile, the family members continue to hurt and blame each other; in most parts, this forms the only action of the plot. At times, the topic of bickering is the stinginess of Tyrone and the addiction of Mary, or at times, it is the youngest son's ailment or the failure of both sons. As the day comes to an end, the father and the sons drink more and more and Mary continues with her morphine addiction. Most of the plot of the play is monotonous. The arguments in the family occur throughout the four acts and five scenes. For example, all acts are set in the living room, and all scenes but the last take place either just before or after a meal. The repetitive plot also helps develop the belief that this particular day is not astonishing in any way instead it is one in a long sequence of similar days for the family, filled with unpleasantness, conflict and at the same time an underlying affection.

The husband and the sons thought that Mary had finally given up her addiction, but they are now suspicious that she may be back on the drug. Jamie is at home for the summer as he is without a job, whereas Edmund has been taken seriously ill. Through the course of the day, it is revealed that Mary is in the habit of taking morphine for the past twenty-three years ever since she gave birth to Edmund. It was because of the stinginess of James that he hired a less competent doctor for a lesser fee and the doctor put Mary on morphine to alleviate her pain, never realizing that such a drug could turn a person into an addict.

Jamie heads towards a brothel, whereas James and Edmund come back after a few drinks. Mary, meanwhile, takes a hurried drive into town to get some morphine and then she spends the afternoon chatting with the house maid, Cathleen, about her youthful days. Once James and Edmund return, Mary engrosses them in a talk while her peculiar, morphine-influenced behaviour drives James to get more whiskey and Edmund to leave. James comes back in time for dinner, but Mary decides she has to go upstairs and sleep instead.

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In the final Act, Edmund comes back from a stroll down the beach to find his father in the living room. Both are drunk and begin to open up to one another about their pasts and feelings. Edmund has his own views of reality like a would-be-poet, whereas James had always been indignant of overindulgence and sluggishness.

On the other hand, Jamie, too, comes home drunk and with stories of an overweight prostitute for whom he could manage a fair deal. Jamie confesses that he has not been the best son to Mary or brother to Edmund. In fact, privately, he wants to jeopardize Edmund's life as he himself is a failure and does not want to see his younger brother succeed.

In the final scene, Mary comes down carrying her old wedding dress, high on morphine and acting like the youthful girl she was when she had first met James. Jamie finds another opportunity to have a hearty laugh at her expense and Edmund strikes him for being insolent. Mary keeps narrating of the time when she was young and it is evident that she is not quite in her senses. The play ends with Mary's sense of loss and despair as she keeps talking about her past and how her dreams got shattered after she married James.

Check Your Progress

1. Describe the opening scene of the play.
2. What are the two medical revelations that form the plot of the play?

4.4 ACT WISE SUMMARY AND ANALYSIS OF *LONG DAY'S JOURNEY INTO NIGHT*

In this section, we will discuss the play act wise and critically analyse the acts.

4.4.1 Act I

O'Neill opens up the play with a detailed account of stage directions describing the living room of the Tyrone summer home in August 1912. The playwright continues to use the stage directions to tell us about James and Mary Tyrone, the Irish-American parents who enter the living room after breakfast. Mary, James' wife is fifty-four and has a young, healthy figure with a pale, thin face. She looks pretty even without any make-up and she has thick, white hair and big, beautiful brown eyes. Her once lovely hands are now gnarled with rheumatism, which keeps moving her hands uneasily. O'Neill very obviously mentions that she has not lost her 'convent-girl youthfulness' and 'unworldly innocence'.

James is sixty-five years old and shows signs of being a handsome ageing actor with a robust bearing—broad gestures and a reverberating voice, typical of his former career in acting. However, his shabby clothes are indicative of his present state of affairs.

James always wanted to be a classical actor, especially a Shakespearean one but his 'vehicle' play, with which he had toured for years, established his reputation and although served him well financially, could not add versatility to his acting. As a result, he never got the opportunity to explore and became confined to just one role. In spite of his

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good earning through theatre, his impending financial hardship can be gauged through his dress and appearance. While his demeanour and manner of speaking establish otherwise, James' current condition and trials get betrayed by his shabbiness.

His wife had recently returned from treatment for morphine addiction and was looking much healthier, and they made frequent remarks on her improved appearance. However, she retains the haggard facial features of a long-time addict. Like many recuperating addicts, she is impatient and nervous and suffers from insomnia, aggravated by her husband and sons' loud snoring.

Although the younger son, Edmund, is only twenty-three years old, yet he is 'plainly in bad health' and shows signs of nervousness. Jamie begins to stare at his mother, thinking that she is looking much better. The dialogue turns unpleasant, however, when the sons begin to make fun of Tyrone's loud snoring, a matter which drives him to lose his temper. Edmund tells him to calm down, which leads to a squabble between the two. After this, James turns on Jamie and attacks him for his lack of drive and sluggishness. Edmund tries to calm everyone down by narrating an anecdote but the father is not amused by the anecdote. At this, Edmund gets distressed and walks out in a fit of coughing. Jamie makes a point that Edmund is really not keeping well these days, to which James urges him to stay quiet so that Mary can remain unaware of the situation. While evidences to the contrary, it is Mary's belief that Edmund's illness is nothing more than a case of common cold that will eventually heal. This delusion can be interpreted as Mary's deep mistrust of doctors. James and Jamie make her self-conscious by staring at her. She reflects on her worn-out beauty, recognizing that she is in the stages of decline.

After Mary's exit, the father and the older son are left wherein James scolds Jamie for talking about Edmund's illness in front of Mary. As she has been recuperating, she is not supposed to worry herself during her recovery from her addiction to morphine. Jamie and Tyrone both are suspicious that Edmund might have been suffering from tuberculosis. They argue over Edmund's doctor, Doc Hardy, who charges a low fee, to which Jamie comments about James' stinginess and compromise on quality to which the father retorts that he himself knows the value of money as he had to earn every single penny to fulfil his needs. On the other hand, his sons have always taken a comfortable life for granted. To this, both of them start accusing each other. While the father accuses the son of squandering money on whores and liquor, Jamie alleges that James has always engaged inexpensive doctors in an attempt to save money which in any case gets squandered on real estate speculation and liquor. To this, James points out that most of his holdings are mortgaged. The blame game continues and the father accuses Jamie of being lazy and condemns him of his failure. He continues to blame Jamie of never being grateful to his father in spite of his support throughout. The father also believes that Jamie as an elder brother would be a bad influence on Edmund to which Jamie counters that he always made an effort to convince his brother to lead a pious life and not follow his habits.

Both sons are alarmed about Mary's movement in the bedroom—the very same one in which she used to satisfy her narcotic urges. James and his sons do not trust Mary for the same and keep questioning her.

The whole family is concerned about Edmund's constant coughing which could be a symptom of tuberculosis and this concern has placed them all under further worry. They are nervously awaiting the diagnosis of his condition. Edmund is more concerned about the effect of a positive diagnosis might have on his mother than on himself. That is why he asks her to 'promise not to worry yourself sick and to take care of yourself'. 'Of

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course I promise you', she answers, but then she adds with a sad bitterness: 'But I suppose you're remembering I've promised before on my word of honor.' This is not the first time that Mary has lied to her family. As Edmund leaves, she becomes restless and tense.

In the second part as well, there is a dialogue between the father and the older son, Jamie. They continue discussing Edmund and his professional life as a writer as well as his illness. They discuss that although some editors are not happy with Edmund, still he has a strong creative urge which drives him to work. They also feel happy about Mary's health and her coming back from the sanatorium. They even discuss steps to hide Edmund's illness from Mary so that they do not have to disclose any unpleasant news to her. They apprehend that they might not do so in case of Edmund's stay at a sanatorium. Jamie reveals his concern about Mary that she might still be addicted as he had seen her walking around the bedroom where she used to take her morphine dose. To this, James retorts that this could be only due to his snoring.

Meanwhile, the audience learns that Mary got addicted to morphine some twenty-three years ago when she gave birth to Edmund. The doctor hired by her husband was not qualified enough and he put her on morphine to relieve her pains. In other words, the economical yet incompetent doctor put her on the potential risk of addiction. Many a times throughout the play, Tyrone's stinginess is blamed for Mary's condition. Opposed to this, Tyrone himself explains it as a kind of prudence and not stinginess.

For the moment as they are discussing, Mary enters and asks them about the topic of their discussion. To which they lie and say that they had been discussing Edmund's doctor. As they do not wish that Mary should be disturbed, they plan to leave to trim the hedges outside. Mary knows that both have been lying to her. As they exit, Edmund enters with a coughing fit and tells his mother that he is not keeping well. At the same time, he tries to comfort his mother by telling her that she should take care of herself and not her son. Mary criticizes her sons for engaging whores and other women of ill-repute. Her fear is that they might never find suitable ladies if they continue to live carelessly. She also criticizes their spying habits and tells Edmund that both her sons have been cruelly distrustful towards her. Yet she confesses that Edmund has reasons not to believe her as she had broken some promises in the past. Edmund exits and Mary keeps sitting all alone.

In the beginning of *Long Day's Journey Into Night,* O'Neill gives elaborate stage directions to give the audience indications as to what the Tyrone family is like. The bookshelves are full of a wide range of books that indicate the family is educated. Since the family is Irish-American, the bookshelves display a collection of Irish literature. The character portrayals also foretell some of the play's encounters. Mary is styled as a rheumatoid morphine-addict, yet she maintains a 'youthfulness she has never lost'.

The description of Tyrone and his shabby utilitarian clothes suggest his financial practicality. Physically, he is very fit as he looks ten years younger than his age. Again, it is through stage directions that the playwright gives an idea of the habits and attitudes of his characters.

As a great playwright, O'Neill presents his characters with equal sympathy and objectivity. The characters lie to each other, blame each other, and are cruel towards each other but, at the same time, feel an undercurrent of affection for each other. Therefore, with all their faults, the characters appear to be convincing and form an integrated family which has been together in all times—good as well as bad. Not one

particular character is the protagonist or the villain. At the core of their relationship, they all are affectionate and compassionate.

Even in the frenzied second and third acts, where we see the characters pulling away from one another in torrents of deception, suspicion and recrimination, there are recurrent outbursts of genuine anguished love. The love exists and may be expressed by any of the three men, but it must come first from Mary, who turns the flows of kinship on and off in these acts as her fears and affections dictate. When she is haltingly and desperately able to admit her awareness of her condition, or Edmund's, the feelings of kinship are immediately apparent.

During the course of the play, the audience learns that there are two main events—the two major illnesses form the backbone of the plot—Mary's morphine addiction and Edmund's confirmation of consumption (nowadays called tuberculosis). Although they have been hinted at from the beginning of the play, yet it is through the course of the play that the two afflictions are confirmed as the core of the play. Both these problems bring all the family members to different situations of painful conflicts. Mary does not accept the harsh truth of her own addiction or Edmund's illness. She believes that her son suffers from plain cold and will recover soon. Many a times, she lies to herself as well as to her other family members. Her husband and sons try to hide certain facts from her, especially Edmund's medical condition so that she may recuperate. James has his own share of conflicts as he is also responsible for Mary's condition as he did not pay a good doctor's fee and instead called a quack who eventually made Mary an addict. Almost similar is the situation now when he is hesitant to pay for the high cost of Edmund's treatment which will be revealed in the later part of the play. Then both sons have their own issues. They have not been successful in their respective lives. They are into drinking excessively and squandering money on loose women.

The Act also unfolds another conflict within the family between the Sr. Tyrone and Jamie. The father believes that Jamie has never understood the value of money and he always takes things for granted, whereas he himself had to earn every single penny. On the other hand, the son believes that his father is stingy because of which his mother and other members had to suffer. He does not show any traits of respect for his father and turns a non-conformist. Eventually, the relationship between the father and the son turns out to be full of disappointment.

The relationship between Mary and Edmund presents an aspect of strength of relationships. Both are similar in many ways, sharing a romantic vision of life and innate affection for each other. Edmund had romantic ideas of writers and he drank to his satisfaction and Mary thought of the success of her children and a high way of life, but the fact remains that James and Mary both are there in their children's lives throughout, which gives thematic strength to the characters. The play's internal unity is affected through these relationships of the characters.

The relationship of past with the present events and situations is another thematic concern of the play. The past keeps hovering and influencing the present. All the characters are controlled by family's history in one form or another. The men of the family are not ready to believe either Mary or her promises as she had not maintained her commitments in the past, and towards the end of this Act, she herself confesses it before Edmund that there have been reasons for her not to believe her. James' past decisions are partially responsible for Mary's condition today. Her past dreams have been shattered as she always had dreams of a youthful girl who would have been a successful pianist or would have entered the church as a nun but her marriage changed her life. She seems to have

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fostered resentment for James for the devastation of her dreams. The problems of the past are effective even today; neither can they be overlooked or discounted.

Another aspect which is revealed in the first Act is the flaw related to communication within the family members. The men in the family keep on hiding it, while Mary chooses to misunderstand. It is ironic that the men keep on hiding Edmund's illness from Mary and on the other hand, she continues hiding her addiction from them. Although they are all concerned about each other, yet they seem incapable of communicating this in a straightforward manner. They blame and argue with each other, but are neither ready nor willing to accept and share the truth. There seems to be a kind of resolution of this conflict towards the end of the play when Jamie shares his true feelings of wanting his brother to fail. Another aspect where communication fails is Mary's own specific notion of home. She is not happy with her life which she spent after her marriage touring with her husband to different places. She always wanted to have a feel of a home which she could not get by accompanying her actor husband. Moreover, she could not express her thoughts until lately.

Check Your Progress

3. Briefly describe Mary as she gets introduced to the audience in Act 1.
4. Comment on James' visage as a classical actor.

4.4.2 Act II

The next Act again begins in the living room of the Tyrones on the same day. Cathleen, the home maid, enters the stage with a bottle of whiskey and some water for a round drinking before lunch. Edmund is already there and he tells Cathleen to call his mother and father for a drink. Meanwhile, Jamie enters and pours some drink from the bottle and adds some water to the bottle so that his father cannot make out that the drop in level. Jamie and Edmund sneer at each other about stealing their father's alcohol and watering it down so that he would not notice it.

Then Jamie expresses his concern about Edmund's health as he believes that Edmund might be suffering from a serious disease rather than simple malaria and they are waiting for the results of the tests. Next, Jamie starts accusing Edmund for leaving Mary alone unattended throughout the morning. Both of them seem to be concerned about Mary's morphine abuse. Jamie also informs Edmund that he and his father knew about Marie's addiction almost ten years ago and they hid the fact from him for all these years.

Mary enters and finds Edmund coughing. When Jamie makes a sarcastic remark about his father, Mary advises him to respect his father and stop finding faults with others. Then she talks of human destiny and how events in one's lives are pre-determined. She also expresses her dissatisfaction with the maid and wishes that they could have kept a better maid. Edmund goes outside to call his father in. Meanwhile, Jamie stares at his mother with suspicion as he internally knows that she is back on morphine.

James and Edmund enter and all have a drink. Suddenly, Mary speaks of her frustration with their summer home, its temporariness and dilapidation, and her husband's unresponsiveness to his surrounds. Mary explodes about Tyrone's failure to appreciate what a home is. She has always had a romantic vision of a home which her husband

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could never provide. Ironically, she indicates to her belief that this air of disinterestedness may be the very reason that he has endured her addiction for so long. She keeps accusing him for the same till they begin lunch. Then she criticizes James for letting Edmund drink, as she thinks it will kill him. Jamie and Edmund exit to have lunch in the dining room. James too stares at Mary with suspicion. With self-justification, she lies to her husband's unexpressed allegations, but he too knows that she is back on morphine. She grumbles again of his drinking and here the scene ends.

There is a gap of half an hour between the ending of this scene and the next scene. The family has its dinner and they are coming out. James gives the impression of being annoyed and detached, whereas Edmund appears to be 'heartsick'. Then there is a small talk between Mary and James about home. It seems that Mary is to a certain extent indifferent while she speaks because she is on a dose of morphine. Right then, the phone rings and James goes to answer it. He has a brief talk and agrees to a meeting at 4:00 in the evening. He comes back and informs about that the caller was Doc Hardy and that he has fixed an appointment with him for Edmund. Mary immediately expresses her disdain for Doc Hardy as she believes him to be incompetent. Once again, we witness how Mary accuses Tyrone for hiring an inexpensive doctor. She exits after a short confrontation.

As Mary exits, Jamie gets suspicious about her. He remarks that his mother must have gone upstairs to get morphine to which his father and brother get angry at him and tell him not to be suspicious all the time. Jamie tells them both not to evade reality and how it is better that they face it instead of running away from it. Edmund argues with Jamie that he is very pessimistic. At this point, the father accuses the sons for not practicing Catholicism in which he himself has a deep faith. Edmund ends the row by telling them that he is going to speak to Mary upstairs about her problem.

After Edmund's exit, the father informs Jamie that Doc Hardy has confirmed Edmund's illness as consumption and Edmund needs to stay in a sanatorium for recovery. Doc Hardy thinks that if Edmund goes to a sanatorium at the earliest, he shall be cured within six months to one year. Jamie demands that Tyrone should not send Edmund to a cheap place. He tells his father that consumption is a curable disease if treated properly. He should not think of saving money by sending Edmund to an inexpensive place. Jamie decides to accompany Tyrone and Edmund to the doctor and exits.

Mary comes back with her notion of a real home as she remarks that Jamie would have been a good son if he would have been brought up in a real home. She is not happy about Jamie's habit of squandering money and alcoholism. She tells James not to give Jamie money so that he cannot waste it on liquor. Tyrone indirectly accuses her of taking drugs again. Though she denies, yet pleads with him not leave her lonely. The husband suggests her to take a ride in the car which he had bought for her. To this, Mary retorts that she has hardly any friend whom she can visit after her marriage. She also makes a reference to one brief scandal about James and a mistress due to which all her friends had abandoned her. James tells her not to talk of the past. Then Mary continues with her history of morphine addiction and how James had hired a cheap quack for the child birth. Indirectly, she puts the blame of her addiction on James. James retorts not to dig up the past. To this, Mary replies, 'Why? How can I? The past is the present, isn't it? It's the future too. We all try to lie out of that but life won't let us.'

Rather Mary continues opening up some facts of their life like the birth of her second son, Eugene, who died in infancy at the age of two and how she had taken a vow not to have another baby as she always blamed herself, and indirectly James, for his

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illness. When she had gone on a tour with her husband and left her mother for babysitting, the child had caught measles from Jamie. James urges Marie not to talk of the past but she still continues and talks of Edmund who had always been weak and of sensitive health. She further says that it was at the birth of Edmund that she picked up the morphine addiction. She tries to justify by calling it her punishment.

As she finishes her speech, Edmund enters. He asks Tyrone for money and his father stingily produces. Edmund is sincerely thankful to him but then tells his father that he might regret it later on as he believes that his son might die soon and his money will be wasted. To this, the father is deeply hurt and Edmund apologizes and they make amends. They then talk of going to meet the doctor and James leaves. Mary tells Edmund not to visit Doc Hardy. Edmund retorts that she needs to quit morphine addiction. Mary denies the accusation. Mary reminds Edmund not to be home late, and the boys leave. Mary stares around the room, one hand drumming, the other fixing her hair. While alone, Mary confesses that she keeps telling lies to herself and pleads guilty that she can 'no longer call my soul my own'. She hopes for reclamation one day through Virgin Mary. She is left alone and is happy that they are gone but feels lonely. Mary closes the Act by asking, 'Mother of God, why do I feel so lonely?'

Act II introduces the great motif of alcohol, which presents a medium on the part of the characters to be away from the conflicts that disturb the family members. If the males of the family find in alcohol a way to escape, then Mary has chosen a different means to escape her pains. It is notable towards the end of the play that all three men and even Cathleen are drunk and Mary has taken a high dose of morphine. The play comes to an end with all the characters in a state of complete inebriation. It can be concluded that all the characters are escapists and they have a strong urge for addiction and escape problems of their everyday lives. Mary had recovered in the sanatorium, but when she came back, she could no longer resist her addiction to relieve herself of the mental tensions. The alcohol motif furthers the main theme of the play which is to suggest that this is like any other day in the life of the family wherein they fight and drink and try to escape the present. Just like the cycle of the day, this cycle of alcoholism, too, continues along with problems in the life of the Tyrones. A very pessimistic inference can be drawn that the family's problems in this play do not get resolved and the conflicts do not abate. Each character passes the day functioning towards inebriation and disagreeing with each other.

In this Act, we undoubtedly see Mary's inclination to blame fate for the problems of the family. Mary's fatalistic view is one of her personality defects as it always affords her an easy way to escape. Similarly, she blames much of her own problems on her unachieved dreams and disillusionment. The fatalistic point of view proves to be an obstacle to solving issues.

Another problem with the characters is that they fail to communicate with each other effectively. Jamie begins to put it to her about her look as somewhat haggard because she is on morphine. Mary, however, instantaneously denounces the assumption and makes up not to understand what Jamie is saying. She will not acknowledge even to her own sons that she has reclaimed her habit. Similarly, her sons will not antagonize her fully and force her to admit, even though they know that she is back on morphine. O'Neill does not put the blame on any one character; rather, all of them are responsible for the common fate of the family and the complete breakdown in communication.

All the characters in this play try to gather a positive attitude at times. Tyrone always anticipates that Jamie will one day be successful. Mary still is optimist that

Edmund will get better and that her husband will finally get her a real home. As a romantic youth, Edmund has hope for the whole family to make amends. Even Edmund has an inclination to evade clashes by laughing them away. He has his outpourings, yet he is less responsible that his father or brother. Mary also tries to hold the family together in part through forthcoming chatter. She seems to loath silence, as every time she is on stage, she makes pointless dialogue even when no one cares for what she has to say. Some of her speaking institutes an effort to even out her struggles.

Act II strengthens the notion that in terms of structure, the play is built around meals. Act I is set just after the family returns from breakfast; Act II, Scene I takes place as the family prepares for lunch; Act II, Scene II is set as the family returns after their lunch; Act III is set as the family prepares for dinner; Act IV takes place late at night when the men are having their last drinks. The structure of meals specifies the criticality of meals to the Tyrone family as it brings all four people together in a traditional way. Still the Tyrones are not actually seen at any one of these main meals. Thus, the play has a sense of waiting and mending in each of the scenes. This arrangement of meals like the configuration of alcoholism is monotonous and puts forward the invariable of life of the characters.

Another point which comes in this Act is the issue of religion, which is for the most part important to Tyrone as well as to Mary. Although neither practice Catholicism, Tyrone and Mary both proclaim to pray every day and they say that they fear God. The two sons, by disparity, are disbelievers. The cessation of the Tyrone family principles from one generation to the next is an important point. While Tyrone was raised up on Shakespeare, Irish authors and the Bible, his sons have despised that same nurture, turning towards unalike type of literature and a nonexistence of reliance. The denunciation of the old way by the second generation is something that Mary and Tyrone both have trouble accommodating, and it further harks back the reader that they are an couple being supplanted by new youngsters.

Finally, Mary's remarks that she cannot fail to recall the past because 'the past is the present' further advocates the uninteresting nature of life in the Tyrone kinfolk. The actions of the past recur in the present, just as the proceedings of each distinct day are repeated based on the hallucinations induced by alcohol and morphine. It must be noted that the title, *Long Day's Journey into Night*, indicates that the day is not really distinctive; it is just another day in the life of the family, not too much dissimilar from most other days except that it is the day that Edmund comes to know that he is suffering from consumption and he needs to visit a sanatorium.

Check Your Progress

5. Identify the event around which the play is structured.
6. State Mary's remark about her inability to forget the past. Write its significance.

4.4.3 Act III

Mary and Cathleen have returned from their visit to the chemist to buy her morphine prescription. As the scene opens, both are alone in the room and Cathleen, at Mary's offer, has been drinking. Mary does most of the speaking and deliberates her love for

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fog but her hatred of the foghorn and her husband's obvious obsession with money. It is understandable that Mary has already taken some of her 'medicine.' Mary delves into her past reminiscences of her life and family. As a pious Catholic schoolgirl, she says that she never liked the drama; she did not feel 'at home' with the theater gathering. She keeps on talking about her past in a Catholic convent and the dream she once had of being a pianist and also the fact that it was once thought that she might become a nun. She mentions that in fact, she used to have these two dreams in her life: to become a nun and to become a well-known professional pianist. She also specifies that while she fell in love with her husband from the time she encountered him, she had never been to the theatre to watch a performance. Mary becomes increasingly preoccupied with her hands, which used to be slender and good-looking but have worsened since her addiction. She tells Cathleen that she needs her prescription to cure her arthritis – a justification which is a lie and not easily taken by Cathleen. When Mary falls asleep under the influence of the morphine, Cathleen exits to cook dinner.

Mary awakes and begins to have unpleasant reminiscences about how much she loved her life before she met her husband. She also decides that her prayers, coming from someone who is an addict, are not being heard by the Virgin. Irrespective of this she gets up to take another dose and at that pint James and the sons return. They are immediately able to tell that she has taken a heavy dose of Morphine. Mary tells them that she is startled they returned, since it is 'more cheerful' uptown. Although both the men are drunk, they are able to apprehend that she is back on morphine although Mary attempts to pretend as if she is not. Jamie, the other son, has not returned as he chose to go to a brothel instead and continue drinking.

Mary meanwhile laments Jamie's lifestyle, who she thinks was very smart until he started drinking. After calling Jamie, a 'hopeless failure' Mary cautions that his bad impact will negatively impact his brother as well. After seeing the condition that Mary is in, James gets angry and says that his attempt to come on time has been meaningless and he regrets her blaming him all the time for things that have gone wrong with her. Then, almost as a routine in the play, the quarreling duo make amends and set aside their bitterness. They even make incomplete remarks about their love for one another. When James goes to the basement to acquire another bottle of whiskey he realizes how he has been be fooled by his sons who added water to the whiskey bottle. Mary meanwhile carries on her talk with her son Edmund.

Edmund shares with his mother that he has consumption (tuberculosis). Mary denies it and tries to discredit Dr Hardy, due to her lack of ability to face the reality and most importantly cruelty of the situation. She reproaches Edmund of making an attempt to get more attention by blowing everything out of proportion. In retaliation, Edmund reminds his mother that her own father died of tuberculosis, and then, before exiting, he adds how challenging it is to have a 'dope friend for a mother.' Firmly resisting James's charges, Mary accuses James of meanness when he is drunk as she walks away. He is as bad as Jamie or Edmund, adds Mary. By herself, Mary admits that she needs more drugs and is hopeful that someday she will 'accidentally' overdose, because she knows that if she did so knowingly purpose, the Virgin would never pardon her. She, in other words, wishes herself dead.

When James comes back with more alcohol, Mary's tone unexpectedly changes as she reminisces about meeting her husband. Tyrone then begins to cry as he thinks back on the memoirs, and he tells his wife that he loves her. Mary retorts, 'I love you dear, in spite of everything.' But she regrets marrying him because he drinks so much.

Mary says she will not fail to recall, but she will try not to all the time. She mentions that she was spoiled awfully by her father and that spoiling made her a bad wife. Mary again calls him stingy.

She opens her heart to James and confides her deepest anxieties about Edmund to him. She feels that her youngest son does not care for her as she an addict. When James tries to raise her spirits, Mary again blames herself for giving birth to Edmund, who appears to have been conceived to replace a baby Mary and James lost before, interestingly called Eugene. When Cathleen declares that dinner is ready, Mary points out that she is not hungry and is going to lie down. James goes for dinner all alone knowing well that Mary is in fact going upstairs to get morphine. James wanders off, broken, into the dining room.

As pointed out in the previous Act, the play is structured around the motif of meals: either waiting for meals or recovering from them. In this case, the family is waiting for dinner to be laid. However, the course of having meals together breaks down over the sequence of the day. Breakfast goes easily, but lunch is slowed down for a long time as the family waits for James Tyrone to return from the garden. Dinner itself is a misadventure as Jamie is not home from his night of revelry. Mary does not have it because she has lost her desire for food; her addiction reaches a hilt as she takes more drugs. In this way, the principal action of the family eating together falls apart.

The idea of a home is also carried forward in this act. Again a more developed idea of Mary's desire for a home is fully conveyed. In fact, she dislikes Tyrone's idea of a home so sturdily because she links it with the death of Eugene, who died when Mary was traveling with her husband. Mary allies James with the traveling home of the theater actor and, metaphorically spurns the way in which she was forced to live life with him.

The frequent use of morphine sends her often into her past. In fact the use of morphine provides her an opportunity to escape from the present conflicts. It allows her to leave the present and live in the past – to a time which is happy for her. It actually happens in the last Act that Mary idealizes her youth to a point where she could not distinguish between the past and the present. It is important to note, however, that while the men dislike Mary's morphine addiction, they themselves are not much better in their abuse of alcohol. While Mary certainly disappears mentally when she is intoxicated, the men do the same, even though they think their choice of drug is more suitable. Of course, it can only be assumed that Mary will carry on losing more of her dreams as she gets older. O'Neill seems to suggest that as individuals get older, they display tendencies of glorifying the past to the point where living in the present becomes intensely agonizing.

This is a very pessimistic outlook but O'Neill unmistakably evades despair by proposing that there is restoration through forgiveness. Mary restates that she cannot forget the past, but she says that she will attempt to forgive. While she cannot be trusted to make such an effort, it seems that forgiving Tyrone's past misbehavior and neglect is the only way that Mary can bear to come back to the present. Without a doubt, the title *The Long Day's Journey into Night* has more than one connotation. If the play was just about Mary, it could be called *The Long Day's Journey into the Past*. There are two movements in the play; on one hand, the family is moving forward in time as embodied by each passing day. On the other hand, all characters are prone to going back into their past as a means of escaping the present and reliving happier times. The title, in its indistinct use of the word 'night', seems to suggest the twin nature of the play.

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Act III noticeably shows us the rapport between Edmund and Mary. It is important to be familiar with the suggestion that Mary has never stopped seeing Edmund as an infant who replaced Eugene. On the one hand, Mary has concerns of seeing Edmund as anything other than her offspring who cannot perish because of an affliction. The very idea of Edmund dying is particularly distressing for Mary as she thinks that Edmund may be God's way of punishing her. In a different way, she also sees Edmund as God's punishment on her.

Check Your Progress

7. Comment on Mary's desire for a home.
8. To what purpose are inebriants used in the play?

4.4.4 Act IV

At midnight, James is sitting alone in the living room, drinking and playing solitaire. As the Act begins, a foghorn is overheard in the distance. Tyrone is drunk, and soon Edmund enters, also drunk. They reason about keeping the lights on and the cost of the electricity. Tyrone's acts are persevering and Edmund reproaches him for believing whatever he wants. Edmund has just come back from a long walk in the icy night air even though doing so was a bad idea for his health. He states, 'To hell with sense! We're all crazy.' Edmund tells his father that he loves being in the fog because it lets him live in a different world. He cynically mocks Shakespeare, saying, 'We are such stuff as manure is made of, so let's drink up and forget it. That's more my idea.' He then quotes from the French author Baudelaire, saying 'be always drunken.' He then quotes from Baudelaire about the decadence in the city in allusion to Jamie. Tyrone condemns Edmund's literary interests; he thinks Edmund should spare literature from God.

While criticizing Edmund, the father grows annoyed and threatens to strike Edmund, then stops himself. He gives up and switches on all the lights. While the two are about to drink, they have a rare gentle conversation. James elucidates his stinginess and exposes that he ruined his career by remaining in an acting job for money. After countless years playing the same part, he lost his flair for versatility.

They hear Mary moving upstairs and they talk about her father, who died of tuberculosis. Edmund notes that they only seem to argue over unhappy topics together. They then begin to play cards and Tyrone tells Jamie that even though Mary had dreams of being a nun and a pianist, she did not have the strength of will for the former or the skill for the latter. They are able to sense that is coming downstairs but pretend not to notice. Edmund then accuses Tyrone for Mary's morphine addiction because Tyrone hired an inexpensive quack. Edmund then says he has aversions for his father and blames him for Mary's persistent addiction because Tyrone never gave her a home. Tyrone protects himself, but then Edmund says that he thinks that Tyrone should accept that he will die from consumption. Edmund continues blaming his father that he spends money only on land and not on his sons or his wife. Edmund states that he chooses over a sub-standard sanatorium.

Tyrone disagrees with his comments, saying that Edmund is drunk. However, Tyrone promises to send Edmund anywhere he wishes to make him better, 'within reason'. Tyrone tells Edmund that he is prudent with money because he has always had to work

for everything he has. Edmund and Jamie, by contrast, have been able to take everything in life for granted as they easily got everything they wanted. Tyrone reasons that neither of his sons sees the value of money. Edmund, exploring into his deeper passions, reminds Tyrone that he, Edmund, once tried to commit suicide. Tyrone says that Edmund was simply drunk at the time, but Edmund maintains that he was cognizant of his actions. James then begins to cry lightly, narrating events from his deprived childhood and his disappointing father.

James and Edmund make amends and both of them agree together on a sanatorium for Edmund, a place that is more expensive but considerably better. Tyrone then tells Edmund of his great acting blunder that disallowed him from becoming widely famous. In fact, he remained confined to one particular role and was typecast, making it challenging for him to magnify his horizons and find new work. James confesses that he only ever, in truth, wanted to be an artist, but his hopes were ruined when he sold out to a brief money-making success. Edmund begins chuckling 'at life, it's so damned crazy,' at the mention of his father as a performer.

Now it is Edmund's turn to share some of his memories as the father and the son open up their hearts to one another. Edmund begins with some of his stories related to the sea. He reveals certain instances when he felt dissolved or gone astray in the ocean. He considers that there is truth and significance in being vanished at sea, and he shares his desire that he should have been born a 'seagull or a fish' and he would have enjoyed his life.

In the play, this is the first time that real interaction between Tyrone and Edmund is explored. This is a relationship that has not been explored comprehensively in the play before this point. They discuss Edmund's preoccupation with literature and it becomes evident that Tyrone wishes to use his authority over Edmund by ordering what Edmund ought to read. One of James's great dreams is to see his sons grow up to be like him and he openly thinks that Edmund's curiosity in literature has led him down at a dissimilar path. All the same, it is fascinating that Tyrone and Edmund are both scholarly figures. Tyrone is charmed by Shakespeare and the art of acting. He acknowledges that his only dream was to be an artist. Edmund laughs at this merely because Tyrone tells Edmund that his quest of art will get him nowhere in life. Tyrone looks as if to be at struggle with his own interest in art as dissimilar to his son's interest.

In this Act, a new side of Edmund comes before the audience. He shares that he likes to take walks unaccompanied at night by the sea. To Edmund, the fog and the ocean hold a symbolic value comparable to that of alcohol. Edmund feels like he can get lost in the large sea, as though he were getting drunk on liquor. The ocean becomes a way to escape from the family in addition to alcohol and morphine. The persistent sound of the foghorn throughout the night is a continuous reminder of the symbolic importance of fog in this play. The foghorn itself is envisioned to help direct ships through the fog to safety. The question for the audience as well as readers is what will escort the Tyrone family through its foggy communication and relationships.

Jamie approaching the house is overheard and James retreats to the next room to avoid a confrontation. He drinks more, but he will not let Edmund drink at first, because of his poor health. Jamie says that he spent the evening at a brothel, where he paid for a fat whore whom no one else was willing to take. He says that he picked a prostitute named Fat Violet, which gives Edmund a chuckle ('she weighs a ton'), but Jamie says it's no jest: her appearance is affecting her source of revenue. Jamie, in turn, feels rather generous about himself. When the owner of the brothel tells him that she will have to fire

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Fat Violet because no one wants her, Jamie jumps at the chance to do a good deed. He hires Violet just for a heart-to-heart about the despondency of life. Edmund assaults Jamie with a knock when Jamie begins admiring himself and reprimanding others.

In an unexpected turn of events, Jamie thanks Edmund for sobering him down. He blames his incoherence on Mary's addiction. He and Edmund both begin to cry as they ponder about their mother. Jamie is also vexed about Edmund, who may die from consumption. Jamie says that he adores Edmund and that, in a sense, he is responsible for who he is at present.

Jamie owns up to that fact that he has been a bad influence and he says that he did it on purpose. Jamie confesses that he has always been envious of Edmund and has wanted him to fail in all his endeavours. All these years, he has deliberately set a bad case in point to bring Edmund down. Jamie confesses that even though he loves Edmund more than anyone else, he has wanted him to fail. He then cautions Edmund by saying, 'I'll do my damnedest to make you fail,' but then he concedes, you are all I've got left'.

Edmund is shocked and looks with exceeding pain at Jamie's frank hatred. In an impulsive burst of indignation, Edmund jumps out of his chair and punches him in the face. For a moment, Jamie gets ready to strike back, but then the urge to fight goes out of him and Jamie come to an understanding that his comment was out of line. Edmund asks for forgiveness for hitting him, but Jamie says that it was right to do so.

In fact, this Act throws some light on the character of Jamie. With Jamie's account of his evening in the city, it becomes clear that even though he is wasting his life away on prostitutes and alcohol, he still feels a certain obligation to help other people and decides to visit an obese prostitute who gets no customers. Jamie is willing to accomplish some degree of self-sacrifice for the upward mobility of others, which is one of his stronger abilities. Although he attempts to help someone else, he is still unwilling to help his own brother. His declaration of guilt to Edmund is noteworthy for a kind of philosophical maturity; he is willing to admit to his own deep complications, even though he is not ready to engage from them. In this case, Jamie may be better off than his parents and brother who have more trouble divulging to their inadequacies. Right until the completion of the play, for instance, Mary never admits to her morphine addiction. Jamie, however, confesses about his mishandling of his brother and the carelessness of his own life. Jamie's confession has added richness and complexity to his character. Eugene's critic Manheim comments:

> 'Jamie's confession reveals man at both his gut-level worst and transfigured best—unsentimentalized and unadorned, yet capable of giving as much as it is possible to give to another person. And that is a great deal. Jamie warns of his certain propensity to harm his brother even if that warning loses him the one thing in life which makes him capable of going on—his brother's love. The warning reveals love which risks the sacrifice of one's own emotional life support system. Jamie gains great dignity his confession, a dignity often lacking in the central figures of modern drama while essential to the heroes of ancient drama, heroes who had to face terrible truths about themselves which others had not the stature to face.'

At this point, James re-enters, having heard all that Jamie had said. Tyrone says that he has been giving that same caution to Edmund for many years. Tyrone calls Jamie a 'waste' to which the two get into a long argument.

The father and the sons are alerted by the sound of Mary playing piano in the following room. The sound stops and Mary appears on stage. The three men help themselves with drinks in a circle. James highs his glass and his sons follow the same,

but, before they can have their drink, Mary begins speaking. The three keep their drinks at the table at the sound of her voice. Although Mary is very pale yet she looks awfully young and innocent, with an enthusiastic and unquestioning smile. It is very obvious that she is on a substantial dose of morphine. Mary is hallucinating, thinking that she is back in her youthful days. She considers that she is in a convent. In her hands, she is holding her bridal robe, which she took out of the attic earlier. Seeing this Jamie, begins to cry and Tyrone furiously says that he will throw Jamie out of his house if he continues to cry.

Edmund abruptly tells Mary that he has consumption, but she tells him not to touch her as she wants to be a nun. She explains that she has spoken with Mother Elizabeth, whom she loves sincerely, even more than her own mother. Mother Elizabeth, at all times, understands, without Mary having to say anything. Her eyes see through Mary and she cannot keep any secrets from her. Still, Mother Elizabeth is not as understanding when Mary tells her she wants to join the convent as a nun. Mother Elizabeth recommends that Mary should be sure of her wish. First, she should try to live like an ordinary girl. If, after a year, Mary still feels the same way, she can come back and they can consider it. Mary is noticeably upset, but will do anything Mother Elizabeth suggests. She feels confused and asks for sanctuary at the shrine to hope for peace again. Mary is sure that the Blessed Virgin hears her and will always bless her, as long as she maintains faith. Mother Elizabeth had told her that she should experience life out of the convent before choosing to be a nun. Mary tells all three of them that she followed that advice and went home to her parents. But then, a few months passed, and something happened. She came across and fell in love with James Tyrone, 'and was so happy for a time'. Her hallucinations make the sons sit motionless and Tyrone stirring in his chair as the play ends.

It is left open to the audience to decide whether the play ends on a note of resolution or not. At the outset, it seems that some conflicts are still left open, particularly Mary's morphine addiction, which is witnessed at its worst in this Act. Mary can no longer even visualize the domain of the real as she falls into a hallucinogenic state in which she thinks she is young again and is back in her convent. It is very distinct now that she takes her morphine to escape the actuality of the present and to bring herself back to a period when her life was full of hope and options. Her final speech ends the play with the hope that the situation will not get better overnight. Rather, the play ends leaving the audience with the feeling that the day is not particularly special; the events of this August day are likely to be repeated by the family on any other day of a year as they are trapped in an endless set of fragmented reveries, struggles and their remedies through morphine or alcohol.

Still, if one believes that there is a resolution to some extent in the last Act, it comes from owning up to faults in an attempt to better the future. Jamie, for instance, warns Edmund to be careful of his jealousy and before that, Tyrone too admits his own stinginess and comes to an understanding to send Edmund to a high-class sanatorium in a hope of curing him. Thus, at least two of the major family conflicts are in some measure resolved by the end of the play.

A motif of fate too appears in this Act, though by different characters now. Generally, it is expressed by Mary, but now Edmund picks up the issue when he mentions that he should have been born a fish or a seagull as he loves the ocean so much. Also, one must notice the astonishing weight that is placed on Edmund's birth in this play by all the characters. Mary and James both attribute the morphine addiction to Edmund's birth. The audience also comes to know that Edmund himself is not fully delighted with

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his birth as a human, although apparently he is half jesting. The playwright prompts the audience once again of a firm fatalistic point of view on life in which humans cannot control their fortune or their heritage. O'Neill seems to suggest that real hope in a fatalist world is to try to pardon and to express the fact.

If thematically certain issues seem to be resolved partially towards the end of the play, yet so far as characterization is concerned, O'Neill has created four complete characters with abundant strengths and flaws. Some of both parents can be seen in both sons, but within the family, one can undoubtedly see some specific variations that have taken place between the two generations. O'Neill does not end the play on any specific note of criticism of any character. Rather, the play ends with a splitting image of a resigned family that was once great but has since fallen into despondency.

Long Day's Journey Into Night is unquestionably a tragedy in its portrayal of the characters, but it is important to notice that it does end on a promise of hope for the future if the characters can transform the way they interact and treat one another. Therefore, O'Neill does not end the story of the Tyrone family on a negative note.

Check Your Progress

9. Comment on the motif of fate that emerges towards the end of the play.
10. Is there a suggestion of hope in the play?

4.5 CHARACTERS IN THE PLAY

James Tyrone (James Senior)

He is sixty-five years old and still looks young. He is about five feet eight but gives the impression of being taller due to his military-like posture and demeanour. He is wide shouldered and broad chested. The husband of Mary and the father of Jamie and Edmund, James Tyrone was once a famous actor who travelled with his wife. As his Irish father had abandoned him at a very tender age, he was forced to start working at the age of ten to support himself.

James has a moral belief and a value for money that leads to a resilient monetary prudence—bordering on stinginess. His dialogue and movement are those of a classical actor with a premeditated modus operandi, but he is very simple, down-to-earth and not volatile at all with 'inclinations still close to his humble beginnings and Irish farmer forbears'. His outfit is to a certain degree threadbare and run down. He wears his attire to the limit of usefulness. He has been in good physical shape his entire life and is free of apprehensions except for the fear of 'dying in the poorhouse' and preoccupation with having money. He has 'streaks of sentimental melancholy and rare flashes of intuitive sensibility'. He smokes cigars and hates being talked about to as the 'Old Man' by his sons. He is unhappy about his sons' habit of squandering money and not following Catholicism.

Mary Tyrone

The wife of James Tyrone and mother of Jamie and Edmund, she is of medium height with a young elegant figure, a little fleshy with distinctly Irish facial features. She was on

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one occasion very pretty and is still remarkable. She has an easy-going and striking voice with a 'touch of Irish lilt when she is merry'. She struggles from a morphine addiction that has lasted almost over two decades beginning from the time of the birth of her younger son, Edmund, who is now twenty-three. While she has denied the addiction several times, she at all times resumed her morphine intake after spending more time with her family. She is on morphine in each scene of the play and her usage escalates steadily as the day progresses.

Although she loves her husband, yet many a times, she has disappointing remarks about him, especially as her marriage put an end to her potential career as a pianist or a convent nun. She is also upset with the fact that Tyrone never gave her a permanent 'home' for which she always longed for. Her hallucinations of being a youthful girl at the closing of the play give no hope from her addiction and betterment of her life.

Jamie Tyrone (James Junior)

The elder Tyrone son is in his early thirties. As he squanders money on liquor and brothels, he has to bank on his parents for financial sustenance. He has never been scholarly and dropped out of more than a few colleges and has very little motivation, much to the disappointment of his parents.

The older son has some of the father in him 'on the rare occasions when he smiles without sneering, his personality possesses the remnant of a humorous, romantic, poetic'. He indicates signs of premature crumbling and degeneration. He also wears a habitual appearance of skepticism. He is considered attractive amongst women and widely held amongst men. He is an actor similar to his father but has much striving finding work due to an ill reputation for being a reckless, unreliable womanizing alcoholic. His father and he reason a great deal about this.

In spite of having all these traits, he rises in the eyes of audience on at least two occasions: one, as he chose a fat whore whom no one else was ready to hire and the other in his confessing his jealousy for his younger brother Edmund, followed by a word of caution.

Edmund

Ten years younger than Jamie, Edmund is more proficiently inclined towards arts. He is lean and resembles both his parents but more his mother. He has her large dusky eyes and touchy mouth carved in a long slender Irish face with shady brown hair. Like his mother, he feels uneasy all the time. In addition to this, his political inclinations lie with the communists.

He is unwell and has shallow cheeks. Later in the play, he is diagnosed with consumption. A scholarly and passionate romantic, he learns during the play that he will have to spend up to a year in a sanatorium to be cured of his deadly disease. Like his brother and father, he is to some extent an alcoholic and has a propensity to squander money, although he works harder than Jamie. He appears to have journeyed the world by being employed in the merchant navy and caught the fatal tuberculosis on one of his trips abroad. He always dreams of being a romantic hero from a Shakespearean play or any other classic. His mother Mary never gives up hope that someday her son Edmund will be restored to perfect health and success in life.

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4.6 ANALYSIS OF THE PLAY

Indeed, some of the parallels between *Long Day's Journey Into Night* and O'Neill's life are striking. O'Neill himself appears in the play in the character of Edmund, the younger son who, like O'Neill himself, suffers from consumption. Let us look at some important points in the play.

4.6.1 A Note on the Autobiographical Content in the Play

Long Day's Journey into Night presents an explosive home life of the dramatist himself. Certain biographical facts may be brought in here like Eugene's own time spent at a sanatorium to get treated for tuberculosis.

Edmund Tyrone has an imaginative and artistic talent just like the playwright himself. Eugene O'Neill's biographer Louis Sheaffer writes about the dying Eugene as he uttered, 'I knew it. Born in a hotel room and died in a hotel room'. Tyrone leads a similar life of a vagabond and his wife keeps complaining of not having a real 'home'.

Like Tyrone, O'Neill's father was an Irish-American Catholic, an alcoholic and a Broadway actor. O'Neill's father, as an actor, spent most of his time in voyages, touring for the theatre.

Like Mary in the play, O'Neill's mother too was a morphine addict and she became so around the time when O'Neill was born.

Like Jamie Tyrone, O'Neill's elder brother did not take his life seriously, choosing to lead a life of a libertine and wasting money on prostitutes, alcohol and the fast-paced irresponsible life of Broadway. O'Neill's elder brother, Jamie died of too much drinking.

Eugene O'Neill had an older brother named Edmund who died in infancy, whereas in this play, Edmund has an older brother named Eugene who died in infancy.

The writer's own son by his first wife suffered from alcoholism and committed suicide at the age of forty.

Eugene's third wife Carlotta later became addicted to potassium bromide and his son a heroin addict and eventually committed suicide.

All these aspects can also be dealt with reference to literary author and critic Michael Manheim's treatment of the issue of autobiography in the play:

'This play grows not out of O'Neill's autobiographical agony, but out of his triumph over that agony, a triumph which is obvious in the very fact of the play's searing explicitness—especially regarding Mary Tyrone. The whole point about her addiction is that in this play, it is no longer seen as the most shameful of horrors. Mary's affliction and her accompanying guilt are treated here with a detachment made all the more effective by being anything but clinical.'

4.6.2 *Long Day's Journey into Night*: A Tragedy

The question as to whether or not it is a tragedy can be answered by describing a tragedy and its major components like leaving the audience with a sense of catharsis or emotional purgation through the viewing of powerful events, and depicting the fall of something/one systematically and the characters, analysing the events. The Tyrone family was once a close family which has deteriorated over the years for a number of reasons:

Mary's morphine addiction; James, Jamie and Edmund's alcoholism, Tyrone's stinginess, the boys' negligent attitude toward work and money, and a number of other factors. As the play is set, the parents are ageing, and while they always anticipated that their sons would accomplish great things, that hope is beginning to be supplanted by a resigned despair. Also, it can be discussed whether the play ends on an optimistic note or does the pessimism continue.

The play becomes all the more tragic as it leaves little scope of optimism for the future. In other words, the future of the Tyrones can only be seen as one extended cycle of a repetitive past along with an addiction to alcohol and morphine.

4.6.3 Use of Images and Symbols

The following symbols and images have been used in the play:

- **Meals:** Meals symbolize time for family union but, more often than not, it falls apart. Moreover, a lot of time is wasted either in waiting for meals or recovering from one.
- **Day:** Time is an important symbol in the play.
- **Fate:** Fate or destiny is another take on time and plays a significant role in the play.
- **Broken dreams:** Broken dreams function as a painful reminder of a time that once was. Especially for Mary who suffers the most as she could not fulfill her dreams, the realization is particularly traumatic.
- **Present:** The present is an illusion. No one is really sure of the present and none of the action (if at all any) appears to be propelled by the present.
- **Past:** The past is an important motif in the play and keeps coming back to the characters. In other words, the conflicts arise from unresolved issues in the past and the characters seem doomed to relive it every day. It is important to note that *Long Day's Journey Into Night* is not only a journey forward in time, but also a journey back into the past lives of all the characters.
- **Home:** Home appears as a symbol of stability and marital bliss. It is also an idealized construct which is never attained by the one character who desires it the most, i.e., Mary.
- **Addiction:** The play foregrounds two kinds of addiction: morphine and alcohol. All the characters (including Cathleen, the maid) take recourse to some form of addiction to escape the present.

4.6.4 Ailment, Disappointment and Addiction

The play opens with a sense of monotony as if each day is doomed to be the same. Action in this regard, appears to be stunted. The possibility of it being any other day is clearly established by the title.

All the present events in the life of the family have most of the strengths that need gathering emerge in the past, which is extraordinarily alive for the Tyrones.

Mary in particular is unable to banish the past and all the dreams she once had of being a nun or a pianist. Tyrone too has, at all times, high hopes for Jamie, who has been a continual disappointment. The addictions give excuses to escape from the conflicts of real life.

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The audience has all the time a strong realizing fact that the family is not making improvement or progressing towards betterment. Instead, it rather persistently slides into hopelessness, as they continue to remain tethered to a past from which they can never recover.

4.6.5 Characterization in the Play

One of the play's greatest strengths is its fair and unbiased characterization. The play has all the characters with certain flaws, yet O'Neill's presentation displays a great level of honesty. He has not been reproachful in nature; no one character is meant to be seen as particularly good or bad.

The play constructs a world in which communication has failed amongst all the characters. One of the great struggles in the play is the characters' mysterious helplessness to communicate, despite their constant conflicts and bickering. For instance, the men time and again fight amongst themselves over Mary's addiction, but no one is prepared to confront her directly. Instead, they permit her to lie to herself about her own addiction and even about Edmund's illness. Edmund and Jamie do not communicate properly until the last Act, when Jamie finally confesses about his own jealousy for his brother and his secret desire to see him fail. Tyrone, likewise, can only disapprove of his sons, but his obstinate nature will not allow him to accept criticism for himself.

All the characters in the play *Long Day's Journey Into Night* seem to be wrecked with desperate love and aching loneliness. In spite of their skirmishes and comments, there is an undercurrent of love and concern for each other.

4.6.6 The Posthumous Publication of the Play

The play was written in 1940–42 but was published posthumously in 1956. It was O'Neill's wish to publish it at least twenty-five years after his death. However, this wish was not fulfilled.

The play was received well by the audience. It was awarded the Pulitzer Prize when it was first published and it has continued to be one of the most prized plays of the twentieth century.

Possibly, the most important reason for its commercial success has been the reason that nearly every family can see itself replicated in at least some parts of the play. The Tyrone family is not an atypical family in the sense that it foregrounds a deep philosophical concern with moving forward and the struggles it has to face as a result of this.

4.6.7 Role of the Past

The play is as much as a long day's journey into the past as anything else. The characters are, to varying degrees, fixated with the past and they are all unable to forget or forgive.

Although the playwright suggests that tolerance and pardon can be an appropriate form of redemption, the characters have trouble forgiving one another. The family is at the end of the day paralyzed because of its incompetence to let go of past pains and wounds. Tyrone cannot be condoned for his stinginess and Mary cannot be absolved for all the assurances which she has not kept because of her addiction. The past is very much alive in the play and all the characters have a tendency to view it through rose-tinted glasses.

4.6.8 The Structure of the Play

The structure of the play in parts presents a similarity to the disintegration that occurs over the course of the day. Meals form a crucial part in the structure. The first four scenes are constructed around meals, either before or after. If it is before a meal, the scene functions with an air of expectation of something important to come, i.e., the meal itself and its accompanying drama. It is worth noting how the family makes several earnest attempts to come together before the food gets cold. In the scenes set after a meal, the family is shown as engrossed in the discussion of how to kill time until the next meal is served.

Meals are very important as they bring the whole family together, but the meal cycle itself breaks down at the end of the play. As the play progresses, it gets harder to gather the family for each meal, and by the end of it, Jamie does not even come home for supper, while Mary is intoxicated and goes back to her room before having her meal.

4.6.9 O'Neill's use of language in the Play

The question can be addressed from the point of view of the characters wherein they use language to describe themselves in their unique ways. They express their attitudes and expression. Actually, this issue can be dealt with on two levels: first, the play presents a politicized language that attributes high significance on meaning, yet the characters emphasize the right to their own selection of names. Taking an instance from the story, Mary is at all times very certain to never permit others to talk about Edmund's illness as something other than a bad cold. Similarly, Tyrone considers himself as 'prudent' while other calls him 'stingy'. Jamie does not wish his lifestyle to be called reckless; he has a preference in calling himself an independent young man.

Secondly, O'Neill does a worthy job of attributing the two sons a comparable diction, a diction that is different to that of their parents. On the other hand, some of the parents' physical response and body language manifest themselves in the language of the sons, who intermittently replicate their parents' words.

The *Long Day's Journey Into Night* is invested heavily in the politics of language.

Check Your Progress

11. Write a short note on Jamie Tyrone.
12. What is the significance of broken dreams?
13. What is unique about the structure of the play?
14. Highlight the characters' inability to forget and forgive the past.

4.7 TENNESSEE WILLIAMS: A BRIEF BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Tennessee Williams was an American playwright and author of several stage classics. He was born as Thomas Lanier Williams III on 26 March 1911 in Columbus, Mississippi. He attended Soldan High School in Missouri, and later, studied at University City High School, also in Missouri. From 1929 to 1931, he attended the University of Missouri in

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Columbia for journalism classes. In 1936, Williams attended the Washington University in St. Louis where he wrote the play *Me, Vashya* (1937). By 1938, enrolled in the University of Iowa, from where he graduated with a Bachelor of Arts degree in English. He later studied at the Dramatic Workshop of The New School in New York City. Around 1939, he adopted 'Tennessee Williams' as his professional name.

His plays *The Glass Menagerie* (1944) and *A Streetcar Named Desire* (1947) established him as a playwright of stature. Both the plays revolved around the theme of individuals who possess a self-punishing nature. *The Rose Tattoo* (1951) reveals Williams' genius in the realm of comedy, which appears as an undercurrent of this otherwise serious play. His *Camino Real* (1953) was experimental in nature. However, his latter works including *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* (1955), *Sweet Bird of Youth* (1956) and *The Night of the Iguana* (1959) move around the familiar domain of family lives and cultures of Southern areas, a theme which keeps recurring in Williams' works. His other plays includes *Suddenly Last Summer* (1958), *The Milk Train Doesn't Stop Here Anymore* (1962), *In the Bar of A Tokyo Hotel* (1969), among others.

Tennessee Williams

In The Winter of Cities (1956) and *Androgyne, Mon Amour* (1977) are the two collections of poetry composed by him. Williams also published a novel called *The Roman Spring of Mrs. Stone* (1950). His *Memoirs*, which came out in print in 1975, record the playwright's conscience plagued by grief and anger, and a constant sense of not achieving success—a familiar theme which his readers/audience were exposed to through the central characters of his major plays.

Tennessee Williams as a playwright

Tennessee Williams wrote twenty-five complete plays. Almost all his plays had a lyrical quality that was plagued with loneliness, and violence had a liberating effect in them. He presented the world theatre lovers with memorable characters, an exceptional vision of life as it appeared in the South, and an unparalleled sketch of the human condition. He was passionately involved in what he called 'poetic realism'. It means the use of mundane daily objects which, when observed repeatedly and in proper contexts, appear to be encoded with symbolic meanings.

His plays also give the impression of being preoccupied with the excess form of human violence and sexual behaviour including insanity, sexual abuse, incest, nymphomania, and brutal and unnatural deaths. Williams himself considered the violence in his own work as normal and ordinary because he considered it to be a part of the human condition. He was also conscious that the violence in his plays was set in a certain American context.

Williams' writings reflected deep sympathy and extensive humour about the castaways in our society. As stated above, although his depictions were often violent, his work, especially his poetry, reflected his kind behaviour.

His first successful play is *The Glass Menagerie,* which was considered to be his 'memory play'. However, his several other plays were his nightmares. Even though the plays were rarely autobiographical, they were based on his personal experiences, reflecting his private suffering and apprehensions.

He has penned down one of his experiences about his sister's room in their family home in St. Louis. According to him, the room, which had his sister's collection of glass figures, represented 'all the softest emotions that belong to recollection of things past'.

As compared to the works of his contemporaries, Williams' works are full of unsurpassed passion and imagination on one hand, while on the other, they reflect a barrage of struggles and dismays.

Just like the works of Edward Albee were criticized by his certain contemporaries, the critics who objected the excessive use of violence in Williams' work, often held their grudges on the use of sexuality. The topic of homosexuality was not an openly debated or examined subject in Williams' time. However, in his plays, Williams plays around with the themes of desire and isolation, which unfold, among other things, the consequences of having grown up as a homosexual in a world which was homophobic in nature. He left behind a perfect body of work which included his prominent plays that are still performed throughout the world. His works are not creatively or technically stimulating, but are melodramatic. Nevertheless, his best ones are creatively and socially powerful, adding to their timeless appeal.

Awards and recognition

Tennessee Williams won many acclaims and laurels for his contribution to literature and theatre. Some of the prominent ones are listed below:

- Group Theatre Prize (1939)
- Rockefeller Grant (1939)
- Sidney Howard Memorial Award: *The Glass Menagerie* (1945)
- Donaldson Award: *The Glass Menagerie* (1945)
- New York Drama Critics' Circle Award: *The Glass Menagerie* (1945)
- New York Drama Critics' Circle Award: *A Streetcar Named Desire* (1948)
- Donaldson Award: *A Streetcar Named Desire* (1948)
- Pulitzer Prize: *A Streetcar Named Desire* (1948)
- Tony Award: *The Rose Tattoo* (1952)
- Pulitzer Prize: *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* (1955)
- Tony Award: *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* (1955)
- New York Drama Critics' Circle Award: *The Night of the Iguana* (1961)
- Tony Award: *The Night of the Iguana* (1961)
- Presidential Medal of Freedom (1980)

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Important works of Tennessee Williams

Apprentice plays

- *Candles to the Sun* (1936)
- *Fugitive Kind* (1937)
- *Spring Storm* (1937)
- *Me Vaysha* (1937)
- *Not About Nightingales* (1938)
- *Battle of Angels* (1940)
- *I Rise in Flame, Cried the Phoenix* (1941)
- *You Touched Me* (1945)
- *Stairs to the Roof* (1947)

Major plays

- *The Glass Menagerie* (1944)
- *A Streetcar Named Desire* (1947)
- *Summer and Smoke* (1948)
- *The Rose Tattoo* (1951)
- *Camino Real* (1953)
- *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* (1955)
- *Orpheus Descending* (1957)
- *Suddenly, Last Summer* (1958)
- *Sweet Bird of Youth* (1959)
- *Period of Adjustment* (1960)
- *The Night of the Iguana* (1961)
- *The Eccentricities of a Nightingale* (1962, rewriting of *Summer and Smoke*)
- *The Milk Train Doesn't Stop Here Anymore* (1963)
- *The Mutilated* (1965)
- *The Seven Descents of Myrtle* (1968, also known as *Kingdom of Earth*)
- *In the Bar of a Tokyo Hotel* (1969)
- *Will Mr. Merriweather Return from Memphis?* (1969)
- *Small Craft Warnings* (1972)
- *The Two-Character Play* (1973)
- *Out Cry* (1973, rewriting of *The Two-Character Play*)
- *The Red Devil Battery Sign* (1975)
- *This Is (An Entertainment)* (1976)
- *Vieux Carré* (1977)
- *A Lovely Sunday for Creve Coeur* (1979)
- *Clothes for a Summer Hotel* (1980)
- *The Notebook of Trigorin* (1980)
- *Something Cloudy, Something Clear* (1981)
- *A House Not Meant to Stand* (1982)
- *In Masks Outrageous and Austere* (1983)

Novels

- *The Roman Spring of Mrs. Stone* (1950, adapted into a film in 1961)
- *Moise and the World of Reason* (1975)

Screenplays and teleplays

- *The Glass Menagerie* (1950)
- *A Streetcar Named Desire* (1951)
- *The Rose Tattoo* (1955)
- *Baby Doll* (1956)
- *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* (1958)
- *Suddenly, Last Summer* (1959)
- *The Fugitive Kind* (1959)
- *Ten Blocks on the Camino Real* (1966)
- *Boom!* (1968)
- *The Loss of a Teardrop Diamond* (2009; screenplay from 1957)

Short stories

- *The Vengeance of Nitocris* (1928)
- *The Field of Blue Children* (1939)
- *The Resemblance Between a Violin Case and a Coffin* (1951)
- *Hard Candy: A Book of Stories* (1954)
- *Three Players of a Summer Game and Other Stories* (1960)
- *The Knightly Quest: a Novella and Four Short Stories* (1966)
- *One Arm and Other Stories* (1967)
    - *One Arm*
    - *The Malediction*
    - *The Poet*
    - *Chronicle of a Demise*
    - *Desire and the Black Masseur*
    - *Portrait of a Girl in Glass*
    - *The Important Thing*
    - *The Angel in the Alcove*
    - *The Field of Blue Children*
    - *The Night of the Iguana*
    - *The Yellow Bird*
- *Eight Mortal Ladies Possessed: A Book of Stories* (1974)
- *Tent Worms* (1980)
- *It Happened the Day the Sun Rose, and Other Stories* (1981)

One-act plays

Williams wrote over seventy one-act plays during his lifetime. The one-acts explored several of the same themes that dominated his longer works. Williams' major collections are published by New Directions in New York City.

- *American Blues* (1948)
- *Mister Paradise and Other One-Act Plays*
- *Dragon Country: A book of one-act plays* (1970)
- *The Traveling Companion and Other Plays*

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- *27 Wagons Full of Cotton and Other Plays* (1946 and 1953)
  - o *Something wild...* (Introduction) (1953)
  - o *27 Wagons Full of Cotton* (1946 and 1953)
  - o *The Purification* (1946 and 1953)
  - o *The Lady of Larkspur Lotion* (1946 and 1953)
  - o *The Last of My Solid Gold Watches* (1946 and 1953)
  - o *Portrait of a Madonna* (1946 and 1953)
  - o *Auto-da-Fé* (1946 and 1953)
  - o *Lord Byron's Love Letter* (1946 and 1953)
  - o *The Strangest Kind of Romance* (1946 and 1953)
  - o *The Long Goodbye* (1946 and 1953)
  - o *At Liberty* (1946)
  - o *Moony's Kid Don't Cry* (1946)
  - o *Hello from Bertha* (1946 and 1953)
  - o *This Property Is Condemned* (1946 and 1953)
  - o *Talk to Me Like the Rain and Let Me Listen...* (1953)
  - o *Something Unspoken* (1953)
- *The Theatre of Tennessee Williams, Volume VI*
- *The Theatre of Tennessee Williams, Volume VII*

Poetry

- *In the Winter of Cities* (1956)
- *Androgyne, Mon Amour* (1977)

Source: Wikipedia

Check Your Progress

15. What was Tennessee Williams' birth name?
16. Which play of Williams reveals his genius in the realm of comedy?
17. Name the two collections of poetry that were composed by Tennessee Williams.
18. When was *A Streetcar Named Desire* published?
19. How many complete plays did Tennessee Williams write?
20. What kind of impression do his plays give?
21. What are the themes that Williams experiments with in his play *A Streetcar Named Desire*?
22. Which of Williams' works earned him a Pulitzer Prize?

4.8 *A STREETCAR NAMED DESIRE*: AN INTRODUCTION

Characters in *A Streetcar Named Desire*

- **Blanche DuBois** – The sensitive, female protagonist with a moth-like appearance who represents the dwindling Southern aristocracy.

- **Stella Kowalski** – Blanche's sister who has wiped off the memories of her aristocratic upbringing in order to be able to lead a more mundane, commonplace marriage.
- **Stanley Kowalski** – Stella's husband and an ordinary, common working-class man who is engrossed in a sexually gratifying life.
- **Harold Mitchell/Mitch** – Stanley's friend, who has been with Stanley during the phase of the war. Mitch, a bachelor has a sick, dying mother for whom he discharges all his responsibilities with utmost care and devotion. He gets involved with Blanche romantically for a short duration.
- **Eunice Hubell** – Wife of Steve Hubell who quarrels with her husband and owns the apartment in which Stella and Stanley live.
- **Steve Hubell** – Plays poker with Stanley and husband of Eunice.
- **Pablo Gonzales** – One of the poker players who disrupts the games with his Spanish phrases.
- **The Doctor** – The doctor who arrives towards the end to take Blanche on her 'vacation'.
- **The Nurse** – The nurse is portrayed as a severe, strong and brutal character who manages to wrestle and bring Blanche to the ground.
- **A Young Collector** – He is the young man who comes to collect money for the paper.
- **A Mexican Woman** – She sells flowers for the dead.

4.9 SCENE WISE SUMMARY AND CRITICAL COMMENTARY

Scene One

The initial section of this scene introduces the readers to the quintessential Stanley Kowalski through the use of various symbols and actions that are performed by him. Stanley enters the scene wearing a loud-coloured bowling jacket and work clothes. He is also shown carrying 'a red-stained package'. He roars at Stella and throws at her the uncooked meat which he has brought with him. Catching the meat, Stella laughs nervously. The neighbours taking a note of the freshly brought meat laugh at the package—a clear sexual imagery which confirms Stanley to be similar to what Blanche perceives him to be a 'survivor of the stone age! Bearing the raw meat home from the kill in the jungle; and you—you here—waiting for him'. This scene, establishes Stanley as a strange and rude man. The scene also sets the table for regular violence and nasty reality into which oversensitive Blanche would soon be a part of.

Williams here uses Freudian sexual imageries to initiate the sexual tension that is about to loom over the text. Apart from the use of the raw meat, the playwright exposes the audience to bowling balls and pins.

Interestingly, at the beginning, Blanche explains that she took a 'streetcar named Desire, and then...one called Cemeteries'. It seems almost as if Williams is being moralistic and wants to suggest that desire leads to death, which in turn becomes an

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escape route to the Elysian Fields. However, ironically, in the context of the play, the streetcar took her to the French Quarter which is definitely not Elysian Fields.

Blanche is sketched as wearing white and has a moth-like appearance. It must be kept here in mind that Williams usually dresses his most corrupt characters in white, the symbol of purity. Chance Wayne in *Sweet Bird of Youth* and Sebastian in *Suddenly, Last Summer* also appear in white. Blanche's dress helps conceal her inner sins. Her action implies the fluctuations of a delicate moth. Just as a moth is drawn towards light and consequently gets killed in the similar fashion, we are told Blanche is scared of light, and later on Mitch forcing Blanche under the light acts as a stepping stone towards Blanche's destruction.

It is important to bear in mind that names used throughout the play have a symbolic connotation. Blanche DuBois literally translates into white of the woods. The colour white is a play on Blanche's presumed innocence and the word woods is used as a Freudian sexual connotation. The word Stella means star. The plantation home was called 'Belle Reve', which means a beautiful dream. Moreover, the loss of Belle Reve echoes through the loss of the beautiful dream that Blanche had.

Scene Two

This scene draws the readers' attention towards Blanche's baths. Her indulgence in the process of bath constantly relieves her nerves. However, this process of bathing also implies cleansing. Through the ritual of baths, Blanche subconsciously longs to cleanse her sins away. The baths are also another factor which irritates Stanley because the hot baths make the apartment even warmer.

It is amusing to notice the open and reprehensible manner in which Blanche flirts with Stanley. The buttons, the expression of desire for a drag on his cigarette and the trunk are sexually implicit. The use of these actions and objects only restates the idea that Blanche is making an effort to seduce Stanley. Her unobstructed display of her desires makes Stanley say, 'If I didn't know that you was my wife's sister I'd get ideas about you.' This scene in a way justifies the later scene when Stanley finally rapes Blanche.

Scene Three

This scene is set against the wild game of poker. Stanley is losing unexpectedly and is running out of patience due to this reason. We find Mitch appearing as a contrast to the rest because of his concern for his unwell mother. Blanche's oversensitivity helps her identify Mitch's goodness. However, Stanley is not blessed with such a quality.

Blanche consciously moves into the light while she is undressing so that she can be noticed. This act symbolises Blanche's desire to remain in the limelight of actions. She uses her body to draw others' attention. The light motif is repeated here again. Blanche requests Mitch to conceal the naked light bulb. Ironically, later on, he will only take off the paper lantern so as to 'get a better look' at Blanche.

As the story progresses, the reader is made aware that Blanche's desires to lie is an obsessive urge. She lies to Mitch regarding her decision to visit Stella and about her own age. However, as Blanche explains her lies, she says these are certain tiny illusions that a woman invents to survive.

In this third encounter between Blanche and Stanley, Blanche becomes the witness to the brutality and roughness that Stanley displays. The violence that he uses is unknown

to Blanche. However, what Blanche finds more shocking is that Stella comes back to Stanley as the fight gets over. Nevertheless, the developing attraction between Mitch and Blanche only highlights the contrasts of the wild and brutal attraction that is shared between Stanley and Stella. The sensitivity and the tranquillity of the relationship between Blanche and Mitch emphasize the delicate foundation of their attraction for each other.

Scene Four

This scene only establishes Blanche as the outsider in the Kowalski family. In trying to convince Stella that Stanley is a brutal person, Blanche only ends up creating distance between herself and Stella. Blanche, unable to deal with desperate situation anymore, decides to get in touch with one of her old acquaintance, Shep Huntleigh, who, in the later stage of the play, will act as a symbol for her anticipated escape from this world.

Towards the end of this scene, we see Stella throwing herself at Stanley. This act of Stella represents Stanley's victory. Though Stanley feels victorious momentarily after this incident, yet he never forgets Blanche addressing him as common, bestial and vulgar, and had added that he is a savage and a brute. Blanche had the courage to call him names in his own house. This scene partly justifies his resentment towards Blanche and his desire to no longer see her in his house. Later on when he rapes her, the act of rape can be seen as partly motivated by his anger towards her for nurturing such attitude towards him.

Scene Five

Here Blanche boasts about being born under sacred signs. Ironically, her revelation about her association with the sacred divine turns out to be the moment of her destruction, when Stanley at this very moment, enquires her about Shaw. Blanche is uncomfortable and left disturbed with this cross-examination. As Blanche's past life unfolds, her present is jeopardized. This moment also informs the audience about Stanley's intentions to destroy Blanche. Thus, in this encounter between Blanche and Stanley, Blanche foresees her world disintegrating and she is losing grip over her surroundings.

This scene carries some Tennessee Williams' use of hallmark symbols. The signs of the cosmos, Blanche's white dress getting spoiled and the cherry soda being carried by young man, all hint towards the impending crisis.

The appearance of the young boy at this juncture of the play is not out of context. Blanche's earlier marriage to a young boy was unsuccessful as she was cruel towards him. Her sexual promiscuity haunts her in the present. She cannot overcome the guilt of not helping her needy young husband who shot himself as he was unable to cope with his life. Blanche intends to undo the past by longing for a young lover who would take the place of her now dead, earlier young husband.

Scene Six

This scene is comforting in a sense as it manages to provide with hope and a sense of salvation for Blanche. At this juncture, the movement of the play seems to imitate the tradition of classical tragedy where, towards the middle of the play, the characters are provided with a scope/possibility of redemption. Blanche's optimism rests with her capturing Mitch. However, later, Stanley conveys about Blanche's past to Mitch that acts as an end to all of Blanche's hopes. Nevertheless, at this juncture, it seems as though Blanche still has a ray of hope at her disposal to free herself from this trapped situation.

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This scene also reasons why Blanche has an aversive attitude towards lights. Blanche explains that her cheerless marriage with the young Allan laid the foundation for rest of her difficulties. Blanche's love for her man was 'unendurable', yet she could not help. Her love emerged like a 'blinding light', and after Allan's death, she never faced a source of light 'that's stronger than this—kitchen—candle!' Thus, Blanche's difficult equation with lights can be read in correspondence to the troublesome memories it connects with.

Moreover, here we realize that essentially both Blanche and Mitch are lonely from within, who are expecting happiness in each other's company, each trying to compliment the other to turn out to be fuller human.

Scene Seven

Contrasting functioning of mind is presented here. Blanche is shown to be engrossed in the bathroom taking her shower and singing and lost in her make-believe world. On the other hand, Stanley is all practical and pragmatic. He is ready to unmask Blanche and is equipped with facts and has generated a list of all the lies she has taken recourse to. In a classic ironic situation when Blanche is bathing (her way of cleansing herself), her past sins are waiting to take on her in the form of Stanley.

Stanley's actions, as already discussed, are due to several reasons. The most prominent reason is Blanche being a threat to his otherwise successful marriage. His marital life has undergone turmoil in the past—Blanche's arrival scenario. Secondly, his ego cannot accept him being insulted time and again by Blanche. He had to bring an end to it by reaffirming his supremacy, which is possible only by exposing the dark past of Blanche. Thirdly, Stanley is a rational pragmatic man who likes 'his cards on the table'. He cannot appreciate make-believe worlds. Thus, for him to survive, he has to bring to an end to all the illusions of Blanche.

Scene Eight

The violence in this scene is significant. Stanley in a violent fit of rage reiterates his supremacy in the household. Yet the main culprit behind Stanley's rage which surfaces from his near dysfunctional marriage is Blanche's presence.

Stanley providing the return ticket to Blanche results in the Varsouviana music being heard by Blanche. The initiation of music brings to the notice of the audience that she is now slipping into a situation in which she will be trapped meeting with similar fate as the death of her ex-husband Allan. As Stella points out, Blanche was once 'tender and trusting' but people took advantage of her, thus underlining that Blanche is one of those people who are unfit for the real world at any point of time.

Scene Nine

The initial description of Blanche had her in old haggard clothes—her last connection with her past life. The Varsouviana music—the music that was playing when Allan killed himself—is heard in the backdrop and Blanche is drinking to submerge herself into her non-real world. The appearance of Mitch, unclean and under his work dress, highlights that he probably is Blanche's one last chance.

Mitch's forcing Blanche to appear under the light has multiple layers of significance. On the surface level, Blanche's lie about her age unravels itself under the light. Blanche had denied herself exposure to the light ever since her young husband killed himself. Since then, she had survived with light that was no stronger than a candle light. Thus,

Blanche, having grown up and surviving in semi-darkness, finds herself being forced into the light, a violation within herself. Thirdly, the physical act of forcing Blanche translates into symbolical reappearance of the truth about her past life. Fourthly, Blanche's survival strategies revolve around magic and illusion. She is far removed from reality. She survives through and within the magic of illusion. Instead of leading a life as it is, she lives for 'what *ought* to be'. Thus, bringing Blanche into the light helps her see life in its real colours, however ugly it might be.

Scene Ten

This scene depicts the final conflict between Blanche and Stanley. The end results in Stanley emerging as the ultimate authority.

In his state of excitement as a would-be-father, Stanley turns into an untamed beast on the look for a prey. For the first time, he visualises Blanche as a potential prospect who 'wouldn't be bad to—interfere with'. With this idea, the plan for seducing Blanche germinates. He also calculates that since Blanche has been 'swilling down my liquor' all summer, it will not be wrong to see the act of seduction as an act of repayment. Moreover, it was beyond Stanley's understanding as to why a woman who has had many a men partner would shy away from sleeping with him. And, most significantly, Stanley has always insisted on using things that are his as per his desires—his car, his radio, everything that is his, that bears his emblem of the gaudy seed-bearer. Blanche, who has taken refuge in his house, has consumed his food and his liquor, which is anything but his. She is not grateful to him; instead, she possesses an antagonistic attitude towards him. Thus, his act of rape is motivated by various reasons apart from what he thinks will lead him to establish his unconditional authority in the household.

Scene Eleven

The poker game last experienced in Scene Three is played here again. While in the last game Stanley was on the wrong side of the game, now he emerges as the clear winner, symbolizing his undisputed control over the household.

4.10 IMPORTANT THEMES IN THE PLAY

Tennessee Williams understands the need to go back to fantasy to survive the harsh realities of life. However, he does not advocate for complete detachment of reality either. He cannot ignore the necessity of the realistic perspective. His plays carry the essence of the unresolved battles that took place between Pirandello's stage manager and the characters. In every play of Williams, one encounters the basic human requirement for placing faith in human values and dignity despite being set against a harsh reality. It is just the way symbolism is set against realism. The playwrights preceding Williams were able to concentrate on absolute human values. However, Williams was unable to do so as he believed otherwise. He firmly believed that there is a 'real' world within and outside each individual which is forever unfriendly to any belief in the holiness of man. His realism depicts this expression existing in this world. *A Streetcar Named Desire* is Williams' best articulation of the human dilemma, which results in the dramatic dilemma. We come across two diametrically opposite ways of looking at life in *A Streetcar Named Desire*: the realistic perspective of Stanley Kowalski and the 'non-realistic' perspective of his sister-in-law, Blanche DuBois. Williams successfully shows the conflicting nature of the two viewpoints.

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4.10.1 Appearance and Reality

In Tennessee Williams' *A Streetcar Named Desire*, Blanche DuBois is the protagonist who is a romantic at heart. The play is a social drama depicted in realistic mode. Blanche explains to Mitch that she keeps creating her own version of the world because she cannot accept the predestined fate at her disposal. Continuously lying either to herself or to the world makes her believe that she is leading the life as it should be lived rather than as it comes to us. Stanley, a man of practicality who has his feet firmly grounded in the material, physical aspect of the world, cannot accept Blanche's world of fantasy and does his best to expose her falsehood. The disharmonic relationship that Blanche and Stanley share results in a metaphorical struggle between illusion and reality. It becomes one of the catalytic agents which keeps the story progressing and creates an overarching tension throughout the play. Finally, Blanche's good intentioned attempts to reconstruct her own and Stella's marital life simply fails to bring any positive results.

Tennessee Williams' play draws the juxtaposition of fantasy lover's incapacity to understand reality through an exploration of the difference existing between the world within and outside. The play moves within the uncomfortably closed two-room apartment where the Kowalskis reside. Williams' use of a setting that gives the power to view the street along with the interior of the house tries to convey his idea that the home is not a domestic shelter. The Kowalskis' apartment does not appear to be a world unto itself that is beyond the greater reality. The characters move in and out of the apartment at their own free will almost throughout the play. Most of the times, these characters are shown to emerge in the house laden with the problems they encounter in the outside environment. Let us consider Blanche: she refuses to change her prejudices against the working class even after she takes refuge with one such family. The most prominent example of this effect in the play can be identified as that moment when Stanley is about to rape Blanche. The back wall of the apartment gradually loses its opaqueness to present the struggles taking place on the street, overtaking the brutality that is about to get executed in the Kowalskis' home.

Though by the end of the play, reality triumphs over fantasy, yet Williams seems to suggest in *A Streetcar Named Desire* that fantasy holds an important place in surviving. At the end of the play, we see Blanche goes back into her exclusive private fantasies which helps her to partially protect herself from the shocking reality which she is unable to face. Blanche's mental disequilibrium gets exaggerated as she retreats completely into herself. By now, she seems to have left behind the objective world long behind so that she does not face the unpleasant reality. However, to break loose completely, Blanche needs to come to terms with the exterior world so that she feels the world is exactly the way she imagines. We can see that objective reality is not a solution to Blanche's illusionary world; rather, Blanche fits herself into the exterior world to carry on with her illusions. Thus, in both the worlds, material and psychological, the watertight distinction between fantasy and reality is shaken. Blanche's ultimate deceived joy implies that, at times and under certain conditions, fantasy acts as a vital force at play and every individual takes recourse to it at some point or the other despite the inevitable triumph of the reality.

4.10.2 Downfall of Blanche DuBois

In *A Streetcar Named Desire*, Blanche DuBois attains a kind of tragic stature where she almost achieves 'victory' while struggling to reach towards victory, and then the unexpected moment occurs when this struggle turns to defeat.

Blanche's fear of death emerges from her fears of getting older and losing physical charms. She obsessively lies about her true age. In fact, her reason to not step in light (apart from the psychological factors) is associated with her fear of exposing her aging looks. She is under the impression that by attracting younger men towards her by using her sexuality, she will be able to retain her youthfulness, and in turn, may be, delay death and go back to the times of youthful bliss she enjoyed before her husband committed suicide.

In the beginning (Scene One), Williams mentions that Blanche's history of sexual promiscuity is in fact a cause of her ruin. When she first reaches the Kowalskis' household, Blanche explains that she boarded a streetcar named Desire, then she changed another streetcar called Cemeteries, which took her to another street named Elysian Fields. This journey which takes place before the play starts, symbolically addresses the various junctures of Blanche's life. The name Elysian Fields has its origin in Greek mythology—it is the land of the dead. Blanche during her lifetime kept pursuing her sexual passion which led to her being thrown out from Belle Reve. This attitude of hers also leads to her being banished from society, though at a different level.

As we read the play, we realize Blanche is haunted by the memories of her dead ancestors, which she relates to their 'epic fornications'. Her young husband's death was an outcome of her not approving of his homosexuality. The play revolves around the idea of unrestrained promiscuity, paves the path for unexpected departures and unwanted ends. In Scene Nine when the Mexican woman is shown selling 'flowers for the dead', Blanche is horrified to meet her because the woman also predicts Blanche's fate. Her being trapped in insanity can be read as the ending which she brought upon herself by her flaws—her inability to channelize her desires in the proper way and her unexplained fear of death. Sexuality and mortality are intertwined fatally in Blanche's life.

Mostly after the late 1940s, it became very common for the literatures to discuss about the universal 'common man' of modern American drama. This common man is described as already defeated. As the motion of the play is set out, this character struggles the best possible way but meets futile ends and possesses low moral standards.

4.10.3 Significance of Light in Blanche's Life

In the play, light becomes a part of Blanche in an odd way. Blanche is reluctant to appear in direct, bright light, especially when her suitor, Mitch is around. She denies revealing her age, and as the story progresses, it becomes clear that she avoids light just to prevent Mitch from seeing the reality of her eroding beauty. At a deeper level, light symbolizes the reality of Blanche's bygone days. She is constantly plagued by the memories of what she has lost—her former husband, her perception of life, her reputation and the refined society (whether real or imagined, it is not clear) which she was a part of.

Blanche veils the uncovered light bulb in the Kowalski home with a Chinese paper lantern. Moreover, she strongly denies going on meetings with Mitch during the sunlit hours or to venues with proper lighting. Mitch mentions his observations regarding Blanche's avoidance of light in Scene Nine, when he narrates her of the details Stanley has provided him of her past. Mitch then insists Blanche to appear under the direct light. Mitch in a state of rage and desperation tells her that he has no issues with her age, but he cannot stand deceitfulness. To this, Blanche justifies herself by saying that her intentions were good. She understands that illusions, rather than worldly truth, represent life as it

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ought to be; hence, that should be the way of life. Blanche's inability to face light also suggests her loose grip over reality, announcing her expected end.

In Scene Six, Blanche confesses to Mitch that when she was in love with her former husband, Allan Grey, she felt as if she was enjoying the world revealed in bright, vivid light. Since Allan's unexpected death, Blanche recounted, the bright light has moved away. Even Blanche's casual sexual relationships with other men have brought her closer to dim light. Bright light, in a way, represents Blanche's young, colourful innocent life, while the poor light explains her sexual maturity and disillusionment with the world around her.

4.10.4 Significance of the Varsouviana Polka

The Varsouviana Polka is the very same tune to which Blanche and her young husband, Allan Grey, happily danced to and that was the last time she saw him alive. Earlier that day, she had discovered him in bed with a male friend who was older than him. However, like matured people, the three of them got involved in dancing together, putting up a face as if everything was normal. In the middle of the Varsouviana tune, Blanche had moved towards Allan and had declared that he 'disgusted' her. That very moment, he left the place and shot himself in the head.

This polka music resurfaces and plays at various instances in *A Streetcar Named Desire,* especially when Blanche is plagued with guilt for Allan's death. The first time the audience gets to hear it is in Scene One, when Stanley encounters Blanche and enquires her about her husband. The second time we hear the music is when Blanche narrates Mitch the life of Allan Grey. From this juncture, the polka music plays more frequently and it nearly leads Blanche to destruction. Blanche confesses to Mitch that the music ends only after she hears the roar of a gunshot inside her head.

The music represents the moment of Blanche's loss of happiness. The untimely and unexpected death of the young husband whom Blanche loved so dearly resulted due to her error in judgment and sets off her mental disability. After this moment, Blanche continues hearing the Varsouviana whenever she gets nervous and loses her hold on reality and mostly takes recourse to heavy drinking to keep the reality at bay.

4.10.5 Bathing and Intoxication

Closely related to the recurrence of Varsouviana Polka is the frequent act of drinking and bathing. As readers get acquainted with the Kowalski family, they realize that both Stanley and Blanche drink unapologetically at various junctures of the play. As readers, we notice that Stanley's drinking is restricted to social calls: he indulges in drinking when he is with his friends at the bar, or playing a game of poker, and to celebrate some occasion. Blanche's drinking, as it turns out, is not just restricted to social courtesy, and she prefers to keep her drinking habit secret. She drinks so that she can stay away from the harsh reality. In her intoxicated state, she lapses into flight of imagination, which helps her release herself from reality, such as creating a getaway with Shep Huntleigh. In case of both Stanley and Blanche, drinking paves the path towards their destruction or makes them destructive. Stanley gets into domestic violence and Blanche releases herself into fantasy. Yet Stanley is able to come back from his drunken state, whereas alcohol leads Blanche to depart from reality.

Throughout *A Streetcar Named Desire,* Blanche is shown to be cleaning herself. Her sexual escapades have resulted in turning her hysterical, but these baths, as she claims, helps her calm her nerves. In view of her desire to forget and wipe off the

remains of her illicit past in the new society of New Orleans, these baths become her way of trying to cleanse herself of her dark history. But however much she may try as she cannot undo the past, even her bathing is never completed. Even Stanley gets into water to take a shower to cleanse himself of his misdeed of beating Stella. The shower serves to soothe his violent temper. Therefore, both alcohol and shower has a psychological impact on the life of Stanley and Blanche.

4.10.6 The Decaying South and the Emerging South

Stella and Blanche represent a world that is on the verge of eroding away. Belle Reve, the sisters' ancestral plantation property is now gone, and the two sisters are the only surviving members of this genteel family. In fact in a symbolical way, the sisters are the only remains of the old charms of cavaliers and cotton plantations. Their strain of Old South, unlike what would seem obvious, was not captured by the General Sherman's army; rather it withered away under the forces of time. Moreover, as Blanche falls victim to the web of time and her beauty gradually fades, so does this essence of civilization, which gets blurred with the passage of time.

Blanche's lapsing into fantasy is her attempt at holding back time which just turns futile. However, Stella manages to live and survives by mixing her DuBois blood with the common middle class man from the Kowalskis. The Old South, as it turns out, can only survive in an impure form, maintaining an imbalanced harmony with the New Souths.

4.10.7 Representation of Violence

The only unpardonable guilt, according to Blanche, is inflicting cruelty knowingly. Unfortunately, Stanley masters this. His final attack on Blanche is an unforgiveable assault against a weak opponent who has indeed lost all her battles. Blanche, on the other hand, is guilty of being dishonest but her intentions have never been bad. The unforeseen outcomes of her lies are unintentional. Often, as we see she lies under a preconceived notion that such lies are important. Throughout the play, we come across violent reactions occurring as a result of decisions taken by characters—Blanche's well-intentioned lies, Stella's dishonesty and Stanley's intentional and unguarded wickedness. Tennessee Williams' plays are full of ways how human beings can hurt each other. It is just that some are more horrible than others.

If we take a closer look at *A Streetcar Named Desire*, we realize that Stanley Kowalski is an abuser. His abuses, rather of the violent nature, are veiled under his sensuality and charm that he displays. His violent temperament finds itself expressing on and off because of his desire to keep running under his control.

Stella, Stanley's wife, is a victim of her husband's abuses. Nevertheless, like every other woman, she tolerates him and completely surrenders herself to his misbehaviours. As one reads through the play, one realizes that the Kowalski couple share an abuser/abusive relationship where each plays his/her role without any question. This unquestioning liberty sanctioned to and acquired by Stanley leads to his indulging in one of the most brutal acts of violence—raping Blanche DuBois (Stella's sister).

Tennessee Williams was probably not familiar with the legal aspects of domestic abuse and violence of his times because it was still not much of a debated thing in those days. However, Williams was aware of the abusive life women lead within the confined walls of domesticity and his play underlines this unequal representation in a normal household.

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4.10.8 Indispensable Men

A Streetcar Named Desire acts as Tennessee Williams' mouthpiece to articulate his dislike for the way the institutions and mentality of post-war America imposed restrictions on women's lives. Williams successfully manages to put light on this situation by presenting before the audience Blanche's and Stella's reliance on men. He criticizes the way society (men) treated women as the transition from the old to the new South was taking place and bringing various changes with it. Both Blanche and Stella, despite their dissimilar nature, view male companions as their only opportunity to conquer bliss. They also rely on men for their daily existence and to build their self-image. Blanche understands that Stella indeed will be happier if her abusive husband Stanley goes out of her life. Yet, the other probable means of sustenance that Blanche proposes—trying to get in touch with Shep Huntleigh for economic support—also includes men for support. When Stella decides to continue staying with Stanley, she places her faith on love, and stay with a man and not with her sister. Williams does not possess a critical approach towards Stella—he only underlines the fact that Stanley is representative of a much more secure future than Blanche offers.

As for the protagonist Blanche, she sees her alliance with Mitch as a fool proof idea for escaping a desperate state. Repeated exploitation of Blanche's sexuality by men has left her with bad memories and unreliable supports. Moreover, her association with various men has also tarnished her image completely. Her dubious reputation leaves Blanche as an unsuitable marriage alliance. However, her deteriorated material state makes Blanche feel that marriage is her only option for survival. When Mitch reveals his plans to leave Blanche because of her ill reputation, Blanche, within no time, considers going to another man—the wealthy Shep Huntleigh—who probably can rescue her. Nevertheless, since Blanche is unaware of her dependence on men, she cannot comprehend realistically how to help herself. Blanche, till the end, does not understand that her unnecessary dependence on men only brought her closer to her downfall and did not help her in her salvation. By depending on people of the other sex, Blanche put her fate in the hands of others, which naturally brought her disaster.

4.10.9 Attraction and Desire

Blanche describes Stanley as ape-like and primitive. Stanley defines that kind of manhood which is wild and unrefined, a Romantic image of man and manliness that has escaped the effeminizing pressures of the civilization. His physical attractiveness is beyond question: Stella is unable to resist him, and even Blanche, who was repulsed by him, is attracted towards him at one point. Stanley's crude ways encompasses within him a terrifying immorality. He has no issues about leading his sister-in-law towards madness, or even physically abusing her. If we analyse the situation in Freudian terms, then Stanley would represent pure id, Stella would represent the ego and Blanche the super-ego. However, unfortunately in the play, the balancing act between the id and super-ego is not feasible through Stella's mediation, but works through the tension between these forces which resides within Blanche herself. A deeper introspection will reveal that Blanche finds Stanley's primitivism alarmingly threatening simply because it is something she knows resides within her as well.

Closely related to the above discussion on physical attractiveness is the concept of desire which is the central theme of the play. Blanche tries her best to deny it, though as we get deeper access into Blanche's world, we learn that desire is one of the most

motivating factors of her life. She is a prey to her desires which has been the reason behind her being driven out of town. Physical desire rules the relationship between Stella and Stanley. They are not driven or regulated by subtle feelings like intellectual or spiritual needs. However, Williams makes it loud and clear that their physical compatibility does not imply that their love is nurtured on a weaker base. Desire finally leads to Blanche's downfall because she cannot find a balanced middle path to handle it.

Loneliness is closely associated with the theme of desire. One of the main reasons for desire to germinate is a deep sense of loneliness that prevails within the characters. Oscillating between these two ends of the spectrum, Blanche finds herself lost. She desperately looks for security and companionship even amidst strangers. More unfortunately, she never manages to overcome the tragic loss and consuming love for Allan. Blanche, as the story starts, is in need of a secured protector. Ironically, her arrival in New Orleans only results in her being left more vulnerable, finally falling prey to the predator Stanley.

4.10.10 *A Streetcar Named Desire:* The Film and the Play

The film version of *A Streetcar Named Desire* appeared in 1951. It was directed by Elia Kazan. The film had Marlon Brando, Vivien Leigh, Kim Hunter and Karl Malden appearing in the prominent roles. The film received a lot of appreciation. It won several Oscar awards, Best Actress (Leigh), Best Supporting Actor (Malden) and Best Supporting Actress (Hunter). Marlon Brando, who played the role of Stanley Kowalski, was nominated but never received the Oscars, despite delivering one of the most outstanding performances.

Williams' Blanche was a representation of the South and Stella was, on the other hand, the new upcoming American woman in certain ways. However, Stanley definitely was the typical man oozing with sexuality and also representing the emerging concept of masculine American man. The story also narrated the transition from the agrarian economy and plantation life to a life perpetuated by industrial surroundings, in a way highlighting the pain that people undergo while trying to live through such transitional periods.

The celluloid adaptation of *A Streetcar Named Desire* captured a few interesting details that were there within the play but were reflected in the film even brilliantly. Marlon Brando appearing as Stanley provided the much required visual representation of the raw, masculine and powerful man that Stanley was. His appearance within no time made it apparent that he was far different from the Southern men who were more of the 'Gentleman' variety devoid of the kind of manliness that Stanley possessed.

Blanche maintains a Southern accent, soft-spoken tone throughout the movie which was not present in Stella. Stella is shown as physically strong and aggressive unlike Blanche, because Stella at a number of occasions is shown to be hitting and yelling at Stanley. The body language between Stanley and Stella conveyed their passion and desire that they nurtured for each other.

The play dealt with controversial themes like rape and homosexuality. So to keep in terms with Hollywood standards, the production house had to rework on the original play over a number of times to sanitize the work for general viewing. Hence, the swear words were done away with and the rape scene was made less shocking. The other significant aspect is the presentation of Blanche's husband, Allan Grey. Allan Grey decides to take away his own life after Blanche discovers him involved in homosexual activities. Yet the film water downs this important point by just saying that Blanche drove her

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husband to kill himself because of her hatred towards him. This definitely shadowed away one of the major critical concerns of Williams' as a social commentator.

In the play, Stella towards the end is portrayed as someone physically drained out (because of child delivery) and emotionally hurt because of her husband's brutal actions towards her sister. Her sister's subsequent departure forces her to take recourse in the arms of her man (Stanley) and one can never be sure if she was able to forgive her husband willingly or despised him forever. However, the film showed a Stella who was very vocal about her husband raping her sister. She is shown to be under so much distress that she appears to be on the verge of leaving her husband's dwelling.

Despite its mellowed down tone to appease the Hollywood rulebook, the film was one of the best adaptations which was well appreciated by both critics and viewers.

Check Your Progress

23. Who is Harold Mitchell or Mitch?
24. How does Scene One establish Stanley?
25. What Freudian symbols are used in Scene One?
26. What kind of an appearance does Blanche possess?
27. To which obsessive compulsive disorder of Blanche does Scene Two introduce the readers?
28. In Scene Three, what game is Stanley losing?
29. With which old acquaintance does Blanche think of reconnecting in Scene Four?
30. What kind of feelings does Blanche nurture towards light?
31. What kind of man is Stanley?
32. Why does the 'Varsouviana' music bother Blanche?

ACTIVITY

Read Eugene O'Neill's *The Iceman Cometh.*

Did You Know

The play *A Streetcar Named Desire* was adapted into a film in 1951. Williams collaborated with Oscar Saul on the screenplay and Elia Kazan who directed the stage production and went on to direct the film. Marlon Brando, Kim Hunter and Karl Malden, all members of the original *Broadway* cast, reprised their roles for the film. Vivien Leigh, who had appeared in the London theatre production, was brought in for the film version in lieu of Jessica Tandy, who had created the part of Blanche DuBois on *Broadway*.

4.11 SUMMARY

NOTES

In this unit you have learnt that:

- *Long Day's Journey Into Night* is an autobiographical drama by Eugene O'Neill, one of the greatest American playwrights, the first and only American dramatist to have won the Nobel Prize for Literature and the Pulitzer Award four times, including the one for *Long Day's Journey into Night*.
- Eugene O'Neill's agonizingly autobiographical play depicts the disturbed relations between a father, mother and two sons.
- Posthumously produced, the play strips layer after layer the strained and complex relations of the main characters in a day's time.
- As the play progresses, the audience witness a drug-addict mother, a professionally failed father, an alcoholic older son and an ailing younger son.
- Although no one dies in the play, still as a tragedy, the undercurrent is that of perpetual loss, morbid relations, failed communication, guilty pasts and disillusioned present.
- Tennessee Williams (1911–83) was an American playwright who was born in the Mississippi region.
- His birth name was Thomas Lanier Williams. He studied at University of Iowa and graduated in 1938. His initial writings were one-act plays and were performed by amateurs and students. Later on, these one-act plays were compiled in *27 Wagons Full of Cotton and Other One Act Plays* (1946) and *Dragon Country: A Book of Plays* (1970).
- *A Streetcar Named Desire* came to theatres in 1946. The play consolidated Williams' reputation as one of the best contemporary American playwrights, and fetched him the prestigious New York's Critics Circle Award and Pulitzer Prize.
- The play's greatest strength lies in its depiction of the psychology of working-class people. The play produced during Williams' times portrayed life of working-class in a didactic way, which focused on social aspects, appearing more like documentary drama.
- Moving away from the established norms, Williams' play intended to represent the working-class characters as psychologically-evolved individuals. To a great extent, Williams manages to portray his blue-collar characters as they are, without unnecessarily romanticizing them.
- Tennessee Williams did not appreciate the early American playwrights; his li was largely influenced by the famous Russian playwright, Anton Chekhov. Chekhov, who mastered the art of putting together the cheerful and the tragic, presenting lonely characters mixed with his hallmark dark sensibilities. These turned out to be a powerful inspiration for Tennessee Williams' plays.
- It is beyond argument that Williams' plays are deeply rooted within American setting and character. The other significant influence was the novelist D. H. Lawrence, whose writings made Williams understand and depict sexuality as a potent force of life. Lawrence is remembered in *The Glass Menagerie* as one of the favourite writers of Tennessee.

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- The American poet Hart Crane played an influential role in Williams' plays. Crane, who had lived a tragic life and faced an equally tragic death, was open about homosexuality and created poetry which did not conform to blind mimicking of European sensibilities. Williams also admired the tradition of great Southern writers who included literary language and poetics of the Southern English culture.
- Being influenced by Eugene O'Neill, Tennessee Williams too challenged some of the existing conventions of the naturalistic theatre. *Summer and Smoke* (1948), *Camino Real* (1953) and *The Glass Menagerie* (1944) are testimonies to some of his early experiments in this regard.
- In *The Glass Menagerie,* music, projections of screen and effects of lightening were used to create the haunting and dream-like condition which is important for a 'memory play'.
- Like Eugene O'Neill's *Emperor Jones* and Arthur Miller's *Death of a Salesman*, Williams' works invents various ways of using the stage to represent the subconscious mind and memories of a character.
- In *A Streetcar Named Desire*, special effects on stage are used to represent Blanche's progression towards madness. The madness inducing polka music, jungle sound effects and odd shadows assist in representing a world that Blanche experiences/lives in.

4.12 KEY TERMS

- **Posthumous:** It is an award or a publication that comes out after the death of the originator.
- **Sublimity:** This means of great beauty.
- **Inebriation:** It is a state of being intoxicated.
- **Gnarled:** It means twisted or bent.
- **Nonconformist:** It refers to a person who is a rebel.
- **Pianist:** someone who plays the piano professionally.
- **Nun:** It refers to a woman member of a religious community who vows to always follow the rules of chastity, poverty and obedience.
- **Hallucination:** It means fantasy or delirium.
- **Melodrama:** It is a drama characterized by exaggerated emotions, stereotypical characters and interpersonal conflicts.
- **Playwright**: It refers to one who writes plays.
- **Nymphomania:** It means excessive sexual desire in and behaviour by a female.
- **Homophobia**: It means fear of or contempt for lesbians and gay men.
- **Promiscuity**: It means having many casual sexual relations.
- **Quintessential:** It refers to the pure, highly concentrated essence of a thing.
- **Effeminate**: It refers to something which is characterized by weakness and excessive refinement.

4.13 ANSWERS TO 'CHECK YOUR PROGRESS'

NOTES

1. The play, *Long Day's Journey Into Night*, begins in a summer morning of 1912 when Mary Tyrone returns home from a sanatorium after her treatment of morphine addiction. It is a family of mainly four persons—James Tyrone, his wife Mary and his two sons, Jamie and Edmund.
2. As the play unravels, it becomes evident that Mary is still addicted to morphine and Edmund's coughing is actually due to tuberculosis. These are the two medical revelations which form the 'plot' of the play.
3. Mary, James' wife, is fifty-four and has a young, healthy figure with a pale, thin face. She looks pretty even without any make-up and has thick, white hair and big, beautiful brown eyes. Her once lovely hands are now gnarled with rheumatism and keep moving uneasily. O'Neill very obviously mentions that she has not lost her 'convent-girl youthfulness' and 'unworldly innocence'.
4. James always wanted to be a classical actor, especially a Shakespearean one but his 'vehicle' play, with which he had toured for years, established his reputation and although served him well financially, it could not add versatility to his acting. As a result, he never got the opportunity to explore and became confined to just one role.
5. Act II strengthens the notion that in terms of structure, the play is built around meals.
6. Finally, Mary's remarks that she cannot fail to recall the past because hr statement 'the past is the present' further advocates the uninteresting nature of life in the Tyrone kinfolk. The actions of the past recur in the present, just as the proceedings of each distinct day are repeatedly based on the hallucinations induced by alcohol and morphine.
7. The idea of a home is is an important concept dealt with in this play. A more developed idea of Mary's desire for a home is fully conveyed. In fact, she dislikes Tyrone's idea of a home so sturdily because she links it with the death of Eugene, who died when Mary was traveling with her husband. Mary allies James with the traveling home of the theatre actor and, metaphorically spurns the way in which she was forced to live life with him.
8. Alcohol and morphine are the two regular inebriants used in the play. The purpose suggested by the characters is to escape the harsh acknowledgement of their present reality.
9. A motif of fate too appears in this Act, though by different characters now. Generally it is expressed by Mary, but now Edmund picks up the issue when he mentions that he should have been born a fish or seagull as he loves the ocean so much.
10. *Long Day's Journey Into Night* is unquestionably a tragedy in its portrayal of the characters, but it is important to notice that it does end on a promise of hope for the future if the characters can transform the way they interact and treat one another. O'Neill does not end the story of the Tyrone family on a negative note.

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11. The elder Tyrone son is in his early thirties. As he squanders money on liquor and brothels, he has to bank on his parents for financial sustenance. He has never been scholarly and dropped out of more than a few colleges and has very little motivation, much to the disappointment of his parents.
12. Broken dreams function as a painful reminder of a time that once was good. Especially for Mary who suffers the most as she could not fulfil her dreams, the realization is particularly traumatic.
13. The structure of the play in parts presents a similarity to the disintegration that occurs over the course of the day. Meals form a crucial part in the structure. The first four scenes are constructed around meals, either before or after. If it is before a meal, the scene functions with an air of expectation of something important to come, i.e., the meal itself and its accompanying drama. It is worth noting how the family makes several earnest attempts to come together before the food gets cold. In the scenes set after a meal, the family is shown as engrossed in the discussion of how to kill time until the next meal is served.
14. The play is as much as a long day's journey into the past as anything else. The characters are to varying degrees fixated with the past and they are all unable to forget or forgive. Although the playwright suggests that tolerance and pardon can be an appropriate form of redemption, the characters have trouble forgiving one another. The family is at the end of the day paralyzed because of its incompetence to let go of past pains and wounds.
15. Tennessee Williams' birth name was Thomas Lanier Williams.
16. The play, *The Rose Tattoo* (1951) reveals Williams' genius in the realm of comedy
17. *In the Winter of Cities* (1956) and *Androgyne, Mon Amour* (1977) are the two collections of poetry that were composed by Tennessee Williams.
18. *A Streetcar Named Desire* was published in 1947.
19. Tennessee Williams wrote twenty-five complete plays.
20. Tennessee Williams' plays give the impression of being preoccupied with the excess form of human violence and sexual behaviour including insanity, sexual abuse, incest, nymphomania, and brutal and unnatural deaths.
21. Williams plays around with the themes of desire and isolation in his play *A Streetcar Named Desire.*
22. Williams got a Pulitzer Prize for *A Streetcar Named Desire* (in 1948) and *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* (in 1955).
23. Harold Mitchell or Mitch is Stanley's friend. He has been with Stanley during the phase of the war. Mitch is a bachelor. He has a sick, dying mother for whom he discharges all his responsibilities with utmost care and devotion. He gets involved with Blanche romantically for a short duration.
24. Scene One establishes Stanley as a strange and rude man.
25. Raw meat, bowling balls and pins, and Belle Reve plantation home are the Freudian symbols used in Scene One.
26. Blanche possesses a moth-like appearance.

27. Scene Two introduces the readers to Blanche's habit of bathing every now and then.
28. In Scene Three, Stanley is losing the game of poker.
29. In Scene Four, Blanche thinks of reconnecting with Shep Huntleigh, her old aquaintance.
30. Blanche is averse to light as it has a very strong relation with her past, especially with the death of her ex-husband Allan. .
31. Stanley is a rational pragmatic man.
32. The Varsouviana music bothers Blanche because it was the same music which was playing in the background when Allan killed himself.

4.14 QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

Short-Answer Questions

1. Discuss the figure of Mary Tyrone.
2. What is the importance of the past in the lives of the characters in the play *Long Day's Journey Into Night*?
3. Write a short description of Stanley Kowalski as he makes an appearance in Scene One.
4. Write down in brief the significance of Blanche's baths.
5. Describe in your own words the significance of Scene Three in *A Streetcar Named Desire*.
6. Express in your words the resurgence of hope and salvation in Scene Six of *A Streetcar Named Desire*.
7. Describe in brief the importance of light in Blanche's life.
8. List out the various reasons that leads Stanley to finally rape Blanche (especially based on your understanding of Scene Seven and Scene One).
9. Write a short note on the film *A Streetcar Named Desire*.

Long-Answer Questions

1. Comment on the motif of meals and home used in the play *Long Day's Journey Into Night*.
2. Discuss James Tyrone as a classical actor.
3. Highlight the euphemistic use of alcohol and morphine consumed by all the characters in the play *Long Day's Journey Into Night*.
4. How are the themes of attraction, desire and need for men projected in *A Streetcar Named Desire?*
5. What significance does the Varsouviana Polka and 'light' hold in Blanche's life? Elucidate.
6. How do appearance and reality reflect in *A Streetcar Named Desire?* Exemplify.
7. What according to you leads to the downfall of Blanche?

8. 'The text of *A Streetcar Named Desire* displays a lot of violence.' Critically analyse this statement.

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4.15 FURTHER READING

Hacker, L. M. Helene S. Zahler ed. *The Shaping of American Tradition*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1947.

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UNIT 5 WILLIAM FAULKNER AND ERNEST HEMINGWAY

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Structure

5.0 INTRODUCTION

There have been several great novels in the history of American literature. The use of styles and themes were very important for writing a good novel, besides the use of words and phrases. Great authors whose style and theme enabled people to understand who and what was being written are William Faulkner and Ernest Hemingway.

William Faulkner belongs to that generation of writers like Hemingway and Tennessee who rejected what was dead in tradition and innovated perpetually. The nation's character was yet shaping itself and it did so by experimenting with its various institutions. Its people surged forward to help. Among its writers, the United States could boast in those crisis-ridden early years, the achievement T. S. Eliot, Ezra pound, Wallace Stevens, John Dos Passos, Eugene O'Neill and Willa Cather whose works gave rise to a breading of perception about the function of formal element and thematic concerns. This generation of writers helped the audience to understand their times and the anxieties of the new age much better through a highly sensitized literary convention that was born out of the stress and pressures of new contingencies.

Today, William Faulkner and Ernest Hemmingway stand as one of the greatest novelists of the world. They gave novel-writing in America a new turn which marked a break in formal treatment of the subject and the rapid shift in perception of realities. Both baffled the readers and critics for the dazzling novelty with which they made their appearance.

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Faulkner experienced a peculiar sense of alienation within family; for instance, when his third brother was born, he felt that he was being neglected. With his father already hostile, it was loneliness that drove him to writing. As a schoolboy, he failed miserably, creating a greater emotional void. At this juncture, there appeared a person named Phil Stone in 1914 who was a striking contrast to Faulkner's brooding nature. This new acquaintance, talkative, exuberant and inclined to literature, introduced him to literature in a way that opened the golden gates of new fascinating world for him. Having left school, he joined his grandfather as a bank-keeper, but continued to feel miserable owing to the absence of anything positive to give him the sense of fulfilment. To further add to this came his failure to get recruited to the Air Force, for his ambition was to become a fighter pilot. His physical attributes did not measure to the required standards to get admission. Faulkner took to drinking which became his lifelong habit in addition to visiting prostitutes. Another blow came when Estelle Oldham with whom he had fallen in love, married someone else.

He kept writing, mainly poems, and managed to join the RAF (Rapid Action Force) in Canada as an officer cadet and went to Toronto for training. Before he could fly the plane, the war ended, thus terminating his dream to become a fighter pilot. His wanderings took him to the classes at the University of Mississippi where he attended some sort of course and worked at odd jobs—a perfectly aimless career. However, through all this, William never stopped writing poems, essays and stories, and got them published in small periodicals. One of the first collections of his poems entitled *The Marble Faun* was published in 1924. Faulkner went to New York to do a job in a bookshop, which was managed by a woman who later on married American novelist and short story writer Sherwood Anderson. After a brief stint, he returned to Oxford and worked in a post office. However, like Tennessee Williams working in a shoe company, Faulkner too found the job uninspiring and difficult for his rebellious spirit to adjust to. He was asked to quit the job in 1924.

With the beginning of World War II, Faulkner's anxiety to join the army again began to trouble him. However, there was one way he could get the position; nevertheless, he was offered a contract to write a book on 'air force operation overseas', but due to his inebriated drunken state at the time of interview with officials, he did not get the contract. His Hollywood stint was marred by his foolish steps which landed him in a self-destructive phase. From 1940 to 1947, he appears to be stuck to writing *Go Down Moses* (1942) and *Intruder in the Dust* (1948) barring which nothing came out of his pen. From that point, however, the great author's days of worldwide recognition dawned. In the 1950s, he became an established master of modern fiction. The National Book Award was given to him in 1950. The same year, Faulkner became the recipient of Nobel Prize for Literature, the third American to be given this honour.

In January 1962, he fell from his horse. He was careless about his injury and took to drinking as a cure. But on 6 July 1962, he died of heart attack. William Faulkner's biography presents the characteristic career graph of an independent minded writer, carving his way through challenging circumstances of life with which he was perpetually at war.

Nobel Prize winner Ernest Hemingway is one of the great American twentieth century novelists, who was known for his economic and understated style of writing. He is best known for works like *A Farewell to Arms*, *The Old Man and the Sea*, *The Sun Also Rises* and *For Whom the Bell Tolls*.

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Hemingway was born on 21 July 1899 in Cicero (now in Oak Park), Illinois. Unlike the dreams of Faulkner, Hemingway served in World War I. He also worked in journalism before publishing his story collection *In Our Time*. He published seven novels, six short story collections and two non-fiction works. Additional works, including three novels, four short story collections and three non-fiction works were published posthumously. Many of his works are considered classics of American literature. He committed suicide on 2 July 1961, in Ketchum, Idaho.

In this unit, we will be looking at the semi-autobiographical novel, *A Farewell to Arms*, by Ernest Hemingway that covers numerous events of the Italian campaigns during the First World War. In Hemingway's early works, war used to be a major theme. Hemingway's own wartime experiences led to the construction of the main plot in *A Farewell to Arms*. The novel outlines the themes of love and war that run side by side. It portrays how, the war actually acts as a powerful catalyst in creating, as well as reinforcing, relationships between human beings. This novel goes a long way in establishing Hemingway as one of the most futuristic authors of the twentieth century.

In this unit, we will, therefore, study the life and works of the two great twentieth century writers, William Faulkner and Ernest Hemingway. We will also study their styles of writing and evaluate the themes in their works.

5.1 UNIT OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- Understand Faulkner as a great novelist
- Explain the meaning and significance of motifs used in *The Sound and the Fury*
- Discuss feminism in Faulkner's novel
- Assess *The Sound and The Fury* as a tragic novel
- Interpret the use of the stream of consciousness in the novel
- Recognize Faulkner's style of writing
- Recall the important aspects of Hemingway's biography
- Summarize Ernest Hemingway's *A Farewell to Arms*
- Analyse the main characters of the novel *A Farewell to Arms*
- Evaluate Hemingway's *A Farewell to Arms* as a twentieth century novel

5.2 FAULKNER AS A NOVELIST

William Faulkner's writing was adventurous and unconventional. His descriptions are loaded with observations on the historical and cultural relation in a domain which witnessed much racial unrest and economic oppression. Relations are subject to these forces. Faulkner realized it clearly and did not leave his scenes innocent of this awareness. Whether he was a moralist in novels or not may be open to debate and some are emphatic that he was a moralist; generally speaking, his passages have a peculiar, almost allusive force of dispassionate presentation. He does not take side as Dickens would prefer to do, and with a furious insistence that would leave little doubt regarding where he stands. On the country, William Faulkner's descriptive passages are 'basically

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informative'. His comments are brief and relinquish the burden of making judgemental statement on social conditions.

However, behind his strong narrations was the burning sense of the central importance of human dignity, which he saw trampled upon arbitrarily, particularly in the politically bristling South.

William Faulkner

Another significant theme which Faulkner deals with is the continuous conflicts with life with which he must have been well familiar.

On a broader scale, his antithesis between traditional and non-traditional positions or ideologies involved the clash of interests within the large families affecting relations in significant ways within which the racial factor also becomes active.

Faulkner is a difficult novelist to read because of his use of various technical devices, which is made with a view to bring out the modernist existential confusion. The reader encounters 'apparently grotesque disturbances and distortions', which became the author's personal novelistic mark.

William Faulkner stands at the topmost position of world fiction, not just English or American, for the precise reasons which are often attacked by critics—the portrayal of confusion, indeterminacy and human soul caught in the whirling storm of efforts to grapple with the sense of the present that is irrevocably involved with the past. That is what keeps interest in his art and fictional world enduring.

Born on 17 August 1870 as William Cuthbert Falkner in New Albany, Mississippi, Faulkner was the first of four sons of Murry Cuthbert Falkner and Maud Butler. Faulkner's artistic imagination was strongly influenced by his family, particularly his mother, his maternal grandmother Lelia Butler and Caroline Barr (the black woman who raised him from infancy). As a schoolchild, Faulkner had much success early on. He also spent much of his boyhood listening to stories told to him by his elders, which mostly included war stories shared by the old men of Oxford, the Civil War, slavery, the Ku Klux Klan and the Falkner family. In adolescence, Faulkner began writing poetry almost exclusively.

In 1927, Faulkner wrote his first novel, entitled *Flags in the Dust*. In 1928, at the age of thirty, he started working on *The Sound and the Fury*. In 1929, Faulkner married Estelle Oldham. In the same, he started writing the novel *As I lay Dying*, which was published in 1930.

Faulkner served as Writer-in-Residence at the University of Virginia at Charlottesville from February to June 1957 and again in 1958. He suffered serious

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injuries in a horse-riding accident in 1959, and died from a myocardial infarction at the age of sixty-four on 6 July 1962.

Awards won by William Faulkner

In 1949, the Nobel Prize for Literature was awarded to Faulkner for 'his powerful and artistically unique contribution to the modern American novel'. However, he did not like the grandeur and fame that resulted from his recognition. Faulkner donated a part of his Nobel money for setting up a fund to encourage and support upcoming fiction writers. This resulted in establishing the PEN/Faulkner Award for Fiction. He donated another part of the prize money to a local oxford bank for setting up a scholarship fund to support the education of African-American teachers at Rust College in Mississippi.

Faulkner was also awarded two Pulitzer Prizes for his novels *A Fable* (1954) and *The Reivers* (1962). He was also awarded the US National Book Award twice for *Collected Stories* in 1951.

5.2.1 Detailed Summary of the Novel

The extraordinary merit of *The Sound and the Fury* lies in the perfect harmony between form and theme which the author achieved by the sheer exercise of his literary genius. It tells the tale of the Compson family, already in its final stage of disintegration, and for that a peculiar sense of time, where past and present have spilled over the barriers, is used. The story is narrated in four stages, employing the viewpoints of three separate characters. However, despite the seemingly repetitive re-run of the story, there is a peculiar freshness in each narration—as the characters are different, hence, their contexts are different. There is Benjy Section, dated 'June 2, 1910', which is followed by Jason Section, dated 'Friday, April 6, 1928' and concluded by Easter Sunday Section dated 'April, 8, 1928'.

From the very beginning, the feeling that the Compson family is in crisis and that it is filling apart is conveyed with vividness. The children appear to be already homeless, though not in the literal sense. Their old, invalid mother is looked up in her house in perfect isolation 'with a hot water bottle and her Bible, and the father locks himself up in the den with a nice big bottle of whisky'. The life is far from sunny and cheerful; with the prospect of improvement almost hopelessly absent. The three brothers in a first person account narrate their past at different stages in the novel. The novel begins with the narrative of Benjy (Benjamin) who is mentally challenged and the youngest son of the family. Mostly, he is seen roaming around on the margins of the town which is located in Mississippi, where he sees golfers busy with their games and yelling 'Caddies" now and then. To Benjy, the word recalls Caddy (Cadence), the loving sister who is married and gone, but with whom he had spent many happy moments. Caddy had played a large role in Benjy's life; remembering her, he becomes agitated emotionally. At this time, 7 April 1928, he is thirty years old. His memories are incoherent and unconnected, more in the form of sense-impressions and lack of continuity of sequence. This makes the entire section a mass of episodes or incidents which freely move backward and forward across the past and the present.

Faulkner shows a fine-tuned artistic sense in portraying Benjy's inner state of psychological response to the agitated emotional condition. This is occasioned by the memories in devising a technique of narration, which relies mostly on the stream-of-consciousness method. Very few authors have shown a complete mastery and easy handling of this particular theme. In this regard, Faulkner has proved to be a master par excellence. We come to know the meaning of his relationship with Caddy and his great

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emotional dependence on it through various recollections coming to surface in a haphazard manner.

His existence in a shadowy world of memories and swirling mental impression puts him in a different situation from that of others. He is the subject of everybody's sympathy and pity, but it is only Caddy, and to some extent Dilsey, who take special care of this utterly dependent person. He feels a reassuring experience of comfort in their company. Besides these, there are other thingd that gives him support—the mirror on the wall, the sight of the fire and the golfers whom he sees busy playing in the field. This section also reveals Benjy's special gift of the sixth sense—a power to sense the impending or imminent crisis which is looming over the family. No one else shows this talent, but living, perhaps, on the level of instinctual knowledge, Benjy works his way through an animal-like reliance on extra-sensory signals as opposed to a calculated reasoning like any other human beings. The first section is presented through the eyes of Benjy and contains those perceptual markers and vision which are indeed special. It is this that plunges the unprepared reader into a world of chaos and accumulated impressions which the reader finds so difficult to comprehend.

Caddy has been shown as a free and fun-loving girl whose wanderings all over the area meet with little approval from others. 'We see her...as a rather daring and enterprising girl. She is not concerned with appearance but instead reaches out to find the truth and reality of the situation.'

She is completely vulnerable and Dalton is exactly the symbol of the kind of danger she is exposed to. He is muscular, physically strong and a bully who impregnates her. He has a low opinion of woman in general. Quentin is quite unhappy about his relationship with Caddy, but Dalton tells him that someone else would have impregnated her, if it had not been him. Quentin quarrels with him, Dalton is stronger and gives him a loaded revolver and drives him to shoot. However, the weak and utterly morbid Quentin falls unconscious without a fight.

Quentin is also not happy with Herbert Head whom Caddy marries soon after her pregnancy is discovered. He looks at him unfavourably. Herbert is not aware of Caddy's pregnancy and tries to win her brothers favour by offering him money and a job for Jason in the bank in which he is employed. Jason blames Caddy for depriving him of the job which probably Head was not serious about. However, Quentin remains hostile and these offers have no effect on him. Caddy's promiscuous behaviour has already earned her a good deal of bed reputation as Herbert Head tells Quentin on his face that 'he is neither the first nor will he be the last of Caddy's lover'. 'Soon after marriage, Herbert discovers Caddy's pregnancy. The outcome is predictable enough. He abandons her. The child she gives birth to is named Quentin and is taken to the Compson house by Mr Compson.

Caddy's marriage leaves a vacant spot in Benjy's life. He becomes melancholic and his pitiful slobbering increases, aggravating his agony and discomfort for others. Luster, the black boy, seeks to lighten his pain by showing the golfers on the meadows and making him sit before the fire.

Eighteen years after the suicide committed by Quentin, we are taken to the Compson household in Jefferson. Caddy's daughter Miss Quentin is now seventeen years old and reminds one of her mother. She is least interested in studies and has begun to be absent from her school and movies about with young fellows. Then she falls in love with a person who is with a Carnival on a brief visit to Jefferson. Her uncle Jason feels

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...ounted and gives her a sound thrashing, but the girl shows a defiant attitude, which he ...ognizes as her mother's. However, this is not the whole story. Quentin shows the full ...aterial of a full blooded heroine of any entertaining work of fiction. When she sees ...at she cannot have her ways, she gathers all the money which Jason has accumulated ...r many years, steals it and runs away without so much as a hint. This is the same ...ney which her mother had been sending to Jason and which he has been using for his ...n pleasures instead of using it for the girl's maintenance. Destiny takes a full circle ...w, Jason is out-witted and floored by the girl whose mother he has been cheating. ...e amount is about three thousand dollars. Jason is beside himself and launches a ...arch for her.

> 'Look here', Jason said. 'My house has been robbed. I know who did it and I know where they are. I come to you as the Commissioned Officer law and I ask you once more are you going to make any effort to recover my property, or not?'
>
> 'What do you aim to do with that girl, if you catch them?' 'Nothing', Jason said. 'Not anything. I wouldn't lay my hand on her. She has cost me a job, the one chance ever had to get ahead, that killed my father and is shortening my mother's life everyday and made my name a laughing stock in the town. I won't do anything to her', he said. 'Not anything' (189).

That is where the novel ends. The last scene is the final humiliation of the family which emerges from the rapid disintegration of its structure, each of its members is detached from the other, isolated in a private limbo of suffering with which others have no concern. It is only Dilsey, the old God-fearing faithful housekeeper, existing in the lowest arduous life of relative unimportance without any hope of improving her position and tenure, who appears perfectly balanced, sensible and united to destiny of all. She visits Church and sheds tears at the sufferings of the saints, showing the capacity for humane feelings for the condition in which the Compson family has sunk and suffers silently not for herself but for others—for Benjy, Quentin, Jason, Mrs Compson, Mr Compson IV and all those whose behaviour ensures the final collapse of the family. The last scene of the novel is quite touching. Dilsey is sitting in the Church listening to ...ons—with her head bent, fully absorbed, a tear trickles from her eyes and rolls along ...r cheek. This is the last symbol of the feeling heart of an ordinary human amidst the glory of the saints. The very last sentence is symbolically significant:

> 'The broken flower drooped over Ben's fist and his eyes were empty and blue and serene again as Cornice and façade smoothly one more from left to right, post and tree, window and doorway and signboard each in its ordered place' (190).

5.2.2 *The Sound and the Fury*: Feminism

'Whatever I do, it's your fault. If I'm bad,
It's because I had to be. You made me. I wish
I was dead. I wish we were all dead.'

Miss Quentin

It is quite difficult to see William Faulkner as overtly engaging himself with the women's conditions in the Southern society of his time and focusing on their problems. On the surface, his world is a man's world—a harsh, tough, masculine world of business ambitions, farmers, servants and drinking and gambling masters who have their way both, in society and family. Women figure in this universe are not centre characters, eager to play a decisive role or even turn the course of events, but peripheral landmarks in the uneven

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terrain, serving men as either servants or grudging members of the family. Men in general have an unsympathetic attitude towards them, regarding them as mere objects that facilitate their plans or manager their daily lives. They can be generally classified along two axes: age-wise, woman are shown as quite young and serve as an object of men's uniformly identical opinion on womankind in general. The older sets of woman are recipient of a higher degree of respect and admiration. They are all beyond the age of sexual attraction.

In *The Sound and the Fury*, women are placed in crucial locations vis-à-vis centrally important characters. There is Candace, Mrs Compson and Dilsey, the major women characters, each quite distinct from the other, but each exercising a powerful influence on men's destiny and, thus, the narrative also. Ironically, men like Quentin and Jason have very low opinion regarding women. They are not capable of thinking, men feel, and are uniformly wanting in morality and usually are promiscuous. Men not only treat them as objects of sexual fulfilment and consider them as useful only for child-bearing. They consider women to deserve physical abuse like beating because it is their confirmed opinion that women are devils and temptresses and possess no morality. They also think that it is their nature not to be loyal to men in any relationship and can betray them without shame or remorse. They are merciless and unforgiving and without a sense of charity, and so on.

There is a strong opinion among a large number of scholars and students of William Faulkner that the celebrated author was unsympathetic to the word 'women', and his portrayal of them does not enhance his image as a champion of woman's cause. This opinion receives plenty of support from the surface reading of his fiction. Though Caddy can be said to have been epitomized as symbolizing the complete decline in normal standards not only by her in deference to the accepted norms of restrained behaviour, but also in the manner others regard her, her daughter Miss Quentin evokes equally uneasy response in others.

She is a self-absorbed girl, representing a free spirit, closer to instinctual way of life, deriving her strength and character from the passionate sources of nature. Perhaps Compson is right when he observes, 'purity is a negative state and, therefore, contrary to nature. It's hurting you Caddy ...He is taking to his son Quentin. '

In the oppressive air of the Compson family Caddy is bound to be subjected to male dominance. The Quentin dreams of having incestuous relation with her is suggestive of the forms of exploitation that go back to ancient past; for weak spirited Quentin, she is no better than an object of sexual fantasy turning it into such an alluring mantel preoccupation that he begins to identify the imaged life (with her) in reality. His idea of Caddy's worth fits in with the decadent air that hangs over the family. Quentin is morbid with ideas of his own futility and hopelessness, and his unable to think about in a healthy way is not surprising. Faulkner's portrayal of the Southern society underlines, as literary critic Richard Moreland puts it, 'alienation and hysteria not just of single characters of types, but of whole communities.' Their problems are one of general lack of a cohesive relationship based upon mutually fulfilling sense of a family, living or working for a future. They as units are not only independent of one another but is a mutually disruptive grid. If Caddy is the focal point of her brother's dissatisfaction, her daughter Quentin is no less a source of disturbance for them. Except for Dilsey, these two women epitome Faulkner's projection of women in this novel as living on the level of scum and fifth, unable to invest them with the light of dignity. To use the famous modern critic Noel Polk's words, 'There is throughout Faulkner, something disturbing about the blood and

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excrement and death.' In the case of Caddy, she does not rise above her association with sexual fantasy in almost every male's imagination.

However, there is another side of her personality. We see in Caddy not only an unusual level of sexual freedom but also a surprising degree of strength of personality. She belongs, as literary critic Katie Kinkel says in her brilliant study, *Sexuality and Narrative Structure in the Novels of Williams Faulkner*, to the common experience of social 'traumas of the post bellum South' which projects sexuality as a 'culturally marginalized experience of Southern trauma of the Southern woman forming an individual sexual and personal identify at the close of an era of inequality and sexual dominance'. In this scholar's opinion, the virulent sexuality of Caddy and Quentin in this novel and of other women characters in other novels of Faulkner constitute a passionate reaction to the attitude of men who treat them with a coercive and blind masculine sense of ownership: 'deviations from norms of sexual and intimate relationships in Faulkner are challenging to the established social, racial, and gendered order. Women in Faulkner therefore become the effective "property" of the men who govern their sexual beings—unable to escape the strictures of white womanhood either by "being sexual" or "being pure", they are coerced into a narrative—or rather—a fiction—of female purity and male chivalry.'

From Caddy's point of view, her escapes may be seen to open up for her avenues of self-discovery, filling her with a sense of her separate (sexual) identify and personal power over men and the system that brings her into variegated relationship with them. It is this power of the self that is so evident in Caddy and sets apart from her self-absorbed brothers.

We have already underlined Caddy's qualities of humane concern for Benjy, a differently challenged brother, with whom she has a special emotional attachment. Benjy appears to be emotionally dependent on her, assuring presence or signs of her existence like the sight of her slippers. The author's brilliant introspective vision presents this highly positive side in the Compson family as something that nature perpetually nurtures and nourishes in man's degenerate ways. This is brought out by Benjy's repeated assertion that Caddy 'smells like trees' or like flowers. In considering the feminist aspect of the novel, one cannot ignore this dimension of Caddy's character.

Despite the oppressive attitude of men, and her own brothers' tendency to exploit her in the most deplorable manner, Caddy shows great patience and perseverance in protecting her brother and daughter. Much has been made of her muddy drawers by critics and scholars, dwelling upon her sexual promiscuity in lengthy studies, but her fighting spirit in safeguarding her daughter appears to have caught little attention. She goes into a universally detested profession to earn money, out of which a little portion is saved, which she regularly sends to Jason for Quentin's upkeep. She becomes a victim of her brother's dishonesty and deception. Instead of forwarding the amount to Quentin, Jason puts it into his own cashbox, keeping, on one hand, the young girl in ignorance, and on the other, getting his mother's signature on the blank cheque. Both Caddy and her daughter come to know of this. Quentin is angry and fights with Jason; her bitterness of heart can well be understood as a justified reaction to blatant act of robbery.

The irony of the situation is that, instead of confessing his crime, Jason goes to the Sheriff to report a robbery that, he complains, has been committed on his money because Quentin in a fury of protest, stomps up to his room, takes money out of his box, which her mother has been sending to her but never reaches her. Though Faulkner portrays women in this particular phase of southern community's history as facing serious problems of male dominance, having been pushed into an utterly vulnerable position, he highlights

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a deeply embedded genderist exploitative relationship within the family and keeps them subjugated by robbing them of their own rights and normal conditions of life. Quentin belongs to a new generation, growing up in these troubled times. There is a difference of perception of social relations and attitude towards personal rights, need to assert and ways of resisting attacks on those rights between Quentin and her mother, Caddy. This difference is already marked by the intemperate bursts of reaction we witness from Quentin. In a fretful mood one evening, while chewing her bread with Jason and with her grandmother sitting at the table, Quentin asks frankly, 'why does he treat me like this, Grandmother?' She says, 'I never hurt him.' When the grandmother tries to remind her that she is young and should not talk like that about elders, she jumps up and puts blame squarely on the elders.

'It's his fault', she says, she jumped up. 'He makes me do it. If he would just'

And then,

'Whatever I do, it's your fault', she says, 'If I'm bad, it's because I had to be. You made me. I wish I was dead. I wish we were all dead.' Then she ran. We heard her run up the stairs. The door slammed.

Caddy did not show this courage. Quentin's defiance is symbolic of the changing attitude of a new woman, who is aware of her being exploited and restricted, and is determined to wage a war against it. While Caddy's affairs are talked about, Quentin's affairs are quite visible; she perhaps deliberately plans it in such a way that she can be seen by her uncle moving in a car with her boyfriend. The tyre of his car, exacerbating his own mood of annoyance not only with her, but his own general failure and frustration at all fronts, is sufficient proof that here is one female who is not going to put up with the nonsense coming from overweening males simply because they are her elders or she was expected to be obedient in a family where hierarchy matters.

Both the women, Caddy and Quentin, despite their apparently disadvantageous positions, show capabilities of putting the men into an extremely helpless positions by exposing their fraudulent dealings and deeds, and uncovering to their own eyes their hollow cores of dithering personality, which cannot face ordinary challenges of life. All male members of the Compson family appear to be victims of this intrinsic weakness resorting in their desperation to greater repressive and abusive methods like calling names, robbing lies and other unscrupulous tricks. The pathetic dilemma of Quentin and Jason is not limited to their own ambivalent views, but such characters as Uncle Maury and Father Compson display in ample measure similar tendencies. As the patriarch of the family, the father has no role at all; he lives in his ideas which are a queer set and at best of little help to give direction to the affairs of his children or shape to a family which is threatened with imminent disintegration. Given to fixed and sedentary existence in the shadows of past glory of a big family, the father sinks into a life of inactivity and drinking. So is Maury, who is another symbol of self-centred avarice. These men lend no support to the family as a system for they possess no love for it. Each one of them is engaged in achieving his selfish end by depriving others, especially women, of their rights.

It needs to be made clear that the prevalent critical opinion makes it appear that the novelist William Faulkner is a misogynist, a hater of women who has intentionally portrayed women in dark colours, demeaning their image as mere objects of consumption. Apparently this may appear to be so, as the same story is recounted from three prints of view by three different persons and at least two women's promiscuous activities get local attention. However, a closer reading reveals that the author is narrating the downfall

of a family in terms of its loss of the essential values of morality and humanity in the larger context of the rapid and tragic degeneration of the southern community.

Faulkner was both a gifted writer with an extra-ordinary introspective vision which penetrated the thick layers of insensitivity that marked society and its members. His portrayal of women is in consonance with his aim, which is to show how men exploit women and how women stand up to their machinations in full resistance and defiance to the patriarchal system society. A significant aspect of Faulkner's universe in *The Sound and the Fury* is that human drama takes places in a family which turns out to be, to use the feminist vocabulary, a site for gender prejudices, discriminations and unrestrained exploitation.

Check Your Progress

1. What was the name of Faulkner's first collection of poems that got published?
2. How did William Faulkner die?
3. Where does the extraordinary merit of *The Sound and the Fury* lie?

5.3 DIFFERENT MOTIFS USED BY THE AUTHOR IN THE NOVEL

Motif is a literary device. It is an image which assumes, by virtue of its recurrence, symbolic significance because its frequent occurrence adds to the meaning of the overall narrative and intensifies its general effect. In William Shakespeare's work, the motif of time is a recurring element which is used to emphasize a ruthless march and the destructive work that is its chief function. In Kamla Das' work, the noted Indian English poetess, the motif of crow, the funeral pyre log and sexual brutality are some of the persistent motifs, which allow her to lend semantic density to certain aspects of her presentation.

In a similar manner, in *The Sound and the Fury*, we come across some motifs which surface again and again, urging us to delve deeper into the novel's sub-textual level of meaning and significance.

5.3.1 Time Motif

What we are aware of primarily is the intense dramatization of the inner life of the chapters through interior monologue. In the first two sections dealing with the mentally different Benjy and Quentin, the sense of time is neatly divided into past, present and future. Time exists in a turbulent, fluid state here; past mingling with the present; and the future dissolving into the present. The events are presented not in a linear order as is normally the case is in storytelling. The point of view taken is that of the character's conscious and sub-conscious flow of impressions in which there is no relevance of past and the present.

Shadow creates a wonderfully dramatic effect in Faulkner's novels, particularly this novel where the impression of the characters' agitated minds project the interior drama that takes place in the family arena. The author was writing a novel in which people of substance turn their life into shadowy matter. The word 'shadow' can mean many things in the novel: it may refer to the looming danger of inescapable gloom and

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bleak prospect with which the Compson family feels increasingly hedged in; it may also imply the perpetual darkness where the sense of relatedness and human warmth is eternally frozen; thirdly, Shakespeare's utterance in Macbeth, 'Life but a walking shadow' lends an overall feeling of shadowy life that each one of the inmates of the house leads. There is a lack of self-will, strength of character and conviction of faith in one another that makes them shadowy.

Benjy is a handicapped character. His intensity of perception draws its strength from the resources of his impressions that are independent of time-sense of the normal order. He is unable to contribute meaningfully in the growth of family. He lurks there as a shadow. For Quentin, the 'shadow motif' acquires greater intensity as the word occurs almost fifty times in the section dealing with him. He is floundering amidst shadows of his own imagined moments with Caddy and his desperation arises out of his inability to come to grips with tangible realities like Caddy's relation with Dalton Amis, and his friends who can at will humiliate him or beat him up without meeting resistance.

Quentin's life floats from one phase of inner oscillations into another like cloud-shadow. His parents help him get a good education at Harvard University, but he cannot make anything out of it. He is worried bitterly over the truth of time and frets. His father tells him a few things about time being the tragedy and misfortune of man which he takes seriously. He learns from Mr Compson that Jesus Christ died not because he was crucified but because of time. Quentin smashes his watch to stop time, which is, again, like Macbeth, an attempt seeking to master the circumstances of life by banishing those who opposed him. The motif of shadow occurs in order to remind us of the futility of our ambitious when our efforts are not properly coordinated and pooled to counter the forces of disintegration. Everyone in this endangered family floats down the turbulent stream of life like shadows at the mercy of density. When Quentin commits suicide, he is shown jumping into the water—the reflection/shadow of his own self rises out of the water to meet him.

5.3.2 Water Motif

Reference to water comes many a times in this novel with the same haunting repetitiveness as the earlier two motifs discussed. In the Benjy section, children play close to the pool of water. Caddy's own character with all its deposition to a defiant free will evolves in close association with her frolics in the water.

It is said that Faulkner himself wished to tell the story of a girl who fell down and got out of water emerging with her drawers turned muddy. These images of Caddy's muddy drawers later become a celebrated theme with Faulkner's critics and scholars. It is difficult to say whether it is a coincidence or there is a deeper significance in the novelist's suggestion about the girl/woman's independent character by portraying their indulgence in water.

5.3.3 Caddy (Candace)

Caddy is the sister of the three brothers, the only daughter of the Compson parents. She occupies a pre-eminent place in this interesting saga of the family's downfall. And yet while all the three male members have been given each a section to present the tale, Caddy's direct presence is not devised by the author. On the other hand, we know her through the narratives of Benjy, Quentin and Jason. We, therefore, have to fall upon the three different portrayals in order to construct our picture of Caddy.

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It is through Benjy's monologue, in the first section, that we get the idea of Caddy's caring, compassionate nature almost similar to that displayed by Dilsey to her and Benjy. In a prominent scene, after Caddy's marriage and her departure from the house, Benjy sees her slippers and becomes so agitated that he wails and slobbers aloud. Their attachment is exceptionally close; Benjy can be claimed by none else but Caddy alone, and while she is away, he feels lonely and sometimes disconsolate. Through the narration of others, different narrators express different opinions about her. Her confidence in her own self and capabilities do not need corroboration from others. It is her elemental quality of being, the essentially Southern spirit of free will and unrestrained passion for enjoying that freedom, untouched, we can say by the awareness of social norms that appeared to be admired by Faulkner's pen. That is why it traces out in prominent lines her breezy, carefree personality, while her two brothers and parents make it quite clear that they resent her scandalous behaviour. The only person who expresses frankly his wonder and admiration is Benjy. Caddy's freshness and exhilaration make him exclaim repeatedly, 'Caddy smelled like trees!'

To Benjy, Caddy becomes a 'mother figure'. In the words of the famous critic Lawrence, 'Caddy, motivated by her comparison for her younger brother, has eagerly given Ben the kind of motherly attention previously denied to him because of his own mother's inadequacies. Tenderly, solicitously, Caddy has discovered ways of appearing to Ben's limited responses to satisfy his instinctive and unreasoning hunger for orderliness, peacefulness, serenity. Therefore, the red-yellow cushions, the smooth satin slipper, are only a few of the objects used by Caddy to provide him with values, which are positive to him because they are somehow sustaining.'

Caddy's fussy, flustering mother says, 'you humour him too much … you and your father both. You don't realize that I am the one who has to pay for it …' To this Caddy says, 'you don't need to bother with him …. I like to take care of him. Don't I, Benjy.'

He is obviously far more comfortable with Caddy than with his mother. To quote Thompson again, 'Her presence was Ben's joy; her absence his grief, her possible return his hope.' Benjy is, thus, somehow acting as a moral mirror for her. When Caddy had her first sexual experience, she returns home bristling with quilt and shame—Benjy in all eyes is looking at her. He somehow evokes in her a greater and deeper sense of guilt. Nevertheless, in a way, she makes his chaotic world of feelings and impressions more shapely and organized. She helps him 'to find within himself the power to convert even darkness refuge unfailing, in which conflict [was] tempered, silenced, reconciled, as Quentin phrased it.'

In relation with Caddy, the externals do not much matter; she is absolutely raw and elemental. She does not care about her dress and appearance. She has been shown to enjoy her life amid trees, free air, open sky and streams. One critic has remarked, 'Caddy herself is love, the one who can quiet Benjy down with the touch of her hand. She is also the boldness of youth as both her dirty underwear and confident assumption of the mother's role indicate.'

In some places in the novel, we also see that she does not care even for her parent's advice about the hours of play and places where it is safe for her to go, and so on. She sees no danger to herself. Her nature is to go exploring the world and life with a degree of exuberance that is rarely found in Compson family members. It is interesting to see that she has been presented here as an important contrast to family's repressive atmosphere. In the words of literary author Michael Millgate, 'Caddy finds an out less

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from family repression in sexual activity but she is also both a principle and a symbol of social disruption'. She reminds us of Ursula Brangwen in D. H. Lawrence's *The Rainbow*. Faulkner created her as a breaker of traditional pattern and spoke of her with intense passion: 'To me she was the most beautiful one… she was my heart's darling. That's what I wrote the book about and I used the tools which seemed to me the proper tools to try to tell, try to draw the picture of Caddy.'

Quentin's love for Caddy is different from Benjy's love. He harbours a peculiar sexual fascination for her. He fears that her careless free activities may land her in serious difficulty; therefore, he advices her to remain within moderate limits. In fact, Quentin scolds her for her misdemeanour. Caddy gives him a shock when it is revealed that she has become pregnant by Ames Dalton. In his agitation, he keeps asking whether she dislikes him or not. She might or might not have felt a sense of guilt; it is Quentin who had instilled her to feel guilty. Quentin represents the sensitive minds that is surrounded by the rotting set of dead values and have no use for anyone. He himself embodies another inadequacy of that family and his extreme morbid possessiveness with regard to Caddy points to it.

Caddy's sexuality is the expression of the consequence she has to bear of her unbridled free behaviour. She is married off in a hurry to Herbert Head, a worthless man far below her character. He, having discovered her illegitimate child, abandons Caddy and the child. As a mother, Caddy has a new focus of attention, her baby whom she named Quentin. She is worried about the proper growth which her daughter needs, so she takes her to the Compson family. It is in the section of Jason that we see the anxiety expressed by Caddy as a responsible mother for her child. Caddy has not been informed about her father's death. She reads about it in the newspaper and secretly visits the funeral, suggesting her deep love and reverence for her father. It also indicates a child's obligation to her father, a level of cultural value, who regularly used to send cheques to cover her daughter's expenses. This money, on one hand, represents a compassionate girl's love for her child, while on the other, it reflects unscrupulous tendency of her brother who shamelessly goes on misappropriating the contribution for fifteen years.

Caddy appears in all the glory and all the possible flaws of a human character that evokes a mixed response in our hearts. In the beginning, we feel that she is too unmindful of the damages which her free behaviour is likely to provoke, and it is created by her brothers and others with insulting words. Caddy's assertive and powerful personally cannot be expected to provoke administration among those who are happy to keep her as a woman under their control. The difference between William Faulkner and D. H. Lawrence is that while Lawrence raises her women to the level of existence where pure passions are interpretable as spiritual urges and yearnings, Faulkner keeps his women to the level of earthly humans, inheriting both the splendour and weakness of human character. They show the flaws that any human being would show, but their spirited adherence to human values and their practice is equally elevating, transforming their characters into angelic mould. Caddy's character is conceived in such view of her joys and sorrows.

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

4. What kind of a character is Miss Quentin?
5. What is a misogynist?

5.4 TITLE OF THE NOVEL

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The title of the novel is a fragment of a speech, a monologue, delivered by Macbeth in Shakespeare's tragedy by that name. It is one of the memorable pieces of dramatic poetry full of philosophical wisdom. Several extracts from Shakespeare's various plays have this quality of functioning independently when taken out of context and imparting a profound thought upon the general human condition. It would be worthwhile to cite that particular extract and see what a splendid composition it is:

Out, out, brief candle!
Life's but a walking shadow, a poor play
That struts and frets his hour upon the stage
And then is heard no more: it is a tale
Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury
Signifying nothing

5.4.1 Resemblance with *Macbeth*: Act V, Scene V

Act V, Scene V in Shakespeare's *Macbeth* reminds us of another one which occurs in the great dramatist's comedy, *As You Like It*, where it is highlighted that the world is a stage on which we are destined to play our roles. The individual scepticism and despondency take a flight in wider circles to reveal unclouded grasp of things.

The two key words, 'sound' and 'fury' foreground with ruthless precisions the disorders into which the great Compson family has fallen. This is exacerbated by self-centred, whining inmates, the three brothers and one sister, who instead of thinking in terms of larger interest of the family and restoring its lost strength and glory, hold one another in contempt. They also indulge in fraudulent business and undertake unscrupulous ways to the great sorrow of the simple-hearted black servant Mrs Dilsey.

The biggest crisis that the family faces is the crisis of confidence. The members live together without a sense of attachment and trust and treat one another with bitter hostility. The elders, particularly the parents of the children, appear to have resigned themselves to their own fate. Each one of them gives the impression of leading his or her life separately and involved in the pursuit of selfish ends. While Mr Compson, Caddy's father, talks like a cynical person shrouded with nihilistic ideas, Quentin, his son, is wallowing in gloomy prospect of life, rooted totally in inaction. He fantasizes about his own sister in sexual terms and imagines having getting intimate with her. Mr Compson has a particular philosophy of life and time. In another of his peculiar notions, chastity is a concept invented by man. In nature's kingdom, there is nothing like virginity—all women have a natural affinity of evil.

Mrs Compson is equally a picture of miserable, fretting woman who cannot get over her notion of declining health. She has been portrayed as perpetually on the edge, whining and whimpering about her children's wayward behaviour. She stays mostly in her bed, and is well-looked after by the faithful black servant Disley. Mrs Compson is also unconcerned about the family and does not do anything to retrieve its position, though she has strong opinions about Caddy's behaviour and her daughter Miss Quentin, who grows into an equally wayward and wilful girl.

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Mrs Compson shows a special favour to Jason, her second son. Jason is a rough, uncouth violent-tempered young man who works in a store but harbours high ambitions. He is an epitome of crass selfishness and unbridled greed. He regularly robs Miss Quentin of the money which Caddy sends to him for her upkeep, keeping everybody, including his mother in the dark about his evil doings. If the old parents are symbolic of the morass into which the family has sunk, Jason represents the final decline of the moral and cultural values of this family which has lost its centrifugal force. He is callous and called-hearted. He dreams of prospering on the money of others which he tries to obtain through cheating and dishonesty. Faulkner shows that Jason, the next head, after the death of his father and his brother, works his evil ways in his own family. There is a painful absence of love and affinity for anyone in his heart. Caddy, whom he dislikes for her independent personality, remains dependent upon Jason for her daughter's upkeep, but he robs of the portion of money which she sends to him.

In the novel, the other person who is emotionally dependent upon him is his mother. She has a great regard for him and pins all her hope on his abilities and thinks that whatever hopes this dissolving family entertains can be fulfilled by him alone. However, even she is not spared by him. He hustles her and takes possession of the keys by force. He keeps her in dark regarding how he has been using her for the money which he does not allow to reach Caddy's daughter. Towards this young and growing girl, his behaviour is one of brutal treatment and insult. He is domineering, crude and heartless, provoking Quentin into rebellion against his uncivilized ways. Though they live in the same house, Miss Quentin feels the atmosphere oppressive and insufferable. She belongs to the times that have changed and continue to change.

There is a lot of 'sound and fury' between Miss Quentin and Jason as the two represent a clamorous conflict between two opposite temperaments. Jason treats Caddy and her daughter the way that is dictated by the sharply declining level of culture of the community.

Jason's brother Quentin is perpetually surrounded by the gloomy and despairing ideas, living a life of weak-hearted withdrawal within himself. He has been offered the best advantage to get educated in Harvard University, for which a portion of the land belonging to Benjy is sold. However, Quentin is a man who is just incapable of making the best of the chances that are given to him. He lives among young men who are physically strong, arrogant and profligate. Quentin's worst aspect is revealed when he dreams of having incestuous physical relations with his sister Caddy. Her open, ill-concealed sexuality provokes rabid desires in him, and for the better part of his time, he keeps brooding over his imaginary relation with her. He even tells his father that it is he who has made her pregnant. His decision to commit suicide can be seen as the logical conclusion of a life that has been intrinsically weak, a mind that is completely debilitated and a personality that has lost touch with reality. Such an unhealthy and inward looking life can only wilt. With Quentin also, we see plenty of storm, sound and fury.

Caddy's daughter, Quentin is a perfect individual person who follows her mother's footsteps in going out with her boyfriend. She shows little sense of responsibility toward either her family members or preservation of the values of a family. She is slave to her whims and passions and has no affection for anyone. This, in short, is a family in which we observe plenty of drama on individual levels in terms of frustrated hopes that mark everybody's life. Each individual thinks only in terms of himself, but even in that pursuit of the self-interest, there is blundering and precipitous movement.

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5.4.2 *The Sound and the Fury*: A Tragic Novel

The entire subject-matter of this novel is projected in an unmistakable light. William Faulkner focuses his interest on the tragic implication that marks the life of south in the crucial juncture of its history. The author had lived in the region which was witnessing a decline in the standards of behaviour, the moral values and the sense of binding which he emphasized so vehemently in his Nobel Prize Ceremony speech. One must link this speech and sundry other expression of ideas recorded in various interviews and other occasions with what is presented in his novel.

His anti-racist stand and pronouncements are well-known which in the world of transition in the 1940s–50s was in the tune with the strengthening democratic spirit. His famous work *Intruder in the Dust* is unambiguously an anti-racist work.

It is the direct experiences with the demeaning systems of society exercising their crushing power over individual's freedom of choice and reducing him to a mere cog in the gigantic wheel of relentless exploitation, particular in racially sensitive South that the author became more responsive to the basic 'Christian virtues of self-respect and mutual respect, forgiveness of others as well as oneself, fortitude, a proper balance between humility and pride and charity' (William Van O' Connor: 150). This led him to the exploration of the essential bases of human relationships, those foundations which tragically lost their location in the troubled times of the early twentieth-century.

Though his novels tell the tales of decline of families that come into contact with the trends of a changing world, the inner anxieties go beyond the particular drama and touch the subject of humanistic values. The extraordinary merit of *The Sound and the Fury* lies in the perfect harmony between form and theme, which the author achieved by sheer exercise of his literary genius. It tells the tale of the Compson family; already in its final stage of disintegration and for that a peculiar sense of time, where past and present have spilled over the barriers, is used. The story is narrated in four stages, employing the viewpoints of three separate characters. However, despite the seemingly repetitive re-run of the story, there is a peculiar freshness in each narration; as the characters are different, hence, their contexts are different.

From the very beginning, the feeling that the Compson family is in crisis, that it is falling apart is conveyed with vividness. The children appear to be already homeless, though not in the literal sense. The old, invalid mother is locked up in her house in a perfect isolation 'with a hot water bottle and her Bible, and the father locks himself up in the den with a nice big bottle of whiskey'. The life is far from sunny and cheerful; with no prospect of improvement, which is almost hopelessly absent. The three brothers in a first person account narrate their past at different stages in the novel. The novel begins with the narrative of Benjy (Benjamin) who is mentally challenged and the youngest son of the family. Mostly, he is seen roaming around on the margins of the town which is located in Mississippi area, where he sees golfers busy with their games and yelling 'Caddies' now and then. To Benjy, the word recalls Caddy (Cadence), the loving sister who is married and gone, but played a large role in Benjy's life; remembering her, he becomes agitated emotionally.

At this time, 7 April 1928, he is thirty years old. His memories are incoherent and unconnected, more in the form of sense-impressions and lack of continuity of sequence. This makes the entire section a mass of episodes or incidents which freely move backward and forward across the past and the present. Faulkner shows a fine-tuned artistic sense in portraying Benjy's inner state of psychological response to the agitated emotional

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condition occasioned by the memories of his sister. He devises a technique of narration which relies mostly on stream-of-consciousness method. Very few authors have shown complete mastery and easeful handling of it. Faulkner has proved to be a master par excellence in it. We come to know the meaning of his relationship with Caddy and his great emotional dependence on it through various recollections coming to surface in a haphazard manner. His pain and desolation are brought out most touchingly at differently stages when he is shown slobbering and yelling aloud.

His existence in a shadowy world of memories and swirling mental impression puts him in a different situation from that of the others. He is the subject of everybody's sympathy and pity, but it is only Caddy, and to some extent Dilsey, who takes special care of this utterly dependent person. He feels a reassuring experience of comfort in their company. Besides these, there are other things that give him support, such as the mirror on the wall, the sight of the fire and the golfers whom he sees busy playing in the field. This section also reveals Benjy's special gift of the sixth sense—a power to sense the impending or imminent crisis which is looming over the family. No one shows this talent, but living, perhaps, on a level of instinctual knowledge, Benjy works his way more through the animal like reliance on extra-sensory signals than a calculated reasoning manner like any other human being. The entire first section is presented through the eyes of Benjy. It contains those perceptual makers and vision frames which are his especial possession; hence, the wandering, jumbled and chaotic accumulation of impressions are difficult for the unprepared readers to comprehend.

Caddy is represented in the novel as a freedom-loving girl. 'It is Caddy who climbs the tree to see what is going on in the household at her grandfather's funeral. Caddy also functions as type of mother.' (Batra: 111). This unrestrained behaviour also suggests the crisis into which she is likely to get, as little precautions or vigilance is seen in her nature that would protect her from probable troubles. This is clearly seen in the incestuous desire which Quentin shows for her —a desire which remained frustratingly unfulfilled. It makes him a victim of self-accusations, guilt and other contrary tugs of emotions that drove him deeper into mystery. Quentin's lust for his own sister does no good to Caddy's reputation. Dalton represents the kind of danger she is exposed to. He meets her and makes her pregnant.

Dalton is a low-lying muscular, physically strong and bullying type of a man. As we know, he has a low opinion of women in general and abuses them. Quentin is quite unhappy about his relationship with Caddy, but Dalton tells him that Caddy would be made pregnant by someone else if it had not been him. Quentin quarrels with him, but Dalton is stronger and gives him a loaded revolver and drives him to shoot. However, the weak and utterly morbid Quentin falls unconscious without a fight. Later on, Dalton offers him his horse so that he would not have to walk all the long distance home. Dalton's role brings out the perfect debasement of the family at the hands of an outsider who not only seduces a girl of the family, but beats down any resistance to this shameful assault on family honour which may be put by any male member. It is not only Quentin who protests Caddy's affair with his man, but even Benjy in his weak-minded reaction tugs at her clothes when he finds them kissing. She attempts to calm down Benjy by assuring him that she will not repeat this again. Benjy may be jealous or angry or just outraged by his sisters' behaviour. However, his unconscious reaction is significant for the element of protest in it.

Caddy is also dumped by Herbert Head after marriage when he comes to know about the illegitimate child. She becomes a prostitute and sends money every month to

Jason for her daughter's upkeep. Caddy, the daughter of a famed and big family, is thus reduced to the level of the miserable and unworthy being, losing not only her own face but damaging the name of the family whose ultimate shame is symbolized by her total decline in a life of sin.

Caddy's affair with Dalton haunts Quentin all along. He goes to Harvard University for studies. Caddy's fate weighs down heavily on his heart. He considers both Herbert Head and Dalton Ames as the destroyers of his beloved sister. Besides, his own sexual fixation on her does not tolerate the idea of someone else taking possession of her sexually. She spins a web of charm around his thoughts, making him more and more miserable so that ultimately he sees no way out of this condition and he decides to commit suicide. He decides to put an end to his life on 2 June 1910. However, several other unfortunate things happen to drive him to the mental brink. He has been accused of seducing a small Italian girl, though he is not at all guilty of it. He has a quarrel with his college mate named Gerald Bland whom he comes to identify with Dalton Ames, the seducer of Caddy. He receives sound thrashing at his hands. The day turns out to be full of bad developments and helps him in no way in mitigating his sense of loss. On the contrary, it brings a series of more humiliating experiences and, finally on the appointed day, he commits suicide.

As stated earlier, Benjy's life becomes desolate after Caddy's marriage. The sight of Caddy's slippers makes Benjy more aware of her absence. For Dilsey, the old faithful housekeeper, the house without Caddy and Quentin is heavy on her mind, and demanding her attention. She had been an important member of the family, as everyone from the old Mrs Compson to Benjy looks up to her for care and order at home. Dilsey feels that her responsibilities have doubled. Her central worry is to keep Benjy calm. Caddy is married, Quentin has committed suicide, father Compson is dead; Jason, the remaining brother becomes the head of the family. He is crook, a selfish person who is ready to go to any extent to achieve personal ends. It has already been pointed out that Jason dupes Caddy of the money she has been sending for her daughter Quentin's maintenance. He is interested in promoting his own interests and is prepared to go to any extent. He lives entirely for himself, feeling that everyone should agree with what he thinks, his utterance with sharp wit and sarcastic remarks. His conversation with the Sheriff is an example. He is also sardonic in his account of his father's funeral. Jason's role is to give a particular direction to the events, for he represents the inexorable force of crisis that does not brook any interference and will destroy anything which will come in his way.

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Check Your Progress

6. What does *Macbeth*, Act V, Scene V remind us of?
7. What is the biggest crisis faced by the Compson family?

5.5 ERNEST HEMINGWAY: A BRIEF BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Born at Oak Park, Illinois, in the summer of 1899, Ernest Hemingway is known to have condemned his middle-class parents for their conventional morality and values.

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Hemingway left home at a young age and became a newspaper reporter in Kansas City. He joined the Italian Red Cross in early 1918 where he served as an ambulance driver in Italy during the First World War. During his stay abroad, a couple of incidences in Hemingway's life became the source of inspiration, as portrayed by the characters of his work *A Farewell to Arms*. The first incidence was a mishap that took place on 8 July 1918, when a trench mortar shell struck Hemingway while he squat beyond the front lines with three Italian soldiers. Though the story was exaggerated over the years, it was a fact that when Hemingway was transferred to a hospital in Milan, he fell in love with Agnes von Kurowsky, a Red Cross nurse. Though there are divided opinions on the role played by Agnes in Hemingway's life and writing, there is a modest doubt that his relationship with her inspired the relationship between Lieutenant Henry and Catherine Barkley in his novel *A Farewell to Arms*.

After recovery, Hemingway worked as a reporter for many years. This helped him in improving his writing skills, where his style had clarity, precision and an emotional expression. In September 1921, Hemingway got married to Hadley Richardson, first of his four wives, and settled in Paris. Here, he made valuable connections with American expatriate writers that included names like Ezra Pound and Gertrude Stein. Hemingway's first collection of short stories, *In Our Time,* introduced Nick Adams, one of the Hemingway's favourite protagonists, whose difficult road from youth to maturity he chronicled. By then, Hemingway's reputation as a writer was firmly established by the publication of *The Sun Also Rises* (1926) and *A Farewell to Arms* (1929).

A Farewell to Arms is considered to be Hemingway's most accomplished novel that gives a powerful description of life, during and just after the First World War. The novel also maps the psychological complexities of its characters with the aid of revolutionary and pared-down prose style.

In 1952, regardless of bouts of depression, Hemingway wrote the novel *The Old Man and the Sea.* Hemingway's novel received the Pulitzer Prize in May 1952, and he was awarded the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1954. On 2 July 1961, Hemingway committed suicide at his home in *Ketchum, Idaho*.

Ernest Hemingway

Hemingway was brought up in Oak Park, Illinois. He joined the Italian front to get recruited with the World War I ambulance drivers. In 1918, he was seriously wounded and returned home. His wartime experiences formed the basis for his novel *A Farewell*

to Arms. He divorced his first wife Hadley Richardson in 1927. After this, he married Pauline Pfeiffer, whom he divorced after returning from the Spanish Civil War where he had been a journalist. Following this, he wrote *For Whom the Bell Tolls*. He married Martha Gellhorn as his third wife in 1940. However, they too got separated when he met Mary Welsh in London during World War II. Hemingway was present at the Normandy Landings and the liberation of Paris.

Soon after *The Old Man and the Sea* was published in 1952, Hemingway went on safari to Africa, where he was almost killed in two successive plane crashes that left him in pain and ill health for almost the rest of his life. Hemingway had permanent residences in Key West, Florida (1930s) and Cuba (1940s and 1950s), and in 1959, he bought a house in Ketchum, Idaho, where he committed suicide in the summer of 1961.

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Important works of Ernest Hemingway

- ***The Torrents of Spring* (1926):** *The Torrents of Spring* is a novella, which was published in 1926. The novel was subtitled as *A Romantic Novel in Honor of the Passing of a Great Race*. Hemingway used the work as a satire of the world of writers. It is Hemingway's first long work and was written as an imitation of Sherwood Anderson's *Dark Laughter*.
- ***The Sun Also Rises* (1926):** *The Sun Also Rises* is a 1926 novel. It is about a group of American and British expatriates who travel from Paris to the Festival of San Fermín in Pamplona to watch the running of the bulls and the bullfights. An early and enduring modernist novel, it received mixed reviews upon publication. Hemingway's biographer Jeffrey Meyers writes that it is 'recognized as Hemingway's greatest work'. Moreover, Hemingway's scholar Linda Wagner-Martin calls it his most important novel. The novel was published in October 1926 in the United States. In 1927, the London publishing house Jonathan Cape published the novel with the title of *Fiesta*. Since then, it has been continuously in print.

  The basis for the novel was Hemingway's 1925 trip to Spain. The setting was unique and memorable, showing the seedy café life in Paris, and the excitement of the Pamplona festival, with a middle section devoted to descriptions of a fishing trip in the Pyrenees. Equally unique was Hemingway's spare writing style, combined with his restrained use of description to convey characterizations and action, which became known as the Iceberg Theory. Additionally, Hemingway investigates the themes of love, death, renewal in nature, and the nature of masculinity.
- ***A Farewell to Arms* (1929):** *A Farewell to Arms* is a novel set during the Italian campaign of World War I. The book was published in 1929. It is a first-person account of American Frederic Henry, serving as a Lieutenant (Tenente) in the ambulance corps of the Italian Army. The title is taken from a poem by sixteenth century English dramatist George Peele.

  A Farewell to Arms focuses on a romance between the expatriate American Henry and Catherine Barkley, whose nationality is described as English or Scottish, against the backdrop of the First World War, cynical soldiers, fighting and the displacement of populations. The publication of this, Hemingway's bleakest novel, paved his importance as a modern American writer. It became his first best-seller, and is described by biographer Michael Reynolds as 'the premier American war novel from that debacle World War I'.

  The novel was first adapted to stage by Laurence Stallings in 1930, then to film in 1932, with a 1957 remake.
- ***To Have and Have Not* (1937):** *To Have and Have Not* is a 1937 novel about Harry Morgan, a fishing boat captain who runs contraband between Cuba and Florida. The novel depicts Harry as basically a good man who is forced into black-market activity by economic forces beyond his control. At first, his fishing charter customer Mr

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Johnson tricks Harry by slipping away without paying any of the money he owes him. Harry then makes a critical decision to smuggle Chinese immigrants into Florida to make ends meet. To continue supporting his family, Harry begins to regularly ferry different types of illegal cargo between the two countries, including alcohol and Cuban revolutionaries. The Great Depression features prominently in the novel, forcing depravity and hunger on the poor residents of Key West who are referred to as 'Conchs'.

- ***For Whom the Bell Tolls* (1940):** *For Whom the Bell Tolls* is a novel published in 1940. It tells the story of Robert Jordan, a young American in the International Brigades attached to a republican guerrilla unit during the Spanish Civil War. As a dynamiter, he is assigned to blow up a bridge during an attack on the city of Segovia. Hemingway's biographer Jeffrey Meyers writes that the novel is regarded as one of Hemingway's best works, along with *The Sun Also Rises*, *The Old Man and the Sea* and *A Farewell to Arms*.
- ***Across the River and into the Trees* (1950):** *Across the River and Into the Trees* is a novel published by Charles Scribner's Sons in September 1950. Prior to publication by Scribner's, the novel was serialized in *Cosmopolitan* magazine. The title is derived from the last words of Confederate General Thomas J. (Stonewall) Jackson.

  A central theme in the novel is death and how one faces death. One biographer and critic sees a parallel between Hemingway's *Across the River and Into the Trees* and Thomas Mann's *Death in Venice*. Generally, critics agree that the novel is built upon successive layers of symbolism. As in his other writings, Hemingway uses the style known as the Iceberg theory in which much of the substance of the work lies below the surface of the plot itself.

  The novel was written in Italy, Cuba and France. *Across the River and Into the Trees* was the first of Hemingway's novels to receive consistently bad press and reviews. In the years since its publication, however, some critics have come to believe it is an important addition to the Hemingway canon.
- ***The Old Man and the Sea* (1952):** *The Old Man and the Sea* is a novel published in 1952. It was the last major work of fiction to be produced by Hemingway and published in his lifetime. It is one of his most famous works, which centres upon Santiago, an aging fisherman who struggles with a giant marlin far out in the Gulf Stream. *The Old Man and the Sea* was awarded the Pulitzer Prize for Fiction in 1953 and was cited by the Nobel Committee as contributing to the awarding of the Nobel Prize in Literature to Hemingway in 1954.
- ***Islands in the Stream* (1970, posthumous):** *Islands in the Stream* (1970) is the first of the posthumously published works of Ernest Hemingway. The book was originally intended to revive Hemingway's reputation after the negative reviews of *Across the River and Into the Trees*. He began writing it in 1950 and advanced greatly through 1951. The work, rough but seemingly finished, was found by Mary Hemingway from among 332 different works Hemingway left behind after his death. The novel was meant to encompass three stories to illustrate different stages in the life of its main character, Thomas Hudson. The three different parts of the novel were originally to be entitled *The Sea When Young*, *The Sea When Absent* and *The Sea in Being*. These titles were changed, however, into what are now its three acts: *Bmiini*, *Cuba* and *At Sea*.
- ***The Garden of Eden* (1986, posthumous):** *The Garden of Eden* is the second posthumously released novel, published in 1986. Begun in 1946, Hemingway worked on the manuscript for the next fifteen years, during which time he also wrote *The Old Man and the Sea*, *The Dangerous Summer*, *A Moveable Feast* and *Islands in the Stream*. The novel is fundamentally the story of five months in the lives of David Bourne, an American writer, and his wife Catherine. It is set mainly in the French Riviera, specifically in the Côte d'Azur, and in Spain. The story begins with their honeymoon in the Camargue. The Bournes soon meet a young woman named Marita,

with whom they both fall in love, but only one can ultimately have her. David starts an affair with Marita, while his relationship with his wife deteriorates. The story continues until the apparent separation of David and Catherine.

- ***True at First Light* (1999, posthumous):** *True at First Light* is a book about Hemingway's 1953–54 East African safari with his fourth wife Mary, released posthumously in his centennial year in 1999. The book received mostly negative or lukewarm reviews from the popular press and sparked a literary controversy regarding how, and whether, an author's work should be reworked and published after his death. Unlike critics in the popular press, Hemingway scholars generally consider *True at First Light* to be complex and a worthy addition to his canon of later fiction.

  In the book, Hemingway explores conflict within a marriage, the conflict between the European and native cultures in Africa, and the fear a writer feels when his work becomes impossible. The book includes descriptions of his earlier friendships with other writers and digressive ruminations on the nature of writing.

Source: Wikipedia

Check Your Progress

8. Who was Ernest Hemingway?
9. Where was he born?

5.6 *A FAREWELL TO ARMS:* CHARACTERS, THEMES, MOTIFS AND SYMBOLS

In this section, we will analyse the characters, themes, motifs and symbols of the novel *A Farewell to Arms.*

5.6.1 Analysis of Primary Characters in the Novel

The primary characters in the novel are as follows:The primary characters in the novel are as follows:

- **Lieutenant Frederic Henry:** The novel's narrator and protagonist, Henry is a young American ambulance driver in the Italian army during the First World War. Henry's quiet stoicism is evident in the manner he conducts his military duties. Though he has no faith on abstract terms like 'glory' and 'heroism', he displays courage in the battle. These terms have no value to him and he is portrayed as a realist rather than an idealist. His life is mundane until he meets the love of his life, Catherine Barkley.
- **Catherine Barkley:** Catherine Berkley is the beautiful nurse and the female protagonist of the novel. The opening of the novel portrays her sorrow for her dead fiancé. In order to forget the tragic event, she gets into a playful and reckless game of love with Henry. Her feelings for him, however, soon change and she becomes his lifelong companion.
- **Rinaldi:** Henry's closest friend and a surgeon in the Italian army, Rinaldi is wry, naughty and oversexed. His primary interest lies in seducing beautiful women, though he was an efficient and skilled doctor.

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- **The priest:** Often at the wrong end of the soldier's jokes, the kind young priest is employed by the Italian army to provide spiritual guidance to young officers. He responds to the soldier's jokes in his usual good-natured manner. The author challenges abstract but popular notions of honour, glory and loyalty through Henry's conversations with the priest.
- **Helen Ferguson:** She is Catherine's beloved friend and a nurse's aide in the American hospital. Her outburst at Catherine and Henry's 'immoral' affair portrays her as an unhappy and lonely woman.
- **Miss Gage:** An American nurse who helps Henry to recover at Milan. She soon becomes Henry's friend as she is easy-going and unorthodox. They are shown to share a drink and a few gossips.
- **Miss Van Campen:** The superintendent at the American hospital, Miss Van Campen is cold, strict and unpleasant. She dislikes Henry and maintains a distance from him.
- **Dr Valentini:** A stoic and aggressive doctor who operates upon Henry immediately, thereby rubbishing the claims of other surgeons that Henry would have to wait for his operation for six months. The novel celebrates the self-confidence and assurance that the character portrays.
- **Count Greffi** The ninety-four year old count represents a mature version of the protagonist, Henry. Though he dismisses the label 'wise', he lives his life according to his own terms. In the novel, Henry values him as a father-figure.
- **Ettore Moretti:** Moretti is a soldier in the Italian army just like Henry. He is an obnoxious braggart who instigates people to fight. He pursues the glory and honour that war veterans believe in and Henry despises.
- **Gino:** Henry meets this young Italian in a devastated village. His patriotism is sharply contrasted with Henry's antagonism towards war.
- **Ralph Simmons:** Simmons is an opera student and the first person Henry meets after fleeing the battle. He provides Henry with civilian clothes so that the latter could venture to Switzerland without drawing any suspicion.
- **Emilio:** A bartender in Stresa, Emilio helps Henry and Catherine unite after the war.
- **Bonello:** Henry's subordinate ambulance driver, who shows his ruthlessness by unloading a pistol on an uncooperative engineer who was already been shot by Henry.

We will now analyse in detail the primary characters in the novel in the subsequent sections.

Frederic Henry

Henry portrays himself as a man of duty whenever he explains his experience in war. He is someone who just keeps to his duties as a soldier and does not bathe in the vainglory that war-mongering fetches. He despises the aftermath of war, and even after being mortally wounded, does not pursue a medal of distinction. Through his conversations with the priest, Ettore Moretti, and Gino, he proclaims his apathy for nonfigurative notions of war, honour, glory, patriotism, etc. These to him are no more significant than the names of cities he has fought in and the streets he has seen decimated. While we notice the nonchalance and unexcited behaviour of Henry in the perspective of war, he surprises

s with his passion for Catherine. It seems as if she is the remedy to him for war; an ntidote, maybe to the hatred he has for war. Initially, he only looks forward to a night's imple pleasures with her, just like his friend, Rinaldi. However, he returns to her, not for he physical attraction, but for a passion he has never known before. We get to see a udden vulnerability, earlier hidden by his stoicism and masculinity, in his love for Catherine; e swears his love for her even when she asks him to stop playing around. The words he ses to describe her hair and her presence in bed is enough to vouch for his genuine ntentions for her. The power of the pathos of an elegy that is evident in his narration fter Catherine's death suffuses the whole novel; probably, this was the author's intention f using Henry as a narrator of the novel.

Catherine Barkley

Hemingway's portrayal of female characters has always come under scanner; more so after the genre of feminism rose to prominence. Women readers have openly criticized him as a novelist who likes to keep his women in traditional garbs. Literary critic Leslie A. Fiedler has mentioned that his portrayal of women may be divided into two vivid categories. First, being a dominant shrew, such as the character of Lady Brett in *The Sun Also Rises*, and secondly, the overtly submissive, such as Catherine in the novel in discussion. Fiedler also maintains that Hemingway is clearly uncomfortable portraying his women characters. He is smarter while handling the men. He stays in comfortable domain with his women and retreats into uncomplicated stereotypes. Catherine surrenders to blissful domesticity, particularly at the novel's end, which is evident with lines like, 'I'm having a child and that makes me contented not to do anything'. This hardly goes down well with feminists and progressive women readers who get rankled at reading such a stereotypical suggestion to a bygone era where women were happy in the traditional roles of a homemaker.

Though Catherine's desire to lead the proverbial happy life often makes her look archetypal, she cannot be denied her moments of grandeur as well. She alludes herself as slightly 'crazy' in her initial days with Henry, though she is aware that they have no serious relationship. She is aware that her feelings for him are primarily physical and that she is using him to keep the memories of his dead fiancé at bay. She capably draws a line and does not wield when Henry claims that he loves her. She tells him that she had had enough for the night and that this love of his is nothing but a lie. She doubts his love and tells him that she imagines that dreadful things are awaiting them and that she would never be able to love her baby as she had never loved anyone truly. This scepticism that she professes about love and their future together may be reflections of a mind of the war-torn social conditions. Though her inner conflicts and their intensities are always open to debate, her loyalty to Henry is absolute. She is a loving, dedicated woman whose desire and ability for a redemptive, otherworldly love makes her the inevitable victim of tragedy.

Rinaldi

An unbelievable womanizer, Rinaldi serves an important function in the novel. Hemingway often celebrates this kind of masculinity, where a man lives life on his own terms, living boldly and truly. Rinaldi professes his love for Catherine when the novel opens, but soon claims that he is relieved that he is not tied down with the emotional baggage that a women's love brings along. He regularly visits brothels, and at one point of time, Henry maintains that he will succumb to syphilis. Though there is no sermonizing in this statement, Hemingway presents this with an air of detached morality. Rinaldi dominates the other minor male characters.

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5.6.2 Themes, Motifs and Symbols in the Novel

Themes

Themes are the primary and often universal ideas explored in a literary work.

(i) Grim reality of war

The title of the novel makes it obvious that the novel primarily deals with war and its aftermath. This is evident by the way Henry's life is affected by war and the manner in which he abhors war. Gino and Moretti support the author to bring out the vagaries of war. Though Gino is naïve and Moretti a braggart, they are the only ones who have their own glorious notions of war; most of the other characters remain inconclusive about the war. Through evocative scenes such as the Italian army's retreat, Hemingway paints masterful pictures of the mindless brutality and violent chaos caused by war. The soldiers' nerves, minds and capacity of rational judgment crumble along with the columns of men. The engineer, who is shot by Henry due to the uncooperative behaviour of the former, mostly upsets readers as, through this violent act, he deviates from his usual calm and detached self; and second, the setting of the scene robs it of its moral import as the conniving fellow soldiers legitimize the murder. The legitimizing of the act is seen to justify the spiralling disorder and hatred that the war has brought in. Through these brutal incidents, Hemingway suggests that the war is nothing but an extension of the dark, murderous addendum to the world that refuses to acknowledge and protect humanity and love.

(ii) Relationship of love and pain

In this novel, the author offers a deep, sombre meditation on the relationship between love and war. The game of seduction that Catherine plays with Henry soon turns into a serious affair of the heart for both. She initiated this game because she was mourning for her dead fiancé and desperately wished to forget him. Henry and Catherine start finding solace in each other from the things that plague them in this world. Henry's passion for Catherine is so strong that he flees the war and looks for her. Once they are reunited, they start planning an idyllic life that could salvage them from the horrors of war. They become each other's social, psychological and emotional healing amidst the Swiss mountainside. The tragedy of the novel lies in the fact that their genuine love can only be temporary in this cruel world.

Motifs

Motifs are persistent structures, contrasts or literary devices that can help to develop and inform the text's major themes.

(i) Masculinity

Hemingway's novels almost always celebrate a swaggering, virile, domineering and supremely confident masculine power. In *A Farewell to Arms*, some of the minor characters portray a fine example of manhood. While Dr Valentini exudes virility as an expert surgeon that poses as competition to Rinaldi's womanizing, Rinaldi proves to be a faithful friend. Bonello, who shoots the fleeing engineering sergeants, has a touch of cruelty that sort of pervades the entire novel. Hemingway has almost always used humour, if not contempt to portray their opposite characters. The success of these men depends on the failure of the other. Rinaldi attacks the guileless priest, thereby establishing his manhood; the overly cautious, almost mousy three surgeons challenge Dr Valentini's reputation by refuting Henry's claims to an early operation.

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(ii) Games and divertissement

The novel abounds in games, intrigues and divertissement which we notice right from the opening of the novel. Catherine and Henry start flirting with each other in order to forget their personal troubles. Flirting helps Henry to 'drop the war' and also diverts Catherine's thoughts from her fiancé. Henry blocks out the worrying thoughts of his return to the front by attending horse races with Catherine. Ironically, his involvement with Catherine becomes the reason for his suffering. Though the war turns out to be a primary divertissement for him, he tries to forget the pain of being separated from his lover while playing pool with Count Greffi. When Catherine tells him not to think about her when he was in the front, he tells her, 'That's how I worked it at the front. But there was somewhat to do then.' Hemingway portrays the temporariness of happiness by using the war and pain as divertissements in the novel. Though happiness is temporary, it is imperative human nature to pursue it. The count claims that though love is a pleasurable pastime, he is well-aware of its vagaries to fall in love with a lady. He hedges against the transitory character of love by finding pleasure and amusement in games, birthday parties, and the taking of 'a little stimulant'. That one can depend on their simple pleasures lends games and divertissement a definite dignity; while they may not match up to the nobility of pursuits such as love, they prove quietly constant.

(iii) Loyalty versus abandonment

The ideas of loyalty and abandonment apply equally well to love and war. Hemingway suggests that one should be loyal to one's love than to war and political causes. While Henry is portrayed as a serious soldier, he does not attach false importance to unreal notions of glory and honour. Though he shoots an uncooperative sergeant who fails to comply with his orders, his reaction needs to be treated as a violent outcome of the all-pervasive nature of war, rather than a personal failure. He eventually follows in the fleeing engineer's footsteps and deserts his regimen. At times, he feels guilty that he has abandoned his regimen when it needed him, his supreme loyalty lay in being true to Catherine. Hemingway wished to impart upon his readers his take on loyalty and abandonment—for him, these are not the opposite ends of an ethical spectrum, but the practical priorities of an individual life.

(iv) Illusions and fantasies

The novel begins with a sense of illusion and fantasy. When the protagonists meet for the first time, they create the illusion of falling in love with each other. While Catherine seeks solace in Henry from the death of her fiancé, Henry fantasizes about her when he is away, thereby urging himself to fall in love with Catherine. Their relationship, at the initial stage, was absolutely artificial and based on illusions and fantasies. Henry is reminded by Catherine that the love they have is nothing but flirting. He is sent away many times by her once she has her fill for the night. When he gets injured at war, the care and tenderness that he experiences from her transforms his feelings for her to love. His love begins to sustain him through his journey through recuperation. It blossoms into an almost surreal passion.

The couple is genuinely passionate about each other; however, they never escape the temptation of dreaming of a better world. The boundary between actuality and illusion blurs often. After Henry and Catherine have spent months in the desolate Switzerland, Hemingway depicts their relationship as a mixture of reality and illusion. Boredom had started to set in, and the couple effects small daily changes to reinvigorate their lives and their passion: Catherine gets a new haircut, Henry sports a beard. Still the

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relative dullness of real, mundane life makes them turn to fantasies of a more perfect existence. They dream of life on a Swiss mountain, where they will make their own clothes and require nothing but each other, suggesting that fantasizing is a part of coping with the banal, sometimes damaging effects of reality.

Symbols

Symbols are objects, typescript, figures or colours used to represent abstract ideas or concepts.

(i) Rain

Throughout the novel, the symbol of rain has been used as a potent symbol of disintegration of the happiness of life. When Catherine and Henry lie on the bed, listening to the storm growing larger every minute, Catherine admits her fear of the rain. She says that the rain has a potential of ruining everything in life. Her fears prove prophetic as they are eventually doomed. Catherine dies on a rainy day and Henry walks in the rain as he banishes the thoughts of missing her from her heart. The rain may also be understood as a symbol of the bleak future that he faces without his lover to support him anymore. Catherine's anxiety over rain finds its destiny in the tragic separation of the lovers forever, confirming the fact that like everything else, great love too, cannot last forever.

(ii) Catherine's hair

Catherine's hair serves as an important symbol in the novel, though not recurrent. In the initial days of their relationship, when the lovers were in bed, Catherine had untied her hair and let it cascade around Henry's face. Henry remembers the inside of a tent or the seclusion of the waterfall. The lovely description that Henry provides of Catherine's hair stands as a symbol of their isolation from the world. The hair acts as a protective covering that secures Henry from the rest of the world. It also stands for temporariness and fragility of life. When they are cut off from the rest of the world and live peacefully in Switzerland, they learn the harsh lesson that love is as ephemeral as life.

Check Your Progress

10. What are the themes, motifs and symbols used in the novel?
11. How is masculinity used as a motif in the novel?

5.7 DETAILED SUMMARY AND ANALYSIS OF THE NOVEL *A FAREWELL TO ARMS*

In this section, we will go through a detailed summary and analysis of the novel under discussion.

Chapters I–V

Chapter I

The novel opens with a description of the small Italian village where Lieutenant Henry, the narrator, lives. It is the summer during the First World War; troops often march

down the road and officers pass in 'small gray motor cars'. Henry speculates that one of the fast-moving cars may carry the king, who travels out of the palace almost every day to assess the battle. As winter approaches, an outbreak of cholera sweeps out about seven thousand soldiers.

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Chapter II

The second chapter opens with Henry's unit moving to the city of Gorizia, away from the actual scenes of the fight. The life in Gorizia is relaxed and pleasant. The buildings are still undamaged and there are cafés and two brothels in the city; one for the officers and the other for enlisted soldiers. Henry sits in the mess hall one day, with a group of fellow officers who declare that the war is over as there is snowfall. They are disrespectful of religion and taunt the priest with their crude remarks about sex. A captain jokingly tells him not to horse around in the presence of ladies. This makes the priest blush. The officers then discuss Henry's travel routes and the priest urges him to visit the Abruzzi region, where his family stays. However, others tell him to visit Palermo, Capri, Rome, Naples or Sicily. The conversation then moves towards opera singers and the group proceeds toward the brothels to spend their night.

Chapter III

The chapter opens with Henry describing his trip to his roommate and fellow lieutenant Rinaldi. He tells Rinaldi that he has travelled all over Italy, and Renaldi comments that travel is no longer necessary to seek beautiful women. Here we get the first glimpse of the larger-than life, womanizing character of Rinaldi. Rinaldi further informs Henry that he has fallen in love with a beautiful young nurse, Catherine Berkley. Henry lends Rinaldi some money so that he could impress the woman as having come from a moneyed background. During dinner, Henry tries to calm the priest who feels hurt that Henry did not visit Abruzzi. A drunken Henry tries to explain the situation as best as he can; the chapter ends with the soldiers picking on the priest again.

Chapter IV

Awakened by a battery of guns, Henry goes to the garage and chats briefly with the mechanics working on the ambulances. When he returns to his room, Rinaldi asks him to come along so that he could be introduced to the nurse. At the British hospital, Rinaldi talks to Helen Ferguson, another nurse, while Henry gets acquainted with the beautiful Catherine Berkley. He is struck by his beauty and especially her beautiful, long blond hair. She carries with her a stick that resembles a 'toy riding-crop', which when enquired, is revealed to be her deceased fiancé's who was killed in the Battle of Somme. She, in turn, asks him whether he has ever fallen in love; he replies that he has not. On their way back home, Rinaldi maintains that Catherine likes Henry to him.

Chapter V

The chapter opens with Henry calling on Catherine the next day. At the British hospital, he is told by the head nurse that Catherine's duty would not be over before the evening, so she would be unable to meet him in the morning. She also expresses surprise at the fact that an American has joined the Italian army. While driving back home along the trenches, Henry surveys if the road can be used for an offensive at a later date. After dinner, he returns to talk to Catherine, whom he finds with Helen. Helen leaves them alone and the duo talk about Catherine's job. They decide to 'drop the war' as a subject of conversation. When he puts his hand around her, she initially resists but later agrees.

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However, when he attempts to kiss her, she slaps him. Henry notes, with laughter, that their little drama has taken them away from the talk of war. Catherine lets Henry kiss her and starts crying, saying that 'We're going to have a strange life'. Rinaldi comments on his romantic glow when Henry returns home.

Analysis: Chapters I–V

Hemingway's bold, declarative, pared-down prose style has changed the tenor of twentieth century American fiction than any other author. His is a clear departure from the Victorian baroque style that was considered the signature of the high literature; the booklovers of the 1920s and 1930s considered his writings to be purely experimental. Though the first chapter is short, it has probably one of the best descriptive sceneries of American literature. Hemingway sketches the description with a detached, journalistic prose style which is emotionally poignant too: 'The trunks of the trees too were dusty and the leaves fell early that year and we saw the troops rally along the road and the dust rising...' With relatively few but remarkably precise details, Hemingway captures life on the battlefront of a little Italian town during the First World War.

CHAPTERS VI–IX

Chapter VI

Henry decides to visit Catherine again after spending two days at the posts. On asking him whether he loves her or not, Henry says yes to her. On hearing this, Catherine requests Henry to address her by her name and not by her surname. After this, both of them take a stroll in the garden and kiss each other. Although he said yes to her, Henry is aware that he does not love her and thinks her to be 'probably a little crazy'. He also realizes that he is a complicated game of love. Catherine takes him by a surprise when she says, 'This is a rotten game we play, isn't it?' Following this, he persuades her to kiss him but she breaks away suddenly from the kiss and sends him away. Henry's loving confusion is sensed by Rinaldi. He feels relieved not to get involved with a British nurse.

Chapter VII

The following afternoon, while driving back from his post, Henry picks up a soldier suffering from hernia. The soldier discloses that he does not want to return to the front and so he threw away his truss—a support for a hernia. He dreads to face his commanding officer. On hearing this, Henry asks the man to bump his head on the wall to get admitted in the hospital and therefore avoid facing his commander. The soldier does as Henry says and thus earns a visit to the hospital. Henry, however, thinks about the impending attack which is scheduled to start in two days. He aspires to be with Catherine and enjoy a first-class wine in Milan. During dinner, the men drink and make fun of the priest. As Henry is heavily drunk, Rinaldi takes him to the hospital and feeds him coffee beans to sober him up. At the nurses' cottage, Henry is informed by the nurse Helen Fergusan that Catherine is not well and does not want to see him. On hearing this, Henry feels very 'lonely and hollow'.

Chapter VIII

On the following day, Henry hears of an attack which was scheduled for that night. Henry asks his car driver to stop on seeing cars passing the British hospital on their way to the front. He rushes into the hospital and requests to see Catherine. He tells her that is off for 'a show' and she should not worry. Catherine gives him a medal of St. Anthony

with the wish to protect him on the front. Henry comes back to the car and the group moves towards Pavla, where the war is scheduled to take place.

Chapter IX

While on his way to Pavla, Henry observes that trenches are filled with artillery and Austrian observation balloons hang ominously above them. The soldiers are installed in a dugout, where the conversation veers towards the ending of the war. As the soldiers are hungry, Henry and a fellow ambulance driver gets some cold macaroni and a slab of cheese from the nearest wound-dressing station. While they are eating, suddenly heavy shelling begins. There is 'a flash, as when a blast-furnace door is swung open'. Henry finds his two fellow soldiers, Passini and Gordini dead by a trench mortar and finds himself unable to breathe. He is carried to the wound-dressing station, where a British doctor tends to his broken leg. He is later sent to the hospital.

Analysis: Chapters VI–IX

These chapters serve the purpose of bringing out the supreme indifference that Henry has for the war. The Italian army is not taken seriously by Catherine and the other British nurses. Being a part of this army, Henry is detached and nonchalant about the ravages of war. He says that the war does 'not have anything to do with me'. The manner in which he helps the soldier with the hernia to deceive the army and enter the hospital on the pretext of having been hurt, is a vivid example of his unpatriotic feelings and distaste for war. Through the display of such unacceptable behaviour, Henry proves once and again that he is not the perfect soldier. Though he is their senior, the other ambulance drivers openly discuss their negative opinions on the war and against Italy, in Henry's presence. He is not angered at the disregard these men show the country and defends the Italian army with a cool, philosophical manner. Henry's objective is ridiculous, pathetic and decidedly not heroic. This sight follows on the heels of a conversation in which the men maintain that 'war is not won by victory' amplifies the doubt cast upon romantic ideals such as glory and honour.

Henry's dealing with the other ambulance drivers in the battlefront portrays him as a stoic soldier. The manner in which he discusses victory and defeat is almost academic rather than passionate. He appears unresponsive to the sense of loss, fear and anger that fuels the Italians' arguments—indifferent even to whether he lives or dies. Opposed to this, his growing love for Catherine is beautifully juxtaposed by Hemingway. The thought of being with Catherine overwhelms him even when he prepares to face the offensive and go to the front. In a very beautiful, sensuous passage, Henry pictures himself and Catherine stealing away to a hotel, where she pretends that he is her dead lover: 'we would drink the capri and keep the door locked and with it hot and only a sheet and the entire night and we would both love each other all night in the hot night in Milan'. Even though his attachment to Catherine is, at this point, casual, Henry is beginning to develop feelings that expand beyond the game he plays with her. The sorrow that he feels when Helen Ferguson announces that Catherine is sick and cannot see him surprises him and hints at the depth of feeling, obligation and attachment of which this usually stoic soldier is capable.

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CHAPTERS X–XIII

Chapter X

The chapter opens with Henry lying in pain in the field hospital. When Rinaldi visits him at the hospital, he informs him that he (Henry) will be decorated for displaying tremendous courage in the face of adversity. He leaves a bottle of Cognac with Henry and promises to send Catherine to see him soon.

Chapter XI

The priest comes to visit Henry at dusk. He tells him that he misses him at the mess hall and gets a mosquito netting, a bottle of vermouth and English newspapers as gifts for which Henry is grateful. The men drink and talk about the war. Henry admits to hating it, and the priest theorizes that there are two types of men in the world: those who would make war and those who would not. Henry laments that 'the initial ones make [the second ones] do it . . . and I help them.' They discuss if ending the war is a genuine probability and whether this would bring any good out of it. The priest tells Henry that he knows that the latter is capable of true love; people who visit brothels are completely unaware of this kind of love, where one needs to give oneself completely to one human being. The priest maintains that he is sure Henry will find his love someday.

Chapter XII

Henry needs to be shifted to Milan for better treatment of his injured leg; the doctors are apprehensive of sending him there. However, they have to move him out of the hospital as they would require all the beds once the offensive begins afresh. Rinaldi and a major from Henry's company visit him the night before he moves to Milan. They tell him that America has just affirmed war on Germany, and the Italians are very excited and hopeful. Rinaldi asks if President Wilson will declare war on Austria, and Henry responds that Wilson will within days. The men get drunk, conversing on the war and life in Milan. Rinaldi informs Henry that Catherine will be going to serve at the army hospital in Milan. Henry sets off for Milan the next morning. He describes the train ride, throughout which he gets so drunk that he vomits on the floor.

Chapter XIII

Henry reaches the American hospital in Milan. He is in great discomfort as he is shifted to his room by the ambulance drivers. He rests for the day. The next day he meets a young nurse, Miss Gage and is visited by the supervisor of the hospital, Miss Van Campen. Henry and the supervisor take an instant dislike for each other. When Henry asks for wine along with his meals, he is informed that he would only be allowed alcohol after the doctor prescribes it. In the evening, Henry sends a porter for a few bottles of wine and the evening newspaper. At night, he is sent a glass of eggnog spiked with sherry by Miss Van Campen, and there is temporary truce between the two.

Analysis: Chapters X–XIII

Henry's disillusionment with the war is vividly portrayed through his stoicism against Rinaldi's excitement for his recommendation for decorations. He is unmoved even after being mortally wounded. Though no one wants to fight in wars, soldiers are expected to show unconditional patriotism towards the countries in the battlefield. Henry's conversation with Rinaldi furthers the expression of men's sympathy and care towards each other.

Loyalty, strength, resilience in the face of difficulty and a healthy sexual appetite—these are the age-old metaphor of masculinity that the novel celebrates.

In the light of Henry's indifference to decorations, it is interesting to note the arguable comparison between Hemingway's Henry and another Henry—Stephen Crane's Henry Fleming, the overzealous, glory-seeking character of *The Red Badge of Courage*. Towards the end of the masterpiece, which Hemingway greatly admired and included in his 1942 collection *Men at War: The Best War Stories of All Time*, Fleming's self-absorption change into a mature dignity. One can make a strong case that the stoic Frederic Henry is an outgrowth of this newly self-possessed and reputable Henry Fleming.

The priest acts as a perfect foil to the oversexed Rinaldi. He believes that deep love awaits Henry; the type of love that would prompt people to sacrifice one's self for the lover. This is absolutely distinctive from the visits to the brothels that Rinaldi advocates. Though Henry is sceptical of this true love, the serious turns that his love towards Catherine takes, makes the reader wait with bated breath for Henry to realize the intensity of his love. The characters in this novel are eternally seeking solace from the war-ravaged world. This solace has been shown to come from alcohol. Throughout the novel, drinking of wines and alcohol has been shown to be consumed. Henry too depends on alcohol. He arranges for bottles for himself when Miss Van Campen declines to keep his request of providing wine with food, as he feels alcohol will help him recover faster. The escape that alcohol gives is absolutely understandable, given the grim surroundings of the war-torn country. The novel now questions, through Henry and other characters who similarly dislike war, whether it is worth wasting one's life on warfare. Hemingway questions the authenticity of engaging in mindless warfare in romantic and philosophical manner. By portraying a hero who risks his life to top his pasta with cheese, he brings out the ridiculous nature of war. Likewise, once Henry arrives at the hospital in Milan, the reader witnesses an equally pathetic and ludicrous world in which clumsy ambulance drivers cannot manage the weight of a wounded soldier and inept nurses cry somewhat than care for their patients.

CHAPTERS XIV–XVII

Chapters XIV and XV

Miss Gage finds the vermouth bottle in Henry's room. While Henry panics that she might report this to the superintendent, she surprises him by asking the reason for him not to have called her to join him. She also informs him that Catherine has arrived at the hospital. Catherine comes to visit him and Henry realizes that he is actually in love with this woman. He pulls her onto bed with him and they make love for the first time. In the next chapter, doctors consult on his case and agree that they would have to wait for six months before they can operate on him. However, Dr Valentini, who is cheerful, competent and energetic and poses a perfect foil to the other three mousy doctors, arrives on the scene. Henry and the doctor have a drink together and the latter agrees to operate upon him the next day.

Chapter XVI and XVII

Henry and Catherine spend the night in his room. Henry is afraid that they might attract attention; Catherine relaxes him. In the morning, Catherine prepares him for the operation. Henry urges her to come to bed and Catherine declines. She tells him that the anesthesia will make him chatty, and he better not disclose their relation to anyone in his post-operative grogginess. She asks him how many women he has made love to till then. He

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replies that he had slept with none other than her. Though she knows he is lying, Catherine is pleased. Henry feels weak and sick after his operation. Henry develops affection for Helen Ferguson, who passes his notes to Catherine when she is on duty. She maintains that her friend is working rather hard and that she should get a few nights off from her duty. Henry speaks to Miss Gage, who arranges for her rest. The lovers spend a passionate night after a few days of rest.

Analysis: Chapters XIV–XVII

Just as the novel opens with a strong sympathy towards a strong, virile type of men, evident through the soldiers' quips for the pious priest, in Book Two, this trend is further strengthened. Hemingway describes the doctor who begins to diagnose Henry's injuries as 'a thin quiet little man who seemed disturbed by the war'. There is a self-assurance and stoicism in Henry that sets him apart from the mousy doctor who lacks the confidence to pronounce Henry's prognosis without first consulting his colleagues. Dr Valentini sharply contrasts this doctor with his good-natured gregariousness. He works hard, drinks hard and wears his sexual appetite on his sleeves. There seems to be a fraternal bond that Hemingway supports—of men fond of wine, women and good times—whether it is on the battlefield, in the bedroom or on the operating table.

Henry conforms to this kind of masculine ideal by rushing boldly into a passionate affair with Catherine. When she appears in his room, he is struck by her beauty and declares the depth of his love for her in: 'Everything turned over inside of me.' Henry's exchange with Catherine in Chapter XVI is incredibly powerful and suggestive. Through simple conversations, inquiring whom the other has loved and made love to, the line between game-playing and true passion begins to blur. Both Henry and Catherine feel more than they say or can say. Grief, fear and a profound desire to be protected from an antagonistic world are among the forces that bring them together. However, these confessions are beyond them; somewhat, they speak in basic unromantic terms:

'You've such a lovely temperature.'

'You've got a lovely everything.'

'Oh no! You have the lovely temperature. I'm awfully proud of your temperature.'

Hemingway rescues these apparently foolish lines from absurd sentimentality by establishing a multifarious psychological motivation for them. For Henry and Catherine, such foolishly romantic lines offer a respite from their war-torn world. Hemingway adopts this suggestive style of writing to maintain the decency that was required in a twentieth century novel. He hoped the readers would be able to read between the lines and get a hint that the lovers were discussing their first episode of physical relation here. Even though such scenes spared puritanical readers of details, the novel was plagued by charges of indecency. A public outcry in Boston, for example, led to the excision of such professed profanities as 'balls' from the novel.

CHAPTERS XVIII–XXI

Chapter XVIII and XIX

During summer, he learns to walk on crutches and the lovers enjoy their time together in Milan. Though the couple discuss marriage but Catherine retorts, 'I couldn't be anymore married' hinting that their stay together exemplifies the strong bond they have. Though

Catherine knows that she could get respite from the war once she marries, she refuses to get married to Henry. She pledges to be faithful to him saying that even if she is sure 'all sorts of dreadful things will happen to us', unfaithfulness is not one of them. The next chapter introduces the character of Moretti, an Italian from San Francisco, serving the Italian army. He is the epitome of patriotism and false war pride. Henry calls him a 'legitimate hero' but maintains that he is quite dull. When he arrives at the hospital, he chats with Catherine, who cannot stand Moretti; she prefers the quieter, English gentleman-type heroes. As the couple talks on into the night, it begins to rain. Catherine fears the rain, which she asserts is 'very hard on loving', and begins to cry until Henry comforts her.

Chapter XX and XXI

Henry and Catherine visit the races and bet on a horse. They win, though not satisfactorily. They then decide to observe the remaining races by themselves and away from the crowd. They both claim to feel better, or less lonely, when they are alone together. The next chapter opens with news that the Allied forces are taking a beating and will be defeated in the near future. Henry is granted another three weeks' of leave and would have to report to his post after that. Catherine surprises him by telling him that she is three months' pregnant. She promises not to bother him and wishes to travel with him. She also talks about the obstacles they would face. Henry tells her that cowards die many times before their death, while brave men die only once.

Analysis: Chapters 18–21

This part of the novel develops situations and the characters of the lovers fully. While in Book One, Catherine appeared to be an emotionally damaged woman on the lookout for companionship and protection, her character is fully shaped in Book Two, where her relation with Henry ventures beyond the ordinary and the mundane physical attraction. As Henry's mobility improves, they take a short trip outside the hospital, thereby getting to know each other better. The trip to the racetrack, for example, shows her fundamental independence: she would rather lose money on a horse that she herself chooses than win rooted on a tip. When she announces her pregnancy to Henry, she does so with trepidation as she does not want him to feel trapped. Though portrayed as an over-the-top romantic in the earlier chapters, here we get to see her steely resolve and love for freedom in the war-torn world. She assures Henry of her faithfulness though she does not want to be married to him. Though not as developed as Henry's character (which is a typical flaw in Hemingway's novel), her courage and determination show through these chapters.

Ettore Moretti brings Henry's character into greater focus by acting as a foil. The Italian-American soldier is boastful, ambitious and arrogant; he is quick to insult others and equally quick to sing his own praises. Henry, on the other hand, is reserved, detached and disciplined. Uninterested in the glory for which the army awards medals, Henry maintains a calm level-headedness that helps to convince the reader that his feelings for Catherine are indeed authentic.

Henry's words concerning cowards echo Julius Caesar's defiant utterance in Shakespeare's play *Julius Caesar:* 'Cowards die many times before their deaths;/ The valiant never taste of death but once' (II.ii.32–33). Henry, like Caesar, remains philosophical and unafraid in the face of potential peril. His inability to contextualize the reference suggests short-sightedness about the progress of his relationship with Catherine.

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CHAPTERS XXII–XXVI

Chapters XXII, XXIII and XXIV

The rain brings bad news for Henry: he is diagnosed with jaundice. Miss Van Campen accuses him of inviting the disease through his drinking binges. She clears away his stash of liquor bottles from the room. The next chapter opens with Henry's preparation of going to the front. He passes by a café, notices Catherine inside and beckons her to join him. When Henry observes, 'They're like us,' Catherine unhappily responds, 'Nobody is like us.' They go to a hotel to spend some time together. Henry asks her how she would cope with the baby; she reassures him that she will set up a cosy home for him to come and rest after the war is over. He arranges for a wagon to travel to the railway station. He urges Catherine to take care of herself and the baby. He argues with a Captain who protests against his bringing a machine-gunner to reserve a seat. Ultimately, he gives up his seat and sleeps on the floor.

Chapter XXV and XXVI

The chapter opens with Henry's arrival in the town of Gorizia. He looks for Rinaldi and thinks about Catherine while waiting for his friend. They discuss Henry's wound and his recuperation. Rinaldi maintains that he should not have been sent to the war. He also enquires if he has married to Catherine. They drink a toast to Catherine and go down to dinner. Rinaldi half-heartedly picks on the priest, trying to animate the almost deserted dining hall for Henry's sake. The mood in the dining hall is sober. Henry and the priest speculate if the war is going to end soon. The priest mentions that most of the soldiers have become 'gentle' these days; Henry retorts that probably the defeat has made the soldiers gentler.

Analysis: Chapters XXII–XXVI

Catherine's farewell to Henry has cast a dark shadow on the romantic idealism she professed earlier. Catherine's comment 'nobody is like us' betrays the pathos that was the base of their relation. By removing their relationship from the supercilious realm of idealized love, Hemingway makes Catherine and Henry's love for each other more real, more complicated and more convincing.

The lines of poetry that Henry speech marks are from Andrew Marvell's poem *To His Coy Mistress* (1681). The poem depicts a man addressing his lover and trying to convince her of his love. He tells her that the social norms of chastity and virginity are but fake in the face of imminent death. The poem intensifies the farewell scene between the couple. Catherine feels like a prostitute, sleeping with her lover, without the sanctions of marriage; buying costly lingerie for the purpose. She knows she is deeply in love with this man with whom she is willing to share her life, but remains satisfied as a lover. She quickly overcomes this feeling and actually wants to do 'something really sinful' with Henry. A sin, she imagines, would bring them nearer together by throwing them into sharper contrast with the outside world. As she says at the racetrack, she feels she is at her best and least lonely when she and Henry are alienated from everyone around them. The final lines of Marvell's poem evoke this feature of Catherine and Henry's relationship:

Let us roll all our strength, and all
Our sweetness, up into one ball:
And tear our pleasures with rough strife,
Through the iron gates of life.

Catherine wishes to unite with Henry against life's harsh realities and seeks comfort in a man she has long loved.

CHAPTERS XXVII–XXIX

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Chapter XXVII

This chapter begins with the news that Italian army is taking a beating. Gino tells Henry that Austrians have modern guns and would destroy the Italian army once they decide to attack. That night, it rains as the Italians are attacked by the Germans and the Austrians. The Italian army slowly starts falling back and moves back to the town of Gorizia. Henry notices that the prostitutes from the known brothels are being transferred in trucks. Bonello, one of the drivers working under Henry offers to go with the women. Henry comes to know that Rinaldi too has left for the hospital and everyone else is evacuated too.

Chapter XXVIII and XXIX

The men drive gradually through the town, forming an endless column of retreating soldiers and vehicles. Henry takes a turn sleeping; shortly after he wakes, the column stalls. Henry exits his vehicle to test out on his men. He discovers two engineering officers in Bonello's car and two women with Aymo. The girls seem suspicious of Aymo's intentions, but he eventually, if crudely, induces them that he means them no harm. Henry returns to Piani's car and falls asleep. His dreams are of Catherine, and he speaks aloud to her. That night, columns of peasants join the retreating army. In the initial morning, Henry and his men decide to gradually from the column and take a small road going north. They stop briefly at an abandoned farmhouse and eat a large breakfast before going on their journey. Aymo's car gets wedged in soft mud and Henry asks others to help. He eventually shoots a fleeing engineering sergeant while his friend escapes. They get stuck after some time and decide to complete the journey to Udine on foot. He gives money to the girls and asks them to leave.

Analysis: Chapters XXVII–XXIX

The descriptive passages of the retreat given in this novel are among the best in American novels. As the lumbering columns of army vehicles wind throughout the country night, Hemingway's prose mimics the dark and streaming motion of the men. When the movement of the columns becomes choppy, so do Hemingway's sentences: 'Then the truck stopped. The entire column was stopped. It started again and went a little farther, then stopped.' These three chapters are noteworthy for their powerful, unromantic and uncompromising attitude towards war. Abstract concepts of honour, courage and glory find no place in the cruel reality of war. In describing the retreat, Hemingway strips war of its romantic attire and provides the reader with solid, evocative and accurate details.

The focus of the novel switches clearly from love to war in Book Three. Hemingway reports from the battlefront with a journalistic style that heightens the realism of the narrative and proves quite unsettling. When Henry shoots at the two engineering officers for refusing to help free the car from the mud, Hemingway's detached prose stops short of passing moral judgment on his action. This spare, disinterested tone sets Henry's wanton violence against an unethical landscape; shooting a man out of anger is given the same weight as pushing a car out of the mud. Hemingway challenges the reader to contact with the scene on his or her own terms by keeping to his nonchalant

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way. Certainly, the support that Henry receives from his fellow soldiers suggests that his actions are not abnormal and that there is a persistent irrationality at work in the battlefront. The world has been stripped of its moral garbs, exposing men to set their own morality and value system. While some, like Gino, fight for their homeland since they believe in ideals such as patriotism and sacrifice, others, like Henry, attach no such grandeur or meaning to their behaviour on the battlefield. The confusion and meaninglessness portrayed by war has been beautifully depicted in the scene where Henry shoots the engineering officer. Bonello's ruthless show of wrath on an injured man underlines this senseless situation.

CHAPTERS XXX–XXXII

Chapter XXX

Crossing a bridge, Henry sees a German staff car crossing an additional bridge nearby. Not wanting to get captured, Henry decides to take the smaller road instead of the main road. Meanwhile Aymo is killed by the Italian rear guard. Now the small group is not only at risk with their enemies, they are also at risk with their own rear guard. They find an abandoned farmhouse and decide to spend the night there. Piani and Bonello go out in search of food. Piani returns alone, saying that Benello has deserted the front in the hope of being arrested. They spend the night in the barn and head out at dawn to re-join the Italian army. They come across a large gathering where officers were being interrogated by the Italian police and killed if found to desert the battlefront. Sensing danger, Henry dives in the water to evade death, just as he was seized by two officers. He could hear gunshots as he swam but as he went further from the shore, the gun shots stopped.

Chapters XXXI and XXXII

Henry floats in the cold water for what seems like eternity. He climbs out of the water and removes all identification of being an officer. He jumps on board a military train at night. When he is observed by a young soldier, he momentarily freezes on his tracks. However, the soldier ignores him. While lying under a canvas, he thinks about the injured knee. He then thinks about Catherine, though the thought of not being able to meet her drives him crazy. Thoughts of loss plague him. He thinks he has put the war past him, and misses the priest, Rinaldi, and his friends, to whom he will never be able to return. 'It was not my show anymore', he ruminates.

Analysis: Chapters XXX–XXXII

The fragile world of the Italian military falls completely in these last chapters of Book Three. Henry's normally calm exterior is shown to crumble, which prompts him to shoot the engineering sergeant. The world descends even further into chaos: the panicky Italian rear guard begins shooting at its own men; Bonello, fearing death, abandons Henry and Piani; and the neat columns that typify the retreat at its beginning have broken into a confused mob. Battle police randomly pull officers from the columns of retreating men and execute them on sight. Hemingway expertly stirs up the horror, confusion, and irrationality of war. Two types of characters have been painted in these last chapters. On one hand we have the terrified officers such as Bonello and Henry and on the other, the overzealous police patrols that pull out Italian soldiers and execute the defecting ones openly. The officer who is executed has resigned to his fate and accepts death as inevitable. He chides the police for pestering him with stupid questions

just before he is shot. Henry is not resigned to his fate and jumps into the water in the face of adversity. Again, Hemingway portrays through his hero, not the proverbial, archetypal hero who challenges his enemies, but a hero who uses common sense and uses trickery to save his life. He flees not out of cowardice but out of an unwillingness to make a give-up for a cause that, to him, seems meaningless. His escape through the river is a baptism of sorts, an act that washes away his anger and obligations and renews his sense of what truly matters in the world. His thoughts return to Catherine. In these chapters, Henry creates a 'separate peace', as he later calls it, with the war—the farewell to arms that gives the novel its title.

As Henry ponders the decision to bid farewell to arms the narrative switches from the first person to the second. This shift doesn't mark the first time that Hemingway uses the second person, but it brings about the most comprehensive usage of it in the text. Here, as in its earlier occurrences, the second person affects a colloquial, storytelling tone. More important, it asks the reader to identify with Henry and get within his head. This device, which Hemingway reserves for Henry's more philosophical moments, is as startling as it is engaging. The repeated 'you' jumps out of a text that has applied 'I' fairly consistently. To heighten the reader's sense of being inside Henry's head, Hemingway lets slide conventional rules of grammar and style. Semicolons proliferate and sentence fragments are strung jointly. Even after the narrative returns to the first person, this stream-of-consciousness style intensifies. Hunger intrudes upon Henry's thoughts about his supposed death and the welfare of his friends, and the narrative follows Henry as he drifts off to sleep with the diffuse sentence, 'There were many places.'

CHAPTERS XXXIII–XXXVII

Chapter XXXIII, XXXIV and XXXV

Henry goes to Milan looking for Catherine, learning later that she has moved to Stresa. He meets Ralph Simmons, an opera singer whom he had met earlier, and the latter offers his help to Henry to venture to Switzerland. He explains the travel routes to Switzerland and also provides him with civilian clothes. Henry leaves for Stresa. Once in the city, he settles in a hotel called Isles Borromees. Helen and Catherine are having their dinner when Henry walks into their restaurant. While Catherine was overjoyed, Helen berates Henry for his irresponsible behaviour towards the pregnant Catherine. Henry and Catherine spend the night at the hotel together. Henry describes the night spent with Catherine: he has returned to a state of bliss, while his thoughts are darkened by the knowledge that the 'world breaks everyone' and that good people die 'impartially'. They decide to move to Switzerland to start their family life. In the morning, Henry goes angling with Emilio and Catherine visits Helen for the last time. In the evening, Henry plays billiard with Count Greffi, a ninety-four-year-old nobleman, talking about the war and religion.

Chapter XXXVI

Later on that night, Emilio wakes Henry to inform him that the military police plan to arrest Henry in the morning. He suggests that Henry and Catherine row to Switzerland. Henry wakes Catherine, and they pack and head down to the wharf. Emilio stocks them up with brandy and sandwiches and arranges for them to take the boat. He takes fifty lire for the provisions and tells Henry to send him five hundred francs for the boat after he is set up in Switzerland.

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Chapter XXXVII

The water in which the couple rows is rough because of the storm. Henry rows all night till he cannot anymore. Catherine rows for a short time, and Henry resumes again. After staying out of sight of coast guards, the couple lands in Swiss lands. They are eventually arrested by the guards and taken to Locarno, where they receive provisional visas to remain in Switzerland. They are so tired that they retire to a hotel and promptly fall asleep.

Analysis: Chapters XXXIII–XXXVI

Up till now in the novel, those involved in the war have raised their voices and reactions to the war, including soldiers, officers, surgeons and nurses. When Henry escapes the front line of the war, he comes across several civilian characters during his travel whose opinions about the war are similar to the attitudes of the military personnel. Characters including Count Greffi, Emilio and Simmons do not support the war. Furthermore, Simmons and Emilio help Henry to abscond from his duty. The novel is seen presenting one-sided perception of the public about war. This shows the novel's central argument that war offers destruction and loss instead of honour and glory.

As Henry and Catherine prepare for their journey to Switzerland, there is a looming sense of doom. Hemingway strongly uses realism to depend on traditional methods of foretelling. However, he envisages the advancing misfortune is several ways. We witness the unexpected outbreak of Helen Ferguson in the hotel, which reflects her fear of loneliness. More than this, however, we see through the novel that the world is a dangerous place where true love cannot survive, as is Henry and Catherine's. One of the most beautifully written passages of the novel is Henry's night time meditation. It is during this time that the echoes of loneliness and the danger of love surviving in an unsafe world are reflected the most. Henry feels that the world was designed mainly to bring an end to the good.

CHAPTERS XXXVIII–XLI

Chapter XXXVIII

With the arrival of the autumn, Catherine and Henry took over a wooden house to stay, which was located outside Montreaux, a village. They were enjoying life together, along with Mr Guttingen and his wife, who lived downstairs. One day, Catherine goes was a hair do, after which she goes out with Henry for a beer, as she thinks this will keep the size of the baby small. She has been very worried about the size of the baby and the deliver process as the doctor had warned her that her pelvis was narrow. The couple discuss marriage again. Catherine agrees to get married someday as this will give a legitimate status to their child. However, she prefers to talk about the sights she wants to see, such as the Golden Gate Bridge and the Niagra Falls. Before the arrival of Christmas, the couple remember Rinaldi, the priest and the men on the front and wonder where they are. Catherine asks Henry to change something in himself, which will not only make him look different but also make him feel good. On this suggestion, Henry agrees to grow a beard. Catherine suggests for herself a haircut to look good and different. However, Henry does not like this idea. Henry is unable to sleep when Catherine asks him to try to sleep together at the same. He lies awake and continues to look at Catherine and thinks for some time.

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Chapter XXXIX

Henry started growing a beard for his changed look as per the suggestion of Catherine. Along with Catherine, he went to a restaurant, where they take pleasure in their isolation and contemplate if things would be the same or get spoilt after the arrival of their baby. Catherine again tells Henry her wish to get a haircut to look young and different and so that Henry falls in love with her over and over again. To this Henry replies that he loves her dearly and asks, 'What do you want to do? Ruin me?'

Chapter XL

The couple move to Lausanne in March so that they can stay near the hospital as the delivery date was close by. Here, they stay in a hotel for about three weeks. Catherine purchases clothes for their baby and Henry exercises in the gym. Both feel that as the baby will come soon, they should not waste time away from each other and be together the most.

Chapter XLI

One morning, around three o'clock, Catherine experiences labour pain. Henry rushes her to the hospital, where she is given a room and a nightgown to change her clothes. Henry goes out to have breakfast on being asked by Catherine to do so. However, when he returns from his breakfast, he finds that Catherine has already been taken to the delivery room. On going inside the delivery room, he sees the doctors standing beside Catherine helping her inhaling anaesthetic gas to get her through the painful contractions. However, till afternoon, Catherine is able to make little progress through her labour as a result of which the doctors suggest that a Caesarean operation would be a considerate solution to the complications in her condition. Catherine goes through unbearable pain and, therefore, requests for more gas. Finally, she is taken out on a stretcher and prepares her for the surgery. Henry watches the rain outside, remembering Catherine fears the rain, which she asserts is 'very hard on loving'.

Soon, the doctor comes out of the delivery room with a baby boy. However, surprisingly, Henry does not feel any emotions for the child. Although he observes the doctor worrying about the child, he rushes to see Catherine without talking to the doctor. Catherine asks Henry about the child and he replies that he is fine. On hearing this, the nurse looks at him surprisingly. He takes him outside and tells him that the baby was stillborn.

After returning from his dinner, the nurse informs him that Catherine is haemorrhaging. Henry fears that his beloved will die. He desperately wants to see her, and on being allowed finally, Catherine tells him that she knows she will not live for long. She requests him not to utter the same words of love that he had used for her during their pleasant time together. Henry stays with Catherine until she dies. After her death, henry tries to bid adieu to her but is unable to do so. He leaves the hospital and returns to his hotel in the rain.

Analysis: Chapters XXXVII–XL

The first half of this section highlights Catherine and Henry's happiness together. This bliss, illustrated in Chapter XL, is efficiently shown by Hemingway, who marks their distance from the outside world. The following lines show this clearly: 'It was March, 1918, and the German offensive had started in France. I drank whiskey and soda while

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Catherine unpacked and moved around the room.' However, a slight nervousness hangs over the tranquillity. Hemingway portrays Henry as one of his typical heroes who yearns for adventure. He is shown to become restless even with his content life. We also find Henry strange when we see him later not feeling any emotion for his son who was stillborn. Although Henry longed for isolation from the world and a life of solitude with Catherine, their togetherness poses a new problem for him—a problem of maintaining some independence for himself. We see him confessing, 'I haven't any life at all any more', when Catherine is happy to have their lives 'all mixed up'. By the end of novel we realize that Henry still loves Catherine. However, when Catherine wants to make love, he wants to play chess. Thus, we see that loves proves to be a challenge, like honour and glory.

Throughout the novel, we see Hemingway foretelling Catherine's death. These are highlighted when Catherine drinks beer to keep the size of the baby small, expecting the painful labour which she would have to go through. She also claims that the world has 'broken' her reminiscence. This intense feeling is highlighted in the passage in which Henry fears the death of the good and the gentle. These sensitivities cast despair on the satisfaction and hopefulness that Henry and Catherine feel. When Catherine is about to die, Henry states this in the most simplest and austere terms: 'It seems she had one haemorrhage after another. They couldn't stop it. I went into the room and hang about with Catherine until she died.' We see Hemingway's power of writing with his ability to stir up so much by using so little.

Although the novel ends with the tragic of death of Catherine, we do not see any signs of epiphany in Henry. Her death is not the medium for a revelation or a great change. The major thematic focus of the novel is both love and war lead to losses for which there is no compensation. The novel ends with a description of the storm, which reminds the reader about Catherine's fear of the rain. The rain which falls on Henry as he leaves the hospital after Catherine's death has such destructive forces that make one hopeless, speechless and powerless.

Check Your Progress

12. Where did Henry's unit move to in the second chapter?
13. Why does Catherine flirt with Henry?
14. What suggestion did Henry give to the soldier with hernia?
15. Why is drinking alcohol used repeatedly through the novel?
16. Who was Dr Valentini?
17. What was the priest's view on true love?

ACTIVITY

In order to understand Faulkner's preoccupation with the non-linear progressions of the mind, read his poems and short stories.

Did You Know

In September 1932, Paramount bought the film rights to Sanctuary. The first film version, entitled *The Story of Temple Drake*, was released in May 1933. It toned-down the more deviant behaviours and included a completely new scene at the end, but did manage to retain most of the suspense of the original story.

5.8 SUMMARY

In this unit, you have learnt that:

- Very few novels can be said to have been surrounded with the storm of controversy about their form and technique as this novel has been, yet at the same time, it has been regarded as exceptionally brilliant.
- The division of *The Sound and the Fury* into sections, with each of the major characters narrating the same tale from his point of view, was a unique experimental step.
- The first thing to note is that on the formal level, the novel is organized into four loose sections, which, though connected through a common family experience, are mutually isolated sections.
- The focus shifts continuously from one character to another. This technique sets it apart from other novels of this author, which normally weaves a tale around the growth of one character. This difficulty is not lessened when we consider that chronology is not an important factor in arrangement of the four sections.
- While the opening section narrates the events of 7 April 1910, the third section dealing with Jason is quaintly located in 8 April 1928. This involves the reader's own back and forth movement over the course of the disjointed time and narrative.
- There is no doubt that this disorderly form of the novel is a deliberately contrived structure which parallels the thematic level in its declining fortunes; the warmth of unity, the controlling commonalty of interests and the cementing force of affinity have evaporated, leaving the Compson family bereft of hope.
- This scene of anarchy is reinforced by the formal and structural aspects in the way a poet would organize his long narrative poem. Many scholars are in a hurry to express their opinion about it as the novelist's failure on the technical front.
- However, if we look at it as another significant functioning in tandem with the thematic stands of the story, we find ourselves in a position to appreciate the relevance of the formal aspects.
- Perhaps, *The Sound and the Fury* is no novel at all; it is a discontinuous, unorganized narrative that lacks a beginning and an end.
- Caddy is one element which runs through everybody's narrative, she obsessively occupies everybody's thoughts and propels the story; but the author chooses to assign her a peripheral existence, thus denying a function of binding the novel as it emerged from the beginning—a conglomeration of sections.

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- Caddy disappears after the Quentin section and finds a brief mention in the section with Jason. This is one point which stands out as a regrettable gap in the organization of the novel; if Caddy had been allowed to dominate the tale till the last section, a more effective form would have emerged. However, the novel ends in as scattered manner as it begins and progresses throughout.
- All this apparent lack of a better formal structural and logical progression from different angles suits the mission well of investigating the inner world of the characters like Benjy and Quentin, which was difficult to present in any other manner. This is claimed as a justification for adopting it.
- Benjy's view of the world is vividly brought out as a succession of impressions of a mind that cannot comprehend it in a liner straightforward manner.
- For him, past is as significant a potential force of the present and there is no neat distinction between the two.
- The author, in order to present a rush of impressions, took recourse to two techniques—selective and ingenious use of steam-of-consciousness technique and the poetic symbolism in which certain motifs carry out the role of portraying the various states of mind of the two main characters.
- Ernest Hemingway was a twentieth century author and journalist. His style of writing was economical and understated, influencing contemporary literature in a big way. His adventurous lifestyle and public image in turn, influenced the younger generations.
- *A Farewell to Arms* by Hemingway covers numerous events of the Italian campaigns during the First World War.
- In Hemingway's early works, war used to be a major theme. Hemingway's own wartime experiences led to the construction of the main plot in *A Farewell to Arms*.
- The novel outlines the themes of love and war that run side by side. It portrays how despite serving as a miserably disconsolate situation, the war actually acts as a powerful catalyst in creating, as well as reinforcing, relationships between human beings.
- The title of the novel makes it obvious that the novel primarily deals with war and its aftermath. This is evident by the way Henry's life is affected by war and the manner in which he abhors war and warfare.
- Gino and Moretti support the author to bring out the vagaries of war. Though Gino is naïve and Moretti a braggart, they are the only ones who have their own glorious notions of war; most of the other characters remain inconclusive about the war. Through evocative scenes such as the Italian army's retreat, Hemingway paints masterful pictures of the mindless brutality and violent chaos caused by war.
- In this novel, the author offers a deep, sombre meditation on the relationship between love and war.
- The game of seduction that Catherine plays with Henry soon turns into a serious affair of the heart for both. She initiated this game because she was mourning for her dead fiancé and desperately wished to forget him.
- Henry and Catherine start finding solace in each other from the things that plague them in this world. Henry's passion for Catherine is so strong that he flees the

war and looks for her. Once they are reunited, they start planning an idyllic life that could salvage them from the horrors of war. They become each other's social, psychological and emotional healing amidst the Swiss mountainside. The tragedy of the novel lies in the fact that their genuine love can only be temporary in this cruel world.

- The ideas of loyalty and abandonment apply equally well to love and war.
- Hemingway suggests that one should be loyal to one's love than to war and political causes.
- While Henry is portrayed as a serious soldier, he does not attach false importance to unreal notions of glory and honour. Though he shoots an uncooperative sergeant who fails to comply with his orders, his reaction needs to be treated as a violent outcome of the all-pervasive nature of war, rather than a personal failure. He eventually follows in the fleeing engineer's footsteps and deserts his regimen. At times he feels guilty that he has abandoned his regimen when it needed him, his supreme loyalty lay in being true to Catherine.
- Hemingway wished to impart upon his readers his take on loyalty and abandonment—for him, these are not the opposite ends of an ethical spectrum, but the practical priorities of an individual life.

5.9 KEY TERMS

- **Gloaming:** It means the faint light after the sun sets.
- **Odd jobs:** It refers to small jobs of various types.
- **Grotesque:** It means strange in a way that is unpleasant or offensive.
- **Indeterminacy:** It means the virtue of not being easily identifiable.
- **Sedentary:** It means without activity or passive.
- **Motif:** It is a subject, an idea, or a phrase that is repeated and developed in a work of literature or a piece of music.
- **Semantic:** It means connected with the meaning of words and sentences.
- **Stoicism:** It is a repression of emotion and indifference to pleasure and pain.
- **Realist:** It refers to a person who represents things as they really are.
- **Idealist:** It refers to a person who cherishes and pursues noble principles.
- **Decimated:** It means devastated.
- **Sermonizing**: It means preaching; imparting moral lectures.
- **Sombre:** It means extremely serious; grave.
- **Masculinity:** It refers to qualities such as strength and boldness ascribed to men.
- **Illusions:** It means a false sense of reality.
- **Fantasy:** It means extravagant and unrestrained imagination.
- **Antiwar novel**: It is a genre of novel that condemns war and its glorification.

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5.10 ANSWERS TO 'CHECK YOUR PROGRESS'

1. One of the first collections of Faulkner's poems entitled *The Marble Faun* was published in 1924.
2. In January 1962, Faulkner fell from his horse. He was careless about his injury and took to drinking as a cure. However, on 6 July 1962, he died of heart attack.
3. The extraordinary merit of *The Sound and the Fury* lies in the perfect harmony between form and theme, which the author achieved by sheer exercise of his literary genius.
4. Miss Quentin is a self-absorbed girl, representing a free spirit, closer to instinctual way of life, deriving her strength and character from the passionate sources of nature.
5. A misogynist is a person who has a dislike for women or girls.
6. *Macbeth*, Act V, Scene V reminds us of another instance which occurs in the great dramatist's comedy.
7. The biggest crisis that the Compson family faces is the crisis of confidence. The members live together without a sense of attachment and trust and treat each another with bitter hostility.
8. Ernest Hemingway was a twentieth century author and journalist. His style of writing was economical and understated, influencing contemporary literature in a big way. His adventurous lifestyle and public image in turn, influenced the younger generations.
9. He was born at Oak Park, Ilinois.
10. The themes of *A Farewell to Arms* are: grim reality of death; relation of love and war. Motifs used in the novel are: masculinity, games and divertissements, loyalty versus abandonment, illusions and fantasies. Symbols used include rain and Catherine's hair.
11. Hemingway's novels almost always celebrate a swaggering, virile, domineering and supremely confident masculine power. In *A Farewell to Arms*,some of the minor characters portray a fine example of manhood. While Dr Valentini exudes virility as an expert surgeon that poses as competition to Rinaldi's womanizing, Rinaldi proves to be a faithful friend. Bonello, who shoots the fleeing engineering sergeants, has a touch of cruelty that sort of pervades the entire novel. Hemingway has almost always used humour, if not contempt to portray their opposite characters. The success of these men depends on the failure of the other. Rinaldi attacks the guileless priest, thereby establishing his manhood; the overly cautious, almost mousy three surgeons challenge Dr Valentini's reputation by refuting Henry's claims to an early operation.
12. Henry's unit moves to the city of Gorizia in the second unit.
13. Catherine flirts with Henry as she wished to forget the pains of the memories of her dead fiancé.
14. Henry asked him to injure his head so that the soldier did not have to go back to the front.

15. Drinking alcohol has been used repeatedly as the characters of the novel wish to seek refuge in illusions and fantasies in the war-ravaged world. They drink to forget the painful memories associated with war and its aftermath.
16. Dr Valentini was an intelligent, cheerful and competent surgeon who operated upon Henry's injured leg confidently.
17. The priest tells Henry that he knows that the latter is capable of true love; people who visit brothels are completely unaware of this kind of love, where one needs to give oneself completely to one human being. The priest maintains that he is sure that Henry will find his love some day.

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5.11 QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

Short-Answer Questions

1. What is the significance related to the characters of Benjy, Quentin and Jason.
2. Comment on the structure of the novel.
3. Comment on the use of stream of consciousness in the novel.
4. Do you find any symbolic devices used in the play? Analyse them briefly.
5. Give a brief sketch of Hemingway's life.
6. Who was Catherine Berkley?
7. Discuss the themes used in the novel *A Farewell to Arms*.

Long-Answer Questions

1. Evaluate *The Sound and the Fury* as a tragic novel.
2. Write a note about women characters in the novel.
3. Discuss the art of characterization in the play.
4. Discuss *A Farewell to Arms* as an antiwar novel.
5. Analyse Henry's character in *A Farewell to Arms*.

5.12 FURTHER READING

Hacker, L. M., Helene S Zahler ed. *The Shaping of American Tradition*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1947.

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